



COMMUNITY CHILD CARE COUNCIL OF SONOMA COUNTY

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Here's Our Handy Choosing Child Care Checklist

Print out and take with you when you visit a provider or use when you call providers.

What to look for when you visit:

- Settings that are safe, provide small group sizes, and have adult-to-child ratios that encourage the best opportunities for development
- Caregivers or teachers who are warm, loving, and trained in early childhood development
- A clean, safe, warm and comfortable atmosphere
- Settings that offer opportunities for meaningful parent involvement
- Happy, well-cared for children
- A child-centered environment that focuses on play
- Space for outdoor play and exercise
- Space for quiet play and naps
- A toilet area that is accessible and easy for children to use
- A variety of toys and equipment in good condition and appropriate to the ages of the children in care
- Providers who participate in the child care food program and serve nutritious food
- Positive discipline and guidance methods that foster the child's ability to become self-disciplined. **Remember that physical or verbal punishment of any kind, in centers or in a family childcare home, is against the law.**
- Cleaning supplies and medications are locked in a high cupboard and out of reach

What to ask when you call:

- Do you have a license?
- Do you have any openings?
- How many children are in your care?
- What is the adult/child ratio?
- What is a typical daily routine/schedule?
- What experience, qualifications, or training do you have?
- What is the staff turnover rate?
- What is the philosophy of the program?
- What are the fees?
- Do you have experience or training in identifying and working with children who have special needs?
- How much TV/Video time is included in the daily schedule?
- What kind of meals and snacks are served?
- What are the rules about visiting the program?
- Do you have a contract that covers fees, method of payment, illness, vacation?