

## WHAT TO ASK When you call

- Do you have a license?
- Do you have any openings?
- How many children attend this center/home?
- What is the adult: child ratio?
- What qualifications, experience, and training does staff have? First Aid? CPR? Special Needs?
- How long has the staff worked for the program?
- What is the child development philosophy of your program?
- Do you have a contract or parent handbook that describes rules, fees, policies, illness and vacations?
- What are the rules about visiting the program?
- What forms of discipline do you use?
- What would a typical day be like for my child? (routines)
- What kind of meals and snacks are served? Do you participate in a food program?
- How do you encourage parents and families to get involved in the program?
- How do you keep parents up-to-date and involved in their child's development and the program activities?
- How much TV/computer/video time is included in the daily schedule?
- Can you give me the names of two or three parents to call for references?

This brochure is made possible with funds from the California Department of Education, Child Development Division

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR When you visit

- Caregivers who are at ease with children and parents. They are warm, loving, and properly trained.
- Happy, respected, well cared for children.
- A clean, safe, and comfortable atmosphere.
- A child-centered environment that allows children to make choices, to explore and learn through play.
- Space for outdoor play and exercise.
- Space for quiet play and naps.
- Toilet area accessible and easy for children to use.
- A variety of toys, equipment and books in good condition, and appropriate to the ages of children in care.
- Appropriate methods of discipline are used. ***Physical or verbal punishment of any kind is against the law.***
- Medicines, cleaning products and other dangerous objects are out of reach.
- Appropriate group size and adult: child ratios.
- Staff includes all children and encourages positive interactions.
- The program understands and respects diversity.
- Children are visually supervised at all times.
- Staff encourages and practices good hygiene.
- Posted emergency evacuation plans.

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Business Hours: Monday-Friday 8:30am-5:00pm



# Child

# CHOOSING



# Care





## Family Child Care

A licensed family child care home provides care and education in a family-like setting. Providers must have 15 hours of health and safety training and pass a background clearance. Providers are licensed for 8 or 14 children and must adhere to specified staffing ratios. Please call 4Cs to inquire about adult: child ratios in a family child care home.

## Child Care Centers

Child care centers are licensed to care for groups of 12 or more children in a school-like setting. Center staff is required to take college level child development courses and pass a background clearance. Centers must meet building, fire and zoning codes. Child care centers maintain the following teacher: child ratios:

1:4	Infants (birth to 2 years)
1:12	Preschool (2 to 5 years)
1:14	School Age (K-12 years)

## License-Exempt Care

Providers who are exempt from state licensure include the following:

- Family, friend and neighbor caregivers (can care for children from one other family)
- Nanny, au pair, or other individual hired to come into your home to provide care.
- Drop in care at a health club and some youth recreation programs and day camps.

## The Keys to Quality Child Care

- Educated caregivers/teachers
- Positive, nurturing relationships
- Developmentally appropriate curriculum
- Healthy and safe environment
- Parent involvement and partnership

## 4Cs Resource and Referral Provides:

- Free child care referrals to licensed and some license-exempt centers.
- Consumer education, resources and statistics for child care in Sonoma County.
- Trustline registration for in-home or license-exempt caregivers.

Call 4Cs Resource & Referral at  
707-544-3077 or

Visit [www.sonoma4cs.org](http://www.sonoma4cs.org) and click on "Find Child Care".

*4Cs provides referrals not recommendations*

## Making Your Decision

High quality child care offers a safe place for your child, has a positive effect on your child's early development, and sets the foundation for positive relationships and a lifetime of learning.

*There are no set rules for choosing child care.* It is a personal decision based on a family's unique needs. What is right for one may not be the best choice for another. A successful early care experience is one in which there is a partnership between the caregiver and the parent. When searching for child care you should:

- Visit several child care programs.
- Spend time to observe the program with children present.
- Ask questions about the program and the caregivers.
- Ask for references from former clients.
- Trust your own judgment.
- Call Community Care Licensing at 707-588-5026 Ask to review complaint history and license status for a center or family child care provider before placing your child in care.

