

# Quality Care Checklist

*Before enrolling in a child care, take a moment to make an unannounced visit.*

## Staff/Caregiver

- How much experience and education does the caregiver have?
- Interactions between caregivers and children are positive, supportive and responsive.
- Children receive individual attention.
- Caregivers help children express emotions, solve problems and develop self-help skills.
- Caregivers comfort children when they are upset.
- Is the child-to-staff ratio met?

## The Program

- The program and/or philosophy of the provider is acceptable.
- There is a daily schedule that has a balance of physically active and quiet activities.
- The activities, toys and materials available to children seem to be appropriate for their ages.
- There are enough games, puzzles, blocks, dress-up play clothes, books and art materials to allow children to select activities that interest and stimulate them.
- Transitions from individual to group activities are smooth, relaxed and controlled.

## The Environment

- Health and safety practices have been established and seem to be followed.
- The facility is bright and cheerful.
- The facility is clean and appears to be arranged in an orderly manner.
- The children's art work is displayed.
- Toys are safe without sharp edges or very small parts.
- The outdoor play area is safe and well maintained and there is enough space for the children to run and play freely.
- Harmful substances are well out of reach or in locked cabinets.
- There is a first aid kit safely stored but accessible.
- Does the food meet USDA standards and is a menu available?
- Eating areas and bathroom facilities are clean and consistently maintained.

## The Service

- The caregiver is available during the hours and days needed.
- The caregiver offers all services I require.
- The caregiver shares with parents the highlights of their children's daily experiences.
- References are provided upon request and the people who are named speak well of the program, the caregiver and the service.
- Caregivers welcome parents into the facility.
- The children appear to be happy here.
- I would feel comfortable leaving my child here while I am at work.

## Red Flags

- The caregiver doesn't want you to visit or ask questions about what your child will do during the day.
- The caregiver doesn't respond to the children or looks past them when talking to them.
- The caregiver often sounds angry or tense.
- The caregiver often seems overwhelmed or bored.
- Your child appears unhappy and withdrawn.
- Your child suddenly doesn't seem to be eating or sleeping well.