SUGGESTIONS ON REVIEWING CHILD CARE FACILITIES

In making child care decisions, UA Life & Work Connections’ Child Care & Family Resources at The University of Arizona encourages employee and student parents to consider multiple factors when choosing a child care facility. This document has been designed so that parents may print and bring along a list of relevant questions when interviewing child care facility providers. Please contact us at (520) 621-4365 with further questions regarding child care options.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Program Name _____________________________________________________________

Contact Person __________________________________________________________

Telephone Number ____________________________ Days/Hours ______________________

Address __________________________________________ Cross Streets _____________

Initial Visit (without your child)_________________________ Follow Up Visit (with your child)________________________

PROGRAM FEATURES

- Do program, in-service/professional training, vacation and holiday schedules adequately support your care needs?

- What fees (registration, tuition, meals and snacks, transportation, supply costs) are parents responsible for? Do they change as the child gets older? Are sliding scales and/or discounts available to UA employees/students? Are sibling discounts offered?

- Does the home or center meet (or exceed) state regulatory requirements? Is the home or center nationally accredited, and if not, does the program subscribe to early childhood education best practices, or plan to pursue accreditation in the future?

- What is the overall philosophy, mission statement, etc. of the program and how is it integrated into the daily routines (indoor/outdoor activities, meals and snacks, napping and rest periods, toileting assistance, etc.)? Are cultural, religious, and family values recognized and respected?

- What are the protocols for visitors, emergency contacts, illness, medicines, signing children in and out, and field trips?

- If children are transported, what are the safety, communications and insurance protocols concerning child passenger safety seats, vehicle maintenance or parent-provided carpools?

- How does the program promote proper hygiene and safety practices, and address illness, fire and injury prevention? Do staff and children continually demonstrate good hand-washing, hygiene and safety techniques?

- How many children are cared for on a daily basis? Is the group stable or do different children come each day? If a home, how many of the provider’s own children are in the group?

- How long has the provider or director maintained a family child care home or center program? How long does the individual anticipate continuing in this capacity?

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- With the permission of previously and currently enrolled families, can the provider or director share their contact information with you for reference purposes?

- How much TV is allowed? Are television programs and movies developmentally appropriate and how are they monitored? Are staff members available to respond to children’s questions and concerns during and at the conclusion of programs?

- Overall, do children appear happy, engaged, and respected? Are their needs and interests anticipated and responded to in a timely manner? Knowing you child’s personality, temperament, and preferences, would you feel comfortable enrolling your child there?

STAFF

- How many staff members are present per what number of children, at any given time?

- How much early childhood education, training and experience do providers, teachers, and support staff have? What degrees or certification do individuals possess, how long have they worked with young children in general and specifically, at that particular facility?

- Do staff members hold current certification in CPR and first aid? Have appropriate screening measures (TB testing, fingerprinting) been completed?

- Is parent participation, observation, and involvement encouraged?

- When staff communicates with children, do they offer their undivided attention and adjust their physical stance to meet the children’s level?

- Do staff support children’s active engagement and facilitate effective transitions for individual, small and large group activities?

- What is the program’s philosophy on discipline, and how do staff members respond to behavioral challenges? Do disciplinary practices support children’s learning, problem-solving abilities and self control? Does the program’s disciplinary philosophy correspond with and support your own views on discipline?

- Do adults give comfort when needed? Are adult responses respectful of children’s developmental stages and abilities, as well as cultural, religious and family dynamics?

ENVIRONMENT

- Do classrooms and play yards offer an adequate variety and quantity of toys, games, books, art supplies and materials, and honor diversity in terms of culture, ethnicity, differing abilities, etc.?

- Are designated areas available for quiet and active play, and can children choose freely?

- Do playgrounds offer sun protection? Are toys, equipment, and pathways safe and well maintained? Are adequate outdoor drinking fountains or water sources available?
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- If water activities are present using a swimming pool, water play stations, etc., are such areas properly secured, maintained, and satisfactorily staffed with knowledgeable, water safety instructors?

- Are eating areas clean and spacious, and is adequate time devoted to appropriate hygiene/cleaning measures prior, during and after snack and meals?

- Are toileting areas clean, well stocked, and maintained and are children provided with enough time to complete toileting and hand-washing routines?

- Are exits clearly marked and well lit? Are fire alarms in good working order with fire drills held on a regular basis?

- Are smoke detectors and fire extinguishers present and in good working order?

- Do you have access to the entire home/center or only to select areas?

- Are outlets properly covered, and are medicines, cleaning supplies, and other harmful substances clearly labeled and stored out of reach of children? Are specialty items, such as firearms/amunition and sporting equipment, also locked, secured, and stored out of the reach of children?

- In general, does the home or center appear to be safe, comfortable, inviting, and supportive of individual family philosophies on how children grow and learn best?