Choosing a Child Care Center

Overall Impression
- People who have used the school speak well of it.
- I would be happy here if I were a child.
- I feel comfortable about leaving my child here.

Additional Concerns
- Tuition and payment policies
- Arrival & departure times
- Holiday and vacation arrangements
- Child release policy
- Discipline & sick child policy

Parents Should...
- Adhere to arrival and departure times agreed upon
- Provide the appropriate paper work requested by the center
- Be involved with your child’s school experiences
- Make prompt payments

Child Care - -
A Parent/Provider Relationship

Quality child care is a partnership requiring equal responsibilities between parents and providers.

Hours of Operation
Monday—Friday
8:30-4:30
Most child care centers in New Jersey, either public or privately owned, serving six or more children below six years of age, must be licensed by The Division of Youth & Family Services (for information, call 1-877-667-9845). All child care centers share a common bond - they are settings where a group of six or more children are cared for during some part of the day.

Finding a center that makes both you and your child happy may require a careful search. Choosing the right child care center for your child is one of the most important decisions you will make as a parent.

This brochure gives some guidelines which may be helpful in your decision making process.

Make an appointment to visit the center when you can observe the children’s activities and speak with the director and staff members. You may want to schedule your visit near closing time so that you can discuss the program with other parents when they come for their children.

The following checklist may help you in your search for a child care center.

**Please Note:** Accredited programs display a torch on their stationery and promotional material. This insignia indicates that the center has achieved a nationally recognized standard of excellence. The torch helps parents identify high-quality programs.

*State law specifies that anyone who has reason to believe that any child has been or is being subjected to any form of child abuse or neglect by any person is required to report the concern to the DYFS Office of Child Abuse Control: 1-800-792-8610.*

**General Information**

- The center is clean, safe and attractive.
- There is enough space for indoor and outdoor active play.
- There are fire extinguishers, first aid supplies and posted emergency procedures.
- The children are engaged in developmentally appropriate activities.
- The teachers interact with the children frequently.
- The center has a happy, relaxed atmosphere.

**Staffing**

- The director and staff are responsive to the children’s needs.
- The staff is well trained and experienced.
- They are friendly and cooperative.
- They treat children as individuals.
- There are enough adults so that children are well supervised.
- The director maintains up-to-date records on each child, including health information.

**Programming**

- There are developmentally appropriate toys and play materials.
- There is a balanced daily schedule and routine.
- Provisions are made for the children to receive nutritious meals and snacks.
- There are simple, understandable rules.
- There is a supervised rest time for the children.
- The space is arranged so that children can work and play independently.