

## OTHER QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

1. What are your hours of operation?
2. What ages of children do you accept?
3. How many children do you care for? Do you have an assistant?
4. What enrollment information do you require?
5. Are you registered in the city or state?
6. What early childhood education training do you receive?
7. Do you have pets?
8. Do you have a smoke free environment?
9. Could you describe a typical day and activities?
10. What is your policy on biting?
11. What input do I have as a parent? May I visit unannounced?
12. How do you handle separation difficulties?
13. What is your response to inappropriate language?
14. Do you provide structured activities?
15. Do you do field trips? Where?
16. Could you provide me with references?
17. Will my child be happy here?

This is only a guide for evaluating a facility.  
Four locations will just be a start for you.

### LOCATION 1

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

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### LOCATION 2

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

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### LOCATION 3

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

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### LOCATION 4

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

**Sanford Children's C.H.I.L.D. Services** • 1115 W. 41st Street  
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# Choosing Child Care



## CHILD CARE

Decide what you need, locate it, judge its quality, and make a selection. Sounds easy enough doesn't it? What they don't tell you is that choosing quality child care for your child(ren) will be one of the most difficult, most important decisions you will need to make for both you and your child(ren). Trust your instincts. If you are not comfortable with the caregiver, chances are your child won't be either. There are certain criteria you should use to evaluate child care settings and programs.

### BEFORE YOU VISIT

Telephone interviews can save time when searching for child care. These calls will help you to find places that have openings in the age groups you need. Then schedule a visit to ask some of the additional questions and concerns you may have. There are a few ideas listed here to help you get started.

### WHEN YOU VISIT

By visiting several child care homes or centers you will get an impression of the care provided.

#### 1. LOOK

Does the environment look clean and safe? Is there enough space for the children to play inside as well as outside? Are there plenty of safe and age appropriate toys available? Are there quiet areas for doing a puzzle or to read a book?

#### 2. LISTEN

Do the children interact with each other? Do they sound happy and involved in play? How does the caregiver interact with your child, as well as the other children in your presence? (Does she get down to eye level with them?)

#### 3. COUNT

How many children are in the group? Are there enough adults caring for them? If registered in the state of South Dakota, family day care homes should have no more than 12 children in their care.

#### 4. ASK:

How long have you been doing childcare? What is your background? Are you registered? Do you participate in a food program? What are your hours of care? I would like to come and visit sometimes, can I stay and watch my child(ren) play? Could you explain your discipline practices? What methods do you utilize?

## 5. REFERRALS

Ask if there are any other parents of children in their care that you can talk to?

- ☺ Does your child enjoy going there?
- ☺ What do you like most about the care your child receives?
- ☺ Are there areas of concern with the care provided?
- ☺ How does the provider discipline?

*This checklist is a tool to help you save time when searching for child care. During your visit, check the box if you observed the action or item questioned.*

### DOES THE CAREGIVER:

- Use age appropriate techniques
- Listen and respond to children with patience
- Smile and greet the children warmly
- Help children problem solve and respect each other
- Appear neat and clean
- Participate in training of safety and child education courses

### ARE THESE PROVIDED:

- Nutritious meals and snacks (do they participate in a food program)
- Clean eating area

### SAFETY PRECAUTIONS:

- Electrical outlet covers
- Locked cabinets/closets for poisons and cleaners
- Sharp edges of furniture covered
- Stairways are gated
- Fire escape plan provided

### IS THE FACILITY GENERALLY:

- Clean
- Comfortable
- Bright and pleasant

### IS THERE:

- A nap area
- Clean bathroom
- Fenced in outdoor play area

### ARE THE TOYS AND PLAY MATERIALS:

- In good shape
- Clean
- Age appropriate

### POLICIES:

- Cost per child, minimum hours
- Children illnesses or sick policies
- Emergency/ medication treatment
- Immunizations
- Discipline of the children
- Late parental arrival (pick up time) fees
- Dismissals
- Vacation days (provider and family)
- Who will you release my child to/approved to pick them up

### TIPS:

- Sign a contract that includes, hours of care, items that need to be provided, rate charged, extra fees.
- If you have a concern regarding a caregiver or program, call Child Care Services at 1-800-227-3020.

