



# Child Care Check List

## Finding the best early care and education for your child

Choosing who cares for your child is one of the most important and difficult decisions you'll ever have to make. To help you find quality when you're considering which child care program is right for your child, we have created a child care check list that you can use from your first visit and throughout your child's stay at the Family Child Care or Child Care Center you choose.

**Always remember to trust your instincts. You know your child and what is best for his or her well-being. If you have certain feelings, either positive or negative, chances are your child will feel them too, so make sure you are confident in your choice.**

### When You Visit

Take time to really experience the programs you visit. Use the checklist below to help guide your experience.

### While Your Child is Enrolled

Strengthen your child's experience by becoming a partner with your provider.

#### First Impressions:

- Do you and your child feel welcomed?
- Is the program clean and safe?
- Is it cheerful and interesting?
- Do there seem to be enough adults for the number of children?
- Do the adults seem to enjoy being with children? Do they hug, rock, cuddle, talk and sing with the children?
- Are the adults actively engaged with the children, paying individual attention to each child?
- Are children engaged in and enjoying their activities, indoors and out?
- Do you see cooperative and collaborative play among the children that is supported by the adults?
- Are the staff approachable?
- Do you see discipline and guidance methods that match your practices?

#### Questions to Ask:

- Are the adults trained in child development and early childhood education?
- What is the adult to child ratio?
- Is the program Accredited?
- Is the program in good standing with California Community Care Licensing?
- What are some quality improvement initiatives in which the program is involved?
- Does the program have low staff turnover?
- Are staff continually participating in professional development in early childhood education?
- How does the program accommodate children with special needs?
- Are children transported to or away from the program at any time in the day?
- Information to Request:
  - A parent handbook
  - Fees, hours of operation, schedule, discipline, menus and other policies
  - The admission agreement

#### Ways to Partner:

- Continue to monitor the checklist items from your visit.
- Regularly ask your child about his or her day. Is your child:
  - Happy and adjusting well?
  - Look forward to being with the provider?
  - Constantly learning new things?
- Make sure there is strong 2-way communication between you and the provider about your child's changes and growth, and how your child is doing.
- Extend your child's learning outside the program – work with the provider to set common goals and help your child achieve them.
- Find ways to be involved in the program.
- Share your family's values and culture.
- Spend time with your child at home – READ and/or tell stories to your child everyday; TALK with your child constantly; and PLAY with your child as much as possible. Quality happens at home too!

*High Quality =*

**Safety + Relationships + Learning**

## The 6 Steps to High Quality Child Care:

1. Review the Resources on the Quality website at [www.qualitychildcaresb.org](http://www.qualitychildcaresb.org) and print off this checklist
2. Phone or go online to Children's Resource and Referral at [www.findqualitychildcare.org](http://www.findqualitychildcare.org) to get a list of programs to visit
3. Visit programs – be sure to take the checklist with you
4. Check the references provided by the programs
5. Log on to the Community Care Licensing Division at [www.cclcd.ca.gov](http://www.cclcd.ca.gov) and review regulations and check on your chosen programs
6. Keep active with the program you choose, and create a strong partnership with the provider

You and your child will truly benefit from your efforts!

QualityChildCareSB.org

## In a High Quality Child Care Program, You Will:



### See

#### **Respectful, responsive relationships:**

Children, families, teachers, friendships

#### **Fun, safe, challenging learning environments:**

Indoors, outdoors, natural, creative, books, sand, mud, water, puzzles, block, playhouse, etc.

#### **Engaging Activities:**

Measuring, climbing, gardening, cooking, dancing, writing

### Feel

#### **That everyone is welcomed, loved and valued:**

Wonder, curiosity, caring, relaxed



### Hear

#### **Playful sounds, and rich conversations:**

Giggles, music, laughter, water, questions, reading, story-telling

#### **Children learning to solve problems:**

Negotiation, reasoning, arguments, sharing

