

15 Factors to Consider When Choosing a Childcare Center



Presented by



Young Scholars Academy

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1. Hours of Operation

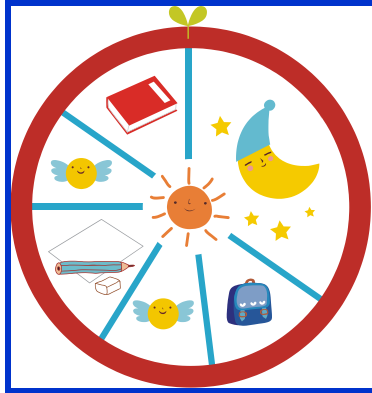
You need to have enough time to drop your child off in the morning and still be able to get to work or appointments on time. A childcare center should be open early enough for you to do that. The center should also be open late enough so that you are not rushing from work.



2. Meals and Snacks

Making sure your child has the proper nutrition throughout the day is an important factor in choosing a childcare center. Make sure to ask the following questions regarding nutrition:

- Do you provide all snacks, breakfast and lunch?
- If they do provide snacks, breakfast and lunch, can they give examples of what will be given to my child?
- Does the center serve low-fat or soy milk, and whole or multi-grain products instead of white flour products? Is fresh fruit served?
- How will the food be prepared?
- How are food allergies handled?
- If they do not provide snacks and lunch, what types of food would they recommend to pack for my child? Can they heat up lunches if necessary?



3. Daily Schedule

What does a typical day look like? What types of activities will your child participate in? Is a daily schedule available for parents? Getting an idea of the daily schedule will help you determine whether your child will enjoy his or her day.



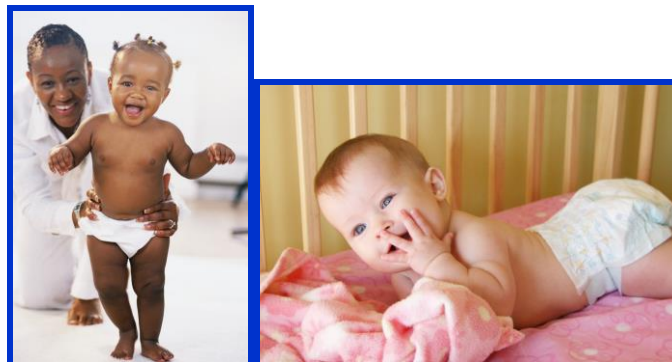
4. Communication

How does the staff communicate with parents about what is going? How will they report to you about any problems they are having? Do they encourage feedback from parents? How would they like to receive feedback? Open communication can help improve your child's overall experience.



5. Discipline Philosophy

It is important to know how the staff will handle misbehavior. What system is in place to discipline children and teach them right from wrong? Does the staff avoid yelling, spanking, or other negative punishments? Negative behavior sets bad examples for children. What positive reinforcement and redirection tools does the center use? Using positive reinforcement techniques and redirection helps to prevent future misbehavior.



6. Diaper Schedule/Potty Training

If your child is still in diapers, ask if the staff changes the diaper when it is needed or is diaper changing done on a timetable? Will the childcare help with potty training? Is potty training included the regular fee, or is it an extra cost? Is there a diaper fee?



7. The Ratio of Individual Staff Members to Children

Finding out the ratio of staff members to children should not be overlooked. When a staff member is responsible for fewer children, the more individual attention your child will receive.



8. Training, Licensing, Credentials, and Accreditation

A well-educated and experienced staff will provide high quality interactions and activities for your child. Make sure to ask the following questions when looking at a childcare center:

- Does the director have experience caring for children?
- Who is on staff? Is there a place to view staff biographies?
- How is the staff screened?
- Does each staff member have the right credentials and experience?
- Does someone have current CPR and first aid training?
- How does the childcare center conduct its own training on an ongoing basis?
- Does the staff continue to receive training about the changes in childcare industry?



9. Age Divisions

How are students grouped together? Are they kept within the same age range? How big are the groups? Socializing children is an important part of child development. Knowing who and how your child will be socializing will help you understand more about a childcare center.



10. Attitude/Energy

Is the staff warm and welcoming? Do they pay individual attention to each child? When you walk in the facility, is it total chaos when you walk in? Children will thrive in an environment that is controlled, engaging and supportive.



11. Staff Turnover

High staff turnover can negatively affect your child. Young children thrive on consistency. The constant turnover of staff members interrupts a child's schedule and routine. Building a trusting relationship with someone and having consistency helps make a child's day go much easier.



12. Parent Handbook

Every childcare center should have policies and procedures in place. Before choosing a center, make sure to ask for a parent handbook and look through it. A parent handbook should have all the childcare center's policies and procedures. Anything a parent needs to know should be in the handbook. If a childcare center does not have a parent handbook, then you may not know what is going on.



13. Curriculum

Familiarize yourself with each childcare center's curriculum. Ask each center how it prepares children for school. Are the teachers required to create a lesson plan for their class? Ask about the reasoning behind the chosen curriculum and its advantages. Compare the different curriculums to each other and decide which one would benefit your child the most. The time your child spends each day at the childcare center will help to establish a lifetime foundation and enthusiasm for learning.



14. Convenient Payment Options

What kind of payments does the childcare center accept? Does the center accept credit cards including AmEx and debit cards? Does the center offer automatic charging of your card or bank account for making payments? Does the center have discounts for paying monthly?



15. Enrichment Classes

Does the center offer extra classes such as Dance, Gymnastics, Spanish, Music, or Computer? Offering these extra classes allows your child additional educational opportunity and added entertainment.

THANK YOU!



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