



Child Care Choices of Boston

www.childcarechoicesofboston.org

Indicators of Quality

Choosing child care for your child is one of the most important decisions you will make as a parent or guardian. Take the time to make a good decision. Make sure you visit the child care options you are considering, and find out about these key indicators of quality.

For more information and guidance on how to choose child care, please contact an Information & Referral Specialist at 617-348-6641, Monday – Friday, 9:30 AM – 3:30 PM.

- **Adult to Child Ratio**

The ratio is the number of children there are for each adult. The fewer the children for each adult, the better it is for your child. You want your child to get plenty of attention. The younger your child, the more important this is. In Massachusetts, babies need an adult to child ratio of no more than 1:3 (one adult for three infants), while four-year-olds can do well with a ratio of 1:10 (one adult for ten children).

- **Group Size**

How many children are in the group? The smaller the group, the better. Imagine a group of 25 two-year olds with five adults, compared to a group of 10 with two adults. Both groups have the same adult to child ratio. Which would be calmer and safer? Which would be more like a family?

- **Caregiver Qualifications**

Ask about the caregivers' training and education. Caregivers with degrees and/or special training in working with children may be better able to help your child learn. Are the caregivers involved in activities to improve their skills? Do they attend classes and workshops?

- **Turnover**

Check how long caregivers have been at the center or providing care in their homes. It's best if children stay with the same caregiver at least a year. Caregivers who come and go make it hard on your child. Getting used to new caregivers takes time and energy that could be spent on learning new things.

- **Accreditation**

Find out if the child care provider has been accredited by a national organization. Providers that are accredited have met voluntary standards for child care that are higher than most state licensing requirements. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and The National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) are the two largest organizations that accredit child care programs.

- **Health and Safety**

All adults and children should wash their hands frequently, especially before and after meals and before and after using the bathroom. All areas should be cleaned daily, especially bathrooms. Rugs, cushions and toys should be cleaned regularly. The space should be child-proofed and supplies should be stored out of children's reach or in locked cabinets. There should be smoke alarms, fire extinguishers and a second exit.

- **Family Involvement**

You want a caregiver who talks to you and makes you feel comfortable and welcome. You should be able to visit the home or classroom as well as ask the provider questions. Likewise, the provider should talk to you about your child's needs and progress.

A Program of: Action for Boston Community Development, Inc.

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