

# CHOOSING A CHILD CARE PROVIDER



It is so important for you to feel comfortable with the child care provider you choose for your child. As you look for the right child care provider, remember that **you know your child best**. You also know what your child needs to grow and thrive. You have the right to ask questions and to feel good about the care that your child receives. **Trust your own feelings.** If something doesn't feel right to you, either when you're choosing a provider or when your child is already in care, think about why you're uncomfortable and ask questions.

This guide provides you with some ideas about areas to consider and some questions you can ask possible providers for your child. **If at all possible, bring your child to the facility or home** before deciding on a provider so you can watch your child interact with the provider. This can help you judge if the provider is a good fit for your child.

Your child is so lucky you are thinking about his or her health, safety, and developmental needs during this process!

## Questions to Ask Child Care Providers



- **Why do you work with children? What do you like most? What do you like least?**  
Look for people who are excited about working with children. Also observe how providers interact with children. Look for warm, caring, responsive relationships between providers and children.
- **What education or training have you had in early childhood development or childcare?**
- **How long have you been working here?**  
Look for situations with low turnover.
- **Do you have CPR and first-aid training?**
- **How do you handle discipline? What are the most common discipline issues you see?**  
Ask about how providers handle tantrums, pushing, fighting, biting, and arguments.
- **How do you comfort children? What would you do if my baby or child wouldn't stop crying?**  
You want caregivers to try various things to calm your child and also ask what works best for your child.
- **How do you let parents know about what goes on during the day?**  
For example, how are parents informed about emergencies or issues concerning their child?
- **What activities do you do with children? Do you have a schedule?**  
Look for age-appropriate activities and toys, active and quiet play, free choice time, rest or nap time, Indoor and outdoor time, snacks and meals.

### If You Have Concerns

You are your child's best advocate. If you have questions or concerns about a child care provider or the care your child is receiving, do not hesitate to learn more and get help. Call Community Care Licensing at 1-844-538-8766 or visit [www.cclcd.ca.gov](http://www.cclcd.ca.gov)

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## Questions about Supervision



- **Am I allowed to drop by anytime?**  
You should be allowed to visit unannounced at any time. Be concerned if the provider says no.
- **Are children ever left unattended?**
- **What is your policy for one-on-one time between adults and children?**  
It should be visible to others and be able to be interrupted so that children are not isolated with adults.
- **Who will be present when my child is there? Do you have a schedule?**
- **Are there ever visitors, volunteers, or other people at the site? Do they interact with children?**

## Questions about the Child Care Site



- **Is the site licensed?**  
You can view licensing information, including any complaints, whether substantiated or inconclusive. Call Community Care Licensing at 1-844-538-8766 or visit [www.cclcd.ca.gov/](http://www.cclcd.ca.gov/)
- **How are employees and volunteers screened?**  
Look for national criminal background checks, in-person interviews, and reference checks.
- **Ask for a list of past and present parent references.**  
Call parents and ask what they do and don't like about the provider and the facility. If they've left, ask why.

## Questions about Hygiene & Safety



- **Look around to see if the facility is safe.**  
Non-toy cabinets and doors should be locked or secured; bookcases and tall furniture should be bolted to the wall; electrical sockets should be capped; and there should be a fire extinguisher and a site safety plan.
- **Look to see if the facility looks clean.**  
Are hands washed after changing diapers and using the toilet and are toys regularly cleaned?
- **Do providers follow safe sleeping practices for babies?**  
For example, are babies placed on their backs on a hard mattress with no blankets or pillows?
- **Are there animals at the facility?**  
Do the animals and children interact? If so, how are children kept safe?
- **Are children ever transported anywhere?**  
If so, who drives? Have you checked driving records? Do you use car seats and/or boosters? Can I inspect them?

## Additional Information

Information in this guide came from the following websites. Visit them to find out more:

[bananasbunch.org/parents-families/parent-handouts/](http://bananasbunch.org/parents-families/parent-handouts/)

[families.naeyc.org/what-to-look-for-in-a-program](http://families.naeyc.org/what-to-look-for-in-a-program)

[www.babycenter.com/0\\_home-daycare-provider-interview\\_1452147.bc](http://www.babycenter.com/0_home-daycare-provider-interview_1452147.bc)

[www.parents.com/baby/childcare/basics/](http://www.parents.com/baby/childcare/basics/)

