

Quality Indicators

Every parent wants what is best for his or her child. Family Care Connection for Lincoln County understands how important your child care decision is. Finding the type of child care setting most suitable for the needs of your family is the first step in selecting child care. Once you have referrals to the available care options in your area you are ready to create your questions to help you assess the quality of the child care.

But, what are the most important quality indicators in child care? First of all, any question that relates to your child or the child care setting is important to be answered. Quality child care providers are happy to answer any question that relates to the care being provided. So don't be shy. Speak up!

There are many resources available to help you select a quality child care setting for your child. Family Care Connection for Lincoln County has materials that will address the age and needs of your individual child. All you need to do is contact us! In the meantime, here is a brief overview and some information that you might find helpful.

You want your child to be safe and happy, loved and cared for, and learning new things every day. Look for a place where:

You and your child feel welcome.

You are greeted personally and feel welcome when you visit. Each child receives warm, individual attention. Family involvement is encouraged. If you are able, you may help with things like field trips or other daily activities. Parents are welcome to visit and ask questions. You are informed daily about your child's activities.

Children and adults display positive relationships.

Children look happy and interact with the adults. Adults interact in positive ways with the children, encouraging them and enjoying being with them. Look for adults who listen to the children and are responsive.

Safety and health practices are high priorities.

The environment looks clean and well cared for. Equipment and play materials are clean, safe, sturdy, and in good repair. Children should be supervised at ALL times. Snacks and meal are nutritious and children are able to eat as much as they need.

Play and learning are valued.

Children are engaged in play. Adults observe children's play and respond to changing interests and needs. Children are able to choose different types of play activities during the day. Children spend little or no time watching television or videos.

Staff are well-trained.

Staff training is the single most recognized indicator of quality child care. Make sure staff are knowledgeable about how children develop and learn. Staff need to be involved in professional development on an ongoing basis.

Staff turnover is low.

Turnover means how long providers stay in a child care center, or with a group of children. A stable and continuous relationship between caregivers and your child is important. High staff turnover can have a negative impact on your child.

The group size is appropriate for the age of your child.

Group size refers to the number of children cared for in a single group. A group would include the number of children in one family child care home or, for centers, in one classroom. Appropriate group size depends on the ages of the children cared for, but generally, smaller sizes are better, especially for young children. The smaller the group, the more attention each child will receive.

The number of children to adults is low.

The number of adults and children is important. It helps determine how much attention your child will receive. There should be at least one adult for every:

Four infants and younger toddlers, (aged 6 weeks through 23 months)

Five older toddlers, (24 months - 29 months),

Ten preschoolers (30 months - 5 years, not yet eligible for first grade),

Fifteen school-agers (six years through age 12.)

Programs meet regulation and accreditation standards.

Accreditation is a voluntary process that child care programs go through. It documents a higher level of care than state licensing requires. The most commonly recognized accrediting organizations are the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC). Although accreditation is a strong indicator of quality, very few programs in Oregon are accredited.