

What is Quality?

Although parents differ in their definition of quality child care, look for these key items:

- ◆ The most important indicator of quality is the relationship between the caregiver and the child. The quality caregiver likes and respects children and responds to their emotional needs.
- ◆ Caregivers use positive guidance techniques, and/or discipline. The sound of the environment is cheerful and pleasant rather than overly noisy or forced quiet. Caregivers are involved with and accessible to the children.
- ◆ Quality caregivers understand the way children learn. There is a flexible, balanced daily schedule during which children are stimulated (but not pressured) to learn through a variety of activities.
- ◆ Quality caregivers understand that parents are their child's first, best and longest-lasting teacher. Parents are encouraged to visit, ask questions and be involved. Parents are informed daily about their child's activities.
- ◆ Nutritious meals are provided. Health and safety practices are observed. Caregivers have first aid and CPR training. Children are supervised at all times.
- ◆ Small group size and a low adult/child ratio contribute to quality child care. The caregiver can observe each child's individual needs and attempt to meet them.



Steps to Take

Decide what you and your child need:

- Days and hours
- Location
- Your child's special needs
- What you can afford
- ✓ Telephone providers, ask questions and arrange times to visit.
- ✓ Visit more than one provider. If possible, observe for a half-hour or so when children are present. Use this checklist, and record only what you see or notice is lacking.
- ✓ Observe your child interacting with the potential caregiver.
- ✓ Ask for references, and check them before making your final decision.
- ✓ Complete paperwork (medical forms, payment agreement, emergency numbers, etc.)
- ✓ Continual evaluation of child care situation.

It remains the responsibility of the parent to screen providers and to determine the quality of care.

**OSU Extension Service
Child Care Resource & Referral for
Clatsop, Lincoln & Tillamook Counties**

**Clatsop County Child Care Resource & Referral
2001 Marine Drive, Room 210
Astoria OR 97103**

**Lincoln County Child Care Resource & Referral
29 SE 2nd Street
Newport OR 97365**

Selecting Quality Child Care

**OSU Extension Service
Child Care Resource & Referral for
Clatsop, Lincoln & Tillamook
Counties**



Clatsop County

**Phone: 503-325-1220
Toll free: 877-333-4960**

Lincoln County

**Phone: 541-265-2558
Toll free: 800-602-2728**

Tillamook County

Toll free: 877-333-4960

http://extension.oregonstate.edu/lincoln/family_care/child-care-resource

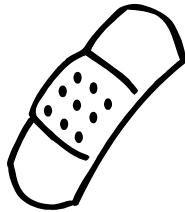
Child Care Checklist

Use this checklist to record your observations as you visit and compare several providers.

Pay attention to your instincts about the caregiver and the program. If you are uncomfortable, your child probably will be too.

Health & Safety

- Adults do not smoke.
- Floors are clean.
- Children's eating area is clean and attractive.
- No children have soiled diapers or pants.
- At least one adult is always with children.
- Detergents, medicines, and drugs are kept out of reach of children.
- Electrical outlets are covered with safety caps.
- First aid supplies are available.
- Toys and equipment are in good repair (no sharp edges, splinters, paint chips, loose parts on toys).
- Phone is available with emergency numbers posted.
- Meals and snacks are nutritious and child-oriented.
- Hands are washed after toileting and before handling food.
- Smoke alarm and fire extinguisher are working.
- Woodstoves and heaters are protected.



Physical Space

- Children have space to store personal belongings.
- A space can be made dark and quiet for naps.
- Heat, light and ventilation are comfortable.

- A variety of pictures, posters and mobiles are displayed.
- Children can easily reach and use toilet and sink.
- Fenced outdoor play area is available.
- Infants and toddlers may crawl, walk and play instead of staying in playpen or crib.

Children

- Children appear happy, comfortable and involved with caregivers.
- Children are busy and involved in a variety of activities.
- Each child spends some time interacting with other children playing, talking, or working together.
- Fighting (hitting, pinching, kicking, grabbing toys) is not acceptable and is dealt with positively.



Parents

- Caregiver encourages parents to visit any time the child is there.
- Caregiver is willing to answer parent's questions.
- Caregiver makes opportunities to meet regularly to talk about child's growth and daily activities.

Caregivers, Teachers & Adult Staff

- Adults explain clearly what they want children to do in words children can understand.
- Adults get children to do things by encouragement, suggestion and praise rather than orders or reprimands.
- Adult lowers self to child's level when speaking and listening.
- Adults are responsive to children's questions and comments.
- Adults are sensitive to individual needs of children.
- Adults encourage self-help skills as child is ready (dressing, toileting, washing, eating).
- Adults respond to infant needs for stimulation.

- Punishment is not practiced.
- The adult in charge is a professional with some training in child development.
- References are provided.

Materials, Equipment & Activities

- Toys suitable to children's ages are readily available.
- Children are generally free to choose what they want to do from several activities.
- Both boys and girls are encouraged to participate in all kinds of activities.
- Each of the following kinds of materials or equipment is available for children's use:
 - Story and picture books
 - Manipulative materials
 - Musical toys
 - Art supplies
 - Games and puzzles
 - Dramatic play
 - Nature discovery
- Adequate indoor space for active play.
- There is a flexible daily plan, balancing structured and free choice activities, active and quiet times.



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