

JUDGING FOR YOURSELF – A CHILD CARE CHECKLIST

This checklist is designed to help you screen caregivers. Read through this list before visiting a home-based child care program for ideas about what to look for and questions to ask. This list is not intended to be comprehensive - it is a sample of the main areas to evaluate.

Think about what is important to you and your child ... let these be your guide. You may want to highlight questions that are of particular concern to you. Ideally, you should be able to schedule two or more visits with potential caregivers. Information can be gathered through observation as well as by talking to the caregiver. Feel free to ask questions - you are interviewing the caregiver for a very important job.

Remember - you need to do a complete screening and reference check of all caregivers. CCPRN does not do that - we are here to offer resources, information, support and training. Our members choose whether they take advantage of this training or not.

Caregivers

Does the caregiver appear to be warm and loving?
Is the caregiver sensitive to children and their needs?
Are the children listened to and talked <i>with</i> , not <i>at</i> ?
Does the caregiver have a sense of humour? Is there laughter?
Does the caregiver appear happy and confident?
Is the caregiver involved with the children or just directing their activities?
Does the caregiver have training and experience in caring for your age child?
Does the caregiver have basic first aid/CPR training?
Does the caregiver have liability insurance?
Does the caregiver have a Police Records Check?

Health and Safety

Are toxic substances inaccessible to children?
Are there smoke detectors and fire extinguishers?
Are stairs barricaded if there are young children in care?
Are play areas and equipment clean, safe and well maintained?
Is the outdoor play area fenced?
Are electrical outlets covered?
Are rooms clean, bright and well ventilated?
Are facilities for food preparation clean and safe?
Do children receive nutritious meals and snacks?
Are meals modified for allergies if necessary?
Do children have a rest or nap time each day?
Does each child have his/her own crib/cot/bed?

Program

Is there a consistent, clear daily routine? Is there enough flexibility in the routine to accommodate individual children's needs and creativity?
Are there activities which encourage children to think, to be creative, to explore, to express themselves, to problem solve and to relate well to others?
Are there lots of play materials of different types? (art supplies, science experiments, sand and water play, blocks, rhythm instruments, dress-up corner, books, records etc.)
Are there many opportunities to enhance each child's self-concept?
Does the caregiver plan activities that recognize each child's cultural background?
Is there quiet time as well as active play?
Are there field trips into the community, as well as community members sharing with the children in their care environment?
Do children appear to be interested and involved rather than bored?

Discipline

Is the caregiver able to explain discipline policies to you? Is s/he open to your input?
Is discipline handled in such a way that is not hurtful, frightening, intimidating or injurious to the children?
Does the caregiver's method of discipline seem appropriate to the age of the child?
How are incidents involving two or more children handled?
What kinds of behaviour does the caregiver see as problem behaviour?
Does the caregiver explain rules clearly and reinforce positive behaviour?

General Atmosphere

Do the children appear happy? Is there a lot of laughing, hugging, caring?
Are the children encouraged to care about and respect each other?
Is spontaneity encouraged?
Does the caregiver greet and talk with each child/parent as they arrive?
Is there parent involvement in the program and are parents encouraged to communicate with each other?
Is the emphasis on cooperation not competition?
Does the caregiver's philosophy about children agree with yours?
Are parents encouraged to visit at any time?
Does it feel like "your kind of place"?

For more information:

Child Care Providers Resource Network:

www.ccprn.com

Province of Ontario:

www.children.gov.on.ca/mcys/english/programs/beststart/care/index./asp

York Region Website publication:

http://www.york.ca/NR/rdonlyres/ewlgomj42ync7wre7cpc526k4f4dvoggdjnr5haq7cn4vvo7bmuprpduk6pfjml46gs6e2awdbf3zktqickp4rh2jd/Home-based_CC.pdf