

WHAT INDICATES QUALITY IN A CHILD CARE SETTING?

It is important to recognize the six quality indicators for child care programs. When visiting programs and interviewing providers who may potentially care for your child, remember to ask about the following:

- **Ratio:** Staff to Child Ratio refers to the maximum number of children per staff person. The caregiver-to-child ratios should be appropriate and according to the NYS Day Care Regulations.
- **Group Size:** Maximum Group Size refers to the number of children cared for together as a unit. Small group sizes ensure your child will receive one-on-one attention and are part of a group that is easier to manage.
 - Low staff to child ratios and group sizes have a positive impact on the overall quality of early and school-age care and education programs and the experiences that children have in those programs.
- **Family Involvement:** The program should encourage family involvement and ask parents to participate in activities and events. There should be an open door policy for parents to come into the program.
- **Caregiver Education and Turnover:** Staff should be educated in early childhood or a related field, have college level education or Child Development Associate certifications. Staff should be knowledgeable about the age(s) of the children that they are caring for and should have education and training that is relevant to children and their care. Staff turnover should be low and there should be longevity with caregiver employment. Low staff turnover indicates that the staff like what they do and provides a stable environment for children.
- **Health and Safety Indicators:** Look for indicators that health and safety practices are followed. For example fire drills should be completed on a regular basis. Providers should wash their hands often and wear gloves during diaper changes. Individual bottles and cups should be marked with the children's names. Correct ratios are being followed and the caregivers directly supervise all children. The environment and materials should be kept clean and sanitized. Providers should practice good hygiene and hand washing with the children. Programs should follow good nutritional and physical activity standards.
- **Accreditation:** Staff education is the best predictor of the quality of an early childhood program. Adults with training in early childhood education provide higher quality programs for your child, implement more appropriate activities, and do a better job of preparing your child for school. There are different types of credentials and accreditations that registered and licensed programs may obtain to show parents that they are operating with the quality standards set forth by different professional organizations including Child Care Aware, NAEYC, NFCCA and others. Parents should inquire as to whether a program/provider has any credentials or accreditations.

CHILD CARE SUPPORT SERVICES

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