Child Care Check List
Finding the best early care and education for your child

Choosing who cares for your child is one of the most important and difficult decisions you’ll ever have to make. To help you find quality when you’re considering which child care program is right for your child, we have created a child care check list that you can use from your first visit and throughout your child’s stay at the Family Child Care or Child Care Center you choose.

Always remember to trust your instincts. You know your child and what is best for his or her well-being. If you have certain feelings, either positive or negative, chances are your child will feel them too, so make sure you are confident in your choice.

When You Visit
Take time to really experience the programs you visit. Use the checklist below to help guide your experience.

Questions to Ask:

- Are the adults trained in child development and early childhood education?
- What is the adult to child ratio?
- Is the program Accredited?
- Is the program in good standing with California Community Care Licensing?
- What are some quality improvement initiatives in which the program is involved?
- Does the program have low staff turnover?
- Are staff continually participating in professional development in early childhood education?
- How does the program accommodate children with special needs?
- Are children transported to or away from the program at any time in the day?
- Information to Request:
  - A parent handbook
  - Fees, hours of operation, schedule, discipline, menus and other policies
  - The admission agreement
- Ask the provider to give you 3 recent references.

Ways to Partner:

- Continue to monitor the checklist items from your visit.
- Regularly ask your child about his or her day. Is your child:
  - Happy and adjusting well?
  - Look forward to being with the provider?
  - Constantly learning new things?
- Make sure there is strong 2-way communication between you and the provider about your child’s changes and growth, and how your child is doing.
- Extend your child’s learning outside the program – work with the provider to set common goals and help your child achieve them.
- Find ways to be involved in the program.
- Share your family’s values and culture.
- Spend time with your child at home – READ and/or tell stories to your child everyday; TALK with your child constantly; and PLAY with your child as much as possible. Quality happens at home too!
The 6 Steps to High Quality Child Care:

1. Review the Resources on the Quality website at www.qualitychildcaresb.org and print off this checklist

2. Contact Children’s Resource and Referral at www.findqualitychildcare.org or 805-925-1989

3. Visit programs – be sure to take the checklist with you

4. Check the references provided by the programs

5. Log on to the Community Care Licensing Division at www.ccld.ca.gov and review regulations and check on your chosen programs

6. Keep active with the program you choose, and create a strong partnership with the provider

You and your child will truly benefit from your efforts!

QualityChildCareSB.org

In a High Quality Child Care Program, You Will:

**See**

**Respectful, responsive relationships:**
Children, families, teachers, friendships

**Fun, safe, challenging learning environments:**
Indoors, outdoors, natural, creative, books, sand, mud, water, puzzles, blocks, playhouse, etc.

**Engaging activities:**
Measuring, climbing, gardening, cooking, dancing, writing

**Feel**

**That everyone is welcomed, loved and valued:**
Wonder, curiosity, caring, relaxed

**Hear**

**Playful sounds, and rich conversations:**
Giggles, music, laughter, water, questions, reading, story-telling

**Children learning to solve problems:**
Negotiation, reasoning, arguments, sharing