



## Childcare

What to look for in good, quality childcare

### What Is Good (Quality) Childcare

- An environment where children will be safe, healthy and well nourished.
- Where the ratio of children to adults is adequate. For children younger than age 2, four children to one adult is recommended.
- Where children are provided ample space, equipment and developmentally appropriate activities to help them grow mentally, physically, socially and emotionally.
- Where a trained and experienced staff provide warm, loving care and work with you and your family to make sure your child learns and grows in the best way.

### Where to Start

- Ask relatives, friends, neighbors and co-workers.
- Check the community bulletin boards in grocery stores, laundromats and churches or other community settings for day care notices.
- Check the newspaper sections under headings such as wanted, domestic services, babysitters or childcare.
- Place an ad in the newspaper or on community bulletin boards giving as much information as possible.
- Check the yellow pages under day care and childcare.
- For help finding quality childcare, additional information and checklists, call your local Childcare Resource and Referral Center:

Fargo area	1.800.452.3646
Bismarck area	1.888.223.1510
Grand Forks area	1.800.543.7382
Minot area	1.800.450.7801
Jamestown area	1.701.252.0350
Devils Lake area	1.701.662.6589
Dickinson area	1.877.222.4355
Williston area	1.701.774.0749
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### What to Know

- Licensing is not a guarantee of quality. Licensing only ensures that minimum standards have been met. Quality of licensed programs varies greatly.
- There is no one "best" type of care for everyone.
- It is your right to contact the licensing department of your county social services to review a licensed childcare program file. Ask about CareCheck Registry or call 1.800.245.3736.



### What to Do

- Ask for references and check them. Some possible questions for references are:
  - How did you feel about the childcare provider's attitude towards your children?
  - What are some of the strengths?
  - What are some of the weaknesses?
  - Were you satisfied with the quality of care provided for your children?

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- How long did you use this childcare provider?
- Would you use this childcare provider again or recommend him or her to a friend or relative?
- Visit with the childcare provider face to face.
- Observe the childcare provider with children.
- Ask to see the facility, center or home.
- Ask to see a copy of any inspections made if the childcare provider is registered/licensed.
- Prepare your child for childcare.
- Develop and use a checklist such as the one listed below. A checklist is one way to help you sort out which situation has met most of your requirements.

## **Childcare Program Checklist** (questions you might ask)

- Are you registered/licensed as a childcare provider?
- What is your payment policy (charge for holidays, vacations, sick days, etc.)?
- What hours/days are you open?
- Do you have a procedure for other people allowed to pick up children?
- How many children do you care for besides your own?
  - What ages?
  - Part time/full time?
- What experience do you have in providing childcare services?
- What training have you had related to childcare services?
- Is your home/facility smoke-free 24 hours a day?
- Are there any pets in the home/facility?
- What meals and snacks are provided?
  - Are they served at regular times?
  - Are the meals and snacks healthy/age appropriate for children?

- Do you participate in the food program?
- Can I drop in anytime unannounced?
- Do you have a backup sitter available if you are ill or have to go somewhere? May I meet that person?
- Are children taken off the premises?
- Do you provide transportation?
  - Where to?
  - Is this included in your rates?
  - Do you have insurance coverage?
  - Do you use car seats or seat belts?
- Where will the children wash, eat, sleep and play?
  - Do children play or sleep on waterbeds?
  - Do infants have their own cribs?
- What are your feelings on wetting, thumb sucking, finishing meals, biting, etc.?
- How do you settle disputes? What are your methods of discipline?
- How much TV do you allow?
- Do you have planned activities?
- What is your emergency procedure?
  - For CPR?
  - For First Aid?
- Do you require emergency information from me? (work phone, home phone, doctor's names, etc.)
- Is the home safe?
  - Are there two exits?
  - Do you have working smoke detectors?
  - Do you practice fire drills?
  - Is the backyard fenced?

## **Observe**

- Are emergency phone numbers posted? (fire, ambulance, etc.)
- Are housekeeping standards about the same as yours?
- Observe the childcare provider with children.

