QUALITY CHILD CARE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS

NOTES:

One of the most important decisions you will make as a parent, is choosing a childcare provider. Before making your decision about a childcare provider, visit several facilities. The more you know, the easier your decision and the more comfortable you will feel making it. The more time you can spend on a visit at a facility, the better; try to plan for at least an hour per visit.

You should expect: a warm greeting, short introductions to both adults and children, a brief tour, an explanation of fees and policies, and an invitation to stay awhile to see the daily routine and children playing. To help you narrow down your choices and make an informed decision, we've compiled a detailed list of interview questions to use as you visit each child care location. Before an interview, print out the questionnaire, and take it with you. Use these questions to help guide your search for a quality childcare provider. Take your time and review your options carefully.

FACILITY LICENSING & STAFF TRANING:

1. Are you licensed and inspected with a regulatory authority? Ask to see the license.
2. Do the provider(s) have first aid/CPR and early childhood development training? What is your and/or their educational background and experience in caring for children?

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

1. Who are all of the people who will be around my child in your home? Who will care for my child?
2. Does anyone smoke in the home?
3. Are there pets in the home and will my child be around them? If so, do they have current rabies shots?
4. How many children do you care for at any one time (number and ages of infants, toddlers and school age children)? Does the child/staff ratio meet State standards?
5. Do you have your own children in care?
6. Does the provider have a reference list of current and past clients?
7. Does the provider appear to like and enjoy the children? Is the provider calm and patient with the children, treating them with respect? How do the children respond to the provider?
8. Do the children seem happy to be there and involved in activities? Or do they wander around, sit with nothing to do or put in a room with toys and left there?
9. How does the provider respond to your child when they first meet? Does the provider welcome your child or ignore your child during the visit?

PROGRAM POLICIES/PROCEDURES:

1. Do you have policies on discipline, illness, and dispensing medicine?
2. Do you have a safe sleep policy (if the child is under 12 months of age)?
3. Are children's families allowed to visit at any time? Is there an "open door" policy?

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PROGRAM POLICIES/PROCEDURES (CONT'D.):

4. Are there policies/procedures in case of accidents, injuries or emergencies?
5. Does the child/staff ratio meet State standards? Do you have your own children in care?
6. Are children taken off the premises, to go on walks, field trips, etc. and how will I be notified?
7. Do you conduct routine fire and tornado drills?

ENVIRONMENTAL:

1. Observe all rooms or areas of the home where your child will play, nap, eat, wash hands, use the toilet and/or be diapered. Are they clean and safe?
2. Is the home child-proofed (electrical outlets covered; no hazardous chemicals or sharp items like scissors or kitchen knives sitting out; hanging cords from window treatments)? This includes lamp tables, counters, kitchen table, unlocked cabinets and drawers—any area a child would have access to.
3. Are the furniture, carpeting, and furnishings clean, well maintained and safe?
4. Are there smoke detectors and a fire extinguisher in the home?
5. Are there guns or other weapons in the house? If so, how are they locked up?
6. Are there safety gates at the top of stairways?
7. Where will my child nap and what equipment will be used (playpen, cot, nap mat)? Note that children under 12 months of age must sleep in an approved crib or playpen.
8. How often is the bedding washed? How is the bedding separately stored?
9. Is there a variety of toys and play materials available to the children? How often are these items changed out? Are the toys and play materials clean, safe and age appropriate? How often are the toys cleaned and sanitized, especially when mouthed by infants and toddlers?
10. Are healthy meals and snacks served? Ask the provider for examples of weekly menus.
11. Ask the provider to describe the daily schedule. What kinds of play activities are planned?
12. Ask the provider to describe how children are supervised, especially if the provider and children are in various rooms or on different levels.
13. Is the outdoor play area free of hazards, such as lawn chemicals, lawn care equipment, piles of debris, garden hoses?
14. Are any water hazards (hot tubs, swimming pools, fountains) made inaccessible to children?
15. Are outdoor storage units locked?
16. What equipment is available for play outside? Is it safe, age appropriate, and in good condition?

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