




How Can Parents Identify a High Quality Preschool

We encourage parents looking for a preschool to visit at any time with their children, but calling ahead for an appointment will ensure that the Director has time to talk with you. Parents should visit as many preschools as possible before making a choice. Allow time to visit the center a second time. A good educational and organizational climate is usually indicated by friendliness among the staff and children.

| Program Characteristics |  | Center 2 | Center 3 |
|---|--|----------|----------|
| Does the program have a clear written statement of its goals and philosophy? | | | |
| Do the goals address all areas of a child's development, including his or her social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development? | | | |
| Does the preschool offer a balance of individual, small group, and large-group activities; and spontaneous play and teacher-guided activities? | | | |
| Is there a balance between rest, quiet periods and vigorous outdoor activities? | | | |
| Do the preschool's activities encourage self-expression; help children to develop various motor skills; and regularly expose the children to literature, the language arts, music, science, and nature? | | | |
| Does the staff encourage and respond to children's natural interests in reading, writing, and counting? | | | |
| Does the preschool provide snacks that are sufficiently nutritious? | | | |
| Does the staff pay attention to, and follow up on, the children's interests in the world around them? | | | |
| Do the content and materials of the preschool program reflect cultural diversity? | | | |

| Staff Characteristics |  | Center 2 | Center 3 |
|---|--|----------|----------|
| Are the teachers trained in early childhood education? | | | |
| Does the Director have experience as a teacher? | | | |
| Does the ratio of adults to children comply with the state requirements? (Check with the local branch of the state agency that regulates preschool programs.) | | | |
| Has the staff been stable over the years? | | | |
| Does the staff welcome parents as visitors and participants, communicate regularly with them, and respect their preferences and ideas? | | | |
| In their work with children, do the teachers express warmth, interest, and respect for each child? | | | |
| Are the teachers engaged with the children most of the time? | | | |

| Physical Environment Characteristics |  | Center 2 | Center 3 |
|--|--|----------|----------|
| Is there an attractive, spacious outdoor area for safe, vigorous activities? | | | |
| Is there a sufficient supply of equipment? | | | |
| Are children always supervised when outdoors? | | | |
| Can children find small, quiet places in the classroom if they want to? | | | |