

CHECKLIST FOR INTERVIEWING AND EVALUATING A CHILD CARE PROGRAM

Here are some suggested questions to ask and things to look for when interviewing a child care program:

- Does the provider seem to genuinely like children? (Provider is smiling and positively interacting with the children.)
- Does the provider get down on eye level with the children when speaking with them? Is he/she down on the floor playing with the children?
- Are parents and children greeted when they arrive? Providers should readily welcome your comments on how your child's night, weekend, morning went as well as any special instructions you might have for the day.
- Are children's needs acknowledged and met quickly, even when things get hectic?
- Does the provider tell you what your child is doing every day and how their day went when you pick up your child? For infants and young toddlers, does the provider fill out a daily sheet letting you know when, what, and how much your baby ate, when they had their diaper changed, things they did that day, etc.?
- Is the provider on a USDA Food Program? Are there menus posted so you know what will be served each day?
- Ask about the provider's experience, training, and background.
- Are the providers involved in continuing education programs?
- Is there enough staff to serve the children? Navy regulations state that each Child Development Home (CDH) care provider can have 6 children in care, age 8 and under, including the provider's own children. Of the 6 children, only 2 can be under the age of 2 years. Child Development Center (CDC) ratios: infant: 4 to 1 caregiver, pretoddler: 5 to 1; toddler: 7 to 1; preschool: 12 to 1; School Age Care (SAC) ratios: 15 children to 1 caregiver.
- Is the atmosphere bright and pleasant?
- Is there a fenced-in outdoor play area with a variety of safe toys and equipment? Is there planned outdoor time every day, weather permitting?
- Are there different areas for resting, quiet play and active play? Is there enough space in these areas for the children to play freely?
- Is there a daily schedule and curriculum plan posted for you to view each week? Is there a balance of active play, story time, quiet play and rest time?
- Are the activities developmentally appropriate for each age group in care?
- Are there enough toys/learning materials for the number of children in care, so that children aren't expected to share when they are not developmentally ready to share?
- Are the toys and learning materials clean, safe and displayed neatly on low shelving units within children's reach?
- Do you understand and agree with the discipline practices of the provider?
- Are the provider's philosophy and developmental expectations consistent with your own?
- Do you hear the sounds of happy children?
- Are the children comforted when needed?
- Are unannounced visits by parents encouraged?
- Will your child be happy in the care of this provider?