

The following guide is a start for you to develop your own list of what to look for when visiting a childcare centre. Take the time to think about what's important to you and your child before you begin your search. Add the things that are important to you that aren't listed.

Safety Concerns

- Is there an evacuation plan in place in case of emergency?
- Are there secure pickup/drop-off procedures in place?
- Are educators on-site that are trained in first aid and CPR?
- Are all outdoor play areas safely fenced in?
- Are menus nutritious and food choices varied?
- Are hand-washing techniques followed by educators and children?
- Check the toys and materials to make sure they are non-toxic and safe to chew - infants and toddlers learn through oral investigation.
- Children are allowed to play with one another, but not permitted to hurt one another.
- Space is provided for crawling and protected space provided for non-mobile children.
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Learning & Development Opportunities

- Are educators trained for the age they teach?
Can you tell what your child is learning in the classroom?
- Do educators interact with children in both small-group and large-group activities?
- Are teachers caring and responsive?
- There should be enough toys available to be interesting and not cause sharing problems, but not so many that the room seems cluttered.
- "Play" is emphasized, rather than adult-directed activities.
- There is enough space indoors and outdoors so children are not crowded.
- There is a special place for your child's belongings.
- The environment includes both soft and hard surfaces for a variety of textures - this is especially important for infants and toddlers.
- Make sure the educators can explain how the program for learning includes opportunities for physical, intellectual, problem-solving and communication skill-building.

- Do both the classroom and outdoor play area encourage creativity and independence?
- Are extra curricular activities, such as sports, dance and languages, offered?
- Are excursions and incursions that enhance each child's learning undertaken on a regular basis?
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Feeling, Concern and Guidance

- Did you feel comfortable with the person who will take care of your child?
- Did you feel that your needs were understood and respected?
- Do you feel the Centre Director and educators listened to you and answered your questions effectively?
- Did you feel that the educators would partner with you in developing your child's potential?
- Did the center staff and teachers convey warmth and a sincere interest in you and your child?
- Do you feel that you could speak openly and honestly about questions or concerns with the Center Director?
- Individual needs are important: the educators use children's names and respect a person's culture.
- Educators recognise children's feelings and encourage children to share their feelings in ways that are appropriate.
- Educators help children solve problems themselves, encouraging them a little bit at a time.
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Connections with Your Family

- A time and space is available for you to talk with your child's educator at pick up or drop off time.
- There is a way to communicate what has happened to your child before you leave your child, and there is a record kept on what happened to your child during the day: naps, food offered, activities, etc.
- There are regular updates providing photos via digital means for you to view your

child's daily activities and development

- Parent meetings and special events are offered so you can meet other parents of children your child plays with.

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Other Things That are Important to you

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