

Observation Tips

Making an informed decision.

Your first concerns are your child's safety, health and welfare. Every program will have positive features, but only you can decide what is most important.

Looking and listening.

You can tell a great deal by watching and listening to what is going on in a classroom or home. Do the children seem to be happy and enjoying their activities? Do the teachers seem loving, nurturing and responsive to all children in their care? Are problems handled promptly and appropriately? Do the teachers seem like people you can trust with your child's health, happiness and well-being? Is this a place where you would feel good about your child spending many hours each day?

Asking questions.

If you have any questions or concerns, write them down as they occur to you. Ask for a time to discuss them with the teacher or director.

Paying attention to your instincts.

You know your child best. Pay attention to any uneasy feelings you may have had during your visit. Can you picture your child in this setting? Were the toys and activities you observed the kinds your child would enjoy? Were they clean? If your child was with you, what was his reaction? Children respond in their own unique ways to new situations. Don't rule out other factors that could influence your child's reaction such as being hungry or tired. Trust your instincts and your ability to make wise decisions for your child.

Considering costs.

Carefully weigh the "pros" and "cons" of each teacher and facility that you visited. Decide which one meets the greatest number of your priorities at a rate you can afford. Keep in mind that the highest cost doesn't always guarantee the best teacher and facility. Likewise, the least expensive rates do not necessarily mean poor teachers and facilities.

Making a good choice.

Now that you have done your homework and some careful thinking, you are ready to make your choice. Remember, selecting and placing your child in an early learning program is just the beginning. Talk to the new teacher often and visit occasionally to ensure your child is safe and happy and your decision was the right one.

Visit the Office of Early Learning at
www.FloridaEarlyLearning.com, or

call the Toll-free Family Line 866-357-3239 (TTY: 711)



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A Parent Checklist for Quality Child Care

QUALITY CHECKLIST

*For Evaluating
Early Learning Programs*

