

A child's healthy development depends on safe and positive experiences during the formative years of life. To help you make the right choice for your child, the Rasansky Law Firm has pulled together several elements to consider when reviewing options for your child.

Call each program, make an appointment, and visit for at least an hour. Watch activities, the interactions between the staff and children, check the surroundings, and ask questions. Feel free to use these guidelines as a checklist when evaluating programs for your child. And above all else: ensure both you and your child are comfortable with the decision.

## Cleanliness

- \* Are the facilities clean and orderly?
- \* Are the toys and surfaces regularly cleaned with a bleach solution?
- \* Do children and staff regularly wash their hands? Is sanitizer used?

## Supervision

- \* How many children are cared for in the program?
- \* How many caregivers are there?
- \* Are children supervised at all times, including nap time?
- \* Are the rules clearly posted and understood?
- \* How do caregivers discipline children?
- \* Are there written policies on discipline? Ask for a copy.
- \* Are younger and older children separated?
- \* Are caregivers supervised so a child is never alone with one caregiver?
- \* What are the policies for dropping off and picking up your child?

## Staff Qualifications

- \* Does the program director have a degree in a child-related field?
- \* Does the program director have at least two years of experience?
- \* Does the philosophy of the program meet with your expectations?
- \* Do the teachers and supervisors have a degree in a child-related field?
- \* Do the teachers and supervisors have at least a year of experience?
- \* Are caregivers trained in how to prevent child abuse, how to recognize signs of child abuse, and how to report suspected child abuse?
- \* Are caregivers trained to keep children healthy and safe from injury and illness?
- \* Are caregivers trained in basic first aid, CPR, and rescue breathing?
- \* Is the staff trained meet the needs of children of different ages and abilities?
- \* Are all child care staff, volunteers, and substitutes trained on how to prevent SIDS?
- \* How long have the staff been with this facility/this program?



## Medical Issues

- \* Are children required to have immunizations? Does the facility keep records of all children's immunizations?
- \* What is the illness policy? How sick is too sick for this facility?
- \* How are illnesses reported to parents?
- \* Is there a nurse, doctor or other health professional on staff? On call?
- \* Are all medications kept out of the reach of children?
- \* Are all medications clearly labelled, and dosing records kept?
- \* What is the medication policy for things like Tylenol, cough syrup, and other over-the-counter drugs?
- \* At what point will parents be notified of sickness or injury?

## Safety & Emergencies

- \* Does the program have an emergency plan in the event of disaster?
- \* Does the program have an emergency plan for a missing child?
- \* Does the facility have clearly posted emergency numbers?
- \* Is playground equipment inspected for safety regularly?
- \* Are there low-impact/no-impact surfaces inside and outside?
- \* Are sharp corners or objects protected with a soft surface?
- \* Are toxic substances like cleaning supplies kept away from children?
- \* Are children protected from strangers or otherwise unwelcome guests?

## Procedures & Policies

- \* Are all facility procedures and policies written? Ask for a copy.
- \* Are references available? Ask for them, and speak with other parents at the facility.
- \* Are rules for the children clearly posted and understood?
- \* Are policies for parents fully understood?
- \* Are journals of the child's daily activities kept? Are parents able to review these journals on a regular basis?

## Warning Signs

These things may be a red flag for parents, and should be fully considered:

- \* The director, teacher, caregiver, or staff fail to answer your questions, fail to address your concerns, or fail to follow-up with you
- \* There are no mechanisms for parental involvement
- \* A child tells of problems or is otherwise outwardly unhappy
- \* A child has multiple unexplained accidents
- \* There is high staff turnover
- \* There are no written policies or procedures
- \* Other parents tell of problems or concerns with the program

