



Choosing Childcare

The Facts

For various reasons, whether it is going back to work or school after having the first baby, re-entering the job market, being a single parent or parents of a dual income household, many parents are faced with looking for someone other than themselves to care for their children. Options for childcare range from care in your own home, care in a provider's home or care in a center. What is important is to take the time to find the right childcare "fit" for you and your child.

Percentage rates of the types of childcare used within the state of Colorado, in 1999:

- 10% - child's home
- 34% - family home
- 56% - childcare center

Percentage rates of the types of childcare used within the nation, in 1999:

- 10% - child's home
- 31% - family home
- 3% - group home
- 56% - childcare center

Considering the Care

Below are a list of questions which will aid in your search for the appropriate type of childcare for your child or children.

- Does the provider have a current childcare provider license?
- What are the hours of operation?
- Are meals USDA-approved?
- Will the provider offer overtime care?
- What are the provider's discipline policies?
- What activities are available for various age groups?
- How much television will the children be watching?



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- What supplies will be needed from home?
- What are the policies when your child is ill?
- What safety precautions does the caregiver offer?
- What is the nap and quiet-time schedule?
- Will field trips be offered?
- What type of transportation will be used when the child travels away from the center?
- Does the provider hold membership in professional childcare organizations?

In choosing between the various forms of childcare, parents need to remember four things:

1. LOOK

- at how safe the setting is for your child
- at how the caregiver interacts and behaves around the children
- at the resources available within the setting

2. LISTEN

- to the setting and what it sounds like
- to whether or not the children sound content and happy
- to the way the teachers/caregivers sound (Are they patient and happy?)
- to the activity going on (too much quietness may indicate little activity and too much noise may indicate a setting, which may be out of control)

3. COUNT

- how many children are in the group
- how many staff members are on site

4. ASK

- questions related to the experience and background of the caregiver, center or staff

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