

# Choosing the Best Care for Your Toddler

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## Quality early childhood education isn't costly..... IT'S PRICELESS!

### Oh Baby, What a Brain!

Recent brain research shows that early childhood experiences actually determine the learning pathways and connections that are formed in the brain- shaping the way a child will learn, think, and behave for the rest of his life. Enhancing your baby's brain development doesn't take expensive toys- it happens during simple everyday interactions with a warm, responsive parent or caregiver.

### When choosing a toddler program you'll want to see:

- Furniture and equipment that is safe, appropriately sized for toddlers with large uncluttered spaces for active play.
- A variety of equipment including push/pull toys, picture books, stacking or building toys, puzzles, musical instruments, dolls, telephones, balls and sand and water table. There should be duplicates of popular toys.
- Adults who respond quickly to cries or calls for assistance.
- Creative exploration with art materials (large crayons, markers, finger paints) with the focus on process rather than the finished product.
- Adults who respond to toddlers' attempts to learn language by listening, expanding on toddler language, and simplify their own language.
- Adults who are patient with toddlers' attempts to acquire new skills and do things for themselves.
- Predictable but flexible daily routines.
- Unhurried routine times (diapering, meals, etc.) are opportunities for learning.
- Toddlers' preferences for toys, foods, or activities are respected.
- Warm, responsive adults who get down on a child's level.
- Adults who frequently read, sing, do finger plays, and look at picture books with individuals or small groups.
- Adults who provide duplicate toys or redirection when dispute occur.

### You'll want to question when you see:

- Adults who are constantly saying "no" and staff that are untrained in caring for toddlers.
- Sand and water play is not offered because it is too much trouble or too messy.
- The expectation that toddlers participate in the same activity at the same time.
- Art projects where toddlers are "helped" to produce a product or follow a model.
- Forced toilet training at a certain age.
- Expectations of the staff that toddlers follow a preschool curriculum.



To Find Quality Child Care Call 1.877.338.2273 or Visit [www.qualistar.org](http://www.qualistar.org) Today!