

Observe

Observation is the single most important guide when choosing an early learning program for your child.

Narrow your list to 3 providers. Visit each facility or home. Meet with the providers or center directors, and tour the facilities.

Here is a check list for you to use when touring each center or home.

Health & Safety

- Equipment in good repair
- Electrical outlets are covered
- Facility is clean and free of litter
- The program's emergency route(s) is (are) posted
- Emergency phone numbers are posted near every phone and in every room
- The doors are locked and visitors are required to sign in

- All toys are clean and in good condition
- The playground has safe surfaces and is fenced in. There are both sunny and shady areas

| Provider #1 | Provider #2 | Provider #3 |
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Environment Basics

- The room is warm and inviting
- The children are happy and involved
- The furniture is child-sized and the materials are at the children's level

- All materials in the room are age appropriate for the children

- There are enough equipment and supplies in the room so children can either play alone or share
- Providers are with the children and within eyesight of them at all times instead of always at their desk

- The community's diversity and culture is reflected in the room and group of children

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Daily Activities

- Nutritious meals and snacks are provided to children

- Nap & story time are built into the day
- Both structured and unstructured art, science, and language activities are available
- Children are exposed to music
- Puzzles, blocks, and a make-believe station are provided

- Children have a time during the day to choose their own activities

- Activities are varied and include both outdoor playtime and an indoor quiet time
- A schedule of activities is posted and available for you to review

| Provider #1 | Provider #2 | Provider #3 |
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Provider / Child Interactions

- Look for signs of mutual respect & appreciation between providers & children
- Providers need to be at eye level of the children when talking to them

- Provider should be listening closely to each child and using encouraging language
- Children should be asked questions and not just given directions

- The provider is appropriately responsive to children who are upset

| Provider #1 | Provider #2 | Provider #3 |
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