



Checklist for Choosing Quality Child Care



ChildCareResources



90% of the brain develops by age 5.

Because of this, the early years are a critical time of growth and development. High quality early childhood education programs help kids get ready for school.

Use this guide to evaluate child care facilities.

Learning

- ☐ Are age appropriate toys, books, puzzles and blocks easy to reach and use?
- ☐ Is there both structured and unstructured daily play?
- ☐ Do caregivers read and sing to children throughout the day?
- ☐ Does the program allow screentime?



National guidelines recommend children under 2 have no screentime, and children 2-5 have less than 30 minutes per week, specifically for educational or physical activity purposes only.

Supervision

- ☐ Are children always supervised, including while sleeping?
- ☐ Are teachers warm and welcoming as they engage with each child?
- ☐ Are clear and simple safety rules established with the children?
- ☐ Do teachers focus on positive, clear, consistent and fair guidance?
- ☐ Are there enough staff members to supervise the children?

Health and Safety

- ☐ Do teachers practice health and safety standards including hand washing and sanitizing surfaces?
- ☐ Do all caregivers have current CPR and pediatric first aid training?
- ☐ Is there a plan for responding to disasters such as fire and flood?
- ☐ Do the children go outside daily, except in severe weather?
- ☐ Is the outdoor play area secure and safe?
- ☐ Does the program serve meals?
- ☐ Do they participate in the Child Care Food Program?
- ☐ Does the program support breastfeeding?
- ☐ Are infants held by adults during feeding?

Professional Development and Certifications

- ☐ Do the teachers and director have early childhood related degrees or certificates?
- ☐ Have caregivers attended child development training? Do they have experience caring for children?
- ☐ Do caregivers participate in ongoing early childhood professional development?
- ☐ Is the program participating in Montana's Best Beginnings STARS to Quality?
STARS standards are higher than licensing standards
- ☐ Is the program nationally accredited?

Communication

- ☐ Are parents always welcome to visit and given a copy of the program's policies?
- ☐ Are there regular parent conferences and is there consistent communication with parents?

Warning Signs

- ☐ The facility is not licensed or has repeated licensing deficiencies.

Check Here:

ccubs-sanswrite.hhs.mt.gov/MontanaPublic/ProviderSearch.aspx



- ☐ Parent visits must be scheduled in advance.
- ☐ Caregivers are physically rough or yell at the children.
- ☐ There are too many children for adequate care and supervision.
- ☐ Facility is dirty or unsafe.
- ☐ There is no consistent program or activity schedule.

We're Here to Help You Find Safe, Quality Child Care

Contact us for help finding or paying for child care.

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