

## Child Care Choices

### Child Care Centers

Child care centers include preschools, nursery schools, before and after school programs, and Head Start programs. Centers need a license.

### Group Child Care Homes

Homes in which two or more adults provide care for up to 12 children. These homes require a license.

### Family Child Care Homes

Homes where an adult cares for one to six children. Family homes must be registered.

### Relative Care Provider

A child's grandparent/step-grandparent, great grandparent/step-great grandparent, aunt/step-aunt, uncle/step-uncle or sibling/step-sibling who provides care in *his/her* home and does not live with the child. Relative care providers must be at least 18 years old and enrolled with the Department of Human Services to receive child care payments from the State.

### Day Care Aide

A person you employ to care for your child(ren) in *your* home. Aides must be at least 18 years old and enrolled with the Department of Human Services to receive child care payments from the State.

**One Call For Child Care**  
**1-866-4CHILDCARE**

(1-866-424-4532)  
Toll Free To Your Community

## A Good Child Care Setting:

*respects children, parents, and caregivers;  
has open and on-going communications;  
and a shared plan for the well-being of children.*



### Developed jointly by:



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# 4 Steps to Choosing Quality Child Care



State of Michigan  
Department of Human Services

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If you need child care, you want the very best setting for your child. When choosing child care, you should visit more than one program. If possible, take your child with you when you visit. The following list will give you some hints to help you make a good choice.

#1

### Interview Caregiver



#### Call First and ask...

- Is there an opening for my child?
- What hours and days are you open?
- Where are you located?
- How much do you charge?
- When is payment due?
- Do you charge for holidays, absences due to vacation or illness, or late pickups?
- How many children do you care for?
- How much child care experience and education do you have?
- How many adults care for the children?
- What ages do you serve?
- Must a child be toilet trained?

#### in a home setting...

- Are there others living in the home?
- Who and what age are they?
- Who, besides the provider, may be caring for my child?
- Will my child be taken out of the home while in your care?
- Are there pets or smoking in the home?

#### Visit and look for...

- Positive interactions between caregiver and children.
- Children getting lots of attention.
- Children who are happy and comfortable with their caregiver.

- Clean, safe, and healthy indoor and outdoor spaces.
- Safety features such as gates on stairs, caps on electrical outlets, and a locked cabinet for medicine, poisons and cleaning products.
- A variety of toys and learning materials, such as books, puzzles, blocks, and climbing equipment, that your child will find interesting.

#### Ask the provider...

- Can I visit at any time?
- How do you handle discipline?
- What do you do if my child is sick?
- How do you handle an emergency?
- Do you have a back-up caregiver?
- Where do children take naps?
- Do caregivers have up-to-date CPR and First Aid training?
- Do caregivers have training in child care?
- May I see a copy of your license?
- Are you accredited?
- May I have a list of parents (current and former) who have used your care?

#2

### Check References



#### Ask other parents...

- Was the caregiver reliable?
- How did the caregiver discipline your child?
- How did you get along with the caregiver?
- Was the caregiver respectful of your values and culture?
- Would you recommend the caregiver?
- If your child is no longer with the caregiver, why did you leave?

Find out about the program's past licensing history and any possible violations concerning the caregiver you are considering...

Visit: [www.michigan.gov/dhs](http://www.michigan.gov/dhs)

↓  
Online Lookups

↓  
Child Day Care Centers and Homes

OR

Fax your written inquiry to:  
517-335-6121

to request this information under the Freedom of Information Act.

#3

### Choose Quality Care



#### Ask yourself, from what you have learned...

- Is there a balance of free play and routines?
- Can the caregiver meet the special needs of my child?
- Which caregiver should I choose so that my child will be happy and grow?
- Is the child care affordable?
- Do I feel good about my decision?

#4

### Stay Involved

#### Ask yourself...

- How can I work my schedule so that I can...
  - talk to my caregiver
  - talk to my child about how the day went?
  - visit my child in care?
  - work with my caregiver to discuss problems that arise?
  - help my child grow?
  - meet with other parents?