

As an association of family child care professionals, we believe that your search for quality care is one of the most important steps you will take toward enhancing your child's development. Whether your child is in someone else's care five days a week or just a few hours, you will want to find a program that is a good fit for your family.

Quality care can be measured in a variety of ways: the provider's education and experience, the adult:child ratio, group size, and the programming that is offered. But, we would like to suggest that you also keep in mind your child's temperament, likes and dislikes, and experience in a group setting.

It is our hope that this brochure helps you ask the right questions and make the appropriate observations so you will know when you have found a care setting that will help your child thrive.



Ask friends, family and co-workers for referrals.

Request a list of state registered providers:

SD Child Care Services: 1-800-227-3020

If you require special care for your child, they will be able to assist you in your search.

Call your regional Early Childhood Enrichment Program:

Rapid City: Early Childhood Connections
342-6464 or 1-888-999-7759

Pierre: Early Childhood Training Network
773-4755 or 1-866-206-8206

Aberdeen: Early Childhood Partners
229-8505 or 1-800-982-6404

Brookings: Family Resource Network
688-5730 or 1-800-354-8238

Sioux Falls: Sanford Children's CHILD Services
333-0698 or childsrv@sanfordhealth.org

Check other community resources:

Sioux Falls: HELPLINE Center
(605) 339-4357

Rapid City: RC Child Care Directory
(605) 393-4328

Family Child Care Professionals
of South Dakota, Inc. Growing
Together

Choosing a Quality Family Child Care Home



quality child care isn't expensive
it's priceless

Find more information
on our web site:

sdchildcare.org



What to ask during the first call

After introducing yourself, ask if the provider has time to answer a few questions:

Do you have openings now ?

What time do you open and close? Ask yourself if you can be there before closing time.

Do you serve meals or do I need to provide them for my child? Is there an extra cost for meals?

When I am able, may I spend some time with my child at care?

What is the typical number of children you have in care at one time?

When could I come for a visit?



Ask for References:

Ask for several names of parents who currently use or have used this child care home in the past. Ask what they liked and disliked about the home. One useful question: "Would you go there again, knowing what you know now?"



Questions and observations for my visit to the family child care home:

Look at the cleanliness and safety in all rooms where your child may go. Check the kitchen and bathrooms. Where do the children nap? Is there separate bedding for the children? How and where are diapers changed? What is the sick child policy? Can you follow those guidelines? Do you have your own back up care for your sick child?

Is there adequate space for all the children, inside and outside? Is there an adequate supply of age-appropriate toys/materials within the children's reach? Is TV used? How often and for how long? Is the material appropriate?

What is the normal daily schedule? Does it include both active and quiet times? Do they have creative activities? Do they play outdoors and indoors? Does the provider supervise the children while they are outdoors? Is there a pool or trampoline? Is there a safe surface underneath swing sets and climbing toys?

Ask to see a menu for this week. Does the provider participate in the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program? If not, is the provider serving fruits and vegetables, protein and a variety of foods? What is the policy about what the child eats? He should be allowed the choice to eat or not eat any food served.

Is the provider registered or legally unregulated? What is the provider's methods of child guidance? Is CPR and First Aid current? What kind and how many hours of training has been taken? What are the numbers and ages of other children in the provider's care? Is this a good match for your child? How does the caregiver interact with the children?

Is there a written contract and/or policy statement? Are you comfortable with the arrangements for substitutes and vacations? Are you prepared to pay the fees being asked? Are the policies concerning payment clear?

Can you picture your child in this setting?

What does a quality child care home look like?

- The caregiver enjoys the children and treats them warmly.
- He/she gets on their level to interact.
- The caregiver shares lots of information with the child's parents regarding their child's experiences in care.
- The children can make choices.
- Nutritious meals and snacks are served.
- The provider reads to the children daily. Some books are available to the children.
- The provider attends on-going training to continually improve her or his services. CPR and First Aid are current.
- The provider has fair and consistent rules and policies.
- Each child is treated as an individual.
- The provider plans activities based upon the child's interests, needs, and development. There are opportunities for creative and messy play, water play, active play, dress-up and dramatic play. Play is the work of children so there must be adequate time given for it.

