

When observing and listening, pay particular attention to five key indicators of quality child care:

A positive and happy learning environment

- Are the children engaged?
- Is staff involved with children at eye level?
- Are the rooms bright and cheerful without being overwhelming with too many sights and sounds?
- Do the adults speak positively about all children?

The right number and mix of children and adults

- Are all children receiving individual attention?
- Do adults call children by name?
- Are children comforted, when needed, by staff or other children?
- Are there sufficient personnel to respond in the event of emergencies?
- Is the “time out” tactic overused by staff?

Trained and supported personnel

- Are caregivers trained in early childhood education and special needs?
- Is the teaching staff able to attend ongoing professional development?
- Do those who work with children themselves receive positive support?

A developmental focus on the child

- Do you see and hear a variety of developmental activities taking place?
- Do the children have opportunities to control objects or events in their environment?
- Are activities based upon a child’s level of functioning?
- Are learning materials accessible to children with special needs?

Parents treated as partners

- Will your child care personnel help you develop goals for your child and plans to achieve them?
- Do personnel provide parents with regular schedules of activities and events?
- Do teachers and caregivers describe their communication practices as “open”?
- Do parents actively participate with their child or children?