



MORE THAN
choices.

CHILD CARE CHECKLISTS.

WHAT KIND OF HELP IS AVAILABLE?

- ◆ Child care referral services.
- ◆ Funding resources for child care.
- ◆ Community program referrals.

CHOOSING CARE FOR YOUR CHILD

FIRST - Determine your needs, as well as your child's.

- ◆ What you can afford.
- ◆ The days and hours you need care.
- ◆ The preferred location.
- ◆ Any special needs your child may have.

SECOND - Call a number of child care providers that meet your requirements.

- ◆ Have a list of questions you want to ask.
- ◆ Set up time for visits.
- ◆ Narrow the list to two or three providers and make unannounced visits.

THIRD - Visit a number of child care providers.

- ◆ Spend at least 30 minutes observing.
- ◆ The best time to observe is in the mid-mornings.
- ◆ Use the included checklist as a reference tool.
- ◆ Ask the provider or director any questions you may have.

FOURTH - Do a background check on the child care provider.

- ◆ Check with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) Licensing Division to see if there have been any valid complaints registered against the center or home.
- ◆ Read the center's record.
- ◆ Listen to your instincts. If you are uncomfortable, your child may be, too!



Parents in the workforce are challenged with balancing family life and their careers. Most depend on child care providers to care for their children while they are at work. The quality of child care children receive is the concern of every working parent. Help is available to make child care decisions easier.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR WHEN DECIDING ON A CHILD CARE PROGRAM

GENERAL

- Do you hear the sounds of happy children?
- Do teachers speak softly to the children?
- Does the center smell pleasant and clean?
- Are menus/snacks appetizing and nutritious?
- Do children have enough room to move between activities?
- Do children have a quiet, comfortable space when needed?
- Are records kept on the health evaluations of each child and provider?

CLASSROOM TEACHERS

- Do providers enjoy working with children?
- Do they speak to children at eye level?
- Are children and parents greeted cheerfully?
- Are children treated with respect?
- Are children's needs met and given priority?
- Are children given activity choices?
- Is the provider using positive statements rather than negative reinforcement?
- Are providers involved with and accessible to the children?
- Do providers understand how children learn?
- Are there enough providers to care for all children's needs?
- Do providers participate in training opportunities?
- Do providers have first aid and CPR training?
- What qualifications do the teachers have?
- Are providers always ready to answer your questions?
- Do providers tell you what your children are doing every day?

FACILITY

- Is the atmosphere clean and pleasant?
- Are toys clean, safe, and within reach of the children?
- Are safety and emergency procedures clearly posted?
- Are toilet and diaper-changing facilities near a sink so providers and children can wash their hands after each use?
- Can the providers see a child's entire play area, indoor and outdoor, at all times?
- Is there a fenced-in outdoor play area with a variety of safe equipment?
- Are electrical outlets covered?
- Is medication out of reach of the children?
- Are first aid kits available?
- Have all providers gone through background checks?
- Are toxic substances like cleaning supplies and pesticides kept out of reach of the children?

PROGRAM

- Is there a daily balance of activities: indoor/outdoor, quiet/active, individual/small group/large group and child initiated/provider initiated?
- Is there a daily balance of play, story, activity, and rest time?
- Do materials encourage learning and exploration?
- Are there enough materials available for all children?
- Do planned activities include all children regardless of their skill level?
- Are lesson plans displayed?
- Is television time selective and limited?
- Are parents well-informed about their child's daily activities?
- Are parents encouraged to drop in unannounced at any time?
- Are parents given ample opportunity to communicate with providers regarding their child?
- Are discipline policies compatible with your philosophy?



MORE THAN
referrals.

CHILD CARE RESULTS.

FOR HELP WITH CHILD CARE COSTS

CHILD CARE SERVICES (CCS)

The Alamo CCS offers Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) subsidized child care to eligible families. To receive assistance, you must reside within the 12-county workforce development area which includes: Atascosa, Bandera, Bexar, Comal, Frio, Gillespie, Guadalupe, Karnes, Kendall, Kerr, Medina, and Wilson Counties. Parents must be involved in one of the following activities: training, education, or employment activities. Eligibility for services is based upon income and family size. Families receiving any form of public assistance or food stamps may also qualify.

This program operates under the direction of Workforce Solutions Alamo and is based on parental choice for child care arrangements. CCS providers must be licensed or registered by the Department of Family and Protective Services, licensed by the Texas Department of Health as a youth day camp, operated and monitored by the United States military services, or be a listed relative provider.

To see if you qualify for CCS assistance, please call one of the numbers below or you may visit your local Workforce Solutions Alamo Career Center. The Workforce Solutions Alamo Career Center addresses and phone numbers may be accessed on our web site at www.workforcesolutionsalamo.org.

Bexar County

Phone: 210.206.5200

All Other Counties

Phone: 1.800.204.7905

FOR HELP FINDING A CHILD CARE PROVIDER

If you are looking for child care providers, you may contact the Resource and Referral Agencies listed below and they can assist you in locating the type of care and services you prefer. Each agency has access to child care provider's names, addresses, and phone numbers for your convenience. This service is available at no cost to you.

SMART START CONNECTIONS

Family Service Association's Children's Resource and Referral Division is a link to information and programs to assist you with your child care needs. Qualified child care consultants will provide

you with information about care for infants through school age children, various types of child care providers, and informational guides on issues that concern you as a parent.

Phone: 210.65.SMART • Phone: 1.800.332.3264

2-1-1 TEXAS

2-1-1 Texas is a statewide network that connects people in need of information and referrals for child care providers as well as other community services such as Food Stamps, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid, and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Just dial the three-digit telephone number at no charge and you can access multi-lingual services 24 hours per day and 365 days per year.

DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES (DFPS) LICENSING DIVISION

DFPS licenses most regulated child care providers in Texas. You may access information about child care rules as well as specific information related to the status of each provider on their web site: www.dfps.state.tx.us then click on "Child Care Licensing", then "Search Texas Child Care".

Phone: 210.337.3399 • Phone: 1.800.862.5252 • www.dfps.state.tx.us

DEPARTMENT OF STATE HEALTH SERVICES (DSHS)

DSHS provides many services but two of the services most important to parents seeking child care are information about immunizations and how to get a copy of your child's birth certificate.

Phone: 210.949.2000 • Phone: 1.888.963.7111 • www.dshs.state.tx.us

TYPES OF STATE REGULATED PROVIDERS

LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTERS

Child care centers are licensed facilities that are routinely monitored and inspected by DFPS. Child care centers may care for 13 or more children under the age of 14 for less than 24 hours. The application process requires that providers receive an orientation and background check. A license is issued after DFPS licensing staff completes on-site inspection(s) to ensure minimum standards are met. Child care centers are inspected every 5-12 months, or more frequently if a report is received related to child abuse or neglect or standards violations.

LICENSED CHILD CARE HOMES

Licensed homes are also licensed facilities that are routinely monitored and inspected by DFPS. Licensed homes provide care for 7-12 children under age 14 for less than 24 hours per day. The application process requires that a licensed home provider complete an orientation class and receive clearances on background checks. A license is issued after DFPS licensing staff completes on-site inspection(s) to ensure minimum standards are met. Child care homes are inspected every 5-12 months, or more frequently if a report is received related to child abuse or neglect or standards violations.

REGISTERED CHILD CARE HOMES

Registered child care homes provide care for up to 6 children under age 14 in the provider's home; they may also take in up to 6 more school-age children. The number of children allowed in a home is determined by the ages of the children. No more than 12 children can be in care at any time, including children of the provider. The application process requires that a licensed home provider complete an orientation class and receive clearances on background checks. A registration certificate is issued after DFPS licensing staff completes on-site inspection(s) to ensure minimum standards are met. Child care homes are inspected every 1-3 years, or more frequently if a report is received related to child abuse or neglect or standards violations.

LISTED RELATIVE CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

An eligible relative child care provider is an individual who is at least 18 years of age, and is, by marriage, blood relationship, or court decree, one of the following to each and every child authorized by CCS: the child's grandparent, great-grandparent, aunt, uncle, or sibling if the sibling does not reside in the same household as the child.

Eligible relatives caring for a child must become listed with DFPS. The listing process includes background checks.

MORE THAN
babysitting.

QUALITY ATTENTION.

TEXAS RISING STAR PROVIDER (TRS)

A TRS provider voluntarily meets requirements that exceed the state's minimum licensing standards for health and safety, group size, child/staff ratios, provider training, and age-appropriate curricula and activities for children of all ages. Certification as a TRS provider is available to licensed child care centers and homes as well as registered child care homes that meet the certification criteria.

TEXAS SCHOOL READY! (TSR)

TSR encourages school readiness programs to share certified teachers and to integrate facility space, professional development, and various funding sources. TSR providers use research-based curriculum, ongoing professional development, and personal digital assistant progress monitoring of children ages 3-5.