

# Pointers For Parents

## Eight Tips For Choosing Child Care

(NAPSA)—Selecting the best child care arrangement is one of the most important choices you'll make. How do you know which is best and what should you look for when evaluating child care centers that appear to have similar offerings?

“Every child is unique, so it's important to choose a place where your child feels at home and the philosophy and approach to learning agree with your own,” said Sharon Bergen, senior vice president of education and training for Knowledge Learning Corporation, the nation's leading provider of early childhood care and education.

Bergen says once parents narrow the search to locations that are convenient and affordable, there are a number of questions they should ask.

1. Is the center licensed?
2. Is it safe? Is the facility clean? Does it have plenty of light and fresh air? Are there formal procedures for the arrival and departure of children?
3. Is there enough indoor and outdoor space for both quiet and active learning and play?
4. Is there a clean, properly equipped area specifically for infants and toddlers? Is there appropriate interaction and nurturing of infants and toddlers?
5. Is parent participation encouraged? Are parents welcome and encouraged to visit and observe at any time? Does the center schedule parent conferences and provide progress reports?



6. Does the center have strict procedures for hiring caregivers? Is the director a professional who inspires confidence? Do teachers have experience and skills in child care methods? Are applicants fingerprinted when required by state law and required to take a medical exam in compliance with state licensing regulations? Are background checks and written references mandatory?

7. Does the center have a written plan you can see in action? Are learning programs designed for each age group?

8. Are education programs focused on the whole child and designed to meet the social, emotional, physical and intellectual needs of children?

Bergen suggests carrying a checklist and taking notes while touring facilities. Answering these questions will help parents make an informed decision.