

Back to Work

A Lesson on Quality Childcare

Playgroup # 12

Materials Needed

- You may give the mothers in your group scratch paper and pencils for notes during the introduction and activity if you choose.

Handouts

- Childcare Regulations in Utah

Introduction

Form a couple of small groups and have the mother's discuss what they feel is important when searching for quality childcare. After a few minutes, have each group share some of their ideas.

Lesson Plan

Lesson Objectives

- Understand what quality childcare entails.
- Know what to ask yourself before enrolling your child in childcare
- Know what your rights and responsibilities are as a parent

What is Quality Childcare?

1. Affection and Attention
 - a. Is the provider interested in your child as an individual?
 - b. Do they talk and listen at the child's level?
 - c. Do they comfort the children when they need it?
 - d. The provider should be warm, energetic, and caring with children.
2. Group Size
 - a. Small groups are the best environment for your child to feel safe and to promote learning.
 - b. Ask how many children they are licensed for.
3. Training and Background of the Childcare Provider
 - a. Ask what training in child development the person has.
 - b. How long have they been doing childcare?
 - c. How long has this center been in business?
 - d. Is the staff CPR/First Aid certified?
4. Low Staff Turnover
 - a. It is important for your child to have the same caregiver as long as possible (a year or longer is best).
5. Parent/Provider Communication
 - a. This is important for a good partnership and the child's positive experience in care.
6. Developmental Growth

- a. Do the program's child rearing goals match your own?
 - b. What is the daily schedule for the children?
 - c. Are they providing opportunities for the child to learn and grow?
 - d. Ask how much and what television programs the children are allowed to watch.
7. A Healthy Environment
- a. Are emergency numbers and policies posted?
 - b. Are their locks on cabinets?
 - c. Is the environment clean and safe for children to crawl?
 - d. Do they provide healthy food and snacks?
 - e. Are there separate areas for eating, diapering, resting, and playing?
 - f. What are the policies for sick children?

Before enrolling your child in a childcare center, you should ask yourself the following general questions:

- Do I agree with the discipline practices?
- Do I hear the sounds of happy children?
- Is the program operated legally?
- Are children comforted when needed?
- How is the program regulated?
- Are surprise or drop-in visits by parents encouraged?
- Was my first reaction to the program positive?
- Will my child be happy there?
- Does this seem to be a healthy and safe environment?
- Does the provider have a written contract or agreement so all expectations are clear?

As a parent you have the right to:

- Interview the childcare provider over the phone and at the childcare setting
- Check for references.
- Visit your child unannounced during day care hours.
- Call to see how your child is doing.
- Assume your child will be treated with respect and affection.
- Expect your child's provider to use a positive discipline style with your child.
- Talk to your child's care giver daily to receive updates on behaviors and habits.
- Express concern for your child.

As a parent you are responsible for:

- Making the final decision on your child's care.
- Checking to see if the program is licensed.
- Listening to caregivers' point of view.
- Talking to your child about how he/she is doing in the childcare setting.
- Discussing your child's illness with the childcare provider if your child gets sick.

Activity

For this activity, have the mother's in your group role play interviewing a childcare provider. Have the mothers get in groups of two. One partner will first act as the mother and the other partner will be the childcare provider. The mother will ask questions that address the seven areas of quality childcare covered in the lesson. Have the mothers switch roles when they are done.

Suggested Reading

Adam's Daycare

By Julie Ovenell-Carter

The Anxious Parents' Guide to Quality Childcare

By Michelle Ehrich

References

Child Care Resource and Referral Mountainland
800 W University Parkway – 163
Orem, UT 84058
801-863-8220
801-952-8220