

Choosing the Best Care for your Pre-School Child



When choosing a preschool program you'll want to see:

- Adults who are warm, caring, and supportive of preschooler's growing independence
- Staff who talk frequently with individual children, at their eye level
- Staff who support and encourage children to resolve their own conflicts
- The environment is arranged to encourage self-help skills and independence—toys kept on low shelves, step stools, child sized equipment, supplies for cleaning up spills available, etc
- Large blocks of free time are available for self-chosen activities from among a variety of interest centers
- The focus is on creative exploration with art materials rather than copying a model
- Daily large motor play, indoors and outdoors
- Daily rest time, with quiet activities for those who don't nap or wake early
- Many opportunities for language learning—books, songs, fingerplays, conversations with adults, dictating stories—individually or in small groups
- Positive guidance techniques are used including redirection, consistent clear rules, and logical consequences. "Time-out" is not over used
- Adults support and encourage developing social skills—sharing, taking turns, etc.
- Materials attractively arranged and accessible including blocks, puzzles and other manipulatives, books and tapes, art supplies, dolls, dress-up clothes and furniture, sand and water play, science materials
- Predictable routines alternate between active and quieter activities

You'll want to question when you see:

- Unsupervised play
- Children required to sit quietly in large group activities for long periods of time
- Children required to sit quietly coloring or doing paper and pencil tasks
- All children expected to do the same activity at the same time
- All children required to nap for a set time
- Physical punishment
- Frequent use of TV or videotapes

