

Choosing Quality Child Care

There are numerous options to consider when choosing child care for your child. Visit www.childcareaware.org for a checklist of criteria.

	Licensed Family Child Care Home	Licensed Exempt, Relative or Friend Care	Licensed Child Care Centers
Adult to Child Ratio	<p>Birth-18 mos. 1:2* (1 adult to 2 children) 18 mos-6 yrs. 1:6**</p> <p>* No more than 2 babies (under 18 mos.) may be cared for by family child care home at one time. ** A maximum of 6 children can be cared for in a family child care home at the same time.</p>	<p>Birth-18 mos. 1:2* (1 adult to 2 children) 18 mos-2 yrs. 1:4 2 - 3 years 1:5 4 - 5 years 1:6</p> <p>* A licensed-exempt provider can care for up to 2 children who are not related to the provider.</p>	<p>Infant/Toddler Centers 6 wks.– 12 mos. 1:3 (1 adult to 2 children) 12 mos. – 24 mos. 1:3 18 mos. – 36 mos. 1:3</p> <p>Preschool Centers 2 years 1:8 3 years 1:12 4-5 years 1:16</p>
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parents choose family child care because they want to keep their children in a home-like environment. ▪ Parents prefer to relate to a single caregiver and believe that children are healthier, happier and more secure in smaller groups. ▪ Sometimes parents choose family child care because they find it closer to home, less expensive or more flexible. ▪ Family child care offers opportunities for children to interact with those of other ages. ▪ Providers have training which includes first aid and CPR. ▪ Must have a doctor or nurse who is available to consult about health questions or concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parents who use this kind of care consider themselves lucky to have a relative, friend or neighbor care for their children. ▪ Parents believe that these caregivers will provide warmer, more loving care for the child and that the child will be more secure. ▪ Many parents believe that relatives, friends and neighbors will be more likely to share their values and they feel more comfortable entrusting their children to them. ▪ Sometimes parents use this type of care because their schedules, budgets or transportation problems limit their other child care options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Families often choose this type of care because they offer children the opportunity to interact with a larger number of children and adults. ▪ Infant & Toddler Centers are specialized for infants and toddlers. Its services should be based on relationship planning -- not lesson planning -- and should emphasize child-directed learning over adult-directed learning. ▪ Preschools are often chosen because parents believe that larger groups, multiple caregivers and state inspections make programs safer for their children and make the arrangement more dependable. Many parents believe that more staff, space, equipment, toys and the organized activities, provides a better learning environment for their children.
Other Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provider may work alone, may have more difficulty handling emergencies. ▪ May experience stress and tiredness from long hours and isolation. ▪ May not be available should a provider's emergency or illness arise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ May not be trained in child care and in health, first aid and CPR. ▪ May work alone and unobserved by others; or may have more difficulty handling emergencies. ▪ May not be available should a provider's emergency or illness arise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ May feel large and impersonal ▪ Staff shift changes mean that children will have to adjust to two or more care providers each day; and may cause communication gaps. ▪ May constrain children to follow routines and rules more than home-based care.