

# **DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE CHILD CARE:**

## **Questions for Parents of School-Age Children**

---

This checklist is meant to help you assess child care programs in their ability to provide your school age child with an environment in which he or she can thrive. Be sure to get references from parents who have had a child your child's age in the program you are considering for a different point of view.

The three main developmental trends in school-age children are:

- Likely to have strong bonds with and need to be with children his or her own age and gender;
- A heightened sense of autonomy - the need for more freedom, decision making, and privacy; and,
- A need to be industrious and produce a product, rather than focus on the process, as they did in preschool.

### **Questions for any type of after-school provider or program:**

1. Your child has been in school with academic structure during the day. Will this program give your child the opportunity to relax either with others or alone, depending on his or her needs? Does it provide interesting activities other than academics? Does the environment contain interesting materials, toys, and games that provide a break or allow a child to be artistically creative?
2. What are the ages and genders of the other, if any, school age children? Can your child relate comfortably with these other children? Will there be any classmates or friends in the home/program? How does your child view the program – does he or she think it is "too babyish"? If there are no other children your child's age, what is provided so he or she doesn't feel left out or bored?
3. How will your child get to the program/home? Is transportation provided? Does the child have enough "down time" between drop-off at the program and your evening pick-up?
4. Are there plenty of opportunities for active physical play outdoors? Is there enough space for children to play independently or in groups? Is there outdoor equipment to explore? A park or playground?
5. How much freedom and flexibility are children given in their schedules and activities? What is a typical day like for a child your own child's age with this provider?
6. Does the provider interact directly with the children, rather than just watching? Does the provider really listen when a child speaks?
7. What is the provider's/program's philosophy on discipline? Are limits and rules clearly defined?
8. Is there space and opportunity for quiet time? For doing homework?

9. Will this provider/program have full-day care available, or even be open, during school vacations and holidays? Is summer care available? What are the costs for this care?

### **Especially for Family Child Care Programs . . .**

1. Is the provider's caring style and philosophy, particularly in limit setting, similar to your own? Do you feel comfortable with her/his style and methods?
2. What is this provider's experience with school-age children? Any special qualifications or educational experiences?
3. Is television a part of this program? How much, when, and what programs are watched?
4. Be particularly sensitive to the ages of the children in the program. Will your child be the only school-age child there? Will he or she be happy there? If there is a younger sibling in the program as well, how does your child feel about that?
5. Are any other adults going to be in the house during child care hours? An assistant? A spouse? Older children?

### **Especially for Center-Based Programs . . .**

1. What are the qualifications and experience of the providers in this program? Any special training? Are they teachers? High school or college students?
2. Are there any special activities offered to develop children's special interests? Organized sports, art, dance, music, or drama activities? Is there an extra cost for any of these activities?
3. How large are the groups? Are they separated by age or mixed? Are you comfortable with these arrangements?
4. Are there any field trips? How are the children transported and by whom? Is there any extra cost for these activities?

**Child Care Resource Center, Inc. ©**  
130 Bishop Allen Drive, Cambridge, MA 02139  
Phone: 617-547-1063 ext. 72/ Fax: 617-547-3340  
E-mail: [parentinfo@ccrcinc.org](mailto:parentinfo@ccrcinc.org)  
Web site: [www.ccrcinc.org](http://www.ccrcinc.org)