



Look. Listen. Ask.  
Know Before They Go.

Questions to Ask Before Choosing Child Care



Choosing the right child care can be **confusing**. Not all child care providers are required to follow the rules necessary to be licensed by the state. Parents can go to [www.scchildcare.org](http://www.scchildcare.org) to find these rules, as well as to see if their provider is licensed or registered.

We've created this checklist of important questions you should ask potential providers when you visit—to help you to look, listen and ask.

[www.scchildcare.org](http://www.scchildcare.org)

SC Child Care Licensing is a division of SC Child Care Services.

# Questions to Ask



## License

- Is the provider licensed? If so, is the license displayed?

## The Building

- Are floors, walls, ceilings, windows, doors, and other surfaces free from hazards such as peeling paint, rust, broken or loose parts, loose or torn flooring, sharp edges, splinters, exposed bolts, and openings that could harm a child?
- Is outdoor metal playground equipment in a shaded area? Is the area safe, clean, and free of litter?
- Are cleaning products and other harmful substances kept away from children?
- Is there cushioning material, such as mulch or sand, under playground equipment?
- Is playground equipment safe and sturdy, free from rust or poisonous materials and without sharp objects?

## Safety

- Can the provider produce records of fire and health inspections and/or does it appear sanitary and safe?
- Is at least one staff member present at all times who is trained in CPR and First Aid? Is a First Aid kit available?
- Do cribs and other equipment meet federal standards?
- Does the provider have a written plan for emergencies, including a plan for evacuating the children in the event of a fire? Do they practice emergency drills?
- Are smoke detectors available?

## The Staff

- Are all teachers at least 18 years old? If they are required to have a director, is he or she at least 21 years old?
- Does the provider require staff to receive regular, ongoing training about child care?
- Have the staff had criminal background checks, including fingerprinting?
- Are all staff qualified to care for children? Do they have the kind of education and training that is required or that would make them a good caregiver?

## Supervision

- Is there enough staff caring for the number of children present?

- Is staff near the children and able to give individual attention to a child when needed?
- Are children in feeding chairs constantly watched? Are children removed from feeding chairs when meal time is over?
- Are children accounted for at all times, including head counts as they enter or leave the building?
- Is there enough space for the children? If the provider is licensed, are there more children present than the number listed on the license?

## Meals and Snacks

- Does the provider post a daily menu? Does it list whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and low-fat foods? Does it limit sweets and processed foods?
- Does the food suit the child's age and appetite? How does the provider handle food allergies?
- Is food properly labeled and stored to protect against contamination?

## Cleanliness

- Does staff make sure that children's hands and faces are clean?
- Are furniture, toys, and other equipment that come into contact with the mouths of children washed and sanitized immediately?
- Are linens, blankets, cribs, cots, and mats cleaned at least weekly?
- Does staff wash their hands frequently, especially after diapering children? Do they use gloves?

## Daily Life

- Is there a written daily program of age-appropriate activities designed to promote academic, social, and physical development?
- How much TV are the children allowed to watch? Does staff read to the children daily?
- Does staff encourage children to be physically active and to play outside every day, weather permitting?
- Do the children appear to be playing and happy?
- Are you welcome to drop in to see your child at any time?

## In Case of an Emergency

- Does the provider ask for written parental consent before giving medication to any child?
- Is medication properly labeled and stored?
- Does the provider keep children's emergency medical information organized in a central location that is easily accessible?
- Does the provider keep a list of adults approved by the parent who have the authority to pick up the children?



[Click here to find your child care provider](#)

