

Do you know the questions to ask when selecting a child care provider? Check out our website for helpful resources. Look. Listen. Ask. Know **before** they go.



ABC Quality
Know Your ABC's of Quality
When You Look for Child Care!



DSS ABC Quality is a division of SC Child Care Services. For more information about the ABC Quality Improvement System or about the laws and regulations related to types of child care providers, please visit our website.

www.scchildcare.org

1.800.763.2223



Click here to find your
child care provider

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What is ABC Quality?

ABC Quality is South Carolina's voluntary quality improvement system; it helps child care providers do a good job of caring for your children. The first step in ensuring that a child care provider meets the basic health and safety needs of children is for the center to become licensed; not all programs are required to be licensed in this state. ABC Quality helps providers to improve the quality of the care they provide to children beyond the basics. **Programs can earn an A+, A, B+, or B quality level. Some level C providers are licensed; others may be exempt from licensing (such as afterschool programs).**

ABC Quality means

- Helping providers offer the best possible care to your children so they can learn and grow.
- Helping providers achieve quality that is better than licensing requirements.
- Ensuring that caregivers working with your children are trained and experienced.
- Evaluating a child care program in a way that lets them (and you) know the level of quality they are providing to children.



ABC Quality providers have access to training, grants, and other resources to improve the quality of care for the children they serve. They can also provide care for low-income families who receive ABC vouchers so their parents can work.

Level A+ and A Centers

- Must meet the highest quality child care standards in South Carolina.
- Must have excellent teacher-to-child ratios and limited class sizes.
- Half of lead teachers must have a Certificate in Early Care & Education; all must have the SC Early Childhood Credential. These courses are taught at local technical colleges.
- Directors must have an Associate degree in Early Care & Education.
- Teachers and directors must get 20 hours of training every year to help them plan curriculum and activities to support every child's development and to prepare them for school.
- Must have extensive on-site reviews by trained ABC Quality staff.

Level B+ and B Centers

- Must meet quality standards beyond basic health and safety requirements.
- Must meet or exceed required teacher-to-child ratios and have limited class sizes.
- Must have teachers who are trained and experienced; this includes having some staff earning the SC Early Childhood Credential and directors who have a Certificate in Early Care and Education. These courses are taught at local technical colleges.
- Meet quality standards for improved staff qualifications, interactions with children, activities available to children, and the physical environment (indoor and outdoor).
- Must have annual on-site reviews of ABC Quality standards by trained ABC Quality staff.



Level C Centers

- Must meet teacher-to-child ratios and all other regulations required by licensing.
- All staff must have a high school diploma and experience working in a licensed child care setting.
- Teachers must receive 15 hours of training every year; directors must receive 20 hours. This training helps them plan activities to support every child's development and learning.
- Must get annual on-site reviews of health and safety practices by trained staff.
- **Level C centers exempt from licensing regulations are required to meet only basic health and safety standards to be enrolled in ABC Quality.**



Remember to know the 5 ABC levels of quality:
A+, A, B+, B, and C.

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Look for...

- Many activities, toys, and materials for all children to choose from, both indoors and outdoors.
- Children actively playing and learning, with a choice of activities, during large periods of time during the day.
 - A written plan for the day.

Listen for...

- A pleasant hum of activity in the classrooms.
- Teachers talking with children individually.
- Teachers encouraging children to talk and responding to them calmly.

Ask...

- Do the teachers follow a curriculum?
- Do the teachers plan for the individual needs of children in their care?
- Does the center meet ABC Grow Healthy standards for nutrition and physical activity?

Next, consider your family's needs, the hours of care you want, the cost of care, and the center location. Find out if they have a waiting list.

Visit several programs to compare and see which is the best fit for your child and your family. Remember to **Look, Listen, and Ask** while you are there...so you will **Know Before They Go**.



For More Information

If you need more help, visit us at www.scchildcare.org or call us at **1.800.763.2223**. You can also contact your community's Child Care Resource and Referral staff. Call 1.888.335.1002 or 211 to locate an office near you.

