

## Child-Care Provider Checklist for Parents

Selecting a child-care center or certified home is one of the most important decisions that you will make as a parent. Part of making a good decision is to visit and observe the activities of the child-care provider, review the law regarding child-care centers, and trust your judgment. It is important to use your five senses when visiting a child-care center or certified home: sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell. Look around the center for proper behavior and cleanliness. Listen for happy children involved with activities. Ensure children have toys and that the furnishings are safe and not broken. Observe snacks or meals to ensure that children are eating. Lastly, use your nose to make sure that the center and children are fresh and clean.

The Office of Inspector General's Division of Regulated Child Care has developed a short checklist to help you evaluate the child-care center you are considering. Remember the three P's: paperwork, premises, and programming.

- **Paperwork**

- Is a license/certificate posted? All child-care providers must have a valid license or certificate.
- Have you reviewed the compliance reports that are posted?
- Did you review the daily schedule to be informed the day's activities and what children are learning?
- Did you see what foods are on the menu?
- Does the facility have the proper background check(s) for all staff?
- Review the child-care provider's policy and procedures.

- **Premises** [Tour the inside and the outside of the Center]

- Are the classroom play areas child-friendly and safe?
- Do you see any hazards? (cleaning chemicals, electrical cords, medications, or uncovered outlets)
- Is the center clean?
- Are furnishings child-sized?
- Is the outside play area safe, clean, and free from hazards?

- **Programming** [Observe the interaction between staff and children]

- Do the children have toys and play equipment?
- Are the toys appropriate and safe for the age of the children?
- Do children play outside?
- Do younger children play separately from older children?
- Do staff closely supervise the children?
- Is there enough staff in the classrooms for the number of children?
- Do the children seem occupied by the activities?
- Does the staff seem patient with the children?
- How does the center staff communicate with parents about issues?
- Did the center serve a healthy snack or meal?
- What does the center do when children misbehave?

**Your initial reaction is very important. ALWAYS TRUST YOUR JUDGMENT!**

**If you have any additional questions, please contact our office at 502-564-7962.**