

CACCI/Child Care Network of Cape Cod & the Islands

Quality Indicators *When looking for a new child care situation, there are six main quality indicators that should be considered. Keeping these in mind during your search will help you determine if a setting is in the best interest of your child.*

Group Size

Find out how many children are in the group. The smaller the group, the better. Imagine a group of 25 two-year olds with five adults, compared to a group of 10 with two adults. Both groups have the same adult to child ratio. Which would be calmer and safer? In which group would your child excel?

Ratio

The number of staff required in a child care home or center depends not only on the *number* of children in that setting but also on the *ages* of the children. In child care centers, the staff to child ratios for infants is 1 adult to 3 children; for toddlers the ratio is 1 adult to 4 children; for preschool children the ratio is 1 adult to 10 children; for school age children the ratio is 1 adult to 13 children. These are the minimum requirements. Family child care providers are typically licensed for 6 children, three of the children may be under the age of two as long as 1 child is at least 15 months and walking.

Family Involvement

Ask a prospective child care provider about their policy on family involvement. You want to see opportunities to be involved in activities, with regular parent meetings held. You should feel welcome.

Caregiver Education & Staff Turnover

Ask about the teacher that will be in your child's room. How long has the teacher worked in the program. What is their educational background? You do not want to see a high staff turnover in a child care center. How long has the family child care provider been running her program? Does she attend trainings regularly? Is she involved with a support group? As a parent, you want to be assured that the people who will be caring for your child are not stressed. You want to know that the staff is knowledgeable and understand appropriate activities and behaviors for children.

Health & Safety

The environment should be clean, with an emphasis on children washing hands before meals and after toileting. Tables are washed. Electrical sockets are covered. Staircases are childproofed. Toys and equipment should be clean, used, but not broken. Outdoor play spaces must be free of hazards of all kinds. Common hazards include access to a busy street, broken glass or peeling paint, tools and construction materials.

Accreditation

This means that a child care center or family child care provider has made a commitment to provide a high quality program for young children and their families. Ask a director of a child care center if they are NAEYC accredited (National Association of Education of Young Children). For additional information on NAEYC accreditation goes to www.naeyc.org. Ask a family child care provider if they have a CDA (Child Development Associate). For additional information on CDA go to www.cdacouncil.org. Family child care providers may also become accredited with NAFCC (National Association of Family Child Care). For additional information on NAFCC accreditation go to www.nafcc.org.

If you have questions or need further information contact an I&R counselor at Child Care Network.

115 Enterprise Road Hyannis
508-778-9470 or toll-free 888-530-2430