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CHECKLIST: HOW TO FIND GOOD CHILDCARE

Choosing someone to care for your children while you work is one of the most important decisions you will make. The following checklist can help you determine whether a particular home or center meets your criteria, so that you can be more informed and more confident with your decision, and your child can be in the best possible hands.

While (or immediately after) visiting each potential childcare facility, consider the following questions:

	Yes	No
Do you have a positive first impression as you walk through the front door?	_____	_____
Is the home or center licensed?	_____	_____
Do(es) the caregiver(s) have appropriate education, experience, and training?	_____	_____
Does the home or center provide a handbook that covers important rules and policies?	_____	_____
Do you feel comfortable with the rules and policies?	_____	_____
Does the caregiver-to-child ratio meet state requirements and your expectations?	_____	_____
Does the home or center look and smell clean?	_____	_____
Do the caregivers wash their hands after changing diapers and helping children in the bathroom?	_____	_____
Do the children wash their hands after using the bathroom?	_____	_____
Do the caregivers wash their hands before handling food?	_____	_____
Do the children wash their hands before eating?	_____	_____
Is the home or center safe and child-proof?	_____	_____
Are small toys kept away from infants and toddlers?	_____	_____
Are outlets covered?	_____	_____
Are doors to stairways closed, or are stairways gated?	_____	_____
Is there the required number of operational smoke detectors?	_____	_____
Are fire extinguishers handy?	_____	_____
Are cupboards containing harmful substances securely latched?	_____	_____

- Are emergency numbers posted by all telephones? _____
- Are outdoor areas fenced and/or away from traffic areas? _____
- Do the children appear happy? _____
- Is the home or center too noisy or too quiet? _____
- Does the caregiver smile at the children? _____
- Does the caregiver talk so that the children can understand him or her? _____
- Does the caregiver demonstrate a positive attitude? _____
- Does it appear that the caregiver loves what he or she is doing? _____
- Does the caregiver show affection toward the children? _____
- Does the caregiver respond appropriately to crying children? _____
- Does the caregiver answer the children's questions? _____
- Does the caregiver appear patient? _____
- Does the caregiver encourage the children to treat each other with respect? _____
- Is the caregiver respectful to other parents? _____
- Are other parents happy with the care their children receive at the home or center? _____
- Does the caregiver follow a daily schedule? _____
- Is outdoor play a part of each day, weather permitting? _____
- Are plenty of toys and books available? _____
- Does the caregiver read to the children? _____
- Are there planned activities each day, such as games or crafts? _____
- Do the children go on field trips? _____
- Are drivers licensed and experienced in transporting children? _____
- Are the vehicles safe? _____
- Do the children use appropriate restraints? _____
- Are children given the time and a quiet place to nap or rest? _____
- Does the home or center provide nutritious meals and snacks? _____
- Is the location convenient for you to drop off and pick up your child? _____
- Does the home or center allow you to visit at any time, with or without notice? _____
- Have any complaints been filed against the provider? _____

Has the provider's license ever been suspended?

Does the cost compare favorably with comparable facilities?

Will you feel comfortable leaving your child there?
