

## HOW TO FIND CHILD CARE

Carefully screen child care providers to see if they have room for your children and whether their personal and professional style seems a good fit for your family. Child Care Resources suggests these steps:

- Phone screening- Call the providers on your list, introduce yourself and ask if they have openings. Are they professional? Do they answer all your questions? Are they friendly?
- Visit- Plan to meet the provider in person to interview and observe the child care environment.
- After the visit- Check references! Talk to the people your provider refers you to, and check the provider's complaint history. Visit <https://fortress.wa.gov/dshs/f2ws03esaapps/lccis/lccis.aspx> for more information.

### TOP 5 TIPS FOR CHECKING OUT CHILDCARE



**#1 HEALTH AND SAFETY:** Ask yourself, “Will my child be safe and content here?” Although licensed providers are inspected for health and safety standards by a state licenser, you should also observe the living and play environment. Look for clean and safe areas free of clutter or potential safety hazards. Request to see the provider's license and investigative reports for the past three years.

**#2 CAREGIVER'S PROFESSIONALISM:** Does the provider seem to take pride in his/her business? Does the provider understand the stages and development of young children and seek ongoing training to increase skills and knowledge about caring for children? Is the center/home accredited? (NAEYC, NAFCC, etc.) In centers, speaking with the director and administrative staff is important, but don't forget to interview the caregivers who will be caring for your child most of the time. Does the provider offer you parent references to call?

**#3 PARENT RELATIONSHIPS:** Will this provider be a good fit for your family? Does the provider communicate regularly with parents about their children's experiences in child care? It's important for your child to have consistent care giving, which includes practices about learning and discipline that you share. Does the provider welcome input and respect your family's values and culture?

**#4 ENVIRONMENT/ATMOSPHERE:** Do the children appear happy and engaged in age-appropriate activities? Is the noise level reasonable for the activities taking place? Is there a variety and choice of activities for the children? Picture your child in this environment. Would he/she adjust well to the size and make up of the group? Do you see pictures, books, etc. reflecting your family's culture?

**#5 CHILD -CAREGIVER RELATIONSHIP:** Does the provider directly talk and play with children in a caring, attentive way that encourages their learning? Research shows that the quality of the adult caregiver's interactions with children can make all the difference in the quality of a child's experience in child care. And ultimately, the developmental outcome of his or her childcare experience will carry over into adulthood ...long after child care has ended!