

# A Checklist for Choosing the Best Family Childcare

## *Making the Right Choice:*

You have decided that you want your child to attend a licensed family daycare home. While keeping your own needs in mind, you must consider your child's needs. The caregiver must be someone who genuinely likes children, makes them feel secure and is able to give individual attention and comfort. The environment should be stimulating, with a balance between active and quiet play. There should be encouragement of individual creativity and social interaction. For more information see the article [Choosing Quality Child Care.](#)



## *Gathering Information:*

Once you have made a list of potential caregivers phone each of them and ask these basic questions:

- What are the basic rules for activities, meals, safety and discipline?
- Are parents encouraged to visit the home with their children so they can observe the reactions of the child and the caregiver?
- Is smoking allowed on the premises?
- What arrangements are made when the caregiver is ill, or on holiday?
- Age range of the children registered?
- Hours of operation?
- Payment of fees - weekly, monthly? (If you are low income ask about subsidized care)
- Can you get receipts for income tax purposes?
- Is parent involvement encouraged?
- If your child has special needs, can they be met?



## *The Interview*

Interviewing the family daycare provider is best when done at her home. Set up the interview during daylight hours so you can see the outdoor play area. Make careful observation of the environment. Bring your child to meet her. Watch closely how your child interacts with the caregiver and her children, if any.

Here are a few things you need to know about your potential caregiver:

How many children will be cared for in the caregivers home?

Does the caregiver communicate easily?  
Do you and the caregiver agree on educational and disciplinary standards?  
If she has a television, recommend the programs your child should watch.  
Set limitations on viewing time.  
Is there a safe area outside to play? Is it fenced? Check outdoor play equipment. Is it safe?  
What facilities are provided for rest periods (naps)?  
Can arrangements be made for your child to sleep overnight, if required?  
Are there suitable varieties of toys, games and books for your child?  
What other activities are provided?  
Is the bathroom clean?  
What happens if your child becomes ill while at the caregivers home?  
Are the children served balanced meals?  
Are there any pets? Are they clean, friendly, and healthy?  
Does the caregiver prefer to be paid in cash or by check?  
Is there a Parent Package outlining policies and contracts that you can take home to read?  
Is her License posted? If not, ask to see it.



### Parent Responsibility at the Interview:

Be prepared to provide the caregiver with the following information at the interview and/or upon enrolment:

- A list of allergies or forbidden foods
- A list of any medications currently being taken by your child; your child's routine - meals, feedings, snacks, rest periods, toilet training, etc.
- Explain your child's temperament, his problems, medical history (if any), likes and dislikes.
- Bring a photocopy of your child's immunization record.
- Fill out any forms that the caregiver requires for enrolment.  
Additional information for these forms could be: your home and business phone numbers & home address; home and business numbers & home address of a relative or a friend should you be unavailable; name and phone number of your family doctor.
- Discuss parent custody arrangements, if any.
- Pre-qualify for subsidized care with your local children's services office. Your caregiver will require proof of qualification prior to your child attending daycare.