

PROGRAM CHECKLIST

The Insider's Guide to Quality Child Care

Choosing the best child care program for your family is one of the most important decisions you will make as a parent. This guide has been created by education and child development leaders based on the best ideas and practices of quality early childhood programs. This reference will enable you to make the best decision possible about care for your family.



Use the checklist to ask questions and to compare the programs you visit. Spend at least one hour observing at the facility, paying careful attention to interactions between adults and children. Once you feel that you have obtained adequate information about every aspect of the program, you will be able to make a decision about the best care and education for your child.

Program

	PROGRAM 1	PROGRAM 2	BRIGHT HORIZONS		PROGRAM 1	PROGRAM 2	BRIGHT HORIZONS
Is the program accredited by, or working toward accreditation by, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is parent participation in program activities encouraged?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the program provide a consistent routine the children can understand and follow?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are there opportunities for informal and formal communication, including daily conversations, weekly notes or journals, informational bulletin boards, monthly newsletters, parent seminars or family events, semiannual parent-teacher conferences about your child's developmental profile, and annual parent satisfaction surveys?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are indoor and outdoor environments child sized and designed specially for children of all developmental abilities and needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do parents have access to center-based resources and information on topics related to child development and parenting?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the program follow a positive approach to discipline through education rather than punishment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are there opportunities for parents to meet together and be involved as a group?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are children happily and busily engaged in interesting and diverse activities and projects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there a system in place that allows and encourages visiting families to speak with currently enrolled families?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the children encouraged to explore the environment and provided choices between individual and small group activities inside the classroom as well as outdoors?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there a system that supports and guides children and parents into the program and into new classrooms within the center?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are field trips or enrichment activities integrated into the program?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are parents given a comprehensive packet of information on the center, faculty, curriculum, classroom, and managing organization?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do children create stories, books, and records of field trips and activities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is a Next Step Transition Program in place to guide children and parents on to elementary school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does each child and family have a consistent group of primary teachers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there a parent resource area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the program actively involved in the community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Is there an Open-Door Policy, making parents welcome visitors to the program at any time during the day?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Faculty

Health and Safety

	PROGRAM 1	PROGRAM 2	BRIGHT HORIZONS
Are the program director and teachers open and responsive to your questions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do teachers interact with children in caring, respectful, and positive ways?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are teachers involved in a continuing education program, including monthly, quarterly, and annual trainings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do teachers have the required training and certification in CPR, first aid, and infection control?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do teachers have access to educational and community resources (e.g., curriculum guides, activity books, and professional journals)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are teachers involved in an annual system of performance evaluation and goal setting?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there an opportunity for formal communication through an annual faculty survey?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do teachers work in teaching teams within a positive and professional environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do the teacher-to-child ratios meet or exceed the state requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	PROGRAM 1	PROGRAM 2	BRIGHT HORIZONS
Are stringent health care policies in place and in practice that include teachers and children washing their hands frequently throughout the day (i.e., before and after changing diapers, toileting, blowing noses, preparing food, eating snack and lunch, playing at the sand and water table, and playing with playdough)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are all surfaces disinfected throughout the day and at closing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are healthful foods and beverages provided throughout the day?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are health care administrators consulted and resources accessed regularly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the center professionally cleaned daily?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are indoor and outdoor environments free from hazards at all times and regularly surveyed for safety?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can environments be easily supervised by teachers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are security policies and procedures implemented, monitored, and evaluated regularly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are emergency procedures and evacuation routes established, posted, and practiced regularly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Parent to Parent Tips

The following tips are from parents who are teachers in Bright Horizons Child Care Centers...what would they look for in a center?

	PROGRAM 1	PROGRAM 2	BRIGHT HORIZONS		PROGRAM 1	PROGRAM 2	BRIGHT HORIZONS
Is the director interested in your family: your questions, concerns, and ideas about caring for your child?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you see specific learning centers rather than just toys on a shelf?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the director introduce each teacher during a tour?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do infants spend most of their time in the arms of caregivers and on the floor exploring? Is the use of chairs, exersaucers, swings or cribs minimized to allow for unrestrained movement and exploration?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do the teachers seem happy together? How do the teachers work together?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you see natural and everyday home materials for children to explore, not just plastic toys?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you see displays of what the children are doing and learning?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you see evidence of reading to infants and toddlers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a parent bulletin board with important information for parents?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do infants and toddlers spend ample time outdoors?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does it feel like you and the center faculty will be partners?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ask what daily individual and group rituals help make the children feel secure and at home.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the center a place in you will be comfortable spending time?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ask what quality enhancements the program is working toward. How does the program evaluate and assess their operations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there daily communication in writing to a parent? Ask to see an example.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does it feel like a great place to be an infant or toddler and <i>be with</i> an infant or toddler — all day?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ask how long each teacher has been with the center.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Do you see great "conversations" between babies and caregivers? Examples would be one-to-one responsive interactions, eye contact, and moments of undivided attention.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				



The best early childhood programs are those that are designed to help give children the foundation they need to build self-esteem, to develop school competence, and to reach for higher levels of learning.

No matter what kind of program you select for your child, you and your child's teachers can join in a partnership to enhance your child's learning experience. By building strong home-school relationships from the start, parents and teachers can support children and prepare them for future success, both in and outside the classroom.



www.brighthorizons.com