

Preschool Program Checklist

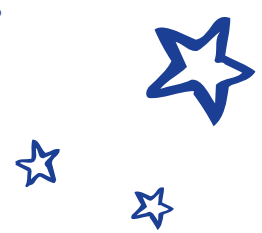
Preschool is the gateway to the classroom. Choosing the best program for this age is a crucial decision, one of the most important a parent can make. Let us help. Our guide has been created by parents, educators, and child development leaders based on the best practices used by quality early learning programs. Use it as a list of questions and reference points to help make the best possible decision for you, your child, and your family.



Curriculum to Get Ready for School

- Do children have access to a computer with educational programming?
- Is there a preschool curriculum? Ask to see an example of activities planned.
- Are any writing or math programs used in addition to the standard curriculum? Are these included in the tuition?
- Are parent-teacher conferences held to discuss a child's development?
- Are children happily and busily engaged in interesting and diverse activities and projects?
- Are there displays of what the children are doing and learning?
- Is current learning documented or displayed in the classroom?

Health and Safety

- How is the spread of germs prevented? Are all surfaces disinfected throughout the day and at closing?
 - Is the center professionally cleaned daily?
 - What snacks are provided throughout the day? Is there a menu?
 - What are the security policies and emergency procedures and how are they monitored and evaluated regularly?
 - Do children have to be potty trained to attend preschool?
 - What is the illness policy?
 - Do the teacher-to-child ratios meet or exceed the state requirements?
 - How are food allergies handled?
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Programs to Learn and Thrive

- Is there daily communication about each child's day?
- What is the program's daily routine and where is it displayed for the children?
- How are the children encouraged to explore the environment and provided choices between individual and small group activities inside the classroom as well as outdoors?
- How are each child's individual goals outlined and progress towards those goals documented?
- Are there opportunities for parents to meet together and be involved as a group?
- Are there any currently enrolled families willing to speak about the center?
- Is there an open door policy? Can a parent call or visit anytime she wants?
- How often is the center closed throughout the year?
- What is the program's approach to discipline?
- Is the program accredited by or working toward accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)?
- What if children don't nap?
- Are any field trips or enrichment activities integrated into the program or do they cost extra?
- Is there a process for preparing parents and children for the first day at the center?

Loving and Professional Staff

- How do teachers manage such a wide range of ages/abilities in one classroom? How do they challenge all skill levels at the same time?
- Do teachers have the required training and certification in CPR, first aid, and infection control?
- Do teachers receive periodic training? Are there opportunities for career development for teachers?
- Do children have a consistent group of primary teachers? If so, how long have they been at the center?
- Do teachers interact with children in caring, respectful, and positive ways? Do you see one-to-one conversation with eye contact?



Great Environments for Discovery

- Is there a variety of materials and purposeful toys—including natural and everyday home materials—for children of all levels to explore?
- Are there defined and labeled areas of learning in the classroom for math, language, and science experiences?