



Choosing Child Care for My Child with Special Needs - Parent Visit Log

Philadelphia
Inclusion
Network

Revised January 2008

This guide was developed by
Child and Family Studies Research Programs,
Philadelphia Inclusion Network
to assist families of
children with special needs choose an
appropriate child care setting for their child.

Some of the information included was modified from the
National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

Parents are encouraged to use this guide
in addition to other guidelines such as those provided,
by their State for example,
the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare
Child Care Works toll-free helpline at **1-877-4-PA KIDS**.

If you would like assistance using
this guide please contact the
Philadelphia Inclusion Network
215-503-1608
cfsrp@jefferson.edu

The **INITIAL STEP** in making decisions regarding child care is to identify the needs of you and your child. Things to think about and decide:

What amount of care do you need or want?
(hours/week/ or day)

When do you need the care? (days/evening/weekends)

How much can you afford to pay? (per week/month)

What things are important to you? (location, program approach or style, curriculum, other parents' perspectives, etc.)

BEFORE your visit::

Call the program. Here are sample questions you can ask:

Is there space available for my child who is age ____?

If not, what is the length of the waiting list?

What hours and days are you open?

Are you open year round?

How much does the care cost?

When can I visit the program?

Schedule a time and day to visit.

You can record the answers for up to three programs on the next two pages.

WHEN you visit

Pages 5 - 18 are set up with questions you can ask and space to record information for up to three visits.

AFTER you visit

Discuss your thoughts and reactions with family members or friends. If your child is currently receiving early intervention or other type of therapy services you may want to discuss your visits with your child's therapist, social worker or special education teacher.

Before your visit
QUESTIONS

Name of Program and
Phone #

Is there space
available for my child
who is age ____?

If not, what is the
length of the waiting
list?

What hours and days
are you open?

Are you open year
round?

How much does the
care cost?

Ask yourself: Do I
want to visit this
program?

Name of Program and
Phone #

Name of Program and
Phone #

FIRST Program Visited

Name of Program _____

Director's Name _____

Date of Visit _____

Time of Visit _____

Questions to ask DURING the visit

May I have a copy of your parent handbook?

What to look for: The mission includes statements related to welcoming all children; meeting children's individual needs; respecting and honoring diversity; appreciation for individual learning styles; etc.

What do children spend most of their time doing?

What to look for: You want to see children spending most of their time playing and working with materials or other children and not being directed by the teacher. The classroom is decorated with children's original artwork, their own writing with invented spelling, and stories dictated by children to teachers

What types of activities do the children do throughout the day?

What to look for: Assorted building blocks and other construction materials, props for pretend play, picture books, paints and other art materials, and table toys such as matching games, pegboards, and puzzles. Children should not all be doing the same thing at the same time. Children have an opportunity to play outside every day – in addition to talking walks

How many children are together throughout the day – do they stay all in one group in the classroom?

What to look for: Teachers working with individual children, small groups, and the whole group at different times during the day. They should not spend all their time with the whole group. For example, teachers read books to children individually or in small groups throughout the day, not just at group story time

Can you tell me how things like colors, numbers, and letters are taught to the children?

What to look for: Children learning numbers and the alphabet in the context of their everyday experiences. The natural world of plants and animals and meaningful activities like cooking, taking attendance, or serving snack provide the basis for learning activities. Worksheets are used little if at all

How do the teachers meet individual children's learning needs or match their learning style?

What to listen for: The curriculum is adapted for those who are ahead as well as those who need additional help. Teachers recognize that children's different background and experiences mean that they do not learn the same things at the same time in the same way. For example, teachers shorten or lengthen the time of an activity; can include movement in an activity that otherwise would be done sitting down – like make your body into the shape of a letter or having children find "something blue" in the classroom rather than just using a blue crayon

How can I speak to some of the parents of children in the classroom?

What to listen for: Children and their parents look forward to school. Parents feel secure about sending their child to the program. Children are happy to attend; they do not cry regularly or complain of feeling sick.

Can parents drop into a classroom at anytime?

Can I set up a "trial day" when my child can join in activities while I observe?

How are parents involved in the program?

| |
|--------------------------------|
| NOTES: |
| parent handbook |
| children spend time |
| types of activities |
| children are together |
| taught to the children |
| individual children's learning |
| parents of children |
| parents drop in |
| "trial day" |
| parents involved |

Let's Review the first visit:

_____ My "gut" feeling about the program is positive

The Program

_____ is licensed or registered

_____ is participating in a State quality rating system
(like AAA rating of restaurants and hotels)

_____ has a positive and stimulating atmosphere

_____ encourages positive social development and good social skills

_____ individualizes for all children, rather than all children doing the
same thing at the same time all the time

_____ There is plenty of indoor space and materials for my child to play and
explore

_____ There is also outdoor space for play

_____ My child's health and safety will be protected

_____ Staff-to-child ratios are appropriate for my child's age

_____ Parent participation seems to be encouraged

The Staff

_____ seemed to have a positive view of children

_____ are qualified and ongoing professional development is provided

_____ appear to enjoy being with the children

_____ have experience working with other children with special needs

_____ were receptive to me and to my child when we visited

SECOND Program Visited

Name of Program _____

Director's Name _____

Date of Visit _____

Time of Visit _____

Questions to ask DURING the visit

May I have a copy of your parent handbook?

What to look for: The mission includes statements related to welcoming all children; meeting children's individual needs; respecting and honoring diversity; appreciation for individual learning styles; etc.

What do children spend most of their time doing?

What to look for: You want to see children spending most of their time playing and working with materials or other children and not being directed by the teacher. The classroom is decorated with children's original artwork, their own writing with invented spelling, and stories dictated by children to teachers

What types of activities do the children do throughout the day?

What to look for: Assorted building blocks and other construction materials, props for pretend play, picture books, paints and other art materials, and table toys such as matching games, pegboards, and puzzles. Children should not all be doing the same thing at the same time. Children have an opportunity to play outside every day – in addition to talking walks

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| parent handbook |
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| types of activities |
| children are together |
| taught to the children |
| individual children's learning |
| parents of children |
| parents drop in |
| "trial day" |
| parents involved |

Let's Review the second visit:

_____ My "gut" feeling about the program is positive

The Program

_____ is licensed or registered

_____ is participating in a State quality rating system
(like AAA rating of restaurants and hotels)

_____ has a positive and stimulating atmosphere

_____ encourages positive social development and good social skills

_____ individualizes for all children, rather than all children doing the
same thing at the same time all the time

_____ There is plenty of indoor space and materials for my child to play and
explore

_____ There is also outdoor space for play

_____ My child's health and safety will be protected

_____ Staff-to-child ratios are appropriate for my child's age

_____ Parent participation seems to be encouraged

The Staff

_____ seemed to have a positive view of children

_____ are qualified and ongoing professional development is provided

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| NOTES: |
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THIRD Program Visited

Name of Program _____
Date of Visit _____

Director's Name _____
Time of Visit _____

Questions to ask DURING the visit

May I have a copy of your parent handbook?

What to look for: The mission includes statements related to welcoming all children; meeting children's individual needs; respecting and honoring diversity; appreciation for individual learning styles; etc.

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| parents of children |
| parents drop in |
| "trial day" |
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Let's Review the third visit:

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The Program

_____ is licensed or registered

_____ is participating in a State quality rating system
(like AAA rating of restaurants and hotels)

_____ has a positive and stimulating atmosphere

_____ encourages positive social development and good social skills

_____ individualizes for all children, rather than all children doing the same thing at the same time all the time

_____ There is plenty of indoor space and materials for my child to play and explore

_____ There is also outdoor space for play

_____ My child's health and safety will be protected

_____ Staff-to-child ratios are appropriate for my child's age

_____ Parent participation seems to be encouraged

The Staff

_____ seemed to have a positive view of children

_____ are qualified and ongoing professional development is provided

_____ appear to enjoy being with the children

_____ have experience working with other children with special needs

_____ were receptive to me and to my child when we visited



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A program of

Child and Family Studies Research Programs

Thomas Jefferson University

215-503-1608

<http://jeffline.tju.edu/cfsrp>

cfsrp@jefferson.edu