

# Choosing Out-of-Home Child Care

Before you choose a program, spend some time there. See if you and your child feel comfortable. Talk to parents of other children that use or have used the program. Their experiences can help you make this important decision. Only choose someone you trust. Leaving your child at any age may be hard for all of you. It takes time for everyone to adjust. Caregivers are trained professionals. They are there to help you and your child. If, at any time, you are concerned visit the program and talk to the caregiver. A good program will always let you in to see what is going on.

## Choosing Child Care Checklist

Some questions to consider when choosing child care

- Is the program accredited or licensed\* by your state?
- Do the children seem happy?
- Are the space, equipment, and materials clean and safe?
- Are there enough materials and equipment? Are they right for your child?
- What kinds of training and experience do the adults have?
- Does the staff work well together? How does the morning staff communicate with the afternoon staff?
- How will staff help your child begin the program?
- What is the discipline policy? Does it fit with yours?
- Look for pictures, books, puzzles, and games that show family and cultural differences.
- Will the program meet the special needs of your child and your family?
- How can parents be involved? Are there advisory committees, workshops, support groups, or social events?
- Can you breastfeed there? Will you be able to bring pumped breast milk?
- Are infants always held when bottle fed?
- Are children kept in cribs and high chairs for long periods of time?
- Is the program flexible or will your child be required to fit into a group schedule?
- Are there enough adults to take care of the children?

Only choose someone you trust.

## Child Caretaker Ratio Requirements

### Family Day Care

number of children	number of adults
6 children	1 adult
7–10 children	at least 2 adults

### Child Care Center

number of children	number of adults
7 infants (0–14 months) or 9 toddlers (15–32 months)	2 adults
10 preschoolers (33 months–6 years)	1 adult

\* The Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) licenses all child care programs in Massachusetts. EEC enforces strong licensing standards for the health, safety, and education of all children in child care. Child care programs include family child care homes, child care centers, school age child care programs, residential programs for children, adoption, and foster placement programs. For more information, call **1-617-988-6600** or visit [www.eec.state.ma.us](http://www.eec.state.ma.us). If outside Massachusetts, check with your state's Department of Public Health for accreditation requirements.

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