

How to Interview Caregivers

The Informational Interview

The purpose of the informational interview is to gather information such as hours, tuition, sick policy, holidays that the provider is closed, activities that your child would be doing, discipline policy, and the provider's child care philosophy. When interviewing, you might want to have both parents or guardians present so that everyone understands the agreements made between parents and provider. If you are interviewing a home child care provider, you might want to meet the provider's spouse and other members of the family.

Formulate questions before the interview. List possible questions to ask each provider, and remembers to ask for references from other parents.

The Initial Observation

When observing a child care program for the first time, its probably best to go without your child. To avoid confusing your child, you should limit your child's visits only to places you are seriously considering. The purpose of this initial observation is for you to watch the provider's interaction with the children, and to assess the program. Bring a note pad so you can make notes and save your questions until after the observation.

Observing With Your Child

Before your final decision to enroll your child in the program, you will want to observe your child's interaction with the teacher and the children. You will want to visit long enough for your child to feel comfortable and to become acquainted with the environment. Depending on your child and the situation, one introductory visit may be enough, or he/she may need to go again with you. You do want to observe your child in the program, but you do not want to intrude on the provider's ability to care for the other children. Communicate with the provider, and evaluate the situation.

When you do leave for the first time, say good-bye to your child, but remember that long good-byes can be very difficult. Demonstrate your feeling of trust in the caregiver. Tell your child good-bye in a calm voice, and let him/her know when you will return.

For more information on choosing quality: <http://childcarehelp.org/families/quality.htm>.