



## Quality Indicators in Early Care and Education and Out-of-School time Programs

At one time or another, all parents need to find someone to help with child care. Quality child care can be difficult to find. It can be defined as child care services that provide a responsive, developmentally appropriate environment for young children. Parents who know that their child is receiving quality child care can be assured that their child is safe, nurtured, and challenged to learn.

Quality indicators are measurable aspects of child care based on research and evidence. Some components of quality in child care may include, but are not limited to caregiver-child interaction, group size, adult-child ratios, teacher training, communication between caregivers and families, and environment safety.

- Caregiver-child interaction is the most important indicator of quality in child care
- Children should have a constant caregiver
- Group size and adult-child ratios affect the relationship between the caregiver and the child
- Adults trained in child development or early childhood education are best able to provide a quality program
- Parents and caregivers that agree on how to care for children can build a supportive environment
- A safe place for children is essential
- Careful attention should be paid to the child's physical environment
- Nutrition and food services should promote physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development

Good child care arrangements can improve the quality of daily life for children and parents. Contacts with caring adults can broaden the child's experience and give parents peace of mind and important information about the child's development.

When we speak of quality child care, we're talking about settings that offer a steady diet of nurturing care and stimulation. In searching for child care, well-trained caregivers, supportive and varied activities, high levels of parent involvement, and good health and safety are the main quality indicators.

### Remember:

Just because a program is licensed or registered, does not ensure that the care provided is quality. Being regulated only means that the children are provided a safe and healthy place. We encourage you to not only visit different types of facilities, but also visit each room in those facilities to get an accurate picture of the quality of care. If you should have a question about the program your child attends or might attend, please call your Resource and Referral Specialist at ChildCareGroup. You may also call the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services at 1-800-252-5400 or visit them on the web at [www.dfps.state.tx.us/child\\_care](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/child_care) for information about your early care and education or out of school time program.

# Quality Child Care Checklist

(Please print and copy this form to take with you to each child care facility you visit)

Name of Child Care Provider/Facility \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Suite # City State Zip Code

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_

We suggest you visit at least 3 different programs and at different times of the day. The following points are a good way to measure the quality of a family child care home or child development center.

## Caregivers/Teachers

- |   |                              |                             |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Does the caregiver seem to really like children?                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Are children greeted when they arrive?                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Does the caregiver get down on the child's level to speak to him/her?       | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Are children's needs met quickly even when things get busy?                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Is the caregiver trained in CPR/First Aid?                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Is the caregiver involved in continuing education programs?                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Does the program keep up with children's changing interests?                | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Is the caregiver willing to answer your questions?                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Does the caregiver communicate with the parents about the child's day?      | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Are the parents' ideas welcomed and are there ways for you to get involved? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Do the caregiver and the children enjoy being together?                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Is there enough staff to meet the needs of the children?                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| What kind of experience does the caregiver have?                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

## Setting

- |   |                              |                             |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Is the atmosphere bright and pleasant?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Is the environment cleaned and well maintained?   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Is the outdoor play area safe and offer a variety of equipment for different ages?      | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Can the caregiver see the entire playground at all times?                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Are there areas for resting, quiet, and active play with enough space for the children? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

## Activities

- |  |                              |                             |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Is there a daily balance of playtime, story time, activity time, and nap time? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Are activities appropriate for each age group?                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Are there enough toys and learning materials for the number of children?       | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Are toys clean, safe, and within reach of the children?                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

## General

- |   |                              |                             |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Do you agree with the discipline practices? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Do you hear the sounds of happy children?   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Are children comforted when needed?         | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Is the program licensed or registered?      | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Are surprise visits by parents encouraged?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Will your child be happy here?              | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |