



## **Indicators of Quality Child Care**

Not all child care is of the quality that really benefits children. There are indicators that have been proven to affect the quality of care: group size; staff to child ratio; family involvement; caregivers' education; turnover rate; health & safety; and accreditation status. Parents need to consider all these indicators when evaluating the quality of the care. Child Care Aware of America, [www.childcareaware.org](http://www.childcareaware.org), has provided some thoughts on some of these indicators:

❖ **Adult to child ratio:**

Ask how many children there are for each adult. The fewer the children for each adult, the better for your child. You want your child to get plenty of attention. The younger your child, the more important this is. Babies need an adult to child ratio of no more than 1:4 (one adult for four infants); while four-year-olds can do well with a ratio of 1:10 (one adult for ten children).

❖ **Group size:**

Find out how many children are in the group. The smaller the group, the better. Imagine a group of 25 two-year olds with five adults, compared to a group of 10 with two adults. Both groups have the same adult to child ratio. Which would be calmer and safer? Which would be more like a family?

❖ **Caregiver qualifications:**

Ask about the caregivers' training and education. Caregivers with degrees and/or special training in working with children will be better able to help your child learn. Are the caregivers involved in activities to improve their skills? Do they attend classes and workshops?

❖ **Turnover:**

Check how long caregivers have been at the center or providing care in their homes. It's best if children stay with the same caregiver at least a year. Caregivers who come and go make it hard on your child. Getting used to new caregivers takes time and energy that could be spent on learning new things.

❖ **Accreditation:**

Find out if the child care provider has been accredited by a national organization. Providers that are accredited have met voluntary standards for child care that are higher than most state licensing requirements. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and The National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) are the two largest organizations that accredit child care programs.

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