



Early Care and Education... where our future begins

Infant/Toddler Child Care

10 COMPONENTS OF QUALITY CHILD CARE FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS

- 1. Licensed Programs Following Appropriate Health and Safety Practices**
 - Licensing insures that basic health and safety requirements have been met.
 - Staff wash their own and children's hands frequently.
 - Separate areas for food prep, diapering and toileting.
 - Detailed procedures for emergencies posted.
 - Health plan in place.
 - Infants placed on their back to sleep.
 - Nutritious meals and snacks.
 - Approved to administer medication.

- 2. Staff Well Trained in Early Childhood Development (0-3)**
 - Caregiver education and level of participation in ongoing training in the field of early childhood development and care is critically important.
 - Caregivers should apply their knowledge of early childhood and use curricula and materials to plan appropriate activities.
 - Caregivers use routines such as diapering, transitions, and mealtimes to promote learning.

- 3. Age Appropriate Environments**
 - Room arrangement allows for quiet and active play, dramatic and messy play, small group activities and individual care.
 - Multiple sets of toys available for access at the child's eye level to promote independent choosing and use.
 - Arrangements of classrooms based on the facilitation of learning by young children, rather on the preferences of caregivers.
 - Infants and toddlers must have separate outdoor space for play.

- 4. Small Groups with Optimal Ratios** (Fewer children mean less noise and less activity to interfere with infants' and toddlers' ability to learn.)
 - Create a greater sense of intimacy and safety.
 - Allow for rich dialogue, less noise and less activity, which are optimal conditions for this age group.
 - Build stronger relationships and enable the ability to adapt activities to meet challenging interests and needs of the group.

Continued... Small Groups with Optimal Ratios



Early Care and Education... where our future begins

- The recommended group size is six to eight for infants and no larger than ten for toddlers.
 - The best adult-to-child ratio is one adult for every three to four infants and one adult for every 5 toddlers.
 - Fewer children mean less noise and less activity to interfere with infants' and toddlers' ability to learn.
5. **Primary Caregiver and Continuity of Care** (Each child is matched with a primary caregiver who develops a positive relationship with the child's family and, whenever possible, is the staff person who changes the child's diapers, puts him or her down for nap and cuddles to look at a book together every day.)
- Relationships between caregivers and children are crucial in quality childcare.
 - Each child enrolled in-group care should be assigned a primary caregiver that has the principle responsibility for that child, building a positive, constant, intimate relationship with the child and the family.
 - Having one caregiver from entry into childcare until the child is three years old is optimal for the child's development given that each change from one caregiver to another takes a toll.
 - Having to learn and relearn a caregiver's ways may slow the child's overall development and leave them reluctant to form new relationships.
6. **Active and Responsive Caregiving to Support Children's Development**
- Caregivers take cues from each child to know when to expand on what the child is doing, when to guide, when to teach and when to intervene
 - The caregiver is alert to signs of stress in a child's behavior and responds with appropriate stress reducing activities and techniques.
 - The caregiver facilitates the development of self-esteem by respecting and accepting children, regardless of their behavior.
7. **Emerging Language and Literacy** (Caregivers promote the development of language through the use of simple words and maintain a balance between listening and talking with the child.)
- Caregivers expand on the sounds made by infants and toddlers and add words and ideas to what very young children express feel or say.
 - Caregivers promote the development of language through the use of simple words and maintain a balance between listening and talking with the child.
 - Staff creates a learning environment that includes age appropriate books and other print material.

Continued... Emerging Language and Literacy



Early Care and Education... where our future begins

- The use of songs, nursery rhymes, and finger plays promote language and literacy development.
 - Caregivers promote the development of language through the use of simple words and maintain a balance between listening and talking with the child.
- 8. Curriculum Observation and Individualized Programming** (Caregivers use curriculum guides specifically designed for infants and toddlers.)
- Learning is an interactive process in need of a variety of choices in activities and materials.
 - Caregivers must understand the temperaments, moods, and preferences of each child and should adapt their care to meet individual needs.
 - Young children sleep, eat and play in regular routines rather than forcing rigid conformity.
 - Based on curriculum and observations, caregivers plan for each day. Individualizing activities, materials and schedules according to the developmental stage of each child.
- 9. Family Involvement and Cultural Continuity** (Whenever possible, caregivers use the child's home language, following cultural norms related to daily routines, and celebrating diverse cultures.)
- Incorporating practices reflecting the values and beliefs of the families and the culture of the communities.
 - Use of the child's home language, following cultural norms related to daily routines, and celebrating diverse cultures.
 - Communicate each day with families, welcome parents into their child's classroom and organize special events that include the child's family members.
- 10. Comprehensive Support Services** (Links to Community agencies provide children in care with a medical home, mental health and social services, and therapeutic interventions.)
- Community agencies are essential to provide a medical home, mental health and social services, and therapeutic interventions.
 - Ongoing communication can ensure continuity of care across multiple disciplines and promote holistic support services and treatment.

Adapted from:

Teen Parent Child Care Quality Improvement Project – www.cpeip.fsu.edu – Florida State University Center for Prevention & Early Intervention Policy.

**Need help finding care for infants or toddlers?
Contact the Council's Referral Department at:
(914)761-3456 ext. 140
Monday thru Friday 9am to 5pm**



**Early Care and Education... where our future begins
A Good Caregiver for Infants and Toddlers is...**

...Loving and Responsive:

- One who hugs, rocks, cuddles, seeks eye contact and enjoys the child...
- Who responds to the baby's smiles and emerging skills and interests...
- Who finds ways to expand upon each experience...
- Is sociable and interested.
- One who talks with the baby about what they do and see...
- A playful partner who introduces new ideas, objects and games...
- Who supports children in their social contacts with other children and adults.

...Respects the Baby's Individuality:

- One who understands and welcomes babies development...
- Recognizes the baby's personal rhythms, style, strengths and limitations...and tunes into these when planning the pace and time for eating, sleeping and playing...
- Is comfortable with a special need or disabling condition.

...Offers Good Surroundings :

- An area that is clean and safe so babies can explore their surroundings...
- An area filled with interesting and stimulating things to explore...
- Set up to promote learning through free play...
- Changed to accommodate the needs of growing infants and toddlers...
- Eating and diapering areas well organized so as to be comfortable and practical for adults while allowing them to focus on the child.