

# How to Choose a Safe Child Care Provider or Caregiver

**1.800.CHILDREN**  
A free, confidential information  
and support helpline

You will make many decisions about where to send your child for school, childcare or other activities and programs. It is important to ask questions when thinking about who has access to your child.

## Before hiring a caregiver...

❁ *Check the reputation of the caregiver, even those you know.*

❁ *Get at least two references from the caregiver. Check all references received. Talk to parents of kids already in the program.*

❁ *Make sure staff/volunteers have been trained to take care of children. Ensure they also receive background checks for child abuse and criminal activities.*

❁ *Observe how the caregiver interacts with your child and other children. Does the caregiver maintain appropriate control of the children and if so, how? Are the caregivers' voices relaxed and reassuring? The caregiver should easily connect with children.*

❁ *In the interview process, let the caregiver know you have ongoing, open conversations with your child about his/her safety, boundaries and that your child will share concerns with you. Let them know your child's concerns will be taken seriously.*

❁ *Find out what activities are available for your child throughout the day. There may be a daily schedule. Check out the toys, play equipment, books, and materials used to keep the children busy. Are play areas clean and clear of hazards?*

## Before enrolling your child in nursery school, daycare, pre-kindergarten, or camp, consider the following:

❁ *Tour the building, inside and outside. If you are not allowed in some sections or rooms, choose another facility. The facility should be clean and well organized. Are there isolated or secluded areas? Are the bathrooms used by children well lit with only one entry point? Are hallways, entryways, stairwells, and rooms brightly lit?*

❁ *Check to see if the facility has a parents' advisory board. If so, call the board and find out recommendations they have made in the past. Has the provider followed through with them? If they don't have an advisory board, why not start one?*













[www.pcaky.org](http://www.pcaky.org)







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## Other policies related to safety:

-  Are there rules preventing staff from taking children home with them?
-  Are children ever transported to events? If so, how are children kept safe at off-site activities?
-  Is there an emergency plan?
-  What is the typical ratio of children per caregiver?
-  Are firearms and weapons safely secured and locked?
-  Are medications and cleaning products stored and out of reach?
-  Is the caregiver certified in First Aid and CPR?
-  Does the provider participate in the All Stars Quality Rating Program?

## Once you have chosen a childcare provider:

-  **Make it clear your child is not to leave the center, home or school without your written permission.** Never sign a blank permission slip.
-  **Give the caregiver a list of individuals your child may leave with at the end of the day.** Ensure identification is checked for any individual picking up your child.
-  **If your child is upset about being left with the caregiver, ask why.** Never assume your child is just being difficult.
-  **Communicate with other parents.** Talk with them about their experiences with the caregiver and/or child care provider. Discuss any problems that may arise.



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