

QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN CONSIDERING A CHILD CARE PROVIDER/PROGRAM

Experience and Education

Family Child Care Provider:

- How many years experience do you have working with children? In what type of setting?
- What is your educational background? Was any of this education related to early childhood education or development? Can you provide documentation?
- What experience have you had with children? With what age groups?
- What was your last job? How long were you there? Why did you leave?
- What other kind of work have you done?
- Tell me about yourself. How did you decide to become a provider?
- What do you like most about being a provider?
- How long do you plan to be in this profession?
- Does your family support your business?
- How do you handle emergencies?
- Do you have a plan for illness or emergencies? May I see it? Are you near a hospital?

Child Care Programs:

- What is the procedure for contacting parents in a medical emergency?
- Do you have training in infant and child cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training and first aid?
- Does you or your staff have training in handling medical emergencies, general first aid and identification of allergic reactions?
- How long has each staff member been working at the facility (average tenure and turnover of staff)?
- Does your staff have experience and skills in modern child-care methods and developmental learning?
- Does the program have procedures for hiring caregivers that include background checks by an outside source, a medical exam, references and fingerprints?

References and Professional Affiliations

Family Child Care Providers:

- How long have you lived in this home and how long have you been in business?
- Will you supply a list of references that includes present and past clients?
- Is this program licensed with the state of NH? (The license should be in plain view if not, ask why.) If so, for how long and for how many children?
- Are you a member of a regional, state or national child care professional organization? If not why?

Child Care Programs:

- Is this program accredited by a nationally recognized professional organization such as NAEYC or NAFCC?
- Are you listed with a resource and referral agency?
- Do you hold Professional Liability Insurance?
- How long have the teachers worked at this facility?
- Do you or any of the staff speak a language in addition to English?

Business/Availability Questions

- Where is this program located and what are your operating hours?
- Do you have an opening and what age is the opening for?
- What are your fees? Are there sliding fees, scholarships, and/or multi-child discounts available? Does your program accept government subsidies?

- What is the application process?
- Do you offer drop-in child care and/or hourly rates?
- What kind of information about our family would be helpful to you in caring for my/our child?
- Do you charge for days when my child is sick or on vacation?
- Do you close for holidays and if so which ones?
- When are child care payments due?
- Is there a late pick up fee, if so, when is it due?
- How much notice is required for me to un-enroll my child in this program?
- Do you provide receipts that I can use for my income taxes?
- Are meals included in the fee quoted? If so which ones (e.g. breakfast, snack, lunch, dinner)? Does this facility participate in a food program (a federally funded food program-CACFP)?
- Can you accommodate special diets (e.g. vegetarian, certain food allergies)?
- What is your foul weather closure policy?

Program Offerings / Supplies / Health and Safety

- What is the total capacity of children you will accept at this facility? Does this correspond with the posted copy of this program's Child Care License?
- What is the age range of the children served? How many of them are full-time vs. part-time?
- What is the child to caregiver ratio for each age group?
- Is there a waiting list and if so, how long is the waiting list and what is the expected turnover time?
- How are children of different ages, needs, and abilities grouped?
- What activities are planned for my child during the day? Is there an appropriate balance of indoor and outdoor activities? Can you describe what a typical day might be like for my child? Describe the feedback I will receive about my child at the end of the day.
- What are some things you hope my child will learn in this program?
- Do you offer educational programs designed to prepare my child for kindergarten?
- Does the daily schedule allow for the children have quiet-time each day? What time of day does this normally occur? During quiet time, is it quite enough for children to rest uninterrupted? Is there a place for children to nap or have quiet time indoors and out?
- Are children allowed to watch television, how long each day? Is so, what programs and how much time each day?
- Do you hold infants during feeding?
- How much time do infants spend in confined to any of the following; crib, play pen, portable-crib, swing or walker?
- Describe how you would play with my infant.
- Describe how you deal with parent/child separation anxiety.
- Describe how you handle toilet training and what age you would suggest beginning this process?
- What types of records do you maintain concerning my child's progress and important learning and activities each day?
- How does your staff support the emotional development of children?

Supplies / Health and Safety

- Make note the lighting and ventilation, and ask yourself if it seems adequate and comfortable.
- Are safe and sanitary practices observed and maintained in the program?
- Are the toileting and wash facilities available for staff and children? Is hand washing after toileting required of both?

- Is the outdoor play area safe? Is all equipment in good repair? Is impact material present on indoor and outdoor play equipment as required by state licensing regulations?
- Is there adequate space for gross motor activity?
- Do the activities emphasize physical fitness as well as mental development?
- Are the toys and materials used by the children clean, safe and appropriate for the children's ages?
- What supplies will I be expected to provide?
- Can I use cloth diapers or are you required to use disposable diapers only?
- Are there any animals or pets present?

Policy Questions

- Do you have a child care policy handbook? This book should tell you the programs position on certain important issues and should include a child care philosophy statement.
- What are the rules of this facility?
- Can I see a sample parent/provider agreement or business contract?
- How are parental complaints handled within the organization? Is there an arbitration process should you and I disagree about something?
- What is your vacation and illness policy?
- What is the policy on sick children?
- Describe your discipline policy. What would you do if my child disobeyed you?
- How are conflicts between children resolved?
- Does anyone in the household smoke?
- Can parents "drop in" for a visit?
- Are parents encouraged to volunteer and participate in program activities?
- How many days was this program closed this past year?

Transportation Questions

- Do you take the children on any field trips?
- Are children ever transported in a vehicle while in your care? If so, do you have a valid driver's license and what is your driving record? Can you provide proof of insurance?
- Do you provide transportation from the child care to home or from the child care to school?