

# Choosing Quality Infant-Toddler Child Care



Choosing child care for very young children requires careful observation. Both the provider and the environment should have special qualities. Time should be taken to visit several different programs more than once. The following guidelines will help you when selecting a quality environment for infants and toddlers.

## Separation

- Parent is invited to spend time with the baby in care
- Caregiver talks with parents about the separation process
- Caregiver is supportive when parent and child say good-bye
- Crying at separation is accepted, and at the appropriate time the baby is directed to other activities

## Caregiver

- Likes and respects infants and toddlers
- Understands each infant develops at her own pace
- Uses calm and nurturing voice tone and body movement
- Touches, holds, carries, and rocks baby
- Talks to baby and responds to babbles, coos, and new words
- Responds appropriately to clues that baby is hungry, tired, uncomfortable, or bored
- Acknowledges crying as the way babies communicate
- Understands parents' needs and takes time to communicate
- Attends classes and trainings in infant care and development

## Activities

- A variety of activities are offered daily
- Cloth books and age appropriate toys are within reach of tiny hands
- Toys are changed often to encourage exploration
- Reading stories and singing are included
- Time is provided for the child to play alone, with or near other children of similar age and ability
- Cribs are not used as a play space
- Outdoor play activities are included

## Physical Care

- Program has a diaper changing table with all necessary supplies within reach
- Diapering is done as often as needed and recorded
- The parent may choose either cloth or disposable diapers
- Baby is carefully cleaned and diapered
- Diapers are disposed of in a covered diaper pail
- Caregiver washes hands and disinfects diapering surface before and after each change
- Diapering, bathing, and dressing is done in a positive manner
- Caregiver talks baby through routines, engaging baby's help

## Sleeping

- Nap room is well ventilated
- Window blind cords are shortened and not near cribs
- Shoes are removed and baby is changed into comfortable clothing for nap
- Baby is helped to sleep when tired using whatever is appropriate for the individual baby
- Crib sheet and blanket are changed daily, or sooner if soiled, and never shared
- Baby is not awakened unnecessarily, but is removed from crib or mat soon after awakening

## Environment

- Clean, comfortable, and pleasant surroundings
- Area is safe for the age of the child and arranged to encourage development
- Infants are not confined to swings or playpens
- Space is provided for both restful sleep and active play
- Baby is supervised at all times even when asleep
- Young infants are separated from toddlers
- Space is provided for moving freely around on the floor
- Toys and play surfaces are wiped clean several times a day

## Feeding

- Babies are fed nutritious food using parent's suggestions
- Babies are fed when hungry rather than on a strict schedule
- New foods are introduced to promote variety and develop skills
- At the appropriate age the baby is encouraged to feed self
- Food and formula consumed is noted on baby's feeding chart
- The baby is held for bottle feeding, the bottle is never propped
- The caregiver cooperates with a mother's breast feeding plans

*Brochure taken in part from material provided by Options: A Child Care and Human Services Agency, Baldwin Park, CA*

YMCA Childcare Resource Service (CRS) is funded through the California Department of Education, Child Development Division to provide free child care referral services to San Diego County. YMCA CRS strives to ensure that all parents receive information and referrals for choosing quality child care.

### Free services include:

- Child care referrals to licensed family child care homes, centers, and nanny agencies
- Application for child care fee assistance
- Parent resource packet of child care information
- *Choosing Quality Child Care* workshop
- Resource library with parenting books and videos
- Referrals to parenting classes
- Links to community services for families
- Training for parents and caregivers
- Child health and Behavioral Health services

**YMCA CRS seeks to promote and develop quality child care but provides referrals, not recommendations, to particular providers.**

**Child Care Referral Line: 1.800.481.2151**

Open Monday – Thursday 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. and Friday 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

**On-Line Child Care Search: [www.ymcacrs.org](http://www.ymcacrs.org)**

**Child Care HealthLine: 1.800.908.8883**

Free child health and behavioral health services.

**Community Care Licensing: 619.767.2200**

Call to review a potential child care provider's licensing history to obtain information on complaints, violations, and site visits.

**For a copy of YMCA CRS referral and complaint policies call the Child Care Referral Line.**