

Choosing child care for your infant is a very important decision, one that should only be made after you have conducted in-person interviews with the caregivers and visited the site to assess the quality of care provided.

Here are some important things to look for, as well as some helpful questions to ask potential caregivers before choosing child care for your infant.

Signs of a quality child care program:

- **warmth and affection**
- **individual care based on developmental needs**
- **continuity and consistency of primary caregivers**
- **caregiver and parent partnership**
- **low caregiver to child ratios and small group sizes**
- **clean and safe environment**

Important Questions to Ask:

- Have the caregivers received training specific to my child's age and needs?
- Is there always someone present who is current with C.P.R. and First Aid training?
- Are all caregivers current with S.I.D.S. and Shaken Baby Syndrome prevention training?
- How closely will my baby be supervised while they sleep, will they be in the same room as the caregiver at all times?
- Will I be welcome to visit any time my baby is in care?
- Do caregivers and children practice good hand washing?
- How often are the toys cleaned and sanitized?
- Do you have any references that I can call?

Making your choice:

Before making your final decision make sure to visit at least 3 different programs to compare the quality of care offered. If it seems like a good fit for your child and family, visit more than once. Visiting a second time will give you the opportunity to ask follow-up questions and questions you may have missed the first time. Also, child care referral agencies always remind parents to contact the licensing agency of the program to check if there have been any complaints or correction orders. After you have made your decision, visit the setting with your child a couple of times before starting. This will give the caregivers the opportunity to begin to develop a positive relationship with you and your baby.

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If you are interested in learning more about the work of the Washington County Child Protection Citizen Review Panel, see the Washington County website at <http://www.co.washington.mn.us/index.aspx?NID=1549>

Or, call Don Pelton, Community Services Supervisor, at 651-430-6631.

