

Six Quality Indicators to Consider

- **Group Size**
- **Ratio**
- **Health and Safety**
- **Family Involvement**
- **Caregiver Education and Turnover**
- **Accreditation**

Group Size

Group size has a positive impact on the overall quality of early and school-age care and education programs and the experiences that children have in those programs. Smaller group size is important in maintaining proper supervision, quality care and enough one-on-one attention for each child in care.

Ratio

Similar to group size, the adult to child ratio also has a positive impact on the overall quality of a child's experience in care. Consult the **Types of Child Care** to find out more about the adult to child ratio for the different types of child care.

Health and Safety

A major concern for parents when they drop their children off at a child care program for the first time is the safety of their children. Some things to look for that indicate the program is safe & healthy are working smoke detectors, toys and equipment are in good condition, food prep areas are separated from restroom and diapering areas. The daily routine should also include proper handwashing and diapering procedures, and direct supervision of children at all times. *This is not a comprehensive list.*

Family Involvement

Parents and families have the most direct and lasting impact on a child. When parents are involved, children are more confident, and feel more comfortable especially in a new setting. Choosing a program that welcomes parents to come in during the time the child is in care is the first step in getting to know the "important people" in a child care program. Know what is expected of you, and what you can expect from a program. Volunteer to help out at the program, to read to the children or go on a field trip. Always keep the lines of communication open.

New York State Law requires providers to give parents the opportunity to discuss issues related to their children. These opportunities must occur at the time of enrollment and as frequently as needed thereafter, but at least annually. It is the parent's right to know what is happening while their child is in a child care program. Do not hesitate to ask questions.

Caregiver Education and Turnover

Caregivers in child care centers, school-age programs, and registered/licensed family child care programs must receive a minimum of thirty hours of educational training every two years, fifteen hours of which must be completed

during the first six months of employment in a center or school-age program. In family child care programs, providers must complete fifteen hours of training during the first six months of program registration or licensing.

Accreditation

Accreditation is a voluntary system by which programs measure themselves against a national set of standards. Going beyond minimum licensing standards, accredited programs make a commitment to excellence. Caregivers in accredited programs take part in on-going training. They are more likely to understand children's needs at different ages, plan appropriate activities, interact with children in warm and stimulating ways, and provide positive guidance for children rather than harsh discipline.

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