

CHOOSING CHILD CARE: HOW DO I FIND THE RIGHT PROGRAM?

Choosing the right child care program can be confusing and difficult. But it's a really important part of your job as a parent. As you know, children grow and learn very rapidly in the early years. This is the time they're laying the groundwork for the future. The caregiver you choose will help guide your child through this critical stage of life. The right kind of child care can be a wonderful opportunity to enrich your child's life and help them get a great start.

Here's a guide to help you through the process of choosing child care. Remember, your most important guides should be:

- Your own feelings and instincts. Pay attention to how you feel in any child care program you visit: Are you comfortable? Do you think your child would be happy here?
- The caregiver's relationships with the children and families. Is this what you want for your child and family?



1. DECIDE WHAT YOU WANT

Think through these questions:

- What are your beliefs and values about caring for children? What's important to you?
- How do you feel about pacifiers, infant feeding, toilet training, and napping?
- What are your views on discipline and education?
- What kinds of activities do you want for your child?
- What are your family's or child's special needs?

2. DECIDE WHAT LOCATION WOULD WORK BEST FOR YOU

- Close to your home?
- On your way to work or near your work?
- Close to public transportation?

3. GET A LIST OF CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

from your local Child Care Resource and Referral agency and from friends and family. In Southern Alameda County call 4Cs at 510-244-0506.

4. DO A TELEPHONE SCREENING, VISIT A VARIETY OF PROGRAMS, AND INTERVIEW THE DIRECTOR OR FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDER.

See 4Cs Telephone Screening Questions Tip Sheet at www.4calameda.org/screeningeng.

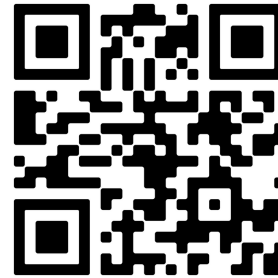
5. CHECK FOR REPORTS OF ANY COMPLAINTS filed against any of the programs you are considering.

- Parents have the right to get complaint information on any child care program they are considering. If you ask, the program must show you copies of licensing reports, including complaint investigations.
- Call Community Care Licensing at 1-844-LET-US-NO (1-844-538-8766) or visit www.cdss.ca.gov. You will need to provide the center or provider's name, address, and license number.

6. PREPARE YOURSELF AND YOUR CHILD

See 4Cs Child Care Tip Sheets online: www.4calameda.org/tipsheets

Or scan the QR Code:



7. COMMUNICATE AND GET ACQUAINTED

Take time to visit and talk with the provider about the program, your child, and your family. If possible, agree on a “test period” to see how your child adjusts to the program and to give yourself time to evaluate your decision.

