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Choosing the Right Preschool

Choosing a preschool for your child is a big decision! You need to choose the program that best fits your child's needs and your expectations! To help you through that process, we have put together this checklist to help guide you during your tour(s).

This checklist is designed to help you choose the right preschool program for your child. It is based on qualities that research has shown to be important for a preschooler's growth and development.

The checklists are not all inclusive. For example, they do not include all of the areas required by state licensing standards. However, you can check the state standards by going to National Center of Early Childhood Quality Assurance (NCECQA).

We do feel these checklists cover what we know to be important characteristics of a quality childcare program. Please take a few minutes to look it over and take notes before your tour.

During your tour, ask any questions you have about the program. It's important that the program you choose meets your needs as a family.

We hope you find this information helpful! Please call us at 763-689-2230 with questions you may have about preschool!

Warm regards,

Cliss Loescher
Director
Building Blocks for Life Preschool

Jesus said, "Let the children come to me. And do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these" (Luke 18:16). Incorporating the good news of Jesus in all it does, Building Blocks for Life Preschool exists to equip children with the essential building blocks for this life and eternity.

Because it is our belief that children are gifts from God, Building Blocks for Life Preschool has been established to aid parents in the bringing-up of their children. Our Christian preschool program seeks to nurture the spiritual, physical, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of 3-5 year olds. It is also our belief that the primary responsibility for raising children has been given to parents, and that the communication and partnership established between these two parties will create a more well-rounded and beneficial experience for children.

Program Information

Gather as much of this information as you can prior to the visit. The tuition rates may not be available over the telephone due to the different types of programs the preschool or center holds. Ask if they can email the rates to you or ask during your visit.

Name of Program	
Address	
Telephone	
Website & Email	
Contact Person Name: Role (Director/Teacher/Etc.)	
Type of Program: (circle one)	Half Day Full Day School Year Only Year Round Other
Days & Hours of Operation	
Holiday Schedule (school, gov't)	
Tuition Fees	
Registration Fees	
Addition Fees (field trips, supplies, etc.)	
Date of Tour (include day of week)	
Time of Tour	

	First Impressions	Yes	No	Notes
1.	Are the grounds in good condition (grass cut, no clutter)?			
2.	Is outside building in good condition (no cracked/broken windows; chipped or peeling paint)			
3.	Is the entrance clearly marked?			
4.	Were you greeted immediately upon entering the program?			
5.	Was the person giving the tour welcoming?			
6.	Were you offered the opportunity to ask questions before the tour?			
7.	Did the person giving the tour seem rushed? Was he/she focused on your tour or distracted?			
8.	Were you given the opportunity to ask questions during and after the tour?			
9.	Did the person giving the tour and the teacher(s) spend time with you and answer any questions you had?			

Questions to ask before or during the tour:

	Questions:	Yes	No	Notes
1.	Is the program state licensed? If yes: for what ages and how many children?			
2.	Does the program hold additional quality ratings			
3.	What training/degrees/certifications does the lead teacher have?			
4.	What training/degrees/certification does the assistant or aide have?			
5.	How many hours of in-service training are teachers receiving each year?			
6.	How long has the classroom staff been employed at the program? (2 years or more?)			
7.	What is the teacher to child ratio (look for 1 teacher for every 10 children)?			
8.	How many children are in one classroom?			
9.	What is the general classroom schedule?			
10.	Does the classroom have interest learning centers (art, blocks, dramatic play, library, math, science, writing, etc.) set up for children's daily use?			
11.	What curriculum is used by the teachers to guide the activities children participate in?			
12.	What is the program's philosophy of education (follows developmentally appropriate practice; faith-based; Montessori, Reggio?)			
13.	Are children given opportunities and time to explore themes, topics and activities each day?			
14.	Do children participate in activities individually or in groups?			
15.	Do children go outside each day for unstructured play?			
16.	What do children do for unstructured play in bad (inclement) weather?			
17.	Does the curriculum <i>prepare</i> children for? Do they provide activities for: Early literacy? Early math? Socialization skills & problem solving skills? Self-help skills? Small & Large muscle/motor skills?			
18.	How is discipline handled? What is the behavior policy?			
19.	How are parents notified of concerns (at pick up time, telephone call, note home, etc.)?			
20.	Are there conferences at least twice a year?			
21.	Does the teacher communicate with parents on a regular basis? How (phone, email, notes home)?			
22.	Are parents welcome to drop by at any time?			
23.	Do the children go on fieldtrips? How often? Where to?			
24.	How does the program ensure the safety of the children?			

Areas to look for and consider when observing in the classroom:

	Questions:	Yes	No	Notes
1.	Do the teachers get down the children's level when they talk to them?			
2.	Are the teachers interacting with the children as they participate in activities in the classroom?			
3.	Are the teachers yelling to the children (across the classroom or the playground) or approaching children to talk with them?			
4.	Are the teachers interacting with the children on the playground or are they interacting more with each other?			
5.	Are the materials in the classroom clean and safe (look for cracked/broken toys, etc.)?			
6.	Are the children happy and engaged with activities and with each other?			
7.	Are the teachers warm and nurturing in their interactions with the children?			
8.	How are problems or arguments between children handled?			
9.	Did you feel welcomed by the staff entering the classroom?			