



# Childcare Checklist

While there are so many things to review, assess and look at when determining the best place for your child – no one can create a single list that meets every family’s ideals. Below is a gathering of many criteria to support your effort. Feel free to print and take this with you to various academies for comparison and consideration.

## **Facility, Campus and Business**

- Is the facility new, look new or recently renovated, fresh and inviting?
- Does the academy have a covered drop off area for all those less than sunny days?
- Does the facility use high levels of security for access in and on campus?
- Was the facility design with “a greener, healthier vision”?
- Is the academy a member of the Green Business Bureau?
- Is the facility exceptionally clean?
- Is the facility State-of-the-Art (e.g. uses solar lighting to bring sunlight into the interior of the facility)?
- Does the facility have a clean air system?
- Was the facility designed with safety and good operational flow in mind?
- Does the facility have a private nursing room for breastfeeding and expressing?
- Does the facility have bathrooms accessible for children playing outdoors?
- Does the facility have bathrooms within the classrooms with their own hand washing stations?
- Are additional hand washing stations located by classroom back door so children wash their hands immediate upon entering from outside?
- Does the facility have fire sprinkler system for added safety?
- Does the facility have a “safe zone” within it – designed and engineered for resiliency in threats of storms or severe weather?
- Does the facility have a café and commercial grade kitchen to prepare and serve nutritious meals?
- Does the facility utilize cots with personal nap linens verses mats that lay on the floor?
- Does the facility have an abundance of outdoor spaces with age appropriate recreation?
- Does the facility have shaded areas for safe play in the sun?
- Does the facility reduce pesticide and chemical exposure to children by utilizing high-end ground cover material?



## **Parent Partnership**

- Do you feel there is a true partnership with parents promised to you at the academy?
- Does the academy offer multiple communication opportunities?
- How open are the teachers and staff about talking with you?
- Are they willing to share and provide you with information about your child's activities daily?
- Is there an online parent portal that supports you with all the necessary and ancillary information and resources you need?

## **Teachers, Support Staff and Administration**

- Does the academy offer teachers continuous training and development?
- Does the academy offer an accredited, research-based curriculum?
- Are teachers trained for the age group that they teach?
- Do teachers interact with children frequently, not just stand back and watch the clock?
- Did you feel you could speak openly to staff?
- Did you feel comfortable with the people who will take care of your child?
- Did you feel the teachers and staff would partner with you in developing your child?

## **Overall Experience**

- Is the Owner also the Operator and on-site regularly?
- Does the school require highly skilled, educated teachers and staff?
- Does the academy maintain lower than State required teacher to child ratio?
- Do the teachers and staff seem to be engaged and care?
- Is the educational philosophy one that will fit with your child?
- Does the campus support your child's desire to explore outdoors and have a green space?
- Is good nutrition, physical fitness, good hygiene taught and reinforced?
- Are ecological appreciation, good citizenship and character building incorporated into every day?

## **Cleanliness**

- Does the daycare center appear and smell exceptionally clean and fresh, both inside and outside?
- Are the established guidelines for sanitizing the diapering stations, bathrooms, kitchens, toys and tables clearly followed?
- Are there regular and professional cleaners to thoroughly clean and sanitize the entire facility?
- Are the majority of cleaning products natural or eco-friendlier substances?



## **Education**

- Does the academy offer an accredited curriculum for preschool?
- Does the curriculum balance education and play appropriately?
- Does the academy offer a music program?
- Does the academy offer an International Language Program?
- Does the academy teach American Sign Language to infants and toddlers?
- Does the academy have a yoga program in addition to their fitness programs?
- Does the academy use and offer children the use of a variety of technologies and devices?
- Does the academy have a partnership with parents, resources, and availability to be an extension of your family?
- Does the academy offer exciting school age programs in the summer, over school breaks and after school?
- Does the after school program offer homework help, provide snacks, computers, recreation and fitness?
- Does the school provide transportation from local elementary schools?

## **Health and Safety Features**

- Does the facility use biometrics or another technology to prevent unauthorized access and “security code sharing”?
- Do all entries and exits provide secure/controlled access?
- Are there established fire alarms/security systems/evacuation procedures posted and shared?
- Is there fencing surrounding the entire outdoor space?
- Does the daycare center have security cameras and/or webcams?
- Is there a written and communicated health and safety program?
- Do caregivers follow hand-washing techniques and support children to do the same?
- Is there a comfortable “sick child” bed with adult supervision for a child feeling under the weather?
- Do the teachers follow a morning health to look for signs and symptoms of illness in each child?
- Have all staff members and teachers had background, reference and criminal checks?
- Are you aware if the academy has on-site emergency plan and an evacuation plan in case of emergency?
- Are you aware of the safe pickup/drop-off procedures?
- Does the entrance have a trustworthy security system?
- Is the staff trained in first aid and CPR and Emergency Response?
- Do they offer full in-house nutritional preparation and full commercial kitchen verses “order in or warming only” kitchens?
- Are the menus nutritious, the food choices varied and look appetizing and appealing?
- Is the majority of the food and mess kept out of the classrooms via the use of a cafeteria?



## **Curriculum**

- Is the day carefully planned for your child?
- Is the program adaptable for various levels of development?
- Do children engage in a variety of activities throughout the day?
- Do children learn social skills—such as sharing, taking turns, and getting along with others?
- Is quality literature used in the classroom every day?
- Are there fully integrated assessment and metric components and tools for the teachers and the administrators to use to support the learning and accurate report and share progress?

## **Infants & Toddlers**

- Are there individual cribs for each infant?
- Are there strict guidelines for sanitizing toys and surfaces?
- Are care, meal, and nap times personalized for your child's needs?
- Are play and daily routines used as opportunities for nurturing and learning?
- Do the toys and materials offer interesting and challenging activities?
- Are children read to several times a day?

## **Preschool & Pre-K**

- Does the curriculum prepare your child for primary school?
- Is quality literature used in the classroom each day?
- Are a wide range of instructional methods used, like individual, small and whole-group learning?
- Are technologies used to both support learning and to teach your child safe and proper usage?
- Does the academy offer character development, promote good citizenship and fair play?

## **After and Summer Camp**

- Is safe and reliable transportation provided to and from school?
- Is there an area where children can do homework after school?
- Do the children have access to and support with computer, tablet and other technologies?
- Is there a variety of fun and engaging activities for children to choose from?
- Are extra activities offered—like music, fitness, water play, sports, celebrations etc.?

## **Equipment and Furnishings**

- Are furnishings, equipment and toys developmentally appropriate, safe and in excellent condition?
- Does the academy regular perform safety checks to certify that their playground equipment meets Federal, local safety standards?
- Are the rooms large with furniture placement and design for maximum comfort and learning?
- Are evaluations of equipment performed before they are brought onto the premises?