

SELECTING CHILD CARE: A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

*Every child in Kansas deserves a safe, healthy and nurturing environment.
Good Beginnings Last a Lifetime!*

When searching for a child care setting that will meet your child's needs as well as your family's needs:

Think about what kind of child care setting you are interested in for your child. Child care homes and centers vary in size, training of staff and daily activities/schedules for children. Ask if a child care home or center is licensed by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. Most child care settings are required to be regulated. Child care regulations reduce the risk of predictable harm to children when being cared for in the child care setting. Child care regulations also provide consumer protection for you and your child.

- **Ask to see the child care license issued by the Department** which will reveal the type of license held and the maximum number of children that may be cared for at one time.
- **Ask to review the Notice of Survey Findings** provided to the facility showing the results of the latest inspection. Licensed facilities are inspected at least once every 12 months.
- **Review the compliance history of a regulated child care facility** in Kansas online at www.kdheks.gov/kidsnet or by calling the Kansas Department of Health and Environment at 785-296-1270.
- **Visit different child care settings (look and listen):**
 - Is the child care home or center a busy, happy place with clean, uncluttered space, sturdy play equipment and a variety of play materials? Are activities conducted both inside and outside? Are poisons and other dangerous substances in locked storage? Is there room for children to engage in active play, quiet play and rest?
 - Are children encouraged to express themselves and satisfy their curiosity? Are they actively engaged in activities? Do the children appear to be enjoying themselves and directing themselves at least part of the time? Are the children welcomed and addressed by the staff? What do the children do in a typical day? Are the children given choices among activities that are appropriate for the age range of children in care?
 - Are the adults working with the children warm, accepting and understanding of children? Are the adults supervising the children well and at the same time enjoying their time with the children? Are the adults educated and trained to work with children?
 - How many children are in care? How many adults work with a group of children? A smaller number of young children in a group is the most beneficial in meeting each child's needs. Are child care practices like discipline, supervision and napping similar to your beliefs and practices? Are children encouraged to learn self-control? How often are children's diapers changed? How do the adults in the program include you in your child's care?
 - What basic services are provided by the program? What type of meals are served to the children? Does the program provide transportation services?
- **After visiting several programs, choose the program that will best meet the needs of your child(ren) and family.**

For additional information about choosing child care or to find help in locating child care, contact the local child care resource and referral agency. To find your local child care resource and referral agency, call 1-877-678-2548 or visit www.ks.childcareaware.org.

You may be eligible for assistance with paying for child care (based on your income). For more information, contact the local Department for Children and Families (DCF) office.