



## Checklist: Choosing Your Quality Child Care Program

Name of Facility: \_\_\_\_\_

Modality: \_\_\_\_\_

The Child Care Council of Dutchess & Putnam, Inc. understands the search for quality child care can be complex. To help parents successfully find quality child care, the Council has provided a **printable checklist** below. Use this as a helpful tool, but do not discount your own intuition. If something does not seem right, continue to weigh your options.

Refer to the table below. This will assist you with descriptions of the modalities of care, definitions of each and ratio sizes.

According to New York State Social Service 390, a program must be registered/licensed where care is provided for more than 3 children for more than 3 hours. Your local Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) agency is also available to answer any questions you may have regarding registered/licensed programs.

Be sure to also visit the NYS Office of Children and Family Services website for information about the NYS regulations and the compliance history of registered/licensed programs.

CCR&R: (845) 473-4141

NYS Regional Office: (845) 708-2400

NYS Office of Children and Family Services: [www.ocfs.state.ny.us](http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us)

---



**Reference Chart**

---

Modality	Definition	Ratio
Family Day Care (FDC) <i>*Registration</i>	Care provided in the residence	-6 children, ages 6 weeks to 12 years + 2 additional school-aged children with approval -One caregiver for every 2 children under the age of 2, including provider's own children
Group Family Day Care (GFDC) <i>*License</i>	Care provided in the residence	-Must have an assistant -12 children, ages 6 weeks to 12 years + additional 4 school-aged children with approval -Once caregiver for every 2 children under the age of 2, including provider's own children
School Age Child Care (SACC) <i>*Registration</i>	Care in any building <i>other than</i> a residence. All children must be school age.	1 Staff: 10 children (ages 5-9 years) Maximum Group Size=20 1 Staff: 15 children (ages 10-12 years) Maximum Group Size=30
Day Care Center (DCC) <i>*License</i>	Program not in a residence where care is provided for more than 6 children for more than 3 hours.	Ratios of children to staff vary upon the children's age and room size.
Legally Exempt (LE) <i>*Exempt from Regulations</i>	One adult caring for no more than 2 unrelated children in his/her home.	-No more than 2 children, in addition to provider's own children -No more than 2 children under the age of 2, including the caregiver's own children



## Environment

Good lighting	Yes	No
Rooms occupied by children are clean, attractive, safe, roomy, and comfortable	Yes	No
Enough toys, games and materials so that children don't have to wait to use them	Yes	No
Space for each child's belongings, including a change of clothing	Yes	No
A safe outdoor play area, both shaded and open with a variety of age appropriate equipment free of hazards that offer space to run, tumble and play	Yes	No
A book center with good picture books	Yes	No
A parent information board	Yes	No
Sturdy, child-size furniture	Yes	No
Windows low enough for a child to look outside with appropriate safety barriers	Yes	No
Games, arts and crafts, sports and dramatic play for children of all ages	Yes	No
A separate crib, cot, or nap mat for each child	Yes	No
Quiet, dark and separate nap area	Yes	No
Are pets present in the facility? If so, will this impact your decision?	Yes	No

## Program

A posted schedule of daily activities	Yes	No
Good balance between planned activities that are age appropriate and time for free play	Yes	No
Time for conversation, reading, listening to music, homework, or being alone	Yes	No
Activities are interesting, fun and challenging where children can learn by doing and can succeed	Yes	No
Children work cooperatively on projects and games to solve problems	Yes	No
Children make music and/or listen to music, sing and laugh	Yes	No
Infants, when not asleep, are out of the crib and included in age appropriate activities	Yes	No
Caregiver(s) play with, sing to, hold, and cuddle each child often throughout the day	Yes	No
Caregivers meet regularly to plan and evaluate their program	Yes	No



## Policies

Up-to-date state license or registration is always posted	Yes	No
Parent's are actively involved, given opportunities to participate, and welcome to visit at any time	Yes	No
Written discipline policy eliminating spanking, shaking, or hurting a child in any way	Yes	No
Emergency procedures are posted	Yes	No
Policy for handling sick children	Yes	No
Holidays and hours of operation are clearly posted	Yes	No

## Staff

Warm, nurturing, friendly, accepting and patient	Yes	No
Caregiver(s) with training and experience (regulated providers required 30 hours of training every 2 years; accredited programs have higher standards than State licensing regulations and usually a higher quality program)	Yes	No
Director or head teacher with college level training in early childhood education (in a day care center or school age program)	Yes	No
Caregiver(s) work as a team (what is their staff turnover? Low staff turnover may indicate higher quality programs since there has been stable and consistent staff working in the program)	Yes	No
Parents comfortable talking with the caregiver(s)	Yes	No
Caregiver(s) comfort a sad or angry child in a loving way	Yes	No
Caregiver(s) offer positive guidance when a child misbehaves	Yes	No
Caregiver(s) enjoy working with the children	Yes	No
Caregiver(s) really listen to the children and parents	Yes	No
Individual need of children are being met	Yes	No
Words of sincere praise and encouragement are given	Yes	No
Caregiver(s) encourage children to learn new skills	Yes	No
Caregiver(s) are energetic and in control while being flexible and fun	Yes	No
Caregiver(s) are positive role models for children	Yes	No



## Nutrition

Well-balanced, nutritious meals	Yes	No
Pleasant and sociable meal times	Yes	No
Infant and toddlers are encouraged to feed themselves	Yes	No
Caregiver(s) sit at the table with the children during mealtimes	Yes	No
Infants held during bottle feedings, and are fed according to their needs and individual schedules	Yes	No
Bottles are refrigerated until needed, and used promptly	Yes	No
Leftover formula discarded at the end of the feeding	Yes	No
Program accommodates special dietary needs	Yes	No

## Parent Involvement

Parents are allowed to visit at any time	Yes	No
Caregiver(s) inform parents about their child's successes and about activities for the day (such as nap schedule, meals, etc.)	Yes	No
Parents make suggestions about menus, activities and program	Yes	No
Parents are encouraged to participate in the program	Yes	No
A parent newsletter and/or bulletin board	Yes	No
Regularly scheduled parent meetings	Yes	No
Parents are encouraged to advocate on behalf of their child (goals, special needs, etc.)	Yes	No

## Diaper and Toilet Routines

Child size toilet and sinks	Yes	No
Diapers changed without delay after they are soiled or wet, and infants are thoroughly cleaned after the dirty diaper is removed	Yes	No
Changing table surface is disinfected after each child is changed	Yes	No
Caregiver(s)' and child's hands washed after changing each diaper	Yes	No
Toileting begins only when the child is physically ready, interested and able to understand the process of using the toilet	Yes	No
Parents involved in the decision to begin toilet training for their child	Yes	No
Toilet training is a positive, pleasant part of the day	Yes	No



## Health and Safety

Children are supervised by caregiver(s) at all times	Yes	No
A first-aid/CPR trained staff member at the site at all times	Yes	No
A smoke free environment (even when children are not present)	Yes	No
A well maintained supply of fire extinguishers, first-aid kits, smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors in the facility	Yes	No
Toys and equipment are clean, sanitized and in good repair (for example: free from sharp edges, splinters, paint chips and loose parts)	Yes	No
A written health record is kept for each child	Yes	No
Children will be released to another person only if you have given written permission in advance	Yes	No
Area that is used for food preparation and eating is clean and sanitary	Yes	No
Written procedures for reporting suspected cases of child abuse and neglect by parents or caregiver(s)	Yes	No
Written policy stating that medication will only be given to children by a caregiver who is certified to administer medication	Yes	No
Written policy for handling sick children	Yes	No
Diapering/toilet areas clean, free from odor, well ventilated and removed from the feeding area	Yes	No
Pads and blankets changed and laundered daily or more often as needed	Yes	No
All children and caregiver(s) wash their hands after using the toilet, before and after eating, and as needed throughout the day	Yes	No

## Warning Signs

The program does not encourage parents to visit or observe	Yes	No
The children move about without any guidance or involvement for 30 minutes or more	Yes	No
The caregiver(s) spend most of their time scolding or yelling at the children	Yes	No