

Finding High-Quality Childcare For Infants and Toddlers

✓ A Checklist for Quality Childcare



Great by 8 seeks to create a community where young children thrive, by connecting West Hartford families with services and resources in our community. To receive updates and information from Great by 8 or get involved, please e-mail whgreatby8@gmail.com.



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✓ A Checklist for Quality Childcare

High-quality infant and toddler care is a critical support for working families. Use this checklist to shape your family's search for high-quality care. Though safety is paramount, strong relationships, exploration, and engagement are also critical for rapidly developing brains.

Indoor/Outdoor Space

Look for:

- Children moving easily in the room
- Large indoor and outdoor areas for group play
- Clean, functional toys at child's height/level
- Different types of toys in the infant, toddler, and preschool rooms
- Smooth transitions between activities — waiting kept to a minimum
- Home-like elements in the classroom, such as family photos

Questions to Ask:

- How are children physically active when they cannot go outdoors?
- How often are toys rotated?

Health & Safety

Look for:

- Well-maintained facilities
- Posted license from the Department of Health
- Safety equipment such as smoke detectors in every room, a fully stocked first aid kit, and clearly marked alternate emergency exit

Questions to Ask:

- What are the cleaning and sanitation procedures?
- What security procedures do you have in place?
- How are allergies handled?
- Are teachers trained in first aid and CPR?
- What is the Health and Wellness policy?

Partnering with Parents

Look for:

- Parent communication board which may include information relating to snacks/meals, lesson plans, or schedules

Questions to Ask:

- How is information shared between teachers and families?
- Are there parent-teacher conferences?
- Is information shared on a daily basis?
- How does school support parent visiting?
- How are families notified if problems arise?
- How do families communicate significant changes at home to teachers?
- Can you share the parent handbook?

Child-Centered Approach

Look for:

- Staff continually and actively engaging with children
- Teachers using positive statements when talking to children
- Teachers talking to children at child's eye level
- Teachers responding to emotional cues/crying
- Teachers holding children for bottle feedings
- Child-created artwork, rather than teacher-perfected projects
- Books and soft materials
- Obvious signs of child-to-teacher and teacher-to-child attachment

Questions to Ask:

- Do children have the same teachers throughout the day and week?
- What is your behavior management policy?
- What is your staff retention rate?

Staffing & Planning Structures

Look for:

- Teachers showing a sense of humor, empathy, and calmness with children, families, and co-workers

Questions to Ask:

- What are required qualifications for teachers, assistant teachers, and substitutes?
- How much experience or training does each teacher have for specific age group?
- Is there a head teacher?
- What curriculum do teachers use?
- Do teachers plan the lessons? When?
- How do teachers plan for children's individual needs?

