

All parents want to support their child's health, happiness and development. Choosing quality child care is an excellent way to do this!



A quality child care program ensures a safe, fun environment where children can PLAY, LEARN and LAUGH!



For more information:

Child Care Licensing: 1-800-543-7545

Parent Info: [www.dss.virginia.gov/contact\\_us/dolp\\_district.pdf](http://www.dss.virginia.gov/contact_us/dolp_district.pdf)

Child Care Aware of Virginia: 1-866-481-1913

Virginia 2-1-1: [www.211virginia.org](http://www.211virginia.org) or dial 2-1-1

Virginia Star Quality Initiative:  
<http://www.smartbeginnings.org/home/star-quality-initiative/about-star-quality/aboutthevsqi.aspx>

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SOCIAL SERVICES

[www.dss.virginia.gov](http://www.dss.virginia.gov)

# CHOOSING QUALITY

## CHILD CARE





### Benefits of Quality Child Care

- ✓ Impacts how children learn, think, develop and behave
- ✓ Promotes social and emotional skills
- ✓ Promotes self-esteem and confidence
- ✓ Encourages curiosity and love of learning
- ✓ Prepares children for school
- ✓ Strengthens math and reading skills
- ✓ Increases probability of attending college

### The Search Begins

**START** your search early.

**LEARN** about child care programs in your community.

**LOOK** for licensed programs in your area.

**CREATE** a list of preferred child care programs to call.

**TALK** to friends, neighbors and other parents.

**THINK** about how you want your child to be treated and cared for.

**COMMIT** to choosing quality child care!



### Getting Started

**CALL** each child care program.

**ASK** the questions that are important to you.

**VISIT** your preferred programs (while children are there) with your child.

**When visiting the program, observe or ask:**

- Is this program licensed?
- What are the teacher qualifications?
- What are the health and safety practices?
- Does staff treat the children kindly?
- Understand children's needs?
- Help children solve problems?
- How do they encourage parents to be involved?
- Is staff experienced and trained?

**Then ask yourself:**

- Does staff seem patient and friendly?
- Do the children look happy and engaged?
- Does the staff show interest in my child?
- Do I trust this person with my child?
- Will my child be comfortable here?
- Will this program support my child's learning and development?
- Does this program meet our needs?
- Did I talk to other parents about the program?



### Questions about the Setting

- Safe indoor and outdoor play areas?
- Safe equipment such as highchairs, cribs and cots?
- Safe, cleared area where babies can crawl and play?
- Locked storage for items that are dangerous for children?
- Working smoke detectors?
- Enough age-appropriate toys and materials for all of the children?
- Is the facility, inside and outside, clean and organized?

### Questions about the Activities

- Quiet and active play, indoors and outdoors?
- Fun language, math and science?
- Pretend play, music, reading and art?
- Adequate supervision at all times?
- Washing hands when needed?
- Nutritious meals and snacks?
- A routine but flexible schedule?
- Enough care providers to give each child individual attention?

**Choosing quality child care is one of the most important decisions you'll ever make**