

DAYCARE: SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

In the Larkin vetting process, we have asked 20+ screening questions. The following questions are designed to allow you to hear firsthand about the program's approach and policies so you can determine if it is a good fit for your child's needs and situation. (The last two pages include questions and suggestions specific to infants & preschoolers.)

Name of the daycare: _____

What is the daily schedule?

Is there a weekly learning plan?

Yes No

What amount of time is spent outdoors each day?

Is screen time allowed?

Yes No If yes, what is that and how much time is allowed?

How is the culture of the child/family respected in activities and celebrations?

What drinks, meals and/or snacks are provided?

What items does my child need to bring from home?

How are the toys and space cleaned and sanitized?

How does the center or home engage with families?

How will I hear about my child's day? (feeding, diapering, napping, mood, developmental milestones)

Do you send photos or text throughout the day?

Yes No

Are there security cameras?

Yes No

How does the staff comfort a child?

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What approach is used to set limits and respond to challenging behaviors (time outs, redirection, listening, encouraging)?

What happens if a child hits, bites or bullies another child?

Are visits from parents allowed and encouraged anytime the child care program is open?

Yes No

(For family daycares) Who else lives or has access to the home? Are they around the children?

(For family daycares) Are there pets in the program area? If so, what kind?

What is the policy for sick children and when is a child required to stay home due to illness or exposure? Is there a refund offered for missed days?

What is the policy and process for giving a child medication?

How many days a year and when is the program closed? (snow days, holidays, staff vacation time, etc.) How much notice is given before a closure?

What is the check in/out procedure?

What is the late pick up policy? (Is there a penalty fee?)

What is the emergency plan for contacting families?

Is there a family handbook?

Yes No

Do you provide a tax receipt?

Yes No

Are there references of current or recent families we can speak to? How can we get that information?

Observe these things in the environment:

Are the areas well organized and clean?

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- Is the furniture and equipment clean and in good repair?
 - Are there locks on the doors to keep children in and strangers out?

 - Where is the staff positioned in the classroom? Does the layout allow the children to be seen at all times?
 - Does the outdoor area look safe?
 - Are there toys and equipment indoors and out that are safe and age appropriate?
 - Are toys and materials at eye level and accessible to children without having to ask for assistance?
 - Does the room have dedicated places for certain kinds of play? (movement area, book area, table toys, etc.)
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Observe these things about the culture:

- How do the staff interact with the children?
 - Do they greet each child?
 - Speak to them at eye level?
 - What is the tone and volume of the staff when they speak?
- Do the staff often hold and cuddle infants and toddlers?
- During your visit, do you hear laughter and see staff and children engaged in play?
- Was the staff interactive and helpful during your visit? Did they seem knowledgeable and willing to answer your questions?

INFANTS & TODDLERS

Questions to ask:

How do the staff accommodate each child's personal schedule (sleeping, eating, playing)?

How are bottles stored? What is the label process for them?

How long are children kept in a device that restricts their movement? (bouncy seat, crib, high chair, swing, etc.)

Is naptime on a specific schedule?

Yes No

What happens if/when they don't sleep?

For infants, does each child have their own labeled crib?

Yes No

Is it free of bumpers, blankets and toys?

Yes No

Are infants held while feeding?

Yes No

(If applicable) How is breastfeeding supported?

How does the program support toilet training?

Does the program have a pacifier use policy?

INFANTS & TODDLERS

Observe these things in the environment:

- Is the kitchen area clean and tidy with a refrigerator for storing bottles?
- Are there appropriate toys for infants (toys to look at, listen to) and toddlers (toys that engage small and large muscle groups like building blocks, play furniture, puppets)
- How is the diapering station set up? (disinfectant, handwashing station nearby)

PRESCHOOLERS

Questions to ask:

How does the program support social and emotional development? (taking turns, following directions, caring and showing empathy, sharing, etc.)

Does the program have a pacifier use policy?

- Yes No

Is naptime on a specific schedule?

- Yes No

What happens if/when they don't sleep?

PRESCHOOLERS

Observe these things in the environment:

- Is the furniture child-sized and does it allow children to easily work together?
- Are there soft and cozy spaces and materials for children to take a quiet break?
- How are the children communicating with each other?