

CHILDCARE SELECTION GUIDE

The subsidized daycare program is a parent choice program. Each parent chooses the daycare setting that meets their child's needs. There are four types of day care settings that you can choose from:

DAY CARE CENTER: a day care facility in which seven or more children who are not related to the operator receive child care. A child day care center must have a certificate of compliance (license) from the Department of Public Welfare in order to legally operate.

GROUP DAY CARE HOME: a day care facility in which 7 through 12 children of various ages (not related to the operator) receive child care. A group day care home must have a certificate of compliance (license) from the DPW in order to legally operate. Most group day care homes are operated in a caregiver's home.

FAMILY DAY CARE HOME: a day care facility located in a home in which up to 6 children who are not related to the caregiver receive child care. A family day care home must have a certificate of registration from the DPW in order to legally operate.

RELATIVE/NEIGHBOR CARE: a child day care setting in which 3 or fewer children unrelated to the caregiver receive child care. A relative/neighbor provider may also provide care for as many as 6 grandchildren. Although a relative/neighbor provider *does not have a license* from DPW, a criminal history and background clearance check must be obtained in order to participate through the CCIS/Welfare.

Choosing a daycare setting can be confusing. In order to help in your decision process, it is suggested that you consider several sites, visit each one, and then choose the day care that best suits your needs. Some items that you may want to consider when selecting a program include:

- A. Staff
 - Treats children with respect, flexibility and patience.
 - Is able to meet your child's developmental and emotional needs.

- Is of a sufficient number to meet the needs of children.
- Takes time to discuss your child with you.
- Practices good personal hygiene.
- Has previous experience or training in working with children.

B. Facility

- Safe indoor and outdoor areas and equipment.
- Orderly, clean play areas.
- Airy room with bright colors
- Sanitary bathrooms and diaper changing areas.

C. Health & Safety

- Comfortable temperatures summer and winter.
- Rounded table corners and other furniture safety features.
- Non-toxic play materials
- First Aid kit.
- Healthy snacks and/or meals.
- Clean kitchen area.
- Hand washing after toileting and before meals and snacks.
- Separate cribs for infants and separate cots/mats for others.
- Cleaning materials, medicines are out of reach of children.

D. Program

- Proper child-staff ratios.
- Creative play.
- Plenty of play materials.
- Plenty of educational materials.
- Organized program of activities.
- Supervised rest time.
- Minimal, supervised TV – if any.
- Stories read.

E. General

- A license or registration certificate from the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare and/or Education.
- Rules clearly explained.
- Good behavior encouraged.
- Other parents visiting.
- Children allowed to get dirty naturally through play.
- No children “left out”.
- Lots of laughing, caring, sharing.
- HAPPY CHILDREN

ASK THESE QUESTIONS:

- May I drop in anytime?
- May I participate in program planning?
- May I take part in special events and trips?
- What are the hours?
- What are the fees? What does this include?
- Is there a reduction in fee if my child is out sick?
- What happens if my child gets sick or injured at daycare?
- Are the caregivers trained in child development?
- What are the hiring procedures?
- How long has most staff worked here?
- May I contact staff references?
- Is there a parents’ group or program?
- Are there restrictions on who may pick up my child?

ASK YOURSELF:

- Is the daycare conveniently located?
- Is the daycare affordable?
- Do I feel comfortable with the caregiver?
- Do I feel good watching my child play at this site?
- Do I feel that the daycare is “right” for both my child and myself?

TRY TO:

Set up a “trial day” when your child can join in activities while you observe.

After your child begins attending:

- Drop in unannounced and visit regularly.
- Leave emergency contact information with the caregiver.
- Set up two or three back up plans in case your child is ill and not able to attend daycare.
- Get involved with your child’s daycare experience.

FOR A LISTING OF LICENSED/REGULATED DAY CARES IN LACKAWANNA COUNTY – PLEASE GO TO <http://www.state.pa.us/Child/ChildCare>