



# Looking For A Daycare Provider?

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## Here are some questions you will want to consider:

- Do you want to find someone that drives with the children? Or would you rather someone who walks?
- Do you want someone who sticks around home? Or someone who does playgroups and many outings?

When you have your initial interview, you will want to have a list of questions to ask your perspective child care provider. Here are some suggested questions:

## What to ask about the home and environment:

- Ask to see all of the rooms that will be utilized as daycare space. If the care provider does not want you to go downstairs where the children will be sleeping for instance, that would be a red flag.
- Ask where the child will be sleeping and in what kind of apparatus. Will they be in a room by themselves? Or with others? This does not always matter but it is a good idea for you to know before you begin as this may be something that makes or breaks your decision.
- Ask them how many children they have in care. Including after school and part time. If they have before and after school kids, ask them how many they would have during the summer vacation and March Break as well as PD days.
- Ask them if they have a pool. If the children play in the back, ask if there is a fenced in yard. Again, this may not be something that matter to you, but it is always good to know.
- Ask if the provider drives with the children. If you are comfortable with a provider that drives, ask what car seats they use, how they are installed and whether your child will be rear facing or not (if you are rear facing.) Speaking from a mom who is extremely paranoid about car seat safety, you have a right to know how your child's seat is installed before they get into the vehicle.
- Ask for a criminal record check
- Find out if there are any other people that would ever care for the children. Ex: the husband, mother of the provider or if she has any other back up care. Ask for a criminal record check for anyone living in the home.



## What to ask about the provider and her personality and experience:

- Ask them what their style of discipline is. You want to make sure that you are comfortable with how they handle different situations. Biting, hitting, walks in the neighborhood and children walking.
- Ask them how much experience they have working with children. Again, this is personal preference but it is good information to know.
- Ask them for CPR and First Aid training
- Ask them what they love about being in the childcare field and why they have decided to open up a home daycare.
- Do you ever have personal visits during child care hours? \*I used to have play dates occasionally with family/friends that had children.

## Daily activities and outings

- What activities does the care provider do with the children? Find out what your preference would be in this area. Is it important that they are doing many activities during the day? Or would you be okay in a less structured environment?
- Does the provider spend time outside?
- How does the provider handle outings where some children may be walking?
- What is the nap schedule? I would also find out if they allow for morning naps for those children who are under 14 months and may still take a morning nap.
- What are your meals like? Do you offer 2 snacks and a meal? Can you give an example of an item on your lunch menu?
- As we discussed in our adjusting to daycare discussion, for some children it is good to have them integrate slowly and go for a visit with you before beginning. It is a good idea to find out if the care provider is open to that. This is a great way for you to see how they interact with the children and how they manage their daycare. (Usually you would only visit for 45 minutes to 1 hour or meet at the park or playgroup.)
- Do you tell the parents what the children have done that day in care?
- What is your sick policy?
- Ask about vacation for the care provider.
- What are the rates?



- Most home daycares will charge whether your child is there or not. So, if your child is sick... You still pay. Find out if they have sick days as well.

### What to look for in the home:

- Look for safety-Keep in mind that if the provider does not currently have any babies, they may not have their home fully “baby proofed” just yet so I would ask them what they would do to ensure your baby’s safety once he/she starts. The things you want to look out for are that the outlets are covered where they play, there are no dangerous, toxic items around the home.
- Look for how the provider interacts with your child. Yes, I would bring your child to the interview if at all possible. Pam and I used to like to do our daycare interviews during the day if it was possible so that the parents could see how we interacted with the other children. However, not all caregivers will want to do this as it can be disruptive to their schedule and to the other children. If they do not want an interview during daycare hours, you will get a sense for how they are with children when you bring your own.
- Ask them what types of food they feed the children for lunches and snacks. You have a right to know what your child will be eating while in care! If you are not comfortable with the menu, you know it is not the right place for your child. They should have examples of what the children have eaten for the last few days so if they do not want to share, that may be a red flag.
- Make sure that there is enough light in the area that your child will be spending most of their day. Natural light is great but in a home is not always possible. However, you do want to make sure that the environment is not super dark and dreary all of the time.
- If you are there when other children are there, do the children seem happy and well cared for?
- Are crying children responded to? Does the care provider speak to the children in a nice tone?
- Is the place clean? As clean as it will get with many children running around! You also want to make sure that your daycare provider is not spending all of his/her time cleaning.

Most importantly, trust your gut! Watch how the daycare provider interacts with you and you will get a feel for their personality. If there are things that make you feel uneasy, talk to the provider about it so that perhaps they can make you feel a little more at ease.

We wish you all the best on your search!

Elisa and Pam,  
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