

Choosing Child Care 5 Steps to Finding Care

STEP: Be Informed

- 1 • Contact Valley Oak Children’s Services at **530-895-3572** or **800-345-8627**.
- Ask relatives, friends, and neighbors.
- Check the newspaper and community bulletin boards.
- Check the Yellow Pages.
- Make a list of possible choices.
- Check valleyoakchildren.org for more information.

Once you have a list of possible choices, set up an interview with the provider. At the interview: **Look, Count, Ask, and Listen.**

STEP: Look at the Surroundings

- 2 • Is the facility safe for children?
- Is it comfortable and clean?
- Is there a quiet place for naps?
- Does the provider talk and interact warmly with children?
- Is there a variety of play space/toys?
- Is there a sanitary diaper changing area?
- Is the kitchen clean and sanitary?
- How do the children interact with each other?

STEP: Count the Child/Adult Ratio

- 3 • Are there the correct number of adults and children?
- How many infants are in care?
- Are you comfortable with the child/adult ratio?

STEP: Ask about Experience

- 4 • What is your experience and/or education in child care?
- What is your child rearing philosophy?
- What kinds of things do you do to help a new child adjust?
- What do you do when a child cries?
- How would you react if you saw my child bite another?
- Can I visit my child whenever I want?

STEP: Listen

- 5 • To the answers that are given (take notes).
- To the noise level of the room.
- For joyful noise from the children.
- For a respectful attitude towards the kids.
- To the feelings you have.
- To any concerns you might have.
- To the concerns your child might have.

Parent Checklist

Have you discussed:

- How an illness of the child or provider will be handled?
- What you are responsible for - diapers, change of clothes, 2 week notice, vacation days?
- How much the provider charges?
- Does the provider have a contract?
- Does the provider have an open-door policy?
- Who to reach in an emergency?
- Whether the facility complies with licensing regulations?
- Emergency evacuation plan?
- What the child’s day will be like?
- Names and phone numbers of other parents using care?
- Other references?
- Any special needs of your child?
- Additional questions?

For substantiated complaint information call Community Care Licensing at

530-895-5033

Once You Have Chosen a Child Care Provider:

- Communicate regularly about how the arrangement is working.
- Periodically drop in unannounced to observe your child.
- Always leave emergency contact information.
- Drop off and pick up your child on time.
- Pay on time.
- Have a plan for when your child is sick.
- Get to know the other parents.
- Let your provider know how much you appreciate her/him.

Knowing Your Rights and Responsibilities

You Have the Right to...

- Contact Community Care Licensing and inquire about substantiated complaint information for the facilities you are interested in.
- Choose child care in a safe place, where you feel comfortable with the provider and the environment.
- Choose who will care for your child, whether it is license-exempt care, a family child care home or a child care center.
- Change your child care provider whenever you feel it is necessary.
- Visit any child care setting unannounced whenever your child is there.
- Report to Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing, or other appropriate authorities any complaint you have not been able to resolve with the caregiver.

You Have the Responsibility to...

- Select a child care arrangement that is safe and a provider who is caring.
- Continually check your child care situation to be sure your child is in a safe environment and receives the kind of care you request.