

14 Factors to Consider When Choosing a Preschool



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1. Hours of Operation

You need to have enough time to drop your child off in the morning and still be able to get to work or appointments on time. A Preschool center should be open early enough for you to do that. The center should also be open late enough so that you are not rushing from work.



2. Meals and Snacks

Making sure your child has the proper nutrition throughout the day is an important factor in choosing a Preschool center. Make sure to ask the following questions regarding nutrition:

- Do you provide all snacks, breakfast and lunch?
- If they do provide snacks, breakfast and lunch, can they give examples of what will be given to my child?
- Does the center serve low-fat or soy milk, and whole or multi-grain products instead of white flour products? Is fresh fruit served?
- How will the food be prepared?
- How are food allergies handled?
- If they do not provide snacks and lunch, what types of food would they recommend to pack for my child? Can they heat up lunches if necessary?



3. Cost

Cost structures of Preschool centers vary. Some charge by the week, while others charge a monthly fee. A Preschool center may also offer a discount if you enroll more than one child. Make sure to clarify exactly how a child center will charge you, determine any discounts you may qualify for, and compare tuition rates with similar centers in the area.



4. Daily Schedule

What does a typical day look like? What types of activities will your child participate in? Is a daily schedule available for parents? Getting an idea of the daily schedule will help you determine whether your child will enjoy his or her day.





5. Curriculum

Familiarize yourself with each Preschool center's curriculum. Ask each center how it prepares children for school. Are the teachers required to create a lesson plan for their class? Ask about the reasoning behind the chosen curriculum and its advantages. Compare the different curriculums to each other and decide which one would benefit your child the most. The time your child spends each day at the Preschool center will help to establish a lifetime foundation and enthusiasm for learning.



6. Diaper Schedule/Potty Training

If your child is still in diapers, ask if the staff changes the diaper when it is needed or is diaper changing done on a timetable? Will the Preschool help with potty training? Is potty training included the regular fee, or is it an extra cost? Is there a diaper fee?



7. Discipline Philosophy

It is important to know how the staff will handle misbehavior. What system is in place to discipline children and teach them right from wrong? Does the staff avoid yelling, spanking, or other negative punishments? Negative behavior sets bad examples for children. What positive reinforcement and redirection tools does the center use? Using positive reinforcement techniques and redirection helps to prevent future misbehavior



8. Training, Licensing, Credentials, and Accreditation

A well-educated and experienced staff will provide high quality interactions and activities for your child. Make sure to ask the following questions when looking at a Preschool center:

- Does the director have experience caring for children?
- Who is on staff? Is there a place to view staff biographies?
- How is the staff screened?
- Does each staff member have the right credentials and experience?
- Does someone have current CPR and first aid training?
- How does the Preschool center conduct its own training on an ongoing basis?
- Does the staff continue to receive training about the changes in Preschool industry?



9. Age Divisions

How are students grouped together? Are they kept within the same age range? How big are the groups? Socializing children is an important part of child development. Knowing who and how your child will be socializing will help you understand more about a Preschool center, and can enhance your child educational and social development.



10. The Facility

Make sure to inspect the layout of the facility for cleanliness and organization. Is the layout open for children to play and crawl? Also, look for cleanliness and ask about the daily cleaning routine. Does the Preschool facility have an outside cleaning crew/company coming in at night to clean the center?





11. Safety & Security

Inquire about how medicines, cleaning supplies, and other poisonous materials are stored. Ask if the center has secure doors, strong safety gates, and a plan in case of disasters. Also, ask each Preschool center to explain who has access to the facility and how people can leave and enter the building. Does the center have a security keypad at the entrance to discourage strangers from entering? What kind of log in and log out process do they have?



12. Recommendations by Others

One of the best ways to measure the quality of a Preschool center is by asking other parents for a referral. Does the center have a good percentage of children enrolled who were referred by other parents? Ask other enrolled parents about the experience their children are having and if they are satisfied with the quality of service, or check for parent testimonials on the center's website to hear what enrolled families are saying. Does the center do an annual parent survey to get parent feedback? If so, can you see the results of these surveys to know what existing parents are feeling?



13. Convenient Payment Options

What kind of payments does the Preschool center accept? Does the center accept credit cards including AmEx and debit cards? Does the center offer automatic charging of your card or bank account for making payments? Does the center have discounts for paying monthly?



14. Enrichment Classes

Does the center offer extra classes such as Music, Dance, Gymnastics, Spanish, or Computer? Offering these extra classes allows your child additional educational opportunity and added entertainment.

THANK YOU!

