

HIGH 5

Must-Ask Questions for Parents
in Search of the Best Early
Childhood Program

How to Find the Right Early Childhood Program for Your Child

Children talk to and interact with the people and things around them, and these interactions and relationships help children develop and learn. When searching for the right early childhood program for your child, look for programs that encourage healthy relationships. This brochure is designed to help you make this choice.

Spend some time in the classrooms of the programs you're considering and try to answer the five questions presented inside this brochure. Keep in mind that choosing a quality early childcare program is an ongoing process. Teachers can change. Classmates can change. Use the High-5 questions on a regular basis to ensure there's still a fit as long as your child is in that early childhood program.



5 QUESTIONS to Ask When Visiting an Early Learning Center



How do teachers guide and, when needed, redirect children's behavior?

- Is it clear how children are expected to behave?
- Do teachers appreciate children's positive behavior?
- Do teachers step in early when they see a child beginning to struggle?
- Do teachers guide and redirect children when they struggle?
- Do teachers help children solve their problems?

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How are teachers and children getting along?

- Do children treat each other with respect?
- Do teachers encourage children to work and play together in a positive way?
- Do teachers and children appear to enjoy each other?
- Do teachers treat all children with kindness, respect, and warmth?
- Do teachers speak to one another in respectful ways?



How do teachers talk with children?

- Do teachers talk with children while they're playing?
- Do teachers show caring by making comments specific to what a child did or said?
- Do teachers ask children questions about what they're doing or saying?
- Do teachers ask open-ended questions that encourage children to think in different ways?
- Do teachers give feedback focusing on children's efforts or strategies rather than consisting simply of general comments about what the child did (e.g., "good job") or praise for the child's intelligence (e.g., "you're very smart")?

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What's happening in the classroom?

- Are children engaged and enjoying what they're doing?
- Are activities available that would interest your child?
- Do children have any choice about what they do during the day?
- Are the routines flexible so they meet the needs of individual children?
- Does the classroom environment accommodate your child's special needs?



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How do teachers communicate with parents?

- Are families encouraged and welcome to visit?
- Do teachers talk with parents in a respectful manner?
- Do teachers have a way of communicating with parents about what the child did each day and whether they have any concerns?
- Are there events that include children's families, and are families regularly informed about them?
- Does this program help children transition to their next school placement?



A Note to Parents

Choosing a high-quality early childhood program for your child is an important decision. While cleanliness, health, and safety policies, staff qualifications, staff-child ratio, group size, and number of square feet per child are important, recent research shows that high-quality relationships also are important.

This High-5 model was developed by a panel of experts—the APA Coalition for Psychology in Schools and Education—to help you to identify aspects of high-quality relationships in early childhood settings and make the right choice for you and your child.



APA Coalition for Psychology in Schools and Education

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