

A guide to daycare selection

Baby's on the way - yay!

* Add yourself to a variety of waiting lists – you can visit and evaluate the daycares later
* Visit your preferred daycares unannounced (and schedule tours if/as needed)
* Relax and enjoy your pregnancy

Your child has a spot – evaluating your choices

* Consider the commute and make the drive during your usual transit time before committing
* Determine the daycare’s exact hours and specific holidays and breaks. Also find out if there are any days on which the facility may close early (right before holidays, for example)
* If the daycare is not year-round and runs a “camp” in the summer, ask how the camp is staffed
* Ask lots of specific questions related to your personal parenting choices:
  + Can you provide food from home? What does the daycare provide specifically?
  + Will you be allowed to bring organic milk/yogurt, if desired? Or would the daycare purchase?
  + How are nursing mothers accommodated? Is there a place to nurse, and it is welcome all day?
  + How/where is breast milk stored? Do bottles have to be pre-made?
  + Does the daycare provide wipes, sunscreen, diaper cream, bug spray or other products and if they do, would they be willing to use yours instead, if desired?
* Meet the teachers and ask questions – we recommend spending time in your child’s potential room
  + How long have the teachers been there? How long have they been in the profession?
  + How much experience do the teachers have with that specific age group?
  + Does the daycare follow a specific curriculum? What about extracurricular activities (music, art, etc)? Is there a set routine? Are all babies put on one schedule, or does baby dictate?
  + What are the teachers’ credentials (degrees/education and/or First Aid and CPR)?
* Understand how decisions are made
  + Be sure that you understand what the teacher to child ratio is in each room (and at each age)
  + How does the daycare determine when it is time for a child to move rooms?
* Read the policies and procedures
  + How often does the daycare practice fire drills?
  + What happens in emergencies like tornado watches?
  + What are the security measures for visitors and individuals who come to the daycare for drop-off and pick-up?
  + For what incidents will the daycare call parents?
  + Can you leave the infant carrier at school if mom drops off and dad picks up, for example?
  + Are the teachers required to get vaccinated for things like the flu and whooping cough?

Daycare supply list

* In addition to following the daycare’s supply list, send extras of everything
  + Daily necessities: diapers, wipes, diaper cream, pacifiers, sippy cups and clothes
  + Food and drink: be sure to send extra food, if needed, as well as formula/milk
  + Comforts for baby: an extra lovey, a portable [Sleep Sheep](http://www.diapers.com/p/cloud-b-sleep-sheep-on-the-go-8220) & their favorite blanket
  + Seasonal items: hat, sunscreen, bathing suit/swim diapers, coat, bug spray, etc
* Purchase labels from a website like [InchBug](http://www.inchbug.com/), [Name Bubbles](http://www.namebubbles.com/) or [Baby Face Band](http://babyfaceband.com/)
* Invest in a BUILT Neoprene 6-pack tote for transporting bottles and consider a [formula dispenser](http://www.diapers.com/p/munchkin-powder-formula-dispenser-girl-143935) for easy formula transportation