

2. What kind of Child Care Arrangement is Best for Me?

At a Glance...

The three most important things to consider when selecting child care are the caregiver, the physical setting, and the activities for the children. High quality childcare is important for your child's current and future development. There may be resources available to help you find the childcare you need.

Time Required

- 1 hour if everything is done in class
- 1.5 hours if Child Care Broker is a guest speaker
- 2 or more hours if participants visit one or more child care facilities

Core Concepts

Parents will choose the best quality child care available to their child.

Objective

Parents will identify potential resources for obtaining quality child care (types of child care.)

Materials

- ☐ Paper and pencils
- ☐ "Quality Child Care: Making the Right Choice for You and Your Child" video (order from Parents Action for \$14.95 at <http://store.parentSACTIONstore.org/prostores/servlet/Detail?no=540>)
- ☐ "Types of Child Care" (handout E-2-a)
- ☐ "Locating Child Care" (handout E-2-b)
- ☐ "Selecting Quality Child Care" (handout E-2-c)
- ☐ List of child care programs and amounts that DHS will subsidize for Families First participants. (Contact your local DHS office to find out who the Child Care Broker is for your region. The broker should be able to supply this information.)
- ☐ Recommended Supplemental Handouts available from your county UT Extension Office:
 - SP 382 Finding Quality After-School Care for Your Child*
 - SP 455 Selecting a Quality Child Care Center*
 - SP 456 Selecting a Quality Family Child Care Home*



Icebreaker

Share your favorite childhood story or children's book that you enjoyed as a child. Tell the title, if you can remember it, and a little bit about what the book was about.



Facilitator Script

Discuss the different types of child care and the advantages and disadvantages of each as listed in the script below. Have participants try to think of examples of each type of child care that are available in your community as you talk about them. Distribute the handout "Types of Child Care" (handout E-2-a).

CENTER-BASED CHILD CARE

Child care centers are places where children are cared for in a group away from their homes for all or part of the day. Keep in mind that center-based care may not be as "home-like" as some children want. Your child may not be happy in a large group for most of the day. Many child care centers have a planned program of activities to help children learn. Some centers have formal plans. Others are more informal and use their day-to-day experience working with children to guide their activities.

FAMILY CHILD CARE

In this setting , the child goes to the home of the caregiver. Often this is a mother with children of her own. You may find a relative, friend, or neighbor who is willing to care for your child in her home, or you may find a family child care home run by someone you do now know. Usually, only about five or six children are cared for at any one time. Family child care is likely to be the easiest to find in rural areas. Keep in mind that a family child care provider may go out of business or stop keeping children at any time. Because many of these homes are not inspected or licensed, it will be up to you to make sure that it is a safe and healthy place to leave your child.

IN-HOME CARE

An in-home caregiver is one who comes to or lives in your home. The caregiver can be a relative or a friend or can be someone you pay to come to your home.

AFTER-SCHOOL CARE

After-school care is provided in most cases by your child's school as a place for children to learn and have fun between the time school is over and 6:00p.m. This is a good choice if you have to work after school hours. Most of the time, these types of programs do not keep children younger than school age.

Distribute the handout "Locating Child Care" (handout E-2-b). Ask participants how they have located childcare in the past? What types of childcare have worked best for their children? Look at the questions listed on handout E-2-b. Ask participants "What else would you want to know about a childcare provider before leaving your child in their care?"

View the 30 minute video "Quality Child Care: Making the Right Choice for You and Your Child" video (order from Parents Action for \$14.95 at <http://store.parentsactionstore.org/prostores/servlet/Detail?no=540>). Distribute the handout "Selecting Quality Child Care" (handout E-2-c.)

The three most important things to consider when selecting child care are the **caregiver**, the **physical setting**, and the **activities for the children**. Let's look at the questions listed in the handout. Are they similar to the things you mentioned that you would like to know before leaving your child at a childcare facility?

Facilitator Tip

If time allows, this module would be a good opportunity for class participants to visit one or more child care settings. If you can arrange to visit a child care center or Head Start center, and/or a family child care center, you might plan to do so at the end of this day's sessions, asking participants to keep in mind the things they should seek in a good quality child care setting. Participants can bring their checklists along for reference, but they should not complete them until they leave the center, so they won't alarm the childcare providers. Ask each participant to select a question from the last page of the handout to be asked of the child care provider(s) you visit. Have them report the responses to class members when you return from the visit. You should compare notes and observations when you return to class or at the next class meeting.

If you are unable to arrange a field trip, have class participants look over the checklist and mark the items that are most important to them. Ask them to share the items they marked and explain why those items are important to them.

Distribute the list of types of child care and amounts that DHS will subsidize for Families First participants.

Because good quality child care is so important for persons who are employed, there is assistance available to Families First participants to help them secure the care you need for your children as you make the transition to work. (Discuss how participants can receive this benefit and what they need to do in order to receive the child care assistance.)



Final Thoughts

Facilitator Tip

Check with your class members to see if they are already using the benefits available to them. If they are not, you may want to invite the Child Care Broker for your county to talk about child care benefits available to Families First participants. Be sure to allow time for questions and answers. You may want to invite the local Child Care Licensing Counselor from DHS to talk to the class about licensing requirements for centers and how to select good quality child care.