

4. Making a Successful Plan and Communicating With Your Child Care Provider

At a Glance...



Selecting childcare is one of the most important decisions you will make for your child. There are steps you can take to help you make the best decision.

Time Required



One hour, depending on number of participants

Core Concept



Parents will secure good quality child care for their children.

Objectives



- Participants will create a plan for locating quality child care that meets their needs.
- Participants will communicate regularly with their child care provider regarding concerns and needs of their child

Materials



- ☐ Pencils
- ☐ Pack of playing cards
- ☐ Items for awards or prizes
- ☐ "My Child Care Plan" (handout E-4-a)
- ☐ "Four Steps to Selecting a Child Care Provider" (handout E-4-b)
- ☐ "Good Communication Tips" (handout E-4-c)
- ☐ "Child's Background Information" (handout E-4-d)
- ☐ Local phone books
- ☐ List of Child Care Providers in your area (may be available from DHS or contact Tennessee Child Care Resource and Referral Service at (800) 462-8261)



Icebreaker

As participants come to class, give those who arrive on time a playing card. Throughout the class period, give a card to participants each time they contribute to the class through offering a comment or assisting with an activity. At the end of the day, give a prize to the person who has the highest card or the best hand of cards.



Facilitator Script

Distribute copies of “My Child Care Plan” (handout E-4-a) and “Four Steps To Selecting a Child Care Provider” (handout E-4-b.) Have participants complete the form while they are in class. They will need to refer to other handouts they have received throughout the Child Care Lessons. Answer the following questions using the references in parentheses.

What type of child care arrangements do I prefer? (Refer to “Types of Child Care,” handout E-2-a.)

What are my concerns or obstacles?

How will I get my child to and from child care?

How much can I afford for child care each week?, etc.

(Refer to materials from DHS on subsidies for child care and to “Child Care Dilemmas: What Do I Do When....?”, handout E-3-b.)

What are the child care centers I can call and the questions I want to ask?

(Distribute local phone books and lists of local child care providers. Refer to “Selecting Quality Child Care,” handout E-2-c, and “Four Steps to Selecting a Child Care Provider,” handout E-4-b.)

Which centers do I wish to visit and which questions will I ask? (Refer to “Selecting Quality Child Care,” handout E-2-c, and “Four Steps to Selecting a Child Care Provider,” handout E-4-b.)

How can I stay involved with my child’s center once I have chosen one for him/her to attend? (Refer to the handout “Four Steps to Selecting a Child Care Provider,” handout E-4-b.)

Regular communication with your childcare provider will be important for finding out what is happening with your child in childcare and informing your childcare provider about things that are happening with your child at home. What are some ways to communicate effectively with your child care provider? The communication skills we learned in other lessons, “I” Messages and reflective listening, are good skills to use in talking with child care providers. They can help you express your concerns about any problems your child might have without sounding like you are accusing the provider. A sample statement might be “I feel concerned when Jimmy tells me that Billy bites him. I know that he may make Billy angry, sometimes. What can we do to help them get along?” This lets the caregiver know that you know about a problem and that you are concerned, but that you recognize there are two sides to every story. The last statement lets the provider know that you want to work with him or her to solve the problem. Remember to tell the provider when you are pleased about the way things are going. This will encourage the provider to continue to do positive things with your child.

Distribute the handout “Good Communication Tips” (handout E-4-c.)

Look at the list of communication tips. Now, read the situation that Mary Ann is facing. If you were in Mary Ann’s position, how would you communicate with your childcare provider about this problem? (Allow participants to come up with what they would say to the provider about their concerns.)

This is a good model to follow in talking with your child care provider. You should try to talk to the child care provider every day about these issues or at least every week.

Distribute the handout “Child’s Background Information” (handout E-4-d.)

Completing this form for the child care provider can help him or her take the best care of your child. If their child care provider does not have a form for parents to fill out about the child, this form should be completed and given to the provider. You should keep one copy of the form on hand at all times. This could be helpful if your child has to go to a new child care provider on short notice. You can make photo copies when a form is needed so you will always have the information available.

Final Thoughts



Assign homework. If you did not get to take a field trip to a child care center as a part of the class, ask participants to visit a child care provider or center in their community. Have them complete the “Selecting Quality Child Care” (handout E-2-c) and report to the class about what they saw without naming the child care provider or center that they visited. This homework may not be completed by the next class period. Let class members help set a reasonable deadline for completing the homework.