

## CHILD CARE SELECTION CHECKLIST

This checklist is for parents to use when selecting a child care program for their child. It was adapted from The National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies checklist. These indicators of a high-quality child care program are a sampling of the hundreds of items assessed through Orange County United Way's Star-Quality Rating and Improvement System. (Star-Quality Ratings are currently available in Orange County for center-based child care facilities only, not family child care homes.) For more information about Star-Quality Ratings and a list of current Star-Quality Centers, please contact Orange County United Way at (949) 263-6150 or visit [www.unitedwavoc.org](http://www.unitedwavoc.org).

Name of Center:		
Evaluation Areas <i>Check box if the program meets expectations</i>	STAR-QUALITY RATING	NOTES
<b>SUPERVISION</b>		
Are children watched at all times, including when they are sleeping?	All ★ Levels	
Are positive guidance techniques used? Do adults avoid yelling, spanking, and other negative punishments?	All ★ Levels	
Are the caregiver/teacher-to-child ratios appropriate and do they follow the recommended guidelines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•One caregiver per 3 or 4 infants</li> <li>•One caregiver per 3 or 4 young toddlers</li> <li>•One caregiver per 4 to 6 older toddlers</li> <li>•One caregiver per 6 to 9 preschoolers</li> </ul>	All ★ Levels <i>(the best ratios are required in 5 ★ centers)</i>	
Are adults warm and welcoming? Do they pay individual attention to each child? Do they respond sympathetically to help children who are upset, hurt or angry?	3 ★ Level and above	
<b>TEACHER TRAINING</b>		
Do the teachers have a California Child Development Permit and experience in caring for children?	2 ★ Level and above	
Does at least one teacher have specialized inclusion training?	3 ★ Level and above	
Are all children screened at least twice a year using a valid and reliable screening tool?	3 ★ Level and above	
Does at least one teacher in each classroom have an Associate's degree and experience in caring for children?	4 ★ Level and above	
Does the director have a degree and some experience in caring for children?	5 ★ Level	
Does the director have a degree and some experience in caring for children?	5 ★ Level	
If a family child care home, has the provider had specific training on children's development and experience caring for children?	<i>(Not applicable to family child care homes)</i>	
<b>PROGRAM CURRICULUM AND ACTIVITIES</b>		
For older children, are there specific areas for different kinds of play (books, blocks, puzzles, art, etc.)?	2 ★ Level and above	
For infants and toddlers, are there toys that "do something" when the child plays with them?	2 ★ Level and above	
Is the play space organized and are materials easy-to-use? Are some materials available at all times?	2 ★ Level and above	
Are there daily or weekly activity plans available? Have the adults planned experiences for the children to enjoy? Will the activities help children learn?	2 ★ Level and above	
Do the adults talk with the children during the day? Do they engage them in conversations and ask questions, when appropriate?	3 ★ Level and above	

	Do the adults read to children at least twice a day or encourage them to read, if they can read?	5 ★ Level
<b>HEALTH AND SAFETY</b>		
	Do adults and children wash their hands (after using the bathroom, changing diapers, before eating, etc.)?	All ★ Levels
	Are diaper changing surfaces cleaned and disinfected after each use?	All ★ Levels
	Do all of the children enrolled have the required immunizations?	All ★ Levels
	Are medicines labeled and out of children's reach?	All ★ Levels
	Are adults trained to give medicines and keep records of medications?	All ★ Levels
	Are cleaning supplies and other poisonous materials locked up, out of children's reach?	All ★ Levels
	Is there a plan to follow if a child is injured, sick or lost?	All ★ Levels
	Are first aid kits readily available?	All ★ Levels
	Is there a plan for responding to disasters (fire, earthquake, etc.)?	All ★ Levels
	Has a satisfactory criminal history background check been conducted on each adult present? Was the check based on fingerprints? Have all the adults who are left alone with children had background and criminal screenings?	All ★ Levels
	Is the outdoor play area a safe place for children to play? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is it checked each morning for hazards before children use it?</li> <li>Is the equipment the right size and type for the age of the children who use it?</li> <li>In center-based programs, is the playground area surrounded by a fence at least 4 feet tall?</li> <li>Is the equipment placed on mulch, sand, or rubber matting?</li> <li>Is the equipment in good condition?</li> </ul>	All ★ Levels
	Is the number of children in each group limited? In family child care homes and centers, children are in groups of no more than <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6-8 infants</li> <li>6-12 younger toddlers</li> <li>8-12 older toddlers</li> <li>12-20 preschoolers</li> <li>20-24 school-aged</li> </ul>	All ★ Levels <i>(the smallest group sizes are required in 5 ★ centers)</i>
<b>MANAGEMENT</b>		
	Is the program in good standing with Community Care Licensing?	All ★ Levels
	Will I be welcome any time my child is in care?	All ★ Levels
	Are there written personnel policies and job descriptions?	2 ★ Level and above
	Are staff evaluated each year; do providers do a self-assessment?	2 ★ Level and above
	Will I be given a copy of the program's policies?	2 ★ Level and above
	Is there a written annual training plan for staff professional development?	3 ★ Level and above
	Is parents' feedback sought and used in making program improvements?	4 ★ Level and above
	Are annual conferences held with parents?	4 ★ Level and above
	Are parents and staff asked to evaluate the program annually?	5 ★ Level
	Is the program evaluated each year by someone outside the program?	5 ★ Level
	Is the program accredited by a national organization?	5 ★ Level