Early Childhood Education
Resources for Families

April 2021

Childcare and Preschool

Arizona Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR)
https://www.azccrr.com/
1-800-308-9000

Head Start Locator
https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/center-locator

Quality First Child Care Quality Checklist

First Things First: Quality Care in Your Region
https://www.firstthingsfirst.org/governance/ftf-regions/find-your-region/

First Things First: Quality First Scholarships and Other Financial Assistance
https://qualityfirstaz.com/parents/paying-for-child-care/

Arizona Department of Economic Security: Child Care

Department of Economic Security in Training Childcare Subsidy

Parenting Support

Birth to Five Helpline
Free service to Arizona families with young children with questions or concerns about their infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.

CALL 877-705-KIDS (5437)
*bilingual English/Spanish

You can ask about anything, including:
- Sleep
- Feeding/Eating
- Fussiness
- Tantrums/Challenging Behaviors
- Potty Training
- Child Development
- Health and Nutrition
- Parenting

Or submit your question online:
https://www.firstthingsfirst.org/resources/birth-five-helpline/

First Things First Parent Kit
Digital toolkit to help meet the challenges of being a parent and support the health development of your baby, toddler, or preschooler.

https://www.firstthingsfirst.org/resources/parent-kit/

“From the day a child is born, the care, attention, love and support they experience lays the foundation for their future.”

- First Things First
WEB and SOCIAL MEDIA

First Things First
www.firstthingsfirst.org
Quality First
https://qualityfirstaz.com/

CCRR
Facebook: @arizonachildcare
Instagram: @azccrr
Twitter: @AZChildCare
Pinterest: ArizonaCCRR

Make Way for Books
https://makewayforbooks.org/
Facebook: @makewayforbooksaz
Twitter: @MWFBAz
Instagram: @makewayforbooks
App: Apple and Android, English and Spanish versions

Vroom app: Apple and Android
https://www.vroom.org/
Choosing a child care setting for your infant, toddler or preschooler is a big decision. Quality is one of the most important factors to consider, as research shows that quality early learning settings help children develop skills that are crucial to their success now and once they enter school. But quality is not always easy to spot. This checklist will help you recognize the key elements of quality and make a more informed decision when considering a child care or preschool setting for your child.

**AT YOUR VISIT: QUESTIONS TO ASK**

- **Do you have a parent handbook?**
  Quality programs should offer you a copy.

- **What are the qualifications of the director and teachers?**  
  How long have they been working with children?
  Experience working with infants, toddlers and preschoolers as well as training or college coursework in early childhood development and education lead to quality adult/child interactions.

- **How do you keep families informed about your program and their children’s progress?**
  Quality centers will post lesson plans, send parents information such as a newsletter, host regular parent/teacher conferences and keep you informed about your child’s activities.

- **What is your ratio of teachers to children?**  
  Maximum group size?
  These determine the level of care and attention your child may receive. Quality programs have smaller teacher/child ratios and limit group sizes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of Children</th>
<th>Preferred Teacher/Child Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birth-12 months</td>
<td>1:5 or less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-24 months</td>
<td>1:6 or less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 year olds</td>
<td>1:8 or less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 year olds</td>
<td>1:12 or less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5 year olds</td>
<td>1:13 or less</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*In mixed-age group settings, check these guidelines by the age of the youngest child in the group.*

- **How does the program deal with children with challenging behavior?**
  Quality programs have steps in place to prevent disruptions, communicate with the child, redirect the child, and communicate with the family. Time out is not effective in dealing with disruptive children.

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AT YOUR VISIT: THINGS TO LOOK FOR

POSITIVE, NURTURING TEACHER/CHILD INTERACTIONS
- Does the teacher make eye contact with the children, smile and listen without interrupting?
- Is the teacher at eye level with the kids when they are interacting?
- Is the teacher interacting with children during activity times indoors and outdoors?
- Do you hear the kids talking more than the teacher? Child voices should dominate.
- Does the teacher ask the children questions where they can give more than a yes/no answer?
- Are the children supervised at all times? Children should never be left alone and should always be within sight and sound of teachers.

CARING FOR INFANTS
- Are babies placed on their backs to sleep?
- Do babies spend part of their play time on their tummies?
- Do caregivers respond promptly to crying babies?
- Are babies held while being fed?

POSITIVE CHILD/CHILD INTERACTIONS
- Are kids playing either together or side-by-side?
- Are children encouraged to work together to resolve differences or conflicts?
- Do kids move freely from activity to activity?

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT
- Is there ample space and materials to encourage play and learning within the children’s reach, including:
  - Books, books and more books
  - Blocks and puzzles
  - Pretend play area with puppets, costumes, etc.
  - Art/writing materials and musical instruments
  - Textured materials, such as sand and water
  - Science materials, like plants, funnels, magnifying glasses, etc.

OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT
- Is there an outdoor play area, with shade, that is used daily?
- Are items from the classroom brought outdoors to be played with?
- Are the adults actively engaged with the kids at play?

AFTER YOUR VISIT: QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR CHILD

Trust your instincts and also your child’s reactions to the teachers and environment.
- Do you think you would like to go play there?
- What did you like best about the classroom?
- What did you like best about the teacher?

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