



School-Age Checklist

The following are some aspects of child care to keep in mind when you are looking for a before- and/or after-school program for your kindergartner or school-age child. You can discuss with the provider some of these statements directly; you will get answers to many of them just by observing the program. Add any questions or concerns you may have to this list.

About the Program/Provider

- Everyone in the program should have experience working with school-age children.
- All staff in the program should have training in CPR and First Aid.
- A low turnover rate in both staffing and enrollment is a sign of a good program.
- The provider should handle conflicts without losing patience, shaming a child, or frequently displaying anger.
- Make sure you're in agreement with the program's discipline policy.
- Rules should be stated frequently and in a positive way.

About the Environment

- The environment should be clean and safe for children of all ages. There should be working smoke detectors and fire extinguishers.
- The program should be inviting to children and parents.
- Children should be supervised at all times.
- Each child should have a storage area for personal belongings.
- The area should be large enough for a variety of activities.

- Children should be taken outside every day, weather permitting. There should be playground equipment available for the children.
- There should be enough materials and equipment for the group size, both indoors and outdoors.
- Television use should be minimal or none at all. If television is used, it must be supervised at all times.

About the School-Age Program

- There should be time for home work and time for fun.
- There should be a quiet place for the children to do homework.
- The teachers/providers should be qualified to help the children with their homework.
- The children should be able to choose what activities they would like to participate in.
- There should be enough variety in activities to keep your child interested.
- A daily schedule for the program should be posted for the children to read. The daily schedule should allow for fun as well as educational experiences.

- The group and individual activities should be acceptable.
- Children should be given daily opportunities for creative expression through various forms of art and music.
- There should be enough books available for the number of children in the program. You may want to ask if children are allowed to bring non-school books from home to read.
- There should be writing materials and supplies for language arts.
- The program should include areas for development in fine motor, large motor, math, science, and language arts.

Schedules

- You may ask if the program offers different schedule options such as before-school care only, after-school care only, or both.
- Ask about the hours of the program.
- If the program is open for full-day care during school vacations, holidays or institute days, ask if there are additional fees for care during these times.
- Ask if there are any set days that the program is closed.

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Fees

- Each scheduling option may have different fees, if so, ask what the fees are.
- Inquire if there is a registration fee and if it is refundable.

Transportation

- Ask if transportation is provided to/from the school and the program. If so, at what cost?

School-Age Program

- Ask if the program is licensed through the state.
- Review the license to see how many children may attend this program. If there is no license, ask about requirements and how many children may attend.
- Observe or ask how the children are grouped; by age, by grade, or as one large group?
- Ask how many teachers are present at all times.

Policies and Procedures

- The program should have a parent handbook; you may ask to see it.
- Look for policies on:
 - Parents that are late picking up their children
 - Sick children
 - Vacations
 - Unannounced visits by parents
 - Who is able to pick up a child
- Are there regular fire and tornado drills?
- Does the program have references?

Parent Involvement

- Parents should be able to be involved in the program by volunteering or chaperoning certain events.
- The provider should be communicating with you about your child daily. Find out how this communication is done; verbal, daily notes, etc.

- A calendar of events should be sent home to keep you informed of your child's activities.
- If there are field trips or special events planned for the children, find out if permission slips are sent home for parents to sign.

Other Issues to Consider

- Ask yourself if you are comfortable with the setting and if your child would feel comfortable in the program.
- Observe the children in the program to see if they seem interested and enthusiastic.
- Ask yourself if the program would work with all of your school-age needs.