



Home Away From Home:

Finding High-Quality Child Care in FIVE Simple Steps

Special to California Kids

When your child is away from home, you need to know she is in a safe, loving, nurturing and stimulating environment. Studies show high-quality child care supports a young child's learning and helps her develop socially, emotionally, and physically. But how do you know if your child is receiving the right care?

Leaving a child under the care of someone else can be a struggle, except when you are confident you have a high-quality child care provider. That's why First 5 Sacramento recommends parents **Find, Investigate, Visit and Evaluate (FIVE)** when choosing a child care provider:

Find high-quality care that is best for your child based on your family's specific needs. There are many different types of care to consider, including:

Family Child Care Homes — This type of care takes place in the child care provider's home.

Child Care Centers — Most of the time, child care centers are bigger than family child care homes and can be run by an individual, business, school, church or public agency.

In-Home Care — In-home care is when someone comes to your home to care for your child. It can be a friend, relative, nanny or baby-sitter.

Home Care Providers — Home care providers take care of their own children and children from other families. Children go to the provider's home for care.

Investigate potential providers. Once you decide on the type of child care and are ready to choose a provider, be sure to ask them plenty of questions about their qualifications and style of care, including:

What's their previous experience in child care?

Is the center/home licensed?

What types of activities are scheduled?

What is the provider's approach to discipline?

Asking these questions and more will give you an idea whether a provider is the right fit for you.

Visit the center or home when children are there. Make sure to:

Watch how the staff interacts with the children

Observe the surroundings and make sure the area is clean, safe, and filled with appropriate equipment and toys.

Talk to parents of children who go there about

their experiences with the provider.

Evaluate and interact often with your provider. Once you have found a quality provider:

Develop a partnership with the provider regarding your child's development

Have regular meetings to hear updates on your child's activities and progress

Share stories about your child

After you **Find, Investigate, Visit and Evaluate**, you can rest easy knowing your children are

in a place where they are able to grow up safe, healthy and ready to enter school learning.

First 5 Sacramento encourages parents to use resources available to them. For local childcare resources and referrals call our community partner ChildAction, Inc. at (916) 369-0191 or online at www.childaction.org. Child Action, Inc. will help you navigate these child care decisions to select a place that is best for you and your child.

First 5 Sacramento Research shows that a child's brain develops most dramatically

in the first five years and what parents and caregivers do during these years to support their child's growth will have a meaningful impact throughout life. Based on this research, California voters passed Proposition 10 in 1998, adding a 50 cents-per-pack tax on cigarettes to support programs for expectant parents and children ages zero to five. In the last year, First 5 Sacramento distributed approximately \$17 in Prop 10 revenues to programs and services that meet local needs. For more information about First 5 Sacramento's programs and services, call 916-876-5865 or visit online at www.First5Sacramento.net.

Easter Egg Hunt

Can you find which Easter egg appears only once?

www.ActivityVillage.co.uk - Keeping Kids Busy

Brundibar

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