

## KIDS LEARN THROUGH PLAY

### Play isn't just fun it's fundamental

Children need playtime, it is crucial for healthy development. Children learn about the world through exploring ideas, manipulating objects and problem solving with others. Using imagination and creativity, children take on new roles and test new concepts. Play provides a meaningful context in which to practice skills and express ideas. It fosters cognitive, physical, and social-emotional development. Teachers facilitate + foster the learning that happens during children's play.

**Hands-on play is essential because playing is learning.**

### When You Visit

#### Visit by yourself first.

It is often helpful to first visit on your own and bring your child on a return visit. This helps you remain focused on all areas of the program.

#### Bring notes + take notes.

There is a lot to take in during a visit and the information provided can be overwhelming. It helps to come to each visit with a "wish list" and questions you'd like answered.

#### Philosophy + Play.

Ask about the program's philosophy and beliefs about child development, as well as their mission.

- Do they believe children learn by doing?
- Do they nurture each child's social + emotional growth?
- Do the teachers plan hands-on learning activities that help advance cognitive skills?



Brochure provided by:



### CONTACT US

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# STARTING YOUR SEARCH FOR EARLY CARE + EDUCATION?

HERE IS SOME USEFUL  
INFORMATION FOR  
FAMILIES  
CONSIDERING EARLY  
CARE + EDUCATION



## FINDING HIGH QUALITY CHILD CARE CAN BE A DAUNTING PROCESS

Finding the right fit can take a lot of time and effort!

### HERE ARE SOME TIPS ON EVALUATING THE BEST PROGRAMS FOR YOUR FAMILY:

#### BEFORE YOU VISIT PROGRAMS CREATE YOUR OWN WISHLIST

Consider what qualities are most important to you. Think about your family's needs and about the interests and abilities of your child. A great way to begin your search is by listing what matters to you most.

- What are your top priorities?
- What would be your "deal breakers"?
- What environment would be a good fit for your child's temperament/health/interests?

#### DO YOUR RESEARCH

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has plenty of information on what excellent programs look like. visit [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org) for more info.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recognizes the importance of high-quality early care and education. Visit [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org) for more info.

**LOCATE: Child Care** and **My Child Care DC** are great resources to use when searching for the right childcare in Montgomery County and DC. Visit <http://www.marylandfamilynetwork.org> and <http://dcchildcareconnections.org> for more information.

#### LOOK FOR ACCREDITATION

Accreditation is a national or state voluntary system maintained by governing institutions such as the NAEYC, the world's largest organization focused on early childhood education. NAEYC accreditation sets professional standards and helps families easily identify high-quality programs.

## PROGRAM CHECKLIST

Determine if it's the right fit by evaluating multiple factors...

### TEACHERS + CAREGIVERS

- Enjoy being with children
- Engage + communicate with children at their eye-level
- Greet children and parents warmly
- Use positive guidance techniques (no yelling, shaming or physical punishment)
- Respond to children's needs quickly
- Provide individual attention
- Monitor children always, including nap time
- Have CPR, first aid, and early childhood training
- Receive continuing education, coaching, and support
- Are trained in child abuse prevention and reporting
- Welcome your involvement and questions
- Share information about your child's day



### THE SETTING

- Environment is bright, pleasant and calm
- Play areas are well organized, with materials attractively presented
- A fenced-in outdoor play area includes a variety of safe equipment
- Caregivers/teachers can see the entire playground and are active with the children

### ACTIVITIES

- Balanced among play time, story time, activity time and naps
- Appropriate and interesting for each age group
- Promote enjoyable experiences that are planned to promote learning
- Language is rich throughout the day, with adults and children communicating



### HEALTH + SAFETY

- Adults + children wash their hands throughout the day
- Diaper changing surfaces are cleaned and sanitized after each use
- All children enrolled are fully immunized
- Labeled medicines are out of children's reach; trained adults give medicines and keep records
- Food surfaces are cleaned and sanitized
- Nutritious food and beverages are safely stored, prepared, and served to keep children growing and healthy
- Cleaning supplies and toxic materials are locked up, out of children's reach
- Plans are in place in case a child is injured, sick or lost

### IN GENERAL

- Feel comfortable with the program's behavior management approach
- You hear happy children
- You notice adults comforting children as needed
- The program is licensed or regulated
- Surprise visits by parents are encouraged
- You sense your child and family will be happy