



## Steps for Choosing Quality Child Care

### **LOOK:**

Visit several different child care homes or centers. Think about your first impression(s) and take notes. Always visit a home or center more than once and stay as long as possible to get a good feel for what the care will be like for your child. After starting care, continue to visit from time to time and talk with the owner if you have any concerns. If you are not welcome to visit at any time, you may want to find a different provider.

### **LISTEN:**

What does the child care setting sound like? Are the children happy and involved? Do the caregivers'/teachers' voices sound cheerful and patient? If the facility is too quiet, it may mean there are not enough activities available. If it is too noisy, it may mean there is a lack of control.

### **COUNT:**

Count the number of children and caregivers/teachers who care for them in each group. The fewer the number of children for each adult, the more attention your child will receive. Especially for babies and younger children, it is important to have a small child to staff ratio that meets or exceeds minimum standards.

### **ASK:**

Quality care providers and teachers should be happy to answer your questions about their child care background and experience. It is important for you to know that the adults who will care for your children have the knowledge and skills necessary to provide the attention they will need. Also, ask about any special training they have and whether the program is accredited.

### **BE INFORMED:**

Is your provider involved in efforts to improve the quality of child care in your community? How can you get involved?

To find out if there have been any valid complaints and/or other pertinent information about any of the programs you are considering, call the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) visit their website at [www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us); call 1-800-862-5252; or contact your local licensing office.