

## **MAKING DAY CARE A GOOD EXPERIENCE**

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- For working parents, one of the biggest decisions you'll make is what child care option is best for your child
- Choosing a good quality child care center or provider and having confidence in your choice will give you peace of mind that money can't buy
- Most child and adolescent mental health professionals recognize that the ideal environment for raising a child is in the home with parents and family
- Since this type of environment is often not available, the role of day care, especially in the first few years of life, needs to be considered

### ***Important things to Look For in the Day Care Environment:***

1. *Trained, experienced teachers who enjoy, understand and can lead children*
2. *The same day care staff for a long period of time*
3. *Opportunity for creative work, imaginative play and physical activities*
4. *Space to move indoors and out*
5. *Enough teachers and assistants – ideally, at least 1 for every 5 (or fewer) children*
6. *Lots of drawing and coloring materials and toys, as well as equipment such as swings, wagons, jungle gyms, etc.*
7. *Small rather than large groups if possible*

### ***Five Reasons to Feel Great About Child Care:***

1. *Children learn sharing, cooperation and problem solving at child care centers:*
  - Research shows that children who receive good, quality child care tend to be ahead of other children intellectually and developmentally

2. *Working mothers spend the same amount of time in direct interaction with their children as full-time mothers:*
  - Employed mothers spend as much time reading to playing with their children as those at home, although they do not spend as much time simply in the same room or house with the children
  - Studies have shown that working women do not sacrifice time with their children, they sacrifice their own sleep and leisure time
  
3. *Children benefit from trusting relationships with more than one caregiver:*
  - Research has shown that babies with more than one attachment are less distressed when mothers leave for work, they are more playful and content in the presence of other adults, and are less distracted at the birth of a sibling
  
4. *A parent-child relationship is not necessarily stronger if mom stays home:*
  - Research shows that children in child care show the same degree of attachment to their mothers and the same amount of security as children who stay home
  
5. *If working makes you happier, you're children will be happier:*
  - Working mothers who like their jobs have better personal adjustments, are happier, and are less depressed than full-time mothers, even those who prefer being home
  - Depressed mothers have depressing effects on their children