CHILDCARE CHECKLIST

When choosing childcare centre it is important to look at how staff interact with the children and whether the centre has a warm, friendly atmosphere. Some things parents often find helpful to consider are:

- Will I be welcome at the centre at any time?
- Are parents encouraged to participate in activities?
- Is there information sharing between the staff and parents?
- Will I be informed about proposed changes to policies?
- Does the centre have a planned program – the day-to-day activities for my child?
- Do staff set individual learning goals for each child?
- Are meal times pleasant and will the meals meet children’s individual needs?
- Does toileting, nappy changing and rest time meet individual needs?
- Are there activities that foster my child’s creativity?
- Are the children encouraged to explore and take on new challenges?
- Will my child’s individual needs be met?

Take this childcare checklist to every childcare centre you visit. Ask these questions and use them as a prompt to ask more specific questions relevant to you and your child’s needs. You may not even need to ask some of these questions – you will be able to see if the centre is doing it.

Service name: ________________________________
Address: _____________________________________
Phone number: ______________________
Director’s/Coordinator’s name: __________________
Opening and closing times: ___________ to ___________
Holiday closures (Christmas, Easter, child-free days):

Fees (per hour/day/week)? __________
Is Childcare Fee Assistance available? Y / N
Is there a waiting list? Y / N
If yes, How long? ______________
Is there a fee to go on the waiting list? Y / N
Are there adequate accident, medication and emergency procedures? Y / N
Is there someone on staff at all times with a current first-aid certificate? Y / N
Is the centre registered with the National Childcare Accreditation Council? Y / N

What is the child/staff ratio? ________
How many qualified staff are there? ________
Does the service have public liability insurance? Y / N
How are children grouped (families, age)? ______________
What meals are provided and what type of food and drinks?

Does the service supply:
Nappies Y / N
Milk formula Y / N
Sunscreen Y / N

Are meal/sleep times planned but not too rigid? Y / N
What are the guidelines for caring for/isolating sick children?

Are toys and equipment safe and in good repair? Y / N
Are fences and gates well-repaired and childproof? Y / N
Is the centre clean and welcoming? Y / N
Do staff observe satisfactory hygiene practices, such as washing hands after changing nappies? Y / N
Are there enough play materials and are they made available daily such as paint, dough, puzzles, blocks, etc? Y / N
Are songs, fingerplays, and books part of the children’s day? Y / N
Do staff appear relaxed and happy? Y / N
Do children appear busy, relaxed and happy? Y / N
Are toys provided varied and age-appropriate? Y / N
Are toys within the children’s reach? Y / N
Is there a daily program based on the individual needs and development of a child? Y / N
If yes, can you see a written copy of the program? Y / N
Is there a balance between indoor and outdoor play? Y / N
Are discipline practices clear, consistent and positive? Y / N
Do staff talk with the children, call them by name, focus on positive behaviour, encourage creativity and independence? Y / N
Are babies attended to when they cry? Y / N
What is the centre’s policy on excursions?
Are you welcome to visit the service at any time? Y / N
Can you be involved in the operation or management of the service if you want to be? Y / N