Finding Child Care

What every parent should know

Selecting a child-care facility is a major decision for parents. Several options include: Registered Family Home, day care centers, pre-school and Parent's Day Out Programs or a private in-home nanny. Only a parent can decide which option is right for their individual situation.

A Registered Family Home is defined as care in the care giver's own home. The maximum number of children depends on the ages of the children; the younger the children the fewer children city ordinance and state law will allow. The maximum number of pre-school children is six (6). In Richardson, two additional school age children may also be in care if they are the care giver's children or siblings of the pre-schoolers. All children in the home must be counted if they are under 14 years of age. When choosing any type of child-care it's important for parents to visit the facility and talk with the providers. The following are a few things to look for when visiting a facility. (See the Known Providers section, below.) **Helpful Tips**

- Is the facility clean and in good repair? Restrooms can be an excellent place to check for good cleaning practices as these will often reflect that poor sanitation practices exist throughout a facility.
- Are the children involved in activities, interacting with the adults and other children in a positive manner? Do they appear to be enjoying their surroundings? Do care givers seem to enjoy the children? How does the care giver handle conflict or inappropriate behavior? Are there enough adults present to supervise the children properly?
- Are there plenty of age appropriate activities, toys, furniture and equipment which will stimulate and teach the children safely and comfortably?
- What credentials and training have care givers received? State law requires that care givers
 obtain specified hours of training. Registered Family Home care givers must obtain 20 hours of
 continuing education per year. This includes current certificates in CPR (cardio pulmonary
 resuscitation) and first aid. Day-care center staff and directors must also meet specific training
 requirements.
- Ask to see current copies of the health and sanitation, fire safety, gas leak test and Texas
 Department of Protective and Regulatory Services Licensing inspection reports. Look for serious
 deficiencies and ask what steps have been taken to correct them.
- Parental cooperation is essential. For example, only a parent can provide care givers with proper enrollment information and current immunization records.
- Communication channels must be open. Talk to the child-care provider about any special instructions or situations which might affect your child's behavior. Ask your child and the care giver about the day's activities. Many facilities have special activities or weekly themes.
- If your child becomes ill while in care, it is important that you arrive promptly to take the child to
 the doctor or home. Regulations require that sick children be excluded. This is for the health of all
 of the children as well as the care givers and their families. If your child has special needs, you
 must advise the care givers.

For Your Information

The City of Richardson conducts unannounced semi-annual inspections of all child-care facilities in Richardson. This includes day care centers and pre-schools as well as Registered Family Homes. There are many high quality child-care facilities in our community. If you do observe situations which you feel may present a health or safety hazard, you may report them to the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services at 1-800-582-6036 or the City of Richardson Health Department at 972-744-4080.