

## Why does choosing quality child care matter?

Good child care arrangements can improve the daily lives of children and parents. Children in high quality care have higher levels of success when they enter school, and exhibit more cooperation and stick with tasks longer than children in other settings. Quality child care environments challenge a child to learn.

- The right child care will make both you and your child happy.
- Child care providers concerned with quality screen visitors and maintain a list of persons approved to pick up your child.
- Quality child care provides children with opportunities to experiment and test new skills.
- Trained child care providers understand how children grow and learn and they know how to provide the most appropriate materials and activities for children to learn.
- Quality child care environments have lower staff-child ratios, so that your child gets more individual attention.
- Quality child care providers welcome you as both an observer and a contributor to your child's program.

## River Valley Child Development Services administers the following Resource and Referral Agencies:

### Choices Child Care Resource and Referral

4421 Emerson Avenue, Ste. 102  
Parkersburg, WV 26104  
Toll-free: 1-866-966-2668  
[www.wvdhhr.org/choices](http://www.wvdhhr.org/choices)

*Serves Wood, Wirt, Ritchie, Pleasants, Harrison, Doddridge, Calhoun, and Gilmer counties*

### Connect Child Care Resource and Referral

200 Upper Kanawha Valley Way  
P.O. Box 369  
Cabin Creek, WV 25035  
Toll-free: 1-888-595-8290  
[www.wvdhhr.org/connect](http://www.wvdhhr.org/connect)

*Serves Kanawha, Clay, Roane and Jackson counties*

### Link Child Care Resource and Referral

611 Seventh Avenue, Ste. 200  
Huntington, WV 25701  
Toll-free: 1-800-894-9540  
[www.wvdhhr.org/link](http://www.wvdhhr.org/link)

*Serves Boone, Cabell, Lincoln, Logan, Mason, Mingo, Putnam and Wayne counties*

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# A Guide for Parents: Choosing Child Care



[www.rvcds.org](http://www.rvcds.org)

# Five steps to choosing quality child care

## 1. Look

Begin by visiting several child care homes, facilities or centers. On each visit, think about your first impression.

- Does the place look safe for your child?
- Do the caregivers/teachers who will care for your child enjoy talking and playing with children?
- Do they talk with each child at the child's eye level?
- Are there plenty of toys and learning materials within a child's reach?

You should always visit a home or center more than once. Stay as long as possible so you can get a good feel for what the care will be like for your child. Continue to visit from time to time even after you have started using the child care provider. Take this handy checklist with you when visiting to help with your evaluation.

## 2. Listen

- What does the child care setting sound like?
- Do the children sound happy and involved?
- Are the teacher's voices cheerful and pleasant?

A place that is too quiet may mean not enough activity. Too noisy may mean that there's a lack of control.



## 3. Count

Count the number of children in the group, then count the number of staff members caring for them. Obviously, the fewer the number of children per caregiver, the more attention your child will get. A small number of children per caregiver is most important for babies and younger children.

## 4. Ask

It's very important that adults who care for your children have the knowledge and experience to give them the attention that they need. Ask about the background and experience of all staff, including the program director, caregivers, teachers, and any other adults who will have contact with your children in the home or center.

## 5. Be Informed

Find out more about efforts in your community to improve the quality of child care. Is your caregiver involved in these activities? How can you get involved? For more information, contact your local Child Care Resource and Referral Agency.