

Choosing the **Best** Care for Your Toddler



KIDS FIRST

CHILDCARE RESOURCE CENTER

When choosing a toddler program you'll want to see:

- Furniture and equipment that is safe, appropriately sized for toddlers.
- Large uncluttered spaces for active play.
- A variety of equipment including push/pull toys, picture books, stacking or building toys, puzzles, musical instruments, dolls, telephones, balls and sand and water table. There should be duplicates of popular toys.
- Warm, responsive adults who get down on a child's level.
- Adults who respond quickly to cries or calls for assistance.
- Creative exploration with art materials (large crayons, markers, finger paints) with the focus on process rather than the finished product.
- Adults who respond to toddler's attempts to learn language by listening, expanding on toddler language, and simplify their own language.
- Adults who are patient with toddlers' attempts to acquire new skills and do things for themselves.
- Predictable but flexible daily routines.
- Unhurried routine times (diapering, meals, etc.) are opportunities for learning.
- Toddlers' preferences for toys, foods, or activities respected.
- Warm, responsive adults who get down on a child's level.
- Adults who frequently read, sing, do finger plays, and look at picture books with individuals or small groups of toddlers.
- Adults who provide duplicate toys or redirection when dispute occur.
- Warm responsive adults who get down on a child's level

You'll want to question when you see:

- Adults who are constantly saying "no"
- Sand and water play is not offered because it is too much trouble or too messy.
- The expectation that toddlers participate in the same activity at the same time.
- Staff that is untrained in caring for toddlers.
- Art projects where toddlers are "helped" to produce a product or follow a model.
- Forced toilet training at a certain age.
- Expectations of the staff that toddlers follow a preschool curriculum.