



## Daycare

### Daycare for kids

Daycare typically refers to a child care facility that parents take their children to during daytime for care, supervision and learning. Daycare centers specialize in care of infants through preschoolers, although some daycare facilities also offer before-and after-school care for school-aged children as well. Some operators even transport children to and home from school and a select number will also provide transportation to certain extracurricular offerings or sports programs. Most daycare centers are national or regional chains; some are privately owned. Be sure to check with your state to determine regulations, licensing or accreditation requirements. The daycare director should also be able to tell you what type of education and training teachers have received.

### Choosing Child Care—Other Concerns

Ask providers if they require a written contract. If you pick a provider who doesn't use a contract, prepare one yourself. Include the hours of care, payments, and other details that are important to you. Keep a copy with your records. Whether you choose an individual care provider or a group care setting, make sure you communicate and have an understanding with your care provider about expected behavior, discipline methods, and appropriate activities.

### Changing or ending child care

Child care changes will occur and will require careful planning. As children grow, their needs change. Also, personal preferences, a move, or other life events may require a different arrangement. Allow time for both you and your child to adjust by talking about it ahead of time. You may want to plan something special for your child's last day at the child care center, such as bringing treats and taking pictures.

Talk with your child about what to expect. Stress the positive parts of the change, but acknowledge the challenges.



### Worrying about the effects of child care

Many parents worry that the relationship with their child will suffer for having another caregiver. Some research on the mother-child relationship shows that its quality is mainly affected by the mother's interaction with the child and other family influences. Another common concern of parents is whether children will develop and learn to their potential in a child care setting. Some research also shows that the quality of the parent's relationship with the child best supports a child's mental and behavioral growth. The more sensitive, responsive, and attentive the mother is, the better the child will do in child care.

### Preventing illness

Your child is more likely to become ill when he or she is frequently with other children. The spread of many diseases can be reduced by practicing healthy hygiene habits regardless of what type of child care arrangement you have. Use hand sanitizer to clean hands if soap and water aren't available.

### **Having a backup plan**

Plan what you will do if your regular provider cannot keep your child or if your child is sick. Children with mild upper respiratory illnesses such as minor colds usually can attend child care. (Usually, mild upper respiratory illnesses are spread before symptoms develop.) Keep your child at home if he or she has a condition that prevents attending child care such as a fever or a rash.

**For more information about this subject please check:**  
**The American Academy of Pediatrics at [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)**  
**The Center for Disease Control at [www.cdc.gov/](http://www.cdc.gov/)**