

2021-2022 PRESCHOOL GUIDE

Mariemont Preschool Parents Group

So, it's time to start your child in preschool, but how do you know which one to choose? Which school is best for your child? How do you know which preschool is best for you? How is a person supposed to decide with so many schools and programs to choose from? This directory is meant to serve as a guide in your quest to find the perfect preschool for your child. Here is some advice on what to look for and questions to ask when choosing a preschool for your child.

1. Decide if you want your child to attend a preschool or daycare center. What's the difference? Preschool is usually (but not always) a half-day program and offers a more structured learning environment.
2. Learn about the school's teaching philosophy. Is the school's philosophy education or play-based? Do they teach the alphabet with the teacher sitting at the front of the room drilling the students or do they let the children learn through their play? Some preschools blend both education and play-based styles into the curriculum.
Does the school stress process over product? In other words, do all of the children make artwork that looks exactly alike? An example would be a cut out teddy bear with 3 buttons down the front, 2 eyes, a nose and a mouth all placed where they belong. Most likely, the teacher did the majority of the work on such a project. An alternative would be to stress creativity by encouraging children to create art projects on their own, such as providing them with various art supplies and letting them create whatever they desire.
3. Learn about the school's discipline policy. This is very important. Will your child sit in a corner for an hour if she pushes another child? Or, after attending to the injured child, will the teacher help the children to work out their differences? Are children taught ways to solve their problems without violence? Are the children taught how to "talk it out" with others they may disagree with?
4. Observe all of the teachers in action. Yes, credentials and degrees are important to a point, but there are some gifted teachers with no degrees and some teachers who have graduated from accredited universities with early childhood degrees who have difficulty interacting with children. Do the teachers treat the children with love and respect? Do they seem to enjoy what they are doing? Remember that your child will be interacting with many students and teachers in a preschool setting; don't just observe the class your child will be placed into. In many schools teachers just care for a certain age group. Shortly after your child's next birthday she may be placed in another class with another teacher.

5. Observe the children in the classroom. Do the children in the room seem to be happy? Are they involved in activities that are age appropriate? Are there lots of things that they can do or are all the children sitting at the table working on the same thing at the same time?
6. What kinds of policies does the center have? What do they do if a child is injured or sick? Do they always notify the parent in some way? For example, if your child has a small cut there may not be the need to inform you immediately, but do they let you know when you pick the child up? Is anything in writing? At some schools, all injuries are written up with the parents receiving a copy. If all injuries are written up, ask if they have statistic available that you can look over. Are there a lot of injuries?
7. What kinds of meals/snacks will be served? Do you need to provide snacks or lunches for your child? If the food is supplied by the center, how nutritious is it? And, what happens if your child is allergic or just doesn't like the food? Are parents informed as to how much their child eats?
8. Find out other details such as the hours of operation, the cost, etc. What happens if you are late to pick up your child? Some preschools assess a financial penalty, perhaps \$1 to \$5 per 10 minute period after closing time. In some cases the preschool may contact social services advising that the child has been abandoned. How does the school release children at the end of the session? Are children permitted to leave with anyone who may come for them? Or do persons need prior approval of the parents along with the requirement proper identification be presented prior to releasing the child to an individual?
9. Can your child "test try" the center before actually enrolling? If so, how does he/she like the experience? Listen to your child and go with your gut instincts! If your child can verbalize well, ask her why she likes or doesn't like a certain aspect. Observe your child as well and see if her answers seem to match the experience she has.
10. Does the school have an "open door" policy allowing parents to drop in at any time? If they do not, forget it! Find another place. A "call first" policy may suggest the school has something to hide.
11. What are the school's COVID policies? Will children be required to wear a mask? What are the changes in policy that you should be aware of (schedule, drop off/pick up, lunch) and how will these be different once the pandemic is under control?

Choosing a preschool is a big step. Your child is precious and you don't want just anybody taking care of her or him. It's important to ask questions, talk with other parents about the preschools their children attend, and to take your time choosing a preschool. If you are under pressure you are more likely to make a hasty decision you may regret. At the end of this directory, there is a list of questions to ask prospective preschool directors.

Anderson Hills Methodist Nursery School

7515 Forest Rd., Anderson Township

231-4688

Program Description: The children of Anderson Hills Preschool will experience the love of Jesus and learn biblical truths through their daily interactions with our staff. Godly values will guide our decisions and will be prevalent throughout our programming. We will partner with parents in helping children to grow spiritually, academically, socially and emotionally. Visit the website for more information: <http://www.andersonhills.org/preschool1/>

2021-22 Information:

The Anderson Hills United Methodist Preschool enrolls children ages 30 months to 5 years.

Registration materials will be available to download beginning January 5,, 2021. Printed registration materials will also be available at the preschool office on that date. Preference will be given to families who are currently enrolled or were previously enrolled, in that order. All applications must be submitted to the preschool by January 31, 2021. Applications may be mailed or hand delivered to the preschool office. Notification of placement will be e-mailed on February 16, 2021.

Prospective parents are invited to visit the open house on Thursday, January 14, 2020 at 6 pm or participate in a private tour either before or after they submit an application for registration. All materials are available on the web site. Please call the school at number above to schedule a tour.

Armstrong Preschool

5125 Drake Rd., Indian Hill

561-4220 X317

Program Description: Armstrong Preschool is a ministry of Armstrong Chapel United Methodist Church for students 2 years old through 5 years old. The preschool is a Christian based school that combines a strong academic curriculum with Christian values.

<https://www.armstrongpreschool.org>

2021-22 Information:

Registration for the 2021-22 school year for current, alumni and church families will begin on 1/11/21. Registration for new families will begin on 1/19/21. See the registration page on the website for more information.

To schedule a tour please call 513-561-4220 or send an email to the Preschool Director, Jennifer Hock at jhock@armstrongchapel.org. You may also easily reach out through the contact page on the website.

Contact Jennifer (jhock@armstrongchapel.org) for more information.

Church of the Redeemer Preschool

2944 Erie Ave., Hyde Park

533-5980

Program Description: The Redeemer curriculum is designed to promote intellectual, social, spiritual, and creative development in children. These goals are achieved through a developmental approach to learning and based on early childhood development to foster each child's curiosity about the world around him or her. Each classroom offers children opportunities to experience all areas of development, including dramatic play, nature, music, and age appropriate cognitive skills. A brief weekly chapel service is presented by a member of clergy and includes simple songs, Bible stories, and a few short prayers suitable for a diversity of faiths. School outreach projects are coordinated to help children develop community awareness and understand the importance of their contribution. Visit the website for more information: www.redeemerpreschoolhydepark.com

2021-22 Information:

The Church of the Redeemer Preschool enrolls children ages 2 to 5 years.

Registration begins on January 5, 2021 for current families, January 11 for parishioners and preschool alum, and January 13 for new families. Registration begins at 8am each day. To schedule a private tour please call Denise_Hoefling, Preschool Director, at number above. Returning children, parishioners and siblings of previously enrolled children are given preference and may enroll prior to the general public. Scholarships are available on a limited basis.

Cardinal Pacelli School

927 Ellison Avenue, Mt. Lookout

321-1048

Program Description: Cardinal Pacelli School, the Catholic elementary school of Our Lord Christ the King Church, offers a balanced approach to education based on the intellectual, social, and spiritual needs of each child. Students learn within a thriving parish community where small classes, Blue Ribbon academics, Christian values, and an atmosphere of nurturing provide a solid foundation for future success. The quality of Pacelli's educational programs are the result of a commitment to excellence. Visit the website for more information:

www.cardinalpacelli.org/index.php/preschool/

2021-22 Information:

Cardinal Pacelli School enrolls children ages 3 and up.

If you have questions about enrollment, or wish to schedule a tour, contact the Enrollment Coordinator at number above or email_admissions@cardinalpacelli.org

Cincinnati Waldorf School

6743 Chestnut, Mariemont

541-0220 ext. 103

Program Description: Learning at the Cincinnati Waldorf School is a dynamic process, engaging the child's imagination & initiative. Art, movement, and music are woven into daily academic studies. Programs are designed to educate the whole child—head, heart, and hands. Reverence for the wonders of nature, gratitude and respect for others, and developing self-discipline are guiding principles. Visit the website for more information: www.cincinnatiwaldorfschool.org

2021-2022 Information

The Cincinnati Waldorf School enrolls children ages 3 and up.

You can view a virtual tour online or begin the enrollment process by contacting Karen Crick, Enrollment Director, at the number above or via email at enrollment@cincinnatiwaldorfschool.org

Country Hills Montessori

4900 Babson Pl., Oakley
271-2808

Program Description: The CHM founder, Ms. Jean Johanningman, wanted to enhance the development of the child in ways beyond traditional programs. Building from the strong foundation of the Montessori Philosophy, she situated her classroom in healthcare centers to facilitate intergenerational learning. In this environment the students have the opportunity to interact with residents in programs structured to promote inclusiveness and collaboration across generations. Residents join the preschool and kindergarten children for crafts, gardening, singing and baking. These interactions between children and residents reflect the importance Country Hills Montessori places on community in the healthy development of the child. Visit the website for more information: www.chmschools.com/oakley

2021-22 Information:

Country Hills Montessori enrolls children ages 3 to 6 years.

For additional enrollment questions or to schedule a tour please contact the number above or email oakley@chmschools.com

Cincinnati Country Day/Early Childhood Division

6905 Given Rd., Indian Hill

979-0220

Program Description: Cincinnati Country Day School emphasizes educational excellence and character development. The school helps each student develop his or her own unique genius by providing a strong academic program, offering opportunities to participate in a wide variety of activities, developing responsible students who respect others, embracing a diverse community, and building self-confidence and self-esteem. The CCDS community provides an environment for students to grow academically, physically, emotionally, artistically, and socially. Visit the website for more information: www.countryday.net

2021-22 Information:

The Cincinnati Country Day School enrolls children ages 18 months and up.

To arrange a visit campus visit and tour, please request a visit online or contact Jennie Bedel, Associate Director of Admission, at 979-0219 or bedelj@countryday.net.

Creative Tots

3 Laurel Ave., Madeira

272-2223

Program Description: The Creative Tots program places a strong emphasis on fun. They guide children through developmentally appropriate learning centers, dramatic play, hands-on art projects, and much more. The program at Creative Tots is designed to stimulate each child's imagination and encourage self-discovery. Children experience, first hand, the joy of learning and doing things independently. The teachers also encourage creative group play and cooperation through gently led group time. The curriculum at Creative Tots includes Spanish, Music, Cooking Classes, and there are computers in each classroom. Parents can choose which days they want their children to attend. For more information, go to www.creativetots.com

2021-22 Information:

Creative Tots enrolls children ages 18 months to 5 years.

Creative Tots programs remain full throughout the year, so please contact them directly for availability information. They do offer tours by appointment. For enrollment questions or to schedule a tour please contact the phone number above or email [at creativetotspreschool@gmail.com](mailto:creativetotspreschool@gmail.com).

Good Shepherd Catholic Montessori School

4460 Berwick St, Madisonville

271-4171

Program Description: Good Shepherd Catholic Montessori School uniquely integrates the proven success of Montessori education with the spiritual and moral formation typically found in a Catholic education. Children at Good Shepherd learn sound academic skills and develop work habits and skills that will serve them well beyond the confines of the classroom. In addition, they grow in a prayerful, joyful faith life—one that is based on a true personal relationship and love of. The parents at Good Shepherd appreciate the opportunity to work side by side with their child's school on behalf of their child's education; know that their child is learning in a warm, nurturing environment that nourishes the child's mind and his or her heart; benefit from the support of the entire school community in carrying out their mission to raise capable, loving, responsible children. Visit the website for more information:

www.gscmontessori.org

2021-22 Information:

The Good Shepherd Catholic Montessori enrolls children ages 3 years and up.

An open house will take place on Sunday, January 26, 2020 at 8am. For more information please contact the school secretary, Nancy Toon, at number above or ntoon@gscmontessori.org. In addition, applications are accepted throughout the year. The application will be dated at the time it is received, and a determination of admission for the subsequent school year will be made in late February/early March.

The Growing Room

7754 Camargo Rd., Madeira

272-2111

Program Description: The program at The Growing Room, inc. has been developed to provide opportunities for the integration of learning in all areas of children's development--intellectual, physical, social and emotional. The learning experiences our teachers plan for children are designed to concentrate on furthering children's interests and emerging capabilities through creative activities and expression. They also offer adventurous summer camps for ages 3-8. For more information, go to <http://thegrowingroompreschool.com/>

2021-22 Information:

Registration opens on Saturday, January 2, 2021, see website for registration forms. Forms will be collected for all three locations on a first come, first served basis on January 2, 2020 at the Montgomery location. For more information you may call the number above or email info@thegrowingroompreschool.com

Hyde Park Community United Methodist Church Preschool

1345 Grace Ave., Hyde Park

979-8191

Program Description: The HPCUMCP curriculum focuses on learning through play. They provide experiences that enrich and enhance each child's cognitive, language, social, emotional, physical, and creative development. Children are given opportunities to learn through first-hand experiences. The teachers help blend home experiences with new experiences. There is a balance between self-directed play and teacher-directed activities, between solitary and group time. Visit the website for more information: www.hydeparkpreschool.org

2021-22 Information:

The Hyde Park Community United Methodist Church Preschool enrolls children ages 30 months to 5 years.

Open registration for new families is ongoing and will continue to accept registration contracts until classes are full. Enrollment is on a first-come, first-served basis. Contact the office at 513.979.8191 or email lgarrison@hpcumc.org, Administrative Assistant, to schedule your visit.

Indian Hill Church Nursery School

6000 Drake Rd., Indian Hill

561-5513

Program Description: The philosophy of Indian Hill Church Nursery School is that preschool learning and social development take place in an atmosphere of sharing and understanding. Teachers encourage each child's strengths and guide their development in emotional, social, and intellectual growth. They believe that children gather information and learn through their play. The curriculum is designed to be developmentally appropriate. Regular classroom curriculum is supplemented with weekly music classes, field trips, and special events. Visit the website for more information: <http://www.ihcns.org>

2021-22 Information:

The Indian Hill Church Nursery School enrolls children ages 2 to 5 years.

Tours for prospective families and registration are ongoing. Please call number above or visit the website with enrollment questions or to schedule a tour.

Knox Presbyterian Church Preschool

3410 Michigan Ave., Hyde Park

321-9228 (Tues through Fri)

Program Description: The Knox Preschool provides a success-oriented, child-initiated environment in which children are encouraged to explore, ask questions, make choices, develop respect and grow in self-confidence. The program emphasizes the individuality of each child and is designed to ensure that the social, emotional, intellectual and physical learning process is both challenging and fun.

Visit the website for more information: <https://www.knoxpreschoolhydepark.org>

2021-22 Information:

The Knox Presbyterian Church Preschool enrolls children ages 27 months to 5 years.

Open registration for new families begins January 28, 2021. For more information or to schedule a tour, please call number above or [email kps@knox.org](mailto:kps@knox.org).

Mariemont Community Church Preschool

3908 Plainville Rd., Mariemont

504-9287

Program Description: The program at Mariemont Community Church Preschool helps children develop social skills and character. They believe that the foundations for academic success are laid through building self-confidence, allowing the child to progress at his or her own pace, and providing a warm and caring environment. The preschool is a ministry of the Mariemont Community Church, and teaches simple Christian values of kindness, honesty, and love. Visit the website for more information: www.mariemontchurch.org

2021-22 Information:

The Mariemont Community Church Preschool enrolls children ages 2 to 5 years.

Contact Renee Brownfield at number above or email preschool@mariemontchurch.org for more information or to schedule a tour.

Mercy Montessori

2335 Grandview Avenue, Hyde Park

513-475-6700 ext. 210

Program Description: Mercy Montessori provides a world class education and a strong foundation for learning and discovery as Greater Cincinnati's first and oldest Montessori school. Mercy Montessori is a private, independent Catholic Montessori School offering a special educational and life experience for children from pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. The student population remains steady at about 280 pupils, with a student/teacher ratio of 15:1, ensuring that they know every child by name and can tailor an educational experience uniquely suited to each one. For more information visit the website: <http://www.mercymontessori.org>

2021-22 Information:

To schedule a virtual tour, please contact Directress of Admissions, Amanda Grimm, agrimm@mercymontessori.org. For general questions about Mercy Montessori, please contact the principal, Patty Normile (513) 475-6700 ext. 228 or pnormile@mercymontessori.org

Meridian Montessori

2063 Beechmont Ave., Mt. Washington
570-4034

Program Description: Meridian Montessori is a boutique preschool and kindergarten committed to whole child wellbeing and meaningful, family-centered learning. The innovative, integrative program is guided by a flexible, personalized curriculum combining social-emotional and experiential learning with a strong academic foundation. Core learning includes: Practical life, Cultural Studies, Sensorial, Language, Math, Technology and Outdoor learning. For more information, go to <https://www.meridian-learning.org/microschool-directory/meridian-montessori/>

2021-22 Information:

Meridian Montessori preschool & kindergarten enrolls children 18 months - 6 years.

A virtual information session will take place of the annual Open House on wednesday, January 20, 2021. Following the information session, prospective families will be invited to schedule a single family visit during regular class time. Please email join@meridian-learning.org for event URL and password or visit the Facebook page www.facebook.com/MeridianMontessori. For additional enrollment questions contact School Leader, Tasha C. Ring, at the number above or via email info@meridian-learning.org

Miami Valley Christian Academy

830 School Street, Newtown

272-6822, Ext. 18

Program Description: The program at Miami Valley Christian Preschool is developed to meet the spiritual, emotional, mental, social and physical needs of the child. The education is tailored to the needs of each child based on their interests, abilities and skills. Children are encouraged to explore, create, and discover through hands-on learning. During their day, the children will have opportunities to participate in large group, small group and independent learning activities. Parent participation is always welcome. Parents are encouraged to stop and observe the program or help with a project. Families are encouraged to visit and observe the program before applying. An informal interview is required before your child can be accepted. Visit the website for more information: <https://www.littlelions-oh.com>

2021-22 Information:

The Miami Valley Christian Academy preschool enrolls children ages 2 to 5 years.

Open House will be held Saturday, February 6. A personal tour registration form is available on the website, or contact Paige McElfresh, Admissions Director, [at pmcelfresh@mvca-oh.com](mailto:pmcelfresh@mvca-oh.com) or number above for more information.

Right At School Program at Mariemont Elementary

6750 Wooster Pike, Mariemont

855-287-2466

Program Description: Right At School provides early learners with a nurturing environment from which to explore the fascinating world around them while building positive relationships in a community of caring educators and curious friends. The research-based curriculum supports state and national early learning standards in math, literacy, science, movement, social-emotional learning, the arts, and more. Rich, stimulating hands-on centers, circle time, music, fitness, outdoor play, snack and lunch, and rest time are all enriching parts of the daily routine that promote socialization, community, well-being and a positive self-concept. Visit the website for more information:

<https://rightatschool-mariemont-elementary.jumbula.com/#/preschool>

2021-22 Information:

For more information on the Right At School Preschool program or before and after school care, call the number above or [email info@rightatschool.com](mailto:info@rightatschool.com)

Seven Hills School

Hillsdale Campus (Lotspeich)

5400 Red Bank Rd., Madisonville

728-2400

Program Description: The philosophy of the Hillsdale (Lotspeich) Campus is that the natural curiosity of children provides the basis for their education. The climate is like that of a lively and loving home where individuals care about each other, where the best each student can achieve is expected and nurtured, and where both success and failure are seen with a sense of proportion and opportunity. Visit the website for more information: www.7hills.org

2021-22 Information:

The Seven Hills School enrolls children ages 2 years and up.

Call the number above or email_admissions@7hills.org for more information or to receive a recording of their virtual admissions event.

St. Paul Community Preschool

8221 Miami Rd., Madeira

891-8187

Program Description: St. Paul Community Preschool, as part of the whole church, gives children a Christian education through group experiences. Development of the entire child—physical, intellectual, emotional, and social—through a stimulating and enjoyable atmosphere is the goal of the St. Paul Community Preschool Program. Experienced, well-trained teachers guide each child to function at his or her own level, as a productive, happy, and confident member of a group. They accept each child as a unique person, and because of their emphasis on the individual, class size is limited. St. Paul Nursery School provides a secure, comfortable environment for every child to develop a positive self-image through rewarding personal and group activities. Visit the website for more information: <https://www.spcpreschool.org>

2021-22 Information:

The St. Paul Nursery School enrolls children ages 30 months to 5 years.

Registration for the 2021-2022 school year will open soon. To schedule a tour or for more information, please contact the phone number listed.

St. Thomas Episcopal Community Church Nursery School

100 Miami Ave., Terrace Park
831-6908

Program Description: The experiences that children have at St. Thomas Nursery School play an important role in their cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development. The teachers at St. Thomas strive to present a program that encourages children to develop a positive self-image by providing an environment where creativity, discovery, and exploration flourish. They provide opportunities for academic growth simply by exposure and positive encouragement. Visit the website for more information: <https://stthomasnurseryschool.org>

2021-22 Information:

The St. Thomas Nursery School enrolls children ages 2-5 years.

For questions or to schedule a tour, contact stns@stthomasepiscopal.org or the number above. Registration forms and fees for the priority registration lottery are due by 3:00 pm on January 29.

St. Ursula Villa

3560 Vineyard Pl., Mt. Lookout
533-7373

Program Description: An independent Catholic school with an emphasis in the preschool is on the development of the whole child—physical, intellectual, emotional, creative, social and spiritual—in a warm, nurturing environment. While the curriculum provides for the universal predictable sequences of development in young children, it also takes into account the individual differences in ability, interests, skills, personalities, and backgrounds. Teachers are responsive to these differences, appreciating the fact that each child is unique. All activities are planned to promote a Christian attitude toward self, peers, and community. Visit the website for more information: www.stursulavilla.org

2021-22 Information:

St. Ursula Villa enrolls children ages 2 years and up.

Please contact Marta Runnels (m.runnels@stursulavilla.org) to arrange a virtual tour of Villa classrooms and programs or to learn more about the enrollment process. In-person tours are not available until further notice.

An All School Open House will be held on Sunday, February 7, 2021 12:00 - 2:00 pm (reschedule date: Sunday March 14, 2021 12:00 - 2:00 pm). Meet administrators and teachers, learn about the admissions/enrollment process, and discover all the Villa has to offer.

Summit Country Day Montessori (Lower School)

2161 Grandin Rd., Hyde Park
871-4700, ext. 209

Program Description: Summit Country Day offers a hands-on approach to achieve the Montessori philosophy of order, independence, concentration, and coordination, moving from the concrete to the abstract. Students develop in areas of practical life, sensorial, language, mathematics, computer technology, science, geography, music, physical education, and spiritual growth. Visit the website for more information: <https://www.summitcds.org>

2021-22 Information:

The Summit Country Day school enrolls children ages 18 months and up.

Applications for the toddler program is due in December of each year. Applications for the 3-6 year old programs are accepted on a rolling admission beginning in November. Prospective families are encouraged to attend a Parent Information Session. Parent Information Sessions offer an in-depth view of the Montessori Toddler through Kindergarten curriculum, including academic and Summit Signature Enrichment Program options. Sessions begin at 8:30 a.m. in the Lower School and typically conclude by 10 a.m. Please call 871-4700, ext. 209 to schedule your visit. The next two sessions are Thursday January 14, 2021 and Thursday, Feb. 4, 2021.

Terrace Park Elementary Preschool

23 Elm Ave, Terrace Park

674-4269

Program Description: The Terrace Park Elementary Preschool is a multi-age developmental program that incorporates the use of 'total communication'. Children are allowed to progress at his or her own level. Children have the opportunity to participate in large group, small group and independent learning activities. Each class has a maximum of 12 children with two or more teachers. Children with Special Needs are integrated with typically developing children. Specialists (Speech Therapist, Occupational Therapist and Physical Therapist) are on hand to work with children on a weekly basis. Visit the website for more information:

<https://www.mariemontschools.org/PreschoolOpportunities.aspx>

2021-22 Information:

The Terrace Park Elementary Preschool enrolls children ages 3 to 5 years.

For further information on this program, please contact Lisa Miller at number above or lisa.miller@hcesc.org.

Use these questions to guide yourself to the right preschool. Visits can be anywhere from 15 minutes to an hour. The more time you devote, the better.

Preschool Director/Teacher Interview

Name:

Preschool:

Address/Phone:

Basics: A good preschool has solid, up-to-date credentials, clear rules and regulations, and firm policies on operating hours, pickup and drop-off times, and when children are too sick to attend.

1. How long has the preschool been in business?
2. What are the preschool's accreditations?
3. Do you have space for my child?

Yes _____ No _____

If not, can we get on a waiting list, and how long is it?

4. What are your hours?
5. What is your holiday schedule?
6. What other days is the preschool closed?
7. How flexible are you with pick up/drop off times?
8. What are the fees?
9. Is there a late pick up fee?

10. How and when do you bill? How do I pay?

11. Do you encourage visits from parents?

12. What do you expect from me as a parent?

Staff: Employees should be educated, with at least two years of college, have a background in Early Childhood Development (though many states don't require this), and CPR and other emergency training. Caregivers should be responsible, enthusiastic, and well prepared, sharing your philosophies on key childrearing issues such as sleep, discipline, and feeding. A preschool with good staff benefits is less likely to have high teacher turnover, which means more consistent care.

1. What are the staff's credentials and training?
2. How long does the average staff member stay at the school?
3. How do you screen your staff?

Size: Look for a preschool with small groups of children and plenty of staff. The ratio of caregivers to children varies, depending on group size. The National Association for the Education of Young Children recommends having at least one teacher for every five children between 24 and 36 months and 1:7 or 1:8 for 4 and 5 year-olds, depending on the group size.

1. How are the kids grouped?

Mixed age_____ Grouped by age_____

2. What is your teacher/child ratio in each group?

Activities: A good preschool will have a curriculum that is well thought out with a variety of activities. The program should be changed regularly so children don't get bored and have a chance to learn new skills. TV and videos should play little or no part in the day's schedule.

1. What is your educational philosophy?
2. How do you discipline a child?
3. How do you comfort a child?

4. What will my child be doing on any given day? What about extracurricular activities?
5. What role, if any, does television have at the preschool?

Hygiene and Safety: A good preschool is clean and sanitary and observes basic safety rules. If you see poorly maintained equipment or the preschool seems dingy and cramped, keep looking.

1. Do caregivers wash their hands before feeding the children?
2. What is your sick-child policy?
3. How often are the toys cleaned and replaced?
4. Do you have a sign-in and sign-out sheet? Are the doors secure so strangers can't just walk in?
5. Do you have a safe, enclosed, outside play area?

Food and Sleep: Obviously, nutritious meals and snacks are better than junk food. Make sure the preschool menu—if one exists—covers all food groups. Nap areas should be clean and quiet.

1. Do you provide lunch and snack?
Yes _____ No _____

If yes, what kind?

2. Are you a nut free facility?
3. Where do the children sleep?
4. Do you have a nap schedule?

Additional considerations: Take a moment to ask yourself the following questions when you visit.

1. Do the staff and children seem happy and engaged?

Yes _____ No _____

2. Is the preschool clean and pleasant?

Yes _____ No _____

3. Will you feel at ease knowing your child is in this setting?

Yes _____ No _____

References: Ask each preschool you're considering for a list of past and present references—and call them. Ask specific questions (don't ask whether they like the preschool; ask what exactly they like about it and what they don't). If their child is no longer there, ask why.

Could you recommend families I can call for references?

Name/Phone