



Selecting a Preschool for Your Child

Choosing a preschool for your child can be a confusing task. If your child does not qualify for public preschool special education services, there are other options for you to consider.

One resource is **Head Start**. This federally funded program offers comprehensive services, including high-quality early childhood education, nutrition, health, and social services to low-income children. All Head Start programs are required to reserve at least 10% of their enrollment for children with disabilities. They may have slots available, even for children who do not meet the income eligibility criteria.

Here are some points to consider when selecting a preschool:

Program:

- You should feel that the atmosphere is relaxed and accepting of children
- The length of day is appropriate for your child
- There is a daily schedule with a good balance of structured activities and free play
- The age range of the children in the program suits your needs

Staff:

- There are enough adults to guide and supervise the number of children
- The adults responsible for the program are certified teachers
- You feel the staff create a warm and comfortable environment for the children
- You feel the staff communicates well with the children

Services provided:

- Toilet training is provided
- Snacks and/or meals are provided
- Transportation

Parent participation:

- Parent participation in classroom activities is encouraged
- Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled regularly
- The staff communicates to parents through daily or weekly notes or verbally each day

Facility:

- The classroom is divided for play, work and quiet time
- You feel there is adequate space provided for the number of children in the program
- There is an outdoor play area that is suitable for your child
- Restrooms are accessible to children (clean area for diaper changes)

Activities:

- There is a variety of activities so that each child has a chance to be successful
- Activities that encourage language development and talking are included
- Learning is recognized as an active process. Children take part in activities and manipulate objects while learning
- Children have opportunities to look at books and listen to reading
- Children participate in activities that require large muscle movement such as running and small muscle movements such as pasting and cutting
- Children are provided with experiences that stimulate all their senses

Materials:

- Toys and safe materials are placed within children's reach
- Materials are appropriate for the age and range of children
- There are enough materials for a variety of activities