

TIP SHEET FOR PARENTS : FINDING THE RIGHT CARE FOR YOUR INFANT

Continuity of Care begins with an assignment of a **Primary Care Teacher** who develops a close relationship with the child and the family. The assigned infant care teacher remains with the child as the child grows from infancy to three years old. The child's primary infant care teacher is responsible for keeping track of the child's development and for communicating with the child's family. These policies support the secure, warm relationships infants need in order to thrive.

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When choosing a child care provider for your infant, there are many things to consider. From the very beginning it is important to establish open and honest communication patterns with the adults working directly with your infant.

As part of the interview process, collect information on ways a program develops relationships with families, how they serve as a resource for families, and what opportunities they have for families to be a part of your child's early learning experiences.

Find out ways a program supports learning through developmentally appropriate practices through experiences, interactions, and environments.

Experiences: Through caring relationships, infants establish the basic structure of their brains, develop a sense of trust and self-confidence, and build a sense of identity.

- Do the adults know each baby well enough to plan the kinds of routines and experiences that are best for that baby?
- Is each baby encouraged to have his or her own schedule of feeding, sleeping and play-time?

Interactions: Spend time observing how an infant care provider responds to the children in their care.

- Are the adults who care for the children warm and responsive?
- Do they talk to, cuddle, sing and play with the babies?
- Do they keep them clean, dry and well fed?

In a Family Child Care home, ask about ways they incorporate infants in to activities planned for older children in the programs. In a Child Care Center, ask if the program has policies in place such as **Continuity of Care** and **Primary Care Giving**.

Adults can use developmentally appropriate practices to help infants and toddlers manage their reactions by tending to their physical needs promptly, with a caring attitude, and using words to describe the situation.

Using words to describe how a child might be feeling is a great way to show a child that someone cares for them. This informs the child that someone is paying attention to their needs.

Young children must feel that someone cares deeply about their well-being before they can become compassionate and empathetic to others.

Environments: Keeping an infant healthy and safe should be the first priority of every provider. Infant care providers must check the environment regularly for potential dangers and adapt to the changing needs of the children in their care. Infant care teachers should also promote healthy habits, such as an active lifestyle and healthy eating habits.

- Are the babies cared for in clean well-kept rooms with appropriate furnishings and toys?
- Do the babies seem to feel happy and do the adults who care for them seem to enjoy their work?



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