



JANE BROWN
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Timing

Many child care centers have waiting lists for interested families so you should begin your search well in advance of the time you will need care. Infant and toddler care can be especially difficult to find due to high demand and small group sizes, so you may need to begin your search for infant care from the time you learn you are pregnant or scheduled for an adoption. For center-based care, try to visit several centers 3-4 months before you anticipate needing care. To find out about availability of care in your area, call us at (877) 425-0009 or email info@rocklandchildcare.org.

Many family child care providers do not have a waiting list, and fill openings as they arise so it is a good idea to start your visits 1-2 months before you need care. Depending on availability you might have to wait longer than you had planned, so having a back-up child care arrangement to cover you until a slot opens is important.

Here are some questions to consider and ask during your visit:

- Does the program have a waiting list?
- How many children are on the waiting list for your child's age group? How often is it updated?
- Many programs have a sibling-preference policy; how many siblings are on the list and how will this affect your chances of getting a slot?
- How does the enrollment process work? Is it open or rolling enrollment, or is enrollment done only once a year?
- Is there an application fee for getting on the waiting list?
- If you are considering a family child care home, will the provider keep in touch with you as openings occur?