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## Child Care Considerations - Child Development

As your child grows and develops physically and emotionally, many changes occur. You will want to choose a form of child care that will meet your child's developmental needs. There are many ways to learn about child development:

- Talk about child development with your pediatrician
- Attend seminars or workshops in your community
- Read books by experts in the field of child development
- Research child development information online
- Talk to other parents
- Talk to your child care provider
- Call us at (877) 425-0009 for more information

### Child Development and Your Child Care Choice

When making a child care decision, look for the best match for your child's developmental needs:

**Infants** need a large amount of cuddling, eye contact and one-on-one attention. Signs of quality in child care programs include: a high provider-to-child ratio (usually one provider to three to four infants), special crawling spaces for infants, sturdy and safe infant toys; infants need to be held and snuggled during feeding time and providers need to spend most of their time playing with and nurturing the infants.

**Toddlers** are eager to explore the world and assert themselves, while still needing comfort, reassurance and loving care from a provider. Quality toddler programs offer: materials for exploration (water, sand); physical activity (climbing, jumping) and hands-on experiences – careful supervision; sensory activities involving sand tables, water tables, silly putty, story times, music and movement activities and a language rich environment.

**Preschoolers** are focused on developing friendships with peers as well as understanding families and the world and developing many new skills. A quality preschool program offers a wide range of activities including art, music, science exploration; activities designed to strengthen physical movement and hand-eye coordination; encouragement of “pro-social behaviors such as sharing and taking turns; unpressured “academic” activities (such as early reading and writing activities).

**Your school-age child** will have some strong interests of her own (e.g., arts, music, reading or science). A quality school-age care program encourages your child to pursue her interests while exposing her to new activities in a fun and unpressured way. School-age children should have plenty of social time with peers and they need time and quiet space for doing homework, as well.

Regardless of your child's level of development, you will want to choose a program that is suited to her needs and a provider that genuinely enjoys working with children of your child's age group. Whether you choose a cozy family child care home or a large, well-run child care center, you can select the program that will best meet your child's developmental needs and help her grow in a loving, safe and stimulating environment. Be sure the provider you select has an approach compatible with your own on issues such as discipline and toilet learning.