

YOUR ROLE IN THE CHILD CARE PROCESS

Remember, not every center can meet every need, but a good center will work with you to meet your child's requirements.

Studies show that the greater part of human development happens before the age of five. From the standpoint of the child -- whether a child will be an asset or a liability in future society -- depends largely on his or her success in school. That often depends upon whether they attend two or more years in a **high quality** preschool setting.

Parents are the most important teachers and caregivers of children. Child care should be an extension of this care. Child care **is not baby sitting**. **Child care is a skilled profession** and should be regarded as such. Parents can become partners with their child care givers in providing a continuum of care and education.

- Provide your caregiver with all pertinent information for understanding your child's special needs.
- Read all handouts, newsletters and other printed materials that your child brings home.
- Pay your fees on time.
- Participate in conferences and attend seminars and activities arranged by the center.
- Establish a regular time to talk with your provider.
- Always stay involved.
- Offer to help out on special events.
- Get involved in center committees and activities.
- A thank you note or just "thanks" to the provider can create happy feelings.
- Whatever you choose to do to stay involved with your provider, you will find the time that you take is well worth the effort.



WARNING SIGNS THAT A PROGRAM IS OFF TRACK*

There are several warning signs that may alert you to the possibility that your program is “off track.”

Children are not purposefully involved.

- Children tend to wander around the classroom during the work/play time, unable to select an activity.

Children show little respect for materials.

- Children misuse many of the materials. Clean-up is a free-for-all with children throwing materials on the shelves or in cabinets.

Children fight over materials.

- Fighting over toys is a constant problem in each classroom. Teachers are continually arbitrating disputes.

Children are often in large groups.

- Circle time lasts 20 minutes in a three-year-old group. Everyone goes through routines at the same time, so waiting periods are unnecessarily long.

Children are not purposefully involved in activities outdoors.

- Children run around a lot outdoors, but there are few activities offered to involve them in more focused play. Fights and arguments among the children are frequent.

Teachers are continually testing children.

- The questions teachers ask children are designed to test them. (*What color is this? How many do I have?*) Teachers do not understand the difference between asking a question with one right answer (to test a child) and asking questions that encourage thinking.

Teachers have lost their spontaneity and joyfulness.

- Teachers follow old lesson plans and fail to pick up on the children’s interests.

Teachers are feeling defensive about the program.

- Teachers express concerns about getting children ready for elementary school and talk about pressures from parents to teach the children reading and math.

* From *A Guide for Supervisors and Trainers on Implementing the Creative Curriculum for Early Childhood*. Diane Trister Dodge Teaching Strategies, Inc., Washington, D.C.