

# Seriously Kids™

*Supporting, educating, empowering.... Seriously useful*

We encourage you to use this checklist as a source of information rather than as a prescriptive checklist. Checklists are great guides to help you determine what you may need, provide a starting point to help in gathering information and take some of the stress out of things such as making a decision or establishing a clear view of the situation on paper.

***Please Note: This checklist should be used as a guide only...always trust your gut instinct***

## CHILDCARE CHECKLIST

If you are looking for child care, you probably have a good idea of what you want as we are sure you have been gathering basic information and making a decision of the type of care you need/want such as Long Day Care, Family Day Care, a nanny, etc.

Knowing exactly what you want and also what defines quality care within a care environment can be tricky. Child care should be convenient, affordable, and offer care when you need it. Finding that can be a real challenge. We have devised a checklist for your benefit to be able to be armed with questions, points, etc when visiting potential places for care for your child. It is rare to find the perfect situation but it is possible to find a very good situation that will best meet your needs.

Remember that it is OK to be choosy. Trust your gut instinct.

With so many different types of care it can be a little overwhelming starting the search for the best child care option and then the centre itself. One thing that is important when you are choosing child care is to decide what you need and want from care and then decide the best care option for your family. There is Preschool/Kindy, Family Day Care, a nanny, Long Day Care, Occasional Care and so on.

Once the type of care option is decided upon it is important to have a flexible approach. Your priority is the best care available for your children which is delivered as quality care.



Of course, what is 'the best' depends on many factors and is specific to your circumstances and needs such as the days required, location, availability, etc. You may have strong views, thoughts or ideas of what you expect or what is important to you. So thinking about and making a list of what is most important to you is a good idea and you can use it as a checklist when first starting your search.



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## CENTRE DETAILS

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Name of centre:

Address:

Phone number:

Contact persons name:

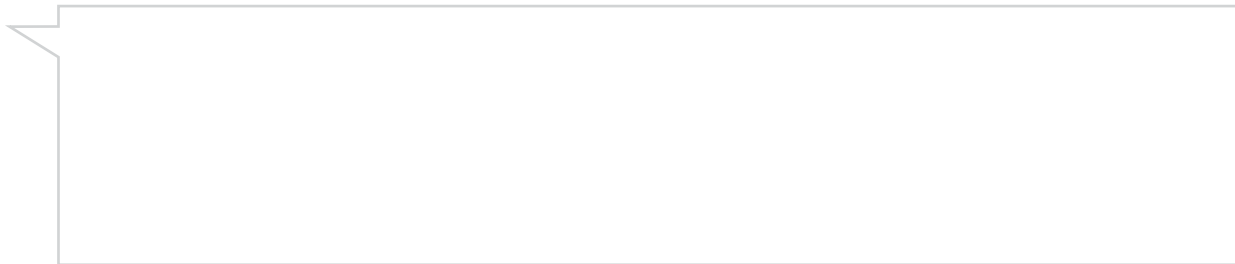
Comments:

What are the centres hours of operation?

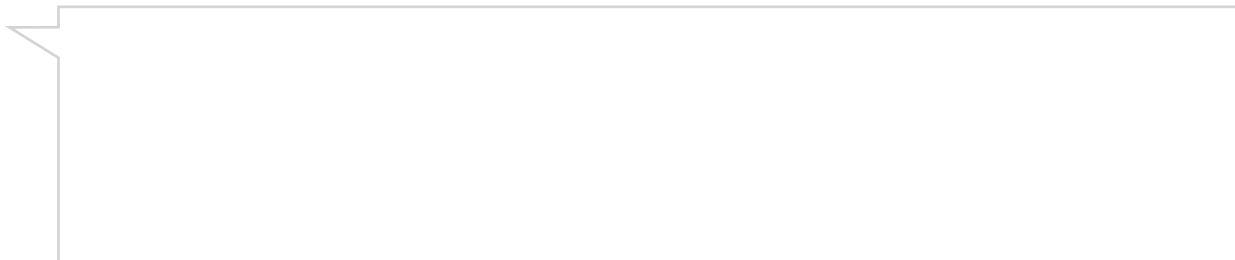
What are you first impressions of the centre? Does it seem clean, organised, relaxed, etc?

How are you and your child welcomed?

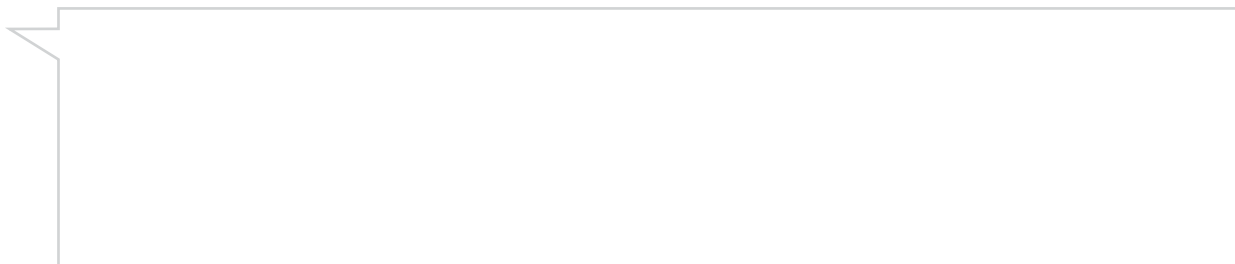
Were you offered a tour of the centre?



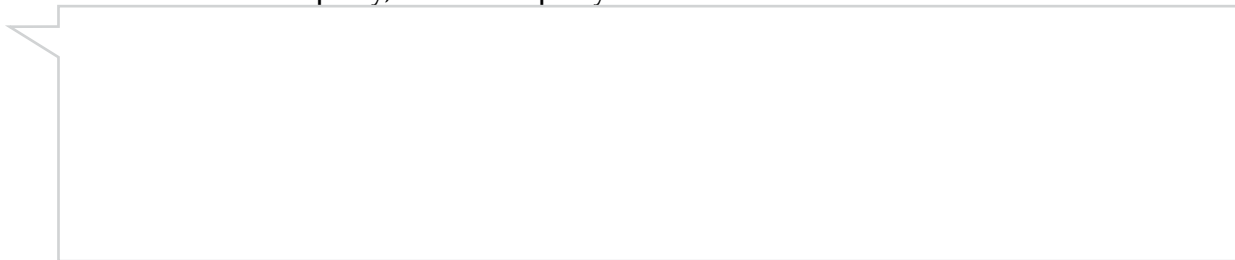
Has the centre been assessed under the National Quality Framework? What is their rating?



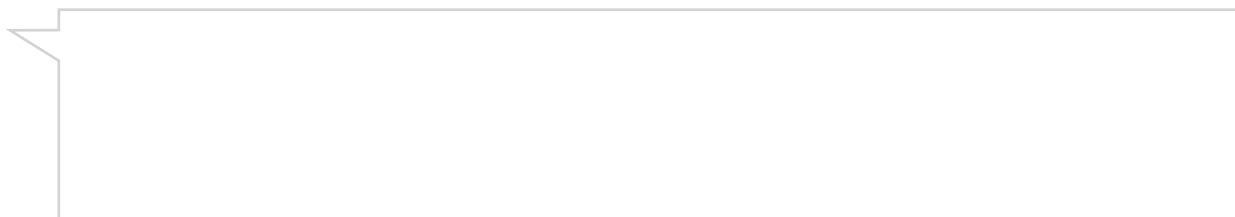
Does the service have a Quality Improvement Plan? Can you view the plan?



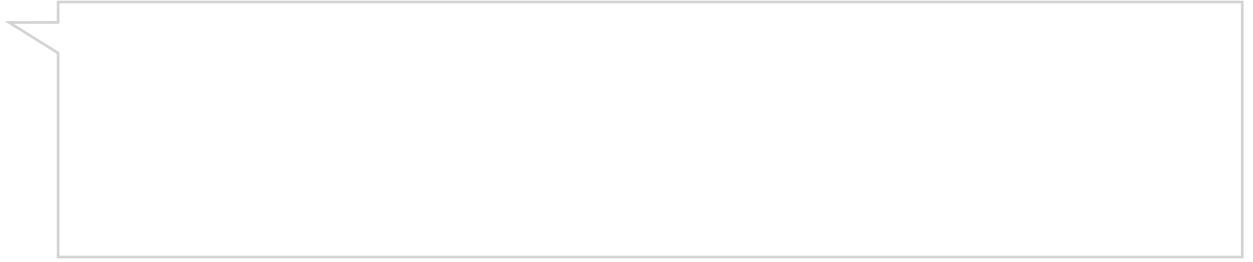
What are their policies and philosophy? Are they available to view? Were you run through the main ones such as the sun safe policy, medication policy?



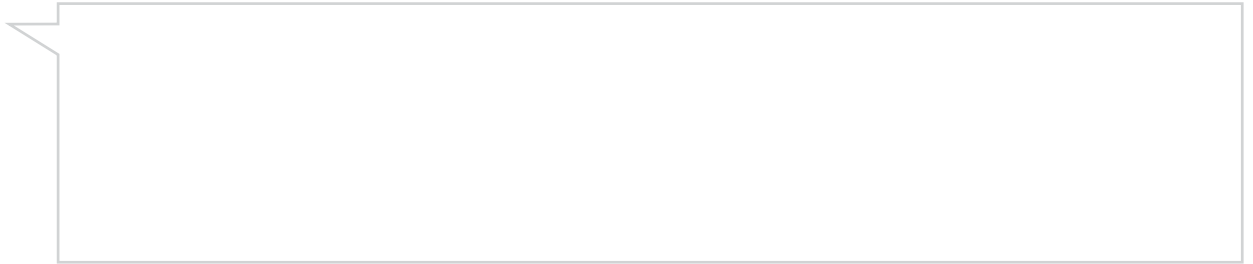
Did the centre seem safe and secure? How did you enter the centre- sign in, intercom, etc? How do they stop any un-authorised people entering the building? And how do they ensure that the right person collects the children?



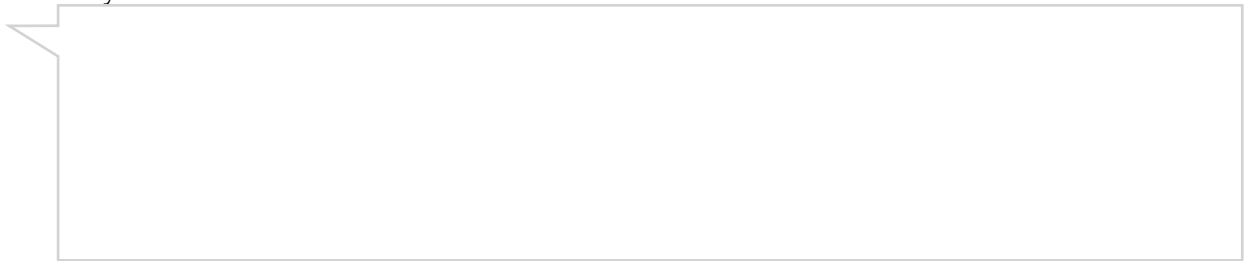
Were the staff easily identified?




What is the ratio of staff to child? Are these ratios are maintained during lunch hours and breaks?



How are the staff supported? Is there in-house training? What are their qualifications and how long have they been at the centre?



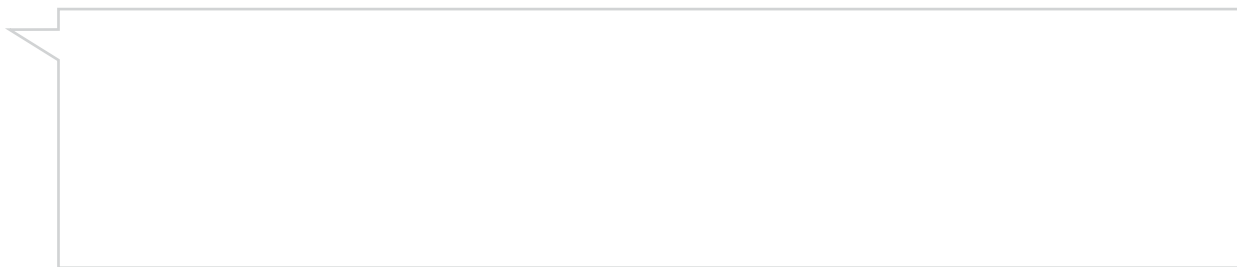
Is there consistency with staff? What is the staff turnover like? (This helps to see whether staff are happy, and stay for lengthy periods. It is not ideal to send your child to a centre that has a high turnover of staff, with frequently changing faces)



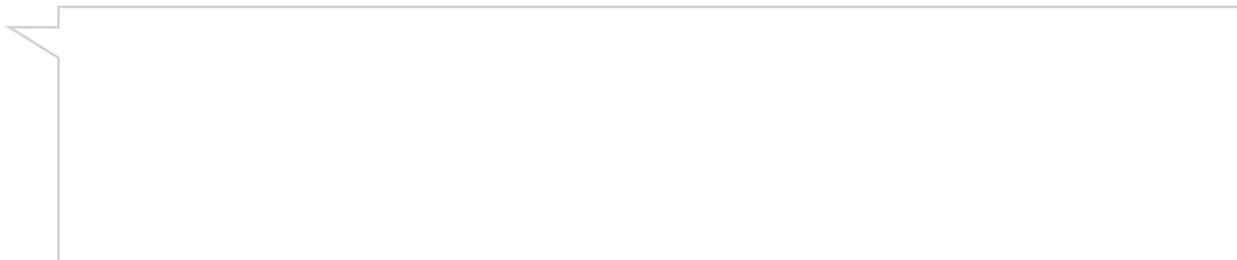
How many members of staff are qualified in first aid? How many accidents have there been in the past year? What happens in the event of an accident?



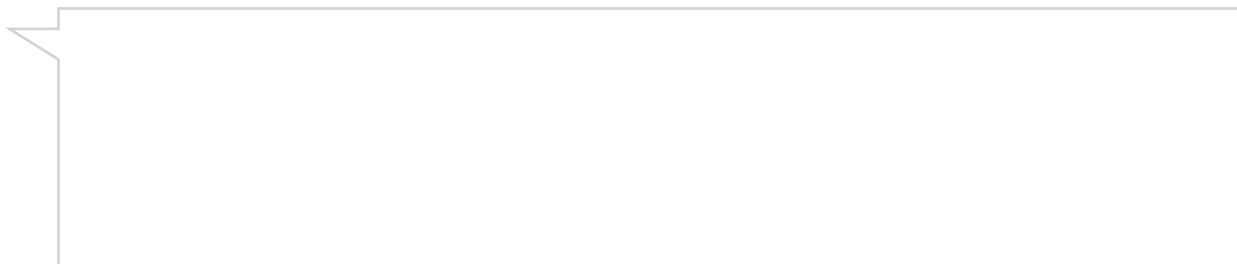
How are parents involved in the centre? Are there parent's evenings? Are parents encouraged to visit?



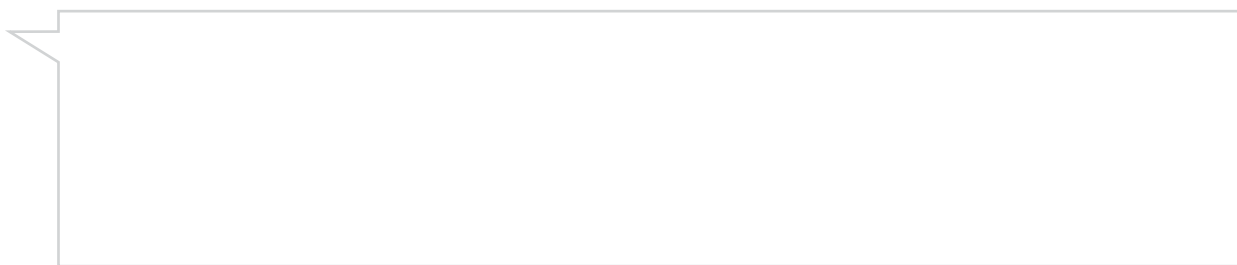
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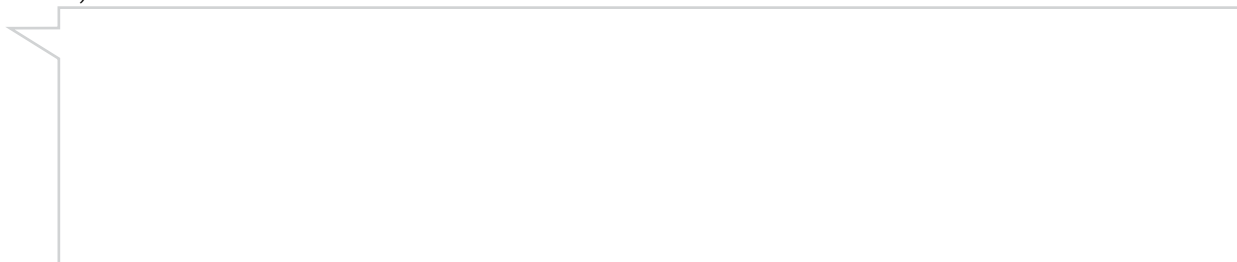
What is the policy on sickness? Or if your child is away? Or if they have an illness?




How/where do the babies/children sleep? Do they accommodate for individual needs and routines?



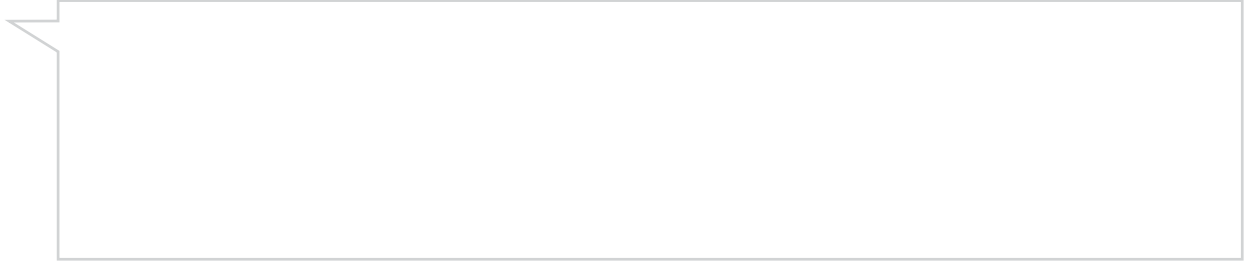
How are the children settled in? (i.e. do they do trial sessions or inductions. Are you called if they don't settle?).



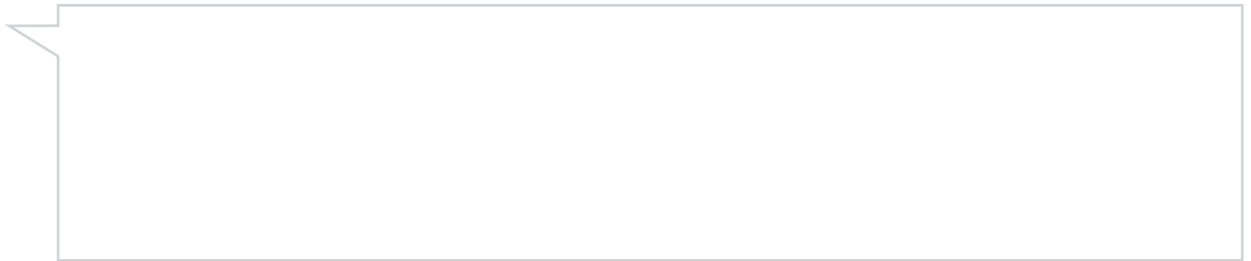
What does the centre want to know from you about the child, your parenting and the family life? It's really important that they ask you about your child, their habits, likes and dislikes, and tries to incorporate them as much as possible into the daily routine.



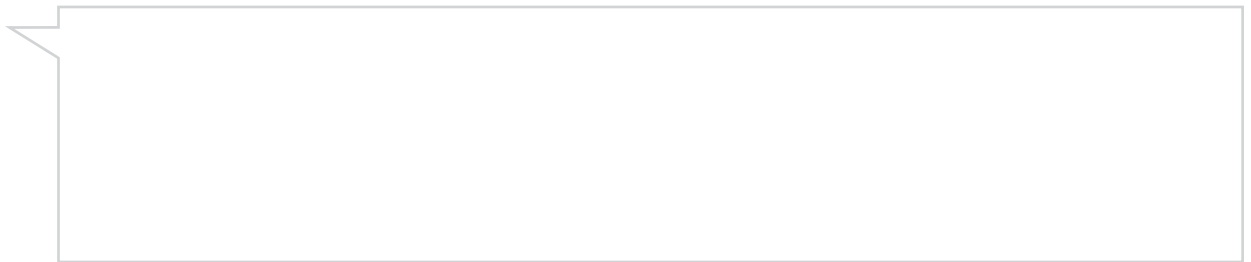
How do they communicate to you about your child's day? How do they communicate happenings at the centre? Is it via a newsletter, emails, etc?



Do the children look happy and occupied? Are they interacting well with others and the staff?



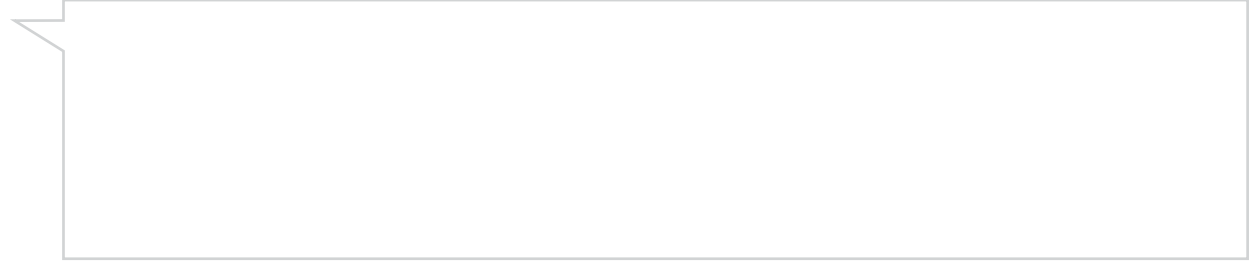
Do the staff look happy with their job or do they appear discontented and lacking energy? Are they interacting freely and happily? What is the staff turnover?



If the centre offers food do they cater for individual children? What time is the food offered? Is food available outside these times if a child is hungry? What do they do if a child refuses to eat? Is the weekly menu on display? How does the centre cope with allergies?



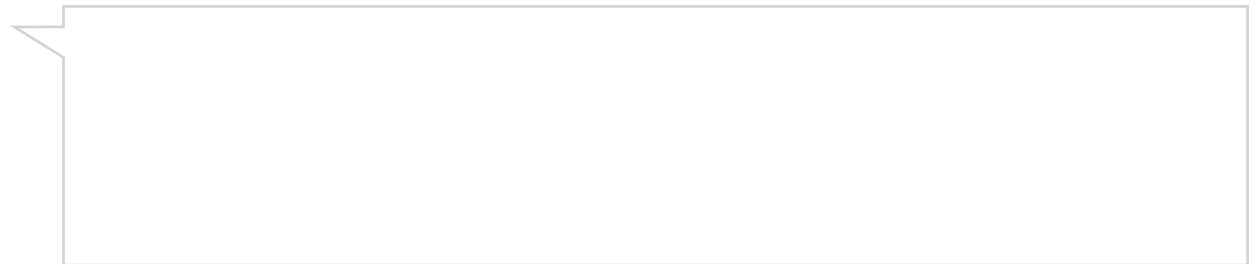
Are the walls decorated with the children's own work? (Beware the centre that has lots of posters and drawings – but not the original work of the children)



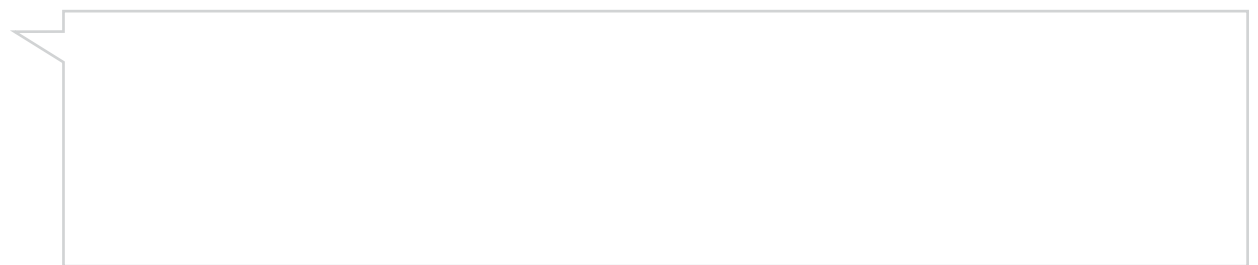
What is the overall feel of the centre? What is the condition of the toys and does there seem to be enough and a variety? What is the noise level? Do the children seem to be interacting in activities and are the staff at their level and interacting?



What is the outdoor playground like? Is there plenty of shade?



What do they do if your child is unhappy? Would they accommodate your wishes?



Be prepared to be at a centre for a while on your first visit. Look around and take in the general atmosphere. Observe during this time the children, the staff. A good centre will understand that you want to be sure that your child will be well cared for and safe. They will want you to ask questions until you are satisfied.

Take your child with you, and pay attention to their reaction. Ask for their opinion after you leave. They will let you know which one they feel more comfortable with.

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## NOTES

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## DISCLAIMER

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We have taken a great deal of care in providing the information contained within this checklist, however, it is intended as a guide only.

Any information provided, while given as a broad guide with the best of intentions should not be substituted for professional advice. The information is given with the sole intention to be used as a guide only, and to aid with any concerns or questions you may have and to help you in determining if you require any further assistance or assist you with embarking on subsequent research.



Remember, checklists are really only ever to be used as a guide.