

**Childcare Centre Checklist**

Choosing the right childcare centre is a big decision and there are a number of individual factors to consider before you select the best centre for your child. Remember, most centres do have waiting lists so it pays to begin looking well in advance. The following checklist will help you in your selection process and can be printed to take with you as you enquire about centres that might be suitable.

Centre Name:	Checked ✓
<p><b>Hours and Location</b> Do the centre hours fit in with your schedule? What are the opening times over the Christmas holiday period? Consider whether you prefer the centre to be closer to your home or workplace.</p>	
<p><b>Meals</b> Do you need meals to be provided? Some centres have in-house cooks while others require parents to supply meals.</p>	
<p><b>Allergies and Special Requirements</b> Does your child have an allergy or require a special diet or medication? If so, does the centre cater for these?</p>	
<p><b>Reputation</b> Referrals are a good way to gauge which centres are popular. Ask around friends with young children and put your feelers out for first-hand feedback on the centres that you are interested in.</p>	
<p><b>ERO Reports</b> Every childcare centre in the country is reviewed by the Education Review Office approximately every three years. Check past reviews online at <a href="http://www.ero.govt.nz">www.ero.govt.nz</a>. This will give you a good idea of a centre's strengths and weaknesses.</p>	
<p><b>Spend time in the centre</b> Once you have narrowed down your list according to hours, location and reputation, it is a good idea to spend some time at the centre with your child. This will give you a 'feel' for the centre's atmosphere and answer some basic questions about how it is run:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do the children receive quality attention and care?</li> <li>• Are the staff attentive?</li> <li>• Do the staff appear happy in their roles as teachers?</li> <li>• What is the staff turnover like?</li> <li>• Does the centre have policies and philosophies that match your values?</li> <li>• Is the environment exciting and well resourced?</li> <li>• Are sleep areas safe and well supervised?</li> <li>• Is the bathroom child-friendly and clean?</li> <li>• Are meals nutritious and prepared hygienically?</li> <li>• Does the centre provide nappies and is this an extra cost?</li> <li>• How will the centre work around your own established routine?</li> <li>• How will the centre report back to you at the end of each day about food and milk intake, sleep patterns etc?</li> </ul>	