



**Leaving your child with a carer isn't easy, so it is important to choose someone you can trust.**

### **WHY IT MATTERS:**

Don't settle for less when choosing a carer for your child. Children need:

- to be in a safe, child friendly environment
- to feel emotionally secure
- a caring relationship
- to feel happy and nurtured
- good nutrition.
- their developmental needs met
- care that is similar to home care
- experiences that add to what you can do at home
- their individual care needs, routines and cultural differences met

### **DIFFERENT NEEDS FOR DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS:**

- Babies need special individual attention
- Children of two years and over can play near or with other children, with adult supervision
- Older children need to be able to play and talk with other children

### **WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A CARER: Someone who:**

- relates well to children
- is a calm and emotionally mature person and who knows what to do in a crisis
- has up to date knowledge of first aid
- has good references
- provides safe, child friendly, clean surroundings
- someone who knows and understands the needs of babies and children
- is prepared to form a positive relationship with child's family

**Think about how this carer would respond when tired or stressed. Remember understanding the needs of babies and children is not instinctive - child care workers need training, and need to enjoy being with children.**

### **Take your time choosing.**

### **CARE IN YOUR HOME OR ANOTHER HOME, FAMILY DAY CARE OR A CHILD CARE CENTRE**

#### **In your home:**

- Provide backup details for help and medical care
- Tell the carer what your child likes and needs.
- Be clear about your expectations regarding things such as rules of the house, visitors, television etc

- Plan daily outings - walk to the park, library, local playgroup
- Tell the carer what and when your child likes to eat and drink
- Phone or ask another family member or friends to call occasionally to check all is going well.
- Ask for information about your child's day

#### **In another home:**

- Get to know the carer before you leave your child. See how they respond to your child
- Try to meet the other members of the family your child will be in contact with
- It is important to feel comfortable with the caregivers' home environment. Check whether it is a safe and friendly environment for your child
- Check if the caregiver will meet the emotional needs of your child. Check their approach to discipline. Don't be afraid to ask questions
- The way we parent varies and your child will feel comfortable with a carer whose style is similar to your own
- Always have emergency backup arrangements to call upon

#### **Family Day Care:**

- This type of care is provided by selected, trained and supported caregivers in their own homes.
- The level of training varies. Check with your local Family Day Care authority
- Get to know the local Family Day Care Coordinator

#### **Child Care Centre or other formal day care:**

Occasional and long day care centres are available in the community. This type of care is usually regulated. Ask how they manage children's behaviour. Check that there will be a special carer for your baby. How does the Centre look and feel? Check that there are enough staff to attend to the children's needs.

#### **HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT PERSON OR CHILD CARE CENTRE:**

- Word of mouth
- Close friends
- Use an agency rather than place an advertisement
- Always insist upon reference checks

#### **BEWARE OF:**

- Emotional problems
- Rigid rules and routines
- Lack of cleanliness and safety
- Not seeming to enjoy being with children
- Too many other children to care for
- Other demands that will distract from child care

#### **NOW THAT YOU HAVE CHOSEN YOUR CARER**

- Make sure caring for your child is their priority
- Show trust and respect
- Allow time for talking about your child
- If your child is verbal talk to him/her about their care
- Allow time for talking about your child's day and what your child needs
- Check the causes for sudden changes in your child's emotions or behaviour
- Respond to any ongoing unhappiness in your child. If your carer is not committed to establishing a happy relationship with your child consider an alternative arrangement

#### **GOOD CHILD CARE SHOULD BE A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE FOR YOU AND YOUR CHILD**