

Family Guide to Choosing Child Care



ROOTED IN CARE

Independent, High-Quality
Early Learning in New Mexico

Choosing child care is one of the most important decisions you'll make for your family. This guide will help you know what to look for, what to ask, and how to find a program that feels right for you and your child.



WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A CHILD CARE PROGRAM

✓ Licensed & Accredited

Make sure the program is licensed by the state. This means it meets health, safety, and quality standards. Many providers also earn national accreditation – a sign of even higher commitment to excellence.

✓ Safe, Nurturing Environment

Look for a clean, secure space where children are happy, engaged, and cared for. Ask about safety protocols, check-in procedures, and emergency plans.

✓ Trained, Caring Staff

Ask if educators are background-checked and trained in early childhood development, CPR, and first aid. Great programs have low child-to-teacher ratios and staff who truly connect with kids.

✓ Curriculum That Fits Your Family

Every child is unique. So is every program. Look for approaches that match your values – such as play-based learning, Montessori, dual-language immersion, Indigenous-led teaching, or nature-based care.

✓ Nutrition & Wellness

Healthy meals matter! Ask what's served, how meals are prepared, and whether the food reflects your culture and family preferences.



QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN TOURING A PROGRAM

- What is your child-to-teacher ratio?
- What is your approach to learning and play?
- How do you handle discipline and redirection?
- How do you communicate with families?
- What are your hours, fees, and schedule options?
- Are meals and snacks provided?
- How do you celebrate culture and diversity?



FINDING THE RIGHT FIT

Choosing a child care provider is more than checking boxes – it's about trusting your instincts and finding a place where your child feels seen, safe, and celebrated.

- Does the space feel welcoming and calm?
- Do the caregivers treat children with kindness and respect?
- Can you picture your child thriving there?



WHY CHOOSE A LICENSED INDEPENDENT PROVIDER?

Licensed, independent early learning programs across New Mexico offer:

- Safe, high-quality care
- Deep relationships with educators
- Flexible scheduling options
- Cultural and curriculum choice
- Trusted support from people in your community

Whether you're looking for full-time infant care or a bilingual preschool program, New Mexico's licensed providers are ready to welcome your child with open arms.



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