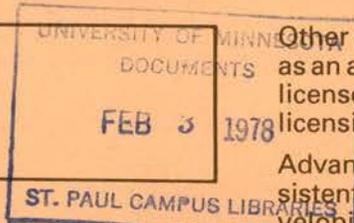
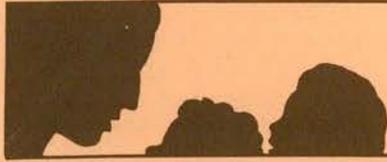


MN 2000
YF-36

No. 36
January-February 1978

young families



LOCATING CHILD CARE

High quality child care has become a major need among families with young children. To assist parents in making the right decision, Anne Claus, day care licensing consultant and a St. Paul mother of young children, recommends careful thought be given to several issues and alternatives.

Type of day care available

In-home care. Someone comes to your home, cares for your children, and may or may not do some housework. A primary advantage of this arrangement is that children can remain at home. However, it is expensive (approximately \$2.50/hour) and persons interested in this type of employment are hard to find. A caution is to check references thoroughly, including persons whose children they have cared for. Make inquiries regarding daily dependability, reliable transportation, etc. Persons employed in this arrangement do not need to be licensed.

Family day care. Family day care homes are licensed and may care for 5 children, including the providers own pre-school children. Ratios are set for infants and pre-school children. Minnesota state law requires that in order to provide day care for children during any part of the 24-hour day, a person must be licensed by the Department of Public Welfare (MN statute 257.081 through 257.123) with the following exceptions:

- 1) a family day-care home which provides care only to children related by blood or marriage.
- 2) a family day-care home which provides care to children from one other family only.
- 3) a person providing care to children for less than 30 days in any other twelve-month period.

A person who provides family day care without a license is guilty of a misdemeanor (90 days or \$300.00 fine.) Anyone who meets the license standards can obtain a license without cost to them.

What are some of the advantages of licensed day care? The children are taken consistently to the same care provider. Care is generally less expensive—\$5.00-\$6.00 per day for full day care. Having a license indicates that references have been checked, and the home undergoes an annual fire safety inspection.

Other advantages include the licensing agency serving as an advocate to handle complaints, providing lists of licensed homes in your home or work neighborhood, licensing standards, and enforcing those standards.

Advantages for the children include discovering consistent caring and warmth from another adult and developing relationships and social skills with other children.

Group day-care is a type of home also licensed by the county welfare department. Each home is licensed to care for 10 children with the day-care provider and one full-time helper. This type of license also specifies the number of children of different age groups allowed.

Day-Care centers are licensed by the state health and welfare department. Program activities are more structured with more children per adult staff person. Children under 2½ years cannot be cared for in day-care centers.

Montessori educational programs are used by some parents to provide day-care. The ratio of adult staff to children is regulated only by the Montessori program itself which is exempt from state licensing procedures.

Before and after school care may vary from asking and paying a neighbor for this service, to having a child participate in a latch-key program. Do not leave your children alone without a responsible adult to report to.

Quality Day Care

How do you find quality day care? Phone your county welfare or social service department for names of persons licensed in the neighborhood in which you work or live. Some counties have a separate phone number under the county welfare listing. Arrangements for day-care are a private business agreement between consumer and provider. Ask questions until you're satisfied with the arrangement made for your child.

Take your child for a look-see. If your child seems uncomfortable, cries, or otherwise reacts beyond the experience of going to any strange place with you, visit other alternatives. Look for a home where your child is comfortable.

Vital considerations include locating child care needs which will meet your child's needs. Can your child handle the competition, schedule, and active program of a day-care center? Or would a less-structured, smaller family day-care home be a happier choice? Your child will spend many hours there without you.

Be honest with your child. Tell him/her where you are going, when you will return. Tell your children you

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want them to be happy there. This gives your child permission to relax, relate, learn, and enjoy. Do this no matter how young your child is.

Remember, you and your day-care provider are a team. This adult needs to play a parenting role, being warm and responsive with children, encouraging intellectual growth, respecting individual needs, and providing a good and a safe environment.

Be alert when the care giver avoids your visits or questions or appears uninvolved or unresponsive with children. If children appear restless, chaotic, or without any guidance for 30 minutes or more, be concerned. Unsafe or dirty facilities are a "flag" as is your child's loss of enthusiasm for play, lack of interest, or suddenly not eating or sleeping well.

Here's a consumer's check list to leave with your day-care provider and back-up persons.

1. Child's name
2. Birthday—Age
3. Mother's name
4. Place of employment
5. Work telephone (name and number of supervisor too)
6. Home address
7. Father's name
8. Place of employment
9. Work telephone (name and number of supervisor too)
10. Home address
11. Home telephone
12. Financial arrangements
 1. Payment amount—pay by check and mark check for tax purposes.
 2. Payment when—
 3. Arrangements for holidays, overtime, sick-days, vacation.
13. Responsible persons to be notified in case parent cannot be reached
Phone numbers.
14. Physician name, address, phone
15. Signed release for emergency medical care for your child.
16. Who may and may not call for your child.
17. Special needs of child:
Allergies
Health problems
Schedule—if infant
18. Make sure a child of any age has a complete change of clothes, underwear and a sweater at day-care at all times.

(prepared by Shirley L. Barber, Ramsey county extension agent)

CHILDREN'S BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are very important, special days to all ages. Some companies give an employee a holiday on his/her birthday. The writer, Grace Ewing, has this to say about children's birthdays: "Second only to Christmas as an event calling for celebration, rejoicing and the

building of family traditions and happy family memories is one's own birthday. If parents are as wise as they are affectionate, they will convince a child that each anniversary of the day he was born is one of the most important days in their own lives as well as his. For both, it is another milestone in the process of growing up. Long before he fully understands what birthdays are all about, he knows that his birthday is a big day and crows with delight because everybody else knows it too."

Birthday parties with the child's friends included are a good way to make birthdays special. For successful parties its probably a good idea to be over-planned with games and activities. If one doesn't go over well, you can quickly go on to something else. Some suggestions that have been used are scavenger hunts, musical chairs, pencil and paper games, progressive games, and time contests. Activities that involve everyone are important. One way may be to have the children make their own party snacks. Listed below are some ideas for "nutritious nibbling" that may be used with, or in addition to, the traditional ice cream and cake.

Applewiches—core apple and slice to make circles. Spread a small amount of cream cheese, peanut butter, or processed cheese on each circle. Serve open-faced or top with another apple circle.

Kabobs—Alternate cubes of cheese, apple, and meat or pieces of orange, cheese, and apple on a toothpick.

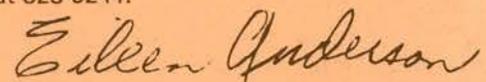
Rollin' Bananas—dip banana chunks in yogurt or orange juice. Roll in coconut, chopped nuts, or sunflower seeds.

Bugs on a log—cut celery stalks into 2 inch lengths. Fill celery with peanut butter, cottage cheese, cheese spread, or tuna salad. Add raisins on top to give the effect of bugs sitting on a log!!

Pretzels—use white or whole wheat frozen bread dough and follow directions on the package for thawing bread. Have each child wash and dry their hands and rub them with shortening. Give each one a gob of dough to mold on a piece of waxed paper. Shape into pretzels, initials, animals, etc. The thinner, the crunchier they'll be. For a nice brown color use a pastry brush to paint the top with beaten egg. Bake on a cookie sheet at 425° F for 12 to 14 minutes or until brown.

THIS ISSUE

This newsletter is published by the Agricultural Extension Service of your University of Minnesota for young families in the Twin Cities area. I would appreciate your suggestions for its content. Call me at 823-5241.



Eileen G. Anderson, Urban Extension Agent

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