

Home Care vs. Center Care

When deciding about the type of care to use, it is important to think about the advantages and disadvantages of the different types of care while weighing your family's priorities and options. Parents should also consider the disposition of their child and what type of care might best meet the child's needs. It can be true that different types of care meet your child's needs better at different stages of development. In all cases, it is important that parents monitor the care the child receives. Child care can be high quality or poor quality in homes or child care centers. Like anything else, there can be glitches in the care arrangements as the child grows and changes. It is critical that parents and caregivers develop the ability to openly discuss and resolve concerns and problems. The relationship between caregiver and parent is key no matter the type of care.

Home-based care can provide continuity of caregiver (the same person is with your child every day), less exposure to illness, sometimes more flexibility with hours and the ability to care for mildly ill children, often lower fees, and a smaller family-style atmosphere. Parents are dependent on the temperament and reliability of the individual caregiver.

Center-based care can provide a team approach that combines strengths of many different staff, certainty that care is always available, and additional security in all areas of site and staff safety. Center-based programs often have a wider variety of materials inside and outside with which to provide developmentally appropriate activities. More formal curriculum, assessment, field trips, and the ability to utilize community resources are often found in center-based programs. Parents might want to visit both types of care when making the decision about which best meets their family's needs.