

Navigating The Child Care Maze (February)

Navigating the child care maze is no easy task. Most parents searching for a quality child care program are interested in more than just safety. They want a warm, loving environment --- a place where children will grow, learn, and be happy. Such programs can be found in regulated family day care homes, group homes, and child care centers.

Parents in the market for child care should use the following steps before making a final decision.

- Investigate available child care programs in your community and get involved in efforts to improve and/or expand them.
- Look for a safe setting with plenty of age-appropriate toys/materials and caregivers who enjoy playing and talking with children.
- Listen to what the setting sounds like. Are children happy and involved? Are caregivers pleasant and patient?
- Count the number of children and caregivers. The smaller the number of children per adult, the better.
- Ask about the training and experience of all adults who will be with your child.

For additional assistance, call the Ingham County Office for Young Children (517-887-4319) or log on to www.ingham.org/hd/oyc.

---Furnished by Ingham County Great Start (www.inghamgreatstart.org)