



Your Child's First Classroom

Tips on Choosing a Quality Preschool

From learning their ABCs to making friends, children learn so much during their first five years of life. So, when it is time to enroll a child in preschool, parents have the important job of finding a preschool that will continue to nurture the child's development. Choosing the right program will pay off in the long run since research shows that kids who attend quality preschools do better in school, especially in reading and math. To help you find a preschool that is a good fit for your child, consider the following tips from First 5 Yolo:

Ask Lots of Questions: Finding the right preschool for your child can take some research. It's a good idea to start your search up to a year before you want your child to start to give you time to evaluate different programs. Typically, children start preschool around age 3.

- Ask to see the school's state license to be sure it meets health and safety regulations.
- Learn about the teachers' educational backgrounds. Ideally, they will have specialized training in early childhood education.
- Ask about the school's child/teacher ratio. The National Association for the Education of Young Children recommends one adult for every 10 children, which means more individual attention for your child.

Look for a Well-Rounded Program: During their early years, children develop quickly as they expand their knowledge about the world around them and learn how to interact with others. Enrolling your child in a program that provides a solid foundation will help prepare him or her for success in kindergarten.

- Look for a preschool that offers a variety of activities adjusted to children's developmental stages and needs, such as reading, arts and crafts, hands-on learning, teacher instruction, group and individual projects as well as active play time.
- Make sure the preschool teaches basic school readiness skills, including the alphabet, numbers, shapes and colors.
- Ensure the school has plenty of age-appropriate books, toys and other materials that encourage literacy and creativity and the environment is set up to best support early learning activities.

Ask about Parent/Teacher Collaboration: Working together with preschool teachers can help strengthen your child's ability to learn.

- Look for a school that welcomes parents and caregivers to visit (including unannounced visits) and participate in activities. This helps establish collaboration between teachers and parents.
- Ask parents at the preschool about how teachers communicate with them. It benefits your child when teachers and parents share information about her or his progress, favorite activities and learning style.
- Ask about the program's discipline policy to make sure it is similar to your own. Having different rules at home and at school can be confusing for young children.

To learn more about quality preschools, contact Child Care Services at 530-669-5695.

For more information on First 5 Yolo programs, services and resources, please visit www.first5yolo.org.

Compliments of First 5 Yolo
403 Court Street
Woodland, CA 95695
530-669-2475 www.first5yolo.org