



Parent Interview Tips

Providers should carefully screen parents and children in an interview. Here are some tips to help you make the most of the interview process:

Set aside enough time to go over the details of your business, including all the terms of the contract and policies. Explain how you deal with issues such as discipline, toilet learning, naps, etc. Clearly express your philosophy about caring for children. Sell yourself by pointing out your strengths (Educational background, special training, and so on).

Describe your expectations of parents. Ask if they understand everything you are saying. Ask about their parenting philosophy. What types of problems have parents had with other providers they have been with in the past?

Offer a tour of your home. Point out the safety features, daily routines, fun activities and children's toys.

Look for these warning signs:

- Was the parent unreasonably late for the interview? It may be a sign of things to come.
- Is the parent uncomfortable talking about their values and expectations in raising children (especially if they are different from yours)? You want a parent who is willing to talk through future conflicts.
- Does the parent show a lack of interest in how you will be caring for their child? If so, you may later be frustrated in trying to involve the parent in addressing their child's needs.
- Does the parent show signs of inflexibility and unwillingness to compromise? If so, you may have trouble handling unforeseen problems.
- Are there signs that indicate problems in caring for the child would be unreasonably difficult?
- Does the parent treat you with a lack of respect?

This handout was produced by Think Small (www.thinksmall.org). For additional family child care business publications, contact Think Small's publishing division, Redleaf Press, at 800-423-8309 or visit www.redleafpress.org.