



Finding Quality Child Care for Children of Lesbian, Gay Bisexual & Transexual Parents

All children must feel safe and their families affirmed in the programs that care for them. While all parents want the best educational environment for their children, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) parents have unique concerns to consider while searching for child care and preschools.

Many of the indicators of an LGBT-family-friendly program are intangible and hard to determine. Ultimately a family's decision is based on whether a program "feels right." Parents are the experts on the needs of their children and must trust their instincts when making decisions. At the same time, there are some specific things that LGBT parents should know to help them in their search. The following is a list of indicators that parents and providers can use to assess whether a program is friendly to LGBT families.

Keep in mind that there are many different types of child care choices, ranging from small family child care homes to large child care centers. Some of these indicators may be more important in larger settings. Whatever its size, a program may be an appropriate choice if it is willing to work towards building an inclusive environment for all families.

There are many indicators for quality child care. This list focuses on issues of special concern to LGBT parents. It is highly advised that parents use other available tools and to contact Quality Care for Children for more information.

BASIC IMPRESSIONS

- The program feels like a warm and nurturing place for all children.
- The provider or staff members seem committed to making all families welcome and included in the program.

CURRICULUM AND ACTIVITIES

- Curriculum themes include LGBT families.
- Mother's and Father's Day celebrations are sensitive to family diversity.
- Parent contributions of books and materials that reflect LGBT families are welcomed.
- If the program has a lending library, LGBT educational materials are available to staff and families.
- The program supports LGBT families by participating in Pride events.
- Conflict resolution and creative problem-solving are covered in the curriculum.



PRINTED MATERIALS OF THE PROGRAM

- The program includes LGBT families in promotional materials like its website or brochure.
- The mission statement or program goals address family diversity, including LGBT families.
- Program forms use non-gender-specific terms such as “guardian, parent, or co-parent” rather than “mother and father.”

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

- Representations of families on display in photographs, drawings, and posters include LGBT families.
- LGBT families are represented in books that are accessible to children and used by staff.

STAFF

- The work environment allows LGBT staff to ‘be out’ to other staff members, parents, and children
- Staff receive and participate in diversity training that covers working with LGBT families.
- The staff is comfortable using respectful and inclusive language when talking about families to children and when talking with LGBT parents.
- Staff accept and support children’s behavior or play that breaks gender stereotypes.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- There is a commitment to hire a diverse staff that reflects the children and families in the program and larger community.
- There is an anti-discrimination policy that includes sexual orientation and gender identity.
- The program provides the same benefits for staff with domestic partners as it does for staff with spouses.
- The program has procedures in place that are consistently used to handle situations in which prejudice is expressed by children, parents or staff.



This evaluation tool was developed by the LGBT Early Childhood Education Initiative, a group of over 30 LGBT parents, community organizations, and early childhood education professionals in the San Francisco Bay Area.

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