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Childcare

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How to choose the right day care centre?

Day care centers are facilities that look after children of various age groups over a short or long period of the day. If you plan to keep your baby in a daycare, start looking out for options during your pregnancy, so that you don't spend too much time on this activity after your baby's birth or miss out on a spot when you need it. Use the time once your baby is born to learn and understand their needs, as this is important in deciding the day care. Before deciding on the type of care that you need to engage for your baby, analyse factors like number of days required, finances and facilities available.

Advantages of Day Care

Day care facilities for babies have many advantages for your child, including:

- They are tightly regulated, monitored and organised;
- Day care facilities have reliable timings that are not dependent on the availability of any individual care provider;
- A good day care center is professionally run and structured around age-appropriate learning and recreation that enhance cognitive skills of babies and pre-school children;
- Babies and toddlers enjoy the company of other children their age in the day care center and such interactions help develop their social, physical and cognitive skills;
- A day care facility may also be less expensive than hiring a full time nanny for your baby.

Disadvantages of Keeping Your Baby in Day Care

Besides the numerous advantages of day care center, there may be a few drawbacks as well, which you may need to look into before deciding on the day care that's right for your baby. Some of these include:

- The day care center timings may not match your work hours, so you may need to either adjust your work hours or make arrangements to pick your child up at the right time;
- Day care centers have strict rules about sick children and you may not be able to send your baby there even if they are mildly ill and may have to miss out on your day's work – you could also see this as a positive, as I'm sure you wouldn't want your child sharing unwanted germs which will make them sick also.
- If you have more than one child, you may be paying much more to the day care than what you would to a nanny;
- Also with multiple children in child care you may find it difficult to get them into the same centre for the same days.

Selecting the Right Day Care Center for Your Baby

Your greatest challenge may be figuring out which daycare provides the best care for your baby. However, with adequate planning and little patience, you can easily find the daycare best suited to your baby's needs. Consider the following while short-listing the day care centre for your baby:

User Recommendations

Take recommendations from people whom you trust, for example experienced relatives, friends or colleagues. You must visit the various daycares available, talk to the parents of kids in those daycares and have a look around the facility.

Warm and Healthy Environment

The daycare should have a warm, nurturing and safe environment in which your child can thrive and learn. It should be peaceful, encouraging, and healthy with ample opportunities for your child to interact and engage in healthy competition with other babies. It should provide enough love and care to each child, so as to fulfill their emotional needs.

Spacious and Safe

Your daycare should have enough space for exploration, should have all the safety measures in place and the staff should be educated and well trained in child-care.

Right Age Group

Most daycares segregate the kids as per age groups. Make sure your child falls into the right age group and gets age-specific exposure and learning. The facility should involve the baby in activities on a daily basis that help in their physical, cognitive and social development.

Convenience of Location

Consider convenience factors like distance from home or your workplace when deciding on the daycare. The advantages of having the daycare close to work may be that it gives you an edge of being available in the shortest time whenever your baby needs you; you can easily go in for breastfeeding or if you want to check on them from time to time. If you travel for work a bit, you may want to consider a location closer to home than work, for those days you're not actually attending your normal work location.

Cost and Timings

The cost of the day care facility and its hours of operation should also be considered before deciding on the day care for your baby. There are long and short daycare centres, you will need to coordinate this with your work hours.

Be Tension Free with the Right Day Care

Daycare centers provide safety, health assurance, social interactions and learning to children. Do sufficient research before deciding the day care for your child. Your little one is not going to get upset about your absence as long as they get love and care and a feeling of security at the daycare center.

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