

Choosing Caregivers

for children with special needs

12 TIPS for choosing child care when your child has a disability:

- 1. Find a provider that is licensed**, monitored, and follows the ADA laws for child care.
- 2. Visit the facility** in order to observe the surroundings, other children, types of activities, and quality of care.
- 3. Evaluate the accessibility of the facility**, relative to any specific needs of your child.
- 4. Get acquainted with the provider's experience** working with children who have disabilities.
- 5. Tell the provider** what you have found "works" for your child's needs.
- 6. Share your fears and concerns.**
- 7. Ask specific questions** about how staff will handle supervision, communication, or other challenges that might be concerns related to your child.
- 8. Look for good staff-to-child ratios** to ensure an environment that promotes individual attention and care
- 9. Ask questions about when and how** restraints, seclusion or 1-on-1 time might be used.
- 10. Ask about their approach/techniques for behavior management** and be sure you are comfortable with it.
- 11. Communicate your child's gifts and strengths** as well as his or her "needs" so that the caregiver also gains an appreciation for the wonderful aspects of your child.
- 12. Foster a healthy relationship with your child's provider.** Mutual respect will encourage ongoing, open communication about how to best pursue success for your child.

Can a provider turn away a child because of his or her disability?

The Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) "guarantees that **children cannot be excluded from public accommodations simply because of a disability**":

- The only exception applies to religious organizations
- An environment that promotes inclusion benefits kids with and without disabilities
- More info at wrightslaw.com

Even if the provider's insurance would raise rates if a child with disabilities was enrolled, the provider cannot bar the child's acceptance on those grounds alone.

A provider cannot pass along any costs incurred in the process of accommodating a child with disabilities to the child's parents.

To help offset costs and charges, providers can pursue tax credits and deductions - see Section 44 of the IRS code.

If you feel that a child care program is discriminating against your child because of a disability, you can get legal advice from the Child Care Law Center at 414-495-5498

RESOURCES:

Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN) Coordinators

Child Care Health Consultant (CCHC)

Child care Law Center (childcarelaw.org)*
**provides numerous low-cost "how-to" books for parents and providers*

www.scanva.org/prc

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