

# Choosing Care for Your Children

12CC  
C549

977

## Family Day Care Homes

(The Babysitter's Home)

Distributed by  
Iowa Council  
for Children  
523 E. 12th St.  
Des Moines, Ia. 50319  
515-281-3986



STATE LIBRARY COMMISSION OF IOWA  
Historical Building

DES MOINES, IOWA 50319

Prepared by Dorothy Pinsky, extension specialist in human  
development and family life.

Cooperative Extension Service

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY



STATE LIBRARY OF IOWA



Pm-796-a  
September 1977

3 1723 02003 0367

## **What Is a Family Day Care Home?**

A family day care home is a type of child care that offers planned activities and a good nutritional program in a healthful and safe home atmosphere. A family day care home provides care for six children or fewer including the provider's own children not regularly in school full days when school is in session. It is concerned with helping and supporting parents with their child rearing when the parents are at work, at school, or want this type of care for other reasons.

The children usually spend the entire working day at the family day care home. Some homes offer night care as well.

Persons providing care in their homes are referred to as family day care home providers.

## **Are Family Day Care Homes Licensed?**

The Department of Social Services is providing a system of voluntary registration for family day care homes. The provider agrees to provide care for not more than six preschool age children, including the provider's own. The provider also agrees to plan activities and provide a safe and healthful environment for children. Six children is generally considered to be a maximum number that can be cared for adequately. If the home you are considering has more than six preschool children, you may choose to look elsewhere. If it is eligible but not registered with the Department of Social Services, you may suggest that the provider register.

## **How Do I Find a Family Day Care Home?**

You may begin by calling the local office of the Department of Social Services for help in locating registered family day care homes. You may also find out about others through newspaper ads, community bulletin boards, colleges and universities, and through friends and neighbors.

A registration certificate or a good recommendation will not provide enough information for you to make a decision, so try to find several homes you can visit.

## **How Do I Choose?**

It is important to find a setting with which you are comfortable, with a family day care home provider who shares your attitudes and values about children. Plan to visit the home and observe the provider with the children. Spend some time talking with the provider. Some things to look for are:

- Do the children appear happy?
- Does the provider seem to enjoy this type of work?
- Is the house clean?
- What kinds of activities are planned?
- How often is the television used?
- Is there safe and adequate indoor and outdoor play space?
- What is the attitude of the provider toward discipline?
- Are nutritious meals and snacks served?
- Is there provision for quiet times, active times, nap times?

## **After the Home Is Chosen**

Once you have made a choice, work out arrangements with the provider about costs, hours, substitute care when the provider is ill. Prepare a permission slip for the provider to take to the doctor or hospital in the event of an accident. Provide phone numbers where you or other family members or friends can be reached in an emergency. Inform the provider of people whom you authorize to pick up your child.

Share information about your child with the provider. This may include food likes and dislikes, favorite activities, special fears, sleep and nap habits.

## **Preparing the Child**

Your child may be just an infant, or your need for child care may have developed rather sud-



denly. No matter what the circumstances, try to prepare your child for the new situation. Talk about the home and the provider before you visit, and try to spend some time with your child in the home. Talk about similarities to things you have done together and provide some familiar things for the child to bring. The transition to a new environment may be difficult for the child, so any advance preparation you can provide will be helpful. Special attention during the first few weeks will be especially important.

## **Preparing Yourself**

If this is your first separation from your child on a regular daily basis, this will probably be difficult for you. Talking to other parents in the same situation can be helpful. If you have chosen a home that you feel good about and with which you are comfortable, this will be of help to you and your family. Talk to the provider about her views of the child's adjustment, and talk to and observe your child. If problems arise, discuss them. If, after several weeks of trying to work out the problem, things are still not working out well, you may decide to find another family day care home. It is important to make a careful decision because consistency is important to your child. Frequent changing of providers may be disruptive for the child's development and for the family as a whole.

## **You and Your Child**

If your child requires regular daily child care, you may feel guilty about not spending enough time with the child or together as a family. It is important to plan for special time and activities with your children. You may be spending fewer hours with your child than you would like to, but the time you do spend together will be valuable and enjoyable for all when it is well-planned and separate from other diversions. Quality child care and time spent together as a family can provide a solid balance for you and your child.



File: 2

## ... AND JUSTICE FOR ALL

Programs and activities of Cooperative Extension Service are available to all potential clientele without regard to race, color, sex or national origin. Anyone who feels discriminated against should send a complaint within 180 days to the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

