

Tips on Choosing Care for Children with Disabilities

There are many things that have to be considered when placing a child with disabilities with a child care provider; such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) child care laws, what questions to ask and what to look for when visiting a potential center or caregiver.

With the exception of child care centers run by religious entities, all child care providers, including small home based providers, must comply with Title III of the ADA laws. However, nonreligious child care centers that conduct their activities in church facilities may be subject to the ADA. According to the Department of Justice website, the basic requirements of Title III are as follows:

- Centers cannot exclude children with disabilities from their programs unless their presence would pose a direct threat to the health or safety of others, or require a fundamental alteration of the program.
- Centers have to make reasonable modifications to their policies and practices to integrate children, parents and guardians with disabilities into their programs, unless doing so would constitute a fundamental alteration.
- Centers must provide appropriate auxiliary aides and services needed for effective communication with children or adults with disabilities, when doing so would not constitute an undue burden.
- Centers must generally make their facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. Existing facilities are subject to the readily achievable standard for barrier removal, while newly constructed facilities and any altered portions of existing facilities must be fully accessible.

Tips on Choosing Care:

1. Find a provider that is licensed, monitored, and follows the ADA laws for child care.
2. Visit the facility to observe the activities of the program and the quality of care for the children present.
3. Pay attention to how well the facility is organized. Does the center seem child-friendly? Are there clear pathways? Are there accessible restrooms nearby?
4. Set up an appointment to interview the administrator or provider on the important questions you may have. Ask about what activities are provided during the day.
5. Get to know the provider's experience with children with disabilities. If they do not have any experience or training with children with disabilities, this child care center may not be the right fit or placement for your child.
6. Provide any pertinent information about your child's disability. This will ensure that your provider is aware of your child's capabilities and needs.
7. Have open communication with the provider. This will foster a partnership with the provider in order to have a successful service for your child.

For more tips on choosing appropriate child care for your children with disabilities, please contact:

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