

What to Look for in an Infant Program

The early years (birth through age 8) are critical learning years, and qualified early childhood professionals accelerate how our children learn, develop, and build the skills needed to get along with others and succeed in school and life.

NAEYC offers these tips to assist parents in selecting a safe, nurturing, and stimulating learning environment for their infants.

For infants, a high-quality program means:

- 1 Group size is limited to no more than eight babies, with at least one teacher for every three children.
- 2 Each infant is assigned to a primary caregiver, allowing for strong bonds to form and so each teacher can get to know a few babies and families very well.
- 3 Teachers show warmth and support to infants throughout the day; they make eye contact and talk to them about what is going on.
- 4 Teachers are alert to babies' cues; they hold infants or move them to a new place or position, giving babies variety in what they can look at and do.
- 5 Teachers follow standards for health and safety, including proper hand washing, to limit the spread of infectious disease.
- 6 Teachers pay close attention and talk and sing to children during routines such as diapering, feeding, and dressing.
- 7 Teachers can see and hear infants at all times.
- 8 Teachers welcome parents to drop by the home or center at any time.



For more tips on choosing a high-quality early childhood education program visit <http://families.naeyc.org>