

What to Look for in a Toddler 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 toddlers.

For toddlers, a high-quality program means:

- 1 Children remain with a primary teacher so they can form strong relationships.
- 2 The teacher learns to respond to the toddler's individual temperament, needs, and cues, and builds a strong relationship and communication with the child's family.
- 3 Teachers recognize that toddlers are not yet able to communicate all of their needs through language; they promptly respond to children's cries or other signs of distress.
- 4 Teachers set good examples for children by treating others with kindness and respect; they encourage toddlers' language skills so children can express their wants and needs with words.
- 5 Teachers frequently read and sing to toddlers (in English and children's home languages).
- 6 Teachers engage toddlers in everyday routines such as eating, toileting, and dressing, so children can learn new skills and better control their own behavior.
- 7 Children have many opportunities for safe, active, large-muscle play, both indoors and outdoors.
- 8 Teachers have training in child development or early education specific to the toddler age group.
- 9 Parents are always welcome in the home or center.



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