

Ask Your Director...

About the program:

- What is the history of this child care program?
- What is the philosophy of this child care program?
- What values form the basis for this child care program?
- What are the expectations for appropriate dress in this program?

About yourself as a new staff person:

- Where can you use your creative talents and ideas in this program?
- What situations would make you doubt yourself and your abilities?
- What strengths do you bring to the child care team?
- What expectations do you have of the program director?
- What help is available if you need to make an ethical decision involving a child or family in your care?
- What should you do if you feel stressed and need a break?
- What should you do if you have problems with co-workers that you can't work out?

About professional development:

- How many hours of professional development are required for you to complete in a year?
- What options for professional development are available to staff in this program?
- Is this child care part of a quality improvement program (such as Keystone STARS in Pennsylvania)?
- If the child care participates in a quality improvement program, how does this participation affect staff?
- List additional questions on professionalism to ask your director:

Safety Scavenger Hunt

Every child care professional should be prepared to act quickly if an emergency occurs or a child's safety is in question. Find each of the following in your child care center, and note the locations (there may be more than one of each):

	Location(s)
Fire extinguisher	
Fire alarm pull	
First aid kit	
Locked medicine box	
Information and evacuation plan	
Emergency contact information for children	
Child pick up or approved release information	
Special concerns/allergy information for children	
Emergency telephone numbers	
Emergency preparedness plan	
Safety covers in electrical outlets	
Locked storage area for cleaning supplies	
Locked area to store your personal items	



Ask Your Director... about Healthy Spaces

What are staff responsibilities for daily cleaning in the center? What specifically do you have to do?

What products are used to sanitize and disinfect materials and areas used by children?

If a bleach and water solution is used to sanitize and disinfect surfaces:

Who mixes the bleach and water solution each day?

What proportions of bleach and water are used for the sanitizing solution?

What proportions of bleach and water are used for the disinfecting solution?

How much standing time is needed when using a bleach/water solution?

Where are the Child Health Reports/children's files for the children in your care, so you can read them?

What are the center's policies for taking children outside to play each day?

What is the policy for sick children? When should parents be called to pick up a sick child? Who does the calling?

Will you be responsible for caring for a child with a chronic illness or condition?

Where is the care plan for this child located?

Who will provide training so you know how to manage this child's care?

Will you be responsible for giving children medication?

Who will train you on the proper procedures for giving medication?

Where is the medication located?

Has anyone at the center talked about the toxic materials commonly found in toys, paint, furniture, fabrics, and carpets? Is anything being done about it?

Does anyone at the center research to find less toxic products when materials are replaced?

What are the center's policies for sick staff and the procedures for taking time off for illness?

List additional questions on healthy spaces to ask your director:

Ask Your Director... about Keeping Children Safe

What should be done if a safety concern is found and can't easily be fixed by a staff person?

What should be done with broken toys?

Who is responsible for checking the outdoor play area for safety concerns?

How often are safety checks done on the outdoor play space?

Does this center have universal rules for the outdoor play space that everyone follows or do individual classrooms create their own rules for outdoor play?

Do several groups use the outdoor play space at the same time or is the space scheduled so one group uses it at a time? Who does the scheduling?

Does the center have a plan for emergencies?

As a new staff person, what is your role if an emergency occurs?

Where will children be taken if there's an emergency and everyone needs to leave the building?

Where will children be sheltered inside if there's an emergency such as a tornado?

How will staff know if an emergency is happening?

When and what kind of emergency drills are practiced so children and staff know what to do if a real emergency occurs?

What are the procedures at this center for reporting suspected cases of child abuse?

List additional questions on keeping children safe to ask your director:

Ask Your Director... about Supervision

Does this center have policies for supervision?

Is there a written sign-in/sign-out process when parents drop off or pick up children? Where is it located?

Do all staff use a specific method for knowing which children are present each day? How will you know which children and how many children you are responsible for each day?

What is the staff:child ratio for the group of children you will work with?

For staff working with young children:

What are the center's policies for maintaining staff:child ratios during children's naptimes?

How are staff:child ratios maintained during staff break times?

How are staff:child ratios maintained when staff are sick or on vacation?

How are staff:child ratios maintained when a staff person needs to meet with a child's family?

List additional questions on supervision to ask your director:

Questions to discuss with other professionals... on Guiding Behavior

- What are the rules for the group of children you work with?
- What is the process for creating group rules?
- What changes have you made to the room arrangement to try to improve children's behavior?
- What mistaken behaviors do you typically expect from children in the age group you work with?
- What do you do to try to prevent mistaken behaviors?
- How do you guide children's behavior in positive ways?

List other questions on play that you would like to discuss:

Questions to discuss with your co-workers... on Observation

- How often do you observe children?
- What methods do you use for observing children?
- What do you do to make sure the children are properly supervised when you are observing children?
- What have you learned from observing children?
- How have you used your observations?

List other questions you would like to discuss with co-workers:

Practice observing and discuss

Set a time to practice your observation skills. Write your observation notes as you observe for the following.

Observe one child during play to determine his/her interests.

List activities that interest this child.

If you were a professional working with this child, what could you do to build on this child's interests?

Observe one child for developmental skills.

List the age of the child you are observing. _____

Describe what you see the child doing.

If you were a professional working with this child, what could you do to build on this child's developmental skills?

Observe one child for behavior.

Describe what you see the child doing.

If you were a professional working with this child, what could you do to guide this child's positive or misguided behavior?

Set a time with a professional working with this group of children to discuss your notes and observations. This discussion should be done at a time when the professional is not responsible for supervising children and in an area away from the children.

Ask Your Director... about communication

- Does this center have policies about communicating with families?
- Does this center have policies about maintaining confidentiality?
- Does this center have a gossip policy?
- What are the expectations for teamwork in this center?
- What should be done if I have a conflict with a co-worker and we can't resolve it ourselves?

List other questions that you would like to ask your director: