

Appendix: Questions to Ask Family Members at Intake

The following are questions to consider when enrolling a child to best prepare for the child's enrollment. It is not recommended that this list be used as a form for parents to fill out. It is advised that family members be interviewed in person whenever possible and that families be advised about their right to confidentiality prior to any interview.

- **What type of care is the family looking for?**
Request that parents share with you their priorities and concerns in seeking child care. Ask them to discuss the characteristics of child care that are the most important to them. Open communication about the family's priorities allows for both parents and caregivers to discuss and mutually determine if what the family is looking for matches what the program offers.
- **How would parents describe their child's personality and temperament?**
Is their child social or shy? Active or quiet? Do they warm up slowly in new situations or immediately seem comfortable? Do they prefer one-on-one interactions, small groups, or large group settings? Would they describe their child's temperament as easygoing, difficult, or fluctuating?
- **What are the child's favorites-toys, games, and so forth?**
Do they have a favorite toy, a special place to play, or something they particularly enjoy doing? Who do they spend the most time with? Who is their best friend? Who do they seem to enjoy being with the most?
- **What skills has the child mastered? Have they recently learned something new?**
Are there signs of emerging skills? Which activities can be self-initiated, and which are independent? Does the child enjoy practicing anything special? Do the parents or other family members have any concerns about their child's overall development?
- **What does the child like to do during the day? What makes the child the happiest?**
What is their favorite time of the day? What are they curious about? What is the child proudest of? What are favorite activities? In which ways will adults need to help facilitate play? How should toys or activities be introduced? (List things children do in a daily routine and ask if their child likes or enjoys each one).
- **How does their child interact with others-with peers, older or younger children, other adults, and strangers?**
Has their child previously been cared for in group settings? Do they have sisters or brothers? What are their ages? Has the child been with older or younger children? Has that worked well? Are they equally comfortable with male and female children and adults? Does their child typically initiate interactions or does their child wait until approached by others?

- **What does the child do when the parents are unavailable-when, for example, they are in the bathroom?**

How does the child respond and behave if an adult cannot be seen or heard? Are there concerns about the child's safety if an adult is not in immediate physical proximity? How much supervision does the child need?

- **How do parents guide their child's behavior? What frustrates the child and how do they react when frustrated? Does the child have any exceptional caregiving needs?**

Asking all parents if their child has special needs gives them an opportunity to share the unique insights they have about their child. Begin by suggesting that parents share what makes their child special or unique. If a child has a diagnosed disability or is coming into child care with health and/or developmental concerns, parents may provide this information at this point.

- **What special considerations and accommodations does the family feel the child may require in the child care setting? Are there any special equipment needs?**

Does the family anticipate or meet the child's basic needs in any special way at home that would be useful for the provider to know about? Are there specific accommodation needs that should be discussed and explored to ensure optimum opportunities for the child's participation in all activities?

- **How does the child communicate?**

What are the primary languages spoken in the home? What are the cues of a child who is nonverbal? What is the extent to which the child understands what is said? How does the child indicate choices by touching, looking, signing, or speaking? Is the family working toward specific communication goals? How can the child care provider encourage growth toward these goals?

- **What is the child's history regarding medication, allergies, and other physical or health-related conditions?**

What medication(s) does the child take (prescription and nonprescription)? When are these medications administered?

- Does the child need to have any medication during program hours? On what schedule?
- Are there any side effects (including behavioral)? From which medications?

- **Does the child have health problems, chronic illnesses, or allergies?**

If so, what happens to the child when they have a crisis related to this condition? What procedures would the staff follow to: prevent these crises? Deal with them when they occur? Does the staff need to be trained in any specific emergency procedures in to ensure the child's health and safety? What communication or feedback would parents find important?

Note: The child may require a health plan or an emergency plan.

- How does their child eat?**
 Are there any dietary considerations? What are the child's likes and dislikes? What are their favorite foods? Do they need assistance with feeding or drinking? What have been the child's typical snack and mealtimes?
- What are the toileting skills of the child?**
 Are there special considerations during diaper changing or toileting? How does the family know when to toilet the child? Does the child give any verbal or physical indication? Are the parents currently working toward independent toileting skills?
- Does the child have any special physical or positional needs?**
 In what ways will the provider know that the child is uncomfortable or tired? Is the child physically active, or do they tend to like less activity and movement? Do they prefer to rest or sleep in a certain position? Do they eat in a high chair, child's chair, or adult seat? Are they comfortable playing on the floor? Do they like to be held in a special way? Are there any other special handling considerations?
- Are there things that, if brought from home, would make the transition to the new child care setting easier?**
 Does the child have a favorite blanket for nap time or a special toy? Would bringing photos from home of family members, friends, neighbors, or pets be helpful? Are separations difficult? Is there anything the provider should know about separations in general?
- Will the child be involved in other programs or transitions during the day?**
 Will the child be attending child care full-time or part-time? Will they be involved in any other programs? Are there things the provider should know about the child's typical day or week? What is the child's most stressful time of day?
- Is the child and/or family receiving services from other agencies or professionals that should be coordinated with child care?**
 What are these services? What steps should the provider take to collaborate with representatives of these agencies? How may the family be able to assist with this networking?
- Are there other significant caregivers or professionals from whom information should be gathered?** Who are other important family members the provider should know about or meet? What are the names and telephone numbers of professionals who should be consulted? What information should be discussed with these people? Should the provider request and review reports or files from professionals or agencies?
Note: if there are other providers or services that are to be coordinated or communicated with, complete a release of information form for each entity.