

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

The place where your child gets care should be good. Most parents give very good care for their children. Many child-care places give good care, too. Children's brains can grow well at home or with a caregiver.

Talk with your child's caregiver every day. Ask questions. Stop in to visit sometimes. Help out when you can. Remember: you share the same goal. You both want to raise a healthy, happy child!



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# *Building Baby's Brain*

*The University of Georgia College of Family and Consumer Sciences*

## What Child Care Can Do

Most working parents need help caring for their children. Good child care is not just a place for parents to leave their babies. Good child care can help a baby's brain grow.

### WHO CARES FOR OUR BABIES?

Many parents go to school or work outside the home. Caregivers take care of children while parents are at work or school.

Some working parents have their own parents care for their children. Other children are in other child care, such as:

- Child care centers or schools
- Family child care
- A relative's home
- A nanny at the child's home

The kind of care is most important. Where a child is cared for does not matter so much, as long as it is good care.



## WHAT IS THE BEST CHILD CARE?

Lots of child care places have been studied. The best child care helps children grow up healthy and happy. Good child care can also help babies' brains grow.

Most parents say the best child care is like "good parenting." Can parents be sure that child care places give "good parenting"? Here are some things to look for:

### Small groups of children

The state has rules about how many children can be with each adult.

- There always should be 2 adults or more.
- No more than 6 babies (birth to 1 year) for each adult
- No more than 10 toddlers (1-3 years) for each adult
- No more than 20 preschoolers (4-5 years) for each adult

### The same loving caregiver

Infants and toddlers need love from a regular caregiver. This is someone you like and trust. Changing caregivers can confuse your baby. Find a good one and don't change.

### Trained adults

The best caregivers know how children grow and change. They know how a baby's brain grows. They can plan activities that teach children.

### A clean, safe place

Any place where babies stay should be clean and safe. Things that are dangerous should be locked up.

## FAIR AND POOR CAREGIVERS

Some parents pick child care with no trained adults. Some parents think only about two things: 1) How much does it cost? 2) Is it close to home or work? Studies show that most child care is only fair or poor.

Good child-care places can be hard to find, but it is worth it! Good caregivers help the brain to grow. Here are some ways:



### Language skills

Good caregivers use lots of language.

They read, sing, and talk with children. This is good for the growing brain. Brain cells connect to help children learn to talk well.

Some child care may have too many children and not enough adults. Caregivers cannot talk, read, and sing with too many children. These children's brain cells don't connect as well.

### Thinking skills

Good caregivers teach thinking by reading, talking, and playing with children. They also give children chances to try new things. These children can think better and solve problems.

Some children in child care do not get to try new things. Many of these children do not learn good thinking skills.

### Physical skills

Toddlers need lots of play to grow healthy brains. They need to climb, play, splash, and run safely. This makes brain cells connect and grow. Do NOT leave children in a playpen all day. It is not healthy. It slows brain growth.

### Feelings

How a child's brain grows can affect his feelings. Babies need regular daily routines. Babies in child care with lots of changes may grow to be troubled children. They may act mean. They may not have some thinking skills.

Children need to feel loved by their parents and caregivers. This helps them learn to control their feelings. Children without love may not grow up healthy. They may feel anger and other bad feelings as they get older.