

# Is Family Child Care Good Enough?

Do Children Need More Learning and  
Stimulation in a Center Facility?

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Traveling to the airport by taxi, heading home after a national conference a few years ago, the driver asked me what my work was. I said I am the director of an organization that offers services to inhome family child care providers.

He said, "oh".

Then, he added, "Our son has an inhome provider, but my wife and I are thinking of moving him to a child care center. He is 2-1/2 and he needs more intellectual challenges to help get him ready for school."

I asked, "How does he act when he sees his provider?"

The taxi driver responded with a huge smile, "He loves her. He runs into her arms and gives her a big hug. He is so happy to be with her and is even a little sad at the end of the day when he has to come home."

I said, "Sir, you need to treat that provider like gold. She is doing more than just caring for your child and keeping him safe. She is a 'mom-substitute'. Your son has bonded with her and that gives him wonderful days when he is not with you or your wife. You can feel reassured, knowing he is happy and having a wonderful time while you aren't there.

"Some parents feel threatened when their provider and child become so close. But no one will ever take the place of mom & dad. However, just knowing that your child is so precious to someone else is a real gift."

"Thank you!" He replied. "I am going home to tell my wife about what you said. I feel so much better, now!"

I don't know if they decided to place their son in a center or if they left him with his family child care provider a little longer. At any rate, this taxi driver recognized the importance of a good, loving, warm child care setting and how it influences his son's life.

Are you a parent with small children in care? Do they leap into the arms of their provider on sight? Do they seem calm and contented when you pick them up at night? Do they happily babble on about their day? If the answers are "yes" to these questions, chances are you have a pretty great provider who is warm, compassionate, friendly, happy, and is teaching those qualities to your child. It doesn't matter if you have an inhome child care provider or a center based setting. In either case, the most important aspect of a high quality child care setting is the ability of the caregiver to love your child unconditionally during your absence.

*This information is offered free of charge from:*

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