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Living with Children the 3-to 5-year-olds

CARING FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

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Your Part as a Parent

Parents usually want to give their children the kind of care that helps them grow in mind, body and spirit. This means taking good care of children when you are with them and seeing that they have proper care when you are away.

Parents cannot be with their children all of the time. It is good for the parent and for the child to be apart for some time. Children need to be around other children and to learn about adults. This helps them get ready for school.

Also, every parent needs some time to relax and do things with other adults. Many adults must leave their children with some-

one else when they go to work. These simple ideas may make choosing the best child care for your child a little easier.

When Someone Else Cares For Your Child

It is important to know exactly who is responsible for your child. If several different family members are left in charge, the child may soon find no one is watching over him. This may lead to trouble. Leaving only one person in charge makes it clear who is responsible for the child.

There may be many reliable people in your neighborhood who can take care of children. You might choose a relative or neighbor, or even an older brother or sister

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of the little child. The person you choose should be:

- Mature
- Responsible
- Friendly and warm with children
- Able to provide a clean and safe place for the child
- Able to watch your child closely enough (should not have too many children to take care of at one time)
- Able to be patient, but still keep the child under control
- Able to provide play areas and play equipment
- Well-known to you and deserving of your confidence

When you find a person with all these qualities, you will probably have to pay for this service. Sometimes parents take turns babysitting instead of paying someone else to take care of their children.

What Child Care Means

Child care is more than just watching a child. It means food, rest or sleep and supervised play. It also includes safety and the child's health. Good child care means discipline and attention for the child.



Planning with the Caretaker

After choosing the person who will care for your child, you and the caretaker will need to agree upon:

- Who will feed the child and when
- When and where the child will rest or sleep
- Where and with what toys the child will play
- How much and when you will pay the caretaker
- What kind of punishment you will allow and who may give it

You will need to provide the caretaker with the following:

- Proper clothes for the child (Take at least one change of underwear and one change of outer clothes. You may want to take a sweater and cap in case of sudden weather changes.)
- One of the child's toys from home (for entertainment)
- A way to get in touch with you or your next of kin, in case of an emergency
- A phone number to call for medical help (doctor, clinic or hospital)
- A list of any special health problems your child may have (diabetes, epilepsy, allergies, etc.)
- The time you will return to pick up your child every day

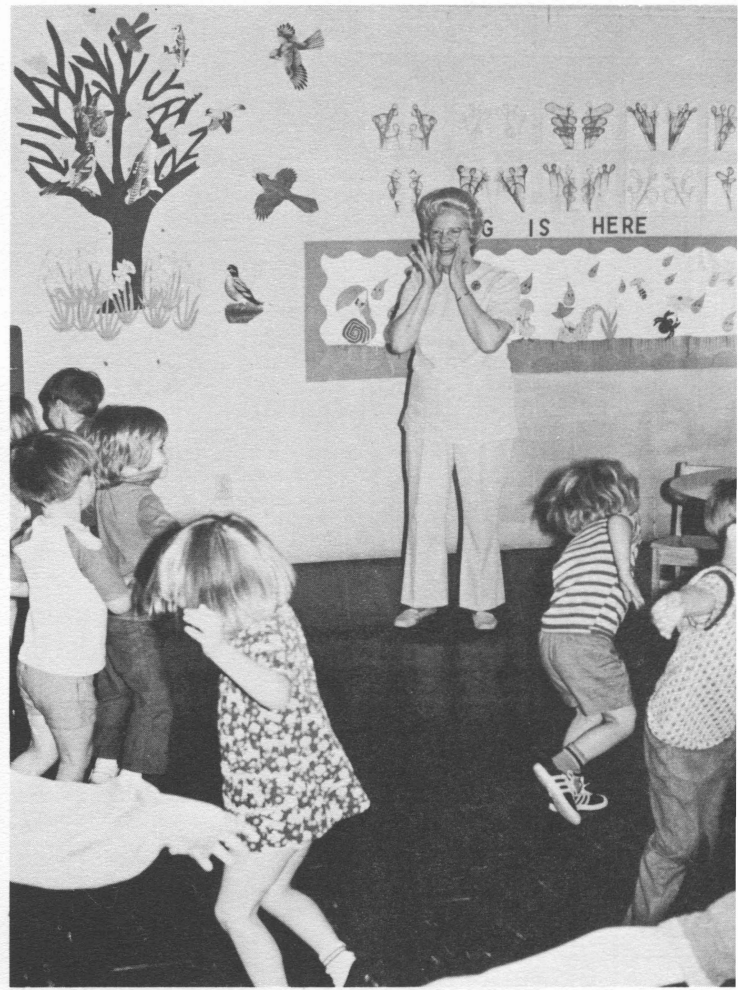
Kinds of Child Care

There are different kinds of child care. The two main types of child care are neighborhood and family care. Community child care is open to the public. The list below may help you find the best type of care for your child, you and your budget.

Custodial Day Care	Babysitting for one or more children by an individual in business.	Cost depends on number of children from the same family, number of hours of service and number of meals or snacks.
Nursery School	An educational program, usually ½ day for 2 to 5 days per week — may include one meal or snack.	Cost is per child.
Quality or Developmental Day Care	Uses trained teacher and aides to provide experiences to get children ready for school.	Cost depends on number of children from one family, children's ages, number of hours of service and number of meals served.
Kindergarten	Training and preschool experiences for the 5-year old may be public or private, usually ½-day sessions.	Public kindergarten is free; private kindergarten has charges that may be adjusted for family income level.
Family or Neighborhood Child Care	Babysitting, usually no teaching.	Cost is set by caretaker and parent.



Parents are the main caretakers of their children and will still be even when they must leave their children with someone else every day. The parents' part is to make a very careful choice of the day care for their children. Providing good care for your child, whether you give it or someone else gives it, will make you feel good about yourself as a parent.



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