Choosing Quality VPK: A Parent's Checklist

	PROGRAM		
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Do the children look happy?			
Are the children involved in activities?			
Are there plenty of books and toys?			

IS/ARE THE TEACHER(S):

Kind and encouraging children to explore and work independently as well as cooperatively in a group?		
Asking children open-ended questions?		
Listening/talking/playing with children?		
Maintaining control of the class in a positive way?		

DO DAILY ROUTINES INCLUDE:

Play outdoors? How often?		
A planned meal routine/schedule?		
Play activities for groups as well as individual play?		
Organized arrival and departure procedures?		
Quiet time for children to relax?		

DOES THE CLASSROOM HAVE:

Several different play areas? (including areas for both active play and quiet time)		
Space for children to move freely?		
A safe environment? (clean and orderly, with no major repair or safety problems)		
Child-sized furniture in good condition?		
Real photographs, current pictures and child's artwork displayed at child's level?		
IS THE OUTDOOR PLAYGROUND:		
Clean, safe and with enough shade for children?		
Fenced in?		

Large enough for gross motor activities (bikes, balls, climbing, running)?

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Organized with an area for children to sit and relax, if needed?		
Open so that a teacher can see all children playing?		

PROGRAM

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WHAT TO ASK ABOUT THE PROGRAM:

Are there materials available that promote the development of literacy and reading?		
Are there opportunities for language development?		
Does the program provide a wide variety of music and instruments?		
Does the program emphasize nutritious food habits?		

WHAT TO ASK ABOUT SERVICES, **POLICIES AND STAFF:**

Is transportation provided?		
Are meals or snacks provided?		
Is the program licensed?		
What days/hours are available for the VPK program?		
What are drop-off and pick-up times and policies?		
What is the child-to-teacher ratio? (two teachers per 18 children)		
How long has the VPK teacher worked there?		
Are references and background checks conducted on staff?		
Are staff trained in emergency procedures?		
Do teachers use non-threatening methods of discipline? (No physical or severe methods.)		
How are parents informed of illness, injuries, behavior issues, eating, etc.?		
Does the provider have written policies or information regarding:		
Their philosophy about education for young children?		
How teachers resolve conflicts between children?		
How teachers discipline children?		
The education and training of staff? (A good program provides this information readily.)		

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