

The impact of daycare on infants



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55% of American mothers now return to work by the time their children are one year old -- out of either financial, professional, or personal necessity. In today's society, there are concerns as to whether attending daycare during infancy produces negative or positive effects on the development of children. Many of these concerns are influenced by the fear that separating an infant from its mother may cause emotional harm to the child or disrupt the mother-infant bond.

No study finds that children of employed mothers suffer solely because their mothers are working. Research has shown that mothers who work spend as much time playing with their babies as do mothers without outside jobs (Huston & Aronson, 2005). It has also been questioned as to whether home-based maternal care or nonrelatives day-care provide the child with more opportunity to develop cognitively and socially (Belsky and Steinberg 1978, Field 1991, Lamb 1996, Peisner-Feinberg et al. 2001). There has been research that has found positive effects of day-care on children's social and cognitive development and suggests that perhaps child-care centers encourage more social interaction than the environment of a home-reared child.

There may be more stimulation in day-care and more communication and sharing to be learned, therefore enhancing these abilities of the children who attend them (Peisner-Feinberg et al. 2001). Evidence shows that a good preschool education is beneficial to young children. Children who attend preschool have a head start when they begin elementary school having learned basic concepts in a preschool center. Some of the negative effects a child may experience while attending a child care center include high child to

adult ratios, insufficient materials and equipment, staff with inadequate training and experience, and caregiver burnout. There are truly some wonderful and caregivers and daycares out there. Choosing the best one is a very important decision that a parent has to make.

How Do You Choose A Good Day Care Center

Choosing a day care center is one of the more important decisions parents can make on behalf of their child. While it may be tempting to be swayed by a center based on rates, location or even decor, there are several other factors to consider. When visiting a center there are several questions one can ask the director of the facility to determine if it's the right one for your child or if you should keep looking (Maughan, 2008).

1. What are the operating hours of the facility
2. How are the children grouped in classes
3. What is the teacher to child ratio for each class
4. What is the centers check in and check out procedures
5. What is the centers policy on disciplinary action for children

In addition to these questions a parent should tour the facility and go over the safety procedures for the facility. Word of mouth is also a good resource. Talk to family and friends and find out if and where their infant went to daycare.

What would you tell a parent of an infant who is concerned about harming their baby by placing them in Day Care, but must work because of economic necessity?

I would tell a parent who must place their infant in daycare to not worry. It won't cause any harm to their child. As long as they put them in a good quality childcare facility the infant will be ok. The important thing for the parent is to do their homework ahead of time when looking for a facility. The parent can call the facility to see how their child is doing throughout the day. Some facilities even have cameras so the parent can actually see what their child is doing. This may ease the parent's mind throughout the day so they won't be so worried about what is going on with their child. According to the NICHD daycare seems detrimental only when the mother is insensitive and the infant spends more than 20 hours a week in a poor quality program (NICHD, 2005).