Choosing Childcare for Multiples

It may seem strange to be thinking about childcare while you’re still pregnant but finding the right care for your babies takes time and research. Also, keep in mind that you’re seeking childcare for more than one baby, so you’ll need to find a caregiver or facility that will have multiple openings when it’s time for you to return to work. Here are some tips to help you find the best care possible for your babies.

**Types of Childcare:**

- **Childcare Center:** This is often a private facility, sometimes through a school, church, or your employer. The facility’s license should be clearly displayed, and providers should be certified.

- **Home-Based Childcare:** This is when your children are cared for in the provider’s home. Some care for infants only, while others have a wide-range of ages. Some states require that home-based childcare providers are licensed and set health, safety, and nutrition standards, so be sure to check your state’s requirements.

- **In-Home Caregiver:** This option includes babysitters (family or friends), nannies, or an au pair (a caregiver from another country who lives with your family). References, background, and training should always be checked on anyone caring for your babies. You can also hire help through an agency that can take care of background screenings and other legal requirements.

**Tips for Finding Childcare**

- Start early (many facilities and caregivers have waiting lists)
- Ask friends and co-workers for recommendations
- Check online for reviews and/or complaints and any licensing violations
- Ask your employer if they are contracted with local centers

**Questions to Ask:**

- Are there sibling discounts? If using a center, will your babies be in the same room or separated?
- Does the provider/center have written policies for illness, medication, SIDS prevention, breastfeeding support, nutrition, discipline, and outdoor play?
- Do all toys, equipment, and spaces (indoor and outdoor) meet safety standards? How often are toys disinfected?
- What education and experience does the childcare provider/center have? Are caregivers certified in CPR?
- Can the caregiver/center provide you with referrals from other parents?
- Is the provider/center licensed with local government agencies? Are there any violations?
- Can you visit the center anytime it is open? Can you see all the areas that your children will use? Are visitors screened, or is their identification checked?
- Do the child-staff ratios fall within national standards? For infants (0 to 6 months), there should be at least one childcare provider per 3 infants.
- Is there an area for you to breastfeed your babies before you leave and when you pick them up?
- How do you handle frozen or pumped breastmilk?