

Daycare Checklist

Page 1 is what you pack. Page 2 is the paperwork and what to leave at home, which is the part that actually holds people up. Tape it inside a cabinet door.

EVERY CHILD, EVERY DAY

- ☐ Two full changes of clothes, each in its own zip bag
- ☐ Weather layers, since most centers go outside daily
- ☐ Diapers or pull-ups, unless potty trained
- ☐ Water bottle or cup, labeled
- ☐ Lunch and snacks, if not provided
- ☐ Bag that fits the cubby, measure before you buy

ADD FOR INFANTS

6 weeks to 12 months

- ☐ Bottles, one per feeding plus a spare, each with full name and date
- ☐ Breast milk, labeled with full name and the date expressed
- ☐ Formula, sealed original container or pre-mixed bottles
- ☐ Bibs and burp cloths
- ☐ Sleep sack

Nothing soft in the crib. No blanket, lovey, pillow or stuffed toy. Safe sleep rules mean a center will hand these straight back.

ADD FOR TODDLERS

1 to 3 years

- ☐ A third change of clothes
- ☐ Spare underwear, once potty training starts
- ☐ Closed-toe, rubber-soled shoes that fasten
- ☐ Comfort item for nap, allowed from 12 months at most centers

Still on bottles or a sleep sack? Use the infant list too.

ADD FOR PRESCHOOL

3 to 5 years

- ☐ Nap mat or cot sheet, home Friday to wash
- ☐ Backpack the child can open alone
- ☐ Change of clothes for the cubby
- ☐ Swim diaper and towel for water play days

LEAVE AT DAYCARE, RESTOCK WHEN THEY ASK

- ☐ Full pack of diapers and wipes
- ☐ Diaper rash cream, labeled, with the signed form
- ☐ Sunscreen, 6 months and up, with the signed form
- ☐ Crib sheet, or cot sheet for preschool
- ☐ Spare shoes and a spare outfit
- ☐ Spare pacifiers

Bedding goes home Friday and comes back Monday. Centers do not launder it.

LABEL ALL OF THESE

- ☐ Every item of clothing, including socks and underwear
- ☐ Bottles, plus lids, rings and sealing discs separately
- ☐ Water bottle, lunch box and container lids
- ☐ Coat, hat, mittens and shoes
- ☐ Comfort item and blanket
- ☐ Nap bedding and cot sheet
- ☐ Diaper cream and sunscreen

Most families use **25 to 30 labels** for one child's core school wardrobe.

A NAME ONLY HELPS IF A STRANGER KNOWS WHO TO CALL

Most name labels tell whoever finds a lost coat what your child is called, and stop there. **ContactMyParent labels carry a QR code.** Anyone who finds the item scans it with a phone camera, with no app to download, and reaches you in seconds. You choose what they see, your number or a message form that keeps it private.

Iron-on labels for clothing, rated for 50 plus washes including machine drying. Waterproof stickers for bottles and hard surfaces. One-time purchase, no subscription.

- Starter**
10 labels, \$14
- Family**
25 labels, \$24
- School Year**
50 labels, \$39
- contactmyparent.com**

Before Day One

The paperwork is what actually delays a start date. Requirements vary by state and by center, so treat this as the list to ask about, not a guarantee.

PAPERWORK AND RECORDS

- ☐ Immunization record on your state's form
- ☐ Physical exam or health assessment signed by a physician, often due within 30 days
- ☐ Medication authorization form, for anything including OTC creams
- ☐ Allergy action plan signed by a physician
- ☐ Asthma action plan, inhaler and spacer
- ☐ Special diet or food substitution form
- ☐ Safe sleep policy acknowledgment, for infants
- ☐ Infant feeding plan, updated as they grow
- ☐ Authorized pickup list, plus the pickup password
- ☐ Signed parent handbook

LEAVE AT HOME, CENTERS WILL REFUSE THESE

- ☐ Loose blankets, loveys and stuffed toys for infants
- ☐ Amber teething necklaces, or any necklace
- ☐ Weighted sleep sacks and weighted blankets
- ☐ Swaddles, restricted in many states
- ☐ Clothing with drawstrings or hood cords

PERMISSION FORMS TO ASK ABOUT

- ☐ Sunscreen and insect repellent
- ☐ Diaper cream and other topicals
- ☐ Photo and media release
- ☐ Walking trips and field trips
- ☐ Water play

MEDICATION RULES

- ☐ Original pharmacy-labeled container, in date
- ☐ Hand it to a staff member and sign it in
- ☐ Never leave medication in a backpack or cubby
- ☐ In-date epinephrine auto-injector, if prescribed

THE ALLERGY FORM STAYS AT DAYCARE. YOUR CHILD DOES NOT.

The action plan you signed sits in a file at the center. On a field trip, at a birthday party, at a grandparent's house or at pickup by someone new, nobody has it.

A ContactMyParent label can carry allergies, conditions and medications alongside your contact details, so whoever is with your child can check in seconds and reach you at the same time. Update it any time without replacing a label.

Not a replacement for an epinephrine auto-injector, or for engraved medical jewelry in a true emergency, since responders are trained to look for engraving. This is for the person who has a moment to check.

Useful for allergies, asthma, epilepsy, diabetes, medications, and anything a caregiver should know

contactmyparent.com

FIVE THINGS PARENTS LEARN THE HARD WAY

1. **Use one name format everywhere: first name plus last initial.** Most rooms have two Emmas, and a first name alone does not get a sock back.
2. **Restock the spare outfit the day it comes home dirty.** The spare gets used quietly and nobody tells you, so you find out at the second accident.
3. **Label the lid, the ring and the sealing disc, not just the bottle.** They separate the moment a bottle is taken apart, and daycare bottles go through a dishwasher most nights.
4. **Label the inside of the heel of a shoe, not the tongue or the insole.** Insoles get pulled out and tongues flex and peel. Label both shoes, because they get separated.
5. **Photograph the cubby on day one.** When they message you to send more clothes, you will actually know what is already in there.