



CHILDCARE STRATEGY GUIDE

Strategizing for Childcare Like the *Boss You Are*

josie*



Introduction

MAKING A PLAN FOR CHILDCARE CAN BE OVERWHELMING (AND A GIANT PAIN IN THE BUM) - BUT FEAR NOT, WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED.

Follow our 5-Step Guide below to create a solid plan for you and your family. If you have a partner, we encourage you to invite them to complete this with you.

(Or not - and you can skip to the [TL/DR](#) 😊)



Step 1

“TO KNOW THYSELF IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM.”
– SOCRATES

Like any good planning guide, let’s start by building a strong foundation and get clear on what’s important to you.

Below are eight common values our clients at Josie look for when selecting a childcare provider. Take a look at this list and write down one or two that really stand out to you when it comes to childcare:

WHAT I VALUE IN A CAREGIVER	DEFINED AS:
Flexibility	Consider you / your partner’s working hours and other commitments. How important are things like flexibility in hours, days of week, being available on holidays, etc.?
Reliability	Different childcare options come with varying levels of reliability. For example, nannies may offer more flexibility in hours, but may need time off unexpectedly. Consider your own needs when it comes to predictability and how important that is to you and your family.
Values & Experience	Childcare providers often will hold educational backgrounds and credentials in early childhood development. Many more established organizations will also be explicit about the values they hold as a company. Consider how important this is to you and your family, and to what degree these elements influence your ability to trust a provider.

WHAT I VALUE IN A CAREGIVER	DEFINED AS :
1:1 Attention for My Child	How important is it to you that your child receive a high degree of one-on-one attention and personalized support?
Socialization	How important is it to you that your child spends time around other children of similar age and developmental stage?
Convenience	<p>Consider you / your partner's schedule once you return-to-work. How flexible will your days be? Will you be in an office, working from home, or some combination of the two? Will you need to travel? With that in mind, how important will it be to find a provider that is conveniently located for pick up and drop off?</p> <p>Hot tip: consider often overlooked things such as traffic, stress levels when you commute, and flexibility of your childcare provider for those inevitable days that you are running late.</p>
Budget / Cost	Affordable childcare may sound like an oxymoron, but there are a range of options available. How important is it to you and your family that your provider not only fits your budget, but has a high predictability in terms of costs?
Gaining a Parent Community	As busy parents, finding a community you vibe with can be one of the most important and one of the most challenging things you do. Certain options may offer ways to meet other parents in your neighborhood or near your place of employment. That means finding peeps to swap ideas and questions with, convenient play dates, and maybe even some longtime friendships (for you and your child!).

AFTER REVIEWING THESE VALUES, WHICH STAND OUT TO YOU? WRITE THEM BELOW.

Values I want my childcare provider to hold:



Step 2

GET TO KNOW YOUR OPTIONS

There are many options to consider when it comes to childcare. See below for a trusty side-by-side comparison of some of the most common options, and the key benefits and considerations across each:

	DAYCARE	IN-HOME DAYCARE	NANNY	NANNY SHARE	AU PAIR	FAMILY MEMBER
BENEFITS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to socialize Predictable availability Special programs/curricula Meet other parents Fewer distractions for remote workers Meals available Predictable costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potentially more 1:1 attention Home setting Ability to socialize Meet other (nearby) parents Closer relationship to caregiver Flexibility on part-time care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caregiver as extended family Flexibility in hours and coverage (holidays, vacation) Home setting Support with house chores 1:1 attention Frequency of communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flexibility in hours and coverage Close bond with another family Affordability Ability to socialize Convenience Home setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caregiver as extended family Flexibility in hours and coverage (holidays, vacation) Home setting 1:1 attention Often on par or less expensive than Day Care/Nanny Cultural exchange 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deepen family bonds 1:1 attention Home setting Shared values High degree of trust Shorter adjustment period Least costly
CONSIDERATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less 1:1 attention Closed on holidays Set operating hours Sick days Less frequency of communication Unpredictable shutdowns Exposure to illness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Often lack formal training Backup option may not be available Few states have licensure requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management responsibilities Backup needed for illnesses, PTO Fewer opportunities to socialize (with other kids & parents) Higher cost Jealousy factor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management responsibilities Backup needed for illnesses, PTO Finding the right partner family Less support for house chores Reliance on other family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of privacy Longer adjustment period Larger emotional investment Communication challenges 1-2 year commitments Fewer opportunities to socialize (with other kids & parents) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenging employer-employee relationship Impacts to family dynamics

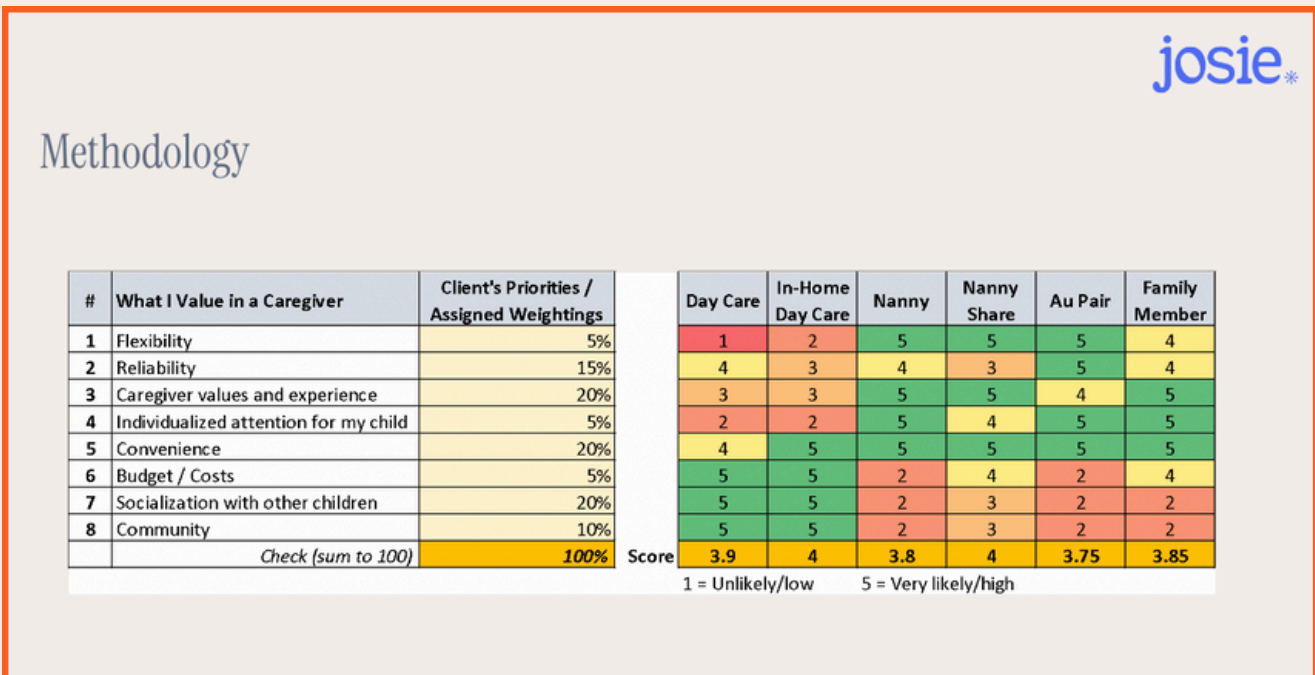
Now would be a good time to look back at the values you wrote up top. Ask yourself, “which of these options may align most closely with the values that are important to me?”

Step 3

WEIGH THE OPTIONS

At Josie, we developed a simple tool to help you weigh various options. Simply assign a percentage to each of the 8 values described above, based on relative importance to you. Just make sure it sums to 100 😊

The tool will auto-calculate a score across the six childcare options described in Step 2. Here's a snapshot of scores for one of our clients:



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Methodology

#	What I Value in a Caregiver	Client's Priorities / Assigned Weightings	Day Care	In-Home Day Care	Nanny	Nanny Share	Au Pair	Family Member			
1	Flexibility	5%	1	2	5	5	5	4			
2	Reliability	15%	4	3	4	3	5	4			
3	Caregiver values and experience	20%	3	3	5	5	4	5			
4	Individualized attention for my child	5%	2	2	5	4	5	5			
5	Convenience	20%	4	5	5	5	5	5			
6	Budget / Costs	5%	5	5	2	4	2	4			
7	Socialization with other children	20%	5	5	2	3	2	2			
8	Community	10%	5	5	2	3	2	2			
		<i>Check (sum to 100)</i>	100%		Score	3.9	4	3.8	4	3.75	3.85

1 = Unlikely/low 5 = Very likely/high


In this particular example, an in-home childcare provider or nanny share have scored best (4 out of 5 possible points). These options happen to align most closely with this individual's values. **NOTE:** This exercise is not meant to be precise, rather, give you a directional sense of which options are starting to align most with your values.

Click [here](#) for the Google Spreadsheet if you would like to use this tool in your childcare search process. For any questions on these tools, please contact hello@myjosie.com.

Step 4

REVIEW HOW YOU SCORED

Take a moment and review how each option scored for you. Invite others you trust to discuss the output (partner, friends, family members, etc.) Below is an example of how this exercise might play out for different families:



Aligning Values to Options (Examples)

I REALLY VALUE...		
<p>For me / my partner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Flexibility in schedule✓ Frequent communication✓ Close relationship with caregiver <p>For my child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ 1:1 attention✓ Home setting	▼	NANNY, NANNY SHARE, FAMILY MEMBER
<p>For me / my partner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Meeting other parents✓ Few daytime distractions✓ Reliable & predictable care✓ Predictable cost <p>For my child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Socialization✓ Specific curricula	▼	DAY CARE
<p>For me / my partner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Close to home✓ Meeting other parents✓ Close relationship with caregiver <p>For my child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Home setting✓ 1:1 attention✓ Socialization	▼	IN-HOME DAY CARE
<p><i>Also consider: Au Pair, In Home Day Care</i></p>		<p><i>Also consider: In Home Day Care, Nanny Share</i></p>
		<p><i>Also consider: Nanny Share, Hybrid Day Care / Family Member</i></p>

After careful consideration and discussion, use this exercise to help you prioritize your time as you begin the search process for a provider. This little upfront investment in knowing what's important to you can save loads of time downstream - so congratulations on taking the time to "know thyself" - or at least, "know thyself's preferences when it comes to childcare!" 😊



Step 5

HAVE A BACKUP PLAN (EXTRA CREDIT ALERT)

Another often overlooked component when it comes to childcare is having a backup plan (and in some cases, a backup to the backup plan!). It's never too early to start lining up options for those unexpected days when the nanny is sick, the childcare center is having power issues, or there is some sort of icky outbreak at the at-home daycare. Below are key questions to work out in advance for those unexpected scenarios:

1. If you co-parent and both of you work, who will be responsible for what and in which scenarios?
2. Who will be responsible for lining up backup childcare when needed?
3. What is the plan for communicating your needs with your employer?

Lucky for you, we crowdsourced our Josie clients and asked what some of the best backup options have been, and we're sharing that list of options here:

1. **Get to know your neighbors.** Not only can they often pitch in, but they are also seriously conveniently located.
2. **Check to see if your childcare center teachers can babysit** - bonus, they already know your child!
3. **Check your benefits and your partner's benefits at work:** more organizations are starting to offer backup childcare coverage / stipends through companies such as Care.com and Bright Horizons
4. See if nearby childcare centers have **drop-in availability**
5. Place **ISO ads on local Facebook groups** or other community forums
6. Try out a **"parent's helper."** These are typically pre-teen, local students who can help with things like diaper changes and feeding while you are at home.
7. **Split childcare with a friend or neighbor.** Pre-arrange with a trusted friend coverage for those unexpected days and offer the same in return.

Final note: If none of the above works out and you are the only option, remember this - it's okay if that means a day of lots of screen time, bad snacks, and whatever else is needed to get you through the day. We're all just doing the best we can, with what we've got, in any given moment.



The TL/DR

1. Consider what's most important to you across the following 8 caregiver values: Flexibility, Reliability, Caregiver Values/Experience, 1:1 attention for my child, Location, Budget, Socialization with other children, and Gaining a Parent Community
2. Common childcare options include: Childcare Centers, Nannies, Nanny Share, Au Pair, In Home Day Care, and Family Members
3. Weigh options based on your values. For example, a nanny may provide more flexibility, but less reliability than a childcare center with multiple providers
4. Have a backup plan. Consider neighbors, friends, family, a local center with drop-in availability, etc.
5. Have a backup-to-the-backup plan 😊
6. Check your/your partner's employer's benefits for things like Flexibility Spending Accounts and backup childcare stipends.

HAVE MORE QUESTIONS?

Get in touch with team Josie:



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