



## Choosing Child Care with Connie Kinder



Studies suggest that up to 75% of all children in the United States attend some sort of day care, whether it is all day, before school or after school care. With increasingly more mothers – both single and married – entering the workforce over the last decades, the need for safe and effective child care has skyrocketed. Connie Kinder, affectionately known as “Auntie Connie,” is seeking to meet some of that need.

Auntie Connie has been educating children, pre-kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, in Washington, D.C.-area school systems for 16 years. With expertise in art education, special education, and early childhood development, Connie will open a new day care center, *Auntie Connie's Place*, this fall in Laurel, Maryland. Auntie Connie's Place will accommodate children ages six months to five years old, and will also offer after school care for children in kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade. The goal of Auntie Connie's Place is to provide the best child care services and support for children and their families.

For Connie, Auntie Connie's Place is a labor of love and a leap of faith. While recuperating at home from a car accident a few years ago, she found herself taking care of a friend's new baby. The experience brought her a new peace, and she knew she was on to something. “I exercised my faith and prayer life,” she says, and the plans for Auntie Connie's Place “just unfolded on their own,” without her effort. “It was all God,” Connie acknowledges.

Through partnerships with local schools, Connie will provide comprehensive training for her Auntie Connie's Place staff. They will also be trained in Abeka, which is a Christian academic curriculum for young children. As a result, Connie expects that graduates from Auntie Connie's Place will be well-prepared for their transition to kindergarten and to their next chapter of life.

Connie knows that choosing child care services for one's child is no easy task. With location, cost, adult-to-child ratio, curriculum, and many other factors to consider, it can be a challenge to make the best decision for both the child and the entire family. According to Connie, there are three fundamental considerations when selecting child care:

1. Choose a child care place where your child is as important to the caregivers as your child is to you. You should have the feeling that staff truly care about your child, and that they are not working there just to earn a paycheck. Parents should feel that this is a loving environment, a place second only to home. Just as important is that the staff love the Lord and carry out their work accordingly.
2. Look for a clean facility. This might seem automatic, but it bears saying. God is a God of order and decency, and child care facilities should reflect that. Find out how and how frequently toys, surfaces and other items are sanitized. Determine if there is ample storage to neatly – and safely – organize the space, and if there are proper fire safety guidelines in place. Ensure that children are never left unattended.

3. Ensure that there is effective two-way communication between you and the child care provider. Caregivers should give clear, complete and accurate feedback regarding your child. They should also listen attentively to your questions and concerns, and respond appropriately. Caregivers should be transparent in such a way that trust is built and sustained over time.

Following these key guidelines can help lay a strong foundation for safe, healthy and beneficial child care for your child.

*For more information about Auntie Connie's Place, please visit [www.auntieconniedaycare.com](http://www.auntieconniedaycare.com).*