**Mary Anne’s Advice**

My name is Mary Anne Jacobs. I’m a parent residing in South Carolina who lost a child as the result of an injury in an unlicensed child care situation.

Andrew would have been 24 years old, so it’s been a while, and some may think it’s history, but it is pertinent to parents who are making a decision about child care for their family. A licensed facility provides some assurance that a lot of the things that I am going to suggest are already taken care of.

First, you need to realize that you can make a choice and you need to do the research, you need to feel comfortable asking the questions. What is your ratio of adults per child? It’s critical. You have the right to stop in and see the facility throughout the day as your child is there and ensure that doors to the front entryway are not locked so you can come in. You also just need to do a visual of the facility. Does the furniture look sturdy? Do the cribs meet the federal mandates? What about the playground equipment? What does that look like? Is it sturdy? Is it, is it fairly new? And, of course, there are regulations for playground equipment as well. It’s really important that a parent do their research. Where do the children take their naps? Is it a facility that’s safe? How many other adults are coming in and out? The ability to make a wise decision about day care is critical and so many parents believe, as I did, I want my child in a home, I want them with individual care. Children are injured in day cares, unlicensed day cares, day in and day out across South Carolina and across our nation, quite frankly.

Take responsibility before making the decision about a child care situation for your child.

Look. Listen. Ask. Know before they go.