

Choosing Quality Child Care:
A parent information package



Working together for quality child care!

Ontario Early Years Centre
Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry

2014

The aim of this Parent Information Package is to assist parents in their search for quality child care. The Ontario

Early Years Centre can provide you with a listing of

licensed and unlicensed child care providers. **The Ontario**

Early Years Centre neither screens, interviews, assesses or

takes responsibility for the quality of child care provided

in our registry, however, the information provided in this

package will help you make an informed decision. We

stress the importance for you, the parent or guardian to

take the responsibility to visit and assess each caregiver,

her/his home or centre and to follow up by checking

references given to you.

Types of Child Care

Licensed Child Care Centres

Licensed child care centres meet specific criteria that are governed by the provincial government. The Day Nursery Act is the legislation that governs licensed child care centres in Ontario. The Day Nurseries Act regulates child/ staff ratios, staff qualifications, physical environment of the centres, numbers and ages of children, acceptable disciplinary measures of the child care centre etc. The Ministry of Education enforces the Day Nurseries Act by licensing and inspecting the programs annually. The Ontario Early Years Centre maintains a listing of licensed day care centres in your area.

Licensed Private Home Child Care Agencies

Licensed Private Home Child Care Agencies are licensed by the Ministry of Education and follows the Day Nurseries Act. In Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, the City of Cornwall Child Care Services is the licensed private home child care agency. Licensed home child care providers may care for up to five children under 10 years old in addition to their own children. The Agency supervises and monitors the home day care providers.

*** Parents who choose licensed child care programs may be eligible for fee subsidies. The Provincial Government provides fee subsidies which is financial assistance towards the cost of licensed child care for parents who are "persons in need" (determined by a needs test), and for parents of children with special needs.*

To apply or for more information about the child care subsidy program, contact our local municipality:

City of Cornwall serving Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry
Child Care Services
613-933-6282 Ext. 3310

Informal Care

Informal Care occurs when neighbours, relatives, friends or nannies provide child care. These arrangements are not licensed by the province, supervised or inspected. Informal caregivers may tend to a maximum of five children under the age of 10, in addition to their own children. The Ontario Early Years Centre maintains a listing of informal providers.

What to look for when choosing child care

You've made the calls. You've narrowed down your search. Now you're ready to visit the programs you're considering.

It's very important to visit the home or child care centre before you enroll your child. If you are considering a home care program, you may want to schedule your visit during the day when you can see the children in action.

Whether you're visiting a child care centre or home care programs, you'll want to:

- talk with the caregivers
- watch the children and staff and how they interact
- assess the physical setting

Here are some points to look for.

First impressions

- Is the location clean and safe?
- Do the children seem happy and interested in what they're doing?
- Are the adults warm, friendly and responsive to the children?
- If you are considering a child care centre, is the licence clearly posted?
- Is there enough space for the number of children?
- Are there adequate napping and toilet facilities?
- Is there outdoor space for children's activities?
- Is the equipment and furniture in good condition?

The daily program

- What type of activities are there?
- What are the policies regarding nap time and toilet training?
- When do the children play outdoors?
- Are there structured and unstructured activities? Individual, small group and large group activities? Active and quiet times?
- Is there a variety of toys and books that are suited to the ages and interests of the children?
- If you are looking at home child care, does the provider take the children to activities outside of the home (for example, to an Ontario Early Years Centre)? If so, how do they get there?
- What happens when a child misbehaves or has a temper tantrum?

Ontario Child Care Supplement for Working Families

The Ontario Child Care Supplement for Working Families is a tax-free monthly payment that helps families pay for the costs of raising children under 7 years of age.

The program helps families who:

- are low-to-middle income single or two-parent families
- have one stay-at-home parent
- have one or both parents studying or in training.

Who can apply?

You can apply if you:

- live in Ontario
- receive the (federal) Canada Child Tax Benefit
- have children under age seven, and
- have the appropriate income level, or
- have qualifying child care expenses.



Learn more

Contact the **Ontario Ministry of Finance**. www.gov.on.ca

Government of Canada: Universal Child Care Benefit

The Government of Canada's Universal Child Care Benefit helps Canadian families pay for child care costs. It gives families \$100 each month for each child under the age of six.

Who can apply?

You can apply if you have a child under the age of six.

Canada Child Tax Benefit

The Canada Child Tax Benefit is a tax-free monthly payment. It helps families pay for the costs of raising children under the age of 18.

Learn more

For more information and instructions on how to apply, visit the website of the **Canada Revenue Agency**. www.cra-arc.gc.ca

Government of Ontario: Child care subsidy

Ontario's child care subsidy helps eligible families pay for child care. The Ontario government, municipal governments and First Nations communities share the cost of the program. The subsidy is provided to child care programs on behalf of eligible families.

Who can apply?

If you are the parent and the child

- is under 12 years old
- is in a licensed child care program, or
- is a school-aged child enrolled in a recreation program.



The amount you pay for child care depends on your family's adjusted net income. Your adjusted net income equals:

- The net income amount on line 236 of the Canada Revenue Agency personal income tax form
- minus
- any federal Universal Child Care Benefit (UCCB) payments. (The UCCB is not considered in determining a family's child care fee subsidy).

How to apply

To apply or for more information about this program, contact our local municipality.

City of Cornwall serving Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry
Child care Services
613-933-6282 Ext. 3310

How to Interview

Here are some guidelines for interviewing caregivers that you may find helpful.

- Allow yourself plenty of time. Take your time to look around the centre/ home. Do not leave until you feel all of your questions have been answered.
- Ask open- ended questions. Start your questions with “what”, “how” or “tell me about”.
- Ask for a tour of the centre/home.
 - Is the place warm, inviting, bright, clean, spacious and organized?
 - Are the toys/equipment in good repair?
 - Is there a variety of toys/equipment?
 - Is the facility clean?
 - Is the facility safe? Are medications, cleaning products, tools or guns stored in a safe place? Is the kitchen area safe? –electrical appliances, knives, plastic bags are out of reach. Are safety gates, electrical plug covers, smoke detectors used?
 - Is there enough room for play and rest?
 - Look at the outside play area. Is it safe? Are the toys/equipment clean and in good repair? Are there any hazards in the area?.
- Ask the caregiver if you can spend part of a day with her/him.
 - Observe other children in care.
 - Are they happy, active, healthy, and busy?
 - What activities are the children engaged in?
 - How are they interacting with the caregiver?
 - How does the caregiver discipline the children?
 - Meet all of the adults who are in the centre or home.
 - How does the caregiver appear? Happy, confident, tired, frustrated? Is she caring, concerned, knowledgeable?
 - How does the caregiver communicate with the children? Does she speak calmly or yell?
- Discuss specific details: fees, contracts, sick policies, who will supply what (diapers, baby food, car seats, etc.)
- At the end of the interview how do you feel? Do you have any strong internal feelings that say “yes” or “no” about this person? Pay careful attention to these feelings. Were you comfortable communicating with this person? Your caregiver needs to be a person that you trust and respect.

Sample Interview Questions for Home Child Care

- What background have you had in childcare?
- Why did you choose the field of childcare?
- How long have you had your own home day care?
- What is the maximum number of children you will take?
- How much do you charge?
- Do you charge for vacations (yours and mine)?
- When do you expect payment—on a weekly or monthly basis?
- Will any other adults be in the house during your hours of operation?
- Do you or any one else smoke in your home?
- What are your hours?
- Do you charge late fees?
- Do you have pets in your house?
- Do you have backup care if you are ill?
- Do you have references?

Play and Learning

- Describe a typical day at your home day care.
- What do you enjoy doing most of all with babies/toddlers? with older children?
- What are some things you do with an infant/toddler/preschooler to help them learn?
- When you take my child out, where would you go?

Physical Safety/Health

Do you have current first aid and CPR certificates?

Do you require that children in your care be immunized?

What is your sick policy for children who are ill?

What would you do if my child became ill while under your care?

How do you give a baby a bottle?

When is naptime? Where will my child sleep?

Have you safety proofed your home?

Nutrition

Do you enjoy cooking? What are some of your favourite meals/dishes that you prepare for the children in your care?

Can you give me some examples of the snacks that you serve?

Do you post a menu plan for parents to see?

Describe a typical lunchtime at your house.

What would you do if a 10 month old kept throwing food on the floor, continually plays with food and puts her bowl on her head?

Emotional Care – Child Management

How do you help a child feel good about herself/himself?

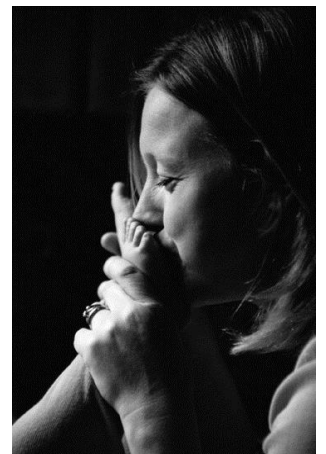
What methods of discipline do you use most with an infant/toddler? a preschooler?

What kind of behaviour irritates you the most? e.g. Whining, biting, destroying furniture

How have you handled children who have acted like that?

Describe how you handle discipline with your child at home.

How does the caregiver feel about your method of discipline?



Introducing Your Child to Child Care

It can take your child a few days or a few weeks to get used to a new child care arrangement. It depends on your child's age, personality and stage of development. Whether your child will be cared for at a child care centre or by a home care provider, here are some things you can do to help your child adjust:

Before starting care

- ✓ Tell your child about the child care program and the people there. Talk to them about all the fun they'll have.
- ✓ Visit the child care with your child. Let your child meet the caregivers and the other children there.

On the first day

- ✓ Go with your child on the first day of care. If you can't go, arrange for another adult (a friend or relative - someone your child knows) to go with your child.
- ✓ Let your child take their favourite toy, like a teddy bear or a blanket, to the child care. Having something familiar is a comfort when everything else is new and strange.
- ✓ Say good-bye when you are ready to leave, even if your child is playing happily. Clearly state when you will be back. Your child needs to feel certain that you will return. If you disappear without saying anything, your child may get upset.
- ✓ Once you've said good-bye, keep going. Hesitating may confuse your child.
- ✓ Make sure you pick up your child at the time you said you would. Your child is counting on you to return when you promised.
- ✓ Greet your child warmly. At the end of the day, your child may be tearful or may simply ignore you. This is a normal part of getting used to child care.
- ✓ If you can, begin care gradually. For example, on the first day, take your child for an hour or so and then leave together. Over the next few days, stay for several hours. As your child becomes more comfortable, gradually increase the time away until your child is spending the full day in care. Taken from the Government of Ontario website: www.gov.on.ca

Checking References

Ask the caregiver for **three** references preferably from parents for whom she has worked. Check all references that you have been given. Some questions that you may ask:

- How long have you known the caregiver? Why did you choose her?
- Did she meet your expectations? Please give examples.
- Would you choose her again? Why or why not?
- What did your children like most about her?
- With what age do you feel she works best?
- Does she offer creative activities? What are they?
- Does she use appropriate behaviour management techniques? What are they?
- Does she seem safety conscious?
- Why did she stop working for you?
- What did you like the best about her?
- Would you recommend her as a caregiver?
- Does she provide daily outings?

Contracts

A contract between the parents and the caregiver is an important element in the child care agreement. A contract is a set of guidelines that both the parent and caregiver agree upon. The contract should contain the following information:

- Hours of care
- Wage/ salary agreed upon and when payment is due (weekly, monthly)
- Overtime/ lateness: are there any penalties?
- Receipts
- Canceling agreement
- Caregiver provides: meals/ snacks/ equipment/ diapers etc.
- Parent provides: playpen/ car seat/ food/ diapers etc.
- Sick policy
- Vacation / holidays:
 - Parent's vacation- are fees still expected
 - Caregiver's vacation- who finds alternate care? Are fees still expected?
 - Statutory holidays
- Forms to be signed: medication policy/ transporting children policy/ emergency medical consent/ swimming pool consent etc.
- Contact information for parents
- Child's immunization record
- Who is permitted to pick up the child

Samples of an Information Form, Child Care Contract, Sick Children's Policy, and Medication Authorization Form are included in this package.

Sick Children's Policy

In order to protect your child and the other daycare children please keep your child at home if...

- Your child has a fever of 101F or higher.
- Your child has measles, chicken pox, mumps, or rosiola
- Your child has a rash that has not been identified by a doctor.
- Your child is vomiting.
- Your child has a severe cold or bronchitis.
- Your child has conjunctivitis (pink eye).
- Your child has diarrhea.
- Your child seems really sick without obvious symptoms.
- Your child has been placed on medication, please wait 24 hours before bringing the child back to daycare.

When medication is to be given at daycare, please fill out the Medication Authorization form.

MEDICATION AUTHORIZATION

I authorize the administration of _____ to
Medication

_____ by _____
Child's Name *Provider's Name*

Start Date: _____ End Date: _____

Use the following Instructions:

Dosage: _____

Time(s) of administration: _____

Storage: _____

Side Effects: _____

Stop medication if the following reaction(s) occur: _____

Name of Prescribing Physician: _____

Phone Number: _____

_____ **Date** _____ **Signature**

Date	Time Given	Amount Given	Provider's Signature	Comments/ Observations

Information Form

FAMILY LAST NAME: _____

CHILD'S NAME: _____ BIRTHDATE: _____

MOTHER'S NAME: _____ WORK #: _____

FATHER'S NAME: _____ WORK #: _____

HOME ADDRESS: _____

_____ PHONE #: _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT: _____ PHONE #: _____

CHILD'S PHYSICIAN: _____ PHONE #: _____

HEALTH CARD: _____

OTHER COVERAGE: _____

EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT:

In the event of an emergency when I cannot be reached, I authorize the administration of any medical procedure deemed necessary by my doctor, or, in unavailable, by any other physician selected by my caregiver.

Date: _____ PARENT (S): _____

CARGIVER: _____

CHILD'S HEALTH RECORD:

General Status of Health: _____

Immunization Up-to-date: _____

Known Allergies or Other: _____

PARENT'S SIGNATURE (S): _____

TRANSPORTATION PERMISSION:

I hereby give _____ permission to take my child/children _____
on field trips or other outings using a car, bus, taxi or on foot.

Date: _____ Parent's signature: _____

PERMISSION FORM

I _____ give permission for my child/ren
_____ to use _____'s
swimming pool, only when closely supervised by the caregiver.

Parent

Date

Witness

Date

PERMISSION FORM

I _____ give permission for my child/ren
_____ to use _____'s
swimming pool, only when closely supervised by the caregiver.

Parent

Date

Witness

Date