

Your Child and Early Learning Child Care Settings

Full-Day Learning for Four and Five Year Olds



Ontario will provide a full day of learning to four and five year olds as part of the province's plan to build a stronger school system and a well-educated workforce. The program will be phased-in over time, starting in September 2010.

Teachers and early childhood educators will work together to help four- and five-year-olds learn during the regular school day. Schools will also offer extended day programs, before and after regular school hours, which will be led by registered early childhood educators. There will be a fee for these programs, and subsidies will be available for some families, based on financial need. Fees will be determined locally by boards.

Integrated and extended day: before and after school programs

The program will provide parents with the option to enroll their child in the school's integrated extended day fee-based program. The extended day option provides before and after school programming from 7:00 am. – 9:00am. and 3:30 pm. – 6:00 pm. for four and five year olds.



In addition, before and after school programs for ages four to twelve will be offered during summer PD days and holidays where there is sufficient demand.

The extended-day program will be led by registered early childhood educators, who will also work alongside teachers during the regular school day. There will be a ratio of one early childhood educator for every 13 children.

If there are more than 13 children enrolled in the extended-day program, a second adult will support the early childhood educator. The second adult is not required to be a registered early childhood educator, but may receive additional training to work in the program.

It is important to ask questions before and after you enroll your child.

For example:

1. Ask about the number of children and the number of staff that will be with your child throughout the day.
2. Who will be responsible to provide snacks and meals?
3. Cleanliness – how will the area and the toys be maintained?

Whether you are looking for extended learning care or any other type of childcare, please see the attached checklist and what to look for.

For more information about full-day learning and child care, please visit the Ministry of Children and Youth Services website www.edu.gov.on.ca/earlylearning

Checklist for Child care...

As a parent, whether you are looking for extended early learning care or any other type of child care please see the attached checklist on what to look for when choosing quality child care.

Choosing Quality Child Care

As a parent, you want to be confident that your child is in a healthy, safe and happy environment. You also want the best childcare environment to meet your child's needs as he or she grows and learns. The best way to be sure is to be informed about your child's day.

Where is the license clearly posted? Ask the Centre Supervisor to explain any conditions or provisions on the license.

Are the staff members qualified?

Does the child care centre have a broad philosophy/mission statement and goals which support appropriate services for individual children?

Discuss the centre policies on behaviour, guidance management, children's illness, sun safety, pick up of children, children's food allergies, emergency procedures.

Does the child care centre involve community agencies to support children who require additional support?

How frequent is staff turnover and how many years experience do staff members have?

How does the Classroom Appear to You?

- Is the noise level comfortable for you as a parent?
- Is the classroom clean, bright, well lit, and well ventilated?
- Is the classroom warm and welcoming?
- Are there more places to play than there are children in the room?



Outdoors/ Playground

- Is the outdoor equipment safe and in good repair, and is there enough equipment for the children?
- What programming happens outdoors and are the children engaged in play?
- Are there shaded areas available for play?

Sleeping Area

- Are the sleeping area and cots clean and comfortable?
- Do the staff members help children settle into rest time? (i.e. rub backs, sit with the child, gentle soothing music)?
- Are non-sleeping children able to get up from their cots after one hour?

Washrooms

- Are the children reminded to wash their hands frequently?
- Make sure to discuss the policy on diapering and toilet learning.



Meals

- Are drinks of water available to the children at any time?
- Do staff members and children sit together during meal times?
- Are there written feeding instructions for infants?
- Are children encouraged to try foods, but not forced to eat things they do not wish to?

Emergency Procedures

- Is there a first aid kit and where do they keep it?
- Are staff members trained in first aid and CPR?

Choosing Quality Licensed Home Child Care

The following is a checklist to help you choose quality child care. Remember, the more boxes you check, the better the indicator of quality!

- Are there 5 or fewer children in care?
- Have you been given and checked references? Does the list include parents of children now in care?
- Does the provider have a current first aid certificate?
- Has the provider, spouse and all other persons over 18 years living in the home had a criminal reference check and Children's Aid record check?
- Is this a smoke free environment?
- Does the provider have pets?
- Does the provider have full liability insurance?
- Is there daily communication with parents (i.e. routines, sign in/out sheet, etc.)?
- Are the child's developmental needs considered when program is being developed?

Outdoor Setting

- Is the area fenced (pool separate), play equipment safe and in good repair?
- Is it free of hazardous materials, and are gardening tools and chemicals locked away?
- Is the sandbox covered when not in use and is the sand changed every year?

Indoor Setting

- Is the home clean, bright and well kept?
- Is there space for safe, active play? Is it free of hazardous materials?
- Do the toys meet current standards and is it in good repair? (Media release recalls)
- Are there safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs and any openings (i.e. laundry room)?



- Are indoor plants toxic or poisonous?
- Are all electrical and blind cords out of reach and secure and are outlets covered?
- Are there working smoke detectors on each level and are they checked on a regular basis?
- Are there serviced fire extinguishers in the home?

Sleeping Area

- Do young children sleep in a crib, cots or beds that meet current standards and are they in good repair?
- Is the bed or crib placed away from other furniture, windows and blind cords?
- Is there a monitor?

Meals

- Am I informed of what my child has eaten, drank, etc?
- Is the caregiver aware of choking hazards?

Washrooms

- Is the hot water set at a safe temperature?
- Is there a stool available and is it safe and stable for standing?
- Are all medicines, cosmetics, cleaning products, appliances and hazardous materials locked away?
- Are children reminded to wash their hands after each visit to the washroom and before and after meals?



Toys/ Equipment

- Are there enough toys and play equipment available for all ages and are they clean and in good repair and stored on sturdy shelves?
- Are creative materials safe and non-toxic?

Safety/ Inspections

- Are there safety straps on highchairs, change tables, etc.?
- Walkers are dangerous and are not being used?
- Are children supervised at all times?
- Are matches and lighters locked out of children's reach?
- Is there a separate diapering area for changing and supplies, away from food?
- Are there any potential hazards in or around the home (i.e. fire places blocked)?



Emergency Procedures

- Is the first aid kit accessible and well stocked?
- Are emergency numbers posted by a phone?

Information to be Shared Between Parent and Home Provider

Put a contract in writing, with copies for both parties, signed and agreed. Check the following boxes to ensure you have covered all the information presented.

- Money matters; basic fee, method of payment, overtime rates, payment for absences (sick, vacation, statutory holiday, etc.), receipt for child care payments, etc.
- Hours and days for which care will be provided, as well as time frame.
- Who will provide lunch, snacks, formula, diapers, car seats, etc?
- Who is responsible to find child care if the provider is not available because of illness, holiday, etc?
- Child's illness (i.e. how ill is too ill to be brought to or stay in care), written consent to give medication, seeks medical attention due to an injury while in care, etc.
- The amount of notice needed if either parties wish to end the agreement
- Who picks up the child?

Provider Discuss:

- Your child care background and training (including your experience as a parent, workshops).
- The number and ages of children in your home (your own and child care children).
- The kinds of activities you provide during the day, your normal routines, how much television is allowed and what outings (have written consent).
- What other adults are present in the household during the day?

Parent Discuss:

- The child's family structure (do both parents live with the child, number of siblings, etc.) and has there been any recent changes that would affect your child's behaviour.
- The child's previous experience in child care.
- The child's medical history, record of immunizations and any medical or health concerns (i.e. allergies, known conditions)
- Is the provider willing to involve community agencies in program planning (i.e. speech and language, therapists, etc.).
- Whether your child is outgoing, shy, nervous, favourite books, foods, etc.
- Your child's eating, sleeping and toileting habits.
- Parents employers, hours of work, child's health card number, doctor's name and telephone number, emergency contacts, etc.
- What form of child guidance is used at home?

At any time, if you have questions or are feeling uncomfortable about your child's care, please address your concerns immediately. Always keep the lines of communication open!