

Early years are learning years.  
Quality early childhood care and  
education is available at a licensed child  
care facility in your neighborhood.



# Choose Quality Child Care!



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# Choose Quality Child Care!

A quality child care arrangement can enhance your child's physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development. Knowing that your child is cared for in a safe and stimulating environment will give you peace of mind and make the balance between work/school and family more manageable. It's not easy to find quality child care so parents need to allow plenty of time to research options and make choices.

## The Basics of Quality Child Care

1. Look for a child care centre or family child care home that is licensed by the Government of Manitoba. They must meet minimum standards of quality, and are regularly inspected and monitored. The most important factor in quality care is the educational background and training of the caregivers. Children need continuity of care and parents need a stable service, so ask about qualifications and how long the provider or staff have been providing care.
2. A quality child care setting is safe and healthy. Children's well-being and their development and learning are supported and enhanced when they are protected from harm and feel safe in the environment. The indoor and outdoor space should be clean, welcoming, accessible, and hazard free. A quality program provides a wide variety of age appropriate and regularly sanitized toys and equipment, uses the Canada Food Guide for snacks and meals, has an emergency evacuation plan, ensures children's safety at all times, is free from environmental contaminants, all caregivers have first aid and CPR training, and can provide evidence of a child abuse registry and criminal record check.
3. A quality child care setting includes warm, responsive, and positive relationships between all adults and all children. Caregivers show care and respect for the children. Caregivers listen to children and show them how to lis-

ten to their friends and treat others with respect. Caregiver relationships with children's families are respectful, supportive, and collaborative.

4. Children's development and learning are supported and enhanced in a quality program. There should be a balance of indoor and outdoor play times, quiet play, active play, individual and small group activities. Caregivers should be engaged in children's activities, and always available to teach, guide, and observe. Children should be encouraged to make choices and learn through play. Children's physical, emotional, social, communication, cognitive, ethical, and creative development is supported and promoted.

## About Licensed Care

All licensed programs are regulated by the Government of Manitoba under The Community Child Care Standards Act. They are routinely inspected by licensing coordinators to ensure compliance with health and safety, staff training and ratios, programming, equipment, behavior management policies, health and nutrition guidelines, and much more.

Licensed programs must issue receipts for your fees, which may be claimed when you file your income tax return. All caregivers must have emergency first aid and CPR training. They have also been checked against the child abuse registry and for any criminal record. The annual licence must be posted in a prominent place in the facility and stipulates the maximum numbers and ages of children that can be cared for and any licensing issues. Ask to see the licence during your interview. Each program has unique policies, programs and procedures. We have provided checklists with some examples of questions you can ask when you visit.

## Licensed Child Care Centres

Full and part-time care in group settings includes infant care (12 weeks to 24 months); preschool (2 years to 6 years); and school-Age programs, before and after school care for children aged 6-12 years. Many provide full-time care for in-service days and school holidays. Some are also open for lunch.

Licensed Nursery Schools are available 2 to 5 days a week for several hours per day and enroll children under age six.

Most of the professionals employed in centre-based programs and nursery schools are trained in Early Childhood Education and Care at the college or university levels

Some programs offer multi-age groups, where older and younger children learn and play together. Others programs group children of the same age and developmental levels

Centres may be privately owned, or may be operated as a not-for-profit program with a parent board of directors. Ask how you can be involved on the Board of Directors or Parent Advisory Committee.

## Licensed Family Child Care Homes

Care is provided in a provider's own home. This multi-age setting provides developmentally appropriate activities to meet each child's needs and interests. Some providers also have training in early childhood education at the college or university level. All licensed providers who are not Early Childhood Educators must complete 40 hours of child care training within 12 months of becoming licensed.

A licensed caregiver may enroll up to 8 children including their own. A group child care home is run by two providers and can accommodate a

maximum of 12 children under age 12.

## Where to Find Licensed Child Care

Call the provincial government at 1-204-945-0776 or 1-888-213-4754 or go online to their website at [www.gov.mb.ca/childcare](http://www.gov.mb.ca/childcare) for a list of licensed facilities in your area.

## Licence Not Required

In Manitoba, care may be provided to no more than 4 children under the age of 12, of whom no more than 2 are under 2 years of age including the caregiver's own children, without a licence. This kind of care is commonly known as "babysitting" and is not inspected or monitored by an outside agency, therefore the parent must take on that role. Government subsidy for child care fees is not available.

Ask the baby-sitter about their qualifications and emergency first-aid and CPR training, and whether s/he will agree to the child abuse and criminal records check. There is a fee to have the search done.

Parents with a child age 16 and under may be eligible to claim a child care expense deduction on their income tax return. Ask your baby sitter if a receipt will be provided for income tax purposes.



## Narrow Down Your Choices

Once you have a list of contacts, phone to see if the program meets your general needs (hours, availability of subsidy, cost, etc.); whether there is space available; or if you can put your name on a waiting list and how long you can expect to wait. These initial phone calls will narrow down your choices.



## Visits and Interviews

Make appointments to visit all programs. Ask for a tour of the facility which should include all the rooms to which your child will have access. Observe the caregivers' interactions with the children in care as well as with your own child. Let the caregiver know what you expect from your child care arrangement and discuss your child's needs and personality. Refer to your checklist and take notes to ensure that all your questions are answered. Don't feel that you have to make a commitment on your first visit.

## Check references

Visits and interviews should help you identify the best program for your family. However, before making a commitment, be sure to ask for names and telephone numbers of several current and former parents who have had their children enrolled so you can do a reference check. If you are unsure, visit the programs again. Ask all the questions you need to.

## Finalize your Arrangement

You've made your choice; now make sure both you and the caregiver understand each other's responsibilities and expectations. Ask for a copy of the policy manual and read it carefully, to ensure they are acceptable to you.

Often, parents are expected to sign a written agreement which specifies the responsibilities of each party, payment schedules, vacation and illness arrangements. If the caregiver does not use such an agreement, it would be a good idea if you put down in writing your understanding of your discussions.

## What to ask references:

- Was the caregiver reliable?
- How did the caregiver discipline your child?
- How did you get along with the caregiver?
- Would you recommend the caregiver?
- If your child is no longer with the caregiver, why did you leave?

## Build a Good Relationship with Your Child's Caregiver

You child's caregiver plays an important role in their development. There are a few tips which can help you build a positive relationship:

- Keep the caregiver informed about important events in your child's life such as illness, a business trip away, a family move or even a late night. Be sure your caregiver always knows where you or your emergency contact can be reached in case your child becomes ill while in care.
- Provide all necessary supplies such as diapers, a change of clothes, and seasonally appropriate clothing.
- Pay your fees on time, as you would your mortgage or utility payments.
- Appreciate your caregiver', say "Thank You!".
- Phone if you will be unexpectedly late or your child will be absent.
- Attend functions such as parent meetings, family BBQ's and parent-caregiver conferences .
- Contribute time and energy voluntarily if asked. (ex. Fund raising for summer field trips)

Should a concern arise, discuss it immediately in a non-accusatory, respectful way. Use clear language which states your concern, and how you would prefer to see the situation handled. If you need to discuss your child, try not to do so at the end of the day when your caregiver must greet other parents and care for other children, or when your own child is within hearing distance. Instead,



ask when would be the best time to talk to the caregiver in private or arrange a specific time to telephone.

Keep the relationship professional; you are paying for a service, but should not expect "favours".

Early childhood educators believe that working with parents is an important part of their jobs. Many have very specific knowledge about child development, and can provide advice and assistance with parenting issues.

# Checklist

## Licensed Child Care Centre/Nursery School

### Children in Care

What ages of children do you enroll?

Do you have any openings now (or will you have an opening at the time care is required, i.e. back to school, after maternity leave)?

Do you accept children on a part time or occasional basis?

How many children would be in the same group as my child?

What is the age range within this group?

Describe your child's special physical, social, emotional, developmental, or dietary unique needs, and confirm the ability of the program to meet them.

What is the child/caregiver ratio in my child's group?

### Program Staff

What kind of training do the staff members have?

What is the percentage of trained staff in your centre?

What is the average length of time the staff has been working here?

What languages do the staff speak?

Who will be responsible for my child's care? How long has s/he worked here? What is his/her training and experience? When can I meet with him or her?

What professional development opportunities does your facility provide for their staff?

### Program Information

Tell me about your daily program.

Do you have a provisional license or a staff exemption?

Where is your licence posted? Are there any irregularities which have led to a provisional licence?

How often do children play outdoors, and what outdoor equipment do you have? Is your yard fenced and inspected daily?

Where do children nap? What if my child doesn't nap?

What kinds of activities will my children participate in? Are there any "special" programs? What kinds of field trips will my child go on? Are there any additional fees for these?

What is your emergency evacuation procedure? Where is it posted?

Tell me about your menu. Where is it posted?

### Fees and Policies

What are your daily fees? Are there any additional charges?

Is a deposit required? What amount? Is it returned when my child leaves, or applied to the first month's or last month's fees?

When are fees paid?

Do you give receipts? Weekly, Monthly or Yearly?

What are your hours of operation?

What kind of late fees do you charge?

How much notice is required if I decide to withdraw my child?

What is your behaviour management policy?

What is your parent's vacation policy? Do parents pay to hold the space open while on holiday?

Do you close for statutory holidays? Do parents pay for these days?

If my child becomes ill during the day, how is it handled? If my child stays home sick, do I pay for this day?

Are meals and snacks provided for my child? Where is your menu posted?

What am I required to bring for my child? (Diapers, pacifier, formula and bottles, lunch, snacks, extra clothes, etc.)

How do you communicate with parents? (A Parent Log Book, drop-in visits, telephone calls, parent-caregiver meetings)

What kind of opportunity do you provide for parent involvement?

Do you have any written information on your program, such as brochure, newsletter or parent policy package?

What is your transportation policy?

May I visit at any time?

### School Attendance

What is the nearest elementary school? How far away is it?

Are children transported/accompanied to school? How do they get there?

Are you open on school holidays?

Do you provide lunch hour care?

# Checklist

## Licensed Family Child Care Provider or Babysitter

### Children in Care

Are you licensed? What ages of children do you enroll?

Do you have any openings now (or will you have an opening at the time is required, i.e. back to school, after maternity leave)?

How many children do you care for at one time?

Do you accept children on a part time or occasional basis?

Do you have any children of your own? What are their ages?

Describe your special physical, social, emotional, developmental, or dietary unique needs, and confirm the ability of the program to meet them.

### Provider Profile

What early education education do you have?

What experiences have you had with young children?

How long have you been a licensed caregiver? (Or if you are not licensed, can you tell me why?)

What languages do you speak?

Who may I call for references?

Do you have emergency first-aid training? CPR? (required for licensed family child care providers)

Are there any youths or adults in your home? Do they have contact with the children? If over 18, have they had a Criminal Record/Child Abuse Registry check?

### Program Information

Tell me about your daily program.

Where is your licence posted? Are there any irregularities that have led to a provisional licence?

Where do the children nap? What if my child doesn't nap?

Is your home smoke free?

Do you have pets? Will the pets be around my child?

Are the children permitted to watch television? How much and what kinds of shows?

How often do children play outdoors, and what outdoor equipment do you have? Is your yard fenced and inspected daily?

Do you liability insurance? What amount? (\$2 million is required by law for licensed providers)

Do you have household insurance that would cover loss or theft on my child's belongings?

What is your emergency evacuation procedure? Where is it posted? How often do you practice emergency evacuations?

Are children ever transported in your car? Will you provide me a copy of your driving record? Do you provide a car seat suitable for the age of my child?

### Fees and Policies

What are your daily fees? Are there any additional charges? Do you accept subsidized children?

Is a deposit required? What amount? Is it returned when my child leaves, or applied to the first month's or last month's fees?

When are fees paid? Weekly, Bi-Weekly or Monthly?

Do you give receipts? Weekly, Monthly, Yearly?

What are your hours of operation?

What kind of late fees do you charge?

How much notice is required if I decide to withdraw my child?

What is your behaviour management policy?

What is your parent's vacation policy? Do parents pay to hold the space open while on holiday?

Do you close for statutory holidays? Do parents pay for these days?

Do you close your home while you are on holidays? How long and when?

If my child becomes ill during the day, how is it handled? If my child stays home sick, do I pay for this day?

Are meals and snacks provided for my child? Where is your menu posted?

What am I required to bring for my child? (Diapers, pacifier, formula and bottles, lunch, snacks, extra clothes, etc.)

How do you communicate with parents? (A Parent Log Book, drop-in visits, telephone calls, parent-caregiver meetings)

Do you have any written information on your program, such as brochure, newsletter or parent policy package?

May I visit at any time?

### School Attendance

What is the nearest elementary school? How far is it? Are children transported/accompanied to school? How do they get there?

Are you open on school holidays?

Do you provide lunch hour care?