

# BABY BYTES

For families with infants and young children

---

## Choosing Appropriate Child Care

With more and more parents working outside of the home, the issue of childcare is a big one. As a parent, how do you determine WHO you leave your child with and HOW do you know that they will care for your child? There are many options out there for child care, the most popular being; placing your child with a family member or friend, in home child care or a licensed childcare centre. The childcare becomes your child's home away from home.



---

## DID YOU KNOW???

According to *childcare statistics*, the numbers of children in childcare is increasing and will continue to do so. As a parent or childcare provider, the best possible thing is to provide quality care and love for those children.

If you are looking for child care for your child, here are some guidelines. But remember, finding good childcare will take time, patience and planning. Shop around, ask questions and compare. **You are buying a service and there are no real bargains, only options. Steps in Choosing a Child Care Centre:**

1. List your day care needs or preferences. This includes your child's needs (age, personality and interests) and your needs (hours of care, location of centre, transportation arrangements).
2. Phone several child care centres to determine those that may suit your needs. You can find out about day care centres in your community by checking the telephone directory, internet, friends, contacting your Early ON Centre, your local community information line, or 211, or Simcoe County Child Care booklet at [www.simcoe.ca](http://www.simcoe.ca)
3. Visit the centres you think are the most promising. Plan to visit each centre for at least one hour. Note any questions and arrange a time to talk with the caregivers and/or the Program Director. If possible, visit on more than one occasion to see what is happening at different times of the day. Parents should be shown through the entire facility or home and allowed to see the child care service in operation. This will give you a chance to see how your child responds to the new environment. Watch your

child. Are they happy? Do they interact with the other children, the teachers? How do the caregivers or teachers respond to your child? Do they look at them, talk in a normal tone of voice? Don't forget to visit the kitchen or ask to see the menus for snacks and meals. Meals should be well balanced and appeal to children.

**So you have found a couple of child care/providers that you are interested in, now what? Here is a list of some of the questions you could ask:**

**THE INTERVIEW...what to ask...**

- How long has the service been around and what are staff credentials?  
What is the child/caregiver ratio?
- Will additional children or adults be present throughout the day?
- What are the routines and programs?
- What is the policy about TV? Viewing?
- Do you have any set rules or children and do you have a discipline policy?
- How will holidays be dealt with, theirs and yours?
- What is the policy in regard to an ill child?
- What supplies are parents responsible for (diapers, sun screen)?
- Are there backup people in place in case the caregiver has an emergency?
- What is the cost and how often is payment to be made?
- Are receipts issued?
- How much notice and pay is required before ending the agreement?
- Can the children choose from a variety of activities and are the activities suited to the ages of the children?
- What is the policy on parents dropping by unannounced?
- Ask for references and check them out.

Visit <https://www.ontario.ca/page/questions-ask-child-care-provider> for additional information on questions for potential child care providers.

**PHYSICAL SPACE...what to look for ...**

- A special place for each child's personal belongings.
- An open space to sit comfortably to eat meals and snacks.
- A washroom conveniently equipped (step stools, etc.).
- An area to nap or rest quietly. A space where a child can be isolated and supervised if ill.
- Adequate light.
- A carpeted floor for a comfortable play area.
- Space arranged for children to freely choose activities.
- Toys and equipment: in good condition, in reach of children, suit the age(s), and size(s) of all children.
- Enough toys for the number of children.

**SAFETY...what to look for ...**

- Staff engaged and involved with children.
- Staff sits with children during meals.
- No physical punishments allowed.
- Staff calmly reassures children who are upset.
- Staff and children wash hands before and after diapering or toileting.
- Medications stored in a locked container, out of reach of children.
- Written instructions for emergency evacuations and fire drills.
- All indoor and outdoor equipment is clean and safe.
- Dangerous objects inside and out such as loose steps, railings, sharp corners.
- Secure outdoor fence and gates.
- Wall plugs with safety covers, smoke detectors, and fire extinguishers.
- Covers over pipes and radiators.
- Bathroom door lock that can be opened from outside.
- Does the caregiver know first aid and CPR?