

A Parents' Guide to Quality Child Care



If English is your second language and you have questions about the information in this booklet, please contact HMC Connections at hmconnections.com or 905-842-2486

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Quality child care supports a child's emotional, social, intellectual and physical well-being. When looking for quality child care, the child care provider and the environment are critical to your child's success.



Child care providers are the key to quality. Their interactions, the activities offered and the support and communication you receive will contribute to the success of your child's experience.

QUALITY FIRST IN HALTON

Quality First is a voluntary program that supports licensed child care centres and licensed home child care agencies in Halton to support the overall quality of the program.



A Quality First Consultant works alongside Educators and home child care providers by supporting professional learning, observations and goal setting.

Next time you are visiting a child care program, look for the Quality First logo. This tells you the centre or home is striving to provide quality care for the children and families they serve.

HOW DOES LEARNING HAPPEN?

ONTARIO'S PEDAGOGY FOR THE EARLY YEARS

How Does Learning Happen? is a professional learning resource about learning through relationships for those working with young children and families. It is intended to support program development in early years programs across Ontario. (*How Does Learning Happen?* p. 5).



“How Does Learning Happen? is organized around four foundational conditions that are important for children to grow and flourish: Belonging, Well-Being, Engagement and Expression. These foundations, or ways of being, are a vision for all children's future potential, and a view of what they should experience each and every day” (*How Does Learning Happen?* p. 7).

CHILD CARE OPTIONS

WHAT ARE MY CHOICES?



Decisions about child care are important and choosing the right type of care for your child takes time and planning.

1. LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTRES

Licensed child care centres are located across the community and may provide care for infants, toddlers, preschoolers and school-aged children. Hours of care typically range from 7 am to 6 pm.

Child care centres are inspected and licensed annually by the Ministry of Education and comply with the Child Care Early Years Act. Program Advisors from the Ministry monitor administration and supervision, curriculum, health and safety. Program Advisors will also provide support to achieve and maintain compliance with licensing requirements.

A classroom Educator is a Registered Early Childhood Educator (RECE), or has received approval from the Ministry of Education to work within the classroom.



**Concerned about
safety of children?**

Call the
Halton Children's Aid Society

905-333-4441

2. LICENSED HOME CHILD CARE AGENCY

A licensed home child care agency contracts home child care providers to provide care for infants, toddlers, preschoolers and school-aged children in their homes. Hours of care can be flexible and may be adapted to suit the needs of individual families.

To ensure that Child Care Early and Years Act standards are met and maintained, the licensed home child care agency is inspected by a Program Advisor each year. The agency employs a qualified Home Visitor to visit the child care homes at least four times per year to ensure standards are being met and to offer support to the provider. The licensed agency collects fees from parents and pays the provider.

Some child care providers may have varying levels of prior child care experience and knowledge. This could be through years of practice, being an RECE or by attending professional learning workshops. Ensure you understand your home child provider's qualifications and training.

3. UNLICENSED CHILD CARE

Other child care options that are not licensed and, therefore, not inspected by the Ministry of Education or mandated to follow the Child Care and Early Years Act are: unlicensed home child care providers, nannies, babysitters, family members and friends.

Unlicensed home child care providers must not care for more than 5 children, including their own children under the age of 4. They may have up to 3 children under the age of 2 within care. This requirement should be upheld regardless of the number of adults providing care. Unlicensed homes are not required to meet provincial health and safety standards.

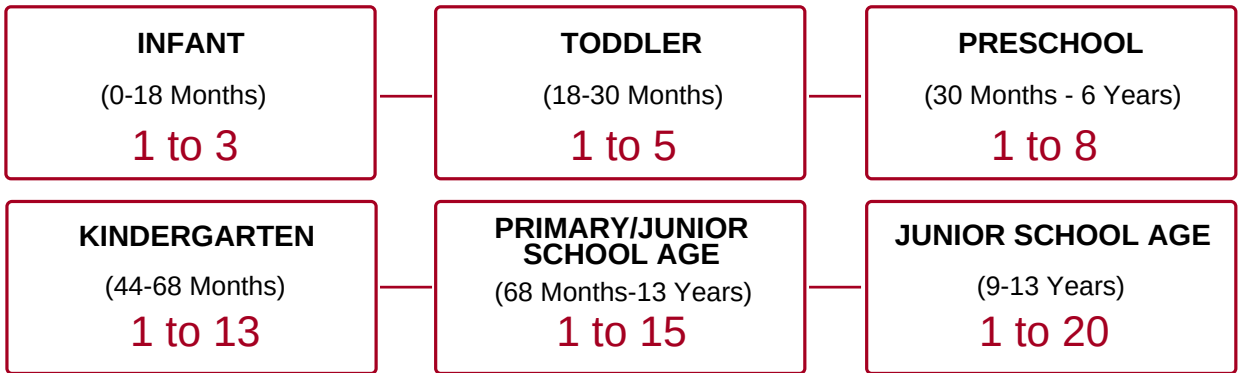
Concerned about what you see in a child care setting?

Call the
Ministry of Education

1-877-510-5333

LICENSED CHILD CARE RATIOS*

Licensed Child Care Centres



Licensed Home Child Care

Children under 13 including provider's **own children** under the age of 4

Maximum of 6

No more than 3 children under 2 years old

* Ratios represent number of staff/child care providers/Educators to maximum number of children allowed in each age grouping



LOOKING FOR MORE INFORMATION?

The following resources may be helpful with your child care search:

- Questions to Consider When Choosing a Child Care Option
- Introducing Your Child to Child Care
- Supporting Children with Special Needs
- Families and Child Care Working Together

Visit **thrc.ca** for details



CHILD CARE SUBSIDY

Child care subsidy, or financial assistance with the cost of child care, is available to families who:

- Live in Halton
- Are working, training, or attending school
- Have children from birth to 12 years of age in a licensed child care program
- Are financially eligible

Contact the Region of Halton

at 311 or 905-825-6000
or visit halton.ca for details.



**Concerned about
health conditions?**

Call the
Halton Region Health Department

311

MAKING YOUR CHILD CARE CHOICE



QUESTIONS TO ASK

PROGRAM

- What hours are you open? Is there flexibility?
- Tell me about your daily schedule.
- What will my child experience during the day?
- Describe your sleep area, schedule, and how children are monitored during sleep hours.
- What will the children do for physical activity if they can't go outside?
- What will you do if my child acts out?
- What experience do you have with children with special needs?
- What does play mean in your program?
- What do you do if I send someone else to pick up my child?
- Are there times when you will not be able to care for my child or the program is closed?
- How do you develop your menu plan?
- If my child has special dietary needs, can you support them?

HEALTH & SAFETY

- How is the outdoor play area monitored for safety?
- How often are fire drills completed?
- What happens if my child gets hurt? What and how will you let me know?
- How and when do you inform parents of other children's illnesses?
- What happens if the Educator or provider gets sick?
- What First Aid qualifications do staff have?



COMMUNICATION & STAFFING

- How and what do you communicate to parents?
- Who do I speak to if I have a question/problem?
- What qualifications do staff have?
- How many years of child care experience do you have or how long has the program been running?
- Describe the type of professional learning activities attended by staff within the past year.

COST

- How much do you charge and when are fees due?
- What is included in your fee?
- What is your policy regarding fees for holidays and vacation time?
- What are your overtime and late pick up policies?
- What happens if my child is ill? Do I pay?

HOME CHILD CARE QUESTIONS

- Can you provide me with references?
- Describe what type of support you receive from the licensed home child care agency.
- Are any other adults in the home during the day?
- How much screen time is viewed by the children?
- Will you be transporting my children in a vehicle? Who provides the car seat? How is the car seat adjusted for my child's needs?



MAKING YOUR CHILD CARE CHOICE



1. Determine the Needs of the Family
2. Find a List of Child Care Options
3. Visit Child Care Options
4. Making Your Final Decision

DETERMINE YOUR NEEDS

TYPE OF CARE

- What is your child's age?
- What hours do you need care?

LOCATION

- Would you prefer close to home, work, your child's school?
- Do you prefer centre-based or home-based child care?

COST

- What fee can you afford?
- Are you eligible for government subsidy?

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Does your child have allergies or dietary restrictions?
- Does your child have special needs?

FIND A LIST OF CHILD CARE OPTIONS

A customized list of licensed child care options may be obtained for free through THRC's

Child Care Directory & Information Line

905-875-0235 | thrc.ca

VISIT CHILD CARE OPTIONS

After an initial telephone contact, you may visit the licensed child care program. This will give you an opportunity to observe the child care in action.

MAKING YOUR FINAL DECISION

After your child care visits, consider what each child care program has to offer your family, and how they may meet your child's needs.

Remember:

- A written contract outlining the terms of care
- Policies related to closures, late fees, holidays, payment arrangements, hours of service, illness
- Policies related to medication administration, First Aid qualifications
- Keep open communication and establish a positive relationship with the Educator
- Health, safety, program philosophy and inclusion policy



The Halton Resource Connection



thrc.ca