



Introducing Your Child to Child Care

Adjusting to Child Care

Depending on your child's age, personality, stage of development and special considerations, feeling comfortable in child care may take anywhere from a few days to a few weeks. Each child will adapt to his/her own pace. Children who seem to adapt immediately may go through a period of adjustment a week or two after starting child care.

How You Can Help

You can help your child by preparing yourself and your child before starting child care. Provide information about your cultural practices, as well as your child's routines and activities at home to the Educator.

To gain confidence with your child care arrangement and help your child become accustomed to a child care setting:

- Make sure you feel good about the child care program. If you feel anxious about your decision, your child will sense it and become anxious too. Talk to your child care provider about any lingering doubts or questions you may have as soon as possible. Often questions can be easily answered. Speak positively about the child care setting and the people who will be there before care begins. Your child's attitude is likely to reflect your confidence and enthusiasm.
- Visit the centre or home with your child ahead of time and more than once if possible. Your child can meet the child care provider and other children and become familiar with what happens there. You will also be able to ask questions and observe activities in the child care setting.
- Arrange a time when the child care provider is available to meet with you to talk about your child's needs.
- Begin care gradually, if possible. For example, on the first day, take your child for an hour or so, and then leave together. For the next few days stay for a few hours. As your child becomes more comfortable, leave for a short time. Gradually increase the time away until your child is spending the full day in care.
- Allow your child to take a favourite toy or object such as a teddy bear or blanket that will be a reminder of you or of home. These items may comfort your child



when everything else is new. Ask the program how this works so you can support your child.

- Pick up your child at the time you said you would, your child is counting on you coming. Use words such as “after snack time” or “after nap time” that they will understand.
- Say “goodbye”, even if your child is playing happily. State clearly when you will be back, using words your child understands. For example, “I will be back after you finish your snack and play outside.” Your child needs to feel certain that you will return and is counting on your to return at the time given. If you disappear without saying anything, your child may get upset.
- Keep going, once you have said goodbye. If you hesitate, you may confuse your child.
- At the end of the day your child may be tearful or simply ignore you. Understand that this is a normal part of getting used to child care.
- Have realistic expectations. It will take time to adjust to the new schedule.
- Breastfeeding mothers may continue to breastfeed even after care starts. Some mothers are able to pump milk, and provide it to the child care program in a bottle or cup. You may wish to discuss breastmilk policies with the child care provider.
- Arrange for back-up care in case of emergency. Introduce your child to the back-up situation once he/she has settled into the program.

Families and Child Care Working Together

When families arrange for child care, they agree to share responsibility for their child’s well-being with a child care provider. It is important that the child care provider is someone you trust and that you see as a partner working with you for the benefit of your child. The relationship should be one of mutual respect, trust and cooperation.

When you choose a child care provider who recognizes the importance of families and takes a genuine interest in your child, it will be easy for you to be open and honest about your expectations.

Building Relationships

Since this is an important relationship outside of the family, a special bond may develop between your child and the child care provider. You can also help your child have a positive experience by acknowledging and supporting that relationship. Take the time to



communicate with the educator every day. To help develop and maintain a good relationship with your child care provider, take the following steps:

1. Clarify Your Expectations

It is important for you and your child care provider to clarify your mutual child care expectations. It will be helpful to discuss your expectations with the child care provider as you review the contract, as well as the policies and procedures. Confirm additional expectations and arrangements by adding them to the contract or letter of agreement. It can save unnecessary misunderstandings in the future.

2. Share Information

Regular communication between the family and child care provider is an essential part of quality child care. It is important to take every opportunity to share information about your child with your child care provider. You will also want to ensure that you have the opportunity to hear about your child's development from the child care provider. Allow enough time in the morning and at the end of the day to exchange information. This will help you and your child care provider to understand the needs of your child. For example, tell your child care provider if your child had a poor night's sleep, seems to be eating very little, or has had a change to their regular routine.

3. Discuss Concerns

You have spent a lot of time and energy searching for a child care provider to meet the needs of your family. If you or your child care provider have concerns about your child, it is important to discuss them promptly. When too much time passes, problems can grow bigger and become more serious. Ensure you talk openly about your child with the provider. When you do have a concern, take some time to think carefully about the concern and make an appointment to discuss it with your child care provider. You and your child care provider have a valuable relationship, and can work toward reaching a solution together.



4. Maintain the Partnership

A willingness to share information and listen carefully is the key to maintaining a good relationship with your child care provider. While it is important for you to find a child care provider who takes a genuine interest in your child, it is also important for your child care provider to feel respected and appreciated. When you look upon your child care provider as a committed, competent partner in your child’s care and express your appreciation, you are helping to create and maintain a higher quality of care for your child.

The Importance of the EarlyON Child and Family Centres

EarlyON Child and Family Centres provide an opportunity for parents and caregivers to obtain information about programs and services that are available for children 0 – 6 years. Parents and caregivers can use the centres to meet and talk to early years professionals, other parents and caregivers in the community. EarlyON provides a selection of free and registered programs which include: drop-ins, parent and child programs, parent education and information, resource library, early learning and literacy programs. For further information call:

EarlyON – Oakville	905-849-6366
EarlyON – Burlington	905-632-9377
EarlyON – Milton	905-876-1244
EarlyON – Georgetown, Acton	905-873-2960