

Choosing Childcare:

Ottawa and Area



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Overview of the childcare system in Ottawa and Area

There are two types of childcare:

- 1) Licensed childcare centers
- 2) All other modes (Unlicensed or informal care)

Licensed childcare centers can be either non-profit or for-profit. The average monthly cost of a licensed childcare center is \$1,100.00 per child and wait time could be up to a year. On the other hand, informal care can usually be accessed faster, and have an average monthly cost of \$1,100.00 per child as well. All centers are subsidized either directly through the City of Ottawa on an application process, where the request is never guaranteed to be approved, or subsidized indirectly through the province's refundable Child Care Tax Credit. Informal care can also get tax credits with the appropriate receipts.

The ultimate childcare centre will be safe, inspiring, and fun. It will teach kids the basics of life, turning them into confident and intelligent individuals. It is crucial that parents and childcare providers are on the same page, to guarantee expectations can be met.

Please contact us at mfsncr@cfmws.com for more information or if you have any questions.

Step 1 - Things to Consider

Budgeting

Affordable

*You will be able to pay for the full fees of your childcare tuition yourselves.

Childcare Subsidy

*Subsidy is government funding support for families to help them pay for childcare either in full or partially depending on your family's income.

Types of Childcare

Unlicensed Home Childcare Centre

*(smaller groups, hours may be shorter, home-like setting, one staff, often cheaper)

*Unlicensed childcare arrangements are made between the parents and the home childcare.

Licensed Home Childcare Centre

*(smaller groups, hours may be shorter, home-like setting, one staff, agency visits, more rules and regulations)

*Home childcare centres are licensed through agencies that insure all regulations are followed

*Parents plan for care through those agencies

For-Profit Childcare Centre

*(bigger groups, hours may be more flexible, often more expensive, multiple educators, more structured, will have a waitlist)

*Private, or for-profit centers, rely on parent fees to operate.

Non-Profit Childcare Centre

*(bigger groups, hours may be more flexible, multiple educators, often more expensive, more structure, will have a waitlist, excess money at the end of the year goes back into the centre)

*Non-profit centers, in many provinces and territories, are eligible for most of the funding allocated to childcare services.

This funding might include, capital funding, start-up funding, a "per child fee" grant and parent subsidies. To receive funding, they must be operated by a board of directors, composed of at least 51% parents.

Types of Curriculum

Every childcare facility offers a certain type of curriculum that will follow their philosophy. Finding the best curriculum for your family and your child's needs is important as it will promote maximum learning and ensure the best education.

Montessori

*A form of education for young children that seeks to develop natural interests and activities, rather than use formal teaching methods.

Universal

*A play-based learning system, essentially, to learn while at play.

Reggio-Emilia

*Student-centered and constructivist pedagogy that uses self-directed, experiential learning in relationship-driven environments.

Waldorf

*Allowing children to learn by example, and opportunities for imaginative play.

Forest

*Allows learners the time and space to develop their interests, skills, and understanding through practical, hands-on experiences in an outdoor setting.

Location Required

- Close to home or close to work

Hours Required

- Opens early, closes late, night time, part-time, full-time or weekends

Step 2 - Finding Childcare and Registering on the City of Ottawa Childcare Waitlist

Resources to Find Childcare in Ottawa

- <http://www.daycarebear.ca/ontario/ottawa/daycare-childcare-list.html>
- <http://www.godaycare.com/daycarein/ontario/ottawa>

The City of Ottawa Childcare Registry & Waitlist

Visit the link below to register your child for the registry and be added to the licensed childcare center waiting list, as well as to apply for the subsidy wait list if needed. You must be on the City of Ottawa's registry to get a spot in a licensed childcare.

<https://onehsn.com/ottawa>

Tips

1. To obtain subsidy with the City of Ottawa, you need to be registered with this website.
2. Subsidy is a contract with the City of Ottawa and not with the childcare centre.

Step 3 - Visiting Potential Childcare Centres

General Questions to Ask About the Childcare Centre/Provider

- What is your transition process when a child starts childcare for the first time, between routines as well as when transitioning age groups?*
- Do you follow a curriculum plan?*
- What does your daily schedule look like?*
- Do you do any kind of progress reports and if so how often are they completed/updated?*
- How do you keep the parents informed about the child's day?*
- What is your educator to child ratio?*
(The Childcare and Early Years Act, 2014 (CCEYA) states that the maximum ECE to child ratios are - Infant 1:3 / 3:10, Toddlers 1:5, Preschool 1:8)
- What is your turnover rate with staff?*
- Are all your educators registered with the College of Early Childhood Educators?*
- Would my child and I be able to stay for a little while to get a sense of how they interact with the space/staff?*
- What does your cleaning schedule look like?*
(Regular and frequent cleaning is necessary. If you drop by unannounced, you will get a good sense of how strict that routine is.)
- Do the staff have appropriate and up to date first aid and CPR training?*
- What is your immunization protocol?*
- Do you have posted emergency and lockdown plans?*
- What is included in the monthly fees?*
- What happens when the childcare provider is sick?*
- What is the policy and procedure if my child is sick?*

Notes

To Be Noticed

- Are there working smoke detectors?*
- Are there emergency exits?*
- Do they use safety gates?*
- Are the outlets covered?*
- Did you feel welcome and invited into the environment?*
- Did you feel that the staff have positive attitudes towards you and your child?*
- Was the classroom fun and welcoming?*
- Do they utilize the natural light?*
(Natural light can do wonders for a child's mood.)
- Were documents or art on the walls recent and/or up to date?*
- Were children happy and engaged in the program?*
- Did you leave feeling confident that your child would be well cared for at this facility?*

Notes

- Parents and Caregivers of a child with exceptional or special needs have additional factors to consider when finding suitable and appropriate care for their child(ren). You may wish to consider writing an “All About Me” or “One-Page Profile” about your child to provide to the childcare centre/provider. This document usually includes information about your child’s qualities and strengths; his/her likes and dislikes, what is important to them and how best to support your child. It is important to be positive and realistic about your child’s care needs.

Here are some general questions parents and caregivers may wish to consider and ask to prospective childcare

General Questions to Ask About the Childcare Centre/Provider

- Does the childcare centre/provider have an inclusion policy?
- Do any of the staff have specific education, training, qualifications or previous work experience in providing childcare to a child with special needs?
- Is the childcare centre/provider willing to obtain additional training or education and/or support and resources to appropriately care for my child?
- What additional resources and support are available to the childcare centre/provider in providing support to a child with special needs?
- What accommodations are available for my child at the childcare centre/provider that will ensure individualized care specific to my child’s needs?
- Does the childcare centre/provider incorporate any particular models of practice or evidence-based approaches within their curriculum and learning environment?
- Does the center allow a transition period for integration?

Questions to Ask About Specialist Services

- My child is currently undergoing a specialist assessment. Can the specialist observe my child within the childcare environment for the purposes of the assessment?
- Can my child access his/her therapies (such as SLP, OT, ABA therapy) at the childcare centre/provider location?
- Can my child’s therapist provide his/her individualized therapy within the childcare environment?
- What specialized equipment and/or items is the childcare centre/provider currently equipped with (ex: toileting, feeding, seating, sensory-related etc.)?
- Can I provide the childcare centre/provider with my child’s own specific equipment and/or items to be used within the childcare environment, that will remain solely for my child’s use?
- Do you currently work with Children’s Inclusion Support Services (CISS)?

Questions to Ask About Your Child’s Needs

- My child has food-related sensory aversions/intolerances or follows a special diet. Can I provide my child with his/her own snacks and lunch?
- My child is non-verbal. What communication tools and strategies do you use that encourage and help develop communication abilities to support children who are non-verbal?
- My child has a history of wandering/eloping. What safety measures are in place to ensure my child’s safety (both in indoor and outdoor spaces)?
- My child has behavioural challenges. How do you support children who have behavioural needs? What support or strategies are provided/implemented if my child’s behavioural challenges escalate?
- My child requires specific medication/treatment. Are you able to administer this medication/treatment? What education or training would be required for staff to be able to administer/provide the medication/treatment?
- My child has difficulty in engaging with peers and needs help with socialization. How do you encourage socialization? What strategies or approaches do you implement?

Questions to Ask About Parent/Provider Communication

- How will you communicate with me regarding my child's successes and/or challenges experienced during the day? (ex: daily communication book)*
- What is your policy on communicating any observations and concerns about a child's development with parents?*
- Do you assist with referrals to service providers and/or specialists in the community?*
- What is your policy and procedure regarding escalation of concerns/issues (by either the parent or the childcare centre/provider)?*
- What is your policy or procedure should I decide to withdraw my child from the childcare centre/provider?*
- Under what circumstances or criteria would you no longer be able to support my child in attending the childcare centre/provider? What is your policy?*

Questions to Ask About Transition to School

- What support is offered to help my child transition from childcare to the school system and environment?*
- Do you assist parents with developing and implementing a transition plan from childcare to school?*

For additional support and services

Children's Inclusion Support Services (CISS) provides support, in English and French, to licensed childcare programs (nursery schools, childcare centres and home childcare agencies) that promote the inclusion of children with special needs within the City of Ottawa. Resources are also available to parents/guardians. As defined in the Childcare and Early Years Act, a child with special needs means a child whose cognitive, physical, social, emotional or communicative needs, or whose needs relating to overall development, are of such a nature that additional supports are required for the child.

General e-mail: ciss@afchildrensservices.ca

Intake: 613-736-1913 ext. 231, intake-ciss@afchildrensservices.ca

Website: <https://www.afchildrensservices.ca/support-and-services/childrens-inclusion-support-services/>

Address: 700 Industrial Avenue, Suite 600, Ottawa, Ontario, K1G 0Y9

Notes