

Military Family Services
National Capital Region



Choosing Childcare in Ottawa

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OVERVIEW OF THE CHILD CARE SYSTEM IN OTTAWA AND AREA

There are five types of child care:

1. Licensed or unlicensed facility
2. Part time care such as a preschool or nursery school
3. Have a caregiver come into your home
4. Drop your child off to a child care provider
5. Before and/or after school care.

Licensed child care (5)

These centers can be either non-profit or for-profit. All licensed 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 [Ontario Child Care Tax Credit | ontario.ca](https://www.ontario.ca). Informal care can also get tax credits with the appropriate receipts.

Preschools and nursery schools (2)

These offer part time care and can prepare your children to enter the school system. They teach various skills such as socialization and early literacy.

Homecare Provider (3 & 4)

To search for a homecare provider, whether it's to have a provider enter your home or bring your children to a provider's home, go to [daycarebear.ca](https://www.daycarebear.ca)

Before and after school care (5)

Some schools (through a third party provider), City of Ottawa community centres as well as homecare providers offer before and after school care. To search for a City of Ottawa community centre to inquire if they have before and after school care, go to: [Place listing | City of Ottawa](https://www.cityofottawa.ca)

To search for a school to see if they have before and after school care offered by a third party provider, families can search on the school board sites for the school they are enrolling their child in to inquire if they offer care.

French Language Catholic School Board: [Conseil scolaire de district catholique de l'Est ontarien - CSDCEO - Agenda](#)

- Ottawa Catholic School Board: [OCSB Calendar – The Ottawa Catholic School Board](#)
- Ottawa Carleton District School Board: [Calendar - Ottawa-Carleton District School Board \(ocdsb.ca\)](#)
- French Language Public School Board: <https://cepeo.on.ca>

The ultimate child care 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

Affordability- Will you be able to pay for the full fees of your child care tuition yourselves.

Child Care Subsidy- Subsidy is government funding support for families to help them pay for child care either in full or partially depending on your family's income.

Types of Curriculum

Every child care 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 and Timing Preferences

Close to home or close to work

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

Step 2 - Finding Child Care and Registering for Waitlists

Resources to Find Child Care in Ottawa

Ministry of Ontario search engine (licensed care): [Search for licensed child care \(gov.on.ca\)](#)

Daycarebear (unlicensed care): [Daycare in Ottawa - Search results \(Page 1\) \(daycarebear.ca\)](#)

The City of Ottawa Child Care Registry & Waitlist

Visit the link below to register your child for the registry and be added to the licensed child care 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 child care. To search for centres that have opted into the Government's Canada Wide Early Learning Child Care fee reduction, you can search the ONEHSN site under the "find child care" tab.

Click [HERE](#) for the ONEHSN site.

Step 3- Visiting Child Care Centres

Questions to Ask About the Child Care Centre/Provider

What is your transition process when a child starts child care 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 Child Care 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 child care provider is sick?

What is the policy and procedure if my child is sick?

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, Hi Mama, Storypark)

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 child care centre/provider)?

What is your policy or procedure should I decide to withdraw my child from the child care centre/provider?

Under what circumstances or criteria would you no longer be able to support my child in attending the child care centre/provider? What is your policy?

Questions to Ask About Transition to School

What supports are offered to help my child transition from child care to the school system and environment?

Do you assist parents with developing and implementing a transition plan from child care to school?

To Be Noted

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 have 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?

Additional Information to Consider When Choosing Child Care for a Child with Complex Needs

General Questions to Ask About the Child Care Centre/Provider

Does the child care centre/provider have an inclusion policy?

Do any of the staff have specific education, training, qualifications or previous work experience in providing child care to a child with complex needs?

Is the child care centre/provider willing to obtain additional training or education and/or support and resources to care for my child?

What additional resources and support are available to the child care centre/provider in providing support to a child with complex needs?

What accommodations are available for my child at the child care centre/provider that will ensure individualized care specific to my child's needs?

Does the child care 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 child care environment for the purposes of the assessment?

Can my child access his/her therapies (such as SLP, OT, ABA therapy) at the child care centre/provider location? Can my child's therapist provide individualized therapy within the child care environment?

What specialized equipment and/or items is the child care centre/provider currently equipped with (ex: toileting, feeding, seating, sensory-related etc.)?

Can I provide the child care centre/provider with my child's own specific equipment and/or items to be used within the child care environment that will remain solely for my child's use?

Do you currently work with Children's Inclusion Support Services (CISS)?

Parents and Caregivers of a child with complex 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 child care centre/ provider. This document usually includes information about your child's qualities and strengths; his/her likes and dislikes, what is important to your child and how best to support your child. It is important to be positive and realistic about your child's care needs.

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?



FOR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT AND SERVICES

Children's Inclusion Support Services (CISS)

Provides support, in English and French, to licensed child care programs (nursery schools, child care centres and home child care agencies) that promote the inclusion of children with special needs within the City of Ottawa. [Children's Inclusion Support Services | Andrew Fleck Children's Services \(afchildrensservices.ca\)](#)

Military Family Services (MFS-NCR)

MFS-NCR has various supports and resources for families related to complex needs such as a sensory lending library. [CFMWS | MFS | NCR | CFMWS](#)

NOTES: