

Finding quality childcare

It is important to tour the space, with your children, before making a decision. Remember that you are your child's first and most important teacher and you know them best!

What to ask

- ☐ If my child is hungry before snack time, or tired before nap time will they be able to eat or sleep?
- ☐ What is your child guidance policy, and can I see it?
- ☐ Do all of your staff have their Childcare First Aid?
- ☐ How is your staff retention?
- ☐ My child doesn't like to play with blocks, will they have other options? What does your program planning look like?
- ☐ How much physical activity time do the children get every day? (45 minutes or more is recommended)
- ☐ How flexible is the planning and the room schedule?
- ☐ Is messy play part of the programming?
- ☐ How do the educators interact with the children during meals? Do children have the opportunity to serve themselves and make choices about what they eat?
- ☐ Will I have the chance to provide input on day-to-day activities? What is your policy on family involvement? Do you have an open-door policy?
- ☐ How do you modify your programming and play experiences for different ages, abilities and preferences?
- ☐ How often do you practice emergency drills?

Child care lookup

Parents can find information about licensed child care programs and family day home agencies with the Child Care Lookup tool. This tool provides information about the location, ages of children served, number of children that can be served in the program, the program's status and recent inspection results.



www.humanservices.alberta.ca/oldfusion/ChildCareLookup.cfm

What to look for

- Educators get down to children's level when communicating.
- Staff give their full attention to children and families. Potential distractions are kept away such as staff's personal phones.
- Expectations are positively communicated stating the expected behavior "Please keep your feet on the floor" versus "Don't stand on the shelf".
- Expectations are realistically appropriate for children's age (Toddlers are not expected to understand the concept of sharing yet).
- Educators communicate with explanations to children, for example, "Please take that crayon out of your mouth, I am worried you might choke on it," rather than direct reactions, such as, "No. Don't do that."
- Staff engage in play with children and are not just supervising them.
- Artwork and samples of work are displayed at the child's level.
- Children are not obligated to be all doing the same activity at the same time.
- Educators sit with children during mealtimes and encourage conversation between children. Bottles are not given to infants in cribs.
- Staff take time to learn appropriate pronunciation of children's and parent's names.
- There is easy access to outdoor or physical play space.
- The environment and materials are representative of the families involved in the program.
- The work of children shows creative expression and individuality (not all artwork is the same).
- Staff certification is posted in a visible space for families to see, and licensing reports are posted in an area accessible to families.
- Program planning reflects open ended experiences – children can make choices and decisions about the experiences they want to engage in, the materials they use and how they use them.
- Roll calling and head counts of children are completed regularly to ensure the safety of and account for all children in care.
- Materials are developmentally appropriate for the age group (i.e., materials are not a safety hazard or too small for infants or not challenging enough for preschoolers).
- Educators are spaced out around the environment to ensure proper supervision.
- Food is not used as a form of reward.
- Materials and toys reflect diversity (food in kitchen centre, characters in books, toys, dolls, pictures in displays, artifacts).