Child Development Resource Connection Peel

INFO Peel

A GUIDE FOR CHOOSING QUALITY CHILD CARE

Families have a lot to think about when selecting child care that meets their families' needs and preferences.

In this guide, you will find four simple steps to help you make informed decisions and find quality child care programs.

1
Identify your needs
2
Be informed
3
Call and visit
4
Make your decision

STEP 1

IDENTIFY YOUR NEEDS

Before searching for child care, it is important to understand your family's child care needs. You may want to consider:

Do you need a program location that is close to your home, work, your child's school, or a bus route?

What values align with your parenting style and will work best for your child?

Which hours do you need care for? Which days? Do you need flexible hours because of overtime or shift work?

Do you need before or after school care? Do you need care during school closures, holidays, lunch programs, or evenings?

Is there a discount available if you have more than one child in the same program?

Does your child have any special needs such as food, physical, or developmental supports?

Will you be using child care subsidy? Does the program accept child care subsidy?

STEP 2

BE INFORMED

Three types of child care:

	Licensed Child Care Centre	Licensed Home Child Care	Unlicensed Home Child Care
Setting	Centre	Private Residence / Home	Private Residence / Home
Age Groups	Children are grouped by age: **Infants** (Younger than 18 months) **Toddlers** (18 to 30 months) **Preschool** (30 months to 6 years) **Kindergarten** (44 months to 7 years) **Primary & junior school age** (68 months to 13 years)	Children of different ages are in the same group	Children of different ages are in the same group
Licensing, Monitoring, and Inspection	The Ministry of Education licenses, and along with Public Health, monitors and inspects child care centres.	The Ministry of Education licenses and monitors licensed home child care agencies. The agency monitors and inspects child care homes.	Unlicensed child care setting which is **not** monitored or inspected unless a complaint is made.
Staff Qualifications (Registered with College of Early Childhood Educators = RECE)	Minimum one staff in each group must be a RECE. All staff must be certified in Standard First Aid and CPR.	Training & monitored by a RECE Home Visitor from the Agency. Must be certified in Standard First Aid and CPR.	Unknown
Police Vulnerable Sector Check	Yes	Yes. A clear police record check for everyone residing in the home 18 years and older.	No
Capacity and Staff: Child Ratios	**Licensing ratios:** **Infants** 1 staff for every 3 children **Toddlers** 1 staff for every 5 children **Preschool** 1 staff for every 8 children **Kindergarten** 1 staff for every 13 children **Primary & Junior School Age** 1 staff for every 15 children	**A maximum of 6 children**, 13 years of age or under which includes provider's own children who are under the age of 4 years old. No more than three children 2 years of age or under.	**A maximum of 5 children**, 13 years of age or under which includes provider's own children who are under the age of 4 years old. No more than three children 2 years of age or under.

	Licensed Child Care Centre	Licensed Home Child Care	Unlicensed Home Child Care
Child Care Subsidy Available	Yes	Yes	No
Hours of Operation	**Child Care Centres** can vary, but usually from 7am-6pm, Mondays to Fridays	Offers flexible hours, but usually from 7am-6pm, Mondays to Fridays	Up to the provider and family to agree on what works

Learn more at www.ontario.ca/page/types-child-care

WHAT IS THE COST OF CHILD CARE?

The cost of licensed child care varies from setting to setting and depends on

A the age of the child, **B** the hours of care, and **C** the type of program.

You can claim child care expenses on your income tax. Keep all receipts for your records.

WHAT IS CHILD CARE SUBSIDY?

Child Care Subsidy helps to reduce the amount of money that you pay for child care for your children 12 and under. The Region of Peel provides subsidy and determines if a family is qualified by reviewing their income and the following criteria:

- Be living in Peel with children age 12 and under.
- Be employed or be attending school.
- Have filed your previous year's income tax return (if you arrived in Canada this year, you may provide your Canada Child Benefit (CCB) notice instead).

If you receive Ontario Works, please contact your Ontario Works Caseworker.

To find out if you are eligible for the Child Care Subsidy or to get more information, visit: **www.peelregion.ca/childcare-subsidy**

To learn which child care providers accept subsidy, contact InfoPeel at 905-890-9432 or visit: **InfoPeel.ca**

STEP 3

CALL AND VISIT

Once you determine your needs and become informed on the licenced child care options available, you may begin to search for child care options that work for you and your family.

STEPS TO TAKE

A **Contact InfoPeel at 905-890-9432** or visit InfoPeel.ca and use the online chat to speak with a certified *Information and Referral Specialist* who will help you find child care options that best suit your family's needs.

B If you want more information about specific child care locations, call the providers directly. Please see the "Common Questions to Ask" on page 4.

C Once you've decided which child care providers are the best fit for your family, **set up a time to visit and speak** with them. Be sure to visit when the other children will be there. This is a chance for you and your child to see the program and staff. Tour all the rooms that your child will be using so you can see not only the space and the interaction between the children and staff. Take time to check out different activities.

Families who are concerned about the development of their child who will be attending licensed child care can access extra support. Peel Inclusion Resource Services (PIRS) helps ensure the child care experience is positive and inclusive. For more information on Peel Inclusion Resource Services, visit www.peelregion.ca/children/special-needs-child-care.asp

STEP 4

MAKE YOUR DECISION

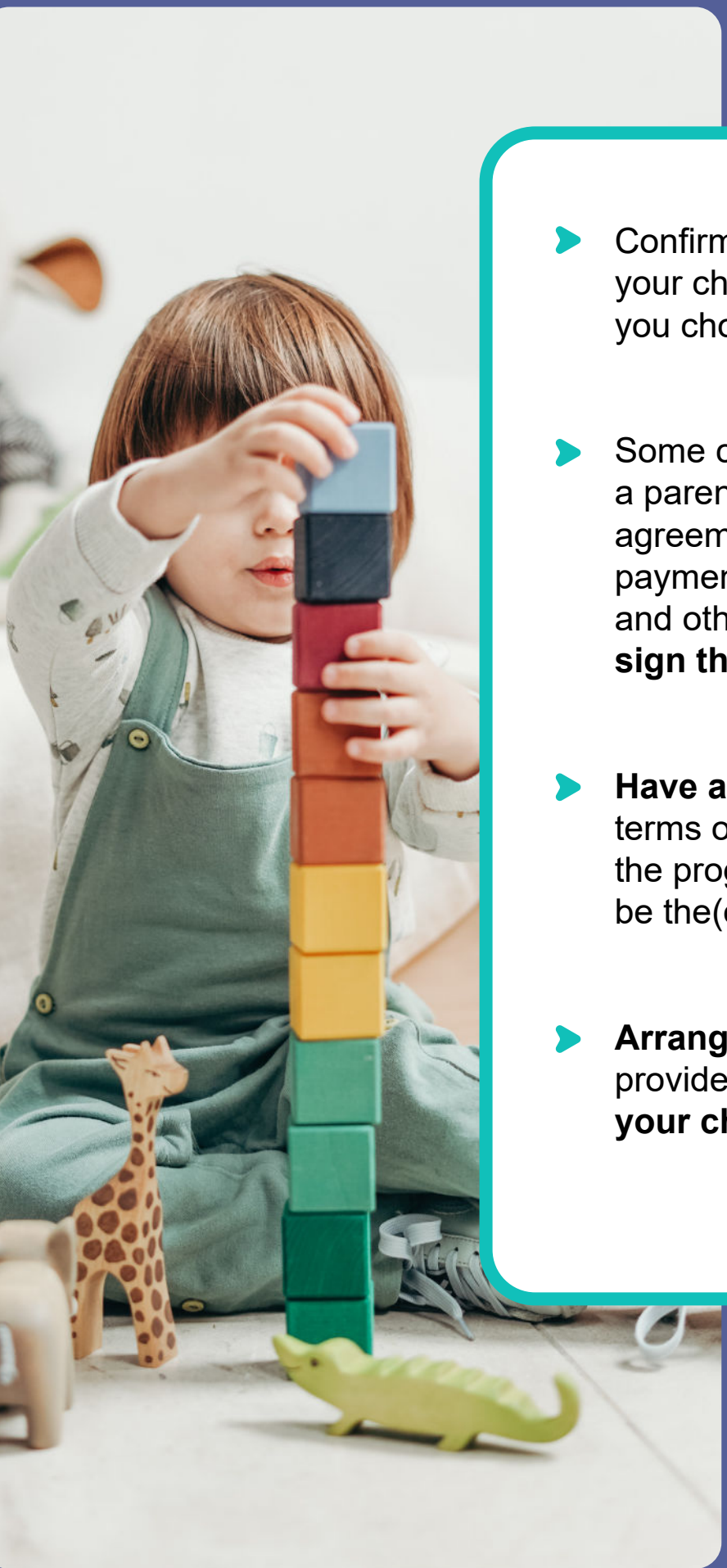
After visiting the child care setting, you may be ready to decide if it meets your family's needs. When deciding, think about:

Which location meets your child's needs? Is it affordable and conveniently located for you?

Do the children in the program seem happy and engaged?

Would you feel comfortable leaving your child there? Would you be comfortable sharing your feelings and concerns with the provider?

Can you follow all the policies and procedures?



THE AGREEMENT

- Confirm if a space for is available for your child with the child care provider you chose.
- Some child care providers may have a parent handbook and/or written agreements with costs, timing of fee payments, vacation, sickness policies and others. **Ask for copies before you sign the agreement.**
- **Have an agreement** in writing with the terms of care you have agreed to with the program administration. This might be the(owner, licensee, or supervisor).
- **Arrange the start time** and ask for the provider's input on **how to best help your child adjust to their program**.

COMMON QUESTIONS TO ASK

PROGRAM AND HOURS OF CARE:

- Is there a parent handbook with the policies and procedures?
- What are the hours of care? Is there a late pick-up fee?
- Who is allowed to pick-up and drop-off my child?
- What are the policies regarding:
  - Fee payment for missed days such as vacation or illness;
  - Illness? Will my child be sent home, or can they stay?
  - Giving my child medication?
- What programs and supports are there for my child?
- What training and qualifications do your staff possess?
- Are there students of other adults working/volunteering in the programs? How often and what are their responsibilities?

COSTS AND SUBSIDIES:

- What is your child care fee? What does that include and not include?
- Do you accept child care subsidy?
- What is the billing period? Is it weekly or monthly? Do you accept cash, cheque, or pre-authorized payments?
- Will I receive a receipt for income tax purposes?

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY AND ACTIVITIES:

- What kinds of activities take place on a normal day? Can children choose not to take part in an activity?
- How do you plan for outdoor play in the warm or cold months?
- Do you have any pets? Do you go on field trips? Do you have guest visitors? What are the policies for these?
- Do you encourage parents to participate in or visit the program? If so, do they need to tell you before coming by?
- What programs and supports are there for my child?