

PARENT GUIDE FOR CHOOSING QUALITY LICENSED CHILD CARE



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LICENSED CHILD CARE

Child care helps families work, attend school, or meet other personal needs. We want to help you choose a child care program that fits your family's needs.

Benefits of licensed child care

Licensed child care is regulated by the Ministry of Education under the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*, however, not all child care sites in Ontario are licensed.

Being licensed means:

- The Ministry of Education inspects licensed child care sites to ensure they follow mandatory standards for health and safety, staffing and programming.
- Peel Public Health inspects licensed child care sites to ensure they follow infection control measures and makes [inspection results](#) available to families.
- Licensed child care sites follow "[How does learning happen?](#)", a Ministry of Education guide for child care programming with a focus on early learning and development.
- Registered early childhood educators deliver programs at sites. They are trained in early child development and regulated by a professional college.
- Families can choose a program that participates in the [Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care](#) plan to receive lower child care fees.
- Eligible families can choose a program that participates in [child care subsidy](#) or supports children with special needs through [Peel Inclusion Resource Services](#).

Licensed child care sites can include: **centre-based programs in the community or Peel schools, nursery schools, before and after school programs, and home child care settings registered with a licensed agency.**



Your journey to finding child care

Get help finding child care that's right for your family.

In this section:

1. Think about your needs
2. Review what to know before starting your search
3. Begin your search for a licensed child care program
4. Call and visit a child care setting
5. Make your final decision

Think about your needs

The first step in your journey to finding child care is to think about your family's unique needs and what's important to you.



Questions to consider

1. How many of your children need child care?
2. What are the ages of your children who need child care?
3. When will you need child care (is it immediately, in 1 month, 3 months, 6 months or 1 year)?
4. What days of the week do you need care (for example full-time or every day; part-time or some days)?
5. During which hours do you need child care (for example standard hours of 7 a.m.-6 p.m.; before/after school, etc.)?
6. Do you need flexible hours of care due to a changing work schedule, shift work or overtime (for example before 7 a.m., after 6 p.m., weekends)?
7. Do you need your child care to be closest to home, work, relative's home, or other location?
8. Does your child care need to be close to a school or public bus route?
9. How will your child get to and from child care?
10. Do you prefer care to be delivered in a home setting or child care centre?
11. Is it important to you that your child care setting is licensed?
12. Is it important to you that program staff or home child care providers are trained and qualified in child development?
13. What child care cost do you think your family can afford each month?
14. Do you need help paying for the cost of child care?
15. Does your child have any special needs to consider (for example physical, emotional, social, language, etc.)?
16. Does your child have any dietary restrictions and/or allergies to consider?
17. Are there any cultural considerations that are important to you (for example faith-based programs, menu options, languages spoken, etc.)?

Review what to know before starting your search

Now that you have thought about your needs, it will be helpful for you to learn more about available child care programs to meet those needs.

Types of child care available

	Licensed Centre-Based Child Care	Licensed Home Child Care	Licensed Before and After School Programs	Unlicensed Home Child Care
Licensed by Ministry of Education	YES. The Ministry of Education licenses the site, and along with Peel Public Health, monitors and inspects child care centres.	YES. The Ministry of Education licenses and monitors licensed home child care agencies. The agency hires home visitors who monitor and inspect child care providers' homes.	YES. The Ministry of Education licenses the site, and along with Peel Public Health, monitors and inspects the child care setting.	NO. Unlicensed child care settings must disclose that they are not licensed and are not monitored or inspected by the Ministry of Education unless a complaint is made.
Ages of children in care	Children are grouped by age: Infants (younger than 18 months) Toddlers (18 to 2.5 years) Preschool (2.5 years to Junior Kindergarten) Kindergarten (Junior and Senior) Primary and junior school age (Grades 1 to 6)	Children of different ages are in the same group.	44 months or older but younger than 13 years (Kindergarten to Grade 6)	Children of different ages are in the same group.
Staff to child ratios	Licensing ratios: Infants 3 staff for every 10 children Toddlers 1 staff for every 5 children Preschool 1 staff for every 8 children Kindergarten 1 staff for every 13 children Primary and junior school age 1 staff for every 15 children	A maximum of 6 children, under the age of 13 which includes the provider's own children who are under the age of 4 years old. No more than 3 children 2 years of age or younger.	Licensing ratios: Kindergarten 1 staff for every 13 children Primary and junior school age 1 staff for every 15 children	A maximum of 5 children, under the age of 13 which includes provider's own children who are under the age of 4 years old. No more than 3 children 2 years of age or younger.

	Licensed Centre-Based Child Care	Licensed Home Child Care	Licensed Before and After School Programs	Unlicensed Home Child Care
Staff qualifications	Programs must have registered early childhood educators. The number of registered early childhood educators depends on age group.	Providers have education approved by a licensed home child care agency. Agencies have staff employed (registered early childhood educators and home visitors) who offer support to providers.	School board-operated programs must have at least 1 registered early childhood educator to lead the program.	Unknown
Participation in an initiative designed to enhance quality care in child care	YES. Centre-based child care can choose to participate in a quality initiative.	YES. Licensed home child care agencies can choose to participate in a quality initiative.	YES. Licensed before and after school programs can choose to participate in a quality initiative.	NO.
Vulnerable sector checks	YES. Needed by all staff.	YES. Needed for all residents of the home over 18 years of age.	YES. Needed by all staff.	NO.
Hours	*Depends on location. Usually Monday to Friday 7a.m. to 6 p.m.	*May offer flexible hours based on needs of families Usually Monday to Friday 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.	Usually Monday to Friday between the hours of 7 to 9 a.m. and 3 to 6 p.m. Some programs may also offer child care during school holidays and breaks.	Depends on provider and family agreement
Child care subsidy available* *Through Peel Region's Child Care Subsidy Program	YES*	YES*	YES*	NO.
Special needs resources available* *Through Peel Inclusion Resource Services	YES*	YES*	YES*	NO.

Get more information about the [different types of child care.](#)

Help with child care fees

Child care fees will depend on the age of the child, hours of care and type of program. It's important to ask a program about their child care fees ahead of time to determine if the program is right for you.

Child care subsidy

If you need help paying for child care and want to apply for child care subsidy, you must meet the following criteria:

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

For more information about help paying for child care and how to apply visit: [Child care subsidy](#)



Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care plan

In 2022, the government of Ontario started the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care plan. To be eligible, children under 6 must be enrolled in a licensed centre or home child care that chooses to participate in the Canada-Wide plan. The goal is to reduce child care program fees to an average of \$10 a day for eligible children by the end of 2026. For more details, visit: [Lower fees for families who use licensed child care.](#)



Ontario Childcare Credit

You may be eligible to claim the Ontario Child Care Tax Credit on your tax return to help with child care costs. Keep all receipts for your records. For more information, visit: [Ontario Child Care Tax Credit | ontario.ca.](#)

Support for children with special needs

Peel Inclusion Resource Services

To be eligible, your child must:

1. Be 12 years old and younger
2. Currently be attending a licensed child care program, or
3. Have a confirmed start date for a licensed child care program within 2 weeks of applying.

For more information on accessing Peel Inclusion Resource Services (PIRS), please visit: [Support for children with special needs in licensed child care - Region of Peel \(peelregion.ca\)](#).

Quality Initiatives

Peel's quality initiative, [Raising the Bar](#) in Peel, is designed to enhance quality care for child care programs within Peel Region.

Programs can choose to participate in the initiative and remain committed to maintaining provincial and community standards and enhancing relationships through lifelong learning, mentorship, leadership, collaboration, and reflective practice.

Consider asking programs if they participate in the quality initiative when calling or visiting a child care setting.



Raising the Bar
Early Childhood Education
An ASCY Community Initiative
A Quality Initiative in Peel

Begin your search for a licensed child care program

Now that you know your needs and the types of child care programs available, you're ready to look for programs that best meet your family's need.

- As you search, it's a good idea to create a list of child care options that you feel meet your needs. To support you with developing a list of potential licensed child care programs, [use the licensed child care search tool and filter by need.](#)

After you create your list, you can call and visit the centre-based or home-based programs to get more information.



Call and visit a child care setting

After creating your list of child care options, you may begin to call the child care programs to ask questions. You can then plan a visit to the ones that interest you.

Questions to ask when calling

1. Do you have space available for my children?
2. If not, is there a wait list and how long is it?
3. Do you have a registration fee and how much is it? Is it refundable?
4. What are your hours?
5. Do you offer part-time and full-time spaces?
6. How much does your program cost and are there any additional fees (for example field trips, materials, etc.)?
7. Do you serve children who receive child care subsidy?
8. What is the payment schedule and when are receipts issued for tax purposes?
9. How do you support children with special needs?
10. How do you support children with dietary restrictions or allergies?
11. Am I able to tour your site while you are delivering care?

Questions to ask when visiting

1. How many children do you currently care for?
2. What qualifications do your centre staff or home child care providers have?
3. Do staff or home child care providers take part in training for professional development?
4. What health and safety measures do you follow?
5. What information do you have to share on your program policies with families?
6. Can I see your menu?
7. What types of activities will my child do during the day?
8. How much time is spent indoors vs. outdoors?
9. How do your staff or home child care providers handle conflict situations that occur between children?
10. Does your program promote diversity, such as integrating different cultural traditions or menu options?
11. How do you continue to improve quality in your program?
12. Does your program allow families to drop in and visit?
13. How do you keep families informed about the daily experience children are having?
14. Do you have an information package that I can take home?



What to observe when you visit

1. Is there enough space indoors and outdoors for children to play?
2. Is the indoor and outdoor space clean and well organized?
3. Are there a variety of materials that children can use?
4. Are there detailed, well organized and visible programming boards?
5. Does the child care setting appear to be diverse and inclusive?
6. Are children active and involved in purposeful play (for example do you see them interacting with others, using materials in meaningful ways, are activities set up to support growth)?
7. Are the staff or home child care provider interacting with children through respectful language, stimulating creativity and imagination as children learn?
8. Do you see all children included in programming?
9. During meal times, what does the quality and quantity of food look like?



Make your final decision

Now that you've called and visited programs, it's time to choose a child care program that's right for your family. Additional resources are available to help you prepare your child to attend their program.

Things to consider

Before making your final child care decision, take some time to reflect on the information you collected and observed while calling and visiting the child care settings, such as:

1. Did the program align with your needs?
2. Did you feel welcome when calling and visiting the child care setting?
3. Was the child care setting neat, clean and well organized?
4. Was there enough space for physical and quiet activity, indoors and outdoors?
5. Were the staff or home child care providers responsive to the needs of the children?
6. Were the children engaged in learning through play?
7. Did the menu offer nutritious foods?
8. Did the program's approach to learning align with your values?
9. Did the program provide you with all the information you asked for?
10. Would you be comfortable with your child attending the child care setting?

Prepare your child for child care

EarlyON Child and Family Centres help prepare young children for child care and offer free, high-quality programs for families with children newborn to 6 years. Families can enjoy interactive learning experiences that support child development. Through EarlyON, you can:

- Talk to qualified staff and ask questions to meet your family's needs.
- Meet other families and enjoy quality time together.
- Join inclusive high-quality programs with your child.

[Learn more about EarlyON.](#)

More help

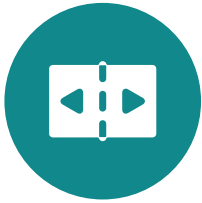
What to do if you can't find a child care program

Here are a few suggestions if you can't find a child care program that fits your needs or you're on a wait list:



Consider all available options

Even if you prefer one child care site, consider all types of child care. There are unique benefits to both licensed home child care and centre-based programs.



Widen your search location

Include more areas to search for child care programs that could work for you and your family. Consider taking another route to work or school and search for options along that route or near a public transportation stop.



Get on all waitlists

If programs you are interested in have a wait list, ensure that the centre or home child care agency puts your children on it right away. Openings in the program may happen unexpectedly for your children and the sooner you are on the list, the sooner you will get a spot.



Ask your friends and family

Talk to your relatives, friends, neighbours or people in your community about where they have found child care and if they have any suggestions for you.



Make a temporary plan

This plan can meet the short-term needs for your family while you continue to search for child care. Arrangements may include care from family, friends, or neighbours. However, since these options are unlicensed, please ensure you're screening caregivers and their references to determine if they can provide the appropriate care to your child.

If you need more help finding child care in Peel, contact Child Development Resource Connection Peel at 905-890-9432 or [live chat through infopeel.ca](https://www.infopeel.ca).

If the child care program won't accept your child with special needs

If you have been refused access to child care, visit: [Sharing questions or concerns about your child care program](#).

For support to find an alternate child care program, connect with an Information and Referral Specialist at InfoPeel.

Phone: 905-890-9432 | **Email:** contact@infopeel.ca | **Website and Live Chat:** [infopeel.ca](https://www.infopeel.ca)

Questions or concerns about your licensed child care program

If you have a question or concern about your licensed child care program visit: [Sharing questions or concerns about your child care program - Peel Region \(peelregion.ca\)](#).

LICENSED HOME CHILD CARE

Licensed Home Child Care is child care that's provided in someone's home. The provider is contracted, and monitored by, a licensed home child care agency. The home child care agency is licensed by the Ministry of Education.

The Ministry of Education inspects a selected percentage of an agency's homes throughout the year to ensure the home and the licensed home child care agency follows the regulations under the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*.

Benefits of licensed home child care

- The caregiver can get to know each individual child and family in a nurturing environment.
- Some children feel more comfortable in a setting that mirrors their home.
- Siblings can stay together, and younger and older children can learn from each other.
- Small group size in the homes allows for one-on-one support in the program.
- Lower costs for placing your child in child care, including help to pay for child care.
- Convenience of child care homes located in your own neighborhood.
- Hours of care may be more flexible to accommodate parents' work schedules.

About the licensed child care agency

- Helps families connect to home child care providers in a convenient location that meets their needs.
- Sends "home visitors", to routinely inspect each site once a month.
- Monitors the child care home for quality and safety, and **[maintains standards required by law](#)**.
- Offers ongoing training for caregivers in child development and play-based learning.
- May offer **[child care subsidy](#)** to support eligible families who need help paying for child care.

Requirements for all licensed child care providers

- A caregiver and their family must complete a Vulnerable Persons Criminal Reference Check every 5 years.
- Homes must be smoke free and comply with the Smoke Free Ontario Act.
- Must allow parents access to the site and their children.
- Caregiver must have a valid standard first aid certification including infant and child cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).
- Parents must be notified when any accident or incident occurs that could affect the health and safety, or well-being of their child.
- Have play-based programs for children both indoors and outdoors, that stems from the children's curiosity and interests.
- Overall learning should promote social, emotional, mental and physical development.

Searching for licensed home child care

When selecting a licensed home child care program, it may be helpful to call agencies and visit home child care programs. Refer to common questions to ask when calling and [visiting](#) and refer to the list of agencies serving Peel.



Licensed home child care agencies serving Peel

Caring for Kids Non Profit Private Home Day Care

- Serving Brampton and Mississauga
- Child care subsidy available

Childspec Licensed Home Daycare Services

- support@childspec.ca
- Serving Brampton and Mississauga
- Child care subsidy available

Family Day Care Services – Licensed Home Child Care (PHDC)

- Serving Brampton, Caledon, and Mississauga
- Child care subsidy available

For Kid’s Sake Day Care Services Inc.

- Serving Mississauga
- Child care subsidy available

Kids Kare Home Day Care Agency Ltd.

- swhyte.kidskareagency@hotmail.com
- Serving Brampton
- Child care subsidy available

Learning Happens Child Care Inc.

- Serving Mississauga, Brampton, and Caledon
- Child care subsidy available

Wee Watch Enriched Child Care - Brampton

- Serving Brampton
- Child care subsidy available

Wee Watch Private Home Day Care- Mississauga

- Serving Mississauga
- Child care subsidy available

Wee Watch – Terrace Woods (Caledon/Vaughan)

- Serving Caledon and Bolton
- Child care subsidy available



BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Licensed before and after school programs can be offered in schools, and in community and home-based child care programs.

Before and after school care is typically offered between 7 to 9 a.m. and 3 to 6 p.m. Some programs may also offer child care during school holidays and breaks. Contact the child care setting for more information on before and after school care.

- If you're looking for licensed before and after school care, you can use the [licensed child care search tool](#).





PEEL INCLUSION RESOURCE SERVICES

Peel Inclusion Resource Services provides extra support for families who are concerned about the development of their child who is attending licensed child care to ensure their child care experience is positive and inclusive.

To be eligible, your child must:

- Be 12 years or under.
- Currently attend a licensed child care program, or
- Have a confirmed start date for a licensed child care program within 2 weeks of applying.

[Learn more about Peel Inclusion Resource Services.](#)

CHILD CARE SUBSIDY

Child care subsidy may be available to your family. A child care subsidy reduces the amount of money that you pay for licensed child care for your children 12 years or under.

To be eligible to apply for child care subsidy, you must:

- Be living in Peel with children 12 years or under.
- Be employed or be attending school. If your child has a special need, exemptions may apply.
- Have filed your previous year's income tax return (if you arrived in Canada this year, you may provide your Canada Child Benefit notice instead).

[Learn more about child care subsidy.](#)



LOWER CHILD CARE FEES THROUGH THE CANADA-WIDE EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE PLAN

To receive lower child care fees, children under 6 must be enrolled in a licensed centre or home child care program that chooses to participate in the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care plan. [Get more information about the Canada-Wide plan.](#)

SEARCH FOR LICENSED CHILD CARE

To help you create a list of licensed child care programs that meet your family's needs, use the licensed child care search tool and filter by need.

SEARCH FOR CHILD CARE

After you create your list, review the [questions to ask when calling and visiting](#), and contact programs to find out more information.



QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS

If you have a question or concern about your licensed child care program or you have been refused access to child care, refer to: [Sharing questions or concerns about your child care program.](#)

