

PARENT SERVICES

Offered through the Kelowna Child Care Society
Child Care Resource & Referral Program

Child Care Referrals:

- Free Child Care Referral service to screened child care providers and facilities
- Information about location, fees, hours of care, available spaces, specialized services and child care program characteristics, child care subsidies
- Free Website service www.kelownachildcare.com to assist parents with locating child care in your community as well helpful information links

Information about:

- Child and parent related community resources
- Workshop opportunities for parents
- Membership Services for families:
Phone for membership costs.

Members receive:

- Newsletter Subscription
- Access to our toy lending library for children from birth to 12 years of age
- Access to our resource library
- Special event activities
- In office telephone consultation regarding general parenting issues
- Free issue of our Okanagan Parent Magazine
- Family Resource Program
Free parent child drop in program for parents
No registration required
- Opportunities to connect with other parents

Home Based employment opportunities

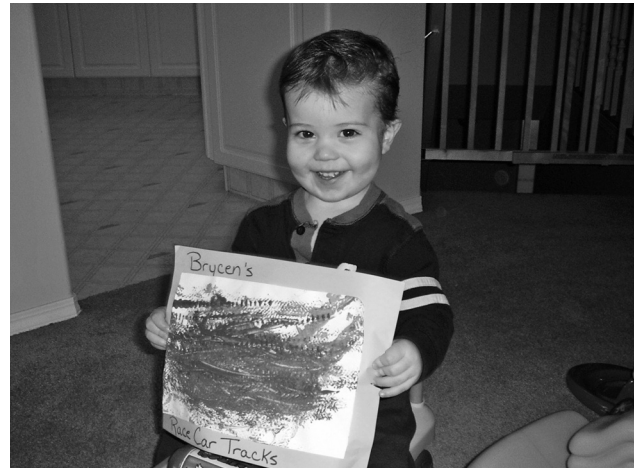
- Screening service for individuals who wish to provide child care in their home
- Home setting review
- Information regarding home day care set up and tax benefits
- Training and professional development opportunities
- Support visits and consultation services
- Infant/toddler equipment lending
- Toy lending library for children from birth to 12 years of age
- Networking social activities

**For more information on Child Care Resource
& Referral Program contact the
Kelowna Child Care Society
762-3536**

NEED CHILDCARE?



Choosing Childcare Guide



KELOWNA CHILD CARE SOCIETY
4-1890 AMBROSI ROAD
KELOWNA, BC V1Y 4R9
PHONE: 250.762.3536
FAX: 250.861.1299



EMAIL: resource@kelownachildcare.com
WEBSITE: www.kelownachildcare.com

When to be concerned...

If your child is unusually fearful of going to child care.

If your child has unexplained bruises or other signs of physical abuse.

If your child talks about inappropriate actions on the part of adults or other children at the child care setting.

If you are worried about the possible abuse of your child or any child in a child care setting, you **must** report your fears immediately to your local Ministry for Children and Families office. If the facility is licensed you can call your local Medical Health Officer. You can also call the Helpline for Children, toll-free at 310-1234 (no area code needed).

Child Care Subsidy...

Frequently, the costs of child care are greater than many parents can afford. Parents may apply for child care subsidy with the Ministry of Children & Family Development. Subsidy is intended to help with day care costs. Please note that sometimes child care fees are higher than the amount of subsidy available and you may be required to pay a parent portion.

To see if you might qualify for assistance with your child care costs, an online evaluator is available. You can access the website at:

www.mcf.gov.gc.ca/childcare.

To apply for child care subsidy you can call 1-888-338-6622. You can also pick up an application form at your local Child Care Resource & Referral office.



Where to begin...

Looking for child care can seem like an overwhelming task. You need to know what options are available to you, how much it could cost and how to choose the best care. Your child is your most valuable asset and we understand the stress and difficulty in making choices about child care. This booklet will assist you in finding what works for yourself and your family.

When to start looking...

The younger the child, the earlier you may want to begin your search. There is always a high demand for infant and toddler spaces, so ideally you will want to start looking 2 to 6 months in advance. Not all day cares will be able to tell you if they will have a vacancy when you need it to start, but they most likely will be able to put you on a wait list for any upcoming spaces.

For children ages 30 months to 5 years, there are more spaces available in our community. You should always look for child care with plenty of time for interviewing and reference checking. If possible begin looking for care at least one month in advance.

If you are looking for space for a School-Age child, you will be limited in your choices as most child care centers are only able to transport to schools in their area. The busiest time of year is September so if this is when you need your child in care you should try to search for this type of childcare in late spring or early summer.

If you are searching for Preschool, be aware that most of the preschools follow the school district's calendar. This means that their busiest time is September. Many preschools take registration the previous spring.



What you need to consider before you start looking...

- Your child's age.
- Your schedule (what hours and days of the week you need care for your child).
- Do you want your child near your home, work, school or en route?
- What you can afford to pay.

Child Care Choices...

Family Child Care Homes

Family child care is offered in the caregiver's own home. Home based family child care providers can be licensed or license not required. Family child care providers can care for children from birth to age 12. Caregivers set their own hours and days of operation. Part-time spaces and flexible hours may be available in some Family Child care homes. Some caregivers offer transportation to school.

License Not Required Family Childcare

In the province of British Columbia you do not need a license if you are caring for two children or less that are not related (This number does not include the caregivers own children). If there are more than two children, from the same family, the License Not Required Caregiver can care for all of the children even though it exceeds the normal capacity of 2 spaces.

If a caregiver chooses, they can become a registered member with a Child Care Resource and Referral Program. This means that they must complete a screening process which includes;

- criminal record checks
- current Childsafe First Aid certificate
- home interview
- reference checks and Dr.'s reference.
- The caregiver's home must also meet the safety and standards of the Child Care Resource and Referral Program.

If you have concerns after talking with your caregiver, you may contact the Child Care Resource & Referral Program or a Licensing Officer to discuss your concerns.



Any Licensed facility/home or Registered Member of the Child Care Resource & Referral Program must meet minimum standards of care. This is not a guarantee of quality childcare. It is up to you to monitor the care your child receives, and to observe how our child interacts with the child care environment. When your child is home encourage them to discuss their feelings about the centre or home. Also, try to take the time to read the daily/monthly program schedule posted in the child care centre or home.



- If possible, work out a gradual entry schedule with your day care. You might want to try leaving your child for a short period of time on the first day and as the week progresses stay away for longer periods of time.
- Leave when you say goodbye. Say when you will return. Don't try to slip away while your child is preoccupied. It may be hard to say goodbye but it is important.
- Welcome the tears; yours and theirs, as a healthy expression of the grief you naturally feel about 'letting go'.
- Don't feel too hurt if your child expresses anger after your first prolonged absences.

Monitoring...

Once your child has begun attending child care, it is important for you to monitor the quality of care that they receive.

If your child is exhibiting different behavior patterns, these may be caused by the new schedule. Your child will probably act like their usual self in time.

Any persistent disturbances in your child's sleeping and eating patterns, or moods, may indicate that the child care program is not meeting your child's basic health and safety needs and you should follow up; discuss your concerns with the caregiver and perhaps other resources.

If your child demonstrates an increasing reluctance to attend childcare beyond the initial period of separation anxiety, discuss your child's feelings with the caregiver. Through open discussion and mutual understanding, you will be able to work with the caregiver to help your child feel secure and happy while attending child care.

Regular communication with your child's caregiver is important. Give yourself some time in the morning or afternoon to talk with your caregiver and exchange information about your child's daily activities and needs. Ask questions as they arise and express any concerns promptly about any changes that may have occurred in your child's life (ie. Separation; death). The caregiver should feel at ease with you when you drop in unannounced to check on your child.

Licensed Family Childcare

The maximum group size in a Licensed Family Child Care setting is 7 children (including the caregivers own children under the age of 12). The maximum group size has age restrictions.

- Not more than 3 of the children may be under the age of 48 months old and,
- Of those 3, no more than one child younger than 12 months old

If no child younger than 12 months old is present:

- Not more than 4 children younger than 48 months old and,
- Of those 4, no more than 2 children younger than 24 months old

Qualifications:

- Childsafe First Aid Certificate
- Criminal Record Check
- References
- Must comply with the Child Care Licensing Facility Act and Regulations

Group Child Care Centres

Group centers can offer two types of care: Infant and Toddler Care and 3-5 year old group care. Group centres usually offer year-round, full-time childcare. Typically they are open between 7am and 8am and close between 5 pm and 6 pm. Centres can offer full-time and part-time care.

Group sizes depend on the type of center: In an Infant Toddler center the maximum group size is 12 children. A group center for children over 30 months has a maximum group size of 25.

Qualifications:

- Under 36 months – 1 Infant/Toddler Educator, 1 Early Childhood Educator and 1 assistant for 12 children
- Over 30 months – 1 Early Childhood Educator and 2 assistants for 25 children



Out of School Care Centres

Out of School Care Centres serve school-age children who require care outside normal school hours. Some centres provide both before and after school care. Many centres provide full day care on Professional Days, Spring Break and Summer vacation. Some centres also offer before and after kindergarten care.

Group sizes depend on the ages of the children. If the children are in Kindergarten and Grade 1 the maximum group size is 20 children. For Grades 2 and higher the maximum group size is 25 children.

Qualifications:

- Kindergarten or Grade 1 – 1 staff for every 10 children
- Grade 2 or higher – 1 staff for every 15 children

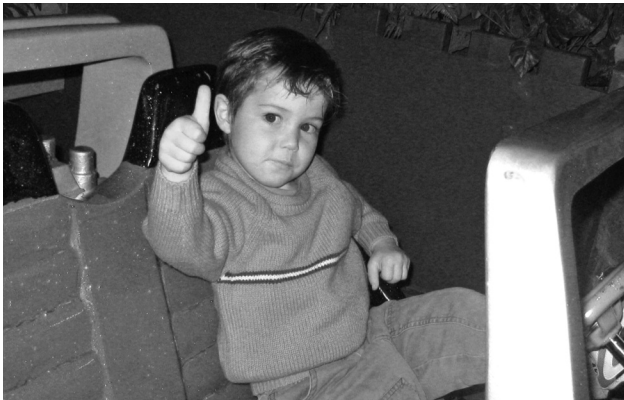
Preschool

Preschools serve children from 30 months (at least 3 years old by December 31st) to school entry. Some provide separate sessions for 3 and 4 year-olds, while others serve mixed age groups. Preschools are generally half-day programs (4 hours maximum). Most preschools operate on the school year from September to June. Most preschools offer morning and/or afternoon classes.

The maximum group size of a preschool is 20 children.

Qualifications:

- 1 Early Childhood Educator and 1 assistant for 20 children



Once you have completed all of your interviews, you need to consider the information you have collected. If your child is old enough, discuss the options with your child. Remember that choosing quality child care will give your child a head start on a strong mind, body, and spirit. Take your time in choosing child care. Trust your own initial feelings about the physical environment, the program and the people. If the setting feels right to you, it will probably be good for your child.

Signing the contract...

Once you have chosen a caregiver you need to sit down with them to go over the contract agreement. The contract should outline clearly your financial obligations, consent agreements as well as general child care program policies and practices. If you do not understand something in the contract ask the caregiver to explain it to you. Once you have both signed the contract, be sure that you receive a copy for your records.

Transition into childcare...

Parents & children can often feel separation anxiety when choosing child care. Here are some suggestions to help parents and children have a smooth transition into child care.

- Spend time with your caregiver, get to know her. Use this time to assist the caregiver in understanding your child's signals and behaviors. During this time meet with the other children your child will be spending their day with, and begin to build trust with the caregiver.
- Present a positive attitude to your child about being apart before the child begins care.
- Bring pictures of mom, dad, siblings, and family pets to show caregivers and other children.
- Tape a story or two for your child to listen to during the day.
- When first leaving a child with a caregiver who has other children to consider, ask her to let you know when it would be appropriate for you to depart, then she will know when she can cuddle or pay attention to your child.

Professional development & staffing:

- Does the caregiver have a current Childsafe First Aid?
- What professional development or training does the caregiver have?
- Does the caregiver regularly participate in training courses and workshops?
- For group centres ask how long caregivers have worked at the facility?

Programming:

- What type of programming does the day care offer?
- What is a typical day like at the day care?
- Are the children able to choose what activities they want to do?
- Are there planned activities?
- Do the children go outside on a regular basis?
- What kind of field trips does the day care do?
- If the daycare is transporting children how do they ensure the children are safe?
- How do the staff deal with conflicts between children?
- Are the activities appropriate for the children's age group?
- Are there any rules about watching TV?
- Does the caregiver take time to listen and respond to the children with interest and respect?

Health and safety:

- How often are the toys and equipment in the day care cleaned?
- Are emergency numbers and procedures clearly posted?
- Where is the first aid kit? Is it accessible and complete?
- Is the facility clean, warm, inviting and appealing?
- Are fire drills held regularly and recorded?
- Is the outdoor play area safe to get to? Free of hazards? Fenced? Supervised?
- Is it a smoke free environment?
- Is the day care and all equipment safe and in good repair?
- Are poisonous materials and dangerous equipment locked up and out of the children's reach?

Occasional Child Care

Occasional Child Care may serve children from 18 months to school entry. Children may not attend more than 40 hours in a calendar month. Many programs provide drop-in care. Others provide a regular twice a week program.

The maximum group size for children under 3 years is 16 children. If the children are over 3 years of age the maximum size is 20 children.

Qualifications:

- For children under 3 years of age, one staff for every 4 children
- For children over 3 years of age, one staff for every 8 children

In-Own-Home (Nanny) Care

If you are interested in having someone come to your home to provide child care, there are no regulations or standards. It is essential you take some time to learn about the caregiver's background, their experience with children and approach to child care. It's a good idea to ask the caregiver for references and proof from the R.C.M.P. that they do not have a criminal record. Also important is designing together a written agreement, describing the days and hours of work, the caregiver's specific terms of employment and your responsibilities as an employer.

Multi-Age Child Care

Multi-Age care is a great alternative for parents that have children ages 0 to 12. This type of care can be offered in a facility or a home based environment.

- Not more than 3 of the children may be under the age of 36 months old and,
- Of those 3, no more than one child younger than 12 months old

Qualifications:

- 1 Early Childhood Educator for 8 children



You are ready to begin...

One of the easiest ways to start your search for child care is to call your local Child Care Resource and Referral Program. They will be able to match your child care needs to what is available in your community. You can access the Kelowna Child Care Resource & Referral Program by telephone at 762-3536. Their office hours are 9 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday. You can also access a database of available child care options at www.kelownachildcare.com.

Making the calls...

Be aware that when you call, the day care may be busy with the children. If you are connected to their answering machine leave your name, telephone number and time you called. If the day care answers your call, ask them if this a good time to talk, or would they like to call you later in the day? If they have time to talk, explain to them the hours and days of care you need and the age of your child. At this point you may want to set up an interview with the day care so you can go into more detailed discussion. If the day care doesn't have space available and you are willing to go on a wait list, it is in your best interest to interview them first.

The Interview...

If you are interviewing more than one day care, you may want to consider writing down people's responses to your questions. After you have interviewed everyone you can compare your notes to help you make your decision. On the next couple of pages are some questions that may help you in making your decision. Some questions are applicable to both family and group daycare. Some questions may only apply to one type of child care.



Questions to consider when interviewing:



Days and hours of operation:

- What are the hours and days of operation?
- What days are they closed?
- Are they open during the summer?

Fees:

- What are their fees?
- When do they take vacation?
- Do they charge their fee during their vacation?
- Do they charge when the child is on vacation?
- What happens when the child care provider is ill?
- Do they charge a late fee?
- Do they charge for statutory holidays?

Policies and Procedures:

- Do they have written policies?
- Is there a trial period in the contract for both parties to decide if this is the right day care for the child?
- How much notice does either party have to give if they are terminating the contract?
- What is the procedure for handling emergencies?
- How do they handle sick children?
- What is their system for knowing where the children are at all times?
- Who supplies diapers, blankets, meals, snacks?
- What are the arrangements for when the caregiver is ill or on holiday, or in case of emergency?
- Do they encourage parent involvement?
- Can a parent visit whenever they wish?