

**Choosing Child Care: Questions to Ask**

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**Cost and Availability**

* Do you have space for my child? If not, is there a waiting list and how long is it?
* What is the cost of care? Are there any additional fees? (e.g. sick time, vacation, late pick-up, application fees.)
* Is a fee subsidy available?
* Do you offer full- and part-time enrolment?
* What are the hours of care? How flexible are drop-off and pick-up times?

**Learning and Play**

* What would my child’s typical day look like?
* Are there structured and unstructured activities? Individual and group play? Active and quiet times? Indoor and outdoor play? How much time is spent outside?
* How do play materials foster learning, creativity, and social interaction?
* Do you play TV shows and movies for the children? If so, how much time do the children spend watching TV and movies?

**Food and Nutrition**

* What kinds of meals and snacks do you provide?
* How is food stored, prepared, and served?
* Are there policies in place for managing food allergies?
* Are you able to accommodate my family’s dietary needs?
* Is there a fridge available for breast milk and is there a schedule for feeding?

**Care and Safety**

* How do you ensure the health of the children? (e.g. sleep, cleanliness)
* What happens when a child is sick? Are they sent home or given medications? What is the procedure for distributing medication?
* Do you have an anaphylaxis plan in place for children with severe allergies?
* Do you accommodate children with special needs?
* How do you support a child with particular fears and anxieties?
* Are staffed trained in emergency first aid and CPR appropriate to the age of the children?
* What safety measures are in place? (e.g. fire extinguishers, smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, first aid kits, safety gates and plugs)
* What is your emergency evacuation plan?
* Do you toilet train children in your care? If so, how do you approach the training?
* How to do you handle children’s misbehaviour? (e.g. hitting, temper tantrum) How do you help children resolve conflict?
* How many children does one person care for at any time during the day?

**Training and Qualifications**

* What educational training do the caregivers have?
* Are staff registered as early childhood educators with the College of Early Childhood Educators?
* How long have staff worked there?

**If you are considering home-based child care, here are some questions you can bring up with home child care agencies:**

* How does they agency choose providers?
* What happens when providers are sick or on holiday?
* What is the agency’s approach when working with providers?

**And with individual home caregivers:**

* How many children do you care for (including your own)? What are the ages of the children in your care?
* Who else lives in the home and may or may not have access to your child?
* What training do you have?
* What areas of the home do the children have access to?