



A Parent's Guide to  
**Quality Child Care**  
in New Brunswick

New  Nouveau  
**Brunswick**

## Building a strong foundation for your child's future



### What is quality child care?

Quality child care means different things to different people. It's up to you to define what it means to you and your family. Most people would describe quality child care as supporting a child's emotional, social, intellectual and physical well-being by keeping children safe and happy in a loving environment.

### Why is quality child care important to a child?

Every child has the right to quality child care. Imagine what your child will be like as an adult. How children grow and develop has a lot to do with the type of care they receive as a child. When children experience warm, supportive interaction with other children and adults, they feel safe and good about themselves. Helping children to learn and develop strong physical and social skills is another benefit of quality child care.

By providing children with a healthy environment that allows them to explore and discover new things, quality child care prepares them for the next stage of their lives. By choosing a quality care provider, you're giving your child a great start on developing a strong mind, body, and spirit.

## As a parent, every choice you make affects the life of someone else - your child

Deciding what type of child care is best for you and your child is one of these choices. With so many factors to consider, it is easy to get overwhelmed, but finding the right child care provider is a lot easier when you know what to look for and what steps to take. Use this information as a guide to help you select quality child care for your child.

The Government of New Brunswick recognizes the important role child care plays in the development of children and is committed to ensuring that all children receive the best possible start in life.

### Step 1 - Start Early

Start looking into child care options as soon as possible. Finding the right child care for you and your child takes time. Many child care providers have waiting lists and if you leave it until the last minute, you may end up with fewer options. Plan ahead, think it through, and make the right choice for you.

### Step 2 - Identify Your Needs

Each family has different needs. You have to start by identifying the things that will be important to you and your family such as the specific needs of your child, costs, location, and how many hours you'll need for child care during the day. Identifying your family's unique needs will help you know what to look for.

### Step 3 - Know Your Options

Child care comes in many forms. Most types fall under one of two categories:

**Licensed child care** – Licensed child care, whether provided in a child care centre or a family day care home, is regulated, inspected yearly, and monitored by the Department of Family and Community Services. These centres meet specific standards of care such as the number of children, space per child, nutrition, health and safety.

**Unlicensed or unregulated child care** – This kind of care has fewer legal requirements and is not monitored or inspected by the Department of Family and Community Services. It includes nannies, private sitters, friends or relatives and can take place in either the parents' home or the provider's home. But there is a limit to the number of children one individual can care for.

Remember that not all types of child care share the same criteria for licensing and regulation. Take the time to become well informed about what each one offers and whether it meets the needs of you and your child.

For detailed licensing regulations in New Brunswick, visit [www.gnb.ca](http://www.gnb.ca) and search by keyword: **child care**.

### Step 4 - Check it Out

Now that you know your options, visit child care providers in your area to determine which ones meet your needs. Don't be shy. Take notes and ask questions. Then, compare how your notes measure up to your needs.



## Step 5 - Make a Choice

Think about what you saw at each visit, and make the best choice based on your own personalized checklist. Each family's checklist will be unique and based on the needs they've identified. Here are a few more basics that may help you make your choice.

## Quality Child Care Checklist

### Things to observe:

- Are you greeted by a child care provider when you arrive?
- Is the atmosphere welcoming and child-friendly?
- Do the other children appear happy and enthusiastic?
- Are children and child care providers actively participating in activities together?
- Is there a tone of respect between the children and child care providers?
- Are the child care providers using a suitable approach to providing guidance and instruction?
- Are there age-appropriate materials accessible to the children?
- Is some of the children's creative work visibly displayed?
- Do the children seem familiar with the routine?
- Do the children seem confident, or unsure of what they should be doing?
- How do care providers handle disagreements between the children?
- Is there an appropriate child care provider to child ratio?
- Does the environment appear clean and safe?
- Are rules and safety procedures clearly communicated?
- Is adequate space provided for each child to keep necessary personal items?

- Is a daily activity schedule clearly posted or communicated to you?
- Are evacuation procedures clearly posted or discussed?
- Is the name of the individual in charge clearly posted or communicated?

### Things to ask:

- Is parental involvement encouraged?
- What are examples of daily meals and snacks?
- How do you discipline the children?
- How do you handle children that are sick?
- Do you administer and keep track of medicines given?
- What are some examples of the day's activities?
- Do you or others that provide care have formal early childhood education training?
- Ask for references from parents who have used this service in the past.

### A day of quality care should include some of the following:

- meals and snacks that follow Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating
- activities that offer a mix of free play and quiet time, and that are developmentally appropriate for the age of the child
- positive interactions between the child care provider and child that is warm caring and respectful
- opportunities for the children to be read to and to participate in creative art activities
- a mixture of physical activity and outdoor play for a minimum of 30 minutes



## Step 6 - Make a Smooth Transition

Leaving your child in the care of someone else for the first time can be a difficult and emotional experience. Here are some tips for making it a smooth transition for everyone involved:

- If possible, start leaving your child with the child care provider for short periods of time, at least two weeks before you need full-time care.
- For the first few days, stay with your child and child care provider for a little while each day to help your child adjust.
- Before leaving, be sure to explain to your child that you'll be back. Do so confidently, without appearing anxious or sad.
- Never sneak out - it is upsetting to your child to have you disappear without warning.
- Never make fun of your child if he cries when you leave.
- Never force a shy or anxious child to jump into a situation. Let them stay close to you until they feel comfortable joining in.
- During the first couple of weeks of care, drop by unannounced and observe the activity and the environment.



## Step 7 - Stay Involved

To make sure your child continues to have a positive experience in child care, make a point of discussing your child's progress with the child care provider regularly. If you are able to, visit occasionally or sign up for special events and field trips.

## Step 8 - Dealing with Concerns

Every relationship has challenges and the one you have with your child care provider is no exception. The key to overcoming these challenges is to discuss problems and concerns with the provider as soon as possible. If the problems cannot be resolved, it may be a sign that the arrangement is not working out. Trust your instincts.

If you have concerns about abuse or neglect, or if you have concerns or complaints about your child care provider, contact the Department of Family and Community Services.

## Still have questions about choosing quality child care?

You're not alone. This is an important decision and it's normal to have questions. That's why we are here to help.

For more information on other child care initiatives or other parenting related topics, visit [www.gnb.ca](http://www.gnb.ca) and search by keyword: **child care**.



