

Checklist for Visiting a Licensed Child Care

This checklist provides you with a list of things to look for, and questions to ask, when you visit a child care facility. It includes overall impressions, policies, health and safety, daily programming and questions specific to infants and children with additional support needs. Consider printing out the checklist and bringing it with you when you visit a facility.

There are many parts of a child care program to consider. It is a good idea to contact each facility that you are interested in, so you can visit as many centres or homes as possible, even if space is not yet available for your child. While the list includes important things to look for, think also about your own values, beliefs and questions about each child care facility. This way, you can make an informed decision that is best for your family. It is also important to trust your feelings and overall impression of the facility.

You can make a copy of this checklist to bring with you, and take notes if you want. Because each family's needs are different, this checklist will help you make the best choice for you and your child.

Centre/Provider Name: _____

Type of Child Care Setting: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Date of Visit: _____

General Impressions

Look For

	Yes	No	n/a
An inviting, clean, and safe space			
Happy and enthusiastic children who look interested in what they are doing			
Warm and friendly adults who respond to children's needs			
Staff/child ratios that meet the licensing requirements			
Enough space for the number of children in the facility			
A lot of activities and play areas for the children			
Equipment and toys that are safe, clean and in good condition			
An interesting and well-equipped outdoor space for children's activities			

Ask

	Notes
Is the facility's licence posted in a location where everyone can see it?	
If the facility has a provisional licence, what is being done to address the issue?	
If there are exemptions on the licence, why are they there? And what is being done to address the exemptions?	

Administrative Policies**Ask**

	Notes
When is the facility open?	
What is the cost of child care per day?	
Does the facility charge any additional fees?	
Do you accept families that are eligible for subsidies?	
Do you help parents apply for subsidy, if needed?	
When do you issue receipts?	
Is care available during school in-service days and holidays?	
As my child gets older, will he or she automatically be re-enrolled in the next age group?	
How much notice do I need to give for withdrawal, holidays or other absences?	
Do you charge fees when my child is sick, absent or on holidays?	
Do you have references available?	

Health, Safety and Nutrition**Look For**

	Yes	No	n/a
Food menu, evacuation procedures and emergency numbers posted			
A clean area for making and serving food			
Clean diapering and toileting areas, child-sized toilets in child care centres			
Safety precautions in place, such as smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, first aid kit, outlet covers, stairway gates			

Ask

	Notes
Who provides snacks and meals for the children – the parents, the facility or both?	
How do you care for a child who gets sick while at child care?	
How do you keep track of medicines that are given?	

What are the policies for when a child is ill?	
What safety precautions are in place to ensure the children's safety in the outdoor play area and on outings, such as field trips or walks?	
How do children go to and from school? If children are not escorted, how do you ensure their safety?	
If there are pets, how do you make sure children are kept safe?	

Behaviour Management

Look For

	Yes	No	n/a
Staff speaking calmly and respectfully to others			
Staff engaging with children in a thoughtful and meaningful way			
Staff helping children work through conflict			
Staff listening to children and responding with respect and interest			

Ask

	Notes
How do you prevent conflict between children?	
How do you manage conflict when it happens?	
How do you help children who have challenging or difficult behaviours?	
How do you encourage children to talk about or work through solutions to problems together?	
How do you work with parents to address behaviour concerns related to their child?	
What happens if my child does not want to take part in an activity or sleep at nap time?	

Daily Program and Curriculum

Look For

	Yes	No	n/a
Children's daily schedule and curriculum statement posted at centres			
Inclusion policy posted			
Staff schedule posted (in child care centres only)			
Many choices of age-appropriate toys, activities and materials in play areas			
Children playing and talking with each other and adults in the room			
Children's creative work displayed in the facility			
Examples of various cultures and traditions in materials or displays			
Children participating in caregiving routines, such as handwashing and changing clothes, with adult help as needed			

Ask

	Notes
How much time do children play each day?	
What kinds of toys and materials do children play with?	
How do you encourage children to make friends and build relationships with you and others?	
Are the toys and equipment always available for children to use?	
What are some ways that play helps children learn and develop?	
What type of activities do you do with the children?	
When and where do children play outdoors?	
If it is a child care home, what parts of the home are regularly used for child care?	
What opportunities are offered for parents to be involved in their child's program?	
Do you take the children on outings or field trips?	

If your child is under two years old, there are some extra things you should pay attention to and ask about:

Look For

	Yes	No	n/a
Staff or home provider holding and rocking infants often			
A lot of toys, books and activities specifically for infants			
Infants able to crawl, walk around and safely explore toys and their environment			

Ask

	Notes
Will the same people take care of my child each day?	
How do you supervise children during naps?	
Are infants held while having a bottle?	
Are infants able to have their own sleeping and eating schedule?	
Is time included for holding infants other than during feeding times?	
How do you help children learn to use the toilet when they are ready?	

Inclusion

Look For

	Yes	No	n/a
All children participating in activities and playing together			
Children with additional support needs included in activities and encouraged to play with other children			
Inclusion policy posted			

Ask

	Notes
What kind of experience and training do you have with children with additional support needs?	
How are children with additional support needs included in activities and encouraged to interact with other children?	
If my child needs additional support, what kinds of changes can be made to help him or her join in activities with other children?	
How do you work with parents and other professionals or therapists to understand a child's individual needs?	
What extra support or training is available to help you meet the needs of my child, if needed?	

For More Information

For more information about child care or financial assistance for child care fees, please contact Child Care Information Services at 204-945-0776, toll-free 1-888-213-4754 or email cdcinfo@gov.mb.ca.