



## The Back to Work Transition

If you are planning to return to work while your child is still young, choosing a caregiver will be one of the most important decisions you will make.

Following is some information and guidelines on how to choose and what to look for in a potential caregiver.

### Terms and Definitions:

1. **Babysitter:** A babysitter is usually a younger person, such as a student, who cares for your child (children) in your home.
2. **Caregiver:** A caregiver is usually a person 18 years of age and over, who offers full daycare on a regular, part-time, or full-time basis. Most parents and caregivers prefer the term “caregiver” when requiring long-term day care services, whether the care takes place in your home or somewhere else.
3. **Early Childhood Educator (E.C.E.):** Parents will also hear the term E.C.E. when people are talking about day care services or daycare centres. An early childhood educator has a diploma in the childcare field. A caregiver offering childcare services in the parents’ home or from their own “in-home daycare service” may or may not be an E.C.E. An E.C.E. usually works in a licensed day care centre but sometimes offers daycare services in his or her home or your home.
4. **Registered means Licensed:** The word registered is most often used in the American childcare system and the word licensed in the Canadian system. Private means for-profit. To operate a day care centre in Canada or the United States you must be licensed.
5. **Non-registered/Non-licensed Private In-Home Day Care Services:** Not licensed. Whether it is or is not registered or licensed, it is usually operated by the private individual who owns the home. Non-registered/non-licensed private “in-home day care services” are not required to be registered/licensed if the

caregiver stays within the by-law limit of the number of children cared for in the home.

6. **Registered/Licensed Private In-Home Daycare Services:** Registered/licensed and owned by a private individual or corporation. Children are cared for in a private home that is registered/licensed with the local authorities.
7. **Private Licensed Daycare Centre:** Licensed daycare centre; Owned by a private individual, a group of people, or corporation. Children are cared for in a building that is designed specifically for childcare.
8. **Non-profit Licensed Daycare Centre and Family Day Homes:** A licensed daycare centre, operated by a non-profit organization whose members sit on the board of directors of the non-profit corporation.
9. A private licensed daycare centre is a for-profit centre and a non-profit licensed daycare centre is a non-profit centre, this is the only difference between them. Both centres have to meet the same regulations and requirements to get licensed. The only difference between the two centres, financially, is where the centre is located. In some areas the government will only assist licensed non-profit organizations with government money, for subsidized spaces, direct operating grants, renovations, etc.
10. **Subsidized Space:** Is government assistance to help people in need of financial help with daycare fees. If subsidized spaces are available in your area they are only offered to registered/licensed in-home day care services, and/or licensed daycare centres, and are geared to assist low-income families.
11. **Day Care Centers:** A day care centre provides care for groups of children and offers year-round, full-time day care. Each centre sets its own policies on matters like fees, the notice required to withdraw a child, holiday closure, hours of operation and whether children can attend on a part-time or drop-in basis. In addition, each centre has its own philosophy and approach to childcare as well as its own program of daily activities.
12. **Family Day Home:** A family day home is a private residence in which care is given by an approved provider to pre-school children who are not the provider's own. A provider can care for a maximum of six children, including her own. The Alberta Child and Family Services Authority also restricts the number of children in a particular age group who can be cared for in an approved family day home.

*Whether you choose a day care or a family day home, the following general rules should apply:*

- Does provider/staff spend individual time with the children?
- Does provider/staff listen to children's ideas and suggestions and respond positively to them?
- Are children encouraged to cooperate with each other?
- Does the provider/staff encourage children to work out their problems and arrive at a solution on their own?
- Does provider/staff assist them when necessary?
- Does provider/staff sometimes allow children to choose their own activities?
- How does provider/staff assist the children in toilet training?
- Do the infants eat and sleep according to their own schedules?
- Are infants who are awake being played with?
- Does the provider/staff hold infants when giving bottles and feeding?
- Does the provider/staff smile and talk to the infant she is changing, dressing or feeding?
- Does provider/staff help children to end a game, clean up and get ready for another activity?
- Are there a wide variety of play activities planned for the children, including music, dress-up, block and art activities, games and outings?
- Do the children have opportunities to play by themselves as well as with others?
- Are children allowed messy activities such as painting?
- Does the provider/staff read stories and play games with the children?
- How often, and how long, is the television on during the day?
- Are children encouraged to set up activities and clean up afterwards?
- Are routines such as rest, toileting and meal times handled in a relaxed manner?
- Are children who need less sleep allowed to play quietly during nap time?
- How does the family day home provider fit in her own housework?

*You should ask questions about:*

- ✓ Staff/provider qualifications
- ✓ Daily activities
- ✓ Care of infants
- ✓ A tour of the facility/home
- ✓ Health and safety issues (i.e. fire drills, administration of medication, meals and snacks)
- ✓ Fees and payments
- ✓ Discipline procedures
- ✓ Criminal Records Check and Child Welfare Information Systems Checks
- ✓ References (if a day home, preferably parents of current or past children the provider has cared for)

### **Stop**

Take time to choose the child care that meets the needs of you and your child.

### **Look**

First impressions are important, ask for a tour of the day care/day home.

### **Listen**

Listen to your feelings.

Do you feel the emphasis is on learning and fun in a safe, secure, pleasant environment? If your child is old enough, listen to what he or she has to say after the initial visit and at the end of each day.

*The Camrose Children's Centre operates the day care centre and the family day home program. Both programs are non-profit and licensed by Ribstone Child and Family Services.*

### **WEANING**

If you are breastfeeding and planning to go back to work, you may choose to wean your baby completely, or to continue breastfeeding and pump or express your milk. Detailed information on both these choices can be obtained from the local La Leche League by calling

Katelyn at 780-672-9389