

Contracting With Our Program

What is Home Child Care?

Home Child Care is care given in an approved private residence to a maximum of five children. The ages of the children range from infancy to thirteen years. Child care may be provided during the day, in the evening, on weekends or overnight.

Philosophy and Program Statement

- To ensure all children receive quality child care which promotes healthy, social, emotional and physical development.
- To assist parents in choosing care for their children in a supervised home environment that respects all cultures and family values.
- To encourage an active partnership between parents and caregivers.
- To identify children's strengths and needs and to assist families in accessing community resources.
- To support child caregivers to ensure that they continue to meet Home Child Care policies and Day Nurseries legislation.
- To offer resources and provide consultation to caregivers in child development, behaviour guidance, nutrition, health, safety and other child related topics.
- To facilitate and encourage the professional development of home child care caregivers and staff.

Region of Waterloo Home Child Care operates under regulations set out in The Day Nurseries Act of the Province of Ontario. A summary of the regulations and Regional Policies are found in this manual as Schedule A, (see Record Keeping).

Contracting With Our Program



Partners in Caring

Building and Maintaining Positive Relationships with Parents

An important part of your work with parents is building and maintaining positive relationships with parents. Being able to communicate effectively with parents and work together with them will have a strong influence on their peace of mind and your satisfaction as a caregiver. Most importantly, the children benefit when the people who care for them also have a good relationship.

The “getting to know you stage” is the most important stage in the parent-caregiver relationship. It sets the foundation for how you will work together in the future. You may want to keep these suggestions in mind:

- At the first interview, welcome the parent and the children into your home. Try to put the parent at ease and have some toys or activities available for the children.
- Take the parents and children on a tour of your home, especially areas where the children will eat, sleep and play (indoor and outdoor areas).
- Let the parents and children know about the other people who will come into contact with them in your home, (e.g. your own family members and other relatives living with you).
 - Tell the parents about the other children that you care for (ages, numbers, and hours).
 - Ask the parent about their own children.
 - name, age
 - special needs
 - personality
 - health concerns such as allergies or medications
 - food likes and dislikes
 - previous child care experiences
 - how the child will likely react to being in home child care
 - parent’s preferences regarding the care of their children
 - supervision and outdoor boundaries for school age children
 - A discussion of your daily schedule (toys and equipment available, typical activities, menu and meal planning, indoor and outdoor activities and outings)

Contracting With Our Program

At the Start

If the child begins using care in your home, parents will be looking to you for reassurance that their child is adjusting to the new environment.

Here are some helpful suggestions for caregivers:

- Be accepting and non-judgmental. The emotional impact of leaving your child with a new caregiver (especially for the first time child care user) can be very traumatic. You may see parents behaving in a way that is not normal for them (peeking in the windows, calling you every 20 minutes). Be patient and understanding-this will pass.
- Be honest about how the child is adjusting. For example, “The baby was crying off and on today but that often happens at this stage and I’m sure he will settle in. I’m trying to keep him with me or in the carrier close to me” or “He had a great day today. He settled in only ten minutes after you left.”
- Offer reassurances about how you are going to handle any challenges and discuss them with the parent.
- Share any information with the parents on the day’s activities and how their child is doing. For example, “Michelle participated actively in craft time this morning. I think she’s starting to feel comfortable here.”
- Smile and be positive. Tell them what is going well; listen to their concerns, and work together to help the child make the adjustment to his new environment.

As Care Continues

As care continues, there are some strategies that will build on the trust and confidence parents have developed in your care.

- Communicating with parents daily helps you both provide the best care possible for the child. Take the time to share a few words with parents at the beginning of each day. Insist that parents accompany their child into your home at drop-off and pick-up times. Keep each other well informed about the child’s health, routines and any important events coming up.
- At pick-up time, talk to parents about their child’s day. Explain about the fun activities or new things learned. Encourage children to talk about their activities or explain a creative project.

Contracting With Our Program

- Find good things to tell parents about their child. Be specific when offering positive comments. Say for e.g. “Michael picked up all the blocks at clean up time today.”
- Ask parents for advice and act on their desires: “Is there anything special you want me to do with Jamie?”
- Be sensitive when the child is within hearing range of your conversation with parents.
- If you need more time to talk things over, arrange a time to call the parent when you are both free.
- Provide parents with a written daily information sheet for infants and toddlers especially regarding their feeding and toileting routines.
- Some caregivers make a notebook available for written notes between the caregiver and the parent.
- Use a bulletin board to post announcements, a daily schedule, menu ideas or current activities. Post pictures of the children involved in various activities during the day. Parents love to see pictures of their children enjoying themselves in your care.
- Advise parents about any changes in the home that may affect the child, such as a new child being accepted into care.
- Before planning a special activity (like going to the library) discuss it with the parents. They may have been planning to do the same activity with the child.

Empathy, understanding, mutual respect, and your shared interest and concern for the child are truly the foundation of a strong, long lasting, quality home child care experience. Feel free to speak to your Home Child Care caseworker or supervisor for assistance in building a positive relationship with parents.

(Adapted from “Partners in Caring: Working with Parents”, Ohio State University Extension)

Contracting With Our Program

Some Commonly Asked Questions

What Will The Home Child Care Caseworker Do For Me?

A Home Child Care caseworker's responsibilities are determined by the Day Nurseries Act.

The caseworker will:

- visit your home at least once a month
- do both scheduled and unscheduled visits
- observe the children's development and behaviour
- assess the preschooler's progress using screening tools
- provide you with useful resources
- discuss any concerns that you may have about child care
- arrange events such as playgroups, outdoor play days and events in your neighbourhood
- safety check your home

***If the caseworker is not available and you have a problem that you would like to discuss immediately, please ask to speak to one of the supervisors, the manager of Home Child Care or another Home Child Care caseworker.**

How Many Children May I Have In My Home At One Time?

A caregiver may care for no more than five children under the age of 13 years in addition to the caregiver's own children, at one time. The following age groupings **must** always be adhered to:

- ✓ No more than five children under the age of six, including the caregiver's own children, present in the home at any one time
- ✓ No more than three children under the age of three including the caregiver's own children, present in the home at any one time
- ✓ No more than two children under the age of two including the caregiver's own children, present in the home at any one time
- ✓ Children who are developmentally handicapped will be considered as "under two"

The determination of the number of children that a caregiver may care for is based on the ages of the caregiver's own children, the size of the home, and the requirements of the children. The home child care caseworker and the caregiver will determine the number of children in her care. This may not always be the maximum allowed number.

Contracting With Our Program

How Are Children Referred To My Home?

When a family needs child care in your area, the Caseworker will consider each available Caregiver before referring the family. The Caseworker will consult with you before giving your name to a parent. The needs of the children, the hours that the parent requires care and the spaces available in the Caregiver's home are evaluated. The parent is given the names of two or three Caregivers to select from. Parents are encouraged to evaluate your home based on the training you have taken, the activities that you participate in and the general suitability of your home.

The interview that you have with the parent is mutual. It is your opportunity to get to know the child and his parent and it is the parent's opportunity to assess the suitability of your home.

Am I Able to Care for Children Who Are Not In The Home Child Care Program?

You may contract to care for children "privately" while also caring for children through the Home Child Care Program. **All** children being cared for in your home must be included in the count when determining your maximum home capacity. The Day Nurseries Act requires that you keep a record of immunization for each privately cared for child in your home. Sample forms for this purpose are available from the Caseworker. Private Children must also be cared for in compliance with the Regulations of the Day Nurseries Act (Schedule A of your contract).

What Are The Ages of Children That I Will Be Looking After?

There are a number of factors to be considered including the ages of your own children and the ages of the children who need care. It is important to discuss your particular interests in child care with the Home Child Care Caseworker. In order to provide quality child care, it is important that you enjoy the ages and stages of development of the children in your care.

How Long Will The Children Stay With Me?

Many children stay in a caregiver's home for a long time. Others will leave for a variety of reasons: parent's job or school changes, parent moves, child transfers to a Child Care Centre or possibly the child just does not seem happy in your home. The decision to transfer a child from your home to another home can be made by the parent, by you the caregiver, or by the Home Child Care Caseworker. We prefer to make this decision a mutual one. Our aim is to provide the best possible placement for the child.

Contracting With Our Program

How Long Will I Be A Caregiver?

This depends on the demand for child care in your area and your continued interest in being a caregiver. The agency is obligated to terminate a caregiver's agreement if the regulations of the Day Nurseries Act are violated. There may also be times when the demand for child care in your area decreases. If you have not cared for children on a regular basis for three months, the caseworker will close your file. If the demand for child care in your area increases, you may re-apply to the Home Child Care Program. (See Agreement to Provide Childcare #10 to 13).

How Do I Handle My Personal Appointments During My Child Care Hours?

Caregivers are encouraged to make personal appointments at times when children are not in their care. On the rare occasion when this is not possible, please contact the caseworker for assistance in finding alternate care. Caregivers are solely responsible for the children placed with them. The only time that children may be left with an adult who is not a contracted Caregiver is in an emergency or serious occurrence. (See the Agreement to Provide Childcare, #16, Schedule "A" #2).

What Activities In My Community Can I Participate In During Child Care Hours?

Caregivers and the children in their care are encouraged to participate in community programs such as neighbourhood groups, parent/child resource centres, library programs and other child focused programs. Activities that are primarily of interest to the Caregiver such as bowling, bingo or keep-fit should be scheduled for after child-care hours. (See Schedule "A", #1. a, b, c.)

What Should I Do When I Want To Go On A Vacation?

When you are planning vacation time, please contact the Home Child Care Caseworker. If you talk about your holiday plans with the parents of the children in your care, they may be able to co-ordinate their holiday plans with yours. Otherwise, the Home Child Care Caseworker will contact the parents and arrange for care of the children during the time you are away.

Contracting With Our Program

What Should I Do If I Have A Personal Emergency Or Family Sickness And Cannot Provide Child Care?

A. **If You Know You Will Be Unavailable Before The Children Arrive.** Call the parents as soon as possible and let them know how long you will be unavailable. Notify the Caseworker with this information. If the parents are unable to make their own private alternate child care arrangements, they should contact their Caseworker who will try to find an alternate Caregiver. Many parents will have an emergency back-up arrangement (a friend or relative willing to do temporary care) for these occasional situations. Parents and Caregivers must remember that Home Child Care can only pay Regional Caregivers to do child care. (See Schedule "A", #2).

B. **If A Crisis Occurs During the Day** and you are unable to continue caring for children (i.e. you or someone in your home becomes extremely ill, there is a serious occurrence, or you have a family emergency....), call the home child care office for assistance. If the caseworker is not immediately available ask for the Supervisor, the Manager or another Caseworker. The staff will gladly assist you.

****Note:** If the emergency is a **serious occurrence** involving the Home Child Care children, please follow the guidelines in the Accidents, Serious Occurrences and Child Protection Issues section of this manual.

What Are My Insurance Requirements?

As stated on the Agreement to Provide Child Care, all people under contract with the Region's Home Child Care program must purchase their own liability insurance. The Region's insurance does not adequately protect the Caregiver in the event of a claim. (See the Agreement to Provide Child Care, #19).

What Is A Ministry "Spot Check"?

As part of the annual licensing review for Home Child Care, the Ministry is required to "spot check" a number of caregiver homes. The program consultant will come to your home either by herself or accompanied by the home child care caseworker.

The purpose of the "spot check" is to ensure the Ministry that the regulations for Home Child Care (Day Nurseries Act) are being followed. The consultant will ask questions about behaviour management practices, sanitary practices and other child care issues.



Contracting With Our Program

What Opportunities For My Personal Growth And Development Are Available Through The Home Child Care Program?

Home child caregivers are encouraged to take advantage of workshops and educational opportunities in their own communities. In addition, the Home Child Care Program hosts an annual one day conference and periodic workshops that are directed at the special interests of the caregiver group.

What About First Aid Training?

Caregivers must keep their FIRST AID certification current through courses offered in the community. In addition caregivers are encouraged to take an Infant CPR course. (See Schedule "A" #20).

Will I Have An Opportunity To Meet With The Family Before A Child Starts In My Home?

After the Home Child Care caseworker has recommended your home to a parent, you should receive a phone call from the parent asking to meet with you. It is important to choose a time that is convenient for you and your family. This will enable you to give the parent and the child your full attention. Remember, this will be a mutual interview. In many cases, it is the first time the parent will have left her child with anyone other than family or close friends.

This meeting is very **important** to both of you. This is a good opportunity for you to show the parent around your home, to talk about where the child will sleep, where he will play and what he will play with. If you have some appropriate toys in view, if you pay special attention to the child and if you take time to reassure the parent about your abilities to do child care, the first step in building a good relationship will have begun. By the end of this visit you should have a good feeling about how the child will fit into your home. (Use the guidelines below).

It will always be your choice to decide to provide childcare for a family. You will want to consider many things before you decide. Will this child or these children fit with the ages of your own, and the other children in your home? Will you be able to work well with the parents? Are the hours of care compatible with your own family's schedule? When you have made a decision, contact your Home Child Care caseworker.

Does Home Child Care provide me with equipment for the children?

No, as an independent contractor, it is your responsibility to equip your business operation appropriately. Most business costs are tax deductible, see "Using Your Home for Day Care". (Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, P134 (E)).

Contracting With Our Program

Caregiver/Parent Interview

What Will I Talk About When The Parent First Comes To See Me?

The Child/Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• personality• likes and dislikes• daily routine	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• allergies, health• school, teacher, friends
---------------------------	--	--

Your routine

- **Daily program and tour of the home** - Parents will want to know how their children will spend their day, where the child will rest/sleep and what activities & outings they will participate in. This is an opportunity to show the weekly menu/activity plan.
- **Outdoor play** - Show the parent where the children will play. Discuss age appropriate supervision.
- **Guiding Children's Behaviour** - Talk to the parents about the expectations in your home and your philosophy of behaviour management.
- **Care of a sick child** - Review expectations, about caring for ill children, Home Child Care Policy and administering prescription medications.

Parent's schedule

- **Confirm hours of work/school**
- **Confirm time of arrival and pick up**
- **Review names of "Escort"** - Listed on the consent form.
- **Overtime** - Discuss how you handle this issue in your business. Do you expect a phone call if parents are late? Do you charge for overtime?
- **Extra coverage** - Can only be approved by the Subsidy office. The parent must notify the subsidy office of any changes and must be confirmed with the Caseworker.

Special Arrangements

- **Vacations** - Talk about when you will be going away.
- **Emergencies** - Tell parent who your back-up person is if you have an emergency situation with one of the children.
- **PD Days** - Ask for a schedule.

Contracting With Our Program

Communication

- **Discuss care with parent(s)** - Agree on a convenient time to discuss your care with the parent(s) on a regular basis.

Attendance Sheets

- **Signing of attendance sheets** - Remind parent that she must sign your attendance sheet at the end of each month. Discuss arrangements for payment of "parent contribution" if there is one.

What Must I Receive From The Parent?

Consent Forms

- Review the information with her. (If she does not have the forms with her, ask her to fill out 2 blank copies).

Written Feeding Schedule

- For infants only (refer to infant section).
- For special diet, food restrictions & allergies.

Outdoor Supervision Form

- To be discussed and agreed upon by parent, caregiver and Home Child Care caseworker.

How Do I Keep The Parent Informed About Their Child's Care?

Maintaining a good relationship with the parent is extremely important for good communication. A friendly word at the end of the day highlighting the positive things that the child has done is very important. Occasionally, you may want to invite the parent to stay for a short visit to discuss the child care arrangement. Communication by telephone is also helpful. All of these ways will help build and maintain that very important relationship with the parent of the child in your care.

Contracting With Our Program

Will I still be a caregiver if I move?

Please let the Home Child Care Caseworker know as soon as possible if you plan to move. Your contract is valid only at your current address. If you move, your agreement will end on the last day that you are available to do care at your old location. You will receive a letter letting you know that your agreement has ended and you will also receive a checklist reminding you about the steps you will need to take to provide care at your new location.

The demand for home child care varies from neighborhood to neighborhood. If there is a demand for home child care in your new area and if your agreement is in good standing, the Region will normally enter into a contract with you at your new location. You should expect to be inactive for 1 – 2 weeks after your move while all parts of your contract are brought up to date. Before you may begin providing child care through the Region, you will need:

- ✓ A home safety inspection completed by a home child care caseworker. All elements of the inspection must be in place.
- ✓ Confirmation of liability insurance.
- ✓ Criminal reference check, Family and Children's Services file check and up to date immunizations for any new residents.
- ✓ All elements of your contract up to date – immunization records for all residents, rabies shots for pets, first aid training, etc.
- ✓ A new contract signed by you, a witness and the Home Child Care Caseworker and approved by a Home Child Care Supervisor.

For more information, please refer to the following check list and contact your Home Child Care Caseworker, Supervisor, or Manager.

Caregiver Change of Address Checklist

As soon as possible, please:

- Notify your Home Child Care Caseworker of the date of your move, your new address, and the last day you will be available at your old address. Your caseworker will notify the caseworker in your new area (if applicable).
- Notify the parents of the last day you will be available to provide care at your old address.
- Notify your Home Child Care Caseworker if when you move, you also change your bank. We need this information for your monthly deposit.

Contracting With Our Program



Before you may provide care at your new address, you will need:

- A successful home safety inspection completed by you and the Home Child Care Caseworker. (**All** elements of the home safety inspection must be in place before a contract can be signed – please refer to the “Quarterly Home Safety Checklist”, the Fire Safety Requirements (Schedule B), and your caregiver resource manual or speak to a Home Child Care Caseworker for more information.)
- Written confirmation of liability insurance for your new location
- Criminal Reference Check, Family and Children’s Services file check, and up to date immunization records for **new** residents
- All elements of your contract up to date – immunization records for all residents, rabies shots for pets, first aid training, etc. Your Home Child Care Caseworker will advise you of any outstanding items.
- A new contract signed by you, a witness and the Home Child Care Caseworker and approved by a Home Child Care Supervisor.