

**Parent Guide to Licensed Child Care in Ottawa**



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## Child Care in Ottawa

### 1) Types of child care programs available in Ottawa

There are different types of child care programs available in Ottawa. Options for care include home-based or centre-based child care and programs may be licensed or unlicensed. Child care programs are also available for school-age children. A detailed description on the different types of child care is provided below. This information was gathered from the Ministry of Education's website ([Ontario.ca/childcare](https://www.ontario.ca/childcare)).

#### *a. Licensed vs. unlicensed care*

##### Licensed child care

Licensed child care is government-regulated care that is available in both child care centres and in the homes of approved home child care providers who work with a licensed home child care agency.

Licensed programs are required to meet the provincial standards set by the Ministry of Education and must provide for the health, safety and developmental needs of children. Child care centres must have their license posted near their entrance, and home child care agencies must make their license available to parents upon request. Parents are encouraged to review the license as it may contain important information about terms and conditions within that child care program.

##### Unlicensed child care

In Ontario, unlicensed child care is not regulated by the government. Unlicensed caregivers are not inspected by the Ministry of Education, and are not required to meet provincial standards. Unlicensed child care is often home based, found through word-of-mouth or arranged with family members who provide care. Unlicensed child care providers cannot care for more than 5 children under the age of 6 (including their own children). It is important to note that the Ministry of Education does investigate all complaints received from the public regarding an unlicensed child care provider.

#### *b. Home child care vs. Centre-based child care*

##### Home child care

Individual home child care providers are not licensed by the Ministry of Education. Home child care providers must adhere to the requirements of the Child Care Early Years Act (CCEYA) for Private Home Day Care. In Ontario, the Ministry of Education issues licenses to agencies. Individual caregivers are not licensed. The licensed home child care agency screens, selects and signs a contract with individual home child care providers.

##### Centre-based child care

Centre-based child care can provide care for infants, toddlers, pre-school and school-aged children. Centre-based child care programs may include nursery schools, full-day and extended hours care, and before-and-after-school programs.

### **c School-age care**

Many schools in Ottawa offer before-and after-school care programs for children 44 months and up to and including 12 years of age. Where there is enough demand, schools that offer full-day kindergarten also offer before-and-after-school programs. These play-based programs complement the regular school day with a combination of exploration, guided independent activities, quiet times and outdoor play.

School boards may offer before-and-after-school programs directly, or through licensed third-party providers who offer programs in a school setting. The majority of these programs are licensed, with the exception of some of the school board operated programs. If a school board directly operates a program, it is regulated by the Ministry of Education

#### **2) Accessing information about child care**

Parents and/or guardians often have many questions and concerns when seeking the right type of child care for their children. The Ministry of Education provides tools and resources to support parents in making an informed decision. Resources include a [Registry of Unlicensed Child Care Violations](#) for reported violations as well as a tip sheet for parents on the [common questions to ask child care providers](#) before choosing a child care program.

For information on resources available for children with special needs, please contact the [Children's Integration Support Services](#) (CISS). CISS provides resources and funding so that children with a special need(s), who are enrolled in licensed programs, are able to receive the extra supports they need. To contact CISS, please call 613-736-1913 extension 231.

#### **3) Cost of care**

The cost of child care is set by the individual child care provider. As a result, the cost of child care in Ottawa varies greatly. Factors influencing the cost of care include location, rent or mortgage costs, property taxes, staffing, and building maintenance costs. The tables below show **the average cost of licensed care in Ottawa** (as of December 2015).

**Table 1 - Home Child Care Average Daily Rates**

<b>Rate (hours of care)</b>	<b>Daily Rate</b>
up to 10 hours	\$ 43.28
up to 7 hours	\$ 34.21
up to 5 hours	\$ 28.06
up to 4 hours	\$ 23.08
up to 2 hours	\$ 18.05

Table 2 - Centre-based Average Daily Rates

Age Group	Daily Rate
Infant (Younger than 18 months)	\$ 73.09
Toddler (18 months or older but younger than 30 months)	\$ 59.92
Preschool (30 months or older but younger than 6 years)	\$ 45.76
Kindergarten (44 months or older but younger than 68 months)	\$ 31.38
Before & After School (Extended Day Program) (44 months up to and including 12)	\$ 24.27
School Age (68 months up to and including 12 years)	\$ 20.62

#### 4) City of Ottawa Child Care Registry & Waitlist

The [Child Care Registry and Waitlist](#) is an online application tool for parents and/or guardians looking for licensed child care in Ottawa. Parents and/or guardians can:

- Choose from home-based care, centre-based care, school age care, nursery and/or preschool programs
- Apply for full fee care, a child care fee subsidy, or both The application is available online at <https://onehsn.com/Ottawa>.

If access to a computer is limited, parents can visit any of the four Community and Social Support Centres to receive assistance in completing the online application. The Community and Social Support Centres are open from 8:30am to 4:00pm and are located at:

- Central: 370 Catherine Street, 2nd floor
- East: Beacon Hill Shopping Centre, 2339 Ogilvie Road
- South: 2020 Walkley Road (near Conroy Road)
- West: 100 Constellation Drive (near Baseline and Woodroffe), 2nd floor East

The Employment and Social Services offices can be contacted by calling 3-1-1, selecting your preferred language and choosing option 4 for “daycare”.

If technical support during the completion of an application is required, families may e-mail [Support@OneHSN.com](mailto:Support@OneHSN.com) or call 1-888-722-1540.

*Important:* Parents and/or guardian must log into their account every 60 days to ensure their profile on the Child Care Registry and Waitlist remains active. Parents who fail to log in at 60 days will receive a second reminder notice at 90 days, as well as a final reminder notice at 120 days. This final reminder notifies parents that they have 72 hours to log into their account otherwise their applications in the Child Care Registry and Waitlist will be removed and the child will no longer appear on the waitlist for care.

## 5) Reporting concerns and complaints

To report a complaint about a child care centre or home day care, please contact the Ministry of Education:

- Licensed care: 1-877-510-5333, [childcare\\_ontario@ontario.ca](mailto:childcare_ontario@ontario.ca)
- Unlicensed care: 1-844-516-6263, [UCCV@Ontario.ca](mailto:UCCV@Ontario.ca)

When making a complaint, please provide as much information as possible. Please include:

- Name of the child care centre or private-home day care provider
- Address of the child care centre, or location where licensed private-home day care is being provided
- A description of your concern

## Information on Child Care Fee Subsidy

### 1) What is a Child Care Fee Subsidy?

A child care fee subsidy helps with the cost of child care for eligible families. A fee subsidy may cover all, or part of a family's child care costs. A fee subsidy is available to children from ages 0 to 12. Parents can apply for a child care fee subsidy online within their Child Care Registry & Waitlist application.

At the time of application, parents are required to sign a Rights and Responsibilities agreement, acknowledging that they understand the terms and conditions associated with receiving a child care fee subsidy. This includes information about how to maintain their ongoing eligibility.

### 2) Rights & responsibilities for parents with a fee subsidy

It is important to understand the rights and responsibilities associated with receiving a fee subsidy. The Rights and Responsibilities/Consent form includes, but is not limited to the following:

- i. If a disagreement with a decision made about the fee subsidy file occurs, a written request may be made within 10 business days to have this decision reviewed;
- ii. For subsidy purposes, each child is permitted up to 36 days of paid absence days per calendar year;
- iii. Families are not eligible for subsidy for absences from the City of Ottawa for longer than 30 consecutive days; and
- iv. While on the City of Ottawa's Child Care Registry and Wait List, changes to the family's situation should be updated on the Child Care Registry & Waitlist. If a family is in receipt of ongoing child care fee subsidy, changes can be reported to [Subsidycoordinators@ottawa.ca](mailto:Subsidycoordinators@ottawa.ca). If a family does not know who their Child Care Case Worker is they can find out by calling 3-1-1, selecting their preferred language and choosing option 4 for 'daycare'.

To obtain a copy of the "[Childcare Subsidy Program Rights and Responsibilities Agreement and Consent to Disclose and Verify Information](#)" please visit [ottawa.ca/childcare](http://ottawa.ca/childcare) or contact one of our Social Support Centres at 3-1-1 (contact information on page 4).

### 3) How a family qualifies for fee subsidy

The Province of Ontario sets the eligibility criteria for families who are applying for a fee subsidy. In order to qualify for a fee subsidy, an individual or family must be both financially eligible and have a qualifying activity. When determining eligibility for a fee subsidy, City staff review the following factors:

- Families must be a legal resident or have an application to become a resident in Canada
- Families must be able to provide proof of residence in the City of Ottawa
- Families must demonstrate a verifiable financial need
- Families must demonstrate a verifiable reason for care

When determining a verifiable reason for care, City staff considers, but does not limit decisions to, the following:

- Working (full-time, part-time, shift work or self-employed)
- Going to school
- Looking for work
- Child has a special need(s)
- Parent has a special need(s)
- Referral by a professional agency such as the Children's Aid Society

In the City of Ottawa, there is a waitlist for eligible families to access a fee subsidy. It is for this reason, and in line with Provincial priorities, that the City prioritizes eligible families for access to a fee subsidy. When an application is completed in the Child Care Registry and Waitlist, City staff consider various socio-economic factors to determine priority.

Families applying for a child care fee subsidy are required to submit certain [documents](#) in order to determine eligibility. City staff will contact the family to confirm the status of their application once all required documentation has been received and processed. Eligibility for a child care fee subsidy does not guarantee a child care space. A child care provider will contact the family directly once a space becomes available.

If a family has qualified for a partial fee subsidy but feel that their portion is not affordable once they have secured childcare, the family can ask to have their file reviewed by contacting [childcaresubsidyinformation@ottawa.ca](mailto:childcaresubsidyinformation@ottawa.ca).

*Important:* If a child is currently in a child care program, the parent and/or guardian is responsible for paying the full cost of care until the subsidy start-date is approved.

#### 4) What if families don't qualify or disagree with a decision?

If a parent and/or guardian do not agree with a decision about their fee subsidy, a review of the City's decision may be requested. This process is called an **internal review**.

An internal review is completed by staff at the Employment and Social Services Centres. A request for an internal review can be made in writing and should:

- State that you are requesting an internal review
- Explain the disagreement with the decision (optional)
- Include any additional information that may help in the review
- Include the requestor's full name and phone number
- Include the requestor's signature and the date

Please e-mail [Childcare Subsidy](#), fax or hand-deliver an internal review request to a Employment and Social Services Centre within 10 days of receiving the decision letter.

If an internal review request letter cannot be sent in within 10 days due to reasons beyond the family's control, the City may still complete an internal review. The family must note in the request letter the reason(s) why more time is needed. Please keep a copy of the request. Results of the internal review will be returned to the family within 30 days of the City receiving the written request.

Families may choose to seek advice from a community legal clinic. Legal Aid Ontario can be contacted at:

- 1-800-668-8258 (Toll Free)
- TTY users can call: 1-866-641-8867 (Toll Free TTY) online at [www.legalaid.on.ca](http://www.legalaid.on.ca) or by e-mail at [info@lao.on.ca](mailto:info@lao.on.ca)

If a family does not qualify for a fee subsidy they may choose to remain on the Child Care Registry & Waitlist for a full fee space.

#### **5) Reporting changes in your situation**

It is important for the parent and/or guardian to keep their City of Ottawa child care subsidy unit and their Child Care Registry & Waitlist profile up-to-date with current information. Parents with a fee subsidy must:

- Report changes in employment/school, address, phone number, marital status, etc.
- Pay their child care fees to the City of Ottawa
- Respond to all letters and submit information by the deadline date
- Report if there is a stop or start in receipt of Ontario Works income assistance

Changes can be reported by:

- E-mail to [subsidycoordinators@ottawa.ca](mailto:subsidycoordinators@ottawa.ca)
- Fax (613) 580-2447
- Or in person at one of the four Employment and Social Services (see page 4 for contact information)

## **6) Transferring child care programs**

Families in receipt of a fee subsidy can transfer children from one child care provider to another as long as that provider has a vacancy and a contract with the City of Ottawa. The wait time to transfer will vary for each provider. Parents and/or guardians who wish to transfer their child must have an active profile on the Child Care Registry & Waitlist. Families wishing to leave or transfer from their current child care provider must provide 10 days' notice to City staff and the agency. Please see the contact information in section 5 on how to inform the City of this change.

If a family moves outside the boundaries of the City of Ottawa, they are no longer eligible for a fee subsidy in the municipality. To apply for a fee subsidy outside of Ottawa please contact the municipality directly.

## **7) Paying a partial child care fee**

Parents and/or guardians in receipt of a fee subsidy may have to pay a portion of the cost themselves. Child care fees must be paid directly to the City of Ottawa. Options for payment include:

Pre-authorized bank payments

- Pre-authorized credit card payments
- In person at any of the City of Ottawa's Client Service Centres

If there have any questions regarding payments please contact the City of Ottawa's Financial Services Unit at 613-274-0427

If a payment has been missed, it is the family's responsibility to inform the City of Ottawa's Financial Services Unit. If a payment is no longer able to be made due to a loss of income, contact the Financial Services Unit. Families may be referred to the subsidy office to review their fee subsidy file.

## **8) Absences from a child care program**

Every child with a fee subsidy receives an allotment of 36 days each calendar year for absences from the child care program (days may be pro-rated dependent on the start date of the child). Absent days include days when the child is sick, on vacation or any other absence. Statutory holidays or days that the child care program does not offer service are excluded. Parents should be aware that:

- Absent days may not be banked and carried over from year to year
- The number of days away is pro-rated for the calendar year based on the number of months left in current year and amount of care to be used, and
- In cases of joint custody, each parent is entitled to the prorated number of absent days based on their custody arrangement (for example, 50-50 custody means each parent would get half of the allotted days)

Families are required to contact the child care program directly to report any absences. A family may request additional days of absence if the child has a documented special need or illness that will require additional time away from the program. A request for additional days of absence can be made through the assigned Child Care Case Worker at [SubsidyCoordinators@ottawa.ca](mailto:SubsidyCoordinators@ottawa.ca) prior to exceeding the 36 absent days. If the request is not approved, the family will be required to pay the full fee for the number of extra days the child was absent.