

Finding Child Care in the Annapolis Valley

Developed by the Valley Regional Enterprise Network with information from the Province of Nova Scotia - Department of Education and Early Childhood Development



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the
valley
REGIONAL ENTERPRISE NETWORK

Child Care in Nova Scotia

Choosing child care for your family is an important decision. It requires time, planning, and information. The Province of Nova Scotia's step-by-step guide to choosing child care has been developed by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to guide you in your search for the child care arrangement that best suits your needs.

Quality child care should offer your child a place to grow, learn and be happy. Children should have many chances to play indoors and outdoors and to spend time with other children and caring adults. Both you and your child should feel comfortable and secure in the child care setting and have the opportunity to ask any questions you may have.

In Nova Scotia, as in other provinces in Canada, there are a number of child care options available to you. You can have your child cared for in a licensed child care centre, or a home that is approved by a licensed family home day care agency. You may also choose unlicensed care where your child receives care by someone in their home or in yours. Each setting has some advantages.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) ensures that regulated child care programs meet and maintain specific provincial standards, which are set out in the Day Care Act and Regulations. The standards ensure that the health, safety, and developmental needs of the children are met. Examples of requirements include:

- group size
- ratio; the number of children that can be cared for vs. the number of staff required
- staff qualifications
- healthy nutrition, including meals and snacks
- hygiene and cleanliness, including space for washing and bathroom areas
- emergency and safety procedures, including monthly fire drills
- behaviour guidance policies
- indoor and outdoor play equipment, toys, and furniture
- adequate indoor play space and natural light
- current Criminal Record Checks and Child Abuse Registry for all staff. Regulated child care facilities are required to maintain both on file for all staff.
- Daily Program standards

Please note that DEECD only monitors care provided in homes that are approved by a licensed family home day care agency. It is up to individual care providers to choose whether or not they register with an agency. In all situations, it is important for parents and guardians to scrutinize the care their children receive. This is especially important if the child care setting you choose is not a regulated child care centre or approved family home day care program.

If you have concerns about your child's care please contact Licensing Services at 1-877-223-9555 or the Early Childhood Development Services at 902-424-1876.

Choosing Child Care

1. Assess Your Needs

Before you start your search for child care, think about what matters most to your family. Consider the following list of questions to help identify your priorities:

- Do all of your children need to be accommodated at the same child care centre, private home, or family home day care, or are you able to manage separate drop off and pick up times?
- Do you have a preferred location for child care e.g., close to your home, or close to work?
- Do the hours of operation match your family's schedule? Is there a chance you may need care for your children outside of typical working hours?
- Do you need infant care?
- Do you need care for a child who has special developmental or dietary needs?

2. Consider Your Options

In Nova Scotia, licensed child care options include child care centres and approved family home day care.

Licensed Care Centres

Child care centres can be licensed to care for children from birth to age 12. To be licensed, child care centres must comply with the Day Care Act and Regulations, and are inspected and monitored regularly.

Some advantages:

- children have opportunities to play with other children, which is important for healthy development and well-being
- professional staff, with training in early childhood education will be present
- activities and the play environment are inclusive of all children and designed to support optimal child development
- centres are required to meet provincial regulations and standards for care
- policies and procedures must be documented and cover important topics such as daily fees, holidays, program goals, and health and safety practices
- specific adult-to-child ratios and group sizes must be maintained
- meals and/or snacks will meet provincial food and nutrition standards
- child care subsidy to assist with daily fees is available to families who qualify
- receipts are provided so that families can claim child care costs on annual tax returns

Approved Family Home Day Care (FHDC)

Family home day care is child care offered in someone's home under the supervision of a licensed family home day care agency. Agencies are licensed to approve, manage, and monitor the care delivered by care providers in their own homes.

Some advantages:

- family atmosphere: group sizes are small
- meals and snacks are healthy and meet provincial food and nutrition standards
- family home day care agencies provide assistance, support and monitoring to the care provider
- care providers must meet standards of care and have clear policies and procedures
- flexibility in schedules and hours may be available
- child care subsidy to assist with daily fees is available to families who qualify
- receipts are provided so that families can claim a portion of child care costs on annual tax returns
- children of multiple ages (infants to 12 years) can be cared for by one provider

Unlicensed Care

In Nova Scotia, individuals can look after up to six children of any age, or eight school-aged children without a license. Unlicensed child care arrangements are made privately between the parents and the provider.

Some examples include:

- a friend or relative who cares for your child in your own home or in their own home
- a babysitter who cares for your child in your own home or in their own home
- a nanny who lives with your family

While you may find there are some advantages to unlicensed arrangements, it is important to evaluate the environment where your child will be cared for.

Questions to consider include:

- Is the environment safe, stimulating and developmentally appropriate?
- Is the person providing the care capable and trustworthy?
- Does the person have any credentials or special qualifications and experience to care for children?
- Are you confident that the person has basic skills such as first aid training?
- Has the person provided proof that she or he has not been found guilty of a criminal offence that would make her or him unsuitable to care for children?
- Is this person in the Child Abuse Registry?

Pre-Primary Program

The provincial Pre-Primary Program is a play-based learning program that supports young children's development and lays the foundation for future school success. The program is free for families and is flexible to meet each family's needs; eligible children can attend every day, or they can attend only a few days a week. Although children do not have to attend Pre-Primary to enroll in grade Primary, the program helps children prepare for school entry.

Children must be at least four years of age on or before December 31 of the year they enroll.

Children must live within the catchment area, as defined by the Regional Centre for Education or the Conseil Scolaire Acadien Provincial, of a school where they wish to attend the Pre-primary Program.

Pre-Primary will be available in all school catchment areas and transportation will be available to all Pre-Primary sites. We encourage families to get in touch with their home school as soon as possible to enroll in the 2020-21 school year. For more information, please visit: <https://www.ednet.ns.ca/pre-primary>.

3. Find Child Care

To start your search, make a list of child care programs in your area. Try some of the following sources to help make your list and refer to the contacts section of this guide:

- Nova Scotia's [Directory of Licensed Child Care Facilities](#)
- Childcare Resource and Research Unit website [*Finding Quality Child Care: A Guide for Parents in Canada*](#)
- Recommendations from trusted friends, relatives, neighbours, or coworkers
- Online resources (message boards, parenting websites, etc.)
- Family Resource Centre, Early Intervention Program or community school
- Yellow Pages
- Community centres

4. Contact Child Care Centres/Providers

Contact each of the child care centres/providers on your list. Think of this step as a first interview. Speak with the director, provider, or owner/operator and have a list of questions ready to ask. The answers to your questions will help you choose the places you'd like to visit in person. Download and print the list of [Telephone Interview Questions \(PDF\)](#) to help you with this part of the process.

At the end of each interview, decide if you'd like to book an appointment to visit the child care program/provider in person.

5. Visit Child Care Centres/Providers

You've made the calls. You've narrowed down your search. Now you're ready to visit the programs/providers you're considering. It's very important to visit the home or child care centre before enrolling your child. During your visit, you'll want to:

- Talk with the staff, owner/operator
- Observe the interactions between the children and educators
- Assess the physical setting and general atmosphere in the centre or home

[Download and print the Child Care Centre Visit Checklist \(PDF\) to take with you on your visits.](#)

6. Make Your Decision

Once you've completed your visits, it's time to consider how each setting could meet your family's and your child's needs and priorities.

- Review the information you've gathered and discuss it with family and friends.
- It is important to trust your initial feelings about the environment, the programs, and the educators or child care providers
- Finally, contact the child care centre or care provider you've selected to confirm your decision.

Help with the Cost of Child Care

Child Care Subsidy

Nova Scotia's child care subsidy program helps eligible families pay for regulated child care. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development provides subsidies to the child care centre or family home day care on your behalf. The subsidy is attached to your child, not the child care centre. If you decide to change child care centres, the subsidy goes with you.

Who can apply?

Subsidies are available if your child is 12 years old or younger and will be attending a full-day or school age program. Eligibility is also based on your family's social need, residency status, liquid assets, and financial criteria. You must be eligible in all areas to qualify for child care subsidy.

How to apply?

You can apply for child care subsidy using one of the following methods:

- contact a [child care subsidy caseworker](#)
- download and print an [application](#) form and mail it to the Early Years Branch
- pick up an application form at a child care centre, family home day care agency, or by contacting a child care subsidy caseworker

Your application will be reviewed by a caseworker. You will be required to provide proof of your income (income tax Notice of Assessment) and your Social Insurance Number with your application. An interview may be scheduled with a caseworker.

Child Care Fees

It is your responsibility to find a child care centre or family home day care for your child. You will need to let the Child Care Subsidy Caseworker know when your child will be starting and what the daily fees are.

Paying Child Care Fees

If approved for subsidy, your caseworker will let you know how much your subsidy will be and how much you will be required to pay. Your child care centre or family home day care will bill the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development directly for the portion of your fees to be paid through subsidy. Be sure to keep copies of all forms related to your child care subsidy application.

On-Going Eligibility

Eligibility for child care subsidy must be re-established every 12 months, or more often if determined by the caseworker. If you are receiving a subsidy, you are required to notify your caseworker of any changes in your financial circumstances within seven (7) days of the change. If you fail to notify your caseworker, you may lose your subsidy and may be required to pay back the subsidy you've already received.

Introducing Your Child to Child Care

Child care can be an enriching and satisfying experience for you and your child. Whether your child goes to a child care centre, a family home day care, or is cared for in a private home, it can take time for you and your child to adjust.

Getting used to Child Care

Depending on your child's age, personality and development, feeling comfortable in child care may take anywhere from a few days to a few weeks. Your child's introduction to child care will be easier if your child care provider understands that you and your child may feel some uncertainty about being separated from each other. Your provider can help relieve your concerns and help your child adjust to new surroundings.

How can you help?

You can help by preparing both yourself and your child well in advance. You can make it easier for your child care provider to help by sharing information about your child's routines, your culture and family and your hopes for your child. If you have specific concerns or needs, you should feel comfortable sharing these. There are things you can do to help your child adjust to child care:

- Make sure you feel good about the child care arrangement. If you feel anxious about your decision, your child may sense it and become anxious too. Talk to your child care provider about any lingering doubts or questions you may have.
- Speak positively about the child care setting and the staff and children before care begins. Your child's attitude is likely to reflect your confidence and enthusiasm.
- Visit the centre or home with your child ahead of time and more than once, if possible. Your child can meet the provider and other children and become familiar with what happens there.
- Go with your child on the first day. If you can't make it, arrange for someone your child knows and is comfortable with to go.
- If possible, ease into care gradually. For example, on the first day, take your child for an hour or so, then leave together. Over the next few days, stay for extended periods of time. As your child becomes more comfortable, gradually increase the time away until your child is spending the full day in care.
- Allow your child to take a favourite toy or comfort item that reminds them of you or of home. Having something familiar is comforting when everything else is new.
- Say good-bye, even if your child is playing happily. State clearly when you'll be back using words your child understands. For example, "I'll be back after you finish your snack and play outside." Your child needs to feel certain that you'll return. If you disappear without saying anything, your child may become upset.
- Make sure you pick up your child when you said you would.

What can you do at home?

It's not unusual for children to experience behaviour changes while they adjust to child care. It's important to be patient and understanding. Your child is adjusting to separation from you and learning to cope with new people, a new place, new routines and activities. Spend time with your child, observe, ask questions, and listen. Direct communication is the best way to find out about what has happened during the day.

Help your child get used to child care by making sure there are no other major changes in your child's life. For example, do not begin toilet training or experiment with new foods during this time. Emphasize familiar routines and activities that will make your child feel secure.

Your confidence and positive attitude will trickle down to your child. Both of you will get used to the child care arrangement more quickly and begin to enjoy the benefits it can have for your family

Child Care Resources and Contact Information

<p>Province of Nova Scotia</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nova Scotia Government's list of regulated daycares (searchable by county) • Annapolis Valley Centre for Regional Education • Listing of regulated daycares by county included below
<p>Family Resource Centres Family resource centres provide oversight to regulated in home daycares. Families can reach out to enquire about vacancies in any of their registered in home daycares.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kings County Family Resource Centre • Family Matters – Annapolis County Family Resource Centre • Greenwood Military Family Resource Centre • Family Resource Centre of West Hants
<p>Additional Local Resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valley Family Fun – resources for families looking for daycare • Facebook Groups (include unregulated day homes/day cares): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Annapolis Valley Dayhomes ○ Childcare Needs Annapolis Valley • Finding Quality Child Care in Canada

Nova Scotia Government's List of Regulated Daycares

Facility Name	Address	County	Program Type	Age Category
<u>AVC Family Tree Children's Centre</u>	295 Commercial St. Middleton	Annapolis County	Full Day	Infant: 0 - 17 months Toddler: 18 - 35 months Preschooler: 36 months - 5 years (not in school)
<u>Family Matters Family Home Day Care Agency</u>	10 Middle Rd. Lawrencetown	Annapolis County	Family Home Day Care Agency	N/A
<u>Good Beginnings Day Care</u>	9 Grange St. Annapolis Royal	Annapolis County	Full Day School Age	Toddler: 18 - 35 months Preschooler: 36 months - 5 years (not in school) School Age: 4 - 12 years (in school)
<u>Just Right Child Care</u>	15143 Highway 1 Wilmot	Annapolis County	Full Day School Age	Toddler: 18 - 35 months Preschooler: 36 months - 5 years (not in school) School Age: 4 - 12 years (in school)
<u>Middleton & District Day Care Centre</u>	167 Commercial St. Unit 1 Middleton	Annapolis County	Full Day	Toddler: 18 - 35 months Preschooler: 36 months - 5 years (not in school)
<u>Brooklyn Early Learning and Childcare Centre</u>	86 Dunlop Rd. Brooklyn	Hants County	Full Day School Age	Infant: 0 - 17 months Toddler: 18 - 35 months Preschooler: 36 months - 5 years (not in school) School Age: 4 - 12 years (in school)

<u>Newport Kiddie Corner</u>	22 Chalet Dr. Newport Corner	Hants County	Part Day	Preschooler: 36 months - 5 years (not in school)
<u>Windsor Day Care Centre</u>	236 Victoria St. Windsor	Hants County	Full Day School Age	Infant: 0 - 17 months Toddler: 18 - 35 months Preschooler: 36 months - 5 years (not in school) School Age: 4 - 12 years (in school)
<u>Windsor Nursery School</u>	122 Cottage St. Windsor	Hants County	Part Day	Preschooler: 36 months - 5 years (not in school)
<u>14 Wing Greenwood Military Family Resource Centre</u>	64 School Rd. CFB Greenwood	Kings County	Full Day School Age	Infant: 0 - 17 months Toddler: 18 - 35 months Preschooler: 36 months - 5 years (not in school) School Age: 4 - 12 years (in school)
<u>14 Wing Greenwood Military Family Resource Centre Preschool Programs</u>	83 School St. Greenwood	Kings County	Part Day	Toddler: 18 - 35 months Preschooler: 36 months - 5 years (not in school)
<u>ABC Nursery School</u>	990 Scott Dr. Kentville	Kings County	Part Day	Toddler: 18 - 35 months Preschooler: 36 months - 5 years (not in school) School Age: 4 - 12 years (in school)
<u>Aldershot Afterschool Association</u>	446 Aldershot Rd. Kentville	Kings County	School Age	School Age: 4 - 12 years (in school)
<u>Apple Tree Landing Family Education Centre</u>	1063 J Jordan Rd. Canning	Kings County	Full Day School Age	Infant: 0 - 17 months Toddler: 18 - 35 months Preschooler: 36 months - 5 years (not in school) School Age: 4 - 12 years (in school)

<u>Berwick & District Nursery School</u>	155 Orchard St. Berwick	Kings County	Part Day	Toddler: 18 - 35 months Preschooler: 36 months - 5 years (not in school)
<u>Building Blocks PreSchool</u>	14 Huron Ave. Wolfville	Kings County	Full Day School Age	Toddler: 18 - 35 months Preschooler: 36 months - 5 years (not in school) School Age: 4 - 12 years (in school)
<u>Coldbrook After School Program</u>	2305 English Mountain Rd. Coldbrook	Kings County	School Age	School Age: 4 - 12 years (in school)
<u>Count Your Blessings Child Care</u>	1406 South Bishop Rd. Coldbrook	Kings County	Full Day School Age	Toddler: 18 - 35 months Preschooler: 36 months - 5 years (not in school) School Age: 4 - 12 years (in school)
<u>Dwight Ross Kids Care</u>	949 Tremont Mountain Rd. Greenwood	Kings County	Part Day School Age	Preschooler: 36 months - 5 years (not in school) School Age: 4 - 12 years (in school)
<u>Evangeline Child Care Centre</u>	85 River St. Kentville	Kings County	Full Day School Age	Toddler: 18 - 35 months Preschooler: 36 months - 5 years (not in school) School Age: 4 - 12 years (in school)
<u>Gaspereau After School Program Society</u>	2781 Greenfield Rd. Gaspereau	Kings County	School Age	School Age: 4 - 12 years (in school)
<u>Horton High Child Care Centre</u>	75 Greenwich Rd. S Wolfville Ridge	Kings County	Full Day	Infant: 0 - 17 months Toddler: 18 - 35 months Preschooler: 36 months - 5 years (not in school)

<u>Kings County Family Resource Centre Home Day Care Agency</u>	503 Main St. Kentville	Kings County	Family Home Day Care Agency	N/A
<u>Kingstec Campus Learning Centre</u>	236 Belcher St. Kentville	Kings County	Full Day	Infant: 0 - 17 months Toddler: 18 - 35 months Preschooler: 36 months - 5 years (not in school)
<u>Kingston Before and After School Program</u>	630 Pine Ridge Ave. Kingston	Kings County	School Age	School Age: 4 - 12 years (in school)
<u>Little Pumpkins Inc</u>	58 School St. Kentville	Kings County	Full Day School Age	Toddler: 18 - 35 months Preschooler: 36 months - 5 years (not in school) School Age: 4 - 12 years (in school)
<u>Love Your Child Infant & Children's Centre</u>	6146 Highway 1 Hwy. Cambridge	Kings County	Full Day Part Day School Age	Infant: 0 - 17 months Toddler: 18 - 35 months Preschooler: 36 months - 5 years (not in school) School Age: 4 - 12 years (in school)
<u>Mayflower After-School Program</u>	1261 Belcher St. Port Williams	Kings County	School Age	School Age: 4 - 12 years (in school)
<u>Mrs. Dee's Afterschool Program</u>	34 Jones Rd. New Minas	Kings County	School Age	School Age: 4 - 12 years (in school)
<u>New Minas Children's Centre</u>	9453 Commercial St. New Minas	Kings County	Full Day Part Day School Age	Toddler: 18 - 35 months Preschooler: 36 months - 5 years (not in school) School Age: 4 - 12 years (in school)

<u>Next Step K.C.A. Afterschool Program (The)</u>	35 Gary Pearl Dr. Kentville	Kings County	School Age	School Age: 4 - 12 years (in school)
<u>Orchards Away Day Care Centre</u>	243 Commercial St. Berwick	Kings County	Full Day Part Day School Age	Toddler: 18 - 35 months Preschooler: 36 months - 5 years (not in school) School Age: 4 - 12 years (in school)
<u>Stepping Stone Preschool and Childcare Centre</u>	1733 Highway 1 Hwy. Auburn	Kings County	Full Day School Age	Toddler: 18 - 35 months Preschooler: 36 months - 5 years (not in school) School Age: 4 - 12 years (in school)
<u>Wee Folk Centre Inc.</u>	904 Central Ave. Greenwood	Kings County	Full Day School Age	Toddler: 18 - 35 months Preschooler: 36 months - 5 years (not in school) School Age: 4 - 12 years (in school)
<u>Wee Folk Centre School Age Program</u>	963 Central Ave. Greenwood	Kings County	School Age	School Age: 4 - 12 years (in school)
<u>Wolfville Children's Centre</u>	17 Earnscliffe Ave. Wolfville	Kings County	Full Day School Age	Toddler: 18 - 35 months Preschooler: 36 months - 5 years (not in school) School Age: 4 - 12 years (in school)
<u>Wolfville Children's Centre School Age Program</u>	30 Highland Ave. Wolfville	Kings County	School Age	School Age: 4 - 12 years (in school)