



EASING INTO CHILD CARE

Transitioning into child care is a big move for children (and families), but it doesn't have to be difficult.

The time has finally come. You are putting your little one into child care and your anxiety is at an all-time high. While you might be feeling a bit of self-doubt or guilt, know that your concerns are completely normal, and you are not alone. According to Statistics Canada, more than half (54 per cent) of all Canadian parents or caregivers use child care for their children aged four and under.

But, let's be candid. The thought of someone else looking after your child can be stressful at first. How will she cope without you? What if he cries? What if you cry? While it can be a trying time, there are ways that you can make the transition as smooth as possible.

An Excellent Choice

You've already taken a great first step by choosing Family Day. As one of the oldest and most well-respected agencies in Canada, Family Day is focused on ensuring children receive the highest-quality child care and early learning

experience possible. And, studies show that when the quality of early childhood education and care is high, and when young children have good relationships with their care providers, their learning, development, and social and emotional maturity is promoted.¹

You might be thinking: "That sounds great, but how will I get through the first few weeks?" You'll get through them just fine — with the help of our great educators.

"We take great steps to make sure families are comfortable and that children get used to their new educators," says Lisa Shortall, Manager of Training at Family Day. "It's ingrained in the Family Day culture to be mindful of everyone, and to work with families on transitions."

Being Prepared

Families are a big part of the process in helping to ease the transition into care.

It is important to prepare a child (who is old enough to understand separation) for the transition to child care ahead of time by talking about the upcoming change in positive terms.²

Lianne Terry, Assistant Program Manager at Family Day, has some suggestions for getting prepared: talking to children about where they are going; getting children excited about the people they will meet; and visiting the centre a few times before starting care.

Some other tips, says Terry, include: writing down special instructions for the educators (i.e., sleeping habits, languages understood, etc.); packing enough supplies — from diapers to clothing to ointment; bringing a security item or stuffed toy for the child; and bringing a family photograph. (See *Tips for Transitioning* on page 2). And feel free to call in to check on your child — we really encourage family communication.

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Getting into a Routine

At Family Day, we know how important it is to establish a consistent routine to help ease transitions. Our educators perform a variety of routines with the children throughout the day, but it is also important for families to get used to regular schedules.

Make sure your child is getting into a consistent sleep routine — particularly after the summer months. And then, try to ensure you stick to consistent drop-off and pick-up times so your child knows when the separation will start and stop. For children, establishing this routine will help to promote trust that their parents or caregivers will, indeed, be returning each day.³

“Every child has his or her own temperament, which will affect how well they adapt,” says Shortall. “If they cry at the beginning, it’s fine — it’s a normal, healthy attachment. If they don’t cry, that’s just fine, too.”

Transitions into Other Groups

While transitioning into child care takes some getting used to, moving from one group to another (i.e., from the infant room to the toddler room) can also affect children.

However, research on young children’s transition processes suggests that with increased time in child care, children become more engaged. Studies have found that compared with children with

less child care experience, children who have been in care for longer are happier in their environment, and are more peer-oriented and sociable.⁴

This might make the transitions within levels of care slightly easier for children. “But it really does depend on the child’s personality,” notes Shortall. “For any transition, we are very strategic.” This includes conversations with families, talking to children, introducing children to new educators, and moving them from one group to another in a gradual, organized fashion.

The New Normal

While there may be a few bumps along the way, the new child care setting will soon become everyone’s “new normal.”

In rare instances, children will have trouble with a transition. Terry says families should watch for big changes in a child’s behaviour — for example, reverting from a cup to a bottle, starting to wet the bed at night, or acting in aggressive ways. If big behavioural changes are evident, families are advised to talk to the centre staff to work out ways to adapt.

Usually, it is just a matter of time before everyone adjusts. By being prepared, keeping the lines of communication open, and establishing a good routine, the transition into child care can be a very positive one.

1, 4 - *Toddlers’ Transition to Out-of-Home Care*, Wilfred Datler et al
2, 3 - *Transitioning into Child Care*, Kathryn Patricelli



TIPS FOR TRANSITIONING

While each child is different, there are a few things you can do as a parent or caregiver to make the transition into child care a little smoother:

Communicate. Speak openly and honestly with centre staff, and ask how they help to transition new children into their program. Offer as much information about your child as possible so they can create a transitional period that best suits your child.

Pay a visit or two. Before the first full day, visit the centre a few times with your child and stay for an hour or so. Your child will see familiar faces and get to know the location, so it’s not so sudden and overwhelming.

Make a list. You might worry about seeming overprotective, but writing down information about your child and giving it to the staff will help them understand your child’s personality and preferences. That can mean less trial and error.

Keep it routine. Making your child aware of his or her schedule during the day is important. Talk to your child about the schedule, what to expect, and when you will be back. Some families even create a ritual for good-byes (i.e., a certain amount of hugs each morning).

Bring items from home. Bringing something special from home, such as a blanket or stuffed toy, can help children in a new child care situation. It brings a sense of the familiar and can often calm children down when they feel upset. A photograph of your family is also a good item to bring to a new child care situation.

Info from: *Tips for Transitioning into Daycare* by Tammy Gold; *Ways to Prepare Your Child for Child Care* by Deborah Rycus

Message from
Joan Arruda, CEO



WELCOME TO FAMILY DAY

It is my pleasure to welcome all new and returning children and their families to our programs. Your choice of child care is a very important decision. Naturally, you are concerned about your child's education and safety within the school and child care environments. Thank you for choosing a Family Day program and putting your trust in us.

Family Day is a multi-service, early learning organization with services in both centre-based care and licensed home child care. The agency is also very strong in family-centred practice and offers family support programs in our EarlyON Child and Family Centres, All Our Kids (AOK) programs in York Region, and other programs funded through The United Way. In addition, we have Integration Coordinators who support children with exceptional needs in the Every Child Belongs program in the City of Toronto.

You will find the Family Day Handbook and Program Statement in your welcome package and on our website. I encourage you to become familiar with both of these documents as they constitute our commitment to you and to your children.

At Family Day, we encourage agency-family partnerships and value them as a way of working within our communities. Each year we conduct an online survey and we would appreciate your feedback. We also invite you to join us for our curriculum nights and other events.

Cheers, Joan

JOIN US FOR A FUN DAY IN THE FOREST

Get outside with us! Family Day is holding an outdoor event next month – and you are all invited. The event will kick off Family Day Outdoor Learning Adventures, an ongoing, agency-wide focus on nature.

The event will be held at the Kortright Centre for Conservation in Woodbridge on Saturday, October 13 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

All children and families in our programs, along with Family Day

staff and caregivers, are invited to come and enjoy a day of hands-on nature activities in the forest. A variety of activity stations will be facilitated throughout the day by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority.



OPEN DOORS
FAMILY DAY OUTDOOR
LEARNING ADVENTURES

Get Ready To Roll

Mark your calendars! The eighth annual Bowling for Family Day will take place on Saturday, April 13, 2019 at two locations: Markham Bowl and Brunswick Zone Bramalea. It's time to start thinking about forming a team and innovative ways to fundraise. More information will be available in the months to come.



Our United Way Campaign

Family Day will once again participate in the annual United Way Campaign in 2018. The campaign raises money for the charity in a variety of ways, including dance-a-thons and an annual CN Tower Climb. Thanks to your generous donations, Family Day's 2017 campaign was a success, and we hope 2018 will be just as positive.



Thanks for Participating in our Survey

"Thank you" to those who took part in Family Day's 2018 Parent and Caregiver Survey. The survey, which was conducted online, had a very high response rate. Drake International, the company that organized the survey, will give a full report to the agency and we will have the results for you in our fall issue of FOCUS.



Follow us on Social Media

Are you new to Family Day? Are you looking to stay informed? We invite you to join us on social media for agency updates, sector news, photos and videos, and a variety of useful information. Join our Facebook community at facebook.com/FamilyDayCareServices and find us on Twitter at twitter.com/FamilyDayGTA.



FAMILY DAY



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- Resource Programs
- EarlyON Child and Family Centres
- Homework Plus

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For countless families, Family Day is the only way!