

# Balancing Work and Child Care

It can be challenging to balance parenting with the demands of paid work or school.

You can make it easier by:

- ✓ choosing the best child care you can
- ✓ making mornings run smoothly by following routines, preparing things the night before and taking time for yourself before your toddler wakes up
- ✓ taking a few minutes for yourself after work or school before re-joining your toddler
- ✓ sharing household chores and spreading them out over the week
- ✓ having a child care plan for when your toddler is sick



### WHAT YOU CAN DO

Work with your partner(s) to share child care and household tasks.



### FAMILY STORY

We make things easier by having simple dinners during the week. And I get up 20 minutes early each day to do yoga and have some time to myself.

## Choosing Child Care

When you're looking for child care, think about what hours and days you need and whether your toddler likes large groups, small groups or one-on-one attention.

Whatever type of child care you use, ensure:

- your toddler will be safe
- you're comfortable with the caregiver's qualifications
- you agree with their approach
- they'll encourage your child's development
- you trust them with your toddler



### TRY THIS

Child care spaces fill up quickly, so start looking early. Talk with other parents, contact your public health unit or community centre, look at newspapers, bulletin boards and online and contact the Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) program in your area (see Child Care in the [Resources](#) section).

Health authorities all conduct regular inspections of licensed child care centres. Parents can also visit their health authority's website and look over investigation summaries and substantiated complaints: [gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/reporting-on-child-care-facilities/licensed-day-care-inspection-reports](http://gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/reporting-on-child-care-facilities/licensed-day-care-inspection-reports)

## Types of Child Care

### Outside your home: licensed vs. licence-not-required child care

#### What is licensed child care?

Programs that are monitored and regularly inspected by regional health authorities. Licensed child care programs must meet specific requirements for health and safety, staffing qualifications, record-keeping, space, equipment, child-to-staff ratios and programming.

#### What is licence-not-required child care?

Providers that aren't monitored or inspected. Licence-not-required providers can care for up to 2 children (or 2 groups of siblings) who aren't related to them. Parents are responsible for overseeing the care and safety of their own children.

### In your home

In-home care can range from having the help of a grandparent to hiring a live-in nanny. With in-home care, your toddler is able to stay in the place they know best. There's no travel and no special arrangements to be made if they get sick. And if your in-home caregiver is from your own cultural group, holidays and traditions can be honoured and family languages can be taught.



### DID YOU KNOW?

If you hire in-home care, you're considered an employer, and you must make Employment Insurance and Canada Pension Plan payments. Contact the Canada Revenue Agency and WorkSafeBC for more information.



### HOW TO Find an in-home caregiver

- Ask family and friends.
- Call a placement or nanny agency.
- Look online.
- Check newspapers and bulletin boards for ads.
- Contact the Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) program in your area. (See Child Care in the [Resources](#) section)



### FAMILY STORY

My mother, who grew up in Iran, took care of my child. She and my daughter regularly attended a drop-in held in Farsi. My mother was able to meet with mothers and grandmothers and speak her native language, and my daughter was able to play with other children.

## Babysitters

When you need a casual babysitter, remember – the younger your child, the older the babysitter should be. Most children under 12 aren't old enough to deal with problems and emergencies.

**Before you leave your child with a new caregiver** – whether a friend, family member or babysitter – prepare by:

- watching them hold and play with your child
- asking how they would deal with crying or fussiness
- watching as they feed and diaper your child
- explaining your safer sleep routines (see [Sleep and Your Toddler](#))
- asking if they've taken a babysitting course
- being sure they have a way to contact you and to call for help in an emergency
- being clear about your Dos and Don'ts:
  - ✓ Follow your bedtime and safer sleep routines.
  - ✓ Check your child often while they're sleeping.
  - ✓ Contact you if there are problems.
  - ✗ Never hit or shake a child.
  - ✗ Don't heat their bottle in the microwave or on the stove. Use a container of warm tap water instead.

**When the babysitter arrives**, show them where things are kept – including the list of emergency numbers. Tell them where you're going, when you'll return and how you can be reached.

## Helping Your Toddler Adjust to Child Care

Before leaving your child with a child care provider, try:

- talking to your toddler about it
- reading books together about child care
- letting **them** spend time with the caregivers and the other children with you there

Make their first days easier by:

- staying as long as you need to
- asking the caregiver to give them extra attention
- letting them bring a blanket or toy
- telling them when you're leaving and assuring them that you'll return at a certain time
- creating a routine in which you say and do the same things each time you leave

Make every day easier by:

- letting the caregiver know if you'll be late
- giving your child lots of extra attention when you return
- talking to them about what they did while you were away and telling them what you did
- asking the caregiver about your child's day



### DID YOU KNOW?

Routines can help your child feel safer as they adjust to child care. And when your child feels safe, they're better able to play, explore and learn.

## Dealing With Unhappiness



### DID YOU KNOW?

Many toddlers go through a “honeymoon phase” in which they’re happy with their child care for several weeks, then unhappy.

If your toddler seems unhappy, try:

- talking to their caregivers and asking if they’ve noticed anything, like not eating or not napping
- calling to check how they’re doing or dropping in to see for yourself
- finding out if they stay upset after you leave
- listening to them about what they like and what they don’t like

If their unhappiness continues, think about other child care options.

Learn more about choosing child care in the *Guide to Selecting and Monitoring Child Care in BC* (see Child Care in the [Resources](#) section).



### DID YOU KNOW?

B.C. has many \$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centres. Learn more information here: [gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/running-daycare-preschool/10-a-day-childcarebc-centres](http://gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/running-daycare-preschool/10-a-day-childcarebc-centres)

## Helping Pay for Child Care



### MONEY SENSE

**The Affordable Child Care Benefit (ACCB)** provides up to \$1,250 per month (\$1,500 if the parent or caregiver is under the age 25) toward the cost of child care. You can estimate your funding amount with the online estimator at [myfamilyservices.gov.bc.ca/s/estimator](http://myfamilyservices.gov.bc.ca/s/estimator). Visit the ACCB website for information on how to apply. Or call the Child Care Service Centre 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday to Friday toll-free: 1 888 338-6622. Translation services are available in more than 140 languages.

In addition, you may be able to reduce your child care fees by up to \$900 per month per child through the **Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative (CCFRI)**. You don’t need to apply to access CCFRI, you’ll automatically get the discount if your child is enrolled in a participating school.

**If you have a toddler with support needs**, you can apply for extra financial help through the Supported Child Development Program (see Children with Support Needs in the [Resources](#) section).

