



Child Care Providers

RESOURCE NETWORK

Home Child Care Health & Safety Guide



Canada 

**EMPLOYMENT
ONTARIO**

Ontario 

About Child Care Providers Resource Network:

CCPRN is a non-profit, charitable organization driven to empower, support, and connect individuals who seek or offer child care in a home setting. Supporting the home child care community for more than 40 years, we have a network reach of 5500+ parents and caregivers.

Why is health and safety important for your home child care business?

As a home child care provider, creating a safe environment is one of your top priorities. There are many preventative measures caregivers can take to minimize or prevent injuries, accidents, illness, and emergencies. Being prepared with the necessary knowledge, skills, and training will help you to maintain a safe environment and be ready to handle any emergencies that might arise. Parents want to know that you have the knowledge, skills, and training to maintain a healthy and safe environment. Keeping a record of professional development activities, as well as a portfolio of certificates, will have a lasting impact on parents, and on your home daycare business overall.

This guide provides information and resources to help you stay current. Ongoing training reinforces your knowledge, skills, and supports best practices.

Special thanks to the Coalition of Independent Childcare Providers of Ontario for their contribution to this document.

CCPRN updates this document yearly. Updated: May 2024
Some links may have changed since the last update.

Please note: The content in this guide is provided for general informational purposes only, and should not be relied upon or construed as legal advice.

A note about contracts:

Essential when running a home child care, a contract communicates your child care service is a *business*. The contract outlines the terms of your agreement, including the expectations and responsibilities of both the parent and home child care provider. CCPRN provides a detailed Business Guide, including contract samples, for your reference. Please visit www.ccprn.com.

Table of Contents

Section One - Emergency Care

- First Aid & CPR
- Medication
- Injury Report Form
- Anaphylaxis Training

Section Two - Preventing Illness

- Immunizations
- Infectious & Reportable Diseases
- Health Screening & Managing Symptoms of Illness
- Handwashing
- Diapering and Toileting
- Cleaning and Disinfecting
- Food Handling Safety

Section Three - Healthy Development

- Healthy Eating & Active Living
- Healthy Meal Planning
- Developmental Milestones
- Screen Time
- Child Abuse and Child Sexual Abuse

Section Four - Environment

- Home Safety Checklist
- Car Seat Safety
- Pool and Water Safety
- Weather Safety
- Fire Safety
- Emergency Preparedness
- Environmental Sustainability

Section Five - Regulations & Best Practices

- Regulations Governing Child Care in Ontario
- Police Records Check - Vulnerable Sector
- Liability Insurance
- Smoke-Free Ontario Act

Section One

Emergency Care

First Aid & CPR

Standard First Aid & CPR C + AED training is strongly recommended for anyone operating a home child care business. If you are affiliated with a licensed agency, this is a mandatory requirement. When interviewing new families this may be the number one question you receive.

Book your First Aid Course with CCPRN - check our website as we often offer discounted rates for Standard First Aid & CPR C.

Two other options when looking for a local First Aid & CPR course are [Canadian Red Cross](#) and [St. John Ambulance](#).

First Aid Kit: Have a well stocked first aid kit in your home as well as in your travel bag or emergency backpack. For a sample list from the Red Cross, [click here](#).



Medication

There are two types of medication: prescription and over-the-counter. Where the term “medication” is used, this refers to any product with a drug identification number (DIN). All medications (including commonly used products such as sunscreen, lotion, bug spray, creams, etc.) should be approved, and ideally previously used by a parent, with no reaction noted. Bug spray should be used with caution due to possible inhalation.

In addition to a “blanket consent” for sunscreen, lotion, or other regularly used products, specific consent from the child’s parent should be obtained before administering any other medication. Written consent should always be obtained on the day you administer the medication. This shows you’ve communicated with the parent and are following their directions.

Download Medication Administration form [HERE](#)

Injury Report

An injury report is an important way to give parents information about an incident that occurred during the day, any follow-up action that was taken, and any ongoing concerns relating to the injury. Pick-up time can be busy, having an injury report filled out is a professional and efficient way to keep parents informed.

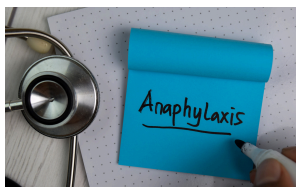
Download Injury Report form [HERE](#)

Allergies & Anaphylaxis Training

Anaphylaxis is a severe, life-threatening allergic reaction. In anaphylaxis, the immune system releases a flood of chemicals which can cause the body to go into shock. Each child with an allergy requires a written Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan, developed in consultation and in collaboration with the child's parent. This plan should list the child's allergies, provide instruction on treating symptoms, be posted for easy access, and be signed by both the parent and caregiver. Having a child with severe allergies in your care requires avoidance strategies and immediate response in the event of an emergency.

Some things to keep in mind if you have a child in your care with allergies:

- If an EpiPen is part of the Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan: It should be kept on the premises at all times and not go back and forth between your home and the child's home. You may want to request a 2nd EpiPen if your daycare has multiple levels or to keep in a backpack for daycare outings.
- Do not serve foods where ingredients are unknown.
- Ensure that parents label food if it is being brought to your home.
- Share information about allergies with the other families in your care.
- Check your art and sensory supplies for possible allergens.
- Take an anaphylaxis training course to increase your knowledge and skills for managing severe allergies. Below is a link to a free, online course which can be taken as often and as regularly as needed. Presenting a recent training certificate to parents may help to ease their worries.



Take Anaphylaxis Training [HERE](#)

Free printable resources are also available on this training website!

Section Two

Preventing Illness

A well written and accurate policies and procedures document promotes an effective, efficient, and consistent approach to infection prevention and control. Your home child care illness policy should be reviewed and updated regularly.

Immunization

Unless explicitly discussed with both potential and current families, providers should ensure that before a child is admitted to their home, the child is immunized according to the Ontario Immunization Schedule. Providers themselves, should also follow the Ontario Immunization Schedule.

Here is a list of immunizations and specific age requirements from the Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit :

ROUTINE IMMUNIZATION

AGE	Diphtheria	Tetanus	Pertussis	Polio	Hib <small>Haemophilus influenzae Type b</small>	Pneu-C-13 <small>Pneumococcal conjugate</small>	Rotavirus	Measles	Mumps	Rubella	Varicella	Men-C-C <small>Menococcal conjugate</small>	Hepatitis B	Men-C-ACYW <small>Menococcal conjugate</small>	HPV <small>Human Papillomavirus</small>	Influenza	Pneu-P-23 <small>Pneumococcal polysaccharide</small>	Herpes Zoster
2 months	●	●	●	●	●	●	●											
4 months	●	●	●	●	●	●	●											
6 months	●	●	●	●	●													
12 months						●		●	●	●		●						
15 months											●							
18 months	●	●	●	●	●													
4-6 years	●	●	●	●				●	●	●	●							
12 years (Grade 7)													●	●	●			
14-16 years	●	●	●															
Every 10 years	●	●	◇															
Every year																●		
65 years																	●	●

◇ One time in adulthood instead of Td

Download the Ottawa Public Health Immunization Assessment Tool for Licensed Child Care [HERE](#)

Infectious and Reportable Diseases

Monitoring and tracking illness is one way for you to stay on top of illnesses spreading within your home child care.

Download Managing Illnesses Document [HERE](#)

It is important to report certain illnesses to your local public health unit.

Download Ottawa Public Health Reportable Disease List [HERE](#)

Health Screening

Daily health screening can help parents determine whether or not they should send their child to your home daycare and can be helpful in preventing the spread of illness. Use the [COVID-19 school and child care screening tool](#), or a screening tool designated by your local public health unit, to screen for symptoms of Covid-19 and other illnesses. Daily updates to and from the parent on their child's overall behaviour and regular habits (i.e., not hungry, trouble sleeping, low-energy, etc.) are also important as changes in a child's usual disposition can indicate illness.

Managing Symptoms of Illness

Check your local public health unit for guidelines on returning to child care after illness. Your home child care policies should clearly detail expectations for parents regarding children with symptoms of illness.

Here are the guidelines from [Ottawa Public Health](#):

- Individuals who have respiratory symptoms or a positive COVID-19 test must self-isolate immediately until symptoms have been improving for 24 hours and no fever is present. Longer self-isolation is recommended for individuals with severe illness, those who are immunocompromised, and those who live or work in a highest risk setting.
- Individuals who have enteric/gastrointestinal symptoms including vomiting and/or diarrhea, should be excluded until symptoms have been resolved for at least 48 hours.
- Follow exclusion criteria for other illness as described in the [Guidelines for Communicable Diseases and Other Childhood Health Issues for Schools and Child Care Centres](#).

Handwashing

Handwashing is one of the most important ways to help prevent the spread of germs. Teaching children proper handwashing techniques will help to prevent germs from passing back and forth keeping the children, and you, healthy.

Printable Handwashing Poster [HERE](#)

Using child-friendly visuals and a handwashing song can help children learn the appropriate steps.

This resource from the North Bay Parry Sound Health Unit has some fun resources. Find it [HERE](#).



Diapering & Toileting

As a home child care provider with infants and toddlers, a large portion of your day is spent diapering and assisting with toileting. As a result, there are many opportunities for germs that pose severe health risks to spread in your home.

Always make sure you have the necessary items available when you need them. This is essential for both safety and health. It's a pain to realize in the middle of a diaper change that you are out of gloves, wipes, diapers, or soap in the soap dispenser. Check supplies and re-stock often.

Diapering and toileting provide a great opportunity for learning. It's an opportunity to engage while helping toddlers learn self-help skills, develop language, and instill a sense of competency.

Ottawa Public Health provides **information on diaper changing** [HERE](#) (scroll down to the tab titled "[Environmental cleaning and disinfection in child care centres and schools](#)").



Cleaning & Disinfecting

By keeping your home and child care area clean you are helping to prevent and control illness. Having an ongoing cleaning and disinfecting schedule for yourself will help you stay on top of this task and feel less overwhelmed.

Cleaning & Disinfecting Schedule: [HERE](#)

Additional information from [Ottawa Public Health](#):

Cleaning is the physical action of removing debris from a surface. Cleaning with soap or detergent, and water, will remove organic material such as food, body fluids, fecal matter, or soil from surfaces. Residue from the soap or detergent must be rinsed off prior to disinfection to prevent neutralization of some disinfectants.

Disinfection must occur after cleaning. Disinfection inactivates or kills microorganisms (germs) that may be present on surfaces and that cleaning does not remove.

Household bleach diluted in water is an inexpensive and effective disinfectant and can be used for most surfaces. It should be prepared daily.

Reference for preparing household bleach solutions [HERE](#)

Food Handling Safety

Children aged 5 and under are at increased risk for food poisoning and related health complications. This is because their immune system is still developing and they cannot fight off infection as well as adults and older children.

Ontario Ministry of Health List of Approved Food Handling Training Courses can be found [HERE](#)

Health Canada also provides a free guide “Food safety information for children ages 5 and under”. **Find it [HERE](#)**



Section Three

Healthy Development

Child Care Healthy Eating and Active Living Guidelines

Home child care providers play a key role in creating healthy environments where children learn and thrive. Ottawa Public Health provides a great online training program to help give home child care providers ideas to put into action.

Free Online Training [HERE](#)

Canadian Movement Guidelines for the Early Years: Ages 0-4

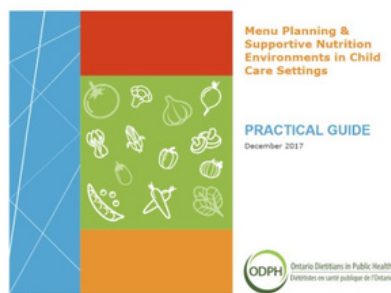
For optimal health and development, young children require daily physical activity, including energetic play. Play that takes place outside, in nature, is ideal. You can learn more about the recommended guidelines and find age appropriate tips at www.participaction.com.

Download the 24-Hour Movement Guidelines [HERE](#)

Healthy Meal Planning

Healthy eating helps children learn, play, grow, and develop. The eating habits children learn carry over into adulthood. What you do in your child care setting will influence their eating habits and how they feel about food. Ottawa Public Health is a great resource, providing sample menus developed for home child care settings and approved by a registered dietitian. It's important to collaborate with parents and to respect any religious or other eating practices. Ideally, the introduction of new foods should be done by the parent.

**Download
Ontario Dietitians
and Public Health Guide** [HERE](#)
**& Blank Menu Template
(scroll to page 37)** [HERE](#)



Active Outdoor Play

Supported by the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, and many other research institutes, the Position Statement on Active Outdoor Play states that:

"Access to active play in nature and outdoors—with its risks—is essential for healthy child development. We recommend increasing children's opportunities for self-directed play outdoors in all settings—at home, at school, in child care, the community and nature."

This is further supported by a position statement released in January 2024 from the Canadian Paediatric Society.

Learn more [HERE](#) and [HERE](#)

Screen Time

Canadian Paediatric Society recommendations:

Young children learn best from face-to-face interactions with caring adults. It's best to keep their screen time to a minimum:

- *For children under two years old, screen time is not recommended.*
- *For children two to five years old, limit screen time to less than one hour a day.*
- *For children older than five, limit screen time to less than two hours a day.*

Learn more [HERE](#)

Developmental Milestones

Watching a child grow and develop is one of the most exciting parts of being a home child care provider, especially in the early years when it seems every day brings a new skill. It's important that you know what is expected at every age and feel comfortable bringing this topic up with parents when you have concerns.

Developmental expectations for every age [HERE](#)

The First Words Communication Checkup is an online screening tool created for parents and legal guardians living in Ottawa and Renfrew County, Ontario.

Access the Communication Checkup [HERE](#)

Child Abuse

Ontario's Association of Children's Aid Societies can help you to understand child abuse and learn about the signs of abuse and neglect. Visit their website for information, definitions, subtle signs of abuse and neglect, the duty to report, and how to find your local Children's Aid Society or Indigenous Child and Family Well-Being Agency.

Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies



Child Sexual Abuse

Available from The Canadian Centre for Child Protection:

"Commit to Kids: Foundational Information for Safeguarding Children from Sexual Abuse" is for individuals who work with children looking for foundational information on child sexual abuse, or those looking to refresh their knowledge on the topic."

This is a free, online, training video. Access the training [HERE](#).

This video discusses:

- The scope of child sexual abuse
- Barriers to disclosure
- Grooming and boundary transgressions
- How you can help safeguard children from sexual abuse

For a more comprehensive professional development workshop on safeguarding children from child sexual abuse, consider taking the full "Commit to Kids" online training: **Details can be found [HERE](#)**

Section Four

Safe Environment

Home Safety

Areas to think of when safety proofing your home for child care:

Stairways:

Any open area between the handrail and stair tread must be enclosed with a protective guardrail. All stairways must be well lit and be free of clutter. Install bolted safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs. Pressure mounted gates are not safe for stairways. Since there is no “standard” staircase, finding the perfect stair gate for your stairs may require a bit of trial and error. Find more information on safety gates [HERE](#).

Windows and Window Coverings:

Examine your windows: Is a child able to reach them? Is there any furniture that a child can climb on to reach the window? Are window coverings a hazard?

Climbing:

Examine your home for climbing hazards. Low shelves and chairs invite climbing! Tall bookshelves and storage units should be bolted to the wall to prevent tipping.

Outlet Covers:

Ensure all electrical outlets have safety covers.

Smoke Alarms & Carbon Monoxide Detectors:

Ensure you have working smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors on each floor. Test and check batteries regularly.

Doors and Drawer Locks:

Install locks on all drawers and doors that need child proofing, for example, cupboards with cleaning materials or medications.

Extensive Weekly, Monthly, Seasonal, & Annual Safety Checklist Schedules [HERE](#)

Car Seat Safety

If you choose to travel with your child care children in a vehicle, it is very important that you have appropriate and correctly installed car seats. Car seats, booster seats, and seat belts prevent many injuries and deaths.

Information on car seats click [HERE](#) & [HERE](#)

Pool and Water Safety

Young children can drown in as little as one inch of water. If you choose to use water as part of your program, it's important that you are aware of the associated health and safety rules, risks, and regulations. The Ministry of Education has rules and regulations that must be followed if you are affiliated with a licensed home child care agency. Individual agencies may have rules and regulations that go above and beyond those in the licensing manual.

Home Child Care Licensing Manual [HERE](#)

Water safety for kids [HERE](#)

Weather Safety

Watching the weather will become an important part of your day. The changing weather will require some health and safety measures for you to be aware of and follow. Extreme weather can go either way, too hot with high UV rays, or too cold with a wind chill.



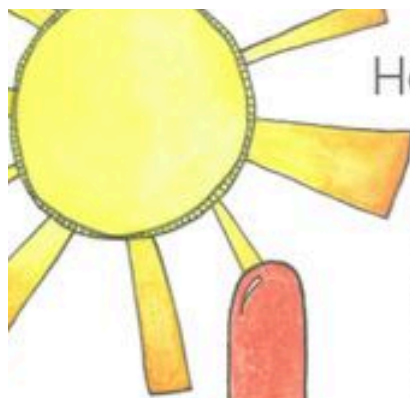
Keeping children cool in the heat [HERE](#)
Keeping children warm in the cold [HERE](#)



Dressing for the Weather

How to Dress for the Weather Guide

Outdoor play is a great way to support healthy growth and development. Opening the doors to outdoor play in all kinds of weather provides children and adults with opportunities to spark their curiosity, leading to wonder, exploration and learning. When children have the right clothing for the season it contributes to them having positive, rich outdoor play experiences that just can't happen indoors. Get outside, be curious, let children lead and have fun!



Supporting Outdoor Play Year Round



www.getoutsideandplay.ca



www.befitforlife.ca

Fire Safety

A fire safety plan is essential. This should contain vital information such as potential hazards, evacuation procedures, and emergency contact numbers. Some requirements to have in your house when operating a home child care are:

1. Working smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms on each floor.
2. Portable fire extinguishers.
3. Emergency phone numbers posted near the phone and saved in cell phone contacts.
4. Emergency lighting easily accessible (flashlights with fresh batteries).

Fire Safety Guide & Plan [HERE](#)

Emergency Preparedness

You never want to think about being in an emergency situation with a group of small children. However, being prepared and having a plan can help you, as well as the parents of the children in your care, feel more at ease.

Fires, floods, tornados, and power outages are examples of emergency situations you may experience.

Having a detailed plan, containing all the information you need, will be extremely helpful.

Red Cross Emergency Planning Guide: [HERE](#)
Home Child Care Emergency Plan Document: [HERE](#)

Environmental Health and Sustainability

Home child care providers may wish to use this checklist to learn about ways to enhance environmental health and sustainability, and to better understand where their child care program is doing well, and where there are opportunities for improvement.

Checklist [HERE](#)

Emergency

Backpack Checklist

As child care providers, we should keep at least one emergency bag at our front door (a second bag at an alternate exit is ideal), for the safety and well-being of the children in our care.

This bag, filled with first aid supplies, emergency contacts, snacks, and comfort items, ensures a quick response during emergencies, and when the need to evacuate is necessary. It will provide peace of mind to both providers and parents.



- Emergency Contacts Binder**
- Names and phone numbers of the parents of the children in your care, along with their emergency contacts.
 - Name and phone number of your evacuation location.

Section Five

Regulations & Best Practices

Regulations Governing Child Care in Ontario

The number of children that you may care for is determined by the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014. It is a good idea to read the [Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, S.O. 2014, c. 11, Sched. 1](#). A helpful starter page can be found [HERE](#). In Ontario, home child care providers are either independent (also known as unlicensed, private, or license-not-required) **or** are affiliated with a licensed home child care agency.

Province of Ontario Child Care Information [HERE](#)

Home Child Care and Unlicensed Child Care: How Many Children Are Allowed?*

Ontario 

HOME CHILD CARE (LICENSED)



MAXIMUM OF 6
children under 13 years old,
including the provider's own
children under 4 years old

BUT



NO MORE THAN 3
children under 2 years old

FOR EXAMPLE:



OR



OR



To promote the safety and well-being of children, licensed home care agencies also consider the following before placing a child:

- the ages of the other children in the group;
- the child's ability to evacuate independently in an emergency;
- the experience and qualifications of the child care provider;
- the physical environment of the home; and
- any special needs and medical needs.

UNLICENSED CHILD CARE



MAXIMUM OF 5
children under 13 years old,
including the provider's own
children under 4 years old

BUT



NO MORE THAN 3
children under 2 years old



OR



OR



Unlicensed child care providers are also now required to:

- Provide receipts for payment of services upon request and free of charge.
- Inform parents/guardians in writing that they are an unlicensed provider. This notification should say: "This child care program is not licensed by the Government of Ontario." Providers must keep a copy on file for two years.
- Allow the parent/guardian access to the premises and their child (with specific exceptions).



FOR MORE INFORMATION
VISIT ontario.ca/childcareproviders
or call 1-800-387-5514 (TTY: 1-800-268-7095)

* Number of children permitted under Ontario law (Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 and Ontario Regulation 137/15) • ISBN 978-1-4606-7579-3 (HTML) ISBN 978-1-4606-7580-9 (PDF) © Queen's printer for Ontario, 2019

Download the Ministry Infographic [HERE](#)

Additional Ontario Ministry of Education Regulations:

- All children on the premises are counted in a caregiver's numbers regardless of how many adults are present (including the child's parents).
- You may have more than 5 children registered in your child care as long as you adhere to the numbers and ages allowed at any given time and have records (attendance chart) to prove it.
- Disclosure: An unlicensed provider must inform parents that they are unlicensed in writing (either hard-copy or electronic). A provider must keep proof of their disclosure for 2 years. The disclosure must say: **"This child care program is not licensed by the Government of Ontario."** Parents are required to sign the document, having it as part of your contract is a good idea.
- Substitute Care: A child care provider can have someone cover their child care during appointments provided there is a signed agreement between the parent and the substitute provider. Only stating that alternate care may be provided by a third party is not permitted.
- Parental Access: With specific exceptions, a caregiver is required to allow parental access to the premises and their child.
- Ministry Inspectors: Caregivers must not obstruct ministry inspectors. If you wish to verify an inspector's identity call 1-844-516-6263.
- All providers are required to provide receipts for payment of services.
- An independent (unlicensed) provider cannot operate in more than one location.
- Providers may not use the following terms when naming or referring to their business:
 - Child care centre
 - Licensed child care centre
 - Licensed child care
 - Licensed day care
 - Home child care agency
 - Licensed home child care agency
 - Licensed home child care
 - Any other term prescribed by the regulations
- The Ministry Home Child Care Licensing Manual details requirements for providers affiliated with a licensed home child care agency. These requirements are generally considered best practice for all home child care providers. **You can find a copy of the manual [HERE](#).**

Vulnerable Sector Check

A vulnerable sector check is a police information check plus a check to see if a person has a record suspension (pardon) for sexual offences. Vulnerable sector checks were created in 2000 to protect children and vulnerable persons and are governed by the Criminal Records Act.

Questions concerning vulnerable sector checks should be directed to your local police service.

To complete your Vulnerable Sector Check, you may have to download the application, fill it out, and go in person to your local police station or you may have the option of submitting it online.

Search your local police services - for example:

Ottawa Police Services [HERE](#)

Liability Insurance

All home child care providers are strongly advised to have liability insurance. If you are affiliated with a licensed home child care agency, please consult with them directly. It is highly recommended that you have at least a \$2 Million policy, included with your home insurance. If you plan to take the children in your vehicle, ensure that your policy covers this as well.

Smoke-Free Ontario Act

Places providing home child care must be smoke-free and vape-free at all times, even if children are not present. This includes any outdoor spaces used by the children.



More Information [HERE](#)

Download Printable Sign [HERE](#)