



Introducing Your Child to Child Care: A Guide for Families

Starting child care is a big step—for both children and their families. Depending on your child's age, personality, and developmental stage, adjusting to care can take anywhere from a few days to a few weeks. Children adjust at their own pace, and even those who settle quickly may go through another adjustment period after a week or two.

Helping Your Child Adjust

You can help make the transition smoother by preparing both yourself and your child ahead of time. Here's how:

- **Share Information**
Let your child care provider know about your child's routines, preferences, and cultural practices to help them provide more personalized care.
- **Build Confidence**
Your child will pick up on your emotions. Speak positively about the child care environment and be confident in your choice. If you have any concerns, talk to the provider early on.
- **Visit Ahead of Time**
Arrange one or more visits with your child before the first official day. Familiarity with the space, staff, and other children can ease anxiety.
- **Start Gradually**
If possible, ease into the routine:
 - Day 1: Stay with your child for an hour.
 - Day 2–4: Extend visits gradually, leaving for short periods.
 - By the end of the week: Work toward a full day.
- **Bring a Comfort Item**
A familiar toy or blanket can provide emotional security during the transition. Ask your provider about their policy on personal items.

- **Be Predictable and Honest**
Say goodbye clearly and confidently. Use terms your child understands:
"I'll be back after snack and outside play."
- **Stick to Promises**
Pick your child up when you say you will. Reliability builds trust.
- **Understand Reactions**
End-of-day emotions—whether tears or silence—are normal as your child adjusts.
- **Breastfeeding Support**
Breastfeeding mothers can continue nursing or provide expressed milk. Discuss storage and feeding policies with your provider.
- **Plan for Emergencies**
Arrange and introduce back-up care in case of illness or unforeseen events.

Families & Educators: Working Together

Child care is a shared responsibility. A strong, respectful relationship between families and educators leads to better outcomes for children.

1. Clarify Expectations

Review contracts and policies together. Discuss any additional expectations and put them in writing to avoid misunderstandings.

2. Communicate Daily

Share important updates about your child's sleep, appetite, or routine changes. Take time at drop-off and pick-up to connect.

3. Address Concerns Early

If something's not working, don't wait. Set up a time to discuss the issue with your provider. Open, respectful communication helps you work toward solutions together.

4. Maintain the Partnership

Trust and appreciation go a long way. Acknowledge your child care provider's dedication and professionalism—they are your partner in your child's development.

EarlyON Child and Family Centres

EarlyON Centres offer a wealth of free programs and resources for families with children ages 0–6. These centres provide opportunities to:

- Connect with early years professionals
- Access parenting resources and support
- Participate in play-based learning and literacy programs
- Meet other parents and caregivers

Programs include:

Drop-ins, registered activities, parent workshops, resource libraries, and more!

Find Your Local EarlyON Centre

- 📍 **Oakville** – 905-849-6366
- 📍 **Burlington** – 905-632-9377
- 📍 **Milton** – 905-876-1244
- 📍 **Georgetown / Acton** – 905-873-2960

For more information about programs and registration, please contact your local EarlyON centre or visit the official EarlyON website.