
Providing child care in your home





Contents

Providing child care in your home	3
A checklist and resources for providers	3
Child care in Alberta	4
Licensed child care	4
Unlicensed child care	4
Checklist and resources	5
Number of children	5
Your insurance coverage, training, and background checks	5
Keeping Records of Children’s Information	5
Your residence	6
Outdoor play space	7
Transportation and outings	7
Child care programming	8
Child supervision	8
Child guidance	9
Health and safety	9
Meals and snacks	12
Your own self care	12
Next Steps	12

Providing child care in your home

A checklist and resources for providers

This document is a general guide to assist unlicensed home-based child care providers in Alberta. Under the *Early Learning and Child Care Act*, anyone providing child care for more than six children in addition to their own requires a child care licence issued by the Government of Alberta.

This document is provided as a resource with recommendations and best-practices for providing child care in a home-based setting. The information contained in this document is not intended as legal or professional advice or as a substitute for legal or professional advice.

There may be other municipal, provincial or federal laws and standards that an unlicensed provider must comply with. Unlicensed child care providers are solely responsible for ensuring that all applicable laws and standards are followed.

The Government of Alberta does not warrant any outcome or result from the use of this document. The Government of Alberta is not liable for any damages arising in connection with the use of the information contained in this document.



Child Care in Alberta

In Alberta, there are two types of child care under the *Early Learning and Child Care Act and Regulation*: licensed and unlicensed. This makes it easy for parents to know which options are regulated by the government and which are not.

Licensed child care

Facility-based

Licensed facility-based programs include:

- daycare
- out-of-school care
- preschool

The Alberta government works collaboratively with licensed programs and monitors and inspects their centres to ensure they are meeting health, safety and program quality standards for children in their care under the Act.

Home-based

Family day home educators are recruited and trained by licensed family day home agencies to offer child care in their own home. Family day home educators can offer child care for up to 6 children not including their own.

Licensed agencies help by offering family day home educators a network for training, resources and assistance. Agencies also collect and manage parent fees and conduct marketing activities on behalf of family day home programs. Agencies provide assurance to parents using family day homes by monitoring each program to ensure they are meeting health, safety and program quality standards for children in their care as prescribed under the Family Day Home standards and the Act.

Visit alberta.ca/child-care to learn more about licensed child care programs and how you can become a family day home educator under a licensed agency.

Unlicensed child care

Unlicensed child care programs can provide child care for up to 6 children, not including their own, at any given time. Unlicensed child care providers are not monitored by the Alberta government or by a licensed agency. Examples of unlicensed child care include nannies, private day homes and informal arrangements with friends, neighbours or family.

Under the Act, the Alberta government can investigate complaints about unlicensed child care providers when there is reason to believe that:

- a person is offering or providing child care to more than 6 children, not including their own, at one time, without being authorized to do so under a facility-based license, or
- there is an imminent threat to the health, safety or welfare of any children to whom the person is offering or providing child care.

If either of these are confirmed, Children's Services has the authority to investigate the issue and enforce a stop order. In this situation, parents of the children in the unlicensed program will be notified of the stop order.



Call Child Care Connect for more information

If you are interested in becoming a family day home educator under a licensed agency, visit alberta.ca/child-care, or call Child Care Connect toll free at 1-844-644-5165 for more information.

Checklist and resources

Below is a checklist with recommended practices and items to address prior to caring for children in your home. The points and sections below are provided as suggestions to support you in meeting the child care needs of families and the daily needs of children in your care.

Number of children

- Unlicensed child care providers (those who do not work with a family day home agency licensed by the Alberta government) may accommodate a maximum of six children, ages 0-12 years old, at one time, not including the provider's own children.

Insurance coverage, training, and background checks

Consider the following to ensure you have adequate insurance coverage and to limit personal liability.

- Have sufficient homeowner-tenant liability insurance and, if you transport children, automobile liability insurance. Licensed family day homes, for example, are required to have at least \$2 million per occurrence for both types of insurance.
- Ensure you have current training in first aid and CPR. For more information and a list of approved first-aid training agencies, visit <https://www.alberta.ca/first-aid-training.aspx>.
- Provide prospective families with documentation of current criminal record checks and vulnerable sector clearances. To get criminal record and vulnerable sector checks, contact your local policing agency.

Keeping records of children's information

Consider recording the following information so you are prepared to address any emergencies should they occur.

- Child's name and date of birth.
- Completed care agreement between parents and provider.
- Parent/guardian's name, home and/or mobile telephone number, and work telephone number.
- Emergency contact name and telephone number(s).
- Evidence that parent(s) have been advised of any outings including transportation and supervision arrangements.
- Daily attendance details, including arrival and departure times. Parent(s) should initial the child's arrival and departure times as a security measure for the transfer of responsibility between the parent and provider.
- Information about any health care provided to a child, including written consent from the child's parent to provide or allow for health care.
- Any other relevant health information about the child provided by the child's parent(s), including immunization records and allergies.

Portable emergency information records

- To be taken on all outings and include:
 - Child's name and date of birth.
 - Parent's name, home and/or mobile telephone number and work telephone number.
 - One emergency contact name and telephone number(s).
 - Relevant health information, including immunization status and medical condition(s).

Your residence

To support the safety, well-being, growth and development of children in your care, consider the following for your home.

- In good repair.
- Windows in all rooms used by children.
- Adequate heat, light, and ventilation.
- Clean, comfortable surroundings.
- Sufficient space for developmental activities of children.

Furnishings and equipment

Consider the following points to ensure that furnishings and equipment, including toys, are safe and support children's well-being and healthy development.

- Furnishings and equipment are appropriate for the ages and development of the children being cared for.
- Toys, equipment, materials, and furnishings are of sufficient variety and quantity for the number and ages of children being cared for.
- Toys, equipment and materials are organized and accessible so that children can make their own selections.
- Furniture and equipment:
 - Meets federal and provincial product safety legislation and is only used as recommended by the manufacturer.
 - This includes, but is not limited to, beds, mats or mattresses with bedding, safety gates, cribs, playpens, high chairs, toilet seats or potties, strollers or carriages, and car seats or booster seats.
 - Playpens should not be used for unsupervised sleep
 - Federal safety legislation does not specify requirements for sleeping infants in playpens, as this type of equipment does not meet the definition of a crib, cradle or bassinet. Therefore, Health Canada advises playpens not be used for unsupervised sleep.
 - Diapering arrangements ensure:
 - Each child is changed on either a change table or individual change pad.
 - Children are diapered in a location that allows for supervision of other children.

Outdoor play space

Access to outdoor play space is important for children's growth and development. Consider the following regarding safety and well-being when arranging outdoor spaces for children in your care.

- Children have access to outdoor play space.
- If the outdoor space is part of your residence, the space is securely enclosed or children will be adequately supervised and protected in the space provided.
- If the outdoor space is not part of your residence, it is within a safe and easy walking distance.

Transportation and outings

In planning any outings with children, consider the following so that you are working with the children's family to ensure they are aware and supportive of the outing, and to ensure you have all the necessary documentation.

- Have parents' written permission to transport their child.
- Advise parents in writing of any outings or excursions planned for a child, including transportation and supervision arrangements, and keep a record of permission obtained for the outing.



Child care programming

Children need a wide variety of activities to stimulate their growing minds and stay active. Consider the following when developing programming that is engaging for children.

- Plan and use a daily program of activities that is developmentally appropriate for the ages of the children and meets their developmental needs in these areas:
 - Emotional
 - Physical
 - Intellectual
 - Creative and social
- Share your program with parent(s).
- Use both indoor and outdoor activities.
- Consider that children with special needs may require activities and experiences that are adapted to their needs and abilities.



Child supervision

It is important that any child care provider adequately supervise children in their care. Consider the following when planning supervision to ensure you are supporting the safety and well-being of children in your care.

- Use developmentally appropriate supervision with children you are caring for.
 - Up to 19 months old
 - within the provider's sight at all times, unless the children are napping, in which case, an infant monitor should be used.
 - 20 months to 4 years
 - should be supervised while using outdoor play space.
 - should be within hearing distance of the provider at all times.
 - provider physically checks on the children every 3-5 minutes.
 - when children are napping, an infant monitor should be used.
 - 5 years to 8 years
 - may use outdoor play space without supervision if they are within sight of the provider (e.g. through a window).
 - provider physically checks on the children every 5-10 minutes.
 - 9 years to 12 years
 - may be allowed more freedom within the residence and in the provider's private outdoor play space.
 - provider should know where the children are at all times.
 - provider physically checks on the children frequently, with consideration for the child's age and what is developmentally appropriate for the children being cared for.

Child guidance

Every child is unique and will learn differently. At times, children may need extra guidance to positively support their growth and relationships with others. Consider the following when it comes to supporting children in your care so they have what they need to grow and learn.

- Use a positive approach to child guidance.
- Discuss the approach with parent(s), and consider preparing and sharing a written statement for the parents (and the child, if it is developmentally appropriate), describing your approach.
- Child guidance actions should be reasonable given the circumstances, and must never:
 - Inflict or cause to be inflicted any form of physical punishment, verbal or physical degradation, or emotional deprivation.
 - Deny or threaten to deny any basic necessity.
 - Use or permit the use of any form of physical restraint, confinement, or isolation.

Health and safety

The health and safety of the children you care for is essential. The following items address responding to emergencies, preventing transmission of infectious diseases, such as COVID-19, managing children's health conditions and medications, and ensuring children's interactions with animals are safe.

Incidents

Examples of health and safety related incidents include an error in the administration of medication, serious illness or injury to a child (requiring emergency health care), a lost child, or an allegation of physical, sexual, emotional abuse and/or neglect of a child by a provider or other residents of the home.

- If an incident occurs:
 - Obtain emergency medical assistance as required.
 - Immediately notify the parent or emergency contact if parent is unavailable.
 - Document the incident.
 - Participate as required in any investigation that is completed, by Children's Services or a law enforcement agency.

Home and safety

- Have a written emergency plan for evacuation procedures and an evacuation route.
- Make sure all children who are developmentally able know the designated meeting place outside the home in the event of a fire.
- Do monthly fire drills (include the sounding of the smoke alarm so that children learn to recognize the sound and connect it with the practiced evacuation).
- Have a working telephone at all times and know how to call for help.
- Keep all medications, vitamins and supplements locked and out of a child's reach.
- Keep all chemicals, alcohol, cannabis products, tobacco products, personal care products and household cleaning products in an area that is inaccessible to children.
- Have the following telephone numbers readily accessible:
 - emergency medical service (including ambulance service)
 - fire department
 - police service
 - poison control centre
 - nearest hospital or emergency medical facility
 - child abuse hotline



Cleaning and sanitization

- Enhanced sanitation practices are recommended for all home-based child care providers:
 - routinely clean and disinfect any surface that people regularly touch.
 - handwashing facilities or hand sanitizer must be available to children.
 - visitors and children should not enter the premises if they are feeling unwell.
 - visitors should wash their hands frequently.
- Unlicensed, home-based providers can refer to the COVID-19 health guidelines for family day homes, found at alberta.ca/bizconnect for additional direction to further reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

Symptoms and illness

- Signs or symptoms of illness:
 - Vomiting, fever, diarrhea, or a new and/or unexplained rash or cough.
 - A child requires greater care and attention than can be provided without compromising the care of other children in your home.
 - Child has or displays any other illness or symptom you know or believe may indicate that the child poses a health risk to other persons on the premises.
- If a child exhibits any of the signs or symptoms listed above:
 - Have the child's parent(s) arrange to pick up the child immediately.
 - Allow the child to return to your home when you are satisfied that the child no longer poses a health risk to others in the program (e.g., the parents provide a physician's note, the parents declare that the child has been symptom-free for at least 24 hours).
- Unlicensed, home-based providers can use the Alberta health daily checklist (for children under 18), found at alberta.ca/bizconnect to help monitor and screen for symptoms to help reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

Medical conditions

- Consult with the parent(s) about the special care required for children with medical conditions (e.g., allergies, diabetes, asthma, eczema, epilepsy).
- If needed, get special instruction or training from medical personnel on how to handle certain conditions or medical emergencies (e.g., asthma attack, administering insulin).

Medication

- All medications should be locked up, excluding emergency medications (such as an EpiPen[®]) that must be stored in an area that is inaccessible to children.
- To administer medications (prescription and non-prescription drugs, emergency medications, and/ or herbal remedies):
 - Have written consent from the child's parent(s).
 - Keep medication in its original container.
 - Administer the medication according to the label directions.
- For emergency medications used to treat allergies, you must be able to:
 - Recognize allergy symptoms.
 - Know how and when to administer the medication.
 - Make sure emergency medications are available for the child at all times, including on outings.

Animals

- Children should not have access to animal/pet foods or waste.
- Children should not have unsupervised access to pets.
- Pets should be vaccinated according to local veterinarian recommendations.
- Reptiles and amphibians must be kept in safe, locked aquariums or cages.

Smoking and/or Vaping

- There should be no smoking or vaping on the premises during the hours that the children are being cared for, or during offsite and/or field trip activities.



Meals and snacks

The following points will help you plan meals and snacks that meet children's needs.

- Serve meals and snacks at appropriate times, in sufficient quantities, and in accordance with each child's needs, including allergies/special diets.
- Meals and snacks should follow the recommendations of a recognized food guide, such as Canada's Food Guide (<https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/>) or Alberta's Nutritional Food Guidelines (open.alberta.ca/publications/5906406).
- Ensure the manner in which children are fed is appropriate for their age and level of development.
- Children should be seated while eating and seated or standing while drinking.
- No beverages should be given to children while napping.
- Parent of infants should supply infant food (including special dietary requirements).

Your own self care

There are a number of mental health supports and resources available through the Alberta Health Services website. Visit the Addiction & Mental Health page at albertahealthservices.ca/amh to find resources that can help. You can also call the anonymous mental health help line 24/7 at 1-877-303-2642 (Toll free).

Next steps

If you are considering providing child care as an unlicensed provider, there are networks and support groups, such as the Alberta Dayhome Support Network (<https://adsn.ca>), that can provide resources, direction and support.

Visit alberta.ca/child-care to learn more about licensed child care programs and how you can become a family day home educator.

This publication is issued under the Open Government Licence – Alberta (<http://open.alberta.ca/licence>).
Please note that the terms of this licence do not apply to any third-party materials included in this publication.

This publication is available online at <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/providing-child-care-in-your-home>

Providing child care in your home | Children's Services

© 2021 Government of Alberta | February 1, 2021 | ISBN 978-1-4601-5012-2