BRUCE COUNTY CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Choosing Quality Child Care

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BRUCE county

Choosing Quality Child Care

The early years are exciting times for you and your child. As a parent/guardian you want to be confident your child is in a healthy, safe, and happy environment that meets your child's social, emotional, and physical well-being needs as they learn and grow.

There are various types of child care programs, and families are encouraged to research which type of child care would meet the needs of your family. As each family is unique, this guide was created to assist in providing practical and legislative information to help you in your research for a quality child care program.

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Relationships and environment are the key to quality child care. It is these cornerstones that will build a strong foundation towards a quality child care program. Studies show that children who attend quality child care are happier, less anxious and more motivated to learn.

(pg. 14 How Does Learning Happen? [2014])

Child Care Programs

Within Bruce County, there are four types of child care programs for you to select from:

1
Licensed Child Care Centres and Before & After School Programs

These programs are licensed by the Ministry of Education under the Child Care and Early Years Act to ensure the programs meet specific provincial standards for the health, safety, and developmental needs of children. Licensed Child Care Centres may provide care for infant, toddler, preschool and school-aged children.

2
Licensed Home Child Care

Bruce County's Home Child Care Program is licensed by the Ministry of Education. As a Licensed Home Child Care Program, we contract individual caregivers who offer child care out of their own homes. Caregivers are screened, approved, and monitored by the Bruce County Home Child Care staff to ensure compliance with provincial requirements as well as the policies and procedures of the agency. These homes provide care for infant, toddler, preschool and school-age children.

3
Authorized Camps and Children's Recreation Programs

Authorized Camps and Children's Recreation Programs are not licensed by the Ministry of Education; however, they are HIGH FIVE accredited. HIGH FIVE is Canada's quality standard for children's recreation and sports. These programs provide care for school-aged children.

4
Unlicensed Home Child Care

Unlicensed Home Child Care Provider are not inspected by the Ministry of Education. However the Ministry of Education investigates all complaints from the public about unlicensed home child care providers who may be operating illegally.

In an Unlicensed Home Child Care Program, the provider is not allowed to care for more than 5 children, including their own children under the age of 4.

Child Care Programs (cont'd)

	Licensed Child Care Programs including Nursery School and Before & After School Programs	Licensed Home Child Care through Bruce County Human Services	Authorized Camps and Children's Recreation Programs	Unlicensed Home Child Care
Licensed by the Ministry of Education	✓	✓	✗	✗
Type of Care	Age groups as per licensing standards	Family grouping Max. of 6 children	School-age children 4 years – 12 years No more than 13 weeks in a calendar year	Family grouping Max. of 5 children
Fee Subsidy Available	✓	✓	✓	✗
Bruce County Special Needs Resource	✓	✓	✓	✗
Health and Safety Inspections	✓	✓	✓	✗
Insurance Requirements	✓	✓	✓	✗
Staff Qualifications (Registered with the College of ECEs = RECE)	Minimum 1 staff per group must be a Registered Early Childhood Educator (RECE)	Training provided by Bruce County Child Care Caseworkers	HIGH FIVE Training provided	Unknown
Vulnerable Sector Checks	Required of all staff	Required for all Home Child Care Providers and their family members over the age 18	Required for all staff over the age of 18	Unknown
Hours of Care (to inquire with each option)	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies

For information on licensed and unlicensed child care centres age groupings, ratios, group size, and staff qualifications please visit:

http://www.earlyyears.edu.gov.on.ca/EYPortal/en/index.htm

Your Guide to Finding the Right Child Care for Your Family

Finding quality child care takes time, patience and planning. A suggestion is to visit a variety of child care programs and compare. Take this booklet with you as a guide and reflect and ask the following questions to determine if this program would meet the needs of your family.

The following observations are important to consider:

Child Care Educator

- Educator knows how children grow and learn
- Educator is kind, sensitive, responsive, open and informative
- Through observation, listening, documenting and collaboration with others educator offers a stable and stimulating setting which invites children to learn and meet their developmental needs and interests
- Collaborates with parents/guardians on common goals

Child Care Environment

- Clean, safe, and secure
- Displays ideas, values, attitudes, and cultures of those using the space
- A small number of children with each adult as per the Child Care & Early Years Act requirements
- Indoor and outdoor play spaces which thrive for learning opportunities to occur
- A variety of toys and equipment available to meet the needs of the children
- A balance of activities throughout the day
- Flexible, yet offer a regular routine
- Nutritious meals and snacks
- Inclusive environment which meets the needs of all children

Questions to Ask

Filling in the below information may help you choose the most appropriate child care option for your family.

List of Child Care Programs

A
Program Name: _____
Location: _____
Contact: _____

B
Program Name: _____
Location: _____
Contact: _____

Environment

		✓	✗	Notes
What are the hours of operation?	A			
	B			
Who is allowed to pick up your child?	A			
	B			
Do the children go on field trips?	A			
	B			
Are parents able to drop in for a visit and are visitors welcome?	A			
	B			
Where can my child's personal belongings be stored?	A			
	B			
Are the children happy, playing, interacting, and exploring?	A			
	B			
What materials and equipment are available for the children to engage with?	A			
	B			
Is the environment safe, clean and in good condition?	A			
	B			
If food is provided what are examples of meals being served?	A			
	B			

Additional Notes

_____

_____

Questions to Ask (cont'd)

A _____
Program Name

B _____
Program Name

Program Views and Philosophies

		✓	✗	Notes
Can you show me the Program Statement for your program?	A			
	B			
Are you an inclusive program by welcoming children of different cultures and abilities?	A			
	B			
When an unacceptable behaviour occurs what steps are taken?	A			
	B			
Explain to me what happens if a child is unable to eat the planned meals or snacks and how is this addressed?	A			
	B			
Tell me about "How Does Learning Happen?"	A			
	B			
Can you show me the daily program of what the children do throughout the day?	A			
	B			
Please explain what supports are provided for children with special needs in your program?	A			
	B			

Additional Notes

Questions to Ask (cont'd)

A _____
Program Name

B _____
Program Name

Staff and Caregivers

		✓	✗	Notes
How many staff are Registered Early Childhood Educators?	A			
	B			
Can you explain to me the staff to child ratio in this room?	A			
	B			
How does the staff communicate daily with parents?	A			
	B			
Are criminal reference checks performed and kept up to date?	A			
	B			
Do staff hold a current Standard First Aid certificate with infant and child CPR?	A			
	B			
Can you show me the child care license and explain to me any conditions or provisions?	A			
	B			
How do staff greet children and families upon arrival?	A			
	B			
Can you give me a tour of the program?	A			
	B			
Do your staff stay current with professional development training?	A			
	B			
How does the before and after school program staff communicate with my child's school and teacher?	A			
	B			

Additional Notes

Questions to Ask (cont'd)

A _____
Program Name

B _____
Program Name

Health and Safety

		✓	✗	Notes
What are your cleaning and disinfecting procedures?	A			
	B			
How do you child proof your program?	A			
	B			
What are your safety and emergency procedures?	A			
	B			
Where do you store your first aid kit, medication, and cleaning products?	A			
	B			
Ensure you view the outdoor play space.	A			
	B			
Tell me about how is the food prepared, served, and any food allergies or religious or cultural diet restrictions and how are these addressed?	A			
	B			
What happens if a child has an allergic reaction?	A			
	B			
How often are fire drills preformed?	A			
	B			
What is your policy on transporting children in a vehicle?	A			
	B			
What is the protocol for outdoor play in the warm/cold months? Any alternatives during inclement weather?	A			
	B			
Are there any pets?	A			
	B			

Questions to Ask (cont'd)

A _____
Program Name

B _____
Program Name

Fee Subsidy and Additional Costs

		✓	✗	Notes
What costs would be associated with my child being in care?	A			
	B			
Are there spaces for families and children who require a subsidized space?	A			
	B			
Will I be provided with a receipt for income tax purposes?	A			
	B			
What additional costs are there? (e.g., field trips, food, diapers, sunscreen)	A			
	B			
What is the billing period and what is the method of payment? Is it weekly/monthly, cash/cheque/ pre-authorized?	A			
	B			
What is the program policy on vacation/sick, snowdays or absent days ?	A			
	B			
How much notice is required if you wish to terminate care?	A			
	B			
Can I have a copy of your current parent handbook?	A			
	B			

Additional Notes

Making Your Final Decision

It important to make your decision after carefully reviewing the information you have collected and based on the reactions of both you and your child to the child care programs you have visited.

Questions you may ask yourself are:

- What program best meets the needs of my child and family (i.e. quality, affordable, times of care, location of care)?
- Was my child happy and engaged during the visit to the program and would I feel comfortable leaving my child there?
- Would I be able to communicate easily and regularly with the child care program?
- Do I feel the programs policies and procedures align with my family's values and needs?

Additional Notes

Making Your Final Decision (cont'd)

Feel free to explore additional resources and information regarding any licensed child care program to assist you in choosing the child care that meets the needs of your child and family, including:

Child Care Fee Subsidy
https://brucecounty.on.ca/services/human-services/child-care-fee-subsidy

Licensing Requirements and Standards (Ministry of Education)
English: **http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/**
French: **http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/gardedenfants/index.html**

How Does Learning Happen? Pedagogical Approaches to Early Years and Child Care Programs in Ontario
English: **http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/pedagogy.html**

Once you have made the decision contact the program to confirm the start date. Please ensure you have a copy of the parent handbook.

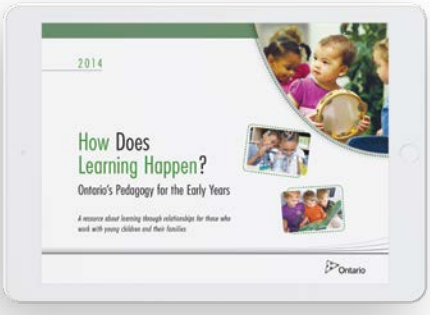
How Does Learning Happen? Guide for Parents

How Does Learning Happen? is a key component of Ontario's vision for early years.

The How Does Learning Happen? professional resource guide is organized around four foundational conditions that reflect the ways learning naturally occurs during children's exploration, play and inquiry.

The four foundations apply regardless of age, ability, culture, language, geography or setting. As well, they align with the Kindergarten Curriculum.

Find Out More:



How Does Learning Happen?
www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/howlearninghappens.pdf

Kindergarten Curriculum: The Kindergarten Program
http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/kindergarten.html

How Does Learning Happen? Guide for Parents (cont'd)

Supporting Your Child's Learning

Parents are the first teachers for their children. Here are some ways you can support their learning:

1. **Give your child time** and opportunity to explore at home and in your community.

2. **Pay attention to what captures** your child's interest and attention. Ask questions or offer comments about their discoveries.

3. **Give your child tasks** that encourage them to make discoveries or solve simple problems. For instance, a laundry basket of socks lets your child explore ways to organize, sort, match, count and practice folding and rolling up socks.

4. **Encourage your child** to try new things and make choices.

5. **Be aware of the sensory information** your child is receiving through noises, smells, sights and textures. Use this sensory information to talk with your child, e.g., "*Did you notice that smell? What do you think it is?*"

COMPLETE YOUR ONLINE LICENSED CHILD CARE APPLICATION TODAY!

EXPLORE YOUR

Licensed Child Care Options

OneList Bruce County

is an online tool that helps simplify the process of finding and applying for licensed child care.

- Find licensed child care programs near home/work.
- Apply to multiple licensed child care programs.
- Access your application anywhere, anytime.

BruceCountyChildCare.ca

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OneList Bruce County (cont'd)

Finding Quality Programs

Licensed child care programs must meet and maintain provincial standards set out in the Child Care & Early Years Act. Provincial standards provide for the health, safety and well-being of children.

CHILD CARE OPTIONS

1 Child Care Programs (Licensed)

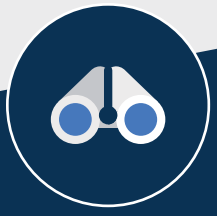
offer part-time and full-time care for infants, toddlers, preschool and school-aged children at a variety of locations.

2 Nursery School Programs (Licensed)

offer part-time preschool programs for children ages 18 months to five years at a variety of locations.

3 Bruce County Home Child Care Program (Licensed)

contracts and supports local individuals who provide child care out of their home. Part-time, full-time and extended care for infants, toddlers, preschool and school-aged children may be available.

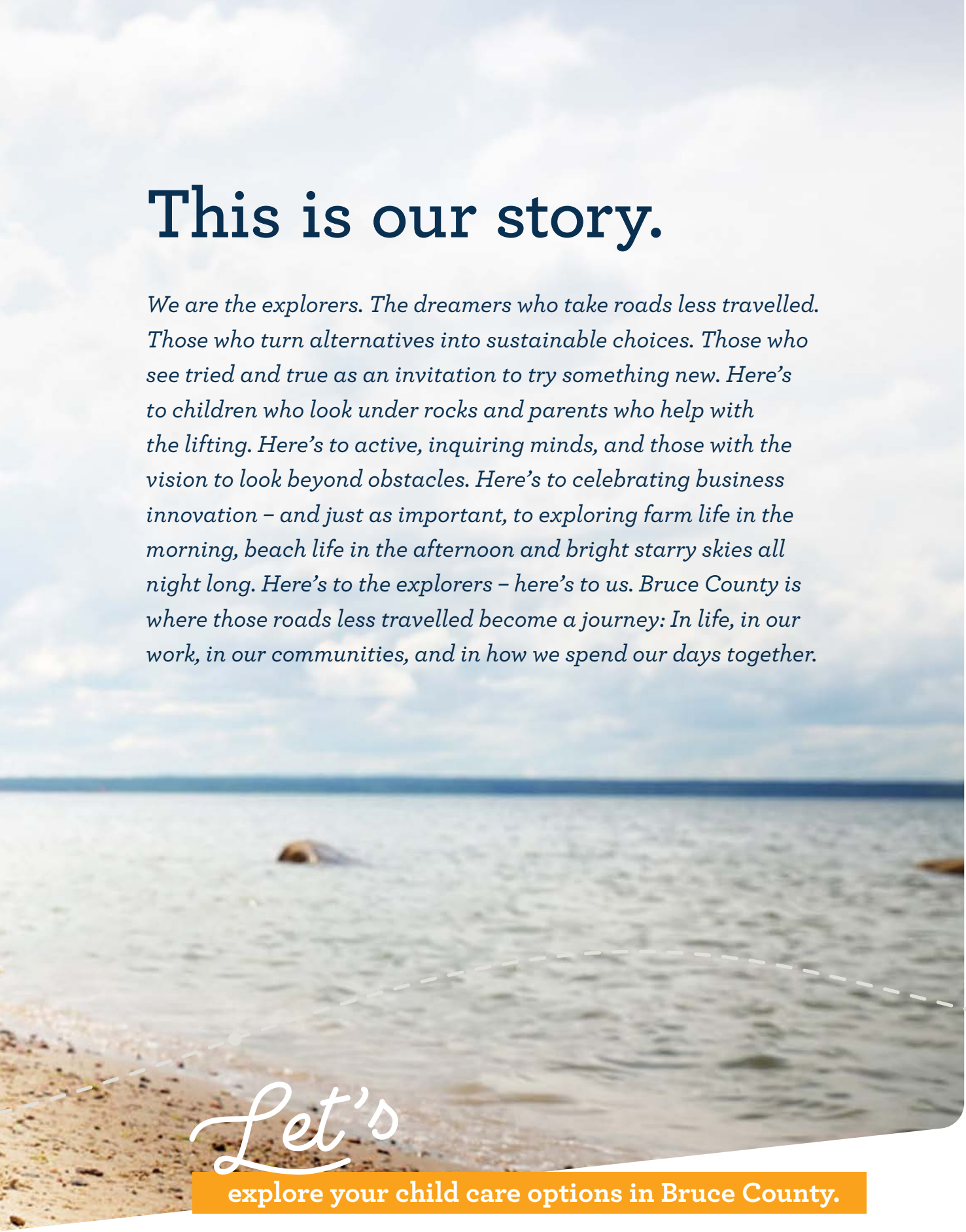


COMPLETE YOUR ONLINE LICENSED CHILD CARE APPLICATION TODAY!

BruceCountyChildCare.ca

OneHSN™ One Human Service Network

Visit **www.onehsn.com** if you live outside of Bruce County.



This is our story.

We are the explorers. The dreamers who take roads less travelled. Those who turn alternatives into sustainable choices. Those who see tried and true as an invitation to try something new. Here's to children who look under rocks and parents who help with the lifting. Here's to active, inquiring minds, and those with the vision to look beyond obstacles. Here's to celebrating business innovation – and just as important, to exploring farm life in the morning, beach life in the afternoon and bright starry skies all night long. Here's to the explorers – here's to us. Bruce County is where those roads less travelled become a journey: In life, in our work, in our communities, and in how we spend our days together.

Let's

explore your child care options in Bruce County.

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