



# *Family Child Care*



*INFORMATION PACKAGE*

for potential family Child Care providers

## *Welcome*

We are very pleased that you are interested in finding more information about family child care. This information package will provide you with some basic information on regulated family child care in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Perhaps you are already taking care of children in your home, or are finding out about family child care for the first time. Whatever your motivation, we are excited to share this information package with you. Inside this booklet you will read information on:

- Family child care in Newfoundland and Labrador
- The regulations that govern family child care
- Operating a family child care business
- The financial incentives available to regulated family child care providers

We hope that you continue your interest in family child care. There are family child care agencies and government departments who are available to answer your questions and guide you through getting started in family child care. Contact information for your region of the province can be found at the end of this booklet.

Best of luck!

### *Terminology*

In the child care field, it is respectful to use the term Family Child Care Provider, Child Care Practitioner or Early Childhood Educator rather than “babysitter”. Referring to yourself as a family child care provider will influence parents and the community to refer to you in the same way, and will help to maintain family child care as a profession.

## Introduction

The purpose of this booklet is to provide individuals interested in family child care with information on becoming a regulated family child care provider. Family child care is child care provided in the home of an individual provider. “Regulated family child care”, means that an individual has gone through an approval process and has been approved or licensed to offer child care in their home, following the requirements of Child Care Services legislation.

This information booklet briefly discusses the concept of quality child care and best practices in family child care in Newfoundland and Labrador. As a family child care provider, you are a small business owner. You will find a section on the business side of family child care, with suggestions on establishing wise, small business practices.

The information found in this booklet aims to give you information so that you may make an informed and educated decision whether regulated family child care is a career for you.

The Department of Child, Youth and Family Services is the department responsible for the development of programs that foster healthy child development and programs which support families in accessing child care. The Department also monitors and licenses child care facilities across the province ([www.gov.nl.ca](http://www.gov.nl.ca)). There are many financial incentives currently available to start family child care, and more specifically, new initiatives are targeted directly at supporting family child care providers who start an infant family child care home. The section, “Initiatives in Family Child Care”, outlines several incentives from the provincial government which support regulated family child care in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.





## FAMILY CHILD CARE

Family child care is child care provided in the home of an individual provider. In Newfoundland and Labrador a home can remain unlicensed if there are four or fewer children being cared for at one time. In this case where all children are under 24 months, the maximum number that can be cared for is three children. These numbers include the provider's own children under 13 years of age.

For homes which have up to six children there are two options for licensing:

- to be approved under the license of a Family Child Care Agency;
- to be individually licensed through regional Child Youth and Family Services staff.

In special circumstances, permission may be granted to care for a seventh or eighth child. A family child care provider's own children who are entitled to attend school full time do not count in these numbers.



## AGES OF CHILDREN

Generally speaking, the following combinations can be cared for by a regulated family child care provider in their home:



- Three children under two years of age; or
- Four children under three years of age (only two can be under two years); or
- Six children (only three of these six can be under three years, and of that three, only two can be under two years of age).
- In special circumstances, approval may be

given for a seventh or eighth child.

- A family child care provider's own children who are in school fulltime are not considered to be part of these numbers.



## QUICK FACTS ABOUT REGULATIONS IN FAMILY CHILD CARE

- Children are cared for in a small group with a range of ages from 0-12 years.
- Regulated family child care falls under the jurisdiction of the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services.
- Child Care Services legislation determines the number and ages of children that can be cared for at one time.
- Legislation also outlines the qualifications of family child care providers and the people who support and monitor the home to ensure it is a quality child care setting.
- Family child care providers are encouraged to maintain a homelike setting while providing a variety of learning experiences for the children.
- Regional Child, Youth and Family Services staff, and Family Child Care Agencies staff recruit family child care providers, visit, and support family child care homes.
- Environmental Health and Fire, Life and Safety officials conduct annual inspections to ensure the safety of the home.
- Once all regulations have been met, a family child care provider will qualify for a license or an approval and can avail of ongoing support and financial incentives.



## **PARTNERS IN FAMILY CHILD CARE**



Family Child Care Providers operate in partnership with parents and many groups and organizations. It is important as a family child care provider to establish trusting and honest relationships with your child care parents, family child care agencies, licensing departments, and with other family child care providers.

Establishing cohesive and supportive relationships with the individuals connected to your family child care home is a central ingredient to providing quality family child care. The reward

gained from these close connections can be a great asset to you as a provider, and to your vision for professionalism in your family child care business.



It is very important as a family child care provider, to encourage parent involvement in your family home as much as possible. Children will feel secure when their parents and family child care provider work together

in a trusting relationship. Both the parents and the family child care provider need to recognize the roles each has in caring for the child, while respecting the decisions of the other.

On an ongoing basis you will receive the support of either a Family Child Care Agency home visitor, or staff of the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services. These individuals are here to support you in your family child care role, and to provide ongoing guidance in the delivery of quality child care.



## IS FAMILY CHILD CARE FOR YOU?

The choice to care for children in your home is a big decision. There are many things to consider before you accept children into your home. As a family child care provider you play an important role in caring for children and supporting their growth and development. Here are some points to consider as you think about family child care:

**“It is never too late to be what you might have been”**

-George Eliot



- Would you like to stay at home with your own children while earning an income?
  - Are you interested in providing a safe, healthy, nurturing and stimulating environment for children?
  - Do you have the support of your family to use the home as a regulated family child care home?
  - Are you open to learning new things about quality family child care?
  - Does planning and providing play-based activities for children interest you?
  - Is caring for children possibly up to ten hours a day something that you would enjoy?
- Did you realize that family child care providers are considered to be self-employed? There are many resources to support you in the business side of family child care.
  - Can you provide the required security checks (certificate of conduct, child protection records check) for yourself as well as for those in your household 16 years and older?

It is important that you consider not only your suitability for family child care, but also your family's lifestyle. Discuss with your family the expectations you have of them in the family child care business, and they in turn need to raise any questions or concerns they may have about child care in their home. Getting the full support of your family will avoid much of the stress that providers often feel in the beginning when setting up their home for family child care.



## YOUR CAREER AS A FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDER

Being a family child care provider is a very rewarding career choice. You have the opportunity to positively influence the lives of the young children in your care.

The early years in a child's life are a very important time to learn the basic skills needed for success later in life. Research in brain development tells us that the first five years last a lifetime. What this means is that there are critical periods in the development of a child's brain that are considered to be windows of opportunities for visual, language, physical, emotional, social and cognitive development. Family child care providers are in the position to offer a variety of experiences which promote a child's development in a nurturing and caring home. When children have close trusting relationships with adults, they learn to be secure and confident; when children are able to interact and play with other children, they learn how to socialize. You can play a vital role in helping children learn these valuable skills that will last a lifetime! As a regulated family child care provider, there are many opportunities for additional training to help you understand more about child development and providing quality family child care environments.







## QUALITY CARE IN REGULATED FAMILY CHILD CARE

Quality in a family child care home is about your nurturing, calm interactions with the children in your care; it also describes your dedication to provide rich learning opportunities that are suitable to the ages of the children.

Family child care provides the opportunity to interact and engage with children in a home setting. You are able help them discover their interests, try new things and encourage them to progress in their development.

*Family Child Care is structured to support the overall growth and development of children*

A quality family child care home can be described in the following ways:

- Warm, nurturing relationships between the children and yourself;
- In a small group setting, you are able to respond to the individual needs of the children;
- Daily, you provide a variety of activities both inside and outside of the home;
- Your home is a safe environment for children of all ages;
- You are knowledgeable about early childhood development and can offer activities to support the social, emotional, physical, cognitive, and language development of the children in your care;
- You provide a variety of nutritious foods for a balanced menu;
- Building relationships with parents and other community partners is important to you;
- You are aware of and take advantage of opportunities to enhance your skills and knowledge as a family child care provider.

As a well-informed and skilled family child care provider, you embrace and demonstrate a commitment to quality child care on a daily basis in all aspects of your work.



## TRAINING REQUIREMENTS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Family child care providers who remain current in early childhood education are better equipped with the knowledge to provide quality child care. Family child care specific educational and professional development opportunities will inform and positively influence the care you offer and enhance relationships you have with children and families.

Prior to becoming a regulated family child care provider, you will be required to complete the family child care orientation course. Depending on where you live, there are several options for you to complete the family child care training.

- ❑ A workshop format is offered through both Family Child Care Agencies in St. John's and Corner Brook. The orientation course is usually offered twice; in the fall and the winter, depending on demand.
- ❑ A self-study option is also available through the office of the Registrar of Child Care Services Certification through the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Newfoundland Labrador (AECENL). The course is offered on a semester basis, three times per year: Fall (September-December); winter (January- April); summer (May- August).

Once you complete the orientation training, you are now ready to apply to become a certified family child care provider.

Those wishing to operate an Infant Family Child Care Home must complete two infant online workshops, offered through AECENL. More information on the infant course can be found on AECENL's website [www.aecenl.ca](http://www.aecenl.ca)

**Certification** is the process that assesses the level of training of family child care providers for the regulated family child care system. Certification will be issued for a three year period, after which time you will reapply with proof of completion of 30 hours of professional development.



## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In addition to the family child care training, there are other **professional development** opportunities available to regulated family child care providers.

- ❑ Regional Child Care Services staff offer workshops and seminars.
- ❑ The two Family Child Care Agencies offer additional training and workshops throughout the year to meet the professional needs of the agency-approved family child care providers.
- ❑ Annual conferences are held each year in various parts of the province.
- ❑ Additional workshops and conferences are held regularly across the province and are advertised through the Family Child Care Agencies and as well through staff of Child, Youth and Family Services.

**Professional development** is defined as any course of study or activity that has been developed for the purpose of enhancing your skill and knowledge specific to family child care and to the field of early childhood education.

Workshops, training and other professional development opportunities provide for the opportunity to network and socialize with other family child care providers. Due to the nature of family child care, you will spend most of your day working on your own with little opportunity for adult interaction. Participating in training and professional development sessions gives you the opportunity to build professional relationships with other family child care providers. These networking opportunities will increase your sense of pride in your work and ultimately lead to improved levels of quality child care you offer in your family child care home.



## THE APPROVAL PROCESS

(WHERE DO I BEGIN TO <sup>START</sup> MY FAMILY CHILD CARE HOME)?

Your first step is to contact either regional Child Care Services staff, OR a Family Child Care Agency for additional information about regulating a family child care home.

You will hear that there are two options to becoming regulated:



Either method you choose you can expect to receive information about the following requirements:

- The application
- Information on how to obtain municipal approval from the community or town where you reside to operate a family child care business in your home.
- Various certificates such as Child Protection Records Check, Certificate of Conduct, certification, first aid, etc.
- Required documents that relate to your home, eg. a sketch of your floor plan, a fire, life and safety inspection, an environmental health inspection, and proof of insurance for your home (and vehicle if applicable).
- Various manuals that explain the Child Care Services Regulations for family child care (Child Care Services Regulations, Family Child Care Policy Document, Family Child Care Outdoor Play Manual, etc.).

A detailed information package is available and can be mailed to you. In many cases staff are available to come to your home to explain the approval process, or you may have an opportunity to attend an information session



## THE BUSINESS SIDE OF FAMILY CHILD CARE

As a family child care provider, you are considered to be self-employed and are responsible for your financial planning and financial management. Having good business practices will help to ensure your business thrives.

word of mouth.

Good business practices include:

- Becoming familiar with the benefits that are accessible to self-employed individuals such as employment insurance, maternity, sickness, and compassionate benefits.
- Good record keeping of both your income and expenses.
- Recognizing when you may need the assistance of professional bookkeepers or bookkeeping software to help you sort out your taxes.
- Having written policies and contracts with all parents outlining the terms of the care you are willing to provide and what you expect from parents.
- Efficient and effective advertising. Research indicates the best advertising is done through

There are a number of resources available to support your understanding of the business side of family child care. The staff of the Family Child Care Agency and Regional staff of Child, Youth and Family Services can help you make contact with organizations that are designed to support small business/self-employed owners. As well, the Department of Innovation, Business and Rural Development has developed a family child care business module in partnership with Child, Youth and Family Services. This module is available to you through Family Child Care Agencies and Child, Youth and Family Services.



## INITIATIVES IN REGULATED FAMILY CHILD CARE

In recent years, the provincial government has made significant investments to support family child care.

- All regulated family child care providers are eligible to receive a one-time start up grant.
- Family child care providers who have completed post secondary training in Early Childhood Education are eligible for an annual Early Learning and Child Care Supplement (currently \$2,330 for Level I and \$4,660 for Level II-IV).
- All family child care providers are entitled to receive an annual equipment grant (currently \$600.00) to help replenish equipment and supplies for their family child care home.

The ***Family Child Care Initiative 2011-2013*** is a two year pilot project aimed at increasing the number of regulated family child care homes in the province. During this pilot project, there are several financial incentives to support family child care such as an increase in the start-up grants and the introduction of an infant stimulus grant.

- For family child care providers approved after April 1, 2011, the start-up grant has increased from \$2,500 to \$5,000.
- Family child care providers who are approved after April 1, 2011 to operate an infant family child care home, qualify for a \$7,500 start-up grant and a stimulus grant of \$200/month per infant cared for, excluding their own infant children.

For full details you can go to [http://www.gov.nl.ca/cyfs/childcare/family\\_child\\_care](http://www.gov.nl.ca/cyfs/childcare/family_child_care)





## CONTACT INFORMATION

For additional information or to speak with someone about family child care, please feel free to contact any one of the following groups:

### St. John's Metro

- Family and Child Care Connections - Family Child Care Agency (709) 754-7090
- Regional Child, Youth and Family Services Staff (709) 729-4331

### Central

- Regional Child, Youth and Family Services Staff (709)292-6283

### Western

- Family Outreach Family Resource - Family Child Care Agency  
Corner Brook (709) 634-2361
- Regional Child, Youth and Family Services Staff (709) 637-2763

### Labrador

- Regional Child, Youth and Family Services Staff (709)897-3121

### Additional Information

Department of Child, Youth and Family Services <http://www.gov.nl.ca/cyfs/index.html>

Department of innovation, Business and Rural Development <http://www.ibrd.gov.nl.ca/>  
Family and Child Care Connections <http://www.familyandchildcareconnections.com/>  
Association of Early Childhood Educators of Newfoundland and Labrador (AECENL)  
<http://www.aecenl.ca/>



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In September 2011, Family and Child Care Connections entered into an agreement with the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services to take the lead in this family child care initiative. The Family Child Care Information Advisory Committee was created to guide the development of information packages that would assist in the recruitment of family child care providers. The Advisory Committee is comprised of representatives from the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services, staff of the Family Child Care Agencies and community stakeholders in the early childhood education sector.





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## Testimonials from Family Child Care Providers

*"I opened my home to care for young children 3 years ago. I love watching them grow and learn daily. It is one of the greatest feelings when each child comes at the beginning of the day with a smile and when they leave at the end of our day with a smile. I wouldn't change a thing".*

Tina

*"Ever since I decided to open my family child care home , I have had the pleasure of watching my own two children grow and reach many exciting milestones in their development along with the other children in my care. This has been a very rewarding experience for me and was one of the best decisions that I made in my career."*

Rhonda

*"I am a professional family child care provider, not a "babysitter" and I am also a very proud business owner."*

Tammy

*"Being a family child care provider is so rewarding when you are there to experience the children's greatest accomplishments and see their smiling faces. What a wonderful way to spend your work day"!*

Crystal

