

What makes an excellent childcare centre? ^[1]

Author: Prediger, Dana

Source: Alberta Views

Format: Article

Publication Date: 1 Apr 2022

AVAILABILITY

Access online ^[2]

EXCERPTS

An excellent childcare centre, such as this one at Mount Royal University in Calgary, provides a safe, friendly, stimulating environment for children. Probably the most important characteristic from the child's point of view is that it's a place where they feel happy and have many fun things to do. For children, a high-quality program may mean feeling accepted for who they are, no matter their ability or culture. It means having friends and responsive adults, being emotionally and physically comfortable. Unbeknownst to the child, having a variety of fun, interesting and engaging activities provides opportunities for developing motor, social, language and cognitive skills through play. A rich and colourful space, with its wealth of materials, enables children to learn—seemingly by osmosis—and to be well prepared for school, increasing chances of success there.

A good centre meets basic needs, providing healthy, nutritious meals and snacks, space for rest and naps, and time outdoors in the fresh air, even in winter when snowsuits are required. It goes without saying that the centre is clean and requires children to pay attention to good hygiene. Crayons, paint and paper, building blocks and other toys are available for the child's creative imagination. On the walls are displays of what the children are doing and learning: drawings, paintings, other artwork, calendars, maps, number charts and photos of outings. The space has distinct areas for several different activities. It is an orderly environment with some predictability. Children have opportunities for interacting with others and also for pursuing activities alone.

The key is skilled staff and warm, responsive interactions between staff and children. The staff are trained and certified in early childhood education. The adult-to-child ratio is high. The staff plan a variety of activities in a language-rich environment where the children are regularly read to and books are discussed. Children are encouraged to talk with their teachers and each other.

This is what makes an excellent childcare centre.

Region: Alberta ^[3]

Tags: curricula and pedagogy ^[4]

high quality childcare ^[5]

quality ^[6]

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