

# Child care help: National website to help parents choose quality daycare <sup>[1]</sup>

**Author:** Monsebraaten, Laurie

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## AVAILABILITY

Vist [findingqualitychildcare.ca](http://findingqualitychildcare.ca) <sup>[2]</sup>

## EXCERPTS:

New parents across Canada are "wandering around in a child care wasteland," says the co-producer of a new national website aimed at helping families find quality options for their kids.

"Confusion reigns about which child care is regulated, what's legal and what isn't and what kind of oversight regulations actually provide," said Martha Friendly, of the Toronto-based Child Care Resource and Research Unit.

"Many parents don't know that all provinces have regulations and oversight for some home child care - or that unlicensed full-day child-care centres are not legal," she added.

Child care advocates have been calling for more licensed care in the wake of two Toronto-area deaths of toddlers in unregulated home daycares this past summer. Just 20 per cent of Canadian children under age 12 have access to licensed daycare.

The website, [findingqualitychildcare.ca](http://findingqualitychildcare.ca), is a collaboration between Friendly's research unit and the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW), which provided funding through its \$2 million annual child care fund.

Lori Ahn-Clifford, whose baby is due in November, welcomes the new resource.

The 35-year-old Toronto woman has been on sick leave from her marketing job for most of her high-risk pregnancy, and the search for child care has only added to her stress.

"It has been challenging," she said. "We were told to get on waiting lists early. But most of the centres charge fees. We've already spent hundreds of dollars and we have no guarantees. It's very frustrating."

If the new website hadn't been created, Ahn-Clifford said she and her web-designer husband would have created one themselves to help others.

Stephanie Bourque, 24, has "pretty much given up" looking for care for her 9-month-old daughter, Kylie.

"It's horrible," the Toronto event planner said about her search, which like Ahn-Clifford's began when she was pregnant. "The prices are crazy."

With monthly daycare centre fees running as high as \$2,000 a month for an infant, Bourque's only option is less costly home-based care, often with a caregiver who is looking after her own children, too.

"I just don't feel comfortable with that kind of situation," she said. "Daycare centres seem to be much safer to me because you have more than one adult and there are more people checking."

As a result, Bourque says she will likely drop to part-time work during evenings and weekends when her husband, Scott Soundy, is able to care for Kylie.

The website, available in English, French and American Sign Language, has been available to union members since August, but CUPW hopes its public launch on Tuesday will allow all parents to benefit.

In addition to information about child care regulations in every province and territory and a detailed check-list, the website includes a 20-minute video on centre-based child care, to show parents what good quality looks like.

"You can't make unregulated child care better than it is with this information. But you can better equip parents," said Jamie Kass, CUPW's national child care co-ordinator.

"I've worked with so many parents who need quality child care and don't get it," she added, "Sometimes they don't even know what it looks

like, which is why we did the video."

Friendly says she has been thinking about the need for a website since the January 2011 death of 14-month-old Duy-An Nguyen at an unregulated home daycare in Mississauga.

Caregiver April Luckese has been charged with criminal negligence causing death and failing to provide the necessities of life.

"Every time a child dies in an unregulated setting there is this uproar, like it never happened before," she said. "We have an inquest or inquiry and then nothing happens."

Friendly was particularly upset by then Education Minister Leona Dombrowsky's suggestion that the parents should have been more careful.

"Of course parents are responsible for their children," Friendly said. "But what is the role of government?"

In light of research that shows parents regularly overestimate the quality of their children's child care, Friendly said she hopes the website can begin to educate parents.

"This isn't going to solve the problem we have in this country around the lack government policy and good-quality child-care options for parents," she warned. "But at least we are providing parents some tools."

-reprinted from the Toronto Star

**Region:** Canada <sup>[3]</sup>

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**Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022):** <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/13/09/child-care-help-national-website-help-parents-choose-quality-daycare>

#### Links

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