

Child Care vs Early Learning

Myth# 1

Child care and early learning are two different things.

Myth #2

Child care is mainly custodial care.

Myth # 3

Only early learning programs/preschool programs prepare children for school.

Quality Looks the Same

- * Philosophy a match for parents & educators
- * Activities enhance children's development
- * Environment interesting, challenging and safe
- * Program considers children's physical, cognitive, social and emotional well being
- * Caring educators with required credentials are consistent, model appropriate behavior, and nurture self esteem
- * Staff/child ratios meet or exceed Licensing requirements



Standards of Quality Apply to Full or Part Day Programs:

- * A program plan that promotes confidence and independence
- * Nurtures a sense of belonging, creativity, curiosity, social responsibility and develops social, motor, language and thinking skills.
- * A morning at preschool and child care will look similar
- * A child care program schedule will be paced for the length of the day
- * Preschool children arrive and leave all at once whereas child care children arrive and leave according to parent's work/study times

Care and Early Learning Can Not Be Separated:

- * Early learning must include consideration of physical, social and emotional growth as much as thinking and academic skills
- * Educators know learning is inseparable from care for young children
- * All programs encourage parent involvement and support educational and developmental goals in a nurturing – caring – environment

The Goal of Community and Policy:

Must be to encourage and support **all** programs for children to raise standards to achieve quality environments that meet the equally important needs of children for care and education.

Child Care and Early Learning/Preschool – Quality Looks the Same

Parents and teachers often think that child care centres and early learning/preschool programs perform different functions. Child care is often viewed as custodial care while early learning/preschool programs are seen as preparing children for kindergarten and school. Care and early learning are integral in a quality program for children; and all children require care and education to support development from birth to prepare for life – not just kindergarten and school.

Parents seeking child care, (family or group), and educators seeking jobs in child development should rate all programs for children according to the same standards:

- * The philosophy of the centre should match the parents' child-rearing beliefs and match the educators' approach to education.
- * A high-quality play based program, regardless of length of time, should follow a regular schedule of activities. These activities match the developmental abilities of the children and strengthen children's physical, cognitive, social and emotional well-being.
- * The physical environment should be interesting and challenging yet ensure safety.
- * There should be, at minimum, the required child/staff ratio of adults with appropriate education. The educators work with the children in a caring, consistent fashion; model appropriate behaviour; offer manageable challenges; and nurture self-esteem.

These standards for quality apply to full day child care or part day early learning/preschool programs. All programs should include a plan of activities that matches the children's needs and promotes their independence, confidence and self esteem. The program of activities nurtures a sense of belonging, creativity, curiosity, social responsibility and develops social, motor, language, and thinking skills. Programs should also provide a variety of experiences designed to encourage exploration and problem-solving, and an awareness of diversity in their community and their world. A morning schedule for preschools and child care centres should be very similar. Unlike part day early learning/preschool programs, child care centres will schedule lunch and afternoon rest time. Child care centres will repeat many elements of the morning schedule in the afternoon (e.g. group time, free play, story time, outside play, snack). Another difference between the two settings is that preschool children tend to arrive and leave all at once whereas children arrive and leave at child care according to their parents' work and study schedules.

Quality early learning/preschool programs stress physical, social and emotional growth as much as they stress thinking and academic skills. Similarly, educators in quality child care settings know early learning is inseparable from care. All programs should encourage parent involvement and provide program plans that support educational and developmental goals in a nurturing – caring – environment. In B.C. we are fortunate to have the Early Development Instrument (EDI) that identifies, by neighbourhood, areas of vulnerability for young children. This valuable tool can be used as a guideline for program development and enhancement.

The goal of policy and community must be to encourage and support **all** programs for children to raise standards to achieve quality environments that meet the equally important needs of children for care and education.