

# Fraser Valley Child Care + Preschools guide

Back to Work after Maternity Leave

How to Choose a Preschool

**90+** Resources





# —back to— SCHOOL

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# back to work after ..... MATERNITY LEAVE

Find our experts, Julie Romanowski at [www.missbehaviour.ca](http://www.missbehaviour.ca) and Dawn Whittaker at [www.dawnwhittaker.com](http://www.dawnwhittaker.com)

You've had your time at home with your babe, and gosh how the time flew. These first months with your child have been amazing, fun, joyful, overwhelming, challenging, exhausting, life-changing, and all-new experiences for you and your partner.

And now? It's time to head back to your job. Your formal maternity leave is up and you're not sure how to feel, what to do, how to prepare?

So we spoke with two trusted parenting experts here in the Lower Mainland and then we also took to Facebook to ask a few seasoned moms who've been there.

Dawnn Whitaker and Julie Romanowski are our parenting experts who can provide some professional insight and actionable tips for this transition.

Dawnn Whitaker is a former nanny, now mom of three and has helped thousands of families with sleep consulting, potty training and general parenting SOS.

Julie Romanowski is a mom, writer, speaker, early childhood consultant & owner of Miss Behaviour: parenting coach & consultant service through her tips, blog, e-newsletter & articles.

Dawnn says that although we, in Canada, certainly are fortunate to have a long maternity leave compared to many countries, knowing this information does not change the feelings of stress, guilt, and anxiety that often creep in as our time on maternity comes to an end.

## 1 | PREPARE FOR SEPARATION ANXIETY

When planning to return to work, know that there is going to be some separation anxiety involved and go into the process anticipating that there will be feelings of sadness on both ends. Knowing this won't change the feelings, but it will help you in your approach to your new routine.

Infants and Toddlers often feel sad when they are initially left with a nanny or a daycare provider. As parents we are often tempted to stay and soothe our child until they are ready for us to go.

"Forget perfect. Take 'perfect' out of your vocabulary."

– Melissa Chapman

"Make sure you have at least a week with the nanny or sitter to train alongside you."

– Nicole Feliciano

"Hire help with housework."

– Susan Carraretto

"Prepare for the whole week on Sunday."

– Jodi Grundig



One of the easiest ways to ease the transition for your child is to make your drop off routine short and sweet. This can be accomplished by giving your child a big hug and kiss, telling them you love them and that you will be back later, and simply handing them to your caregiver and walking away with confidence. Give yourself permission to have a cry about it in the car, but stay confident and strong while walking out the door. To ease the inevitable "**mom guilt**," have your nanny text when your child stops crying or call the daycare once you're settled at work and ask how she's doing.

## **2 | SHARE HOUSEHOLD RESPONSIBILITIES**

Often the parent taking care of a young child at home, takes on extra household responsibilities during maternity leave such as cooking, cleaning, and laundry. Take the time to discuss how to share these responsibilities with your partner before you make the transition back to work.

## **3 | START YOUR NEW ROUTINE EARLY**

Often daycares have different routines to the one you've established. For example, naptime is often at specific times. As a result, you may need to shift your child's lunchtime and even bedtime to accommodate. Ask your daycare provider for an outline of the routine in advance, and begin to implement it several weeks before returning to work.

Additionally, spend some time looking at when dinnertime will take place once you've return to work. Factor in daycare pick-up and commuting and begin to shift dinnertime towards this new routine.

## **4 | PUMPING AND SIPPY CUPS**

If you are breastfeeding and looking to continue doing so upon your return to work, find out ahead of time where you will be able to pump at work and make those arrangements in advance.

If your child will only take milk from the breast, begin to introduce him to a sippy-cup or straw-cup of pumped milk around the age of nine months in order to prepare them.

Dawnn reminds us that although returning to work is not easy, once you get through the first week, you may be surprised to find how quickly both you and your child adapt to your new routine. You may even find that in no time at all, you are packing your child up for early drop-off in order to squeeze in a few

Julie's advice includes some tips specific to heading back to work after having your second or subsequent child and having been at home with them for the year. She indicates that any change in routine can be tricky to manage successfully for everyone in the family – including the older sibling(s).

## 5 | HOLD A FAMILY MEETING

Create a special time to gather everyone together to discuss the upcoming changes, challenges & schedules. Allow opportunities during this discussion for everyone to have their 'say'. Any opportunity to express a child's self-worth and value, can help them continue to be confident and secure individuals. This can also really help to get everyone 'on board' and encourages the family to really work together as a team!

## 6 | CREATE A SCHEDULE

A written schedule of events or a calendar are simple visuals that can provide an incredible impact for the entire family! It's a great way to keep everyone on the 'same page', increase communication and expectations as well as give kids and other family members the opportunity to know what is coming up in the next day's/weeks which can ease anxiety and provide a lot of relief.

## 7 | WRITTEN NOTES & VISUALS

When Kids are away from their Parents, a creative way to stay 'connected' is by leaving them a special note under their pillow, lunch kit, school bag or bathroom mirror! This simple gesture can show kids that their Parent were thinking about them, planned ahead to create this opportunity for them and really wanted to make their day special.

## 8 | DAILY DE-BRIEF

A daily de-brief at a designated time of day (such as in the car ride home, after dinner or before bed) allows kids to know that at this special time, they have their Parents attention to discuss things that may be on their mind. It can be a great way to keep the connection going and communication lines open. Having this special time of day scheduled into the daily routine, allows kids to know that their Parents are 'available' even when times are busy or that they are apart for most of the day.

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# choosing ..... a P R E S C H O O L

When your child is nearly 3 or 4, you may want to enroll them in a preschool program. Preschool can be especially enriching if they have been at home with you up until this point. Socialization, routines, literacy, numeracy, music, physical activity and outdoor play are just some of the reasons your child will benefit from attending a formal preschool program. It can be somewhat challenging to decide on which preschool to enroll your child. The following are just a handful of factors to consider in your search.

## 1 | COST

Costs for part-time preschool (3hrs / 2x week) is usually \$1500 and up for the full year (September through May/June) in the Lower Mainland. What fits your budget may not fit your ideals, so be sure to shop around.

## 2 | METHODOLOGY

This includes different types of offerings such as Montessori, Reggio Emilio, 'play-based' and potentially others. Find out more about the school's teaching methods and ideology by speaking with the school director and reading any materials they offer.

## 3 | LOCATION

Keep in mind where your child will be going to elementary school and if the children attending the preschool will be in the same school.

### What does it all mean?

#### Reggio Emilia Approach

"based on the principles of respect, responsibility, and community through exploration and discovery in a supportive and enriching environment based on the interests of the children"

#### Montessori

"an emphasis on independence, freedom within limits, and respect for a child's natural development"

#### Waldorf

"emphasizes the role of imagination in learning, striving to integrate natural living in intellectual, practical, and artistic development"

#### Play-based

Typically plenty of open ended play time with some direction; often parent-participation



Photo: Shutterstock

#### **4 | LANGUAGE**

Are you looking for French Immersion, will your child be attending a French Immersion elementary school? Other languages are also available around the Lower Mainland, such as Spanish, Cantonese and Mandarin.

#### **5 | RATIOS**

Ratios are governed by the Government of British Columbia's education standards, however, be sure to ask if the classes always fill up and what your child's classroom will ultimately look like in terms of numbers.

#### **6 | CLASS TIMES**

Does the typical Tuesday/Thursday or Monday/Wednesday/Friday preschool schedule work with your family's schedule? I chose a preschool for Ivy that allowed me to place her in full day five days/week when she was 4 because she was ready and it worked for us and our schedule.

#### **8 | TEACHERS**

Meet the teachers. Do you like them? Do they have a good rapport with your child? Do they give you a good, loving, vibe?

#### **9 | UNIFORMS**

There are a few select preschools that require uniforms of this age group. You need to know and plan for this in advance.

Happy Preschool Hunting!



# enrichment CLASSES

..... by: Heather van Mil

It seems that life revolves around a school calendar whether you have school aged children or not, so look to a September - December, January - June and Summer program calendar when looking for preschool aged enrichment programming as well.

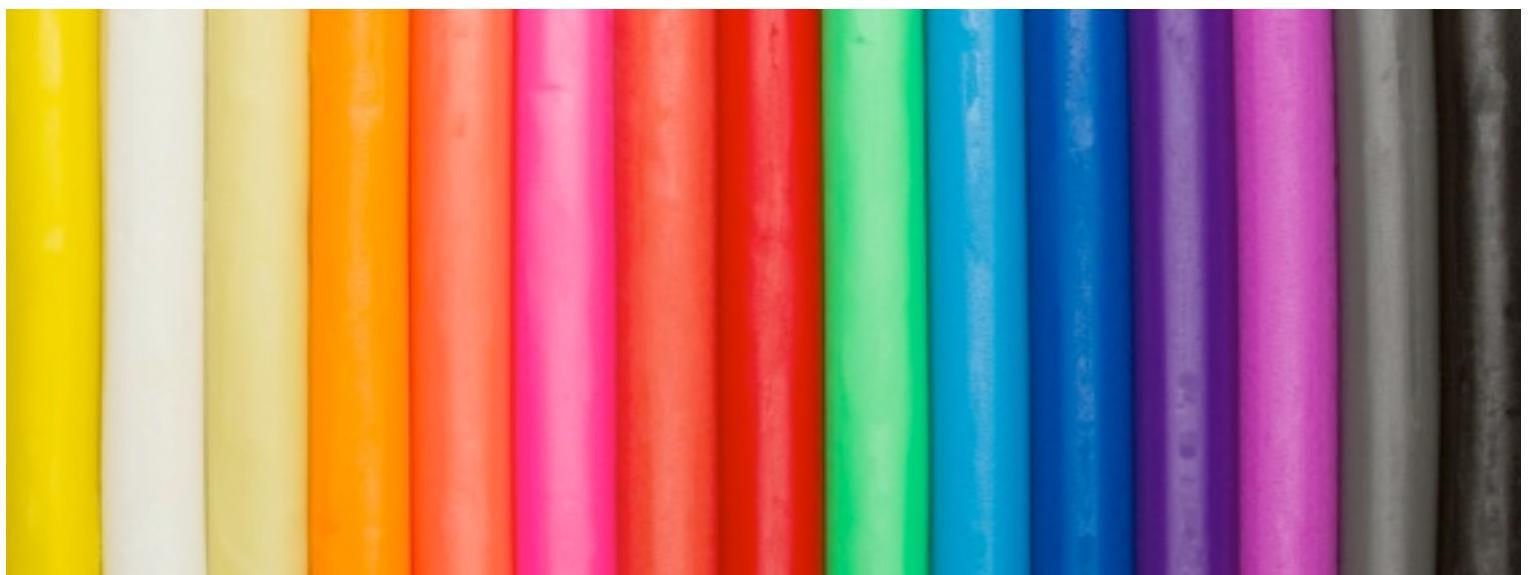
You will find that your local community centre or privately run program has classes starting up or even to drop in to keep everyone busy and happy throughout the year.

With so many different children's programs being offered, from music to sports to languages and more, how do you know which one is right for your child?

## HOW TO CHOOSE CLASSES

### GIVE IT A TRY

Look for programs that offer a free trial class prior to commitment. While you often won't know after just one class if your child is going to be a prima ballerina or black belt master, you will have an idea if the instructor and class format will work for you both.



## **GET FLEXIBLE**

Even if flexibility is not a prerequisite for your child's class, it should be at the top of your check list when choosing a program. With nap schedules evolving on a seemingly daily basis and illnesses cropping up non stop, you want a class that offers drop in options or make up classes so you aren't investing in something that you'll be missing out on.

## **GO FOR THE PERKS**

We're all trying to maximize our spending, and children's programs are no different. Find out what benefits the company offers with a class enrolment. Many top up the value with exclusive members only events, free drop ins or awesome discounts in addition to the weekly program. Ask about extra benefits ahead of time so you can get the most bang for your buck.

## **GROUP ACCORDINGLY**

Be mindful of the age range when choosing a class for your little one. Children change on a daily basis and at this age a lot can happen in 6 months! A class that serves a wide age group won't necessarily be able to meet your child's individual needs and milestones. Under 3's are best served in groups of children within 6 months of each other, and those over 3 years old should have no more than a 1 year gap to maximize learning.

We are lucky to be able to offer so many different experiences to our little ones so above all, have fun! Be open minded and you just might be surprised at what your child ends up enjoying and excelling at.

*Heather van Mil is a Toronto born mama of 2 with her feet now firmly planted in the sand on the West Coast. By day she runs her own marketing consulting company Word of Mom Marketing ([www.wordofmommarketing.ca](http://www.wordofmommarketing.ca)), by night she writes not one but 2 blogs Life Love and the Pursuit of Play (<http://lifeloveandthepursuitofplay.com>) and Creative Sides (<http://creativesides.ca>).*



# child care CHOICES

..... by: Amber Strocel

Finding the right childcare for your little one is no easy feat. You want a provider who is caring and attentive and responsible. You want something that fits your life in terms of hours, location and cost. And you don't want to spend years on a waitlist. We're here to help. Today we're breaking down your childcare options in Metro Vancouver, and what each one costs. We may not have all the answers, but we can definitely help you get started.

## CHILDCARE AGE RANGES

When it comes to choosing childcare, age matters. Some providers cater to infants, others will only take toddlers and still others work with preschoolers. You will need to make sure that the provider you are looking at provides care in the age range you need. The ranges are:

- Babies - 0 to 18 months
- Toddlers - 18 months to 3 years
- Preschoolers - 2.5 to 5 years
- School age - 5 to 12 years

## CHILDCARE OPTIONS AND FEES

### Unlicensed Family Childcare

Unlicensed family childcare covers anyone who isn't licensed by the province from babysitters or family members to mamas who provide care to other people's little ones. An unlicensed childcare provider can only provide care for two children - or a group of siblings - plus their own children. This is typically the most



In fact, it may even be free if you're able to find a family member. However no licensing means no one else is checking in on the provider.

**Average fees** - there are no firm numbers available for unlicensed care

### LICENSED FAMILY CHILDCARE

Licensed family childcare is provided in a family home. There can be up to seven children, including the provider's own children, and there are rules around the children's ages. There are also health and safety regulations that a provider must follow in order to maintain their license. Licensed family care is typically a little pricier, but the license demonstrates that the provider is creating an appropriate environment.

**Average fees** - about \$875 per month (from \$830 for preschoolers to \$905 for infants)

### GROUP CHILDCARE

Group childcare is what we think of when we think of daycare centres. They are often located in a school, preschool, church or commercial building. There are usually multiple staff who all have some type of certificate or diploma in early childhood education. The hours are fairly generous, but there is little or no flexibility if you don't work traditional hours. Given the costs associated with operating a centre, it is no surprise that this is one of the most expensive options. Also, waitlists can be long.

**Average fees** - about \$1020 per month (from \$840 for preschoolers to \$1130 for infants)

## NANNY/AU PAIR

Nannies and au pairs are similar, but there are a couple of key differences. Au pairs are childcare providers from a foreign country who are in Canada for a limited time - usually around a year. Au pairs typically live with the family while they are here and room and board are deducted from their fees, which means you will be paying less than the number quoted below after deductions. Nannies, on the other hand, may or may not live with a family and may provide only part-time care. In both cases you tend to pay the same amount regardless of the number of children in your family, and your costs reflect the amount of hours you use rather than paying a per-day or per-month rate.

**Average fees** - about \$14.81 per hour for nannies (\$2600 per month for full time care) and \$11 per hour for au pairs (\$1935 per month for full time care) Plan to deduct \$350 per month for a live-in as you can charge them this amount for room and board.

## CHILDCARE COSTS VARY ACROSS THE REGION

Your childcare options and costs will vary depending on what part of Metro Vancouver you live in. Nannies and au pairs are paid about the same whatever part of the city you call home. The same thing cannot be said for family and group care. For instance, group care for an infant varies from an average of \$947 per month in Surrey, Delta and White Rock to an average of \$1408 per month in the City of Vancouver. That's a huge difference! And family care for a preschooler varies from an average of \$753 per month in Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam and Port Moody to an average of \$1075 per month in the City of Vancouver. Childcare is most expensive in Vancouver, on the North Shore and in Burnaby. It is more affordable in New Westminster, the Tri-Cities and South of the Fraser.

## FIND OUT MORE

If you want more detailed information on choosing childcare visit [childcarechoices.ca](http://childcarechoices.ca). You'll find a wealth of information, as well as links to care providers in your area. You can also check out [this article from HealthLink BC](#). Finally, check out the provincial [Childcare Programs Map](#) to find care near you.



# Fraser Valley resources

## GROUP DAYCARES

### Abbotsford

New Generations Learning Centre | 604-534-2009

QT Day Care Centre | 604-851-2201

Kids Club Child Care Centre | 604-852-2822

Kinder College Day Care 604-294-8282

Kids & Company 778-294-2262

### South Surrey



[www.brightpathkids.com](http://www.brightpathkids.com)  
778-571-4734



[www.cefa.ca](http://www.cefa.ca)  
604-449-2332

Tiny Wings 604-531-4718

Peninsula Child Care Centre 604-541-8433

Seaview Child Care Centre 604-536-5772

Little Impressionists 604-363-6663

### White Rock

Evergreen Child Care Centre 604-531-8045

.....



# Fraser Valley resources

## HOME DAYCARES

### Abbotsford

Discovery Trails Childcare Centre | 604-746-0442  
Fun-n-Learn Childcare Centre | 604-755-0738  
Honey Bee Academy Family Daycare |  
604-751-2475  
Little Moments Learning Centre | 778-856-1379  
Little Steps Child Care Centre | 604-832-6094  
Puddlejumpers Childcare Centre | 604-744-5341  
Whale of a Time Family Daycare | 604-850-5206

Step by Step Family Child Care | 778-298-5611

Sunny Bunny Family Daycare | 604-513-8688

Willoughby Heights Little Star Daycare |  
604-510-9367

### White Rock

Robyn's Nest Daycare | 604-560-1319

## LANGLEY

Bright Star Multiage Child Day Care | 604-618-8671  
At Play Child Care | 604-220-1383  
Friendly Daisies | 778-298-3854  
Gigglez + Grinz Daycare | 604-539-8388  
Precious Treasures Child Care | 604-532-8501



# Fraser Valley resources

## PRESCHOOLS

### Abbotsford

City of Abbotsford Preschools | 604-853-4221  
Central Heights Preschool | 604-852-2541  
Small Beginnings Preschool | 604-856-1017  
Fraser Valley Montessori | 604-859-8410

Rainbow Park Preschool | 604-536-4346

The Centre for Child Development Preschool | 604-584-1361  
Westerman Preschool | 604-501-5548  
White Rock Christian Academy | 604-531-9186  
Morgan Creek Montessori | 604-535-3596  
Bright Star Montessori | 778-395-5995  
Wind and Tide | 604-575-0549

### South Surrey



[www.surrey.ca/preschools](http://www.surrey.ca/preschools)  
604-591-4011



[www.brightpathkids.com](http://www.brightpathkids.com)  
778-571-4734



[www.cefa.ca](http://www.cefa.ca)  
604-449-2332

### Langley

City of Langley Preschools | 604-514-2865  
Chipmunk Achievers Preschool | 604-888-5022  
Curiosity Grove | 604-882-0408  
Discovery Station Preschool | 604-533-5881  
LCS Building Blocks Preschool | 604-533-5881  
| 604-533-2222



# Fraser Valley resources

## PRESCHOOLS CONTINUED

### Langley continued

Pathway Montessori Children's Center |  
604-644-7547

Sunbeam Preschool | 604-530-7344

### White Rock

Little Sprouts | 604-760-6284

Buena Vista Montessori | 778-888-2602

Mountain View Preschool | 604-541-5402

### Abbotsford

Abbotsford Dance Centre | 604-855-7861

Creative Edge School of Arts | 604-855-3343

Music At Tiffanys | 604-308-2726

Sportball | 604-688-3157

### Langley

My Gym | 604-628-6567

Langley Gymnastics | 604-455-8845

The Little Gym | 604-539-539-2543

Langley Dance Academy | 604-427-0117

Langley Community Music School | 604-534-2848

## CLASSES

[www.fit4two.ca/](http://www.fit4two.ca/)  
[area/surrey](#)  
604-802-0043



# Fraser Valley resources

## CLASSES CONTINUED

### Surrey

Arts Umbrella | 604-535-1127

Music Together | 604-538-7154

White Rock Gymnastics | 604-542-0386

.....

### NANNY + AU PAIR AGENCIES

My Best Helper | 604-347-7338

International Homecare & Nannies Inc. |  
604-609-9925

Nannies On Call | 604-734-1776

ABC Nannies | 604-560-2404

Global Nannies & Caregivers Agency |  
604-464-5707

Opt-Mum Nannies | 604-671-4965

Care Solutions | 604-983-8407

Ace Personnel | 604-321-2778

