

# PROVIDING QUALITY NEWCOMER INFANT CARE

CARE FOR  
NEWCOMER  
CHILDREN  
RESOURCE  
SERIES



The early years are a period of growth and opportunity for children, but they are also a time when children are most vulnerable to harm!

## **MAKE HEALTH AND SAFETY YOUR TOP PRIORITIES.**

A safe and healthy environment is one that provides for a child's development while minimizing exposure to illness and injury. Research shows that the following risk factors need to be considered and addressed appropriately when caring for infants:

- Supervision, staff ratios, and staff training
- Immunizations for of children and staff
- Prevention of injury and abuse
- Infection and disease control
- Planning safe evacuation procedures
- Safe storing and use of toxic substances

## **SUPPORT FAMILIES WITH SENSITIVITY AND UNDERSTANDING.**

Providing safe and nurturing infant care supports newcomer families during a time of transition, vulnerability and adjustment. Many parents may have never left their child in the care of others, and they may have no one to help them here. Parents are often unsure of how their infants will be cared for and what is expected of them as a parent in Canada- especially when there is often no common language and families come from diverse cultures.

You have an opportunity to not only provide safe care for infants but to support the whole family with sensitivity and compassion. You can do this by creating a welcoming environment that encourages parents to spend time in the program, practicing gradual separation, and fostering warm, responsive relationships.

## **PROVIDE CULTURALLY-SENSITIVE CARE.**

Culture is made up of shared values, beliefs and practices. Children absorb information about culture from the important adults in their lives. Research and practice have shown that for infants to prosper in child care, their experiences should reflect a sensitivity to their home culture. Culturally-sensitive care positively influences the development of self-esteem, social competence, language and intellectual growth. The important thing is to approach parents with an open mind and a respectful attitude.

## **LEARN ABOUT DIVERSE PARENTING PRACTICES.**

The more you learn about and understand diverse parenting practices, the more supportive you can be. The best way to provide support and learn from parents' experiences is to observe the parent with their child, and ask for their perspectives on parenting practices. You may find that some parents carry their babies in slings on their backs, or that some mothers feed their babies on their laps with their fingers. Asking parents how they put their baby down for a nap or soothe them when they're upset shows curiosity, respect and a desire to understand and support.

Visit [cmascanada.ca](http://cmascanada.ca) for more resources to support your work with newcomer families



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