WHAT IS A FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAM?

-Called family resource centres, parent/child drop-in centres and family literacy programs.

- Family support programs offer a safe and friendly environment for children to play and learn. They also provide parents and caregivers in the community the opportunity to meet one another, helping caregivers and parents to connect.

- Programs vary depending on age, but usually are geared towards newborns – 5 year olds.

WHAT TYPES OF ACTIVITIES OR SERVICES ARE OFFERED?

- In addition to a space for your child to play and/or you to meet other parents and caregivers, services and activities may include: parenting skills workshops, clothing exchange, toy lending libraries, community kitchens, information and referrals to community services, counseling, support or discussion groups, speakers, English as a second language instruction, physical fitness, recreation, food banks, parenting resource libraries and caregivers registries (lists of babysitters). Not all programs will offer all these services.

HOW DO FAMILY SUPPORT CENTRES WORK?

- Most are drop-ins (i.e. no registration necessary) and you and your child are welcome to come and go any time during the hours of the program.

- Others are more structured and have planned activities, or may last for a number of weeks.

WHAT MAKES IT DIFFERENT FROM A DAYCARE CENTRE?

- You will be involved directly in learning activities with the children. You will be responsible for your child at all times. However, sometimes staff or other caregivers supervise the children while caregivers participate in other activities.

- Some programs may have a babysitting cooperative where you and the other caregivers exchange child care.

- Most programs are free, while some may charge a small fee or a sliding scale.
For more information on childcare options, financial assistance, and parenting resources, please contact the Family Care Office. 416.978.0951 www.familycare.utoronto.ca

Last revised: March 2022