

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

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Over the last three decades, the need for child care has grown steadily, with the rise in employment rates among women and the corresponding increase in dual income earner families and single-parent led families. In addition, the demand for quality child care has also increased, due to the potential benefits on peer socialization, school readiness, and numeracy and language skills. In Canada, options for child care vary from daycare centers, preschool programs and before and after school services. Finding the most appropriate child care arrangements can, at times be challenging. Parents must often balance the need between availability, convenience/distance, overall quality and cost of child care.

In the City of Toronto, thousands of parents sit idle on a lengthy waiting list for after-school daycare spots. They scramble to find spaces for their children in an increasingly overburdened system; in many cases parents are even forced to look elsewhere as after-school systems are full or unavailable. Many day care centres are hard to find online and parents/guardians may not have the time (or ability) to query through multiple results on the web.

A step towards solving this issue is to provide parents and caregivers with information that allows them to find and connect with local childcare services in close proximity. Utilizing the DayCare Finder App, our team's goal is to provide the public with a means to identify the closest childcare centre to reduce the burden for those raising children. This application benefits both the city and parents; parents will be able to find services closer to home and/or work while the city continues to work towards growing its child day care service for all Torontonians in need.

## APP CHARACTERISTICS

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The locations of child day care centres compiled in the DayCare Finder application are from the Early Years Centres point coordinate data submitted to the City of Toronto's open data catalogue. Our application is designed to find the most geospatially appropriate child day care centre in the City of Toronto based on the chosen location by the user.

Our application can be used three different ways:

1. Query the name of the child day care centre of interest using the Query Widget. A popup will display the address, postal code, major intersection and phone number for the child care centre.
2. Locate a child day care centre using the Direction Widget. Type an address or landmark (e.x. CN Tower) in the City of Toronto as the starting point and input another location to be the endpoint. A popup will display the directions and travel time to the child day care centre.
3. Identify the closest child day care centre with the Near Me widget. Using the My Location icon as the search criteria when prompted to, identify the closest child day care centre location to the user. A popup will display the information about the closest child day care centre and directions and travel time to the closest child care centre.

Interplay between the query and Direction widget make this application particularly useful; the user can search for a child day care centre of interest and then get directions and travel time by car, walking or truck from a starting point. The near me widget simplifies all query tasks and identifies the most convenient child day care centre based on proximity. The functionality is ideal for busy parents and saves money on transportation costs.

The DayCare Finder web application is easy to use. The user-friendly interface makes it simple for any parent or guardian to use the app to find an appropriate child day care centre without hassle. The fast and reliable results generate the quickest directions to a child day care centre of interest.