

5 TIPS FOR CHOOSING childcare

Handing your precious bundle of joy over to a new carer is never easy, particularly when you're heading back to work after maternity leave. Luckily, The Childcare Guide, a collaboration between 460 childcare centres across Australia, has been created to help you choose the best fit for your family.

1 Types of childcare.

From long day care and family day care to occasional care and having a nanny, the type of care you choose should be appropriate for you and your child's needs. It's good to know how each type of care should operate and if they are government approved.

2 The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)

All government-approved childcare services follow a properly developed curriculum – the EYLF. It's important you have a basic understanding of the EYLF so you can be sure it's being implemented at the childcare service of your choice.

3 Quality ratings

The National Quality Framework (NQF) is a great way to compare childcare services. The NQF is an agreement between all states and territory governments to work together to provide better educational and developmental

outcomes for children. It means that all government-approved facilities (long day care and family day care) should meet certain standards in order to receive one of the quality ratings: excellent; exceeding national quality standard; meeting national quality standard; working towards national quality standard; significant improvement required.

4 Kindergarten and preschool program

As your child approaches the age of four, you'll need to make a decision on where to enrol them for that all-important transition to 'big school'. Most long day care centres offer kindergarten/preschool programs with longer operating hours than standalone kindergartens and preschools. Consider whether your choice of childcare caters for the school transition and what their programs involve.

5 Government assistance

What government assistance is available and how it all works could be an important factor in choosing your childcare. For example, it's good to know that if you choose a childcare provider that is government approved you could be eligible for the Child Care Benefit and/or Child Care Rebate.

The Childcare Guide has a great checklist of questions you can go through when considering a childcare centre, and also offers two complimentary days of childcare through participating centres.

Visit www.thechildcareguide.com.au for more information.



My first PYREX RANGE

These sweet new containers from Pyrex are perfect for storing baby's food, keeping it fresher for longer. The containers are great for storing all kinds of meals, from snacks to purees and fresh fruit. The tight-seal, flexible silicone lid is leak-proof and

comes in two colours, pink and blue, and the glass base is microwave-, oven- and dishwasher-safe as well as scratch- and stain-resistant. The My First Pyrex range is available from Peter's of Kensington, World Kitchen stores and Big W, from \$7.95.



WHEN 2 BECOMES 3

It's no secret that her Royal Highness the Duchess of Cambridge is expecting bub number three, but did you know she and Prince William are breaking a royal tradition by having a third baby? Kate and Wills are the first royal couple in the Queen's immediate family to have more than two children – the traditional 'heir and spare' in 58 years. But while the royals have plenty of resources on hand, we asked everyday mums who went from two to three children to share their advice:

Jodi Wilson, blogger at www.practisingsimplicity.com

"OLDER SIBLINGS MUST STEP UP – NO TWO WAYS ABOUT IT. WHILE YOU FEED YOUR THIRD BABY, THE OLDER CHILDREN HAVE TO FIND THEIR CLOTHES, BUTTER THEIR TOAST AND PACK THEIR SCHOOL BAG ON THEIR OWN."

Juliet Potter, mum to Ash, Lola and Gia

"ALLOW TIME OUT FOR YOURSELF; KEEP UP AN EXERCISE REGIMEN, READ A BOOK! AND ENLIST AS MANY 'VILLAGE PEOPLE' AS YOU CAN TO DELEGATE WHEN YOU CAN'T DO OR DON'T FEEL LIKE DOING (EASY FOR KATE!)."

Sabrina Rogers-Anderson, mum to Arabella, Estelle and Georgina

"TAKE 10 MINUTES A DAY TO DROP EVERYTHING AND JUST SIT DOWN WITH YOUR KIDS – YOU'LL ALL FEEL MUCH BETTER FOR IT."

Jane Needham, mum to Stella and twins Ronan and Angus

"DIVIDE AND CONQUER IS MY RULE: SEND ONE TO A FRIEND, ONE OFF WITH DAD, AND DO SOMETHING SPECIAL WITH THE REMAINDER."

The first one, I almost became a doula. I was reading every book. I was ready. This one, I haven't done anything. I'm like well, we didn't break the first one.

ASHTON KUTCHER, DAD TO WYATT, AGED THREE, AND DIMITRI, AGED ONE.

Tried & tested:

CRYOTHERAPY

In my job, I'm no stranger to new products or experiences. We are constantly reviewing new things, but I've never tried something quite so 'cool' before! Cryotherapy is a non-invasive, hyper-cooling treatment that helps your body to do many things, including boost metabolism, flush toxins and even help recovery post-birth. It can aid in reducing inflammation in the body, and speed up your recovery time.

But what does it involve? I stripped down to my underwear and stood in a chamber for a few minutes at a time, while a mist of freezing goodness (at -110°C!) washed over me. I must admit it felt strange... but the results came afterwards, when I jumped out of the chamber. I felt refreshed, full of energy and got instant relief from a pesky foot injury. It's worth a try, if you're game! For more info, visit www.cryo.com.au.

