



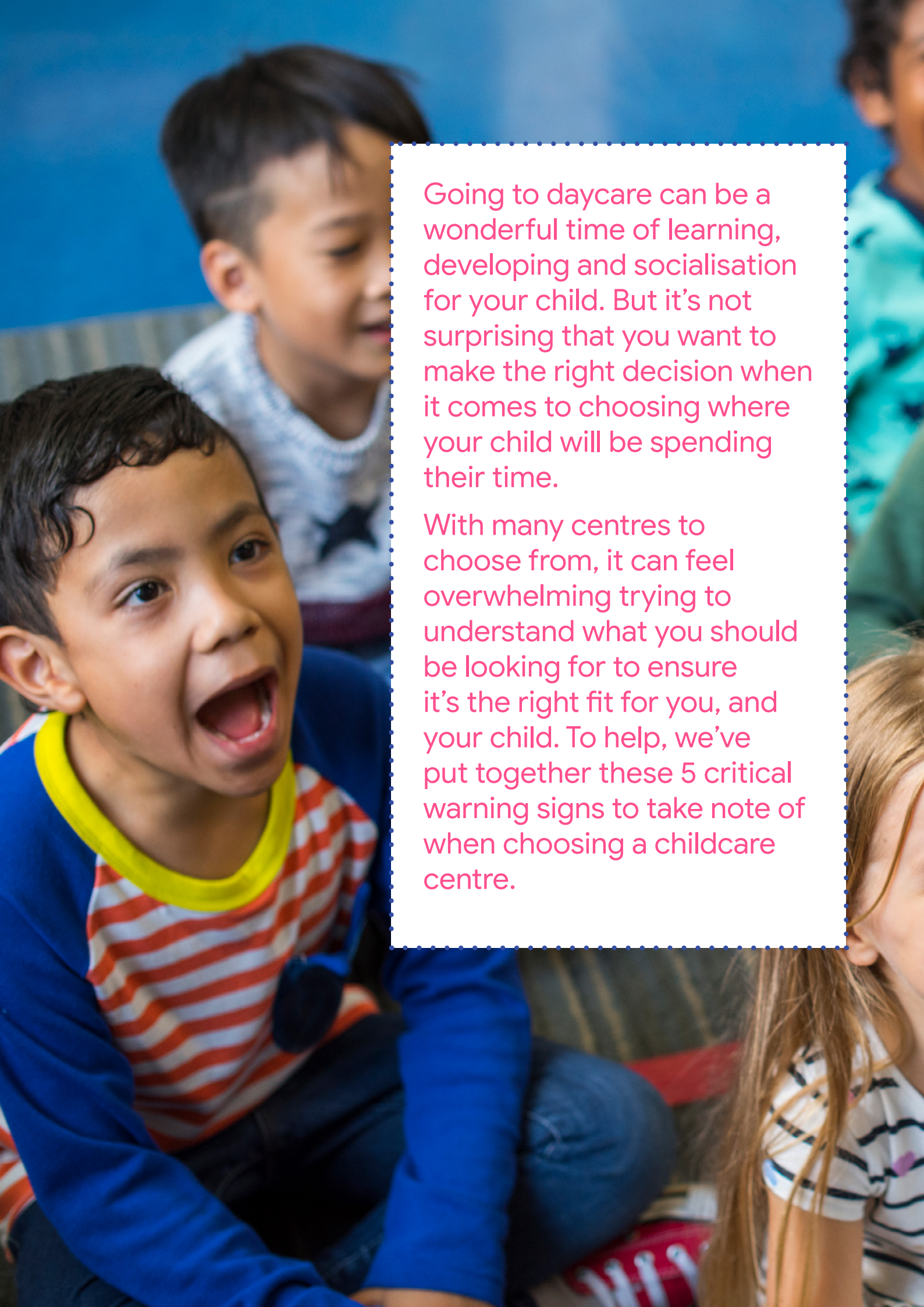
CHILDCARE CENTRE

**LEAVES
YOUNG MUM**

IN TEARS!

5 CRITICAL POINTS

“IF ONLY I KNEW FIRST”



Going to daycare can be a wonderful time of learning, developing and socialisation for your child. But it's not surprising that you want to make the right decision when it comes to choosing where your child will be spending their time.

With many centres to choose from, it can feel overwhelming trying to understand what you should be looking for to ensure it's the right fit for you, and your child. To help, we've put together these 5 critical warning signs to take note of when choosing a childcare centre.

1

INADEQUATE TEACHER/CHILD RATIO

This is not only illegal but poses a safety risk to your child. It is your right to ask direct questions to the centre as legislation requires strict compliance for teachers looking after children.

Here are the minimum requirements by law:

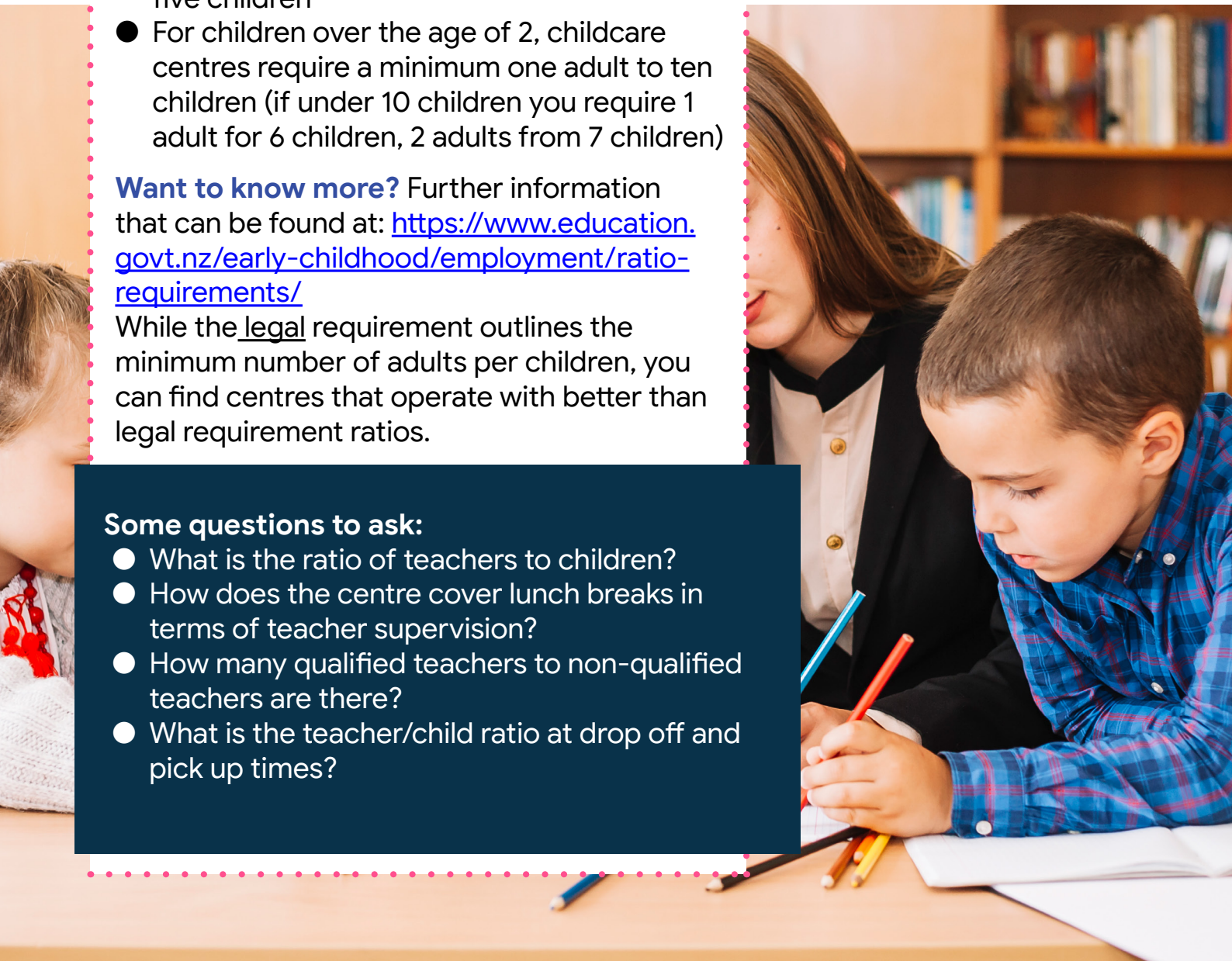
- For children under the age of 2, childcare centres require a minimum of one adult to five children
- For children over the age of 2, childcare centres require a minimum one adult to ten children (if under 10 children you require 1 adult for 6 children, 2 adults from 7 children)

Want to know more? Further information that can be found at: <https://www.education.govt.nz/early-childhood/employment/ratio-requirements/>

While the legal requirement outlines the minimum number of adults per children, you can find centres that operate with better than legal requirement ratios.

Some questions to ask:

- What is the ratio of teachers to children?
- How does the centre cover lunch breaks in terms of teacher supervision?
- How many qualified teachers to non-qualified teachers are there?
- What is the teacher/child ratio at drop off and pick up times?





THE CENTRE LACKS A 'HEART' AND TEACHERS ARE UNAPPROACHABLE AND LACK GENUINE OPENNESS

How comfortable do you feel leaving your child at the centre? The right centre will welcome your child and make them feel comfortable and at ease.

A centre will generate either a positive or negative vibe. It's likely you'll get an intuitive sense of this yourself, but some questions to ask yourself include:

- What do you feel when you walk through the doors to the centre?
- What is your child's reaction?
- Are you greeted with a warm "hello" when you arrive?
- Are the teachers welcoming and engaging?
- If your child is already in a childcare centre, do they run up to see their teacher or do they shy away?
- Is the atmosphere warm and inviting or cold and unappealing?
- Does the centre have a good initiation programme when a child joins?
- How does the centre process transition of your child from one age group to another?
- What response do you receive if you arrive at the centre unannounced?



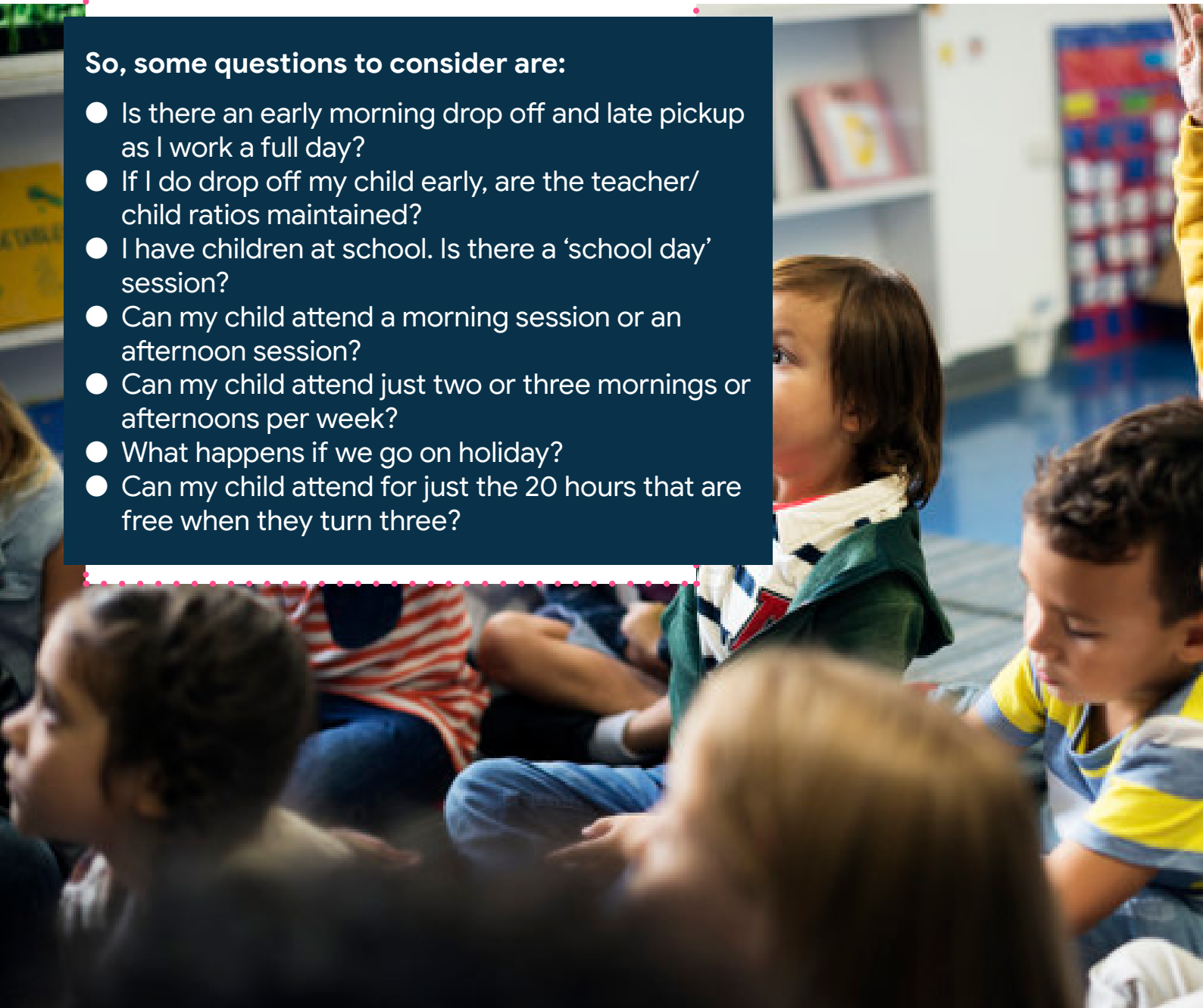
3

THE CENTRE HAS LIMITED CHOICE OPTIONS FOR ATTENDANCE

Not only are you leaving your child in the hands of strangers at the start, many parents are juggling careers, part time jobs and school drop offs. This itself is stressful and if the centre does not have some flexibility with times, you can be left feeling at your wits end.

So, some questions to consider are:

- Is there an early morning drop off and late pickup as I work a full day?
- If I do drop off my child early, are the teacher/child ratios maintained?
- I have children at school. Is there a 'school day' session?
- Can my child attend a morning session or an afternoon session?
- Can my child attend just two or three mornings or afternoons per week?
- What happens if we go on holiday?
- Can my child attend for just the 20 hours that are free when they turn three?



4

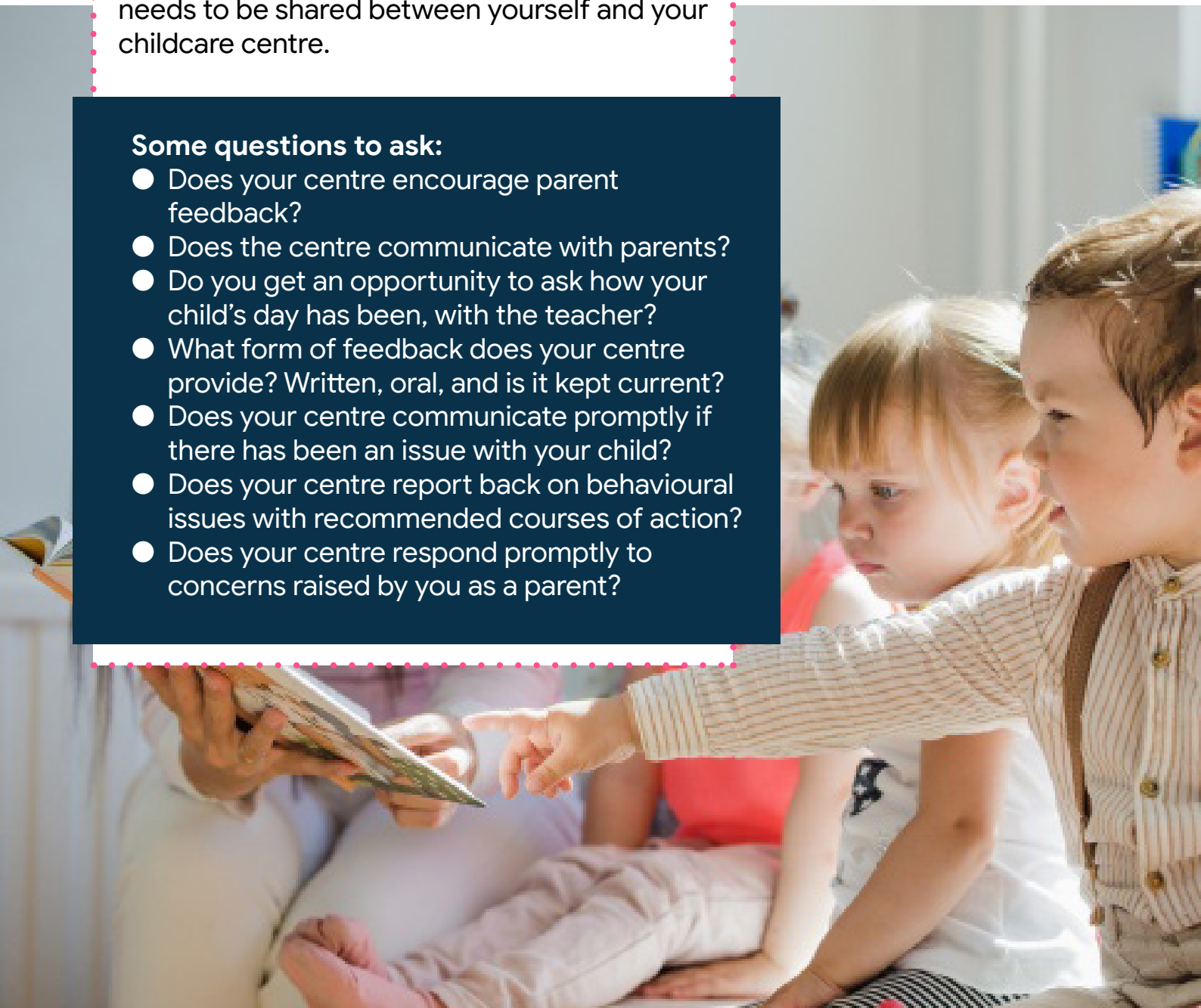
COMMUNICATION IS LACKING AND WHEN IT COMES IT IS ONE WAY

Good, consistent and regular communication is critical – after all, you want to know how your child is getting on.

Communication must go both ways, from teacher to parent and from parent to teacher. These preschool years are so important in your child's development and this is a path that needs to be shared between yourself and your childcare centre.

Some questions to ask:

- Does your centre encourage parent feedback?
- Does the centre communicate with parents?
- Do you get an opportunity to ask how your child's day has been, with the teacher?
- What form of feedback does your centre provide? Written, oral, and is it kept current?
- Does your centre communicate promptly if there has been an issue with your child?
- Does your centre report back on behavioural issues with recommended courses of action?
- Does your centre respond promptly to concerns raised by you as a parent?





SAFETY SEEMS LACKING

When choosing a childcare centre, safety and hygiene are paramount. Not all centres provide a level of safety and hygiene that would give you peace of mind.

You are entitled to ask if police checks been undertaken on all people who have contact with children, including the owner. Enquire about safety policies - are these well documented?

Each centre would have undergone a recent Education Review Office (ERO) report. This is the New Zealand government department that evaluates and reports on the education and care of students in schools and early childhood services. How good is the latest Education Review Office (ERO) report?

When you visit the centre, take note of the following:

- Does your centre have secure fencing?
- Is your centre private?
- Is your centre on a busy road or is there safe off street parking?
- What is the outside play area like? Is there a flat area for children to play?
- Is the outside play equipment safe for children?
- Are babies and children under two, separate from older children?
- How often is the centre professionally cleaned?
- Is ensuring cleanliness part of the teacher's daily task?
- Are table tops, toys and other surfaces cleaned regularly?
- How healthy are the meals served if the centre provides food?

