



PARENT HANDBOOK

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Program Statement

We are committed to providing a fun, recreational, stimulating and creative learning environment that is designed to meet your child's physical, social, emotional and intellectual needs.

The purpose of the Policy Statement:

This statement is designed to strengthen and guide program development that meets high standards of quality learning and regulations that will benefit the experiences and outcomes for the children in our care, their families, Educators, students, volunteers and community partners. This statement is consistent with Minister of Education's guide for Licenced Child Care that is located in subsection 55 (3) of the CCEYA (Child Care Early Years Act).

This statement uses the government document "How Does Learning Happen?" as a guide for our Educators to support pedagogy and curriculum development. <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/pedagogy.html>

We see all children "**as competent, capable of complex thinking, curious, and rich in potential**"

Our Educators recognize that each child is a unique individual who brings their own abilities to the program and deserves the encouragement and space to try new things, explore new ideas, develop their own unique creativity, and can express themselves in a safe comfortable environment where they feel they belong and are valued.

Our goals for the children are consistent with the four foundations of learning that are documented in "How Does Learning Happen?" document. These are:



Belonging: Every child has a sense of belonging when he or she is connected to others and contributes to their world.

Well-being: Every child is developing a sense of self, health, and well-being.

Engagement: Every child is an active and engaged learner who explores the world with body, mind, and senses.

Expression: Every child is a capable communicator who expresses himself or herself in many ways.

Our Goals and Approaches

The following program goals and approaches reflect our belief that all children are competent, capable and curious individuals who demonstrate their personal ability to reach their unique potential. We believe that the children's family are the most important people in the child's life and we work closely with them, the school community and community partners to ensure continuity in providing high quality of care for all of the children in our programs.

"It takes a village to raise a child" – African Proverb

Goal: (a) We are committed to promoting the health, safety, nutrition, and well-being of the children - CCEYA, O.Reg 137 46 (3) (a)

Approach:

- Our Educators monitor the children's health through observations that are documented, completing illness forms when a child becomes ill in the program, communication with the parents and any other community agencies when needed.
- All Educators, students and volunteers are certified with Standard First Aid and CPR level "C"
- Our Educators follow the guidelines provided by the Minister of Health regarding immunization and requirements from Public Health and the local Fire Departments to ensure the safety and well-being of the children in our care.
- Anaphylactic policy, individual emergency anaphylaxis plans, centre allergy lists are in place to provide consistency in ensuring the health and safety of the children.
- We offer the children a nutritious morning and afternoon snack. Our menus meet the Canadian Food Guidelines and the snack requirements of a minimum of 2 food groups per snack. Menus are posted on the parent communication board and available on our website. www.amongfriendschildcare.com
- We do not allow children to bring in outside food on school days; however, we do have Director Approval from the Ministry of Education in place for children to bring in their bag lunches during PA Days, Christmas, March and Summer Breaks when they attend full day programs within our Centres.

Goal: (b) We are committed to supporting positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents and Educators; (c) to encourage the children to interact and communicate in a positive way and support their ability to self regulate – CCEYA, O.Reg 137 46 (3) (b)(c)

Approach:

- Our Educators encourage and engage in positive, welcoming and respectful interactions with the children, their families, other Educators, school community and community agencies.
- Arrival and departure times are documented by the parent/guardian in the child's classroom, which we encourage, as this provides the opportunity to relay information about the child's day or their health and well-being.
- Our children are encouraged to interact with their peers and others in a respectful and positive manner which helps build towards healthy relationships and connections.
- Educators promote support for children with self-regulation by providing many opportunities for the children to make responsible choices, choose what they will do and how they will do it and with whom, assisting with taking initiative, encouraging leadership roles and encourage children to resolve situations and problems.
- Redirection is used to guide a child into acceptable options when engaged in an unacceptable activity. Logical and natural consequences endeavour to make children aware of the results from their actions.

Goal: (d) We are committed to fostering the children's exploration, play and inquiry – (e) We are committed to providing child-initiated and adult-supported experiences – (f) We are committed to plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences in which each learning and development will be supported (g) We are committed to incorporating indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play, rest and quiet time, into the day, and give consideration to the individual needs of the children receiving child care - CCEYA, O.Reg 137 46 (3)(d)(e)(f)(g)

Approach:

- Our Educators see every child as an active, engaged learner who explores the world with body, mind and senses. They support the children's learning by encouraging collaborative inquiry and are co-learners. Educators are mindful of the children's capabilities, individual needs and will offer support and assistance when required.
- We promote engagement and allow opportunities to learn through play by providing play experiences and activities that stimulate the children's interests.
- The children are provided opportunities to choose through independent exploration of the materials in the classroom and planned activities based on observations, interests and needs of the children.
- Our Educators plan activities and experiences that are geared to meet these learning areas; Personal & Social Development, Language, Literacy (writing and reading), Mathematics, Science, Technology, the Arts (visual, dance, music, dramatic play), Health and Physical Activity.
- We implement outdoor and active play daily which plays an important role in improving co-operation, gross motor skills, social and physical development.
- Quiet areas are provided for the children to complete homework and for time to unwind when needed.

Goal: (h) We are committed to fostering the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children – (i) We are committed to involving local community partners and allowing those partners to support the children, their families and Educators - CCEYA, O.Reg 137 46 (3)(h)(i)

Approach:

- We recognize that each family and children's needs may vary and offer support where possible. We welcome and involve children of all abilities. Our program expresses respect for diversity, equity and inclusion as a vital optimal development of learning by following these themes; quality, flexibility, fairness, partnerships and dignity.
- We involve community partners with ongoing support from parents/guardians when help is needed to successfully integrate exceptional children into our programs.
- Posted weekly is a program schedule with a variety of fun-filled activities that have been planned for the children based on their needs and interests. This provides input to the parents/guardians on what the children are learning through their day.
- We also encourage parent involvement by organizing parent engagement meetings.

Goal: (j) We are committed to supporting Educators or others who interact with the children at a child care centre in relation to continuous professional learning - CCEYA, O.Reg 137 46 (3)(J)

Approach:

- Professional Development for our Educators is vital for the ongoing commitment to the child care field. All Educators are required to attend training sessions provided by the Management Team.
- Our Educators are also offered many opportunities to attend training workshops, participate in online training sessions and review resources provided by the Child Care Community, York Region and the Ministry of Education.

Review and Implementation of this Program Statement - CCEYA, O.Reg 137 46 (3)(k)

Our Educators use the feedback provided by the Ministry of Education during the annual licensing visit to address and ensure ongoing compliance under the CCEYA.

Input and suggestions from our Educators, during staff meetings, ensure that all Educators benefit from each other's ideas, knowledge and strengths.

Daily interactions between our Educators, the children in our program and their parents/guardians ensure that our program provides a positive and healthy environment for our children.

This statement will be reviewed with the intent to explore ways to improve its effectiveness and to modify or change areas that no longer make a positive impact on the learning environment.

This Program Statement will be reviewed by all Educators, students and volunteers prior to working with the children, at least annually thereafter and at any time there is an amendment made to the statement. All educators, students and volunteers are to sign off that they understand the statement and that the approaches in the statement will be implemented.

Days and Hours of Operation

Our Child Care Centre's provides daily care for Kindergarten and School-Age children during the school year. Our Child Care Centre's are open Monday to Friday from 7:00am for the morning programs and close at 6:00pm/6:30pm depending on location. Please refer to your child's Rules and Regulation page of the Registration Form for your applicable Centre's Hours of Operation.

On non-instructional days, including: PA Days, Christmas Vacation, March Break and Summer Holidays, we also provide childcare from: 7:00am – 6:00pm, at certain locations. Please speak with your Site-Supervisor for open locations. During Christmas break, open locations depend on School Board schedule.

The Child Care Centre is open every day throughout the school year except Statutory Holidays and Easter Monday. In the event that the School Board declares that the school will be closed to students (school strike, power outage, snow closure, inclement and/or special weather days, staggered entry days, operational needs/reasons, pandemic shutdown, and isolation days.), our Child Care Centre will be closed as well. If our Child Care Program has begun and the School Board, Public Health, or any other Public Official determines that the schools must close early due to any of the reason listed above, the Child Care Centre will contact parents/guardians to have them make arrangements to have their child(ren) picked-up earlier than usual. Announcements are made on local radio stations advising of school closings due to weather conditions. Please listen for these announcements.

Arrival and Departures

Parents/guardians are required to and must accompany their child/ren to and from the Centre daily (AM/PM), ensuring the child/ren are signed in and out. It is imperative that parents/guardians make contact with the Educators at drop-off and pick-up times. At no time are children permitted to walk home once in our care. Parents/guardians or someone on the pick-up list must come and sign-out children.

Fees

Full fees are required for all children, along with completed registration forms, PRIOR to starting. All outstanding fees MUST be paid in full PRIOR to your child/ren starting in the program. You will be charged for all absences, regardless of full time or part time. Post-dated cheques are required for the school year (September to June), including statutory holidays. *There is no charge for Easter Monday. PLEASE NOTE: ALL ENROLLED CHILDREN ARE CHARGED FOR P.A. DAYS REGARDLESS OF PART-TIME OR FULL-TIME REGISTERED. Subsidized care is available - please contact York Region for information regarding subsidy. Fee assisted care families must ensure that York Region speaks directly to our Subsidy Department at our Head Office prior to starting. Parents/guardians must notify our Office of any fee changes. Separate fees apply for Camp Registration and all pizza lunches. Full fees/daily rates will continue to be charged to families in the event of a school strike, power outage, snow closure, inclement and/or special weather days, staggered entry days, operational needs/reasons, pandemic shutdown, Public Health outbreak, and isolation days.

PLEASE NOTE OUR ORGANIZATION HAS BEEN ACCEPTED INTO THE CANADA-WIDE EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE SYSTEM BETWEEN THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO AND THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA. FOR MORE INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT AMONGFRIENDSCHILDCARE.COM

"Base Fee" means any fee or part of a fee that is charged in respect of a child for childcare, including anything a licensee is required to provide under the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 (CCEYA), or anything a licensee requires the parent to purchase from the licensee, but does not include a non-base fee.

"Non-Base Fee" means any fees charged for optional items or optional services, such as transportation or field trips, or any fees charged pursuant to an agreement between the parent and the licensee in respect of circumstances where the parent fails to meet the terms of the agreement (eg., fees for picking up a late child, fees to obtain items that the parent agreed to provide for their child but failed to provide), as defined in the CCEYA.

Late Fees

There is a \$5.00 late fee for the first 15 minutes and then \$1.00 per minute thereafter. **This fee is payable directly to the Educators at the time of pick up.** It is imperative that parents/guardians contact the Child Care Centre early enough to advise of late pick up and/or make alternate arrangements for the child/ren to be picked up before Centre closing hours.

Please Note: The Child Care Centre has the right to contact CAS and York Region Police, if it is after closing hours and your child(ren) are not picked up.

NSF

\$20.00 will be charged for NSF cheques. Parents/guardians will be allowed 2 days to replace the payment in the form of a money order or a certified cheque. Should there be more than 3 NSF cheques, the child/ren's care may be terminated. Contact must be made with Head Office. Please note that care may be suspended until full payment has been made to clear the outstanding fees given.

Tax Receipts

Tax receipts will be issued prior to the CRA deadline date. They will be mailed out to the address on your child's Record of Payment form. Should you require a duplicate receipt, a \$15.00 fee will be charged.

Waitlist Policy

All parents/guardians are directed to submit a Request for Enrollment Form to the Registration Department that is located on the amongfriendschildcare.com website before they can be added to the waitlist. We do not charge for placing your child(ren) on our waitlist.

The Request for Enrollment Forms are dated when received and added to the waitlist by the Registration Department.

Part time schedules (less than 5 days per week) may not be accommodated due to high volume of full time enrollments.

Kindergarten children and younger siblings of currently enrolled children are given priority for enrolling in September based on the current licensed capacity of that age group.

Parents/guardians can call the Registration Department to find out where their child is on the waitlist. The waitlist is maintained with confidentiality that allows the parent/guardians to only ascertain knowledge of their child's position on the waitlist.

Parents/guardians are called from the waitlist in sequence to fill any vacancies as they occur. If a family, for any reason declines the spot we will then offer the spot to the next family on the waitlist.

Please note, parents/guardians who decline a spot will remain on the waitlist in the same place/seniority unless they have requested to be removed from the waitlist.

September is our official start of the program, spaces can become available at any time of the year however July, August, and September have the most movement and fill quickly.

Once you have been contacted regarding a space you will have 3 business days to accept the spot. Spots cannot be placed on hold or reserved without payment.

Summer Camp programs are the only programs that a registration fee is required per family for confirmation of space.

Confidentiality of Records

Children's records are confidential and are open only to our Educators, the Licensee, an authorized employee of the Ministry of Education Licensing Agency or the child's parents or legal guardians.

Registration Forms

Parents/guardians will be given a Registration Package prior to enrollment for their child/ren (one form per child). All sections must be filled out completely including: medical information, parent's contact information, permission form, photo consent form, etc. The Registration Package must be provided to the Child Care Centre prior to the child/ren starting in the program, including all payments to be sent to the Head Office at: P.O. Box 1205, Kleinburg, Ontario, L0J 1C0. For September registrations, all Registration Packages must be sent to the Head Office due to school closures during the summer months.

Included in the Registration Package is a permission to pick-up list. Please write the name and contact information of anyone permitted to pick-up your child/ren. Please be advised that the Educators will not release your child/ren to anyone without proper verbal and written confirmation from parents/guardians if the Educator does not recognize the person that has arrived to collect the child/ren, they must check the person's ID and check that they are on the child/ren's authorized pick-up list. If a person is not on the pick-up list and if the Educator have not received prior verbal or written consent directly from the parent, the child/ren cannot be released to that person. Parents are to be called immediately and notified that this person has arrived to pick up their child/ren. The Educators are to clarify with parent whether the person can collect the child/ren. An Educator is required to stay with the child/ren and closely monitor them until an authorized person arrives. At no time is the Educator allowed to leave the child/ren with anyone else. Once the child has arrived in our program, at no time is the child allowed to leave the Centre without a parent or an authorized person coming into the program to sign the child/ren out, or written permission from a parent/guardian via note or text to the Centre phone.

Every September, parents/guardians will update these Registration Forms. Should any information change during the school year (work address, cell number etc.) please advise Educators and change information immediately. It is imperative that contact information, for someone other than the parent/guardian, is provided in the event of an emergency.

Christmas / March Break / Summer Camp / PA Day Registration

Educators will approach parents/guardians prior to Holiday programs for registration (separate sign-up fees are required). Parents/guardians must contact Head Office to register. Please be advised parents/guardians are charged for what they register for. Christmas, March Break and Summer Camp are offered at specific locations. PA Day Registration: Parents/guardians must sign their child/ren up on the P.A. Day lists that come prior to the date advising whether your child/ren will or will not attend.

Out Trips may be offered during Christmas Break, March Break, Summer Camp and P.A. Days - Separate forms will be given on premise regarding Out Trips. An additional out-trip fee or in-house entertainment/activity fee may apply. If the Child Care goes on an out-trip all children must go. There will be no Educators at the Centre. Program location may be at a nearby site for P.A. Days, Christmas, March Break and Summer Camp. If due to low enrollment or a pandemic, we may not be able to offer PA Days at some locations. We will notify families a week in advance. **Please note: Full fees are required for the dates in which you are registered for and you will not be able to cancel once payment is received.**

Snacks / Bag Lunch Policy (in conjunction with, and as referenced in, our Anaphylactic Policy):

The Child Care will provide snack daily for the children. One of the snack companies that we use is Avron, as well as, other grocery suppliers. Allergy/food restrictions/special request diets/gluten-free food must be included on the child's Registration Form and parents/guardians must call our Snacks Director at our Head Office.

Special hot lunch programs (eg. Pizza) may be provided for the children on full-days at an additional cost. Signs will be posted for these special days and a sign-up for parents/guardians who wish to have their child participate.

In order to reduce the risk of exposure to anaphylaxis causative agents, we closely watch all outside food that is brought into the Centre. We do not allow children to bring in outside food on a regular basis, however, we do allow children to bring in their lunches during Christmas, March Break, Summer Camp and when they attend full-day programs (P.A. Days) within our Centres.

Please visit www.canada.ca/foodguide for healthy menu options, healthy eating habits, recommendations, recipes, tips and resources.

The children's lunches will be inspected by the Educators prior to eating and any food that has come in contact with causative agents or are causative agents, will be removed from their lunches; Educators will contact the parents/guardians immediately and explain why the children were not allowed to eat that certain product.

All snacks served to the children that are provided by the Centre are inspected to minimize possible traces of causative agents.

A plan for the dissemination of the information on life-threatening allergies, including anaphylactic allergies will include updating all new and returning Educators on the child/ren who have allergies. A list of children with known allergies, as well as their respective allergens, will be posted in areas of food preparation and consumption, and available and accessible in any other area in which children may be present to minimize risk of reaction.

Should a child forget to bring a lunch or the lunch needs to be supplemented due to the presence of allergen containing foods, and parents will be called immediately to bring a lunch to the Centre. If this is not possible, the Centre has snacks that can be used to supplement for the lunch (eg. cheese sandwich, fresh fruit, fresh vegetables, cereal, milk, etc).

Parents/guardians are requested to provide peanut/nut free lunches/snacks in a labelled lunch-bag (using freezer/ice packs if applicable for dairy, cold meats, etc) or thermos type container in order to keep food fresh/cool/warm as required to maintain a safe temperature and nutritional value is maintained. If possible, we will refrigerate lunches as space permits.

Parents/guardians are reminded to ensure that all water bottles and lunch bags are clearly labeled with your child's name on it.

Withdrawal / Program Time Change Requests

Should parents/guardians wish to withdraw their child/ren from the Centre, two weeks (10 business days) written notice must be provided to our Head Office. Please note that the Christmas and March Break time frame cannot be used as part of the two-week notice. Should you wish to change the program times at the Centre for your child/ren, you must submit your request in writing to our Head Office for approval. Upon approval, there will be a two-week (10 business days) notice period from the date of your request, and if possible, the change will be made. Families must remain in the program until the end of June to guarantee first priority for September re-registration.

Leave of Absence / Vacation

Should your child/ren need to take a leave of absence, you are required to pay for the first two weeks that they are away from the program. Parents/guardians must provide us with a return date (no more than one month of return for the spot to be held). Anything over and above the first two weeks of absence may be rebated. Should you have a special circumstance, please contact our Head Office to further discuss. SHOULD YOUR CHILD BE ABSENT FROM THE CHILD CARE, PLEASE INFORM THE EDUCATORS AT THE CHILD CARE CENTRE DIRECTLY.

Health Information

Each child is required to have on file at the Child Care a medical record, which includes the signature of the child's parent or guardian or source of the medical information. This medical record should be completed at the time of enrolment. Any allergies to food or medications must be noted on the medical record. The child's weight and height must also be recorded.

Parents with children with anaphylaxis must provide an Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan for their child prior to enrollment

This plan will include but is not limited to:

- Description of the child's allergy
- Monitoring and avoidance strategies
- Signs and symptoms of an anaphylactic reaction
- Child Care Educators roles and responsibilities
- Parent/guardian consent for administering allergy medication, sharing information and posting Emergency Plan
- Emergency contact information
- Location of the 2 **Epinephrine Auto-Injectors**

Anaphylaxis Plan and Emergency Procedures

The parent/guardian will meet with the Centre Supervisor and Designate to review and train them on the child's Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan prior to the child starting. Parents must provide 2 **Epinephrine Auto-Injectors**. One can be kept on the child or in his/her school backpack and one (or both) can be kept with the child's classroom teacher. All **Epinephrine Auto-Injectors** must have a prescription label on it. Parents are requested to advise the Centre Supervisor if their child develops an allergy, requires medication and/or of any change to the child's anaphylaxis emergency plan or treatment.

Training

- The parent will review the child's anaphylaxis emergency plan, including the procedure to be followed if the child has an anaphylactic reaction, with the Centre Supervisor and Designate and will train both Educators prior to child starting in the program.
- The parent may also review and train the remaining Centre Educators in the program. A "train the trainer" model will be used. A parent may train the Licensee, Centre Supervisor, Designate or Program Educators, and this individual can then train the remaining Educators, students and volunteers at the Child Care Centre.
- Training by the parent will include the procedures to be followed in the event of a child having an anaphylactic reaction, including how to recognize the signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis and administer medication.
- Any new Educators, student and volunteers who commence employment or placement after the initial training will be given the training by the Centre Supervisor or Designate or another Educator who has been trained by the parent in Supervisor's absence.
- The Centre Supervisor and Designate will be trained by the parent of child annually and receive consent from the parent to train new Educators, students and volunteers.
- Educators will conduct a check to confirm if the child (ren) have their required medication with them before each transition (i.e. moving from the classroom to the gym, outdoor play, out trip, etc ...)
- The Educators will be required to sign and date that they have received training and witnessed by the person implementing the training (Parent, Licensee, Centre Supervisor, Designate, Program Educators).

Illness

Exclusion of Sick Child and Return:

The Supervisor of the Child Care Centre reserves the right to refuse to accept any child with symptoms which might endanger the health and safety of the child or the other children. No child who arrives noticeably ill, with diarrhea, vomiting, a rash or a fever shall be admitted for that day.

Should a child become ill during the day, with these symptoms, his/her parent/guardian or designate will be required to pick-up the child within one hour. The child may not come back to the Child Care Centre unless he/she is 24 hours' symptom-free. An Illness Form will be completed and filed with the child's registration form.

In the event of an illness outbreak, we will follow Public Health Policies and Regulations.

Administration of Medications

Our Child Care Centres will administer medications only under the following conditions:

- Only medication prescribed by a physician may be given. However, medications such as Benadryl (for anaphylactic allergy) will be permitted only with a physician's written permission.
- Medications to be given to the child are administered only after the parent/guardian has given written authorization by completing, dating and signing a Scheduled Medication Treatment Record that has been provided by the Child Care Centre.
- All medications that are to be administered to the child must be in the original container which is clearly labeled with a pharmacy label that states the prescribing doctor's name, the child's name, the name of the drug or medication, the dosage of the drug or medication, the date of purchase and expiration, and instructions for storage.
- For Epinephrine Auto-Injector medication; the parent must complete the Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan. For all other emergency prescribed medications; the parent must complete an Emergency Medication Record. (Emergency Medications can be Inhalers if child is not authorized to carry and administer on their own, Seizure Medications and Benadryl).
- Epinephrine Auto-Injector or Asthma Inhaler can be administered and carried by child with the physician's written permission.
- All medications are kept in a locked container out of the reach of the children. However, Epinephrine Auto-Injector and Asthma Medications can be kept with the child and with the classroom teacher, in the classroom backpack.
- In the event that a child has an IP Plan and/or Medication Form for Anaphylactic, Emergency Allergy, Asthma, and/or Medical Needs, where the storage for medications (including Epinephrine Auto-Injector, Emergency Allergy Medications, and Asthma Medications) allows for the medications to be kept on/with the child and/or with the classroom teacher, this may be permitted with a parent/guardian's written authorization/signature and will be inaccessible at all times to children (with the exception of Epinephrine Auto-Injector, Emergency Allergy Medications, and Asthma Medications).
- One Educator will administer medications according to the instructions on the label and written parental authorization.

The Scheduled Medication/Treatment Record must be filled in immediately after administration and signed by that person with the date, the time, and the amount given.

- When Emergency Medication has to be administered the parent/guardian are to be notified as soon as possible.
- Once the medication is finished or the parents request the discontinuation of the medication, the medication authorization form is to be placed and kept in the child's file. The Scheduled Medication/Treatment Record must be kept for the period of time that the child is in the program.
- When administering medication, the child is to be removed from the activity area to administer medication in a quiet environment with the least possible interruption. Medication should be dispensed in a well-lit area.
- After the medication is discontinued or expires, return it to the parent. Record the date.
- Measuring spoon (parent to provide) should be used when administering medication. (1 teaspoon = 5 ml)
- RECE/Designate in each classroom is in charge of dispensing medication. In their absence, the Site Supervisor is in charge of the medication in accordance with the written procedure.
- Children are not permitted to dispense their own medication unless they have written permission from a physician.
- Vitamins are considered as drugs which mean the Procedure for Dispensing Medication would apply.
- All medication is stored according to the storage instructions on the label.

Smoke Free Policy

Please be aware that the Child Care Centre and School Property is a smoke-free environment. Smoking or handling of tobacco, medical or recreational cannabis, and the use of electronic cigarettes and vaping is PROHIBITED in and around the building, playground area and parking lot at all times; whether or not children are present. All Educators, parents/guardians, students and volunteers will be made aware of this policy by way of the Parent Handbook, policy review in Policy Binder and signage which is visible on our Parent Board. Educators, students and volunteers are required to review and sign off on this policy upon commencing employment and at least once annually thereafter.

Program Schedule and Photo Documentation

Posted weekly is a program schedule with a variety of fun-filled activities that have been planned for the children based on their needs and interests. Photo documentation can be displayed on parent board, easel portfolio, scrapbook and/or on the classroom's laptop using a slide show. Weekly program schedules are created. They are posted weekly for parents/guardians to review. **Children are not permitted to bring any games or toys from home.**

Inclusion Policy

Our Child Care Centres actively promotes inclusive practices to best meet the needs of the children and families in our Centres by removing barriers, building bridges and celebrating diversity. We believe that every child is unique, and in partnership with families, we are committed to meeting the developmental and educational needs of all children.

All children are welcome to attend regardless of ability, need, background, culture, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or economic circumstances. Children require meaningful learning opportunities in inclusive settings to maximize their growth and development to reach their full potential.

Every effort is made to fully integrate children with special needs into our programs with accommodations being made to support the individual needs and learning styles of every child.

Children with special needs may require additional supports to fully participate in our settings. This includes children who, due to emotional, familial, physical, behavioural, developmental, cognitive, communicative or emotional factors, are at risk of not maximizing their potential.

Special needs encompass children who require support and assistance with daily living, whether formally diagnosed or not, and whether a diagnosis is short- or long-term in nature. (OMSSA definition)

Through the development of individual education/accommodation plans, children with exceptional needs should be provided enough support to enable them to participate fully and successfully in an inclusive early childhood education program.

Through our inclusive practices, we aim to reflect our wider community and promote positive attitudes to both the similarities and differences in each other.

Our Child Care Centres are committed to working with the family, community partners and community clinicians to ensure the needs of the child(ren) are met. To achieve this, we actively engage with parents/guardians and organizations such as York Region R.I.S.E Program for additional support, York Region Early Intervention Consultants, etc. to develop individual education and accommodation plans.

All individual accommodation and education plans are unique and include a description of any supports or aids, adaptations or other modifications to the physical, social and learning environment including instructions on the implementation of the plan.

Our program ensures inclusion is supported through equitable registration and admission practices. In order to provide an open and accessible service for all children and families, admissions are accepted on a first come first served basis where possible. However, due to the severity of the exceptional needs, possible entry into the program may be placed on hold until an additional support Educator has been put in place to successfully integrate the child into the program.

Within the guidelines and requirements of the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Child Care and Early Years Act, Our Centres are committed to:

- Ensuring that each request will be considered individually, on a case-by-case basis, to determine accommodation requirements
- Working to eliminate barriers that prevent children from accessing or participating in the program
- Achieving a culture and program environment that is supportive of children including reviewing policies and practices to ensure that they are not discriminatory
- Establishing an efficient and timely accommodation process that is consistent
- Developing (jointly with the parents/guardian) an individualized education and accommodation plan that respects the dignity of the child, promotes integration and full participation and respects confidentiality

Our Child Care Centres will:

- Respect the dignity of the parent/guardian by accepting a parent/guardian's request for accommodation in good faith
- Ensure that the accommodation provided meets the specific circumstances, while at the same time working to ensure general accessibility for all children in terms of spatial and physical requirements
- Ensure the necessary steps are taken to determine what modifications might be required for a child to participate fully in the program
- Be Inclusive by ensuring that the parent/guardian is involved in the process to ensure parents/caregivers have a voice in goal setting and priorities for their child(ren)
- Ensure that all accommodation requests are considered on an individual basis
- Limit requests for information to those reasonably related to the nature of the need or limitation, and only for the purpose of facilitating access to the program
- Deal with accommodation requests in a timely manner
- Ensure that the childcare environment is welcoming and that all children treat one another with respect
- Take an active role in ensuring that alternative approaches and possible accommodation solutions are investigated, review various forms of possible accommodation and alternative solutions up to the point of undue hardship
- Work to identify an appropriate accommodation which meets the needs of the child in an equitable and financially responsible manner

It is the desire of the Child Care Centre to meet the needs of each child in our care. Should the Educators or Director believe that a child's attendance is posing a risk to the other children at the Centre, him/herself and/or the Educators, the Director, or Associate Director, may request that the child be withdrawn from the program.

All Educators, volunteers and students must review these individualized plans, note any modifications and record the date of the review.

Positive Guidance and Encouragement

We want all our children to be safe and to enjoy our program with peace of mind. For this reason, we have expectations and rules that respect the rights of all members of our school community. Violence, swearing and behaviour that puts others or self at risk, are not permitted nor tolerated. It is our intent to include all children in our program, however should a situation be identified where concerns have been raised that a child's needs are not being met and/or other children are at risk, then our Centre Supervisor will work together, with the child's parents/guardians, to resolve the situation. A step in the resolution may include developing an action plan and consultation with relevant community resources.

- Children are to be re-directed in a positive manner that is developmentally appropriate for their age.
- Positive reinforcement is the preferred way to encourage a child to develop self-regulation, ensure safety and to respect the rights and property of others. Educators will reinforce and acknowledge positive behaviours.

Educators will notify parents/guardians of any challenging behaviours and work together to re-direct and put strategies in place to support the child.

Should there be concerns regarding the behaviour of a child, parents/guardians will receive notification in the following order:

1. Verbal warning,
2. Written warning
3. Written notice of child/rens' dismissal from the program.

Please Note: the childcare centre has the right to dismiss a child from our program immediately if the Director, or Associate Director, determines the behaviour of a child presents serious risk of injury to the child, other children enrolled in the program, and/or the Educators, or is disruptive to the program's operation.

Supervision Policy of Volunteers and Students

Placement Students and Volunteers are not counted in the Educators ratios at our Child Care Centre's. It is observed that volunteers and students are supervised by an employee at all times and no volunteers or students are left alone with the children.

Prohibited Practices

This provision forbids physical punishment and other harmful disciplinary practices to protect the emotional and physical well-being of children. These practices are never permitted in our child care centres.

No Licensee shall permit with respect to a child receiving child care at a child care centre or at a premise where it oversees the provision of child care:

1. Corporal punishment of a child, which may include but is not limited to hitting, spanking, slapping or pinching
2. Physical restraint of children, including but not limited to confining to high chair, car seat etc. for discipline or in lieu of supervision unless for the purposes described in the regulation (to prevent self harm, harm to others, and only until risk of harm or injury is no longer imminent).
3. Locking the exits of the child care centre for the purpose of confining the child, or confining the area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs in an emergency.
4. Use of harsh, degrading, measures or threats, or derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, scare or frighten the child or undermine their self respect, dignity or self worth.
5. Depriving the child of essentials including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding.
6. Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

Contravention of the Prohibited Practices from an Educator, volunteer or student will be investigated by the Management Team and the person or persons involved will be disciplined by either suspension without pay or possible termination of position.

Documentation of discipline issued will be provided to the person involved as well as added to their file at the centre by either the centre Supervisor and/or the Management Team.

RECE and OCT Educators found guilty of the contravention will be reported to their affiliated colleges within the time frame allocated by the colleges (RECE - College of ECE / OCT Educators - Ontario Teachers College).

Child Abuse and Duty to Report

Should the Educators of our Child Care Centre's, in the course of their duties, have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is, or may be suffering from, or may have suffered abuse, shall forthwith report suspicions and the information on which it is based to the Children's Aid Society. The Educator who initially suspects child abuse is the one who should report directly to the Children's Aid Society.

It is not the responsibility of our Child Care Centre or Educators of the Centre to investigate or verify the abuse or to pass on information to the Director of the Child Abuse Register. These duties belong solely on the Children's Aid Society. Our Educators will not contact the child's family or any other person to determine the cause of the suspected abuse or neglect. It is not the responsibility of our Educators to contact or report child abuse cases to the police. It is the Children's Aid Society who will notify the police.

Serious Occurrence Policy:

In spite of all best precautions, Serious Occurrences can sometimes take place.

A Serious Occurrence could include:

- Death of a child who received child care at the Child Care Centre
- Abuse, neglect, or an allegation of abuse or neglect of a child while receiving child care at the Child Care Centre
- A life-threatening injury to or a life-threatening illness of a child who receives child care at the Child Care Centre
- An incident where a child who is receiving care at the Child Care Centre goes missing or is temporarily unsupervised
- An unplanned disruption of the normal operations of a Child Care Centre that poses a risk to the health, safety or well-being of children receiving child care at the Child Care Centre

A Serious Occurrence does not necessarily mean the Child Care Centre is out of compliance with licensing requirements or that children are at risk in the Child Care program.

Serious Occurrence Notification Form Policy

Please be advised our Child Care Centres will post a Serious Occurrence Notification Form for all parents/guardians to review to provide a safe, creative and nurturing environment for your children. The form will be posted for 10 business days visible to all of our parents/guardians. This posting will give our parents/guardians information about the incident and outline follow-up actions taken by the Management Team to prevent future incidents.

Emergency Management Policy and Procedures

All of our Child Care Centres have a policy in place to provide clear direction for Educators to follow to deal with emergency situations. These procedures set out steps for Educators to follow to support the safety and well-being of everyone involved. Clear policies and procedures will support all individuals to manage responses and responsibilities during an emergency, resulting in the safest outcomes possible. Staff will follow the emergency response procedures and will ensure that children are kept safe, are accounted for and are supervised at all times during an emergency situation. For any emergency situations involving a child with an individualized plan in place, the procedures in the child's individualized plan will be followed. If any emergency situations happen that are not described in the policy, our Director, Associate Director or Quality Assurance Supervisor will provide direction to staff for the immediate response and next steps. Staff will follow the direction given. If any emergency situations result in a Serious Occurrence, the Serious Occurrence Policy and Procedures will also be followed. All emergency situations will be documented in detail by the Site-Supervisor or Designate in the daily written record.

If an "all-clear" notification is given, parents/guardians will be notified verbally and/or with a written notice posted at the Child Care entrance.

If an "unsafe to return" notification is given, written notice will be posted for parents/guardians at the Child Care Centre entrance with information on the evacuation site.

Parent Involvement

- Parent/guardians sign-in and sign-out forms are implemented daily, which provides opportunities for parents/guardians and Educators to share pertinent information regarding the child/ren.
- Parents/guardians are to share information in regards to their child receiving assistance for special needs during school hours from an I.E.P. or I.P.P. This will assist in the successful integration of the child in the program. In addition, there is a program in York Region called R.I.S.E. (Resources for Inclusion, Support in Early Learning Settings) that will provide a support Educator for children with special needs upon approval. Parents/guardians need to contact Head Office for further information.
- Parent/guardian surveys are implemented periodically for feedback.
- Newsletters are provided periodically throughout the school year.
- Parent/guardians Engagement Meetings are offered when needed (generally twice per school year).
- Parents/guardians are encouraged to review the children's program, and view the photo documentation provided.

Parent Issues and Concerns Policy and Procedures

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to provide a transparent process for parents/guardians, the child care licensee and staff to use when parents/guardians bring forward issues/concerns.

Definitions:

- *Licensee:* The individual or agency licensed by the Ministry of Education responsible for the operation and management of each child care centre it operates (i.e. the operator).
- *Staff:* Individual employed by the licensee (e.g. program room staff).

Policy:

General

Parents/guardians are encouraged to take an active role in our child care centre and regularly discuss what their child/ren are experiencing with our program. As supported by our program statement, we support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents/guardians, child care providers and staff, and foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents/guardians about the program and their children. Our staff are available to engage parents/guardians in conversations and support a positive experience during every interaction.

All issues and concerns raised by parents/guardians are taken seriously by the Director, Sandi MacMillan and the Associate Director, Amanda Mezzatesta, and will be addressed. Every effort will be made to address and resolve issues and concerns to the satisfaction of all parties and as quickly as possible.

Issues/concerns may be brought forward verbally or in writing. Responses and outcomes will be provided verbally, or in writing upon request. The level of detail provided to the parent/guardian will respect and maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved.

An initial response to an issue or concern will be provided to parents/guardians within 24 hours. The person who raised the issue/concern will be kept informed throughout the resolution process.

Investigations of issues and concerns will be fair, impartial and respectful to parties involved.

Confidentiality

Every issue and concern will be treated confidentially and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of parents/guardians, children, staff, students and volunteers, except when information must be disclosed for legal reasons (e.g. to the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities or a Children's Aid Society).

Conduct

Our centre maintains high standards for positive interaction, communication and role-modeling for children. Harassment and discrimination will therefore not be tolerated from any party.

If at any point a parent/guardian, provider or staff feels uncomfortable, threatened, abused or belittled, they may immediately end the conversation and report the situation to the supervisor and/or licensee.

Concerns about the Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a Child

Everyone, including members of the public and professionals who work closely with children, is required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.

If a parent/guardian expresses concerns that a child is being abused or neglected, the parent/guardians will be advised to contact the local Children's Aid Society (CAS) directly.

Persons who become aware of such concerns are also responsible for reporting this information to CAS as per the "Duty to Report" requirement under the *Child and Family Services Act*.

For more information, visit <http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childrensaid/reportingabuse/index.aspx>

Procedures

Nature of Issue or Concern	Steps for Parent and/or Guardian to Report Issue/Concern:	Steps for Staff and/or Licensee in responding to issue/concern:
<p>Program Room-Related</p> <p>E.g: schedule, sleep arrangements, toilet training, indoor/outdoor program activities, feeding arrangements, etc.</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the classroom staff directly <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the supervisor or licensee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Address the issue/concern at the time it is raised <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - arrange for a meeting with the parent/guardian within 3 business days or at the earliest convenience of both parties. <p>Document the issues/concerns in detail. Documentation should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the date and time the issue/concern was received; - the name of the person who received the issue/concern; - the name of the person reporting the issue/concern; - the details of the issue/concern; and - any steps taken to resolve the issue/concern and/or information given to the parent/guardian regarding next steps or referral.
<p>General, Centre- or Operations-Related</p> <p>E.g: child care fees, hours of operation, staffing, waiting lists, menus, etc.</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the supervisor or licensee. 	<p>Provide contact information for the appropriate person if the person being notified is unable to address the matter.</p> <p>Ensure the investigation of the issue/concern is initiated by the appropriate party within 5 business days or as soon as reasonably possible thereafter. Document reasons for delays in writing.</p>
<p>Staff-, Duty parent-, Supervisor-, and/or Licensee-Related</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the individual directly <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the supervisor or licensee. <p>All issues or concerns about the conduct of staff, duty parents, etc. that puts a child’s health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the supervisor as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.</p>	<p>Provide a resolution or outcome to the parent(s)/guardian(s) who raised the issue/concern.</p>
<p>Student- / Volunteer-Related</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the staff responsible for supervising the volunteer or student <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the supervisor and/or licensee. <p>All issues or concerns about the conduct of students and/or volunteers that puts a child’s health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the supervisor as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.</p>	

Escalation of Issues or Concerns

Where parents/guardians are not satisfied with the response or outcome of an issue or concern, they may escalate the issue or concern verbally or in writing to Amanda Mezzatesta, Associate Director, who can be reached at (905) 552-0610 Ext.6 or amongfriendsdaycarecentres@hotmail.com

Issues/concerns related to compliance with requirements set out in the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* and Ontario Regulation 137/15 should be reported to the Ministry of Education's Child Care Quality Assurance and Licensing Branch.

Issues/concerns may also be reported to other relevant regulatory bodies (e.g. local public health department, police department, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Labour, fire department, College of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario College of Teachers, College of Social Workers etc.) where appropriate.

Contacts

**Ministry of Education, Licensed Child Care Help Desk: 1-877-510-5333 or childcare_ontario@ontario.ca
Amanda Mezzatesta, Associate Director: (905) 552-0610 Ext. 6 or amongfriendsdaycarecentres@hotmail.com**

Conclusion

We hope that this handbook will answer many of your questions. Please contact the Site-Supervisor or our Management Team at the Head Office if you require more information.