



Child Development Institute's **EARLY LEARNING CENTRES**

A HANDBOOK For Parents and Guardians

Version 2.0

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Dear Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to CDI's Early Learning Centres!

We are pleased that you have selected one of our centres as your child care provider and partner in early child development. We look forward to your child's participation in a safe, supportive and family friendly environment where s/he will flourish.

To better provide for your child's needs and to achieve our goals, we ask that you work with us by following the policies and procedures we have presented in this Handbook. In return, we will provide you with well trained, qualified staff, clean and safe facilities, and a nurturing environment where your child will thrive as we work together.

We encourage you to provide feedback and get involved in a variety of ways. You are welcome to contact the Director of your child's centre by telephone or email or stop by the office. We also have a Parent Advisory Committee that provides a broader range of opportunities for involvement depending on your time.

Thanking you in advance for your cooperation and participation.

Carolee Cain
Director, Healthy Child Development

Introduction

Our Organization

Child Development Institute is a non-profit community-based organization, which has been serving the families of young children in Toronto since 1909. We are a multi-service organization, providing a range of programs and services – all of which are directed toward our mission of *Strong Families, Healthy Children*.

Our Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles

To help you better understand our agency, please take a moment and review our Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles listed below:

Vision

Child Development Institute will continue to be recognized for innovation and excellence in child development services and research by collaborating and partnering with others who share our values.

Mission

Child Development Institute's mission is to promote and support the healthy development of children and to strengthen the families and communities in which they live.

Guiding Principles

- ❖ Service excellence
- ❖ Research and evaluation
- ❖ Innovation
- ❖ Collaboration
- ❖ Continuous learning and sharing knowledge
- ❖ Responsiveness
- ❖ A family-centred approach
- ❖ Diversity
- ❖ Social justice
- ❖ Accountability

Our Early Learning Centres

Background

This Handbook is intended to provide you with basic information so you become familiar with the Vision and Mission of Child Development Institute as well as the philosophy, principles and the policies under which our Early Learning Centres operate. If there is material in this Handbook that is unclear or if you have unanswered questions, we encourage you to discuss these fully with the Director at your centre.

Our Early Learning Centres are licensed non-profit centres operated by Child Development Institute. They are licensed by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services and meet the provincial standards of *The Day Nurseries Act*. In addition, our centres have purchase of service agreements with the City of Toronto for the provision of subsidized child care and meet the operating criteria of Toronto Children's Services.

Our Early Learning Centres are governed by the rules and provincial regulations for licensed child care centres. Children are cared for in a safe, welcoming and nurturing environment where they receive warm, nutritious lunches and snacks daily as well as participate in stimulating and well-equipped programs. Parental involvement is welcomed.

Purpose

The purpose of CDI's Early Learning Centres is to provide high quality non-profit child care and early learning programs for infants, toddlers, pre-school and school-aged children, from newborn to 12 years. Our commitment is to help each child reach their full potential by engaging in activities and developing relationships that support healthy social, emotional, physical and cognitive development.

Philosophy

The philosophy of Child Development Institute Early Learning Centres acknowledges the child's natural desire and ability to learn. Our centres share with parents and guardians the responsibility for promoting sound growth during the most important period of development.

Children grow and develop at individual rates that are often unrelated to chronological age. Thus, we provide learning activities with a variety of challenging levels designed to meet the needs of all children.

Principles

The objective of the program is to provide a safe, secure, consistent and pleasurable environment in which each child will have the opportunity to:

- build a positive concept of self as an individual, as well as a member of a family and a community (*self-concept*);
- learn to play and share experiences with others and to accept limits in terms of discipline and rules (*socialization*);
- acquire knowledge about the world and how it works, rules for figuring out problems, and the ability to use language to represent ideas in abstract form (*intellectual development*);
- develop both gross and fine motor control and body coordination, while enjoying the benefits of good nutrition and outdoor activity (*physical development*); and
- each parent/guardian can be assured that the activity of the centre enhances and extends the scope of his or her own parental caring and responsibility (*family involvement*).

Hours of Operation

Care is provided 10½ hours daily, Monday to Friday, from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

The centres are open Monday through Friday (5 days a week) year round, except for the following:

- New Year's Day (January 1st)
- Family Day (3rd Monday in February)
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- Victoria Day (3rd Monday in May)
- Canada Day (July 1st)
- August Civic Holiday (1st Monday in August)
- Labour Day (1st Monday in September)
- Thanksgiving Day (2nd Monday in October)
- Christmas Day (December 25th)
- Boxing Day (December 26th)

On occasion a centre may close early during the year but not before ample notice is given to parents/guardians.

Early Closing on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve

Pursuant to our collective agreement with CUPE 2132, the union representative for our Early Learning Centres, all our Early Learning Centres are required to close early on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

This means that whenever Christmas Eve or New Year's Eve occurs on a day that the centres are normally open for business, the centres will be closed by 12:00 noon. Your centre Director will provide you with advance notice of the early closings.

NOTE: The centres are not open for business on statutory holidays.

Programs and Staffing

As provincially licensed centres, our staff/child ratios and groupings of children are based on the *Day Nurseries Act* requirements. The ratios and groupings are as follows:

GROUP	APPROXIMATE AGE	TEACHER/CHILD RATIO
Infants	newborn - 18 months	3 - 10
Toddlers	18 - 30 months	1 - 5
Preschool	2 ½ - 5 years	1 - 8
Kindergarten	4 - 5 years	1 - 10
School-age	6 - 12 years*	1 - 15
* <i>not available at all centres</i>		

Programs

Infants

The daily schedule is determined by the individual needs of the child. Infants explore their environment through play, songs, and story time.

Toddlers

Toddlers use their imagination and creativity to participate in small group activities and in play. Opportunities are given to socialize and interact with one another to build self-confidence in preparation for moving to the next age group.

Preschool

Children 2½ to 5 years continue to build their creativity and all other areas of development. They also explore the world around them through community activities and involvement.

Kindergarten

At this stage, children are introduced to activities that enable them to grow and develop their school readiness skills through self-expression, imagination and creativity.

School-age

Children explore and participate in more advanced learning activities.

Staffing

Our centres are staffed with individuals who are capable, qualified, and well-trained in early childhood learning, which are reflected in the programs and services we provide.

To maintain the high standards and quality of our programs and services, the Director of the centre and at least one teacher per age group are trained in provincially recognized programs of Early Childhood Education (ECE) or their equivalent. Assistant teachers are experienced in working with children and are required, upon hire, to be enrolled in Early Childhood Education classes at a community college. Aides provide additional classroom support to the ECEs and Assistants.

Effective January 2009, all ECEs are mandated to have membership in the Ontario College of Early Childhood Educators, a regulatory body set up by the Province of Ontario, to ensure the high quality of teachers in child care and early learning programs across the province.

Students and volunteers may be involved in the programs throughout the year and work with the children on a one-to-one or small group basis under the supervision of trained staff. As a condition of employment, staff and students are required to undergo a criminal reference check by police prior to commencement of duties, and all staff must have current First Aid and CPR certificates, as well as be trained in Anaphylaxis and the use of an EpiPen Auto Injector. Registered volunteers are also required to undergo a criminal reference check.

Parents/guardians who volunteer to accompany a group of children on a specific outing are not required to be registered volunteers and are therefore not required to undergo a criminal reference check.

Note:

For the purposes of this Handbook, all references to staff include full-time, part-time and contract staff, as well as students and registered volunteers.

1.0 Key Policies

Relevant policies and procedures are posted at the centres, in a publicly accessible area.

1.1 Anti-Oppression Policy and Procedures

Definition of Oppression

Oppression is behaviour based on prejudiced feelings and attitudes, which lead to differential and unfavourable treatment of persons, based on factors such as:

- Race/ethnicity
- Physical differences
- Culture
- Age
- Gender
- Sexual preference
- Religion
- Socio-economic status or income level

Oppression may be intentional or systemic and works to exclude or restrict access to or participation in an organization, institution, employment, education, accommodation and services. An important element in oppression is the exercise of power, whether it is social, economic or political.

Statement of Principle

Child Development Institute is committed to providing leadership to ensure that its mission and operations embrace the entire community that we serve. Child Development Institute will work to ensure full community participation and access to its services, employment, Board membership and volunteer opportunities. Child Development Institute believes that ethno-racial and linguistic diversity enriches and strengthens our community socially, culturally and economically. Diversity should be reflected in Board, volunteer and staff recruitment, staff hiring, as well as staff and volunteer development and in the development and delivery of programs and services.

POLICY

Given the aforementioned principles, Child Development Institute undertakes the following commitments:

- Child Development Institute will create opportunities to achieve a staff and volunteer resource base that is racially and culturally diverse and reflective of the community we serve;
- Services and programs of Child Development Institute are responsive, sensitive and appropriate to the needs of racially, culturally, and socially diverse groups;
- Child Development Institute programs seek to promote equality and attitudinal change through the elimination of systemic barriers in our programs that prevent full participation;
- Oppressive behaviour and/or language on the part of Board, staff, students and volunteers is not tolerated;
- Oppressive behaviour and/or language on the part of service participants is not condoned;
- Communication materials present a positive and balanced portrayal of racial, cultural and social groups.

This policy is intended to act as a positive force for racial, cultural and social equality and the elimination of all oppression.

Policy approved by Board of Directors – April 26, 2004

1.2 Inclusion Policy

At our Early Learning Centres, no child shall be refused or denied child care accommodation because of his/her race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical, mental, or emotional condition. All children requiring space at our early learning centres will be placed solely on the basis of their Parent(s)/Guardian(s) ability to pay full fee, or to obtain the necessary subsidy from the City of Toronto Children's Services department. All children entering into the care of the centres shall be treated equally, with respect and be given the support and opportunities they need to grow and develop emotionally, mentally, and physically.

1.3 Client Complaints Policy

1. Clients will be supported to raise issues of concern and to address them through an established process and in a timely fashion.
2. Many issues can be resolved within the context of a relationship where an open and respectful communication of views and feelings is facilitated.
3. Where such a resolution cannot be achieved within this relationship, clients have the right to access in an orderly manner all staff decision-making points (e.g. case conferences) within our organization.
4. Child Development Institute shall respond to complaints as quickly as possible and shall endeavour to complete the recourse process within two weeks.
5. Where such complaints raise issues of concern to the Board of Directors about the policies and practices of Child Development Institute, such policies and practices shall be reviewed and may appropriately be adjusted by the Board.

1.4 Child Abuse Policy

By law, it is a requirement that any demonstration or allegation of physical or verbal abuse by a parent/guardian or staff directed at a child registered at one of our Early Learning Centres must be reported to an appropriate child welfare agency, without first informing the child's parent/guardian or the person who has been accused of the alleged abuse.

For more information, please refer to the full version of the **Child Abuse Policy** posted in the centre.

1.5 Confidentiality/Privacy Policy

Child Development Institute, in providing programs and services to parents and children, collects personal and health information about its clients and their families in accordance with current privacy legislation. All information relating to a parent, child and/or family matters will be held in the strictest of confidence.

Except where mandated by law, written consent must be obtained from parents/guardians before any information considered to be confidential may be released to a third party. Information in your child's file or about you and/or your child cannot be released to another person or organization without your prior written consent. Should another person request information about you or your child, you will be asked to fill out and sign the *Authorization to Provide Child's Information to a Third Party* form. In addition, a Personal Health Information and Protection Act (PHIPA) Statement is posted in your child's Centre.

For more information, please contact our Privacy Officer at 416-603-1827.

1.6 Serious Occurrence Reporting

At our Early Learning Centres, a process is in place for documenting and reporting incidents that are considered to be serious and must be reported according to the *Day Nurseries Act* or other legislation. For more information, please refer to the ***Serious Occurrence Reporting Policy*** posted in the centre.

1.7 Behaviour Guidance

Our behaviour guidance policy is based on meeting individual needs within a supportive environment. Whenever a child harms or injures (e.g. bites, scratches) another child, the parents of both children will be informed. However, the name of the aggressor will not be released.

For further information, please refer to ***Behaviour Guidance Policy*** posted in the centre.

1.8 Code of Conduct

At our centres every parent, guardian, staff, student, volunteer, and child will be treated with respect, fairness, and equality. Any parent/guardian who exhibits discriminatory behaviour or physical or verbal abuse directed at children, staff or other adults at the Early Learning Centres (or at any of our locations) will result in a written warning after the first incident. A second incident may result in the individual being banned from the centre for a period of time.

1.9 Parents/Guardians Non-Compliance with Policies

To best serve you and your family, and for the benefit of the children in our care, we have policies in place to ensure fairness in our interactions with you.

- If the Director of the centre determines that you have consistently not complied with your obligations under the Early Learning Centres Parent Contract, or the policies of the Early Learning Centres, the Director must report the matter to the Director of Healthy Child Development, who may inform the Executive Director.
- In the event that it is proven that you have breached the contract, after the first time you will receive a verbal notice, followed by a written letter. A second letter may result in a notice of withdrawal of service.

1.10 Use of Tobacco

The Smoke Free Ontario Act prohibits the smoking of tobacco in any enclosed public place or enclosed workplace; it also prohibits the smoking of tobacco in a child care setting or in the area of a child care centre. Therefore, smoking of tobacco is banned on the premises of all Child Development Institute facilities, including playgrounds and parking lots.

1.11 Parents/Guardians Custody Rights Policy

(Enforced Without Prejudice)

If the court has awarded you full or shared custody of your child, for the safety and protection of your child, you must submit copies of any legal documentation to the centre's Director to demonstrate your rights. If you are in the process of or have been granted legal guardianship of your child, you must promptly inform the Director of the centre about any change in the status of your custodial rights. You should report any change to your custodial status to the Director of the centre as soon as possible.

Should a non-custodial parent/guardian appear on the premises of an Early Learning Centre, the Director may immediately contact the police and/or the legal parent/guardian of the child in question. The child will immediately be moved to the Director's office and be released only to the custodial parent. In the case of a verbal dispute or physical altercation, the child will be released to the appropriate child welfare agency and/or the Metropolitan Toronto Police Services until the situation has been resolved.

For the safety and security of the children in our care, staff do not "take sides" or get personally involved in family disputes. Where there is a dispute as to custodial rights, the physical and emotional security of the child in question is the only concern of the staff at the Early Learning Centres.

2.0 Admission and Enrollment

2.1 Admission

Before your child is accepted at the centre, you will be given a Registration Package to complete and return to the centre.

The Director of the centre will arrange an interview to familiarize you and your child with the centre, answer your questions and/or concerns, and review the required admission forms, prior to your child's enrollment at the centre. A one-time non-refundable registration fee of \$50.00 per family is required at the time of enrollment.

You are encouraged to remain with your child at the centre during the first week to ensure his/her transition into the child care setting is as smooth as possible. This will help to reassure your child and to minimize his/her fears until s/he becomes comfortable at the centre.

2.2 Enrollment

Full-time enrollment will have priority over part-time enrollment unless a combination of part-time spaces makes up an entire full-time equivalent. Part-time spaces combination may be approved by the Director at his/her discretion.

2.3 Internal Transition Period

You and staff in charge of your child's program will mutually agree upon a timeframe to make your child's transition from one age group to the next as smooth as possible. Staff will notify you in advance of a scheduled transition. Fee changes for the next program will commence on your child's first full day in the new classroom.

2.4 Withdrawal/Termination of Services

You will be required to provide at least two weeks written notice in advance of permanent withdrawal of your child from the centre. If notice is not received, you will be required to pay the full fees for the month.

Should you withdraw your child on a temporary basis, s/he will not be guaranteed a permanent space at the centre, and will be placed on a waiting list. See **3.1 Payment of Fees** in this Handbook for information on ensuring the availability of your child's space.

2.5 Withdrawal due to Accommodation shortage

While we try to ensure that children enrolled at our centres are accommodated, due to space limitations, we may not always be able to do so on an ongoing basis. Each classroom is licensed for a maximum number of children, and occasionally, there are times when one or more classroom has the maximum number of children and there is not enough space to move a child into the next age group due to a shortage of space.

Before a decision is made about which child may be asked to be withdrawn, the Director will take into consideration a number of options. Once the decision is made, the parents/guardians of the child who is being asked to withdraw will be notified and a reasonable timeframe will be allowed for the withdrawal. If you are the parent/guardian of the child being withdrawn, you may be asked to consider moving your child to another of our centres. We will also assist you in finding care at another centre. You will receive the notice of withdrawal of your child from the centre several weeks in advance of the withdrawal date.

Should you have any questions or concerns about this, please ask your centre's Director for more information.

2.6 Immunization

It is a recommendation of the local Medical Officer of Health that all children enrolled in a licensed child care setting must be immunized against infectious diseases. Acceptable proof of immunization will be the Ontario Ministry of Health issued card or note completed by your family doctor or child's paediatrician, listing all immunizations received to date. For more information on exemptions, please refer to **5.3 Immunization Exemptions – Special Circumstances** in this Handbook.

If an outbreak occurs and your child has been exempted or his/her immunization is not up to date, s/he cannot attend the centre until the danger of illness has passed, or until s/he receives the required vaccine. You are also encouraged to contact your local public health department for information.

2.7 Information Update

Registration packages must be completed annually. Immunization records will be reviewed annually to ensure information is up to date. However, it is your responsibility to inform the centre of any changes during the year, especially changes regarding emergency information.

3.0 Fees

3.1 Payment of Fees

Fees are due and payable on the first day of every month, in advance (e.g. fees for February are due on February 1st). You are required to pay fees for every day, Monday to Friday, from January 1st to December 31st, including statutory holidays, temporary periods of absence, vacation days, sickness or other days your child is away from the centre. When the first day of the month occurs on a weekend or statutory holiday, your payment is due on the first business day following the weekend or statutory holiday. For more information see **3.4 Fees – Vacation** in this Handbook.

Credit Card Payments

A pilot project has commenced at a couple of our centres, introducing direct payment by credit card and will expand to all our centres commencing January 1, 2010. Parents/Guardians will have the option of paying their child's monthly fees by Visa or MasterCard. Please see your centre's Director for more information.

Notice of Fee Increase

Notices of fee increases are distributed (by mail or in person) to parents/guardians no later than December 1st of each year. Increases are effective on January 1st of the following year.

Returned Cheques

If a cheque is returned to the centre by your financial institution, you will be required to replace the cheque immediately and pay a twenty-five dollar (\$25.00) administration fee. If more than 2 cheques are returned, you will be required to make future payments by credit card, money order, or certified cheque.

Fees in Arrears

If your payment has not been received by the due date you will be given a written notice requesting payment be made within the next five (5) business days. If payment is not received at the end of the 5 days, you will be given a notice of withdrawal.

3.2 Late Pick Up Fees

Everyone must exit the centre by 6:00 p.m. If you have not arrived and/or left the centre with your child by 6:00 pm, s/he will be considered to be a late pick up.

The time displayed on the centre's wall clock will be determined to be the correct time. The late fee is **\$1.00 for each minute you or an authorized person is late**. An authorized person who is late to pick up your child must sign the late pick-up form. However, it is your responsibility to pay the late fee regardless of who is authorized to pick up your child.

Continuous late pick-up of your child may result in a request for withdrawal from the centre.

Late pick up fee payments are to be paid in cash and are due within 24 hours of the late pick up and are not to be included with your monthly childcare fees. Where the late fee is incurred on a Friday or the day before a statutory holiday, payment is due by the end of the following business day.

Our first responsibility is to ensure the safety of your child. In the event that you or an authorized adult has not arrived at the centre by 7:00 p.m., and has not contacted the centre to advise staff of your late arrival, the appropriate child welfare agency will be notified.

3.3 Fees for Access Cards

To have access to the centre, you may be provided with either a pass code or an access card. Where access cards are provided, a one-time refundable fee is required.

Centres located in a school setting do not require access cards or pass codes.

3.4 Fees – Vacation and Other Absences

Parents/Guardians paying full fees

You are required to pay for every day your child is enrolled in the centre, regardless of the reason s/he is away, including vacation, illness, temporary absences, or other absences.

Parents/Guardians receiving fee subsidy

Effective January 2009, Toronto Children's Services introduced a new policy regarding fees for days taken in excess of the maximum allowable number of days.

You will be required to pay the daily full fee rate for any additional days taken in excess of the Toronto Children's Services entitlement. If your child will be absent and the expected time away will exceed the maximum allowable days, you must pay for the number of extra days before your child commences his/her period of absence, regardless of the reason for the absence.

For more information, please refer to the City of Toronto website at www.toronto.ca/children, or contact your Children's Services Caseworker to discuss the policy change.

3.5 Non-Payment of Fees

You will be requested to withdraw your child from the centre if you have not paid the required fees by the due date.

3.6 Receipts

Receipts for income tax purposes will be issued no later than the last business day in February of the following year for monthly fees and registration fees, where applicable. Fees for late pick up of children are not considered to be regular fees and are not included.



4.0 Daily Operations

4.1 Attendance and Pick-Up of Children

Attendance

If your child will be absent from the centre for any reason, you are requested to phone the centre by **9:00 a.m.** to inform the staff of your child's absence and give the reason for the absence.

Arrival

To help your child adjust to the day's activities, on **arrival** at the centre, help remove his/her outdoor clothing and footwear, take him/her to the appropriate classroom and communicate any new information about your child to the teacher in charge.

Departure/Pick-Up

Our centres close at 6:00 p.m. and you should make every effort to pick up your child by the centre's scheduled closing time. When you cannot pick up your child on time, you must give advance notice (written or by phone) to the staff. Another person picking up your child must be previously authorized by you and will have to show the staff a government issued photo identification (such as a driver's license) or your child will not be released to the individual(s).

To pick up your child/children, an authorized person must be at least **16 years of age**.

Pick up of Child by Intoxicated Parent/Guardian or Other Authorized Person

Your child will not be released to you or an authorized person if, on arrival, the individual appears to be intoxicated or under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Staff will suggest calling your child's other parent, or an alternate person to pick up your child.

If the individual insists on leaving the centre with your child, the police and appropriate child welfare agency will be notified.

4.2 School Bus Transportation

Teachers from your centre walk children to and from nearby schools. If you choose a school that is not on our route and your child requires another mode of transportation, you will be responsible for arranging the transportation for your child. Arrangements for transporting your child to and from the school and centre must be made by you through the school. The bus pick up/drop off must be outside the centre and you must inform the centre's staff about your child's pick up and/or drop off times or changes in the schedule.

4.3 Suspension from School

Some of our centres are located on school property, and for those centres the appropriate school board policy applies. For example, if your child is suspended from school, s/he may not be allowed to be on the school premises, and so will not be able to attend the centre's programs.

If your child is registered to attend programs at one of our centres not located on school property, s/he will only be allowed to attend the program that s/he is registered in. For instance, if your child is registered to attend before and/or after school programs at the centre, those would be the only times your child would be allowed at the centre.

4.4 Illness

Should your child become ill, you should immediately notify the centre staff of your child's illness and how long s/he will be away from the centre. If you are ill and do not have other arrangements to drop off and pick up your child from the centre, you should also notify the centre staff.

If your child is away for more than three consecutive days due to an illness, a physician's note will be required for verification and re-admittance to the centre.

Kindergarten and School Age Children

If your child is sick and cannot attend school, s/he cannot attend the centre's programs and the Early Learning Centres' protocols for illnesses must be followed.

4.5 Termination of Service - Child Cannot Adjust To Program

Occasionally, despite the best efforts of parents/guardians and the centre staff, a child may not adjust to the program, or the centre's setting may not be what s/he needs. Should your child be unable to adjust to a program, the following steps will be taken:

1. The Director and staff involved will meet with you;
2. External help/interventions may be sought, if you agree to and sign an *Authorization to Provide Information to a Third Party* form, allowing your child to be seen and/or observed by a qualified professional (i.e. a medical practitioner or a child care consultant);
3. Goals will be set for you and your child;
4. A City of Toronto Children's Services Consultant will be informed and be consulted with;

5. The Director will carefully consider the recommendations of the qualified professional and the Children's Services Consultant before making a final decision;
6. Timelines will be agreed upon for you to come to terms with your child's possible inability to adjust to the program and other options that may be available to you;
7. If your child is still unable to adjust to the program, the Director, with the approval of the Children's Services Consultant and the Director of Healthy Child Development, may remove your child from the program and the centre and, wherever possible, you will receive two weeks notice of the removal, in writing. All outstanding post-dated cheques will be returned where applicable. The Director will make every effort to promptly inform you of the availability of alternative child care arrangements.

4.6 Parent Involvement

Our goal is to make you and your child's experience at the centre a positive one. To achieve this, you are encouraged to participate in programs at your child's centre. Throughout the year, each centre hosts many different kinds of activities; from parent-teacher conferences to celebrations. We invite you to join in and participate.

The degree to which you wish to participate is solely up to you. We understand that many parents/guardians do not have much free time. Participating in the centre can range from being an active parent on the advisory committee (PAC) or helping collect things needed in your child's classroom.

Whatever your time permits, whether it is volunteering for a field trip or reading to the children, we welcome your participation! Please speak to your centre's Director if you are interested.

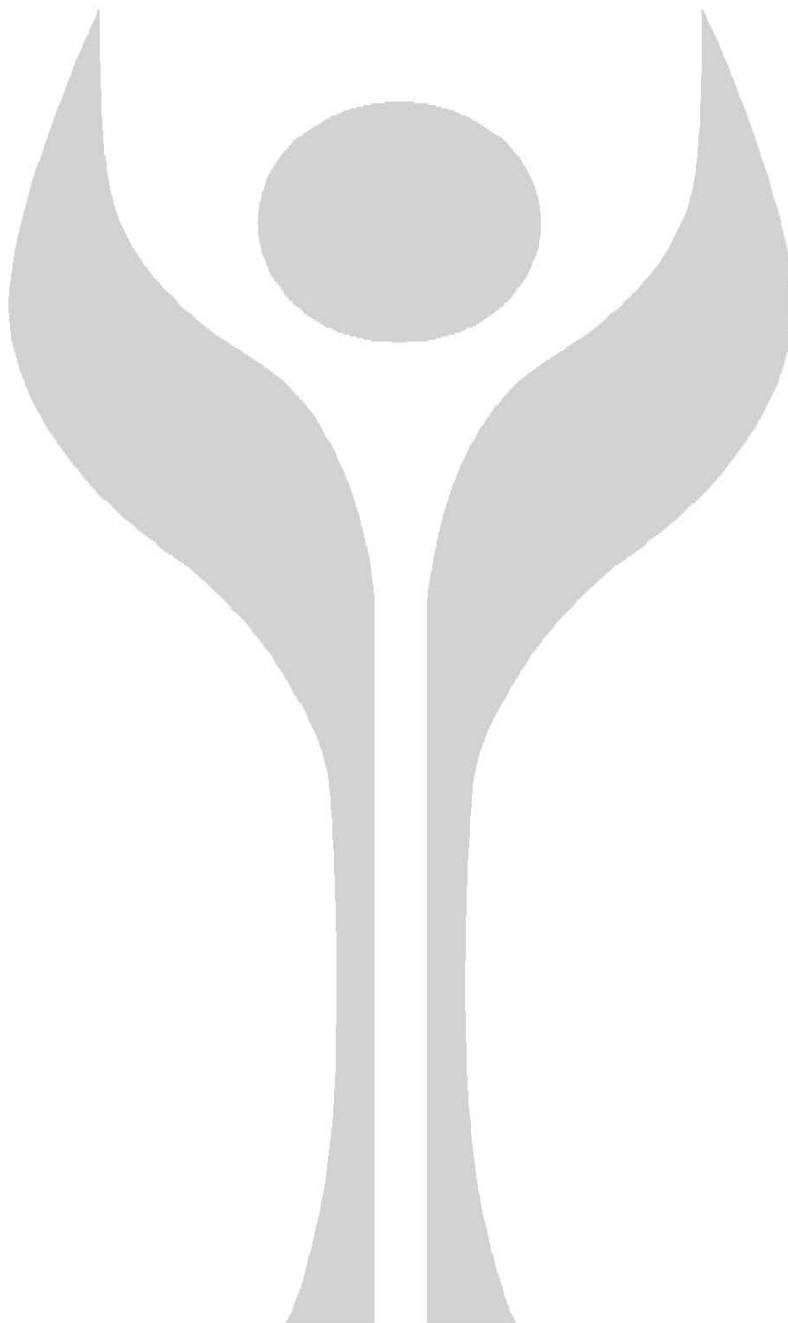
4.7 Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)

Our Early Learning Centres have established Parent Advisory Committees that meet on a regular basis. The purpose of the Parent Advisory Committee is to provide Parents/Guardians with a forum to participate in the overall life of the organization. The advisory will create a more meaningful experience for families and children within the early learning centres. The Parent Advisory will be a strong and effective vehicle to support the childcare. Further, the Advisory will enhance access and participation in programs and services. The centre will strive to provide services that are flexible, responsive and based on need.

4.8 Monetary/Non-Monetary Gifts

We understand that occasionally parents/guardians like to support staff by rewarding them with gifts. While we appreciate your desire to do so, our policy is that parents/guardians

shall not give monetary gifts to the centre's staff. Non-monetary gifts are acceptable, but shall not exceed \$50.00 in value.



5.0 Health and Wellness

Our health and wellness policies are based on information received from Toronto Public Health and the Paediatric Society of Canada's *Well Beings: A Guide to Health in Child Care*.

5.1 Health Policy

This policy is designed to maintain the good health and safety of all children and staff at the Early Learning Centres.

Unless your child becomes ill at the centre, s/he will not be allowed to remain indoors during outdoor time. As mandated by the *Day Nurseries Act*, all children over thirty (30) months of age must spend two hours each day outdoors, weather permitting.

Children cannot attend the centre if illness prevents them from participating in regular daily routines or if attendance could be harmful to themselves or others. If a child shows signs of illness while at the centre, s/he will be separated from the group. Staff must notify the Director and contact parents/guardians immediately.

Some important signs of illness to look for are:

- Unexplained or undiagnosed pain.
- Acute cold with fever, runny nose and eyes, coughing and sore throat.
- Unusual behaviour: No matter what the cause of a child's symptoms, the behaviour always provides an important key to help a caregiver estimate how serious the illness is. Children with unusual behaviour such as lethargy or unusual sleepiness, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, or other signs of possible severe illness should be seen by their physicians as soon as possible.
- Wheezing or difficulty breathing.
- Vomiting: If the child has had two or more episodes of vomiting during the last 24 hours, caregivers can exclude until the vomiting stops.
- Diarrhea: Exclude for 24 hours until diarrhea is gone or physician determines child is not infectious. Parents/guardians will be notified and asked to pick up their child if any of the following are present: 2 or more episodes of diarrhea or diarrhea with a fever, vomiting, dehydration, blood or mucus in stool, or abdominal cramps.

Note: In the case of an outbreak, the Public Health Department will determine the period of time that must pass before your child can return to the centre.

- Dehydration (Lack of body fluids): symptoms include drowsiness, no urination within the last 6-8 hours, lips and tongue are dry, not drinking, skin is tight. Dehydration can be very serious in children and your child must be seen by a doctor as quickly as possible if s/he exhibits any of these symptoms.
- Change in skin colour: a sudden onset of paleness or yellowing of the whites of the eyes or skin may be a symptom of a serious illness.
- Rash: Undiagnosed skin or eye rash.
- Fever: In general, your child's behaviour tells more about the severity of the illness than the degree or height of his/her temperature. A fever usually indicates that your child is fighting either a viral or bacterial illness. You should keep your child at home until the fever is gone at least four hours without the use of a fever reliever such as Tylenol. If s/he develops a fever during the day, the centre can accommodate him/her with a temperature up to 38.5° or 101° F with some flexibility depending on his/her behaviour. You will be notified of your child's fever and must pick him/her up or arrange for someone else to do so as soon as possible.
- Sore throat and difficulty swallowing.
- Headache and stiff neck.
- Severe itching of body and/or scalp.
- Ear infections: Your child will not be excluded unless s/he is too ill to participate in activities (e.g. irritable, clingy, inconsolable crying).
- Known or suspected communicable diseases (see below).

5.2 Communicable Diseases

When a child is diagnosed with a communicable disease (e.g., chicken pox) the centre's Director or designate will advise the local public health department and the families of other children in the program. Children must stay at home if they have any disease considered communicable/contagious (i.e. infectious by contact).

The Early Learning Centres protocols for contagious diseases are:

Chicken Pox – your child cannot return to the centre until spots have dried up (scabbed over)

Conjunctivitis/Pinkeye – If discharge is pus, your child must remain at home until s/he has taken appropriate antibiotic for one (1) full day (24 hours).

Strep Throat – your child must remain at home until the appropriate treatment has been taken for at least 24 hours

Head Lice – your child must remain at home until the appropriate treatment is completed and s/he is nit free

Impetigo – your child must remain at home until the appropriate treatment has been taken for at least 24 hours

Measles – your child must remain at home until at least 4 days have passed since the onset of rash

Mumps – your child must remain at home for at least 9 days after the first sign of swelling

Ringworm – your child must remain at home until the appropriate treatment has been taken for at least 24 hours

Rubella – your child must remain at home for at least 7 days after the onset of rash

Scabies – your child must remain at home until the appropriate treatment has been taken for at least 24 hours

Whooping Cough – your child must remain at home for at least 5 days after the appropriate treatment begins or for 3 weeks from the onset of cough if untreated

Daily routines that may prevent communicable/contagious diseases from spreading include regular hand washing, sanitary clean-up, and implementation of universal precaution guidelines with respect to bodily fluids. Sanitary procedures and universal precaution guidelines are posted in each program room of the centre.

The Director of the centre makes the final decision as to whether an ill child can remain in the childcare setting. This will be based on what is best for your child's care as well as for the other children and may be in consultation with the local Public Health Department.

Whenever your child is absent, you should communicate with his/her teacher any symptoms, causes etc. as precautionary follow up.

Medication of any kind (i.e. prescription drugs or non-prescription drugs accompanied by a doctor's note) may be administered at the centre according to the Drug Administration Policy and the *Day Nurseries Act*.

5.3 Immunization Exemptions due to Unusual Circumstances

In certain circumstances where a child cannot be immunized (e.g. medical problems), or a parent/guardian objects to the immunization due to religion or for conscience convictions, an exemption form must be obtained and signed by the parent/guardian and in the case of conscience or religious belief, sworn before a Commissioner of Oaths.

Exemption forms may be obtained at the Ministry of Health, or at the City of Toronto Department of Health. A copy of an Affidavit signed by a Commissioner of Oaths must be provided to the centre.

5.4 Allergies

In May 2007 Sabrina's Law came into effect to protect children suffering from anaphylaxis. More information is provided in your child's Registration Package.

You are required to advise your child's teacher or the Director if your child suffers from allergies and the reactions s/he may experience. Every effort will be taken to minimize contact with substances that may cause an outbreak of the allergy. Please advise the centre as soon as possible, in writing, of any changes.

5.5 Food

The Early Learning Centres adhere to a "nut-free" environment, and with the exception of fresh fruits, parents are encouraged not to provide their children with outside food or snacks to take to the centre.

Meals are catered and menus are carefully planned according to and meet the Canada Food Guide requirements.

If your child has allergies or is on a special diet, it is your responsibility to notify the Director, so that arrangements can be made concerning meals and snacks. Instructions for special diets must be provided in writing and will be kept in your child's file.

From time to time, we may not be able to accommodate a special diet; at this point, we would have a discussion with you and ask you to provide food for your child.

5.6 Birthday/Event Celebrations

Children's birthdays are celebrated in a simple but joyful manner. The celebration will be held at snack time on the day of or close to the birthday. You will be informed of the time and day in event that you wish to participate in the celebration.

5.7 Infant Meals and Snacks for Kindergarten and School Age Children

Infant Meals

Meals prepared at home for infants should be brought to the centre in sealed containers, or

packaged so there is no leakage or spillage, and your child's name should be clearly written on the outside of the container or package.

Meals and/or Snacks for Kindergarten and School Age Children

Parents/guardians who provide snacks for their kindergarten or school age children to take to school must ensure that the snacks are properly packaged or in containers that do not allow leakage or spillage. You must also remind your child to keep his/her snacks in his/her bag or backpack at all times while at the centre. Left over snacks are not to be eaten at the centre.

At times, it may be necessary for you to provide a meal/snack for your child if s/he is being picked up by another authorized person. Please ensure that the meal/snack is in a sealed, spill proof container, which must be kept in your child's bag while s/he is at the centre. You child cannot eat the meal/snack at the centre.

5.8 Emergencies and Illness – Special Circumstances

In the case of an emergency, where medical attention is required:

- Staff will call 911.
- Your child will be taken to the nearest hospital as determined by the ambulance attendant. If you have specified a hospital of choice, the attendant will be advised. Staff will accompany your child and take your child's emergency card.
- Staff will notify the parent who will be asked to join the child and staff member at the hospital.

5.9 Administration of Prescription Medication

Staff at Child Development Institute Early Learning Centres may administer prescription and/or non-prescription drugs in accordance with the Day Nurseries Act. The Director will ensure that an ECE staff is in charge to administer all drugs and medications.

You must ensure that:

1. Medication is in the original container or package and must be accompanied by a doctor's note.
2. Medication is clearly labeled with your child's name, the doctor's name, the name of the medication, the dosage of the medication and the date of purchase and instructions for storage. The instructions should also specify the length of time for which the medicine will be administered.
3. Medication is current and has not expired.
4. You have completed and signed the medication authorization form for each day that medicine must be administered by staff at the Centre.

Note: Your child may carry his/her own life support medications, such as asthma or other emergency allergy medication, provided that the ECE staff are aware of it so that it can be properly stored to ensure the safety of the other children.

Ongoing/Continuous Use of Medication

You must ensure that you properly train the staff responsible for administering the medication in the proper technique, use and the appropriate times to administer the medication.

You must sign a general consent form for administering the medication. The form must be renewed annually. In addition, you will be required to sign a form each day the medication is administered, as an acknowledgment that your child has received the appropriate daily dosage.

REMEMBER: If you do not provide your child's medication, s/he cannot be admitted to the centre.

Administration of fever relievers such as Children's Tylenol, Tempra

Fever relievers may, with your consent, be administered to your child to keep him/her comfortable until you arrive at the centre. You will be required to provide the fever reliever, in its original container, and sign a consent form for staff to administer.

5.10 Special Conditions

Ensuring the safety of all children in our care is very important to us. If your child has a medical condition (i.e. Asthma, Epilepsy, Allergy, etc.) or develops a condition after starting at the centre, you must inform the Director of all details pertaining to your child's condition to ensure his/her wellbeing. A note from your child's doctor should contain specifics of the condition, such as:

- The name of the condition and any information that may be required by a hospital or ambulance attendant (i.e. Patient History).
- Current medications your child is taking (whether administered at the centre or not).
- Side Effects/Warnings of Medication or Condition.
- Activities that your child is prohibited from participating in. Food your child is prohibited from eating.
- Things that would be likely to irritate the condition or cause an attack.
- A list of contact information for any medical specialists involved in the treatment of your child, including their phone numbers and hospital affiliations.
- Any other helpful information/hints.
- How to physically give first aid. "Do's and Don'ts"
- What symptoms to watch for both before and during an attack.
- How to calm or settle your child.

In the event that your child has an attack and has to be taken to the hospital, you will be called immediately and an ambulance will be ordered for your child.

Follow Up – When appropriate, staff may have to explain an occurrence to the rest of the children in order to promote an environment of understanding and acceptance of differences.

When necessary, meetings will be arranged to brief staff about your child’s condition. It is imperative that you keep staff informed as to recent attacks or new developments.

5.11 Outdoor Play

Sun Safety

Child Development Institute takes very seriously the issue of Sun Safety and the danger of exposure. The Director and all staff will endeavour to follow all recommended sun safety precautions to ensure the safety of all children in attendance at the Centre. Sun Safety applies to all children at the Early Learning Centres.

The Director will ensure that all staff, volunteers and students are familiar with the Sun Safety Procedure and appropriate forms completed.

You will be provided with a fact sheet on “Playing outdoors during Smog and Heat Alerts”.

To ensure that appropriate Sun Safety care is taken the following steps will be taken:

1. You or the Early Learning Centre will provide a sunscreen with a minimum SPF of 30 or a CDA recommended sunscreen, in its original bottle to be kept at the centre.
2. You must sign a Consent for Application of Sunscreen form.
3. If your child is allergic to sunscreen, you must provide a written note to be placed in your child’s file.
4. All children participating in centre activities will be required to wear hats for all outdoor activities.
5. Staff will monitor weather bulletins and will record smog alert warnings, UV ratings, temperatures and other pertinent information in the communication log. All centres will receive bulletins from www.airqualityontario.com and will post this information for parents/guardians and staff.
6. Children will not participate in outdoor activities or fieldtrips on days when there is a smog alert warning.
7. The Director will inform staff of decisions regarding outdoor activities based on weather information.

Cold Weather Safety

Children will not be taken outdoors in the winter if the temperature - according to the Weather Channel - is at minus (-) 10° C with wind-chill. When the temperature is between 0° C and -10° C staff will use discretion as to how long children should be allowed outdoors.



6.0 Children's Information

6.1 Valuable Items

Please do not send your child to the centre with anything you consider valuable. The centre cannot take responsibility for lost or misplaced items the children are wearing or carrying.

6.2 Children's Cubbies

You should check your child's coat cubby each night and take home any soiled clothing, information flyer, artwork, etc.

6.3 Diapers/Toilet Training

If your child requires diapers and wipes, you are required to provide a supply to the centre. You are requested to provide 5-7 diapers daily to keep your child's supply current. Your child's name should be clearly written on the package/container.

6.4 Clothing Policy

You should keep an extra change of clothing at the centre for your child. If you have an infant child, you may want to leave more than 1 change of clothing. All soiled clothing will be sent home at the end of the day for laundering and will need to be replaced with a fresh change.

Please label all of your child's clothing with his/her full name.

6.5. Outdoors Clothing

In the winter, please check the information board for the appropriate clothing recommended to dress your child in: boots, hats, jackets, snow pants, extra socks, mittens (at least 2 pairs) – jackets with strings or scarves are not considered safe, therefore we encourage parents to send "string" free clothing for their child.

In the summer, please make sure your child has a hat, shorts, tee shirts, extra socks and sneakers or running shoes for outdoor activities. Open toed sandals/ flip flops or jelly sandals are not safe for outdoor gross motor activities and are not to be worn at the centre.

6.6 Children's Profiles

Upon registration of your child at the centre, you will be asked to provide information about your child, such as his/her likes, dislikes, habits, favourite food and toys, etc. Progress reports for each child are completed during the period of enrollment in a program at the Centre, and you are encouraged to discuss your child's progress with the teaching staff.

6.7 Birthday/Event Celebrations

Children's birthdays are celebrated in a simple but joyful manner. The celebration will be held at snack time on the day of or close to the birthday. You will be informed of the time and day in event that you wish to participate in the celebration.

6.8 Infant Meals

It is the responsibility of each parent/guardian of infants (from 3 – 12 months) to supply formula, dry infant cereal and food for their child. Please provide written instructions regarding the daily fluid and solid intake of your infant.

A minimum of four bottles of freshly prepared formula are required daily for each infant. Bottles must be plastic. Staff will rinse bottles and nipples after use. **Bottles are to be clearly marked with the date and your child's name.**

Breastfeeding is encouraged even after a child has entered the centre. Every attempt will be made to accommodate mothers wishing to continue a nursing schedule at the Centre. It is, however, important for the child to accept a bottle from the staff should the need arise. For this reason, it is advised that you introduce your child to the bottle before s/he is enrolled at the centre.

6.9 Excursions

The Director of the centre authorizes all aspects of special excursions including staff/child ratio, location and transportation.

Field trips, such as walks to local libraries, parks, etcetera, are fun for children to participate in and enhances their learning experience. You will be requested to sign a permission form for your child to go on any field trip, including those that require the use of transportation.

At times additional adults (parent volunteers and/or student helpers) are required on certain excursions and their attendance will be confirmed prior to the excursion. Although our goal for outside excursions is a 1:2 adult/child ratio, a ratio of 1:4 will be maintained at all times.

6.10 TV Viewing

In recognition of the excellent children's television programming that is available, occasional viewing of quality educational programs, the centre's curriculum may be used to enrich the curriculum. The Director will approve all programs before they are scheduled for viewing and they will be posted in the weekly program plan.

6.11 Photographing Of Children

Occasionally, the staff at the centre may photograph and/or videotape the children in attendance. These photos and tapes may be used for educational and/or childcare related purposes, for classroom bulletin boards, photo albums, and for displays regarding our

programs. You are requested to sign consent forms at the commencement of your child's attendance at the centre, and on an annual basis, for internal and external use.

6.12 Nap and Quiet Time

Individual infant sleeping and nap time will be outlined by parents and on demand as opposed to a rigid routine. Toddlers, preschoolers and kindergarten children will have a regular afternoon nap or quiet time following their lunch. It is our belief that children who have outgrown naptime still need a quiet restful period. A quiet area will be provided for reading and quiet activity.

6.13 Private Babysitting

Staff are discouraged from providing babysitting services for clients of the centres during non-working hours. Should employees choose to provide the service, parents and staff should be aware that it is a private contract between them and that the centre cannot be held liable for any issues arising.

6.14 Accident Reports

Children may occasionally get scrapes and bumps during their time at the centre. Staff will fill out accident reports for any incident that requires first aid, or involves a bump to the head. In the event your child is involved in an incident, when you arrive to pick up your child, the staff will review the accident report with you and ask you to sign it. This ensures that you have been notified of the accident. If it is necessary to do so, you will be contacted during the day to be informed about the accident.

7.0 Emergency/Evacuation

7.1 Emergency Accommodation

In the event of an emergency that makes the centre premises temporarily unavailable, the children will be taken to a previously determined evacuation site, typically within walking distance of the centre. Each centre will have a previously identified evacuation site, and the name, address, and contact information will be posted in the centre beside the Fire Drill and Evacuation Policy. Staff will remain with the children at the evacuation site until parents are contacted and are able to pick up their child/children.

In the event of a neighborhood or region wide evacuation, the police or fire department will determine the steps to take, according to their emergency operating procedures. You will be contacted and arrangements will be made for picking up your child/children.

7.2 Lock Down of Centre

Should there be an incident or situation at your child's centre or in the vicinity of the centre and you are not allowed to enter the centre to pick up your child, you will be contacted at the earliest opportunity by staff at the centre, who will inform you about the situation. You may also receive directions from any emergency personnel at the scene, which you must follow.

For centres located in a school setting, the appropriate school board policy takes precedence over the agency's policy.

Early Learning Centres

Contact Information

NAME OF CENTRE	ADDRESS	CONTACT INFORMATION
Annex Early Learning Centre	161 Madison Avenue Toronto, ON M6P 1Y8	Tel: 416-924-0545 Fax: 416-924-0461 Email: email_annex@childdevelop.ca
Cabbagetown Early Learning Centre	162 Parliament Street Toronto, ON M5A 2Z1	Tel: 416-968-0990 Fax: 416-504-6927 Email: email_cabbagetown@childdevelop.ca
Holy Family Early Learning Centre	141 Close Avenue Toronto, ON M6K 2V6	Tel: 416-915-5389 Fax: 647-439-2055 Email: email_holyfamily@childdevelop.ca
Maple Leaf Early Learning Centre	301 Culford Road Toronto, ON M6L 2V4	Tel: 416-915-5360 Fax: 416-915-5362 Email: email_mapleleaf@childdevelop.ca
Parkdale Early Learning Centre	119 Close Avenue Toronto, ON M6K 2V2	Tel: 416-535-6116 Fax: 416-536-6166 Email: email_parkdale@childdevelop.ca
St. Francis Xavier Early Learning Centre	53 Gracefield Avenue Toronto, ON M6L 1L3	Tel: 416-915-5374 Fax: 416-915-5376 Email: email_stfrancisxavier@childdevelop.ca
Wellesley Early Learning Centre	495 Sherbourne Street Toronto, ON M4X 1K7	Tel: 416-928-9900 Fax: 416-928-2325 Email: email_wellesley@childdevelop.ca
Windermere Early Learning Centre	356 Windermere Avenue Toronto, ON M6S 3L3	Tel: 416-763-2734 Fax: 416-763-6380 Email: email_windermere@childdevelop.ca
<p>You may also contact Carolee Cain, Director of Healthy Child Development, at: Tel: 416-603-1827 or by email ccain@childdevelop.ca or visit us at www.childdevelop.ca</p>		

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Please record important information here

Name of Centre: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number of Centre: _____

Date of Registration: _____

Name of Centre's Director: _____

Program Registered: _____

Name(s) of Teacher(s): _____

Notes/Comments: _____

