



Early Learning Centres



EARLY LEARNING CENTRES FAMILY HANDBOOK

Revised: February 2023



Early Learning Centres

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WELCOME TO CDI'S EARLY LEARNING CENTRES!

We are pleased that you have selected one of our Centres as your childcare provider and your partner in early learning, care, and development. We look forward to your child's participation in a safe, nurturing learning environment, with qualified, experienced Registered Early Childhood Educators and Early Childhood Assistants.

The Early Learning Centres welcome parent participation in our programs. You may wish to join our Family Advisory Committee (FAC). The FAC encourages parent input for program development, topics for guest speakers, fundraising/social events for children and parents, and community events planning. Meetings are held throughout the year.

Parents are also encouraged to share any special talents or skills that will enhance the learning experiences for the children. Further involvement would be to share with your child's teacher any at-home activities and special interests your child engages in that can be incorporated into the classroom activities.

You are welcome to visit your child's classroom!

If you have any questions, please contact the Centre's Director/Designate.

Darlene Landry
Director, Healthy Child Development
Child Development Institute



LEGEND:

Parents/You/Your = Parents and/or Legal Guardians

Director = Centre Director or Designate

Staff/Employee = Full-time, Part-time and Contract staff

Teacher = Registered Early Childhood Educator (RECE) or Early Childhood Assistant (ECA)

OUR EARLY LEARNING CENTRES' BACKGROUND

This Handbook is intended to provide you with basic information about our Early Learning Centres. It is available to parents of children enrolled in our Centres, as well as anyone interested in obtaining care. It is also available on our website at www.childdevelop.ca. Our Program Statement is reflected in the policies under which we operate our Early Learning Centres.

Our Centres are licensed by the Ontario Ministry of Education and meet the provincial standards of *the Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA)*, 2014.

We have a purchase of service agreement with the City of Toronto for the provision of subsidized childcare and meet the Toronto Assessment for Quality Improvement.

Our Early Learning Centres are operated by the Child Development Institute (CDI).

ABOUT CHILD DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

The Child Development Institute (CDI), is an accredited multi-service non-profit organization. CDI has been serving the families of young children in Toronto since 1909. Our family-focused approach puts families first.

We work with each child and family's unique strengths, needs and challenges. We help them to uncover their abilities, give them tools to succeed, and support them in overcoming challenges.

Vision Statement

To make measurable lifelong impact on the mental health and well-being of children, youth, and their families.

Mission Statement

We transform the lives of children, youth, and their families by developing and delivering world class, innovative evidence-based mental health programs.

Values

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

HOURS OF OPERATION

Care is provided 10½ hours daily, Monday to Friday, from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., except for the following days of closure or statutory holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Family Day (3rd Monday in February)
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- Victoria Day (3rd Monday in May)
- Canada Day
- August Civic Holiday (1st Monday in August)
- Labour Day (1st Monday in September)
- Thanksgiving Day (2nd Monday in October)
- Christmas Day
- Boxing Day
- The Centres are not open for business on days assigned in lieu of statutory holidays.

Early Closing on Christmas Eve and New Years' Eve

In accordance with our collective agreement, our Centres are required to close at noon on December 24th and 31st whenever these dates occur on a weekday (Monday to Friday). Fees are payable for the full day. Your Centre Director will provide you with advance notice of the early closings.

Closures due to Severe Weather- TDSB/TCDSB Schools and CDI Centres

For any of our childcare sites that are in a school, we will follow the directive of the school board; namely that if TDSB/TCDSB closes the school, the childcare Centre will be closed as well. Parents/guardians can check the TDSB/TCDSB website and Twitter page for updates. All CDI Early Learning Centres will close whenever TDSB schools are closed due to severe weather. Parents will be notified by the childcare center Director by email, no later than 6:30 am. CDI childcare centers operating in schools and those not in school will be closed and no refunds will be issued for those days.

If the childcare center opens and severe weather conditions progress throughout the day, childcare staff will call families to encourage early pick up.

PROGRAM STATEMENT

Child Development Institute is committed to promoting and providing an inclusive and safe environment that uses *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years* framework, as a guide to govern our programs in each Centre's daily practices. We strive to build strong and responsive relationships between children, teachers, families, and our communities, which continually develops the abundance of potential in every child.

Play serves a very important role in a child learning about self, others, and the world. When we give children the time and opportunity to engage in active self-directed play, we recognize the need for children to explore, examine, investigate, and ask questions. Inquiry-based play is a fundamental mode of learning for all children; children learn about the natural world through self-created experiences. Play enables children to explore a variety of creative uses of common materials and environments (indoor and outdoor spaces), it challenges conventional ways to use materials, and gives children a sense of power, control, and mastery of their own learning.

This program statement will be reviewed annually to ensure that it is aligned with, and upholding the pedagogy and practices set forth in the Minister of Education’s policy statement.

Indicator- {{(O. Reg. 137/15, s.46(3))}}	Goal	Approach
(a) Promote the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of the children	We promote an inclusive and safe environment that promotes race, ethnicity, physical, mental, and emotional well-being of the children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children’s diversity is respected in choices and materials used throughout the program. • Staff monitor the environment (inside and outside) daily for any immediate or potential hazards. • Children’s nutrition is valued through menu choices that reflect the Canada Food Guide and monitored by a registered dietician. Food choices are respectful of family beliefs and practices. • Staff adhere to all food restrictions and allergies and document the children’s health. Concerns are brought forward to families immediately.
(b) Support positive and responsible interactions among the children, parents, childcare providers and staff	All children, families, and staff entering into the Centre shall be treated equally and with respect. They will be given the support and opportunities needed within our environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities are given for staff and families to connect daily and for families to discuss their child’s development and program. • Staff will facilitate a play-based curriculum that encourages children to be curious, take risks, and lead their own learning.

<p>(c) Encourage the children to interact and communicate in a positive way and support their ability to self-regulate</p>	<p>Staff will support a child by providing a developmentally appropriate framework for children to communicate in a positive manner and promote self-regulation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff will model positive interactions and communication by respecting each child's individuality and being engaged in children's play. • Staff will model and encourage children to recognize feelings in others. • Staff will provide opportunities and teach how to use self-soothing techniques with children to resolve issues. Specifically, this includes planning activities that allow for turn-taking, extended focus, conflict resolution, and positive interactions with peers.
<p>(d) Foster the children's exploration, play and inquiry</p>	<p>We recognize each child's natural desire and ability to learn. Staff will foster children's natural curiosity to explore and be leaders in their learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through observations and documentation, staff will expand children's interests and inquiries through curriculum planning. • Staff will provide materials and experiences (both indoor and outdoor) that encourage children to explore through open-ended activities, build-on experiences and learning opportunities.
<p>(e) Provide child-initiated and adult supported experiences</p>	<p>We recognize each child's natural desire and ability to learn. Staff will foster children's natural curiosity to explore and be leaders in their learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff will provide materials and experiences (both indoor and outdoor) that encourage children to explore. • Staff will act as facilitators in the environment through observations and documentation. This allows teachers to plan group and individual experiences. • Staff will be active listeners (observers) with children and plan according to children's interests, abilities, and experiences using documentation.
<p>(f) Plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development will be supported, and which is inclusive of all children, including children with individualized plans</p>	<p>Staff will engage children by planning experiences that are based on their interests and developmental needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff will provide materials and experiences (both indoor and outdoor) that encourage children to explore. • Staff will be active listeners (observers), using observations and developmental assessments to plan according to children's interests and experiences.

<p>(g) Incorporate 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 childcare</p>	<p>A variety of experiences will be planned and facilitated for the children that incorporate all times of the day (indoor, outdoor, active, and quiet) while ensuring the individual needs of the children are being met.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff will meet the individual needs of the children by following individual plans, observations, family-instructed needs, and regulations set forward for the Centre. • Staff will plan adaptations for experiences/activities so that all children are successful and engaged. • There are learning Centres in the environment to foster children's varying needs. There are opportunities for children to have quiet and reflective time, and areas that allow for play that is more active (both indoor and outdoor).
<p>(h) Foster ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children</p>	<p>We promote a culture of family involvement by engaging families in partnerships with our teachers that support their children's development and learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are opportunities for staff and families to connect daily and for families to discuss their child's development and program. • We have an active Parent Advisory Committee and parents are encouraged to join and participate. • The parents are encouraged to provide input into experiences that are planned for their children. • Parents are encouraged to participate in the program through various measures (i.e., read a book to a group, take part in cooking activities, etc.).
<p>(i) Involve the local community partners and allow those partners to support the children, their families, and staff</p>	<p>We will engage various stakeholders in the community to support our children, families, and staff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We support families and community members by having up-to-date community boards in our Centre. • Each Centre has a Family Support Worker that can assist families needing support and provide resources for families and teachers when needed. • We liaise with community members and facilitate programs, workshops, and training that supports our families, children, and staff.
<p>(j) Support staff or others who interact with the children at a childcare Centre in relation to continuous professional learning</p>	<p>We will support staff to attend professional learning opportunities and encourage ongoing training as related to the childcare field.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff attend workshops provided throughout the year through various avenues (i.e., internal training, external workshops, and performance goal development). • Financial support is available for staff training. • The Centres have access to additional professional development pertaining to special needs from our clinical services division. • Opportunities are given for staff to attend TDSB professional development sessions for our school-based Centre.

(k) Document and review the impact of the strategies set out in clauses (a) to (j) on the children and their families	To ensure that the strategies set out in (a) to (j) are meeting the needs of our children and families and that opportunities are provided to make changes if needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through documentation of feedback from families, children, and staff, we assess and explore opportunities for improvements in our approaches. • Families are surveyed throughout the year using an online formal survey or hard copies (depending on need). • Monitoring of the program through a developed checklist that reflects the strategies set out in the program statement.
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SERVICES OFFERED AND STAFFING

As provincially licensed Centres, our teacher to child ratios and groupings of children are based on the *Childcare and Early Years Act, 2014* requirements. The ratios and groupings are as follows:

Name of age category	Age range of age category	Ratio of staff to children	Max number of children in group	Proportion of employees that must be qualified employees
Infant	Younger than 18 months	3:10	10	1/3
Toddler	18 months or older but younger than 30 months	1:5	15	1/3
Preschool	30 months or older but younger than 4 years	1:8	24	2/3
Before and After Kindergarten (available only at Fraser Mustard)	44 months or older but younger than 7 years	1:13	26	1/2

Our teachers are Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) and Early Childhood Assistants (ECAs). RECEs are registered with the College of Early Childhood Educators, while Early Childhood Assistants are required to have an ECA certificate and are experienced in working with children.

As a condition of employment, teachers are required to undergo a Vulnerable Sector Police Record Check upon hire and every five years while employed. In addition, all teachers are required to have current Standard First Aid and Infant/Child CPR certificates, as well as be trained in Anaphylaxis and the use of an Auto-Injector.

Reduced Ratios *Does not apply to infant programs or outdoor play periods*****

Name of age category	Number of Children in Room	Number of Staff Required	Time Period for usage
Toddler	1-8	1	Am: 7:30 – 9:00
	9-15	2	PM: 5:00 – 6:00
Preschool	1-12	1	Am: 7:30 – 9:00
	13-24	2	PM: 5:00 – 6:00
Kindergarten (available only at Fraser Mustard)	1-20	1	Am: 7:30 – 8:00
	21-26	2	PM: 5:30 – 6:00

ENROLMENT AND ADMISSION

Enrolment

Preference is given to families seeking full-time enrollment when there is a demand for these spaces.

Parents of children enrolled part-time in a program will be given the first right of refusal.

Admission Procedure

As part of the admission procedure, the following documents must be completed by the parent and will be reviewed by the Centre Director:

- Registration Package and Signed Parent Contract
- Copy of Immunization Record
- Signed Consent Forms (those that are applicable)

To help your child adjust to the new program, you are encouraged to spend some time with him/her in the program during the first week.

Required Immunization

Proof of immunization must be shown prior to the enrolment of a child in the Centre. **If this documentation is not in English, a Doctor or Medical Practitioner must verify, in writing, that the requirements are met.** An Ontario Ministry of Health Immunization Card or a note (on letterhead) from a medical professional listing all your child's immunizations received to-date are acceptable as proof of immunization. The child must also be immunized from time to time thereafter.

Objections or Exemptions must be completed on the approved forms provided by the Centre Director and must be submitted prior to admission. **NOTE: **** If an outbreak occurs, the child who has an objection or exemption on file will be excluded from the program ******

FEES

Child Development Institute has enrolled in the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) system and is pleased to offer fee reductions to families as part of the agreement. For information on the CWELCC visit <https://www.ontario.ca/page/canada-ontario-early-years-and-child-care-agreement#section-2>

A copy of the fee schedule outlining the base fees for the Centre will be provided with this handbook, and will be available online. Base fees are the mandatory charge for the provision of child care.

Payment of Fees

Base fees are due and payable on the first business day of every month for every weekday (Monday to Friday) including statutory holidays, Easter Monday, Civic Holiday, temporary absences, vacation days, sick days, or other days a child is away from the Centre.

Base fees are due and payable regardless of any closure that is beyond the Centre's control, such as severe weather conditions, natural disaster, loss of heat, electricity or water, flooding, etc.

Changes to banking information can take several days to complete so please provide information at minimum a week prior to the fee withdrawal date of the 1st of each month.

Non-sufficient Funds (NSF)

If a payment is returned for non-sufficient funds, an NSF non-base \$25.00 administration fee will be charged.

Notice of Fee Increase

Notice of fee increases are distributed at least 30 days before the increase comes into effect.

Subsidized Fees - Exceeding Subsidy Entitlement

Payment of the Centre's daily full-fee rate is required for any additional days taken more than the entitlement set by Toronto Children's Services.

Payment Methods

Pre-authorized debit. Every family enrolling into the Centre must complete a Preauthorized Debit form whether or not you currently have a fee. This step is required to complete enrollment. Cheques and cash are not accepted.

Fees in Arrears

Non-payment by the due date will result in the issuance of a written past-due notice requiring immediate payment. If outstanding fees are not received by the date indicated in the notice, the child will be withdrawn from the program.

Income Tax Receipts

A receipt will be issued annually, no later than by the last business day in February of each year for fees paid (excluding NSF and childcare service charges) during the previous calendar year. Your receipt will be mailed to the address on-file if you have already withdrawn your child from the Centre.

ACCESS TO THE CENTRE

Access to the Early Learning Centres differs from site to site. Some sites have access codes, others require buzzing in and being granted entry. For the safety and security of all, we ask that parents do not share their access code with other parents, or hold doors open for other individuals.

DAILY ARRIVAL

It is important that you take your child to the classroom to be signed-in and acknowledged by a teacher.

COMMUNICATION

HiMama is an electronic communication tool used by our staff to inform families about their child's day.

Families can expect:

- to receive a daily report containing information about how much your child ate, how long your child slept, and any activities or special events your child participated in
- twice a month, an individual photo of your child that illustrates a developmental milestone or a captured photo that describes what your child is doing in that moment.

Please note:

- the needs of our children come first, and the dynamics of each program can vary daily and will influence the amount of time staff have to include additional information.
- All messages requiring responses must be communicated through the main office via email or telephone.

Although this is a required part of our program, you will be required to give signed consent to participate.

REPORTING ABSENCES/SAFE ARRIVALS

Any absence should be reported to the classroom teacher by **9:00 a.m.**, along with the reason for the absence and how long your child may be away. If a call has not been received, staff will phone the family to obtain and document a reason for the child's absence.

SLEEP (INFANTS)

All infants under 12 months of age will be placed on their back to sleep in accordance with Public Health Agency of Canada recommendations. Please speak to the Director if you have any concerns.

DEPARTURE/PICK-UP

Advanced notice (written or by phone) is required whenever another authorized person (who is at least 16 years old) is picking up your child. A government-issued photo identification, such as a valid driver's license, is required.

Your child will not be released to an individual who is suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Everyone picking up a child must let staff know they are leaving with the child.

LATE PICK-UP

Parents must pick up their children and leave the Centre no later than the 6:00 p.m. closing time. The non-base late fee will be **\$1.00 for each minute, if pick up occurs after 6:00 p.m.** Calling to advise that you will be late does not exempt you from the late fee.

At the time of late pick up you will be provided with an invoice for late fees and payment must be made directly to the staff, in cash, within 24 hours. The habitual late pick-up of a child will result in discussion with the Director, progress to written warning and could result in a request to find alternate accommodation for the child.

AGE GROUP TRANSITIONS

You will receive advance notice when your child is moved from one age group to the next. Fee changes for the next age group will commence on your child's first full day in the new classroom. ****Subsidized families will continue paying their assessed fee, unless changed by Toronto Children's Services****

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Consent forms for each child must be completed and signed to permit teachers to pick up and drop off children at school or on the school bus.

ANNUAL UPDATE OF INFORMATION

Your child's file at the Centre is updated annually. It is important that you inform the Centre of any changes during the year, especially for emergency purposes.

ACCIDENTS OR INJURIES

When a child is hurt or injured while at the Centre or while participating in offsite activities with the Centre, an Accident Report will be completed and signed by staff. The parent will be asked to sign that they have received the report and a copy will be given to them.

In the event of a major medical emergency or accident, staff will call 911. The child will be transported to the closest hospital by taxi or ambulance and staff will accompany the child. Parents will be notified immediately and asked to meet at the hospital.

NUTRITION POLICIES

Breast Feeding

Breast feeding is encouraged even after a child has entered the Centre. However, it is important for a child to accept a bottle from the teacher should the need arise. We encourage parents to introduce their child to the bottle before he/she is enrolled at the Centre.

Meals and Snacks

Meals and snacks are provided for all children one year and older. Menus are posted in the Centre.

Children under one year of age must be provided with meals and snacks from home. Kindergarten and school-age children are permitted to bring food to the Centre, which may only be eaten at school. Food must be labelled with the ingredients, **must be “nut free”, must not contain any allergens prohibited in the Centre**, must be properly stored in leak and/or spill-proof packages or containers and is to always remain in the child’s bag or backpack while at the Centre.

Food Allergies/ Anaphylaxis

Our Centres promote a “nut-free” environment, and as such, nuts and nut products are not permitted. In addition, there may be other food allergies in the Centre/program. Meals are catered and menus are carefully planned in accordance with Canada Food Guide requirements.

Written notification must be made for all allergies or for any special diet/ dietary restriction so that appropriate arrangements can be made for meals and snacks. These will be kept in the child’s file.

The caterer will be informed but requires 72 hours (three business days) advance notice to provide a meal substitution.

Written notice is required for any change in a child’s allergy, special diet/dietary restriction.

Written notice is required to cancel a child’s allergy, special diet/dietary restriction.

If a child has a known or develops an anaphylactic allergy and requires use of an EpiPen, an Anaphylactic Plan of Care will be created and 2 EpiPens must be left at the Centre.

Birthday/Event Celebrations

Each child’s birthday is acknowledged at the Centre. Cakes and/or loot bags are not permitted.

ACTIVITIES OFF THE PREMISES

Planned Community Walks

Occasionally, groups of children may be taken on walks through the community, provided there are sufficient staff and volunteers (Vulnerable Sector Police Check required).

Planned Trips

During summer months, day trips may be planned for pre-school, kindergarten, and school-age children, provided there are sufficient staff and volunteers (Vulnerable Sector Police Check required).

VALUABLE ITEMS

Do not send valuable items to the Centre. The Centre is not responsible for lost or misplaced items. This applies to strollers also.

CHILDREN’S CUBBIES

Check your child’s cubby each night and take home soiled clothing, written information, artwork, etc.

DIAPERS

You must provide a supply of diapers and wipes for children who require them. At least five to seven diapers are required daily to keep your child's supply current. Your child's name should be clearly written on the package/container.

CLOTHING

It is important to always keep one or two changes of clothing at the Centre. Replace soiled clothing with fresh items. All clothing must be labeled with the child's full name.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Your written consent is required for your child's picture to be taken for educational, agency, or other use.

OUTDOOR TIME

Children aged infant to preschool must be outdoors for at least two hours each day. Children in Before and After School programs must spend at least 30 minutes outdoors each day.

Sun Safety

All appropriate sun safety requirements must be followed, including the application of sunscreen and wearing of hats. Your signed consent is needed for the application of sunscreen to your child. Sunscreen will be provided by either parents or the Centre. If your child is allergic to sunscreen, you must provide a written note for their file.

Teachers will monitor, record, and post weather bulletins, smog warnings and/or heat alerts. Children will not participate in outdoor activities or field trips on days when a smog warning or extreme heat alert is issued. The Director will inform teachers of decisions regarding outdoor activities based on weather information.

Cold Weather Safety

Children should be dressed appropriately for winter weather. Infants will not be taken outdoors if the temperature (according to The Weather Channel or Environment Canada) is at -10°C including wind-chill.

Toddlers, pre-school, and school age children will be taken outdoors at temperatures of up to -15°C , including wind-chill. The length of time children will remain outdoors will be at the discretion of the Centre's Director/Designate.

EVACUATION SITE

In the event of an emergency that makes the Centre premises temporarily unavailable, the children will be taken to a pre-determined neighbourhood evacuation site, and parents/guardians will be contacted to pick up their children. The name, address, and contact information of the evacuation site is posted in the Centre.

FAMILY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (FAC)

FAC meetings will be held throughout the year. FAC meetings enable parents to meet and discuss Centre-focused events or information with the Centre Director. Family-specific issues or issues that require conflict resolution, must be discussed with the Centre Director.

RESPECTFUL ENVIRONMENT

Everyone has the right to feel safe and to be treated with dignity, respect, fairness, and equality. Harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated. This is the expectation of everyone doing business with/entering any of the Centres. Failure to adhere to this expectation may result in being denied access to the Centre. If a parent/guardian or employee feels threatened, abused, or belittled, they may immediately end the conversation and report the situation to the Director. Any parent who exhibits discriminatory behaviour or physical or verbal abuse directed at children (including their child), staff or other adults while at the Centre will receive a written warning which may include the individual being banned from the Centre either temporarily or permanently depending on the degree of violation.

ISSUES AND CONCERNS

This policy outlines the process for how Child Development Institute Early Learning Centres respond to client complaints about its services.

Client Concerns: Concerns are defined as specific feedback or comments given by a client to a CDI employee which are intended by the client to flag an issue. Client concerns are addressed in a conciliatory manner with a focus on improving CDI services and learning from client feedback.

Client Complaints: A client complaint occurs when a client has indicated a desire to bring the concern forward for resolution.

POLICY

CDI recognizes that concerns and complaints are an important component of continuous quality improvement and are valued. CDI also recognizes that at times, concerns and complaints are part of the service delivery process.

When a client brings a concern to staff, staff will work with the client to find a resolution that is satisfactory to the client. When a client brings a complaint to staff, staff will determine whether the complaint is within their ability to address, or whether the client needs to be asked to speak with the Director. In both cases, the Director is to be informed by staff, in writing, of all client complaints within 1 working day.

PROCEDURES

Client Concerns

1. Clients are encouraged to discuss their concerns with specific childcare staff involved to determine if they can find a solution to the problem together.

Resolution of concern that is satisfactory for the client

1. If a resolution that is satisfactory to the client is found, notes concerning the nature of the concern and the resolution shall be written by the staff persons having knowledge of the concern in the program room logbook immediately after.

Complaints

1. If a resolution to a concern is not found, the staff is to direct the client to the Director and provide verbal notification to the Director. This has now become a complaint.

2. There are also times when a parent will go directly to the Director to lodge a complaint.
3. The Director or designer will contact/respond as soon as possible to determine whether a solution can be found together. In some cases, it will be necessary for the Director or designate to conduct a preliminary inquiry as soon as possible.
4. The inquiry shall include seeking information from staff members having knowledge of the complaint through interviews conducted by the Director or designate. Other clients may be interviewed if their knowledge or involvement appears relevant, but this step shall be taken only after due consideration.
5. The Director or designate must discuss their findings with the client(s) concerned, either in person, by telephone or in writing depending on the situation and the preference of the client(s) as quickly as possible. The goal is to reach solutions that are satisfactory to the client(s) whenever possible.

Resolutions that are satisfactory for the client

1. Notes regarding the nature of the complaint and the resolution of the complaint shall be written by the Director and kept on file.
2. If the Director determines that the circumstances require reporting to a child protection agency or the Ministry of Education, the Serious Occurrence Policy is to be followed.
3. If an action in item 2 is required, the Director of Healthy Child Development or designate will be informed and is responsible for informing the Chief Executive Officer immediately.

Resolutions that are Unsatisfactory for the Client

1. If the complaint is not resolved satisfactorily the client will be provided with the contact information for the Director of Healthy Child Development immediately.
2. A summary of the complaint and the steps taken shall be prepared by the Director and submitted to the Director of Healthy Child Development.
3. The Director of Healthy Child Development will contact the client as quickly as possible in order to seek a resolution.
4. The Director of Healthy Child Development will advise the client that their complaint will be forwarded to the Chief Executive Officer and may be discussed with representatives of the Board of Directors.

Complaint received about a Director

Where a complaint is received about the Director and the Director and client cannot come to a resolution, the contact information for the Director of Healthy Child Development will be given to the client.

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 by 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 Director.

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 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*.

Review of client complaints

At least annually the Senior Management Team reviews and addresses issues arising from a summary of submitted client complaints.

In the annual Quality Assurance Report to the Board of Directors, the Chief Executive Officer will provide a summary of all client complaints during the previous year.

SCENT FREE ENVIRONMENT

CDI recognizes that some employees and clients will have a negative reaction to scented products and will attempt to minimize any exposures that might occur at our Centres through the implementation of a scent safe environment. Staff and visitors are asked to refrain from using scented products when reporting to any of our offices. Families are asked not to send their children to the child care Centre with scented products on themselves or clothing.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS' NON-COMPLIANCE WITH POLICIES

Non-compliance with your obligations under the Early Learning Centres Parent/Guardian Contract or policies may result in a report being filed with the Director of Healthy Child Development who may take additional action.

WAIT LIST POLICY

This policy is intended to provide a clear explanation of how our Early Learning Centres determines the order in which children on the wait list are offered admission. The demand for childcare spaces at our Early Learning Centres is often greater than the spaces we have available; as a result, each Centre maintains a wait list for each of the age groups they serve.

It is however suggested that families place their names on more than 1 Centre's wait list.

Families who need help with the cost of childcare, can apply for a childcare fee subsidy through the Toronto Children Services website at www.toronto.ca/children or call 311. If placed on the subsidy wait list, families will need to contact the Early Learning Centre directly to place their name on their waitlist. Families requiring a fee subsidy must be approved for placement by Children's Services before being placed. Once placed on the subsidy waitlist, families will need to fill out CDI's online waitlist.

There is no fee to place your child on our waitlist. As spaces becomes available, they are offered to families in the following order:

1. Children currently enrolled and moving to another age
2. Siblings of currently enrolled children
3. Previous families who left due to maternity leave, or space accommodation, who went on the wait list prior to leaving Centre.
4. Children from the community wait list
5. **Windermere ELC** – enrollment is primarily, but not exclusively, for children of Condominium residents and staff
6. There are times when child protection agencies will ask us to place a "priority" child. In this case the child may be placed ahead of all the above

The privacy and confidentiality of the children listed on the wait list is protected under CDI's privacy policy. For information on your status on the waitlist, please contact the Centre Director. Movement on the wait list is unpredictable, so it is not always possible to give you an accurate account of where you are on the list.

As space becomes available, the Director will contact families on the wait list from first to last for the specific age group corresponding with the vacancy, until the vacant spot(s) have been filled.

Procedure

1. It is the family's responsibility to keep their information current with us, especially their phone number. If we cannot contact the family, they will be removed from the list.
2. It is the family's responsibility to call us to let us know if they are still interested in a childcare space by calling us from time to time.
3. Families are placed on the waitlist by date of contact. We cannot guarantee a space will be available at the time that it is required.
4. When a family's name is next on the list, they will be contacted and offered the next available space. Spaces are allocated using the first person on the list that fits the age required to fill the available spaces.
5. When a space is offered, the family will have 24 hours to respond. If a response is not received within 24 hours, it will be considered a refusal and the family's name will be passed over. If a second unsuccessful attempt is made to reach a family, the family's name will be moved to the bottom of the list.

6. If a response is received and the space is turned down, the family's name will be placed on the bottom of the list.
7. If a start date is offered, but the family does not wish to take it at that time, to secure the space the family will be required to pay the non-refundable full fee rate until the child is in attendance.
8. If a family accepts the space offered and then do not take it at the last minute, their name will be removed from the list.

This policy will be reviewed:

- a) with **staff**, before they begin their employment;
- b) with **volunteers or students** who will be interacting with children, before they begin to volunteer or before they begin their educational placement;
- c) with each person described in (a) or (b), at least annually after the first review and at any other time when changes are made to a policy, procedure, or individualized plan.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE CENTRE

Withdrawal from the Centre may happen because:

- The parent(s) is voluntarily withdrawing the child from the program;
- A child has reached the maximum age he/she can be at the Centre;
- The program is unable to meet the child's needs;
- There is an accommodation shortage; or
- The required childcare fees have not been paid.

For all withdrawals, whether the request is made by the Centre Director or the parent, four weeks' notice in writing is required.

Withdrawal by Parent/Guardian

If adequate notice is not received, payment of the full fees for the four-week period will be required.

Withdrawal Due to Maximum Age Requirements

When a child reaches the maximum age that he/she can be in the program, the Centre Director will notify the parent, in writing, of the date by which the child will be withdrawn. The Centre Director will assist the parent by making referrals to other age-appropriate childcare programs or services.

Withdrawal - Program Unable to Meet Child's Needs

Sometimes, the Centre is unable to meet the child's needs. The Centre Director, the Resource Consultant and the child's teacher shall make every effort to assist the child. If the decision is made to withdraw the child from the Centre, the parent(s) will be referred to another childcare Centre or specialized program.

The following steps will be taken:

- Documentation of meeting with parents outlining the steps taken, resolution made and any referrals to another childcare Centre or relevant service;

- Notification of Toronto Children's Services Consultant (if receiving subsidy), and Child Development Institute's Senior Management Team and Board of Directors.

Withdrawal Due to Accommodation Shortage

Each age group at the Centre is licensed by the Ministry of Education. Based on the availability of space at the time a child is moving into the next age group, there is no guarantee that the Centre will be able to accommodate him/her.

In such instances, the Director may request that children be withdrawn from the program. 30 days' notice will be given for the withdrawal, and assistance will be provided in finding alternate care at another Centre.

The Centre will make every effort to ensure all children are accommodated and moved from one age group to the next.

Withdrawal Due to Unpaid Childcare Fees

When the required childcare fees are not paid by the due date, the parent/guardian must meet with the Director of Healthy Child Development.

Withdrawal Due to failure to comply with Code of Conduct

If a parent/guardian or other individual entering Centre on behalf of a family refuses to correct behavior that contravenes the Code of Conduct after 2 written warnings and 1 subsequent meeting with the Director, Healthy Child Development, withdrawal notice may be given.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Our health and wellness policies are based on information received from Toronto Public Health. Although Toronto Public Health guidelines may state that there is no exclusion for certain illnesses, children will be excluded under certain in the best interest of all the children.

Attendance when Child is Ill

Children cannot attend the Centre if illness prevents them from participating in regular daily routines. If a child shows signs of illness while at the Centre, the teacher must notify the Director. An illness report will be provided outlining symptoms observed.

Note: *In the case of an outbreak, Toronto Public Health will determine the period of time that must pass before a child can return to the Centre.*

General Signs of illness

Parents will be required to pick up their child in the following instances:

- **Fever:** A temperature of over 38 °C or 100.4 °F accompanied by general symptoms such as lethargy, vomiting or diarrhea. Child to be kept at home at least 24 hours fever-free without the use of a fever reliever.
- **Diarrhea:** Two or more episodes of (a) diarrhea in one day, or (b) diarrhea with a fever, vomiting, dehydration, blood or mucus in stool, or abdominal cramps. Exclude for 24 hours until diarrhea is gone, or a medical practitioner determines the child is not infectious.

- Vomiting: Vomiting accompanied by fever or lethargy. Child will be excluded for 24 hours until vomiting stops or a medical practitioner determines the child can return to the Centre.
- Cold: with fever, runny nose and eyes, coughing and sore throat
- Ear Infection: a child will not be excluded unless he/she is too ill to participate in activities (e.g., irritable, clingy, inconsolable crying).
- Unexplained or undiagnosed pain
- Wheezing or Difficulty Breathing
- Undiagnosed skin or eye rash
- Unusual Behaviour: Children with unexplained rash or unusual behaviour such as lethargy or unusual sleepiness, irritability, persistent crying, headache, stiff neck, dehydration, change in skin color, or other signs of possible severe illness should be seen by their physician as soon as possible.

Attendance Protocols for Contagious Conditions and Diseases (exclusions)

- Chicken Pox – exclude until lesions scab over.
- Strep Throat – exclude for 24 hours after treatment has started and child can participate. If not treated exclude 10 to 21 days or until child is well enough to participate.
- Ringworm - exclude until treatment has started.
- Impetigo - exclude until 24 hours after treatment has started; lesions on exposed skin should be covered.
- Conjunctivitis (Pinkeye) - (if the discharge is pus and eyes are red) – child cannot attend the Centre until the appropriate treatment or antibiotic has been taken for at least 24 hours.
- Head Lice – child must remain at home until the appropriate treatment is completed and he/she is nit free.
- Measles – child must remain at home until at least four days have passed since the onset of rash.
- Mumps – child must remain at home for at least five days after the first sign of swelling.
- Rubella – child must remain at home for at least seven days after the onset of rash.
- Whooping Cough – child must remain at home for at least five days after the appropriate treatment begins or for three weeks from the onset of the cough if untreated.
- Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease – Children will be excluded for 5 days or until blisters have dried.

MEDICATION POLICY

A signed consent form is required for all medication.

Prescription Medication

- Must be in the original container of the package.
- Must be clearly labeled by a pharmacist with child's name, the medical practitioner's name, name of the medication, dosage to be taken and how often, and the date of purchase and instructions for storage.
- Must be current (not past expiry date).

Over-the-Counter Medication

- Must be accompanied by a note from a qualified medical professional (i.e., medical

doctor, nurse, naturopath, pharmacist) stating the name of the child, dosage, time to be administered and duration.

- Must be in original container with child's name and pharmacy label or letter.
- Must be current (not past expiry date).

Where necessary, parents must train teachers (RECE) in the proper technique, use and the appropriate times to administer medication.

Fever Relievers

Fever relievers (see over-the-counter medication) may be administered to a child with the understanding that the parent will be immediately contacted and required to pick-up the child from the Centre within two hours of being notified of the child's condition.

Life Support Medication

It is mandatory that the parents of every child with a life-threatening condition (e.g., asthma or anaphylaxis) provide the Centre with a puffer or auto-injector (EpiPen). An extra epi-pen must also be provided at the same time, as a second dose is often required while waiting for emergency services. A child who requires an auto-injector due to a severe allergy will not be accepted into care without their 2 prescribed and current auto-injectors. If a child no longer requires an auto-injector, a note from a medical practitioner confirming this information will be required. A school aged child is permitted to carry his/her own life support medication provided that all employees are made aware. These practices are in place for the health and safety of your child.

OVER THE COUNTER PRODUCTS

The following products may be administered to children with a single "blanket" authorization (in the registration package) without documentation of administration: Sunscreen, moisturizing skin lotion, lip balm, hand sanitizer and diaper cream. These products must be labelled with the child's name.

CHILDREN WITH MEDICAL NEEDS

If a child has a medical condition that requires additional support, accommodation or assistance, the Director must be informed of all details pertaining to the medical condition as soon as possible. This also applies to any child requiring medication for a chronic or acute condition or diagnosis or who requires medication on an emergency basis. This includes Asthma (puffer), Anaphylaxis (Auto-Injector/EpiPen). An Individualized Plan for a Child with Medical Needs, or an Anaphylaxis Plan of Care will be developed and put in place. A medical practitioner's note containing the specifics of the condition may be required. The plan will be developed in conjunction with the child's parent/guardian.

Please speak to the Centre Director if you wish more information on the Individualized Plan for Medical Needs or the Anaphylaxis Plan of Care.

OTHER POLICIES

We cannot include all the policies that apply to you but have included a brief description of these policies below. These policies are accessible in the Early Learning Centres, and you can ask the Centre Director/Designate for a copy.

- Inclusion of children
- Child Abuse and Duty to Report
- Emergency Management
- Custody and Access
- Prohibited Practices
- Serious Occurrence Reporting
- Use of Tobacco, Cannabis, and Electronic Cigarettes
- Student and Volunteer Policy

Inclusion of children

Our Early Learning Centres adhere to the Ontario Human Rights Code. No child shall be denied childcare 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 based on their parent(s) ability to pay the full fee or obtain the necessary subsidy from the City of Toronto Children’s Services Department.

All children in our care shall be treated equally and with respect. They will be given the support and opportunities they need to help them grow and develop emotionally, mentally, and physically. Our *Individualized Support Plan for Children with Special Needs* and our *Individualized Plan for a Child with Medical Needs* policies outline how we will support a child who has been identified as requiring additional support. These plans will be developed in consultation with parents, regulated health professionals (where applicable) and any other persons who work with the child.

Child Abuse and Duty to Report

The Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017 states that any allegation or suspicion of abuse must be reported to a child welfare agency. This means that staff must report to a Children’s Aid Society any information they may have about suspected child abuse or neglect, without first informing the individual against whom the allegation was made. If it is necessary for us to call a child welfare agency about your child, we will:

- Keep the report confidential and protect your privacy as best we can.
- Talk to you about our report as soon as the Children’s Aid Society gives us permission.
- Most of the time, this means after they contact you.
- Offer you and your child all the support we can.

Child Welfare Agencies - Contact Information:

Toronto Catholic Children’s Aid Society: **416-395-1500**

Toronto Children’s Aid Society: **416-924-4646**

Jewish Children’s Aid Society: **416-961-9351**

Native Child and Family Aid Society: **416-363-8510**

For more information, please refer to the full version of the **Child Abuse and Duty to Report Policy** posted in the Centre.

Emergency Management

The Centre has emergency management policies and procedures. In the event of a situation that affects the childcare Centre, parents will be contacted by phone, as soon as children are out of harm’s way, to be informed of the situation. Parents will be required to

follow directions from any emergency personnel at the scene.

Fire drills are held monthly. Centre staff and students know and practice these routines regularly and copies of the procedures are posted in each room. Verbal review and orientation of this procedure is given to all staff, students, and parents upon enrolment.

Custody and Access

To better protect and safeguard the children in our care, the Centre Director will require a copy of any legal documentation that establishes the legal custodian of a child. The document must be issued by the courts or be a private agreement signed by both parents, witnessed, and dated. The copy will be placed in the child's file. Any changes must be promptly reported to the Centre Director.

Prohibited Practices

In accordance with the CCEYA, the following practices are **prohibited** in the Early Learning Centres:

- a) Corporal punishment of a child.
- b) Physical restraint of a child, such as confining the child to a highchair, car seat, stroller, or other device for the purposes of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting himself, herself, or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent.
- c) Locking the exits of the childcare Centre for the purpose of confining the child or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the Centre's emergency policies and procedures.
- d) Use of harsh or degrading measures, threats or derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame, or frighten the child or undermine his or her self-respect, dignity, or self-worth.
- e) Depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing, or bedding, or
- f) Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

Serious Occurrence Reporting (SOR)

Our Early Learning Centres have a process for documenting and reporting incidents according to the CCEYA or other legislation. For more information, please refer to the Serious Occurrence Reporting Policy posted in the Centre.

All licensed childcare Centres are required to post a Serious Occurrence Notification form in a public area (e.g., beside the SOR policy and Centre's licence) for at least 10 days, plus an additional 10 days for updates.

The notification form will be kept on file at the Centre for three years from the date of the report.

Use of Tobacco, Cannabis and Electronic Cigarettes

The Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017 prohibits the smoking of tobacco, the use of electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) to vape any substance, and the smoking of cannabis (medical or

recreational) in a childcare Centre or a place where an early years program or service is provided, as defined in the Childcare and Early Years Act, 2014.

This applies to all internal and external areas of our childcare Centres, including stairwells, washrooms, playgrounds, parking lots, and sidewalks adjacent to our Centres.

Student and Volunteer Supervision

Our goal for encouraging volunteer and student participation in our childcare programs is to provide participants with an opportunity to work with experienced staff in a team-based environment so that they may obtain professional skills and training through interaction with children and families. Generally, students are placed through colleges and universities. Parents/caregivers may volunteer for trips or outings with the Centre.

To ensure the safety and protection of our children, volunteers, and students must:

- Be at least 18 years of age
- Undergo a Vulnerable Sector Police Record Check
- Adhere to the Centre's policies and procedures

Students and volunteers are not:

- Allowed to be alone with children (unless parent volunteer is alone with their child)
- Included in the staff complement, and cannot be counted as part of the staff to child ratios
- Permitted to administer medication

Students and volunteers are always supervised by an employee. At no time, and under no circumstance, shall a student or volunteer be left unsupervised with children.

FAMILY HANDBOOK UPDATES

The procedures and policies stated in this handbook are subject change. Each time this handbook is modified you will receive the updated version. Please discard previous versions.

Contact Us

CDI Fraser Mustard Early Learning Centre

82 Thorncliffe Park Drive
Toronto, ON M4H 1K3
T: 416-421-7676
F: 416-421-7447
E: fm@childdevelop.ca

CDI Parkdale Early Learning Centre

119 Close Ave.
Toronto, ON M6K 2V2
T: 416-535-6116
F: 416-536-6166
E: email_parkdale@childdevelop.ca

CDI Wellesley Early Learning Centre

495 Sherbourne St
Toronto, ON M4X 1K7
T: 416-928-9900
F: 416-928-2325
E: email_wellesley@childdevelop.ca

CDI Windermere Early Learning Centre

103 The Queensway
Toronto, ON M6S 5B3
T: 416-763-2734
F: 416-763-6380
E: email_windermere@childdevelop.ca

Director, Healthy Child Development

Darlene Landry
T: 416-603-1827, ext. 2301
E: dlandry@childdevelop.ca