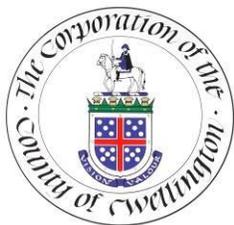


MOUNT FOREST
CHILD CARE & LEARNING CENTRE
PARENT/GUARDIAN HANDBOOK



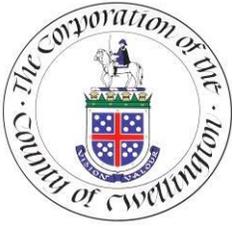
MOUNT FOREST CHILD CARE AND LEARNING CENTRE PARENT & GUARDIAN INFORMATION AND POLICIES MANUAL

Revised December 2019

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MOUNT FOREST CHILD CARE AND LEARNING CENTRE PARENT & GUARDIAN INFORMATION AND POLICIES MANUAL

PHILOSOPHY & PROGRAMME STATEMENT

County of Wellington Child Care Centres strive to provide nurturing and inclusive environments that are attuned to the interests of children – what they know and what they wonder about. It is through these environments, as well as play and inquiry experiences, that all children, who we view as competent, capable and creative; can develop their unique disposition, resilience, and skills for life-long learning.

How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years released by the Ministry of Education in 2014 is used as a tool for planning and reflection. The following four foundations from this document inform and guide our work with children, families, the community and each other.

Belonging - We cultivate authentic, caring relationships and connections to create a sense of belonging among and between children, adults, and the world around them.

Well-being - We nurture children's healthy development and support their growing sense of self.

Engagement - We provide environments and experiences to engage children in active, creative, and meaningful exploration, play and inquiry.

Expression - We foster communication and expression in all forms.

By all parties; children, families, child care staff and the community working collaboratively together in all aspects of early learning and care, we can achieve positive outcomes for every child.

GUIDING GOALS AND PRACTICES

We use the following goals, strategies and approaches; We use the following goals, strategies and approaches;

A. We provide environments and approaches that meet the child's health and well-being, safety and nutritional needs.

- Our child care centre is licensed by the Ministry of Education and we participate in a licensing renewal process on an annual basis.
- All meals, snacks and beverages meet the recommendations set out in Canada's Food Guide and are reviewed and approved by a Public Health Dietician. Weekly menus are reviewed with families during the registration process and a 4 week menu rotation is posted.
- Nutritious snacks and meals are prepared on site by the child care cook who has experience preparing meals for young children and holds Food Handler's certification.
- Children's individual well-being is recorded daily and includes their symptoms of ill health, how they ate, changes in their sleep patterns and any accident/incidents that occurred during the day.
- The child care provides flexible routines and spaces to accommodate for children's differences and preferences for play, eating, resting and toileting and includes exploring the outdoors a minimum of two hours each day, weather permitting.
- Child care staff, students and volunteers follow policies of the Directly Operated Programmes including; Playground Safety Policy, Anaphylactic Policy, Sanitary Practices Policy, Sleep Supervision Policy, Serious Occurrence Policy, Medication Policy, Supervision of Volunteers and Students Policy, Programme Statement Implementation Policy, Staff Training and Development Policy, Criminal Reference Check/Vulnerable Sector Check Policy and Fire Safety/Evacuation Procedures.

B. We promote positive and responsive interactions amongst and between the children, families and each other.

- We believe that parents/guardians know their child best. Child care staff invite parent/guardian's insight and knowledge. This collaboration begins as part of the enrollment process when families are invited to tour the centre, meet the child care staff and share their hopes, dreams and goals they have for their child and their child care experience.
- Transition forms are provided to families when their child moves to another group/room. These help to ensure that child care staff have current information about eating and sleeping habits, play preferences, interests and development for each child in their group.
- Child care staff use warm, positive and respectful approaches and support children as they develop the ability to recognize and describe their emotions and feelings. We observe to determine what a child's behaviour may be communicating and respond using strategies as described under *Supporting and Guiding Children* of the Parent Handbook.

C. We provide opportunities for children to interact and communicate in a positive way and support their development of autonomy and self-regulation skills.

- Child care staff strive to know each child well - their needs, strengths, interests, body cues and communication. Child care staff model resiliency skills which includes, labeling children's emotions, role model appropriate emotional responses and interactions and supporting each child in their development of social skills and resolving conflict with others.
- Children are encouraged to recognize and respond to their individual body cues such as hunger, sleepiness, thirst, and toileting requirements. For instance, children are offered meals and snacks prepared by the child care cook and are supported in their decisions of what and how much to eat of what is offered.
- Meal times provide an important opportunity for children to practice independence, grow socially and to develop healthy views about food and eating. The centre uses a 'family style dining' approach—meaning that staff join the children at meal times—engaging and facilitating discussions amongst the children while at the same time, providing opportunities for children to demonstrate autonomy and self-help skills.
- Children are provided with various mediums to express themselves, including but not limited to: craft materials, music, role play materials, blocks, and other open ended materials and activities.

D. We foster children's exploration, play and inquiry.

- Child care staff provide welcoming environments, experiences and opportunities for children to actively explore and investigate what they are naturally curious about and to invite children to imagine, think, create, solve problems and make meaning of their experiences.
- Materials provided in the programmes are easily accessible so children have a variety of materials to play with and explore.
- Children are provided with opportunities to take measured risks appropriate to their abilities and with adult support as needed. Staff assist and support children in their inquiry, problem solving and perseverance and will redirect play if it is harmful to the child, others, or property.

E. We provide child initiated and adult supported experiences based on observation.

- Teachers plan the environment and activities based on their observations of children and provide adult supported activities to expand on children's natural curiosity and interests.
- Child care staff provide provocations for learning that are based on the children's interests, development and/or a Cycle of Inquiry.
- Teachers provide daily small and large group experiences and environments that include block/construction play, role playing, fine and gross motor activities, creative materials and sensory exploration, songs, finger-plays, language and literacy, social and emotional development.

F. We plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences which support each child's learning and development. Our approaches are inclusive of all children, including children with individualized plans.

- Classroom teachers are registered Early Childhood Educators and have knowledge in child development, curriculum and pedagogy. Teachers use this knowledge to make meaning of their observations of children which influence the set up of our programme. We adapt, plan and implement inclusive activities, experiences and environments that respond to children's interests, development and individualized plans.
- Children's experiences are made evident to parents and educators through many methods which may include programming webs, charts, documentation panels and learning stories.
- Teachers are provided with time to complete programme planning and to record children's experiences.

G. We provide inclusive environments and activities – both indoors and out – incorporating the individual needs and considerations for each child during active play, rest and quiet time.

- Parent/guardians are consulted regarding their child's individual needs, preferences and supports for participation in the entire programme – indoors and out - as part of the enrollment process. This information is reviewed regularly to ensure children's individual needs and considerations are incorporated into the programme as the child moves from one group to the next.
- Teachers monitor children's development using the Ages and Stages Developmental tool. Child care staff and Inclusion Support Services consultants work in collaboration with parent/guardians to develop Individualized Support Plans for children whose developmental needs may benefit from additional resources and whose parents have provided informed consent.

H. We work in partnership with families and foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents about the programme and their children.

- Parent/guardians are consulted regarding their child's individual needs, temperament, likes and dislikes, etc. both during the enrollment process and ongoing throughout their child care experience.
- Child care staff participate in regular communication with parent/guardians. Drop off and pick up times in particular are used as a time to discuss the care, well-being, interests and changes that may affect the child, family or programme.
- Teachers use many methods to engage families and to seek their knowledge and insight including the sharing of learning stories, documentation panels, parent/staff touch base meetings and/or telephone conversations.
- At any time, parent/guardians may bring forward any concerns or questions they may have. Child care staff work in partnership with families in an effort to support communication, maintain positive relationships and to obtain mutually agreeable resolutions.

I. We are participants in our community and welcome community partners to enhance our programmes for children, families and child care staff.

- The child care programme serves as a learning environment for community visitors, students and aspiring Early Childhood Educators.

- Child care staff access and utilize programmes and locations in the community such as the library, fire station, local grocer etc. as it relates to the interest of the children and the programme.
- Inclusion Support Services (ISS) support the child care centre to meet the needs of all enrolled children, including those who benefit from additional resources. ISS includes: WeeTalk (speech language pathologists), KidsAbility (occupational and physiotherapists) and Canadian Mental Health Association (resource consultants and social development consultants).
- Child care staff participate in Transition to School Meetings with the school board as needed.
- Child care staff maintain confidentiality. No information regarding children or families is shared with outside organizations or schools without written parental/guardian consent.

J. We promote and provide opportunities for reflective practice and continuous professional learning.

- As part of the orientation process and ongoing training, all child care staff, students and volunteers regularly review policies and procedures that guide and inform their work in child care.
- Child care staff, students, and volunteers are provided with information about courses, workshops, training and communities of practice.
- Child care staff participate in a performance appraisal process which invite's staff to participate in goal setting and reflective practice.
- The child care centre participates in side by side learning and mentorship. We support staff obtaining their education and/or diploma in Early Childhood Education by serving as a host agency overseeing their practice and placements as ECE's in training.

K. We document and review the impact of the strategies included in our programme statement on children and their families.

- Staff meetings provide the child care team with the opportunity to participate in reflective and collaborative practices including sharing observations of children and/or planning activities, environments and strategies that support the programme statement, children's growth and development and parents insights and suggestions.
- The child care supervisor completes an audit checklist to ensure the programmes' compliance with the child care Programme Statement.
- The child care supervisor serves as a mentor and coach to their child care team. At least annually, each staff is provided with a written record indicating which Programme Statement strategies were observed.
- Child care staff facilitate regular conversations with families regarding their care. The child care supervisor implements a "touch base" with newly enrolled parents/guardians to discuss their overall satisfaction with their child's care experience and to participate in problem solving as needed. Additional touch bases are recorded in the Transition from when a child moves from one group to another.

PROHIBITED PRACTICES

No child care staff, student or volunteer will implement any strategy that would undermine the health, safety or well-being of any child in receipt of care including,

- i. Corporal punishment of a child.
- ii. Physical restraint of a child, such as confining the child to a high chair, 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
- iii. Locking the exits of the home child care premises for the purpose of confining a child, or confining a child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the licensee's emergency management policies and procedures
- iv. Use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of 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
- v. Depriving a child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding; or
- vi. Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will

Any staff member, student or volunteer who witnesses another adult using prohibited practices as described in this policy and/or practices in contradiction of the goals and approaches of the Programme Statement is obligated to report the incident to the Child Care Supervisor or designate as soon as possible but **within 24 hours of the occurrence**.

HOURS OF OPERATION

The child care centre is open Monday thru Friday from 6:30 AM to 6:00 PM.

To provide your child with consistency and to ensure the required child/teacher ratios are met, please bring your child to the centre only for the hours you have agreed upon with the centre supervisor and that has been listed on your registration information.

Please inform the supervisor in writing if you need to request a change to the scheduled hours. You will be notified once the hours can be accommodated.

TYPES OF PROGRAMME

We provide:

Full day - 5 hours or more

Half day – morning or afternoon

Full time – five days a week

Part-time – less than five days a week (minimum of two days a week)

AGE RATIOS

Infant

Birth – 17 months of age
1 teacher for every 3 infants

Toddler

18 months – 30 months
1 teacher for every 5 toddlers

Preschool

31 months – 5 years
1 teacher for every 8 preschoolers

ENROLLMENT AND REGISTRATION

Prospective families are encouraged to visit the child care programme to help determine if our programme meets your needs, hopes and goals. Before you enrol your child, the Child Care Supervisor will review your completed enrolment package with you. This is a time to share any questions or concerns you may have and to review the goals and expectations you may have for the programme. We have an ‘open-door’ policy and welcome families to visit at any time.

Up-to-date immunization information as per the current *Publicly Funded Routine Immunization Schedule for Ontario* must be provided before your child may start in the programme. Parent/Guardians who do not want to immunize their child must provide a *Statement of Medical Exemption*, signed by a qualified physician or must provide a religious belief affidavit signed by a commissioner of oaths. This document will be sent to Public Health. Please note: **Children who are not immunized may not attend the child care centre during a vaccine preventable outbreak. Child care fees are charged regardless of your child’s attendance.**

WAITING LIST AND ADMISSION INTO THE PROGRAMME

The following procedures outline the order in which children are offered admission into the programme.

Procedure:

- The information provided by families on the waiting list is deemed confidential.
- No parent/guardian will be charged a fee or deposit to be placed on the waiting list.
- The Child Care Supervisor will contact families inquiring about the programme and will maintain a waiting list of families requiring child care.

- Only families requiring a minimum of 2 full days or equivalent per week will be placed on the waiting list. Exceptions may be made to meet urgent or extenuating circumstances as deemed by the Child Care Supervisor or Directly Operated Manager.
- Families inquiring of their placement on the waiting list will be provided with an approximate range in increments of 'five or ten' of the number of children placed ahead of their child, i.e. 'There are approximately 15 children ahead of your child'.
- The waiting list will consist of an initial application form which will include;
 - the name of the parent/guardian
 - parent/guardian contact information
 - parent/guardian address
 - name and age of child
 - child care needs i.e. full time, part time
 - reason for care
 - the date of the application
 - the date when care is required

ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAMME

- Children are offered admission into the programme based on the hours of care noted in the initial application form and the centre's ability to meet the needs of the child, family and legislative regulations. If the need of the family is not accurate, the centre reserves the right to re-assess the family's placement on the waiting list using the current information as provided by the family.
- The Child Care Supervisor will offer admission to the programme using the following priorities and criteria;
 1. Families who already have a child in the programme.
 2. Families who reside in the County of Wellington.
 3. Families who reside in the City of Guelph.
 4. Families who have an urgent or extenuating circumstance as deemed by the Directly Operated Programme Manager and/or Director of Children's Early Years i.e. F&CS directive.
 5. Families requiring full week, full day.
 6. Families requiring part week, full day.
 7. Families requiring full week, part day.
 8. Families requiring part week, part day.
 9. Families who live outside the County of Wellington and City of Guelph – and then priority #4 – 8.

- Before a child may be admitted into the programme, Parent/guardians must complete all areas of the enrolment package and meet the immunization requirements as stated in the Parent Handbook.
- Families who are already admitted into the programme and who desire to change their hours of care must provide notification to the Child Care Supervisor and receive approval prior to changing their hours of care.
- Parent/guardians and/or the Child care centre may terminate care with two weeks written notice.

PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

- Participate in the enrolment process including completing all required paperwork, proof of immunization and providing contact information in case of an emergency.
- Provide the centre with up to date information pertaining to the child and/or their application and enrolment information and of any changes to all.
- Notify the centre of their child's absence.
- Provide two weeks written notice of withdraw.
- Provide two weeks written notice of any changes in hours of care and receive approval from the Centre Supervisor before implementing such changes.
- Fulfil financial obligations i.e. paying child care fees, providing required paperwork for subsidized care.
- Failure to uphold the responsibilities of the Parent/guardian may result in the termination of their child care placement.

SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN

As part of the hiring process, all staff provide a clear Police Vulnerable Sector Check and proof of Valid First Aid and Infant/Child CPR Certification. Additionally, classroom teachers are Registered Early Childhood Educators and our child care cooks have Food Handler's Training.

Ensuring the safety and well-being of children in our programme is the responsibility of every staff member. Your child will be supervised by a staff member at all times. No student, parent or volunteer will be left alone with your child.

Our programmes serve as a learning environment for community visitors, students and aspiring Early Childhood Educators. We ensure that every staff, student and volunteer completes an orientation session before interacting with children in the programme.

STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORTING AND GUIDING CHILDREN

Behaviour is a method of communication. Through the development of trusting relationships and by knowing each child well, child care staff, students and volunteers are best able to decipher the root of adversities and to determine how best to respond and support the child. Parents know their children best and their knowledge and input is valuable. We will seek and include your views and perspectives throughout your child care experience, and when there are any changes in your child's typical behaviour or development.

The safety and well-being of every child is a priority. We will intervene and implement behaviour guidance strategies when a child is:

- Endangering the safety of themselves or others.
- Behaving in a physically aggressive or verbally abusive manner.
- Being destructive of property.
- In a conflict that is emotionally upsetting.

We use many strategies. These include:

- **Observation:** We will observe to determine what a child's behaviour may be communicating. This information can be helpful in developing a plan to best support the child. A plan may include: changing the environment, adjusting the level of support, role modeling, positive reinforcement, problem solving, and/or redirection.
- **Responding to safety concerns:** Ensuring the safety and well-being of every child is a priority. If there is an concern for a child's well-being we will remove child(ren) from the situation immediately, attend to an upset or hurt child first and then assess the situation and follow through with an explanation to the child(ren). This explanation may include clearly defining behaviours that are and are not acceptable.
- **Use of natural consequences:** As appropriate we will assist the child(ren) in making decisions. For example, *'If you play in the cold without mittens, your hands will feel cold. I will bring your mittens outside for you, in case you change your mind.'*
- **Supporting the child's 'readiness':** We use positive and supportive approaches when/if a child has withdrawn themselves from the group and/or chooses to re-enter play. We will assist the child in labeling their feelings/emotions, support them to identify the issue and guide them to use acceptable ways of having their needs met.
- **Role modeling:** We role model calming strategies. This may include: deep breathing, sensory exploration, stepping away and returning to the situation, asking for help, participating in physical outlets such as outdoor play, running, songs and finger plays.
- **Additional Support:** If necessary, we will seek additional support. This could be from:
 - Child Care Supervisor

- An outside support agency: i.e. Inclusion Support Services. This will not occur without your consent.
- **Time Out:** Time Out is considered a demeaning and prohibited practice. It is not used at the centre. Instead, we will clearly identify the issue (what we would like the child to start or stop doing) and will provide simple and clear expectations. i.e., *“I see your hand hitting. Ouch! That hurts! Stop Hitting. Do you want a turn on the bike? I can help you ask for a turn on the bike.”*
- **Apologies:** We do not require children to state apologies as children do not develop the cognitive and empathetic skills to fully understand the concept of ‘regret’ until later in life. We do however introduce these skills through our role modeling of such.

SECURED ENTRANCE

The safety of children, their families and staff members is important to us. The main entrance of the child care centre has a controlled entry system. All information or details and equipment for use of the secured entrance is shared with all legal guardians of children currently enrolled in the centre and is NOT to be shared with escorts (relative or non-relative).

ESCORTS

All escorts picking children up from the programme must be over the age of 18 years.

USE OF TAXI

Releasing children to a taxi and/or volunteer driver is not a regular practice and is only considered in extenuating circumstances and when approved by the Supervisor or designate. In approved situations, children will be released to taxi or a volunteer driver only if a parent/guardian has provided this direction. Please note that programme staff are required to meet ratios and may not be able to accompany your child from the centre to the taxi. In such cases, parent/guardians are responsible for making arrangements for the supervision of their child to the taxi. Parents are required to phone the centre to inform us that the taxi is coming and to confirm that they are waiting to receive their child.

CUSTODY ARRANGEMENTS

If your child has a formal custody arrangement which you would like us to support, you must provide the Child Care Supervisor with a copy of the court order for your child’s file.

Child care staff will notify the police in situations where a 'non-authorized' person is persistent that they are to pick up a child.

CENTRE CLOSURES

The child care centre is closed for the following legal holidays:

New Year's Day	Family Day
Good Friday	Victoria Day
Canada Day	Civic Holiday
Labour Day	Thanksgiving Day
Christmas Day	Boxing Day

When a holiday falls on a weekend, the child care centre may close on an alternate day. Families will be informed in advance of this taking place. Child care fees are charged for centre closures due to the holidays stated above.

FEES AND PAYMENTS

Fee are charged based on the hours of care (i.e. full day, half day...), days per week (3 days per week, 5 days per week), as well as the group your child is placed. Recognizing there is a variance between groups (in cost and in teacher to child ratios), the Supervisor will attempt to place your child in the next age group close to their age of eligibility. If your child turns of age to be eligible to move up to the next age group but, there is no space in the next age group to allow the move, your child will be moved in order of priority, as soon as a space becomes available. Regardless of the group your child is in, your child's teacher will plan and provide a programme that supports their growth, development and interests.

Please see the attached Fee Schedule for applicable rates.

Invoices are given to families every two weeks. The invoice is for the previous 2 weeks of attendance. Fees are due by the first Friday of the billing period. Late payments will be charged interest.

Payments can be made by cheque, post-dated cheques, cash and debit. Cheques are payable to COUNTY OF WELLINGTON. Payments are entered into our billing system and you will be given a receipt to confirm payment. Staff will not be responsible for any missing cash.

You will be charged for days that your child misses because of illness, vacations, legal statutory holidays or absence. For example – absence related to inclement weather. Child care fees will not be charged in situations of an unexpected closure such as closures due to inclement weather. If the child care centre opens and later closes, full child care fees are still required.

You will be charged for days that your child misses because of illness, vacations, legal statutory holidays or for an unexpected closure for example – closure due to inclement weather.

You will be charged \$35.00 for any NSF cheque. You will receive a letter from the County of Wellington if this happens.

If you arrive after closing, you are required to sign a Late Pick Up Form. A late fee of \$5.00 for up to the first fifteen minutes and \$3.00 for every 5 minutes after that will be charged. This is payable to the County of Wellington. Receipts are not issued for late fines.

Please keep all receipts for your income tax return.

LATE PICK UP

Routines and consistency are important to your child and to the operation of the child care centre. If you are unable to pick up your child as planned, please make alternate arrangements for your child to be picked up by a listed escort. Please remember to notify the centre so staff can let your child know who is on their way.

You are expected to arrive in time to leave the child care centre by the time it closes. To help you, the staff will start to prepare the children fifteen minutes before the centre closes.

If your child is not picked up as planned, the child care centre will begin calling to see if there is a change in your pick-up plans. If the centre does not receive appropriate arrangements for your child's pick up, your emergency contacts will be notified. If these are also unavailable, Child care staff will contact Family and Children's Services. At no time will your child be left unattended.

If you arrive after closing, you are required to sign a Late Pick Up Form. A late fee of \$5.00 for up to the first fifteen minutes and \$3.00 for every 5 minutes after that will be charged. This is payable to the County of Wellington. Receipts are not issued for late fines.

WITHDRAW FROM THE PROGRAMME & CHANGES IN HOURS

Families who have a change in their hours of care must provide notification to the Child Care Supervisor and receive approval prior to changing their hours of care.

If you plan to withdraw your child from the centre you are required to give the centre two weeks' notice in writing. Full fees will be charged for the two week period following notification of withdrawal.

Parent/guardians and/or the child care centre may terminate care with two weeks written notice.

NOTICE OF LAST DAY FOR CHILDREN ENTERING KINDERGARTEN

The child care centre offers care for infants, toddlers and preschoolers. We are not licensed to provide before or after school care for school age children.

If you choose to enroll your child in Full Day Kindergarten, your child's last day at the centre will be the last Friday in August of the year your child is registered for kindergarten.

SUPPORTING INCLUSION

It is our belief that every child holds rights as equal and essential members of our community.

Families are viewed as the expert on their child. You play an important role in your child's experience. Your advice, support, suggestions and input help to inform our programmes and support staff in creating environments that reflect the unique and diverse characteristics of every child.

DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING

As part of your enrolment package, you will be provided with a Nipissing Checklist. This is for your information and can be used as a discussion tool during registration. It is not a requirement that you complete this.

Your child's teacher has an education in child development. They plan and implement inclusion practices to ensure all children, regardless of the abilities or disabilities can participate to the best of their ability in all aspects of the programme.

The Ages and Stages Developmental Checklist is used as a tool to inform teachers in goal setting, planning environments that meet the individual needs of every child and to identify children who may benefit from extra resources, supports or Individualized Support Plans. If applicable, staff may seek support, guidance or resources from community support agencies. All staff maintain confidentiality. Referrals to community support agencies will not occur without your informed and written consent.

You are encouraged to participate in setting appropriate goals for your child, attending meetings regarding your child and providing insights unique to your role as their parent/guardian.

COMMUNITY SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES

Our centre works closely with child related community agencies to provide collaborative services to meet the individual needs of the children and their families. A list of names of all persons who may come into contact with your child, along with the agencies that they represent, will be posted at the centre.

Only with your written approval, will child care staff discuss and record your child's progress with support agency workers specifically assigned to individual children.

ILLNESS AND CARE FOR YOUR CHILD

When a child is not well they will often require additional support, attention, and supervision. Recognizing that every staff member is required in order to meet proper teacher-child ratios, we are not able to provide the additional supervision an ill child requires.

Child care staff monitor children's health throughout the day beginning when your child first arrives and before they interact with others. Please do not bring your child to the child care if they are not well. If your child becomes ill during the day, you will be called to pick up your child. If you are not able to pick up your child, you must have another person pick up your child. Should the staff be unsuccessful in contacting you, they will contact the person(s) you have listed as your emergency contacts.

Your child cannot attend child care with the following ailments:

- Fever.
- Unexplained Diarrhea – 2 or more bouts, or in combination with other symptoms (i.e. rash or fever).
- Vomiting – 2 or more bouts, or in combination with other symptoms.
- Any contagious sickness/symptom (i.e. rash, sores). Doctor's note may be required.
- Any sickness that prevents your child from participating in all aspects of the programme.
- If your child needs more care than the staff can provide without compromising the needs of the programme.

As per the directions of the Public Health Unit, children experiencing unexplained diarrheal or vomiting must be **free of these symptoms for 24 hours before** returning to the child care programme. In situations where the centres has been deemed in a pending or confirmed outbreak, staff and children experiencing diarrheal or vomiting may be required to remain home until they are symptom free for 48 hours.

FOOD AND MEAL-TIMES

Meal times provide an important opportunity for children to practice independence, grow socially and to develop healthy views about food and eating. We use a ‘family style dining’ approach—meaning that staff join the children at meal times— engaging and facilitating discussions amongst the children while at the same time, providing opportunities for children to demonstrate autonomy.

Scooping their own food, pouring a cup of milk, scraping their plates, feeding themselves, choosing portion sizes... are all examples of ways in which children can participate in the experience.

Children are invited and encouraged to try new foods. Researchers tell us that offering new foods 10-15 times can help to increase a child’s food preference. As such, meal time is not a time to rush but rather it’s a time to talk about things that have occurred in the day, to make plans for things that will happen and for building trusting relationships with each other.

Staff sit with the children and participate in snack and meal times - facilitating a calm and unhurried atmosphere. Knowing that children’s tastes and feelings of fullness are unique and will evolve over the years, staff use positive and supportive approaches as children taste new foods, learn to pour and scoop, and develop their sense for proportions.

All meals, snacks and beverages meet the recommendations set out in the Canada Food Guide and are reviewed and approved by Public Health. Weekly menus are posted for your information. We are not able to give food brought by parent/guardians to other children in the child care centre.

All food and drinks brought from home must be clearly marked with your child’s name. The centre supports practices that promote the health and well-being of children and cannot implement practices that would be in contravention of any policy, procedure or regulation.

ALLERGIES AND FOOD RESTRICTIONS

It is important that we are aware of any food allergies or dietary restrictions your child has. This information will be recorded and posted in all areas where food is prepared or served.

From time to time, the centre may post restricted foods or allergens that are not permitted at the child care centre. This will occur when a child or staff member has a life threatening allergy. During such times, everyone (i.e. parents, children, staff) are required to adhere to the posted food or allergy restrictions.

If your child has an allergy that requires medical considerations (i.e. epipen, inhalers) the supervisor will work collaboratively with you to develop an Individualized Health Plan. This plan will be shared with all staff, students and volunteers to help ensure the well-being of your child.

MEDICATIONS

The child care centre can only give children prescription medication or medicine directed in writing by a medical practitioner (i.e. Child's physician or Registered Nurse).

All medication must be in the original container and labelled with the pharmacy prescription.

A completed MEDICATION FORM, including your signature, is required to permit staff to administer medication. Staff may not administer medication without this.

All medicine brought to the child care must be handed directly to the teacher to ensure it is stored properly and safely. Do not leave medicine in your child's cubby.

Additionally, you may request staff to apply creams, lotions and/or lip balm to your child. In these circumstances, your signed consent is also required. These items must be labelled with your child's name.

CHILDREN'S INDIVIDUAL HEALTH PLANS

Your child's health and well-being is important to us. You are required to assist in the development of an Individual Health Plan for your child if she/he has a medical and/or health concerns which could pose a life threatening concern for your child. Examples of life threatening conditions are,

- History of seizures.
- Respiratory conditions i.e. severe asthma.
- Cardiovascular conditions i.e. fainting or collapsing.
- Diabetes.
- Anaphylactic Allergy.

These Individual Health Plans will be reviewed by all staff, students and volunteers and posted in areas where they are easily accessible. These measures are to help ensure the well-being of your child.

SLEEP CONSIDERATIONS

We use respectful and supportive approaches to assist your child in their development of autonomy and self-regulation skills. This includes their ability to recognize their individual feelings of sleepiness and their ability to self sooth, rest, and sleep.

Children ages 12 months and younger will be placed on their back to sleep as recommended in the *Joint Statement on Safe Sleep*. This requirement may only be overruled with written instructions by the child's physician. Once an infant is able to roll from their back to their stomach or side, they will not be repositioned back onto their backs if they have switched position in their sleep.

Sleep positioners or devices, bottles and cups are not permitted in cribs or on cots. Sleeping areas will be kept dimly lit to ensure the safe supervision of all children. Children are supervised during rest and sleep and staff members conduct visual checks of sleeping children every 30 minutes by being physically present beside the child while the child is sleeping and looking for indicators of distress or changes in sleeping patterns. Any significant changes in a child's sleeping patterns will be shared with you, their parent and may result in adjustments to sleep supervision. Parent/guardians are encouraged to speak with their classroom teacher at any time to discuss their child's individual sleep considerations.

As per the *Child Care and Early Years Act*, Toddler and Preschool aged children's rest period will not exceed two hours in length. Sleeping children will be gently awakened by changing the environment i.e. increasing lighting, opening shades...

Your child will be assigned an individual crib or cot. While your infant is 'falling to sleep' a small sleep item (i.e. stuffed toy) may accompany them in a crib while they are being supervised directly. These small sleep items will be removed when the child is not supervised directly. Staff will assist children with resting and sleeping by, playing soft music, patting/rubbing children's backs, reading a story, rocking...

As children transition between groups, any adjustments to sleeping arrangements will be communicated with their new teacher.

Children who are unable to sleep will be provided with quiet activities and play opportunities off their cots after no longer than an hour of rest. Practices that would undermine a child's well-being will not be used at any time. These include,

- not providing a cot, crib or bedding for sleeping or resting.
- taking a child's soother, blanket, sleep toy away.
- sending children to 'bed' as a form of punishment.
- with-holding any aspect of the programme as a form of 'punishment' for not sleeping or resting.
- forcing children to sleep or rest against their will.

OUTDOOR PLAY

Your child will have a minimum of two hours of outdoor play on a daily basis – weather permitting. This may include time on our playground, a neighbourhood walk or a visit to community green space.

Child care staff complete a check of the outdoor play space each day to ensure the safety of toys, equipment and surfaces. Indoor gross motor activities are provided on days that weather does not permit the children to play outdoors.

Due to staff ratio requirements, children may not stay indoors while their group is outside. If your child is not able to participate fully in the programme – including outdoor play – they should remain at home.

CLOTHING FOR PLAYING INDOORS AND OUT

Outdoor play provides a wonderful opportunity for your child to play, explore and develop large motor skills. Digging in the sand, crawling on the grass, playing in the snow, painting, water play...are all examples of the types of active play your child will experience.

Providing your child with appropriate clothing for outdoor play i.e. sunhats, rain boots, winter clothing... will assist your child in staying warm and dry while they participate fully in the programme. Please provide clothing that will allow your child to play and explore. For safety reasons, please do not send scarves or clothing with long strings.

Staff and families work in partnership to communicate any clothing or needed child care supplies (i.e. needed diapers, hat, mittens...). In some situations we may need to request that you bring necessary items to the centre before the end of the day and (if possible) will provide a substitute for clothing/diapers until the items are received.

Please label all clothing to help us return lost articles to their proper owner and please remember to return borrowed 'child care clothing' to the centre.

ACCESS TO WATER

Children in the programme may not have access to any standing bodies of water (ie. ponds and recreational in-ground /above ground swimming, portable/"kiddie"/ inflatable wading type pools).

Staff may provide your child with opportunities to play with water using sprinklers, hoses or water tables. Your child will be supervised by a staff at all times.

EXPLORING THE COMMUNITY

Under the direct supervision of staff your child may explore the surrounding community through neighbourhood walks. Children will be brought to see the local businesses and schools where families may attend, work, or shop. As well, they may visit with library, fire, health, and police services.

Child care staff will ensure the safety and well-being of your child during excursions off premises. Staff role model safe practices such as crossing at stop lights and street corners, walking on side-walks, and looking both ways before crossing the street. Your signed approval is required to permit your child to participate in neighbourhood walks.

ACCIDENT REPORTS

Child care staff will complete a written report when any accident or incident occurs that could affect the health, safety or well-being of your child. You will be provided with a copy of this Accident/Incident report.

In the event that your child is picked up by an escort on the day that an Accident/Incident report is completed, the report will be provided to the escort person in lieu of you. It will be the responsibility of the escort to ensure that you receive this report.

DUTY TO REPORT – SUSPECTED/ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

We all have an obligation to report suspected child abuse or neglect. All staff who know or suspect a child is or may be in need of protection are obligated by law to personally report such information on to Family and Children’s Services. In the event that an investigation occurs, we will work collaboratively with F&CS to support the child and family through this process.

UNDER THE INFLUENCE

If someone comes to pick up your child who appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, child care staff will request someone else from your escort list to pick up the child. Their cooperation is expected however, if they are not, the child care staff are obligated to call the Police and Family and Children’s Services for assistance.

DUTY TO REPORT – SERIOUS OCCURRENCES

A serious occurrence could include a serious injury to a child, use of a prohibited practice, fire or other disaster on site. The child care programme must immediately report a serious occurrence to the Ministry of Education. To support increased transparency and access to information, Serious Occurrence information will be posted at the centre for 10 days.

CONCERNS AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

You are invited to share any questions, concerns or advice you may have at any time. Ideally, this would occur with the most appropriate person according to the issue i.e. concerns regarding your child’s development might be raised with your child’s teacher while concerns pertaining to your account would be best addressed with the Centre Supervisor.

At any time, you may bring forward any concerns and questions with the person you feel is most appropriate and/or with whom you are most comfortable. In turn, staff will forward the question/concern to the appropriate person - as applicable, within 24 hours. This will occur in a confidential manner and with the intent to support communication, maintain positive relationships and to obtain a resolution.

NOTE: At any time Parent/guardians may bring questions/concerns to the Children’s Early Years Director and/or to a County of Wellington Quality Child Care Visitor. The County of Wellington Quality Child Care Visitor may be contacted at

T 519.837.3620 x3095

T 1.800.265.7294 x3095

E childcareinquiries@wellington.ca

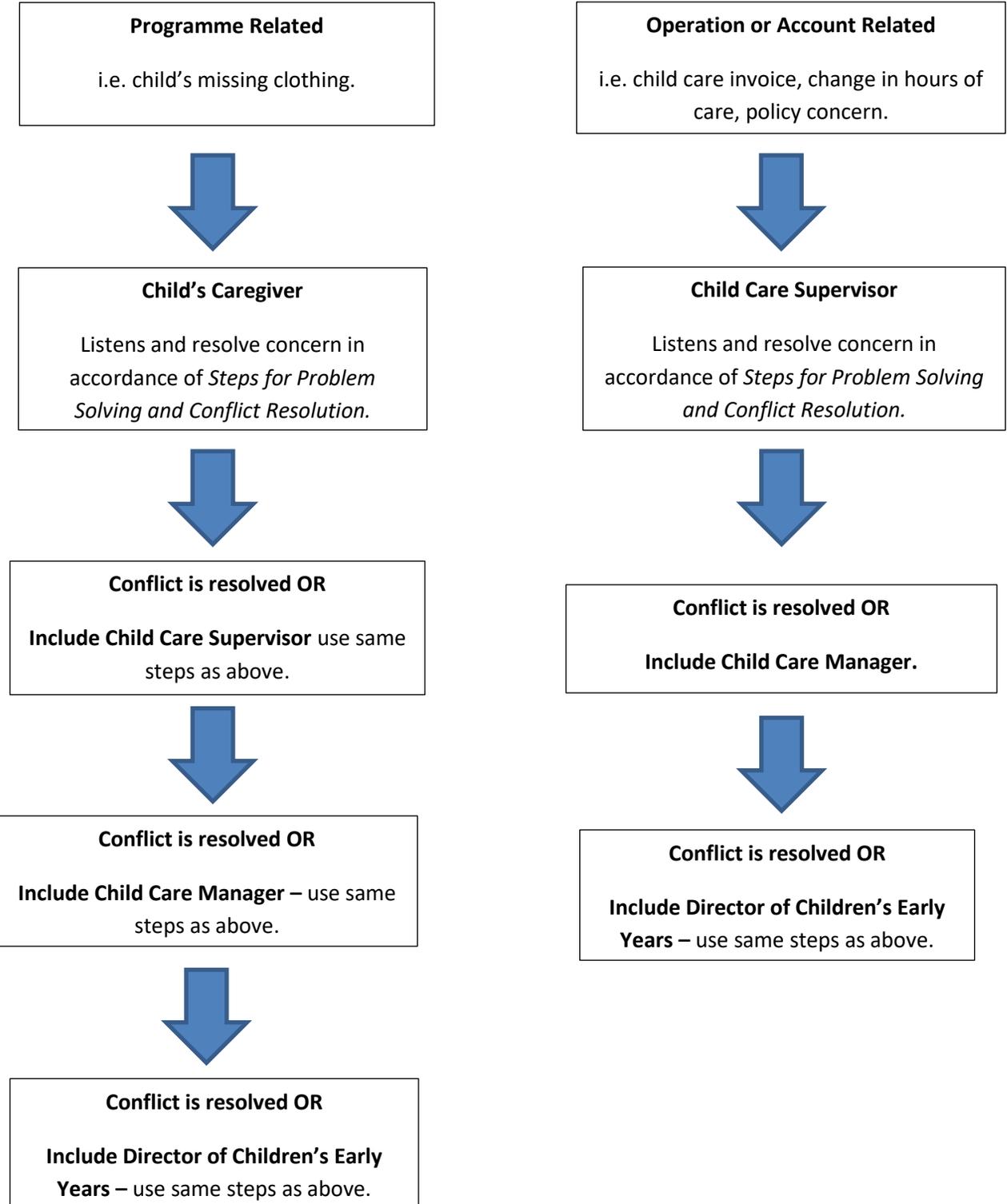
Additionally, you may share concerns/questions/suggestions anonymously via the ‘suggestion box’ located at the centre and/or through the County of Wellington Programme Visitor.

Concerns regarding the approaches used to guide, support, or redirect children, must be reported to the Supervisor within 24 hours of becoming aware of the concern (See Diagram for Route for Resolution).

ROUTE FOR RESOLUTION

We are committed to resolve issuing and concerns in a timely manner and will include the individual(s) best able to assist with this process. (See chart on next page).

Parent/Guardian Has Concern



APPEAL PROCESS

If a resolution cannot be reached following the last step and/or if the parent/guardian wishes to appeal a decision, they may forward their appeal to the Administrator of Social Services, County of Wellington.

CLOSURE POLICY – INCLEMENT WEATHER AND EMERGENCY

We understand that our families depend on our services for child care. The centre will stay open for our regular hours unless we cannot meet the requirements of the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*, or if Public Health or County of Wellington Administration requires the centre to close.

In inclement weather, staff will try to make their way to the centre safely. We may need to limit the number of children that attend, or ask parents to wait at the centre until enough staff arrive to provide care to meet our teacher to child ratios.

If we close outside of our regular hours of operation, we will change the centre's voice mail message announcing the closure. When possible, a notice will also be placed on the centre front doors.

Child care fees will not be charged in situations of an unexpected closure such as closures due to inclement weather. If the child care centre opens and later closes, full child care fees are still required.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND SERVICE CONTINUITY

The safety and well-being of children, families and staff is a priority. The County of Wellington has a Service Continuity Plan specific to Emergency Management of our child care centres. This plan is reviewed with each staff, staff and volunteer as part of their orientation. Copies of this will be provided upon request.

If we are unable to provide safe supervision of children due to an urgent or pressing situation and/or if we are not able to maintain legislative requirements, we may leave the premise and provide temporary care at our Emergency Shelter location. These decisions can have a critical impact on services. As such, decisions will be made by the CAO of the County of Wellington or their designate.

Should a decision to relocate be made, you will be immediately notified by phone and will be required to pick up your child from the Emergency Shelter. In the event the centre is unable to reach you, your emergency contact person(s) will be notified and required to pick up your child. Additionally, a notice indicating that the centre has moved to its temporary Emergency Shelter will be posted on the front doors.

As part of the recovery process, you will be contacted as soon as information is available, including information regarding the reasons for the evacuation, plans for remedying the

situation, timelines, processes for supporting children and families as well as steps and expectations for returning the programme to operational and legislative requirements.

If we need to relocate the children for any reason, our Emergency Location is:

**Mount Forest Fire Hall
381 Main Street North
519.323.1441**

EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT

In the event of a serious accident or illness involving your child while attending the programme, child care staff will make every effort to contact you and/or your emergency back-up designate. If your child is in need of emergency medical treatment, staff will seek medical assistance (i.e. call 911). This may include transportation for emergency treatment by ambulance.

(_____) **parent/guardian initials**

I received a copy of the Parent and Guardian Handbook. I had an opportunity to review this package with the Child Care Supervisor and understand the policies and processes within it.

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Child Care Supervisor: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____