



OTTAWA-CARLETON  
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD



# PARENT HANDBOOK

OCDSB Early Learning Centers



**Early Learning OCDSB Early Learning Center**

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# Introduction

**\*\*Please note that the Early Learning Department at the OCDSB has enrolled in the Canada Wide Early Learning Child Care System (CWELCC)\*\***

*The OCDSB is grateful to be present on this land, the traditional unceded and unsurrendered territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabe People. The OCDSB is committed to First Nations, Métis and Inuit rights, human rights and equity. The Board recognizes its responsibility to ensure that our policy and associated procedures promote and protect First Nations, Métis and Inuit rights, human rights, and equity and strive to address and eliminate racism and structural and systemic barriers for children, students, staff, caregivers and the community.*

As a licensed child care program in Ontario, we adhere to the Ministry of Education's policy statement on programming and pedagogy, *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years* (HDL). This is based upon four pillars to build on as a child continues in our care: Belonging, Well-Being, Engagement and Expression. Throughout this journey, we view all children, families and educators as competent, capable, curious and rich in potential.



Setting out and acting on a strong belief in children, we foster their exploration play and inquiry by providing materials based on the children's observed interests and questions.

We encourage the children to use materials in a variety of ways to promote creativity, imagination and implementing play-based/inquiry-based learning opportunities with educators as co-learners.

We provide child-initiated and adult-supported experiences by following the lead of the

children, and providing related resources to enhance the learning experiences. We plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development will be supported by meeting within teams to share observations, discuss, collaborate, and plan for a child's developing skills and abilities. We provide equipment and materials that are appropriate for the whole group of children as well as documenting and evaluating activities within a team to ensure the learning objectives are achieved.

The program incorporates indoor and outdoor play, active play, and rest/quiet



time into the day that gives consideration to the individual needs of the children receiving care by providing a schedule of daily activities that is flexible, and allows for extensions of activities as well as a variety of activity choices.

We foster the engagement of on-going communication with parents regarding the program and their children by welcoming parents into our program, encouraging them to ask questions and share information about their child. We make children's learning visible by displaying documentation about the children and the program.

We involve local community partners and allow those partners to support the children, their families and staff by providing parents with the resources needed to involve appropriate agencies to engage with their child. Engaging in activities in the local community as well as the school environment enhances our community of learning.

## **Vision Statement:**

To be leaders in the field of Early Learning, ensuring that every child, family, caregiver and educator has access to caring, innovative and socially responsible OCDSB early years environments; and

## **Mission Statement:**

To support a culture of lifelong learning, in collaboration with school and community partners, through safe, inclusive, diverse, and evolving early years programs that foster the unique potential of every child and their caring adults.

## **Program Statement**

**We promote the health, safety and well-being of children by:**

- Providing nutritionally balanced snacks and lunches, while respecting food allergies and restrictions, following *Canada's Food Guide* as well as *Ottawa Public Health's Child Care Healthy Eating and Active Living Guide*
- Providing opportunities for active/quiet activities, both indoors and outdoors during the day.



- Ensuring children are wearing appropriate clothing and footwear during outdoor play, and helmets.
- Providing opportunities for children to engage in and explore their world according to their interests, putting their needs first.

**We support positive and responsive interactions among children, parents/ caregivers and staff by:**

- Providing a welcoming, respectful environment for all members of a family, encouraging consistency between home and child care.
- Providing opportunities for open communication with parents/caregivers at drop off and pick up times.
- Inviting parents/caregivers to participate in program activities, encouraging feedback and ideas around their child's interests.

**We encourage children to interact and communicate in a positive way and support their ability to self-regulate by:**

- Facilitating group play opportunities to encourage positive interactions between peers.
- Providing developmentally appropriate activities to encourage child's engagement.
- Acknowledging the child's thoughts and feelings with empathy.
- Encouraging developmentally appropriate language (verbal and non-verbal) to communicate feelings, and modelling appropriate responses and behaviours.
- Implementing prevention strategies as a team for inappropriate actions.

**We involve local community partners and allow those partners to support the children, their families and staff by:**

- Providing parents/caregivers with the resources needed to involve appropriate agencies to engage with their child.
- Engaging in activities in the local community as well as school environment.

**We support staff in relation to Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) by:**

- Providing current and updated information on Continuous Professional Learning from the College of ECEs, and How Does Learning Happen? resources from the Ministry of Education.
- Providing information on professional development opportunities from federal, provincial and local childcare and Early Years organizations.
- Including time in regularly scheduled team and staff meetings to share professional ideas and information.
- Encouraging peer coaching.

**We will document and review the impact of the above strategies on the children and their families by:**

- Reviewing the program statement and the strategies identified yearly to ensure accuracy.
- Encouraging documentation and displaying of evidence of children's learning opportunities through photographs and written text.
- Providing educators opportunities to meet formally and informally with families to share information.
- Allowing for time at regularly scheduled team and staff meetings to discuss the program statement implementation.
- Involving educators in determining PD topics/areas of interest specific to program statement goals.

**Expectations for Implementation of the Approach to the OCDSB Program Statement:**

- The following practices are in place to ensure that only preferred practices are used in regards to the implementation of the Program Statement;
- Prior to working with the children the Team Manager / Program Coordinator will discuss the center's Program Statement, and prohibited practices with each educator and student to ensure compliance, as required by the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 (CCEYA);
- Monitoring practices by ongoing observations;
- Team meetings will include discussion about implementing approaches specified in the program statement, as well as prohibited practices and interventions;
- A daily log will be kept for staff to record in. The following information will be documented: anecdotal record of intervention, children involved, location, time, duration, techniques used by the child and educator. The Program Coordinator and/or Team Manager will review the documentation as needed; and
- The Program Coordinator in consultation with the Team Manager will complete educator performance appraisals.



## Program Staff

“When we see educators as knowledgeable, reflective, resourceful, and rich in experience, we value the experiences and environments they create for children.” (HDLH)

Our educators are composed of Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECE); and Program Assistants.

To support educator teams applying pedagogical approaches and practices as well as policies and procedures, our Team Manager as well as the Program Coordinator work alongside the educators to both guide and support them to deliver a responsive and quality program. The General Manager of Early Learning oversees the operation of the OCDSB’s Early Learning Centers.



Our childcare delivery model includes the annual movement of staff within or between programs allowing the continued or new relationships between the children and their current educators. It values the importance of meaningful relationships with children and families. This delivery model will support educators and families to build trust, ensure consistency and mitigate stress during transitions to new age groups. This model will support the overall well being, belonging, expression and engagement for children, families and educators. This is a delivery model that works in harmony so that educators are closely engaged with each child throughout their ages and stages of development. This model ensures that each educator will work with each age group for no less than 1 year depending on needs of the children/families, educator goals and program requirements.

The Educator Teams, the Team Manager Program Coordinator and the management team foster interactions and communication among educators, children and families. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to communicate with all OCDSB Early Learning Center educators.

## Criminal Reference Check — Vulnerable Sector Checks

To mitigate risk to the safety of the children or anyone else who works in the program, all of our Early Childhood Educators (RECE), Program Assistants, Cooks, Housekeepers and Coordinators as well as the Early Learning Department Team must provide a current Police Record-Vulnerable Sector check prior to beginning employment. This is a legislative requirement of the Ministry of Education for all OCDSB employees.

## Licensing

OCDSB Early Learning Centers are licensed under the *Childcare and Early Years Act, 2014 (CCEYA) of the Ontario Ministry of Education (EDU)*.

Programs are required to meet all the regulations of the Act in order to operate. A Program Advisor from the ministry monitors and ensures our program meets licensing requirements, that compliance can be demonstrated and maintained, suggests best practices and provides additional information regarding our standards for safety, employee training and program policies.

Programs are also required to meet all health and fire regulations dictated by the City of Ottawa, as well as health and safety standards of the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board.

For more information on licencing: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/>

## Hours of Operation

OCDSB Early Learning Centers operate Monday to Friday on a twelve month basis.

**Hours:** 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

### Statutory Holidays

We will be closed on the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Family Day
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- Victoria Day
- Canada Day
- August Civic Holiday
- Labour Day
- Thanksgiving

In addition to the above mentioned holidays all OCDSB Early Learning Center locations are closed the week between Christmas and New Year's.



## Registration Application Process



### First step:

Parents are required to use the City's online *Child Care Registry and Waiting List (CCRAW)* to request a space in either of these programs.

Parents will be required to Make a Registration request by clicking on the New Children icon via the *OCDSB Early Learning Centers* webpage. Your request will be sent to the Program Coordinator responsible for your program. If your service request is approved, you will

receive next steps on how to proceed with registration. The application is only a request, and may be approved or denied by childcare management staff, depending on availability, admission criteria and available spaces. A waitlist will be available at each site if required.



### **Next Steps:**

Once your request has been approved, you will receive an email confirmation and your activation code in order for you to activate your account. You will then be asked to complete the e-registration process.

**NOTE:** It is important that you make note of your user ID, password and security question answers for future use.

Activate your account and complete all required information. You must complete all sections of the registration before it's deemed completed.

**NOTE:** You will receive an automated email confirming that the child profile has been created, therefore your registration is complete.

**If at any time you are encountering difficulties with the registration requests, accessing the parent portal or any part of the registration process you can receive technical support via email at [support@digibot.ca](mailto:support@digibot.ca).**

To continue to access your on-line registration parent portal click on the Existing Children icon via the OCDSB [Early Learning Centers](#) webpage.

## **Waitlist Policy and Procedure**

### **General**

- OCDSB Early Learning Centers will strive to accommodate all requests for the registration.
- Where the maximum capacity of a program has been reached and spaces are unavailable for new children to be enrolled, the waiting list procedures set out below will be followed.
- No fee will be charged to parents/caregivers for placing a child on the waiting list.

## **Procedures**

### **Application Process**

- Parents/Caregivers are required to use the City of Ottawa's online Child Care Registry and Waiting List (CCRAW) to request a space in the Early Learning Center.

- Parents/Caregivers will be required to submit an application by clicking on the Apply to ELC icon via the OCDSB website OCDSB Early Learning Center.

The request will be sent to the Program Coordinator/ Team Manager responsible for your program. If the application is approved, the family will receive next steps on how to proceed with registration. The application is only a request and will be reviewed by the Program Coordinator according to program space and staffing availability.

- The Early Learning Department will maintain a waitlist through our e-registration system which dates and time stamps all applications during our transition to using the CCRAW system through the City of Ottawa.
- Once an application has been approved, parents/caregivers will receive an email confirmation and, if required, an activation code in order for the family to activate their account. The parents/caregivers will then be asked to complete the e-registration process.

### **Offering an Available Space**

Parents/caregivers of children on the waiting list will be notified via Digibot that a space has become available in their requested program. A tour of the center will be arranged with the Program Coordinator.

## **Maintaining Privacy and Confidentiality**

1. The waiting list will be maintained in a manner that protects the privacy and confidentiality of the children and families on the list and therefore the child's position on the waiting list will only be provided to their parents/caregivers.
2. Names of other children or families and/or their placement on the waiting list will not be shared with other individuals.

## **Withdrawals**

A withdrawal request will need to be made by accessing your parent portal, clicking on the Existing Students tab on the OCDSB website and requesting an end date to your child/ren's schedule. Withdrawals will require two weeks notice. Once the withdrawal has been completed, you will receive an email notification verifying the end date in the program. A refund will then be processed if applicable.

\*Please note that refunds, if applicable, will follow in 4 weeks.



## Updated Parent or Child Information

It is the parent's/caregiver's responsibility to update their account on the ELC Parent portal with any changes to work information, telephone numbers, address, email address, child's medical conditions and emergency contact information. To access the ELC parent portal, click on the Existing Children icon on the OCDSB [Early Learning Centers](#) webpage.

## Base Fees

All of the programs under the OCDSB Early Learning Department (ELD) serve both fee paying and subsidized children. The OCDSB has a Purchase of Service Agreement with the City of Ottawa which sets out the guidelines regarding subsidies.

Budgets are based on the cost of operating the programs for a twelve (12) month period, and fees are calculated from costs reflected in the budgets.

The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board makes every effort to keep parent fees as low as we possibly can. Parents will be given a minimum of one (1) month notice of any increases to fees.

Fees will be collected through Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). The monthly fee is due on the first day of each month and will be deducted from your bank account within the first 3 business days of the month. If your child starts after the monthly fees have been processed, your first month's fee will be processed along with next month's fees.

For the fee information, please see the Early Learning Center 2023–2024 [Fees and Locations](#) icon on the OCDSB website.

## Non-Base Fees

In order for your child to receive a subsidy for the Infant Toddler Preschool Program you must register with the [City of Ottawa Child Care Registry and Waitlist](#) (CCRAW). When you add your name to the Registry, you will have the option to apply for a subsidy.

### Insufficient Funds Charges/Overdue Fees

Any fees returned due to insufficient funds are subject to a \$30 administration fee. The OCDSB will make a second attempt on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month (or the first business day if the 15<sup>th</sup> falls on the weekend) to recover the missed payment along with the \$30 NSF fee.

If fees remain in arrears for more than 30 days, your child care services will be reviewed by the General Manager to determine what action will be taken to collect the overdue fees. The OCDSB may require payment by bank draft/certified cheque if fees are in arrears for more than 60 days. At that point the OCDSB reserves the right to suspend child care services until full payment is received.

## Income Tax Child Care Receipts

Families will be provided with a receipt of their child care expenses for the previous calendar year by the end of February, following the calendar year end. The names and amounts on the receipt are based on the information provided through our e-registration (DIGIBOT) system. These receipts will be available to parents in the parent portal by clicking on the Existing Children icon via the OCDSB [Early Learning Centers](#) webpage.

## Transportation

Transportation and/or busing to and from all OCDSB Early Learning Centers is the responsibility of the parents/caregivers.



## Safe Arrival and Dismissal (Signing In And Out)

\*Parents and/or caregivers must sign their child in at drop off in the morning, and sign their child out at pick up in the afternoon.\*

As stipulated in the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, every licensee ensures that daily attendance records are kept indicating time of arrival and departure of every child or if a child is absent. No child will be released to a person other than the parents/caregivers without written permission given to the educators in advance. Parents/caregivers are required upon registration to complete an "Authorized Person" list of people who are permitted to pick up their child. Parents/caregivers are required to keep this list up to date.

Should a situation arise whereby a person is picking up your child who is not on our list of authorized persons, we require written permission to release your child to that person. In such cases, the staff will be asking for photo identification.

## Accepting a Child into Care

When receiving a child in the morning, program staff must:

- Engage in a face-to-face drop-off with the parent/caregiver.
- Inquire about the child's recent experiences and any changes to the pick-up procedure.
- Verify authorization for alternative pick-ups through DIGIBOT or, if unlisted, obtain written consent from the parent/caregiver and/or update DIGIBOT accordingly.
- Document changes in the pick-up procedure in the daily written record.

## Child Not Arriving at the Early Learning Center

If a child does not arrive as expected in the morning, and there is no communication from the parent/caregiver regarding a change, within one hour of the child's usual

expected time of arrival, staff will:

- Inform the Program Coordinator or designate.
- The Program Coordinator or designate will contact the parent/caregiver via phone or email.
- In the event a parent/caregiver cannot be reached, the Program Coordinator/designate will contact the emergency contacts listed on the child's emergency contact list
- Once the child's absence has been confirmed, program staff shall document any additional information about the child's absence in the daily written record as needed.



### **Releasing a Child from an OCDSB Early Learning Center**

The supervising educator at pick-up will:

- Release the child only to the parent/caregiver or an authorized individual with written consent.
- Confirm unfamiliar individuals with another staff member or request photo identification.
- Contact parents/caregivers by 6:00 pm if a child remains uncollected, engaging them in activities while awaiting pick-up.
- Contact additional contacts on the authorization list if necessary.
- Notify the Program Coordinator, designate or Team Manager for support if the parent/caregiver cannot be reached.
- If no contact is established by 6:30 pm, contact local authorities and inform the Team Manager.

### **Late Pick Up**

OCDSB Early Learning Centers close at 6:00 pm. If a parent, or other authorized adult is unable to pick up the child by 6:00 pm, alternate arrangements must be made in order to meet the closing time of the program. Parents/caregivers are required to respect the operating hours of the Early Learning Center. Late fees will be applied for any child who is in the program past 6:00 pm. If an educator is unable to contact a parent or caregiver to ensure someone is on their way to pick up the child/ren, they will then call the emergency contacts listed for each child. If thirty (30) minutes after closing time, the educator is unable to contact a responsible parent, caregiver or alternate pick up person, the Program Coordinator, in consultation with the Team Manager, will notify the authorities (Ottawa Police and/or the Children's Aid Society) that a child/ren is left in a program with no contact by a parent or caregiver. The educator will remain with the child/ren until either a parent, caregiver or local authority picks up the child/ren.

### **Absenteeism**

For the health and wellness of all educators and children, sick children and staff are

expected to stay at home. Please call the Early Learning Center before your child's scheduled arrival if your child will be absent. If you know your child will be absent for a day or part of the day, or absent for an extended period of time, a vacation for example, please notify the Program Coordinator. There are no rebates or reduction of the monthly fee as a result of a child being absent from the program.

## **School Closures**

If schools are closed due to a facility failure, there will be no care offered at our Early Learning Centers. School closures are usually announced by most local radio stations, on the OCDSB Website, or by email via Digibot.

When buses are canceled due to inclement weather, schools remain open; therefore, the Early Learning Center will also be open for any children enrolled in the ELC. It is the parent's responsibility to get the child/ren to and from the program.

The Early Learning Department has calculated the daily fees to include an allowance for up to 5 closure days during the 2023–2024 school year. This applies to any of the following (please note this is not an exhaustive list):

- Labour disruptions
- Any unforeseen closure due to facility failure such as power outage, gas leak, plumbing issues
- Natural disaster such as tornado or earthquake
- During staffing circumstances where legislated child to educator ratios cannot be maintained

For these rare occurrences, families will not be issued a refund or credit of any kind.

## **Enrollment Capacity**

The maximum number of children, including the number in each age category, allowed to be receiving child care in our Early Learning Centers at one time is set out by the licence to operate child care.

## **Behaviour Guidance**

Learning to be respectful of shared materials and spaces, expressing emotions and negotiating diverse thinking are a daily occurrence in shared experiences. We regard these circumstances as teachable moments by providing both the children and adults the opportunity to negotiate differing opinions, voice their frustrations and collaboratively solve problems. When these situations arise, we listen carefully to each child, encourage them to listen to one another and support them as they identify with each other's feelings when possible.

“Grounded in a view of the child as competent and capable of complex thinking” (HDLH,2014), educators work with the children to help them develop their own sense of self-discipline. Staff recognize the importance of stressing the positive with children, redirecting them as much as possible. Limits are expressed clearly to the children, with reasons and logical consequences.



Together, the educators and the children work to co-construct solutions and reflect on whether these solutions are working. We make time and space available for children to resolve misunderstandings all while ensuring that it is age or developmentally appropriate. The educators support the children as they reflect on the consequences of their actions and provide alternative options. There may be occasions when the educators ask for family support during relational learning opportunities.

Parents will be informed of any behavioural incidents involving their child that occur during their child's day. In some cases, an incident report will be completed by educators; in order to document behaviours, and identify strategies to assist in addressing inappropriate behaviours.

Neither physical nor verbal punishment, nor withdrawal of basic needs, care or affection is used to discipline the children, we ask you to respect these limitations while in the center. The method of adult intervention used allows for decision making and self-discipline on the part of the child, resulting in a positive rather than a negative experience.

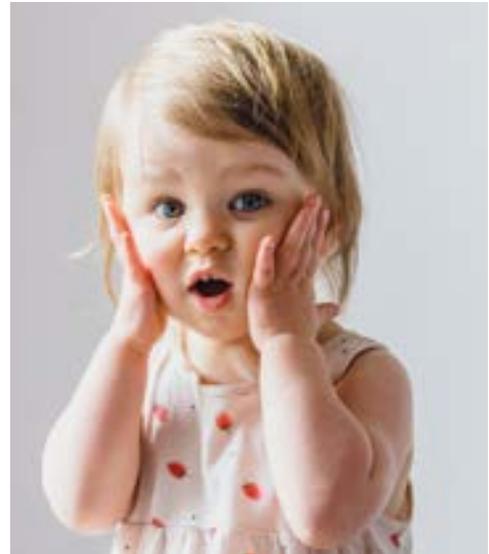
## **Prohibited Practices**

As determined by legislation, (Ontario Regulation 137/15, *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* these provisions forbid physical punishment and other harmful disciplinary practices to protect the emotional and physical well-being of children. They set out clear direction regarding prohibitive practices to support the overall well-being of children. These practices are never permitted in a child care center. Furthermore, no employee of the OCDSB, or student who is on an educational placement with the OCDSB shall engage (i.e. implement) any of these practices. Young children benefit

from an affirming approach that encourages positive interactions with other children and with adults, rather than from a negative or punitive approach to managing unwanted behaviour.

**None of the following practices are observed in the program:**

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



## **DUTY TO REPORT**

Section 125 of the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017 (CYFSA) imposes a duty to report for everyone, including RECEs, where there are reasonable grounds to suspect one or more of the following with respect to a child:

- Emotional Harm: The child has suffered emotional harm, or there is a risk that the child is likely to suffer emotional harm demonstrated by serious: anxiety, depression, withdrawal, self-destructive or aggressive behaviour, or delayed development.
- There are reasonable grounds to believe that the emotional harm suffered by the child results from the actions, failure to act or pattern of neglect on the part of the child's parent or the person having charge of the child. Physical and / or sexual harm, abandonment, acts of criminal nature and exposure to family violence, which can take the form of physical, sexual, emotional or financial harm as well as neglect.

Persons failing to do so are subject to legal action and a fine if convicted. Failure to report under the CYFSA may also have consequences for members of the College under the ECE Act and the regulations of the College.

*Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect: It's Your Duty*

*College of Early Childhood Educators (CECE)*

## **Accidents/Incidents**

### **Health and Safety**

While attending the Early Learning Center, children are supervised at all times by the educators. However, accidents or incidents can happen while children are exploring their indoor and outdoor environments. If your child is injured while in care, in most cases, educators will communicate with you when you arrive to pick up your child. Should the injury require further medical attention, we will contact you and/or your emergency contacts as soon as possible.

Educators will fill out and provide an Injury Report form. Should an accident occur at home that may impact your child's participation in the Early Learning program, please ensure that you inform the Early Learning educators.



## **Health**

If your child contracts any communicable diseases you are required to notify the child care program immediately. We work in partnership with Ottawa Public Health to ensure appropriate measures are taken to minimize the spread of infection. Ottawa Public Health requests that when outbreaks occur, the childcare centers exclude children who have certain communicable diseases until certain criteria are met for a healthy return to care. If your child is hospitalized for a minimum of twenty four (24) hours, please notify the Program Coordinator immediately. Upon arrival at the child care program or throughout the day, educators may determine a child is "not well enough" to attend the program. If this is the case, the child will be isolated and the parent/caregiver will be notified to pick up their child as soon as possible.

Ottawa Public Health has set forth certain policies to protect all children. Your child may not attend the program if they suffer from the following:

1. A fever of 38 degrees Celsius or higher (100.3 Fahrenheit)
2. Vomiting (must be symptom free for 48 hours prior to returning)
3. Diarrhea (at least 2 episodes)
4. Croupy cough and green discharge from the nose
5. Any unexplained rash or skin irritation
6. Complains of a bad headache or sore throat
7. Eyes/ears that are oozing any form of discharge (must be on antibiotics for 24 hours prior to readmission)
8. Strep Throat (must be on antibiotics for 24 hours prior to readmission)

If your child develops any of these 8 symptoms while your child is in childcare or at home, we ask that you keep your child at home until they are symptom free for 24 hours, or the period of time specified above. Please do not give your child Tylenol and bring them to the program as they might be contagious.

Ottawa Public Health — [Communicable Diseases Guidelines](#)

If your child has allergies and/or is taking medication at home, please notify the staff, so that they can be alert for any side effects.

## Administration Of Medication

Written permission from a parent/caregiver is legislatively required to administer both prescription and non-prescription medication to a child while attending one of our programs. Parents/Caregivers are required to complete a Medication Authorization Form.

All medication must be in the original container, clearly labeled with the child's name, dosage, administration, storage instructions and possible side effects.

All medication will be stored in a locked, metal container in the fridge or cupboard.

Epi Pens and Asthma medication will be in a designated place in consultation with the parents.

**For everyone's safety, please do not leave medication of any kind in your child's cubby or backpack.**

## Nutrition

OCDSB Early Learning Centers aligns with the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board guidelines for addressing the needs of students/children with severe or life-threatening medical conditions. These guidelines are in compliance with Sabrina's Law, Ryan's Law and all other relevant legislation. [OCDSB Procedure PR.548.SCO](#) meets



the recommendations set out in the Health Canada document "Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide."

A healthy menu is provided each day on site. The menu includes a morning and afternoon snack as well as lunch. Menus are posted on site at the Early Learning Center as well as your Digibot Parent Portal. Any changes to the menu are posted daily. Ottawa Public Health and the Ministry of Education both inspect and review the menu.

OCDSB Early Learning Centers practice family-style dining for all meals and snacks served throughout the day. Family-style dining is a method of serving food to

our children by bringing the main and side dishes to the table in serving bowls; this allows the children to serve themselves.

The goal of family-style dining is for children to develop self-help skills, social skills, empower them to make their own food choices and create pride and ownership of the food they are eating. Children scoop their own portions and pour their own milk/water, improving fine motor skills. In our classes, a teacher is present at every table. They are a role model, sitting and engaging in positive conversation, while eating with the children. The children interact with their peers by taking turns, asking one another to pass the serving bowl or for more of a particular food.

By dining together as a cohesive group, with both their peers and teachers, children look around and see the members of the group enjoying the food, which makes them much more likely to try it too! In addition to creating a supportive meal environment, family style dining promotes the tradition of enjoying conversation and healthy nutritious food together. At the end of the meal, the children scrape their own plates and help with clean-up.

***Safety is our utmost concern, if your child has any food allergies or restrictions, it is very important to identify the allergies or restrictions in your child/ren e-registration (DIGIBOT) information. It is the parents' responsibility to make any changes or modifications through the parent portal by clicking on the Existing Children icon via the OCDSB website. Please communicate with the on-site educators, and an appropriate alternative will be provided.***

## **Anaphylaxis**

Anaphylaxis is a serious allergic reaction that can be life-threatening. It requires avoidance strategies and immediate response in the event of an emergency. These policies and procedures are intended to help meet the needs and save the lives of children with severe allergies and provide relevant and important information on anaphylaxis to parents, staff, students, and visitors at the child care center.

This policy is intended to fulfill the obligations set out under Ontario Regulation 137/15 for an anaphylactic policy for child care centers. The requirements set out in this policy align with Sabrina's Law, 2005.

### **Strategies to Reduce the Risk of Exposure to Anaphylactic Allergens**

The following strategies to reduce the risk of exposure to anaphylactic causative agents will be followed at all times by employees and students at the child care center.

- Do not serve foods where its ingredients are not known.
- Do not serve items with 'may contain' warnings on the label in a room where there is a child who has an individualized plan and emergency procedures specifying those allergens.
- Ask the caterer or cook to provide the known ingredients for all food provided. The ingredients will be reviewed before food is served to children to verify that causative agents are not served to children with anaphylactic allergies.
- In cases where a child has food allergies and the meals and snacks provided by the child care center cannot meet the child's needs, ask the child's parent to supply snacks/meals for their child. All written instructions for diet provided by a parent will be implemented.
- Ensure that parents label food brought to the child care center with the child's full name and the date the food arrived at the child care center, and that parents advise of all ingredients.
- Where food is provided from home for children, ensure that appropriate supervision of children is maintained so that food is not shared or exchanged.
- Encourage parents who serve foods containing allergens at home to ensure their child has been rid of the allergens prior to attending the child care center (e.g. by thoroughly washing hands, brushing teeth, etc.)
- Do not use craft/sensory materials and toys that have known allergens on the labels.
- Share information about anaphylaxis, strategies to reduce the risk of exposure to known allergens and treatment with all families enrolled in the child care center.
- Make sure each child's individual plan and emergency procedure are kept-up-to-date and that all staff and students are trained on the plans.
- Refer to the allergy list and ensure that it is up to date and implemented.
- Update staff and students when changes to a child's allergies, signs and symptoms, and treatment occur and review all updates to individualized plans and emergency procedures.
- Update families when changes to allergies occur while maintaining the confidentiality of children.
- Update or revise and implement the strategies in this policy depending on the allergies of children enrolled at the child care center.

## Communication Plan

The following is our communication plan for sharing information on life-threatening and anaphylactic allergies with staff, students, parents and families.

- Parents will be encouraged not to bring foods that contain ingredients to which children may be allergic.
- Parents and families will be informed about anaphylactic allergies and all known allergens at the child care center through Digibot.
- A list of all children's allergies including food and other causative agents will be posted in all cooking and serving areas, in each play activity room, and made available in any other area where children may be present.
- Each child with an anaphylactic allergy will have an individualized plan and emergency procedures that detail signs and symptoms specific to the child describing how to identify that they are having an allergic reaction and what to do if they experience a reaction.
- Each child's individualized plan and emergency procedures will be made available and accessible wherever the child may be present while receiving child care.
- The caterer, cook, individuals who collect groceries on behalf of the child care center and/or other food handling staff, where applicable, will be informed of all the allergies at the child care center, including those of children, staff, and students. An updated list of allergies will be provided to the caterer or cook as soon as new allergies are identified. The supervisor or designate will communicate with the caterer/cook about which foods are not to be used in food prepared for the child care center and will work together on food substitutions to be provided.
- The child care center will communicate with the Ministry of Education by reporting serious occurrences where an anaphylactic reaction occurs in accordance with the established serious occurrence policy and procedures.
- This communication plan will be continually reviewed to ensure it is meeting the needs of the child care center and that it is effectively achieving its intended result.

## Sleep Policy and Supervision

In accordance with the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, we are required to provide children with a rest/quiet time each day. All children are assigned their

own cot. We provide the cots and sheets, and we ask that you provide a blanket for your child's comfort. If you do not have a blanket, one will be provided for your child. If a blanket is not your child's preferred item to rest, please provide us with a preferred cuddle toy. Blankets



or rest time toys will be sent home weekly to be washed and will be required to be returned the following day. We recognize that children have varied needs in regards to sleep and rest. The educator teams will provide an environment conducive to their needs.

Staff are checking the children during sleep time every 15 minutes, for signs of distress or unusual behaviours. These checks are documented and available for parents to see. If there are any significant changes in a child's sleep pattern, this will be communicated to the parent.

We are following information set out from the Ministry as well as the "*Safe Sleep For Your Baby*" and the "*Joint Statement on Safe Sleep: Preventing Sudden Infant Deaths in Canada*" document provided by the Public Health Agency of Canada.

## What do I need to bring?

We encourage the children to explore their environment in many ways; on occasion, this may require a change of clothes. It is necessary that all children have a change of clothes at the center. All items provided by families must be clearly labelled with your child's name or initials. Children require appropriate footwear for all activities and weather conditions. Children must wear sandals with a back strap, running shoes or boots when using playground equipment.

Families are required to provide diapers, wipes and necessary ointments if required.

**\*\*Please note: We are scent-free facility, please ensure the products you provide are fragrance free.**

## Participation in Outdoor Play Fostering Natural Curiosity

We venture outside in all seasons experiencing all kinds of weather. Weather-proof

or durable waterproof seasonal wear makes children's participation in the outdoors possible and enjoyable. Mittens are preferable to gloves as they are warmer and easier for children to put on. Parents can anticipate providing extra mittens in winter, splash pants in spring, and hats, sunscreen and water bottles for the summer weather. We track the weather forecast to support parent planning for outdoor play.

In the outdoors educators involve your child in dramatic play, music, story telling, art, the study of plants, mapping activities, animals and insects. Active and outdoor play in daily programming also provides opportunities for increased physical activity for children. Emphasis will be on participation and enjoyment that encourage children



to explore their natural environment. Extra care will be taken to ensure children are supported as they experiment, inquire and engage in developmentally appropriate activities. This is consistent with the principles outlined in *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years*, which include creating opportunities for children to engage in active play that allow them to connect with the natural world and their community. Due to staff ratio requirements outdoors, we cannot offer children the option of staying indoors. If child/ren are not well enough to play outdoors, this is an indicator that they are not well enough to participate in all the activities, therefore should not attend the child care program. We will ask for your child/ren to remain at home until they are well enough to participate in every aspect of the day.

## Field Trips

With parent/caregiver consent, walking trips on school grounds will occur on occasion. Early Learning center field trip activities could also include visits to the school gym for indoor active play or school performances.

## Fire Drills — Emergency Shelter



To ensure the health and safety of children and educators, Emergency Management Measures are in place outlining the roles and responsibilities of employees. All programs conduct monthly fire drills and follow evacuation procedures. This ensures that all children become familiar with emergency procedures. In the event of a real emergency when the children cannot return to the Center they will be moved to our designated emergency shelter and parents will be contacted by email via digibot or phone call to pick up their children immediately.

## Serious Occurrence Notification

In the case of any situation considered a Serious Occurrence, it is a requirement for all licensed child care facilities to post a Ministry of Education Serious Occurrence Notification Form next to the licensing information in the program. This form will remain posted for a minimum of ten (10) business days.

## Student Involvement

The OCDSB Early Learning Centers welcomes both placement ECE students and Highschool students into the various programs offered in our child care programs. We believe it is a valuable part in gaining experience in a child care environment. Students also play an important role in supporting staff in the daily operation of child care programs. Greeting and supporting students in this important work is also a key

strategy for the recruitment of new graduates and to inspire high school students to become RECEs. At this time, the OCDSB will not be greeting volunteers in our programs.

If co-op or placement students wish to participate within the program, it is a requirement that these individuals present a current Police Records check to the OCDSB prior to their first visit. In addition, any students must read and sign off on the Program Policies and Procedures, and any anaphylaxis plans that have been put in place.

**Students are supervised by an employee at all times and are not permitted to be alone with any child.**

## **Child, Parent and Staff Code of Conduct**

The OCDSB strives to provide a safe, inclusive and respectful learning environment for all. Children, parents/caregivers and staff are asked to adhere to the **Respectful Workplace** and **School District Code of Conduct** policies linked below:

[\*Respectful Workplace\*](#)

[\*School District Code of Conduct\*](#)

### **Policy Highlights:**

A school/childcare shall be a place that promotes responsibility, respect, civility, accountability and a positive school climate exists when all members of the school community feel safe, comfortable, accepted and valued.

### **All members of the school community shall:**

- i. respect and comply with all applicable federal, provincial and municipal laws;
- ii. treat one another with dignity and respect at all times;
- iii. not swear at any member of the school community.

Parents/Caregivers play an important role in the education of their children, and should support the efforts of school staff in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all children. Parents/caregivers fulfill their role with respect to the District Code of Conduct when they:

- communicate regularly and meaningfully with the school;
- demonstrate conduct in keeping with the provincial Code of Conduct, the District Code of Conduct, and school/childcare rules;
- demonstrate respect for all students, staff, other parents/caregivers, and all other members of the school community.

If at any point a parent/caregiver, provider or staff feels uncomfortable, threatened, abused or belittled, they may immediately end the conversation and report the situation to the coordinator/team manager.

## **Communication, Compliments and Concerns**

At the OCDSB, we believe that parents/caregivers play a vital role in child development. You are your child's first teacher. Educators value the partnership they build with the whole family.

In all programs, educators will post planning activities and documentation of the children's learning for you to see and explore on your own and with your child.

The OCDSB Early Learning Department wants to hear your questions and feedback. Below is the best way to connect with us if you have feedback, questions or concerns about the Early Learning Centers Program. At your child's ELC, your child's ELC educators and the on-site Program Coordinator are the first point of contact, followed by the off-site Early Learning Team Manager and Early Learning General Manager.

When communicating with an Early Learning Program Team Manager or General Manager, please email [earlylearning@ocdsb.ca](mailto:earlylearning@ocdsb.ca) or call 613-596-8760. In order to assist us in providing a timely response to any questions or concerns, please clearly identify your child's name and Early Learning Center when contacting the Early Learning Department.

## **Parent Issues and Concerns Policy and Procedures**

The purpose of this policy is to provide a transparent process for parents/caregivers. Parents/Caregivers are encouraged to take an active role in our child care center and regularly discuss what their child(ren) are experiencing with our program. As supported by our program statement, we support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents/caregivers, child care providers and staff, and foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents/caregivers about the program and their children. Our staff are available to engage parents/caregivers in conversations and support a positive experience during every interaction.

All issues and concerns raised by parents/caregivers are taken seriously by OCDSB Early Learning Center staff and will be addressed. Every effort will be made to address and resolve issues and concerns to the satisfaction of all parties and as quickly as possible.

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

An initial response to an issue or concern will be provided to parents/caregivers within two business days. The person who raised the issue/concern will be kept informed throughout the resolution process.

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

### **Confidentiality**

Every issue and concern will be treated confidentially and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of parents/caregivers, children, staff, and students, 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).

## PROCEDURES

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

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

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

## **Contacts:**

### **OCDSB Early Learning General Manager**

Julie Cyr: 613-596-8261 or [julie.cyr@ocdsb.ca](mailto:julie.cyr@ocdsb.ca)

### **OCDSB Team Manager**

Dallas Hall : 613-596-8211 ext. 8941 or [dallas.hall@ocdsb.ca](mailto:dallas.hall@ocdsb.ca)

### **Ministry of Education, Licensed Child Care Help Desk**

1-877-510-5333 or [childcare\\_ontario@ontario.ca](mailto:childcare_ontario@ontario.ca)

### **College of Early Childhood Educators:**

1-888-961-8558 or [discipline@college-ece.ca](mailto:discipline@college-ece.ca)

website: <https://www.college-ece.ca/en>

## **OCDSB Early Learning Center Locations**

The parent handbook and all policies and procedures contained within are applicable at the following OCDSB ELC locations:

- Queen Elizabeth Public School
- Shingwàkons Public School
- Woodroffe High School