



**Toronto Early Learning &  
Child Care Services**

# Parent Information Handbook



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## Welcome to Toronto Early Learning & Child Care Services (TELCCS)

We offer quality early learning and child care services, directly operated by the City of Toronto, Children's Services for children from birth to 12 years of age at over [40 sites](#) across the City.

Our early learning and child care programs are divided into age groups as set out in the Child Care & Early Years Act 2014 (CCEYA). We serve:

- Infants (birth – 18 months)
- Toddlers (18 months – 30 months)
- Preschool (30 months – 6 years)

Each of our centres is unique in size, design and age groups they serve. Please visit us at [toronto.ca/telccs](https://toronto.ca/telccs) to get more information.

TELCCS works in partnership with families, communities and other service sectors to provide high quality early learning and child care programs that promote and support education, health, and economic outcomes for families with young children.

### Our Philosophy

We see children as active participants in their environments, who are by nature, problem solvers. We view children as competent, active, curious and capable learners rich in potential. We support play based learning in which children have the opportunity to explore and interact with the indoor and outdoor environments. Programming is based on the knowledge that children's growth follows a development sequence that is universal, but that within that sequence, each child proceeds at different rates and in unique ways.

### TELCCS Program Statement Overview

Our Program Statement is a guide for staff, regarding children's programming and pedagogy (how children learn). This program statement is intended to strengthen the quality of our programs to support positive outcomes in relation to children's learning, development, health and well-being on a consistent basis. This document outlines strategies, practices, beliefs and techniques that guide our interactions with children, parents and colleagues to support positive, professional and respectful interactions.

TELCCS follows a Play Based Learning Program Model that reflects the Early Learning Framework (ELF) and [How Does Learning Happen?](#) Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years. If you are interested in further information regarding this you can refer to the Minister of Education's Policy Statement on Programming and Pedagogy made under the [Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014](#).

Our programs support each child's personal wellbeing, health, safety and nutrition through a team approach that includes:

- Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs),
- Child Care Aids,

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- Supervisors, and
  - a team of support services including the Nutrition Services Unit, Asset Management Unit and Senior Management Team.

In TELCCS, we view children as competent, active, curious and capable learners rich in potential. We believe that children learn best when they are interested and engaged in play and experiences that encourage and support active exploration and manipulation of materials. Daily learning experiences are developed and adapted by the Registered Early Childhood Educators to reflect and support children's individual stage of development and interests.

These learning experiences are based on written observations of each child and on the staff's knowledge and training regarding child development and learning.

Each element of the children's day; indoor and outdoor play, active play and quiet time are considered by TELCCS to provide unique and valuable learning and development experiences, and opportunities that are supported by planned programs and child initiated learning.

Registered Early Childhood Educators are responsive to children's individual needs and strive to consistently provide a high quality early learning and care program to support children to reach their optimum development.

**For a full version of the TELCCS Program Statement, visit [toronto.ca/telccs](https://toronto.ca/telccs) or request a printed copy from a TELCCS centre.**

## **TELCCS Staff Team**

Each centre has a Supervisor who is responsible for overseeing the daily operations of the centre and leading the early learning and child care staff team. Supervisors are Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) who must be approved by the Ministry of Education.

Our full time staff are Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs). RECEs are responsible for:

- developing, implementing and adapting the planned children's programs,
- supporting the children's learning and development through positive interactions and strategies in line with the TELCCS Program Statement, and
- ensuring the safety and well-being of the children in their care in partnership with parents.

For more information regarding the College of Early Childhood Educators and registered Early Childhood Educators you can go to [college-ece.ca](https://college-ece.ca).

Centre staff teams also include part-time Child Care Aides, who work with the Registered Early Childhood Educators, to support the children's learning and well-being throughout the day.

Our Nutrition Services unit includes a Dietary Supervisor, who is a Registered Dietitian, and two (2) Food Production Analysts, who are members of the Canadian Society of Nutrition Management. Each centre has a dedicated Nutrition Services' staff with a valid Food Handler Certificate.

Nutrition Services conducts various nutrition and food production inspections on food quality and temperature controls; provides recipe and menu suggestions; inspects the meals at time of delivery

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and observes the children when eating. Centre staff routinely report their observations of the children's acceptance of meals and snacks to Nutrition Services and our catering company.

In addition, independent, unplanned inspections of centres are conducted by Toronto Assessment for Quality Improvement (AQI) on meals, snacks and food safety. Toronto Public Health also conducts unplanned inspections to ensure compliance.

All of our centres are supported by an Asset Management Unit that ensures that centres are kept in a state of good repair and oversees renovation and redesign of centres.

Our Senior Management Team consists of five (5) Program Managers, who oversee the operations of a group of centres in a geographical area, and a Director who is responsible for Centre based and Home Child Care Operations. They are supported by Supervisors who oversee Administration and Budget, and clerical support staff.

All centre staff have current Standard First Aid and Infant/Child CPR Certification. All TELCCS staff and students placed at our centres complete Vulnerable Sector Checks prior to their work/placement and on a regular basis.

Ongoing staff training and development opportunities are provided for our staff to ensure that our programs use the most current practices and our programs support children's optimal learning and development. We strive to provide training to staff with the least disruption as possible to the children's programs by implementing a training in a wide variety of formats; including, eLearning, online training, lunch and learn, evening and weekend sessions. At times, however, it is necessary to engage staff in learning opportunities during the week. The supervisor will ensure that appropriate staff coverage is in place.

An annual Training and Development Plan is developed and implemented to ensure that all mandatory and required training is available to staff. In addition, as members of the Toronto Public Service, our staff also participate in mandatory workplace training including but not limited to: Human Rights, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities (AODA), and Customer Service.

Registered Early Childhood Educators are required to meet the Continuous Learning requirements of the College of ECE.

## **Every Child Belongs**

In Toronto Early Learning & Child Care Services, every child belongs and is welcomed into our centres. We are committed to providing fully inclusive early learning & child care programs that support the health and well-being of every child in our care by focusing on the individual child and family needs.

For children who may need extra supports, TELCCS works with [Toronto Every Child Belongs Services](#) who provide support through service contracts to centres and to individual children. They use developmental screening tools, program and equipment adaptations, service coordination and referrals to support children and families. Resource Consultants work in conjunction with the parents, centre staff to develop and implement an individual plan to support the needs and development of

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the child. Our staff will work with you to determine the best way to support your child and family needs.

## **Prohibited Practices**

All TELCCS employees and students are to use behaviour guidance strategies that support children to develop appropriate social and emotional skills and comply with the TELCCS Program Statement. TELCCS and the Child Care and Early Years Act prohibits the following practices:

- a) corporal punishment of the child;
- b) physical restraint of the 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;
- c) locking the exits of the child care centre or home child care premises for the purpose of confining the child, or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the licensee's emergency management policies and procedures;
- d) 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;
- e) depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding; or
- f) inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

If, at any time, a staff member or placement student were to implement any of these practices, the appropriate children's protection agency would be notified and disciplinary actions would be taken, including notification to the College of Early Childhood Educators as required. Incidents of this nature would be reported to the Ministry of Education as a Serious Occurrence.

All staff and placement students are guided by the [TELCCS Program Statement](#), which they review and sign annually.

## **Duty to Report**

Every person in Ontario is required under the Child and Family Services Act to report his/her belief that a child may be in need of protection: "A person who believes, on reasonable grounds, that a child is, or may be in need of protection shall forthwith report the belief and information, upon which it is based, to a society."

The legislation specifically requires individuals who perform professional or official duties with respect to children such as the "operator or employee of a day nursery" to report suspicions of child abuse. If in the course of their professional duties, the supervisor and/or staff of the centre have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child may have been abused, the suspicion, and the information upon which that suspicion is based, must be reported immediately to a Children's Aid Society.



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A professional, who works with children, can be charged and fined for failing to report. It is the responsibility of the child protection agency to investigate and follow-up on the situation, as necessary.

If a parent/guardian expresses concerns that a child is being abused or neglected while in care, the parent will be advised by the TELCCS employee to contact the local Children's Aid Society (CAS) directly. Any concern or complaint made by a parent or visitor that **suggests an allegation of abuse will be reported to a local Children's Aid Society by the TELCCS employee** who received the complaint.

## Confidentiality

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

## Fee Payment

A current list of the [child care fees](#) for TELCCS centres by program and age group is included with this handbook, posted in each Centre and available online.

Fees are charged for all service days and for statutory holidays. Fees charged for statutory holidays cover fixed costs.

All child care fees must be paid in advance. Your first payment will consist of the fees for the part of the month in which your child is admitted to the centre and for the following month.

Clients will receive an invoice from Billing Services at the centre during the second week of each month. The invoice reflects all days that your child is enrolled, including all absent days.

If you have questions related to your invoice, the contact information for the Billing representative is located on your invoice.

Fee payments can be paid through one of the following options:

1. Telephone or Internet Banking,
2. Cheque/Money Order - payable to City of Toronto, and
3. Cash Payment – in person at Metro Hall, 55 John Street, 10th floor, TO, ON M5V 3C6

A tax receipt will be issued annually for all child care fees paid from the previous calendar year.

It is the responsibility of families to pay their assessed fees. TELCCS may withdraw service if fees are not paid. The City of Toronto will pursue all outstanding monies owed.

For information about child care fee subsidy and waiting list application, please contact 311, visit [toronto.ca/telccs](https://toronto.ca/telccs) or if you have a Children's Services Caseworker, please contact your Caseworker.



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## Waitlist/Registration Policy

Each Toronto Early Learning & Child Care program has a waitlist. The waitlists can be long, so register early.

Before you register, we encourage you to:

- Review the information concerning TELCCS centres to decide which program(s) best meets your family's needs.
- Review our current fees
- For families, who need help with the cost of child care, use the child care fee subsidy calculator at [toronto.ca/childcaresubsidy](https://toronto.ca/childcaresubsidy) to find out if your family might be eligible and to estimate how much you will have to pay.

To place your child(ren) on the waitlist for a TELCCS centre(s), visit our website at [toronto.ca/telccs](https://toronto.ca/telccs) or call 311.

- If you need help with the cost of child care, apply for a child care fee subsidy online at [toronto.ca/telccs](https://toronto.ca/telccs) or call 311. This one application will put your name on both the fee subsidy waitlist and the waitlist for the TELCCS programs you choose.
- When a space becomes available in a centre, the space is offered based on the earliest date of registration on the waitlist.
- Families requiring a fee subsidy must be approved for placement by Children's Services' District Operations.

For information on your status on the waitlist, please contact the centres you have chosen directly. Contact information is available on our website.

## Admission Procedures

Once your child's admission and start date have been confirmed, the Centre Supervisor will schedule a meeting with the parent(s)/guardian prior to admission to the centre.

During this meeting, the Centre Supervisor will review the Child Admission Package and gather information, such as, parent contact information, your child's doctor's contact information, health related information, etc. The Centre Supervisor will provide an overview of the early learning & child care program, and the centre's policies and procedures.

This meeting is also an opportunity for you to share information about your child and family, and to ask questions. We encourage you to share as much information about your child and family with us as you feel comfortable to help us provide the best care and services for you and your child.

**The following information must be provided at the time of admission and should be updated as changes occur:**

## Emergency Contact

At admission, staff will request information regarding emergency contacts.

We are required by the Ministry of Education to ensure that each child has the information of at least

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one emergency contact person in the event that the parent/guardian is unavailable or cannot be reached. Parents must provide the centre with the name and contact information of at least one person.

## Pick Up Instructions

At the time of admission, please share any specific restrictions, instructions or custody arrangements with the centre supervisor concerning release or access to your child. Please be prepared to provide legal documentation concerning custody arrangements. We also request that you provide the Supervisor with information on any changes that may come up.

## Children's Immunization

Licensed child care centres are required to collect and retain up-to-date immunization for all children not attending school. Please ensure that you provide current and up-to-date immunization information to the centre.

If your child has not been immunized, the parent must provide one of the following:

- Written medical exemption by a qualified medical practitioner, which clearly states the medical reasons why a child cannot be immunized.
- or
- Complete the Immunization Exemption Form identifying that you have chosen not to immunize your child on the grounds that the immunization conflicts with your conscience or religious beliefs.

Please note that if an outbreak of a communicable disease occurs, any child who is not adequately immunized will not be able to attend care unless the child receives the required vaccine or until the outbreak is over.

For the current recommended immunization schedule, visit [toronto.ca/immunization](https://toronto.ca/immunization)

## Gradual Admission

If it is possible for your family, we recommend that your child become acquainted with the early learning & child care setting gradually to support a smooth and positive transition for your child. Over the course of your child's first week at the centre, we encourage you to start with a short visit, lengthening it each day. This gradual transition helps to make your child's adjustment to their new centre a more positive and successful experience.

Parents and staff are encouraged to work together to develop a transition plan that supports your child during this time. If this is not possible for your family, please speak directly to the Supervisor who will work with you to support your child in their admission to the centre.

## Operating Hours

Toronto Early Learning & Child Care Centres operate between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., Monday to Friday; excluding statutory holidays.

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We are closed on the following statutory holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Family Day
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday\*\*
- Victoria Day
- Canada Day
- Simcoe Day
- Labour Day
- Thanksgiving
- Remembrance Day\*\*
- Christmas Day
- Boxing Day

Fee payment is required for all statutory holidays, except Easter Monday and Remembrance Day.

**Note:** TELCCS Centres are closed on Easter Monday and Remembrance Day. Please check with your child's school to determine if they will remain open on these days. Parents are responsible to make arrangements for school escorting and bus escorting on these days.

### **School Board Professional Activity (PA) Days**

TELCCS Centres are open on School Board PA days and full day services are available to any children who are registered full-time with TELCCS. Children, who are registered part-time, are not guaranteed services on PA days due to the number of licensed spaces available. Parents should speak directly with their Centre Supervisor if their child is registered part-time.

### **Drop Off Procedure**

Parents must drop their child off directly to the room in which they are enrolled. For the safety of your child, it is important that parents confirm that a staff member is in the room and knows that your child has arrived. Staff will document the arrival of your child when they enter the room. If there are any issues of which staff should be aware regarding your child's health, it should be shared with the teacher at the time of drop off. This is also good time to share information with your child's teacher about your observations regarding your child's development or interests that will help the staff in planning activities for your child and the others in the room.

### **Pick Up Procedure**

Children can be picked up at any time before 6:00 p.m., by a parent, guardian or a person who has received authorization from the child's parent to pick-up. It is important that you make sure that the staff is aware that your child is leaving the program for the day. At pick up, please also take a moment to speak to your child's teacher who will tell you about your child's day. The staff will document the departure of your child each day.

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Many families have a support system of people who will also pick up their child at the end of the day. Please ensure that the staff are aware when alternate arrangements for pick-up have been made by providing us with the person's name and contact information. Children will not be released to any person without authorization or confirmation from the parent. The person will be required to provide identification. If staff are not aware of alternate arrangements, staff are required to confirm with the parents by phone and verify identification before releasing the child. We encourage you to provide contact information in advance for anyone who the child may be released to other than yourself.

**Note:** Children can be dropped off and picked up at any time between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

## **Late Pick Up of Your Child**

All TELCCS Centres operate from 7:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m., Monday to Friday. Parents should plan to leave enough time to pick up their child, communicate with the staff about their child's day and gather all belongings prior to the centre's closing time.

If a situation arises where you will be arriving late to pick up your child, please notify the centre as soon as possible. In these circumstances, we encourage you to have alternative pick-up arrangements in place so your child is picked up as soon as possible.

If the centre has not been contacted by the parent(s) to notify staff that they will be late to pick up their child, staff will attempt to reach one of the child's emergency contacts that you provided. If the parents and emergency contacts cannot be reached by 6:30 p.m., as a last resort, staff will contact the appropriate Child Protection Agency.

If repetitive late pick-ups occur, the Centre Supervisor will meet with the parent to discuss and determine whether the centre hours meet the family's needs. If continued lateness is expected or continues, the Centre Supervisor will support the family to explore alternate child care arrangements that are more suitable to the family's needs. A notice of withdraw from care may be issued for unresolved patterns of lateness.

## **When Your Child is Sick**

Each day when your child is dropped off at the centre staff are required to do a basic health check to ensure your child is able to participate in the program that day. If your child is not well, we encourage you to keep them at home or visit a medical practitioner if necessary.

Staff practice daily infection control measures to prevent and manage illness to the best of our ability. We encourage you to do the same by using the hand sanitizer available in each child care centre and by keeping your child at home when they are not well.

If your child is showing ill symptoms at home (e.g. unexplained rash, vomiting, diarrhea), your child should not attend care and should remain home, usually 24 hours symptom free or until they are well enough to return and participate in the program.

Should your child become sick at the centre, the staff will monitor the child and inform you. Depending on the type of illness, the staff or Centre Supervisor may contact you to arrange for the child to be

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picked up for their own well-being. When your child is returning to care after having a serious illness or communicable disease, we will require a note from your medical practitioner to confirm that the child is free from infection. These practices support a health and safe environment for children, parents, staff and visitors to the Centre.

It is common for some children to be more susceptible to illness in the first few months of attendance. We recognize that this can be concerning and stressful for parents; therefore, we encourage you to ensure that you have plans in place in the event that your child may not be able to attend care. With time, most children develop immunity and adjust to being in a group environment.

For more information regarding common communicable disease and exclusion times, please visit the [Toronto Public Health](#) website or speak to the Centre Supervisor. If Toronto Public Health declares the centre to be in outbreak, the sick child will not be able to attend care for 48 hours of being symptom free.

## **Medication**

If your child requires medication, the centre staff will administer prescription medication only. Prescription medication must be provided in the original bottle/packaging, clearly labeled with your child's name and instructions for administering. Parents must complete and sign the appropriate medication administration form before the medication can be administered by our staff.

Non-prescription or over the counter medication must be accompanied by a written prescription by a medical practitioner.

A new medication administration form will need to be completed and signed for any changes in medication or medication instructions.

For the safety of the children, we ask that parents hand any medication directly to the staff so that it can be securely stored away from the children's reach.

Parents are required to take home any expired or medication that is no longer to be administered to the child at the centre or for disposal at a pharmacy.

## **Individual Medical Plan**

An Individual Medical Plan will be developed and put in place for any child requiring medication for a chronic or acute condition or diagnosis or who requires medication on an emergency basis. All individual medical plans will be developed in partnership with the child's parent/guardian. Plans will be reviewed and signed off annually by all employees and students.

## **Allergies and Anaphylactic Allergies**

If your child has an allergy that requires the administration of an auto-injector, please notify the supervisor immediately to ensure that the necessary documentation and actions are taken to ensure your child's health and safety. You will be required to provide written and specific details of your child's allergy and symptoms of an allergy reaction from a medical practitioner including a prescribed

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auto-injector. All allergies will be listed in each of the programs to ensure all employees are aware and can respond appropriately to any potential reactions. A copy of the TELCCS Anaphylaxis Policy and Procedure and all required documents will be provided to you.

To ensure the well-being of children who have anaphylactic allergies, it is imperative that an auto-injector is available at the centre at all times. A child, who requires an auto-injector due to a severe allergy, will not be accepted into care without their prescribed and current auto-injector. If a child no longer requires an auto-injector, a note from a medical practitioner confirming this information will be required. These practices are in place for the health and safety of your child.

## **When Your Child is Absent**

Parents must notify the centre when their child will be absent. Absent days include days when your child is sick, on vacation or absent for any other reason.

As per the Children's Services' Attendance Policy, a child receiving fee subsidy has an allotment of up to 35 absent days per calendar year (January - December). Children who are enrolled in a centre between July and December (1/2 year) may only be absent up to 18 days for the remainder of the year. Children may not be absent for 20 or more consecutive days without advance payment.

If a child exceeds the number of allowable absence days in a calendar year, the parent is responsible for paying the full fee for any days exceeding the limit. In special circumstances, parents can submit an appeal to Children's Services for additional days.

More information regarding the appeal process is available from your Children's Services Caseworker or at [toronto.ca/children](https://toronto.ca/children).

Parents paying full fee rates are not required to limit their number of absent days; however, the daily fee applies.

## **Children's Accidents and Injury While in Care**

While at the centre, the children are supervised at all times. Despite close supervision, some accidents may occur as your child explores and develops new skills and abilities. If your child is injured at the centre, the staff will provide immediate first aid, as needed. If the situation requires attention beyond basic first aid, we will contact you or the emergency contact person(s) on file. If required, we will call 911 or transport your child to the nearest hospital or medical facility by taxi.

The staff will provide an accident report documenting the accident or injury. A parent or guardian's signature is required at the bottom of the form to verify that you were informed of the accident/injury. A copy of the signed report will be provided to you.

If your child has an accident or injury at home, please inform the staff when you drop off your child the following day, so we are aware of the incident.

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## Withdrawing Your Child from Care

We require two weeks written notice if you plan to withdraw your child from the centre for any reason. If you are currently receiving fee subsidy and are transferring your child to another centre, approval must be received from Children's Services prior to the transfer taking place.

If the required notice is not received, you will be charged a penalty equivalent to the full cost of two weeks of care. Payment of this penalty along with any other outstanding fees must be made prior to your child's re-entry into the child care system. A transfer to another child care program may not be processed until outstanding fees have been paid. All debts are pursued by the City of Toronto.

## Demission of Your Child

On occasion, a TELCCS Centre may find that they are unable to continue to provide care for your child. This takes place when:

- A space is not available in the next age group when your child is of age to move to the next age group.

The Centre Supervisor will review the demission information with you at the time of admission. A form will be provided for your signature to confirm that you have received and understand this information.

TELCCS works to provide as much notice to parents as possible, when demission may happen. In these circumstances, the centre will work in partnership with the family and the subsidy worker to find alternate child care arrangements.

## Your Child's Nutrition at the Centre

Our programs offer a variety of nutritious foods for lunch and morning and afternoon snacks. Foods selected, promote good health and give each child the opportunity to enjoy new foods as good eating habits are established. Menus incorporate the healthy eating guidelines of [Canada's Food Guide](#) and meet the CCEYA regulations. Weekly menus are posted in advance for your information. All of the menus are reviewed annually by a registered dietician. A Sample Menu is included in your Parent Handbook Package.

Meal times for all children are viewed as an opportunity for positive and social interaction. Meal times also provide learning experiences and support the development of self-help skills; such as, serving their own lunches, feeding their self, etc.

Infants are fed according to their individual needs. We will provide you with an Individual Feeding Form for you to identify the foods and consistency of foods that your child is able to eat. This document will be reviewed with you regularly for updates and changes as your child grows and develops. If your infant is on expressed breast milk or formula, you will need to provide a prepared bottle for each feeding at the centre.

If your child has a health related, special diet or any food related allergies, please let the centre know immediately so that arrangements can be made to provide an alternate food item or menu.



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Parents must provide written instructions from a medical practitioner explaining the details of the health related food restriction or allergy. This information will be kept in the child's file and updated when as necessary.

Parents who choose to provide food for their child must ensure that all centre food restrictions are met and that the food is clearly labeled with the child's name. The centre will ensure the food is stored safely and served to your child at the appropriate meal time. Parents may only provide food for their own children.

In order to ensure that all children's food allergies and restrictions are met, the centre will provide a cake to acknowledge and celebrate each child's birthday.

## **Outdoor Play**

The Child Care and Early Years Act requires that children attending care in a licensed centre must participate in at least two hours of outdoor play, weather permitting.

TELCCS recognizes the value the learning experiences, developmental opportunities and health benefits that participating in outdoor play year round provides. Outdoor play time is used as an opportunity to expand on children's learning and encourage physical activity to support optimal success in the future. Both spontaneous and planned learning experiences are implemented during this time.

It is important that children be dressed for the various types of weather to ensure they can actively participate in the outdoor program. Please ensure that adequate and suitable clothing and footwear is provided year round for your child.

At times, due to the weather children's outdoor time may be extended or shortened to ensure that children are active, engaged and comfortable. Staff monitor the children's comfort and activity level in the varying weather conditions to determine the length of time children will remain outside. We strive to provide outdoor environments that provide children with various levels of activity to suit the time of year and weather. Extra drinking water, water activities and additional quiet experiences in the shade are implemented during the summer and more physically active, high energy experiences are implemented during the colder winter months.

TELCCS implements sun safety practices and encourages parents to provide child safe sunscreen and protective clothing such as a wide-brimmed hat for outdoor times. The staff will assist children to apply sunscreen to the exposed skin areas prior to going outside.

## **Community Walks & Off-Site Excursions**

Our centres are an integral part of the local community and strive to implement a variety of learning experiences for children to explore and participate in their community through walks to local sites. Parents will be notified of planned local walks on the individual room Program Plans.

We encourage parents to share suggestions and resources within the community that the children may enjoy exploring.

Occasionally, older children may participate in planned off-site excursions by school bus or TTC.

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Parents will be consulted and notified in advance of all off-site excursions during the planning phase and will be provided with a consent form to complete prior to their child's participation.

## **Clothing and Personal Belongings**

Each child has a cubby, a personal space to store their outdoor clothing, shoes and extra clothes. Please ensure that your child has a complete change of clothing in their cubby in case of washroom or wet spill accidents.

Please clearly label all of your children's clothing and belongings to minimize mix-ups and lost items. Please refrain from leaving any valuables in your child's cubby. TELCCS is not responsible for lost or missing clothing or personal items.

Children in diapers will be provided with a small storage area in the room washroom to store diapers, wipes, creams, etc. Please ensure your child has sufficient supplies each day. Staff will strive to notify parents when supplies are becoming low but we encourage you to monitor this as well.

## **Rest Time**

### **Infants**

Infants are each provided with their own crib (older infants may use a cot to support the transition to the Toddler room with parent consent). Infant sleep needs vary by individual child. The staff will work with the parent to determine a flexible schedule for the child that responds to their personal needs each day. Infants are closely monitored while sleeping and are checked on regularly. A Sleep Time Safety Policy is posted in the Infant room for your review.

### **Toddlers and Preschoolers**

As per the Child Care and Early Years Act, a rest or nap period of no more than two hours is scheduled during the day. The child's age and individual needs are considered when implementing a rest routine. The centre will provide each child with their own cot or crib and bedding. All beddings are changed and laundered weekly, at a minimum. Children are welcome to bring a personal soft toy or blanket from home to use at rest time.

Children's sleep/rest time is monitored by staff ensuring that a regular visual check is completed on each child and documented to help ensure their health and safety.

After one hour of resting, children who are not asleep are provided with quiet learning experiences, as identified on the program plan while their peers may still be sleeping.

## **Individual Child Photos for Families**

The use of personal cell phones, including cameras by clients, students or visitors is not permitted in the centres. Parents who would like photos of their child participating in the program may occasionally provide a camera to the centre staff who will take photos of their child only. In addition, the centre may occasionally provide parents with hard copy of photos of their child taken within the program by staff to share child involvement and developmental or learning milestones.

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To ensure the privacy and confidentiality of all clients, photos of other children in the program are not permitted.

## **Student & Volunteer Policy**

TELCCS supports field placement to students enrolled in Early Childhood Education programs from institutions with an agreement in place with the City of Toronto. The student placements offer opportunities for students to observe, learn and practice skills working with children. The participation of students in placement at our centres provide the children with new learning experiences and additional positive adult interactions throughout their day. We are pleased to enable our staff to share their knowledge and experience by mentoring future Early Childhood Educators.

Students completing a field placement at a TELCCS centre are not included in the legislated staff to child ratios. Students are never left alone with the children. They are supported by a member of staff at all times.

All students are required to provide confirmation of a clear Police Vulnerable Sector Check and medical assessment prior to commencing placement at the centre, and review and sign the TELCCS Annual Policy & Procedure package prior to the start of their placement.

Toronto Early Learning & Child Care Services does **not** provide volunteer placements in any of our centres. The Centre Supervisor can provide any persons seeking a volunteer opportunity with information concerning other local agencies and organizations that may be able to provide a volunteer placement.

## **A Respectful Environment**

We believe that all children and adults have the right to feel safe and to be treated with dignity and respect. Harassment and discrimination will therefore not be tolerated from any party. The City of Toronto & TELCCS expects that all employees, parents and persons who are doing business with the City conduct themselves in a respectful manner. This is an expectation of all persons entering into any of the centres and City of Toronto facilities.

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

Failure to adhere to this expectation may result in denied access to the centre.

## **Access and Equity**

Toronto Early Learning & Child Care Services provide children and families with equitable access to racially sensitive and culturally appropriate services.

We believe that ethno-racial and linguistic diversity enriches and strengthens our community socially, culturally and economically and that racism creates barriers for children, families and communities. TELCCS, as part of Children's Services Division, is committed to developing child care environments and programs that promote and respect the beliefs, values and practices of all families in our city.

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## Parking

Most of our centres have a designated drop off and pick up area for parents to park their car for a short period of time. If you expect to spend more time in the centre, please park in a designated parking area. Please refrain from blocking other cars.

TELCCS is not responsible for any parking costs, parking infraction costs or damage done to your car while on centre property.

## Smoke Free

The Smoke Free Ontario Act prohibits persons from smoking in enclosed and public places, to protect workers and the public from the hazards of second hand smoke.

Smoking, handling of a cigarette or use of an e-cigarette is prohibited in the centre and playground, near entrances and playground areas whether children are present or not.

## Emergency Management

*In the event of an emergency that may affect services:*

Toronto Early Learning & Child Care Services has policies and procedures in place for various types of centre and city-wide emergencies that are reviewed regularly with all employees to help ensure the safety of all children, parents, employees and visitors to the centres.

*In the event of an individual centre emergency (i.e. evacuation):*

Information will be shared with parents via:

- Twitter: [@ChildCare\\_TO](#),
- Facebook: [facebook.com/TorontoChildrensServices](https://facebook.com/TorontoChildrensServices),
- Postings on the doors of the centre, and
- Parents/Guardians or child emergency contact will be notified of the emergency via telephone numbers provided.

*In the event of a city or area wide emergency effecting a number of centres (i.e. snow storm, evacuation, power outage)*

Information will be shared with parents via:

- Twitter: [@ChildCare\\_TO](#),
- Facebook: [facebook.com/TorontoChildrensServices](https://facebook.com/TorontoChildrensServices)
- Media: TV & Radio,
- When possible, the identified child emergency contact will be notified of the emergency via telephone numbers provided.

## Tell Us How We Are Doing

Toronto Early Learning & Child Care Services is committed to ensuring that all customer service contacts are responded to in a courteous, fair and timely manner and will take appropriate action as

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required. We adhere to the following principles when dealing with a customer service contact.

- Everyone has the right to request service or complain about public services.
- All customers need to know that their requests are heard, understood and respected.
- We support participation for persons with disabilities, considering their needs and expectation of equity, dignity, integration and independence.
- Customers are expected to provide their requests and complaints in a respectful manner. Verbal abuse, verbal threats, racist statements, etc. will not be tolerated.

We track both Customer Service Complaints and Customer Service Compliments.

## Our Commitment

Toronto Children's Services' employees are committed to serving the residents of the City of Toronto with professionalism and integrity. Feedback is an important step in our endeavor to continually improve our service delivery to you.

### What is a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction related to a Toronto Children's Services program, service or staff member where you believe that the City or its staff has not provided a service experience to your satisfaction at the point of service delivery.

### What is a Compliment?

A compliment is an expression of approval or appreciation for a service, staff member, program or process from you.

### How can I make a compliment or complaint?

If you have a concern or complaint concerning your child's care, we encourage you to speak to the Toronto Early Learning & Child Care Centre Supervisor of your child's program directly. For a list of TELCCS Centre contact information visit [toronto.ca/telccs](https://toronto.ca/telccs).

If you feel your concern or complaint has not been addressed or resolved to your satisfaction or you prefer to speak to someone else, you may contact the Program Manager whose name and contact information is posted on the parent bulletin board in your centre.

**What can you do if you do not agree with the resolution to your complaint? Contact TELCCS Head Office by:**

Phone: 416 392-3317

Email: [telccs-headoffice@toronto.ca](mailto:telccs-headoffice@toronto.ca)

Fax: 416 397-1680 or

Mail: 55 John St, Metro Hall, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor, Toronto, ON M5V 3C6

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## What can you expect when you make a complaint?

Complaints are reviewed promptly and every effort is made to resolve them as quickly as possible. We monitor complaints and use them to assess and improve the quality of service we are able to provide to you.

- Each complaint is considered on its own merit.
- Complaints will be treated confidentially and steps will be taken to help protect a complainant's privacy.
- Complaint investigations are fair, impartial and respectful to parties involved.
- You will be kept informed about what is happening and why it is happening.
- You will be contacted when your complaint is escalated.
- You will be advised of your option to escalate your complaint if you are dissatisfied with treatment or outcome.
- You will be informed when a decision is made and provided with an explanation for the decision.
- We will respond to your initial complaint within 24 – 48 hours.
- Complaints involving staff conduct will be investigated and you will be informed when it is resolved; however, no disciplinary information can be shared.
- All written complaints will be responded to in writing.
- While there are certain steps that need to be taken to ensure fairness for all concerned, there can be unavoidable delays; however, we will treat each case in a prompt and thorough manner.
- If you are making a verbal complaint, you may be asked to put your complaint in writing, especially if it involves a serious or complex matter.

## Parent Handbook Updates & Revisions

All updates and revisions of this Parent Handbook will be reflected on the Toronto Early Learning & Child Care Services [website](#). Parents will be notified of any major updates or revisions to the Parent Handbook through hard copy.

## Municipal Freedom of Information & Protection of Privacy Act

The personal information requested in connection with the admission of your child, as well as his/her child care records established with the child care centre, are collected under the legal authority of the City of Toronto Act, S.O. 2006, Chapter 11. Schedule A, s. 136(c) and the Child Care and Early Years Act, S.O. 2014, Chapter 11. The information will be used for the purpose of ensuring the delivery of high quality early learning and child care services under the Acts and Toronto Quality Assessment for Improvement. Questions about this collection can be directed to the Director, Toronto Early Learning & Child Care Services, Children's Services, Metro Hall, 55 John Street, 10th Floor, Toronto, Ontario M5V 3C6 or by telephone at 416-392-3317.