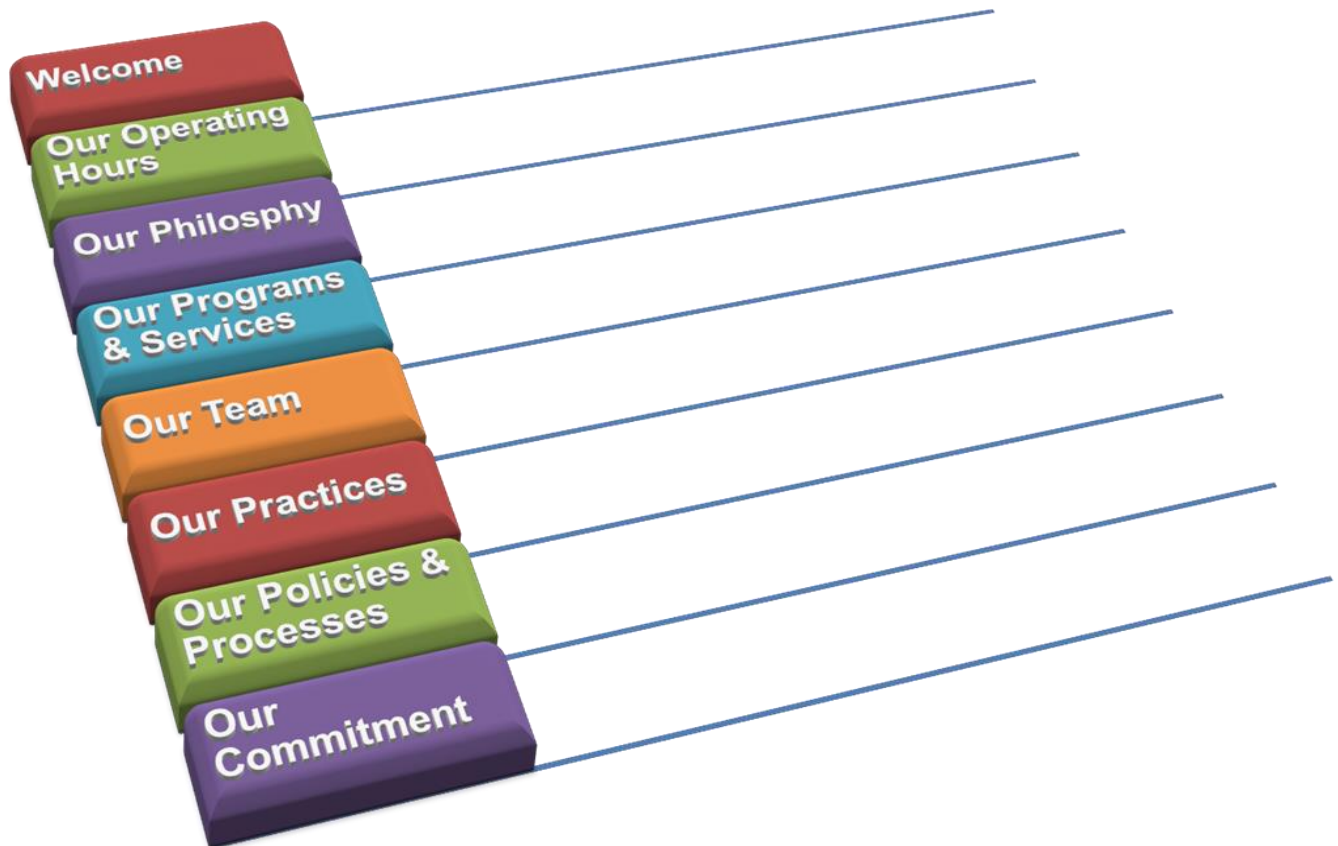




Toronto Early Learning &  
Child Care Services

# Parent Information Handbook

Toronto Home Child Care (THCC)



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## Welcome to Toronto Home Child Care (THCC)

We are proud members of the City of Toronto's Children Services Division, Toronto Early Learning & Child Care Services (TELCCS).

### Children's Services Mission Statement

Toronto Children's Services promotes access to high quality early learning, child care and supports families through a well-planned and managed system.

### Licensed Home Child Care

For many families, licensed home child care is the best choice of care for their children. Toronto Home Child Care is licensed by the Ministry of Education under the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014. Toronto Home Child Care enters into contracts with independent operators (Providers) to offer child care services to children from birth to 12 years of age in their homes.

At THCC, we have flexible hours of care available outside of those offered by child care centres, including evenings, overnights, and weekends. In addition, THCC provides an opportunity for siblings to be placed in the same home. The Providers we contract with are located in neighborhoods in Scarborough, North York, and Etobicoke.

The program and care that each Provider offers varies. Many offer hot lunches, enhanced programming, local field trips as well as participation in play groups and escorting children to local school(s).

THCC Providers are under contract with the City of Toronto to provide child care. Prior to starting with the agency Providers need to have completed a Home Based Child Care Training Program. Each Provider must provide a current medical and a Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC) Police Reference Check (PRC) for themselves and each adult resident of the home for clearance with the agency.

THCC does not provide placement opportunities for students or volunteers in Provider homes.

Providers new to THCC undergo a rigorous orientation process prior to being able to care for children.

Under contract with THCC, Providers must meet the regulations, standards, and policies of the City of Toronto. THCC Providers must meet the Provincial Child Care and Early Years Act as well as meeting the City's Quality Assurance Standards.

Included in the legislated requirements is the need for Providers to have valid, current Certification in Standard First Aid, including Infant and Child CPRC.

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The legislation also sets requirements for the maximum capacity in each home regarding the number and ages of children in care.

## **The Role of the Agency in Licensed Home Child Care**

The License in home child care is issued to an agency. As an agency, THCC is responsible for ensuring the legislative requirements are met by the Providers that are in a contractual agreement with us. All Providers working with the THCC agency will display a Ministry of Education logo in their home while the children are present.

THCC has Home Child Care Supervisors and several Home Visitors. The Home Visitors have the responsibility for the recruitment and support of Providers as well as the placement of children into care.

Home Visitors visit Providers on a monthly basis, ensuring requirements are met and offer support to the Providers to enhance the program planning for the children's daily activities. Most visits are unscheduled and the Providers may also have visits from THCC Supervisors, Program Manager, Director, Children's Services Consultant and the Provincial Program Advisor or Quality Assurance Analysts.

As a licensed home child care agency, THCC will:

- ensure information sessions are available for Providers in child development, program planning and delivery that is age appropriate, nutrition and other topics related to child care to support them in operating their business.
- ensure the legislated requirements such as Providers and Home Visitors having current valid Certification in Standard First Aid and CPR level C are met. Also sets parameters for outdoor time, rest time, current PRC/VSC information is collected, and more are met or exceeded.
- provides staff to support the Provider and the families of children in care.
- monitors the Provider's home to ensure the areas the children have access to are maintained in a safe and clean manner and the number of children in care is within the contract agreement with the agency.
- monitors the child care home for safety, cleanliness, and the number and ages of children in care.

## **Role of the Home Visitor**

The Home Visitor is employed by the Toronto Home Child Care Agency and is responsible for screening and recruiting of home child care Providers. The Home Visitor visits the child care home regularly to verify the Child Care and Early Years Act requirements and that the City's Quality Assurance Standards and THCC expectations are met. This ensures that the care your child is receiving is safe, nurturing and stimulating.

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Your Home Visitor provides ongoing support to you, as parents, and to the Provider to maintain a successful child care placement. In addition, your Home Visitor is available to answer any questions or concerns you may have about your child care placement. We encourage you to call your Home Visitor at any time.

The Home Visitor will contact you regularly to ensure that the child care placement is meeting your family's needs. If your concern cannot be resolved by a Home Visitor, please call THCC at 416-392-3326 and speak to a Supervisor who will assist you.

## 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.

## Toronto Early Learning & Child Care Services' Program Statement

Toronto Early Learning and Child Care Services follow 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. Please see the Minister of Education's Policy Statement on Programming and Pedagogy made under the [Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014](#).

All children are competent, capable, curious learners who are rich in potential. One of the features of home child care is the ability to group children of different ages in one setting. You may have chosen this kind of care to keep your children together. The daily program in the Provider's home must be flexible and able to respond to the individual needs of the whole age group.

Children will be given opportunities and activities to explore and interact with their environment and their skills & development will progress at their own individual pace. Through these experiences, the Provider will strive to promote the health, safety, nutrition, and well-being of all children in the program. As each child is a unique learner, program plans may need to be adapted or individualized as required.

The daily routine will allow time for special activities, indoor and outdoor play, active and quiet times and planned activities for each child's needs and interests. Younger children may have individual schedules as required. You should see a variety of toys in the child care home, including dress-up clothes, puppets, building toys, as well as books and puzzles.

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Depending on the ages of children your Provider has in care, toys and creative activities will vary. A program plan is posted weekly within the Providers home to inform you of the activities and learning experiences that your child is participating in.

## **Promoting Positive Interactions**

The role of the Provider is to support positive and responsive adult/child interactions with everyone in the home care environment. Parents will also be expected to model appropriate positive interactions for the children while they are in the home or engaged in any program activities. As children require assistance to learn social skills, the Provider will encourage the children to interact and communicate in a positive way and support children with their ability to self-regulate. Providers will be responsive to children in a timely manner to assist them when they are requiring support. Providers will plan their programs to foster a balance between child-initiated activities and adult supported experiences that will encourage children to play, explore possibilities and inquire within their learning environment.

## **Parent/Family Engagement**

A supportive relationship between the parents, Provider and THCC will help ensure the best quality care for each child.

Communication among the parents, Provider and THCC is an important part of parental involvement. Communication strategies include:

- daily interactions with your child's Provider as you bring your child to care and/or pick them up,
- written and verbal feedback through questionnaires or phone calls,
- information about the child's development and progress shared in writing and/or verbally, through informal talks or individual parent interviews,
- socials, meetings and information sessions that reflect the interests of parents and provide an opportunity for parents to visit with other parents, as well as the Providers and Home Visitors,
- family involvement in program development through the sharing of family interests, talents, customs etc.,
- sharing in the community events the Provider is participating in, and
- family engagement in the children's learning progress.

## **Individual Child Photos for Families**

To ensure the privacy and confidentiality of all clients, taking photos of other children in the program is not permitted. The Provider may occasionally give parents hard copies of photos of



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their child taken within the program to share child involvement and developmental/learning milestones. Photos of the children may also be posted in the homes.

## Health and Safety

Eight times per year Home Visitors conduct H&S visits to the Provider homes to focus on child health & safety on a number of areas.

The following areas are checked to confirm compliance:

- Outdoor play spaces
- Equipment and furnishings are in safe, clean, and good repair meeting CSA standards.
- Safety Hazards are identified and corrected.
- Sanitation and cleanliness of the home and a check of documentation to confirm all required expectations are met.
- Under the Provincial Legislation, smoking is prohibited in all child care homes.

If you have any concerns about H&S in your Providers home, please let the Provider or your Home Visitor know right away.

## Supervision

Each child in care is supervised by the Provider at all times with the exception of some older children (10+) who may escort themselves to school. For these children, an agreement is worked out and put in writing between the parent, the Provider, and the Home Visitor.

## Accidents

Every effort is made to ensure that your child is protected and safe. However, accidents may occur. You will be informed of any accident involving your child on the day it happens. The Provider will complete an accident report for your signature. By signing the report, you are confirming you have been told about the accident. You will be provided with a copy of the report within two days and a copy will also be filed with the THCC agency.

If it is a serious emergency, your child will be immediately taken to the hospital and you will be notified. **It is very important that the Provider is able to contact you at all times. Please remember to keep all emergency information up to date.**

For your information, any serious situations that occur will be reported to the Ministry of Education as it is considered a Serious Occurrence in the Child Care and Early Years Act. All Serious Occurrences must be posted to give parents information about the incident and the follow up actions. On any day that you take your child to the Providers home and he/she has

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been involved in an accident outside of the Providers care that leaves a bump, bruise, mark or burn, please be sure to point it out to the Provider upon arrival.

## **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 emergencies that are reviewed regularly with all employees to help ensure the safety of all children, parents, Providers, employees, and visitors to the homes.

### **In the event of an individual home emergency (i.e., evacuation)**

Information will be shared with parents via postings on the door of the home and parents/guardians or a 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 homes (i.e., snow storm, evacuation, power outage)**

Information will be shared with parents via Media TV & Radio and when possible, parents/guardians or a child emergency contact will be notified of the emergency via telephone numbers provided.

## **Every Child Belongs**

In TELCCS, every child belongs and is welcomed. We are committed to providing fully inclusive environments that support the health and well-being of every child in our care.

Inclusive child care means that quality services are provided for children regardless of their race, ability/disability, language, culture, ethnicity, or family structure. Inclusive child care also encompasses children's individual interests, needs and strengths. For a child who has additional support needs, Resource Educator Consultation Services can be accessed through the Home Visitor.

## **Individual Support Plan**

In the event that your child has an extra support need that does not require the support of a Resource Educator, an individualized support plan will be developed with the Provider, the Home Visitor and yourself to address the child's individual needs.

## **Supporting Children with Self-Regulation**

To ensure a child's safety and well-being, and to foster social and emotional development, it is necessary at times, to set limits or standards of acceptable behaviour. In selecting Providers,

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we carefully consider their approach to supporting children with self-regulation skills. This is discussed during Provider information sessions, Provider orientation to THCC as well as one-on-one discussion with the Home Visitor during visits and, from time-to-time, specific information is provided on Child Guidance. Our approach to Child Guidance is one of positive interactions appropriate to each child's developmental level and actions that promote learning outcomes and support children with self-regulation skills.

The Providers are guided by the TELCCS Compliance and Contravention Policy and Procedures. These guidelines are reviewed and signed off on annually. A complete copy is available from your Home Visitor upon request.

## Prohibited Practices

There will be no corporal punishment of children permitted in licensed child care homes or the following forms of discipline will not be used:

- Striking a child directly or with an object.
- Shaking, shoving, or spanking.
- Physical restraints as a form of punishment.
- Denial of comforts such as food, bedding, shelter, clothing.
- Harsh or humiliating responses of any kind including verbal.
- Confining a child in a lockable room.

It is suggested that you discuss your views and philosophy on behaviour guidance with the Home Visitor and any prospective Provider. Our policies require that when you pick up your child that the Provider informs you of any behavioral issues and re-direction strategies used.

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

## Duty to Report

Every person in Ontario is required under the Child and Family Services Act to report her/his 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 that individuals who perform professional or official duties with respect to children to report suspicions of child abuse. If a Provider or Home Visitor has reasonable grounds that a child may have been abused, the information about his/her grounds must be reported to a Child Welfare Agency (Children's Aid Society).

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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, students, and volunteers, except when information must be disclosed for legal reasons (e.g., to the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities or a Children's Aid Society).

## Waitlist/Admission Procedure

The Agency has a waitlist/registration policy that is followed for the admission of children. To place your child(ren) on THCC's waitlist, you can call our office directly or visit our website at [toronto.ca/children/telccs](http://toronto.ca/children/telccs) or call 311.

Once your child's admission and start date have been confirmed with the Home Visitor and Provider, the Home Visitor will meet with you at the Provider home, to fill in the child admission package prior to your first day. During this meeting, you will review the package so the Provider can gather information such as parent contact information, Doctor's contact information, health related information, etc.

This meeting is an opportunity for you to share information about your child and ask questions. We encourage you to share as much information as you feel comfortable, to help the Provider to give you the best service possible.

## Gradual Admission

It is recommended that a child become acquainted with child care Provider gradually to support a smooth and positive transition for your child. During the course of the child's first week in care each day, the child stays a little longer. This process helps to make the transition into child care a more positive experience for both parent and child. The Provider will work with you to develop a transition plan for your child.

## Arrival and Departure

The Provider takes responsibility for your child only when he/she is placed in the Provider's care. It is vital to ensure that your child has been safely received by the Provider each day.

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You are required to designate someone to pick your child up in the event of an emergency. You will be asked to provide the contact information for this person and ensure that it is kept up to date.

The Provider can only release your child to you or someone you designate. Please advise the Provider in the morning if your child will be picked up by someone other than yourself, or if your plans change during the day, please contact the Provider and let him/her know.

Please ensure the person brings with them photo ID (such as a driver's license), as the Provider will be asking for identification. If you are going to be later than you're agreed upon pick up time, please notify your Provider so arrangements can be made. The Provider has other responsibilities both before and after the hours she has agreed to provide care to your child and will appreciate your consideration.

If you have not contacted the Provider and it is an hour after the agreed upon pick up time, your emergency contact person will be contacted and asked to pick up the child. If the emergency contact person cannot be reached or is not able to pick up the child, a Child Welfare Agency will to be contacted.

If the hours of care you need change, please contact your Home Visitor as an amendment will need to be made to your contracted hours of care.

## **Meals and Nutrition**

When your child is in care for a full day, he or she will have a midday meal that includes servings from all four food groups of the Canada Food Guide, and two snacks that include servings from at least two of the food groups.

The Provider must inform you of the weekly menu offered to your child, including any changes/substitutions. If your work hours are long, and you need care for your child through both lunch and dinner, you may need to supply one of the meals. All food items that you bring to the Providers home must be labeled with your child's name, including drinks.

Discuss any special dietary requirements with the Provider and Home Visitor. Please be sure to keep your Provider up to date on any changes in your child's dietary requirements or limitations. This information will be kept on file. If your child requires a packed lunch for school, you are required to bring this with your child to the Providers home daily.

## **Feeding - Infants Under One Year of Age**

It is the responsibility of parents to supply written instructions to the Provider and to update the instructions as necessary. In addition, parents must supply the daily food for their infant,

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including prepared formula, sterilized bottles, and baby food in quantities sufficient to meet the feeding instructions. These items need to be individually labelled with your child's name.

## **Rest**

For infants up to 18 months of age, each child has available to them a crib or playpen for rest time. For children 18 months to 5 years of age, each child has available to them a cot and bedding for rest time. Rest time is a maximum of 2 hours daily in this age group. For children who do not sleep, the children usually have a quiet time with books, puzzles, and other relaxing quiet activities.

All children will be monitored during sleep time by the Provider, who will record the monitoring in 30-minute intervals during the day time.

## **Sleep for Infants**

Infants under the age of 12 months must be placed to sleep on their backs. Parents of infants under 12 months must provide a note from the Doctor if they would like their child to be placed on their stomach or side to sleep. Infants should be placed on a safe, firm sleep surface with a fitted sheet. Infants should not be placed to sleep on pillows, quilts, or other soft surfaces.

## **Diapering Supplies**

Parents are responsible for supplying diapers, wipes, creams, and all diapering supplies for their child.

## **Clothing**

It is preferred if children come to care in comfortable clothing that allows them to move freely. This does include appropriate clothing for the weather – coat, hat, mitts and boots for winter, shorts, sun hat and running shoes or good sandals for summer. Children do have toileting accidents or wet spills that may require a change of clothing. We request that each child in care have a complete change of clothing at the Providers home. For infants and younger children, we suggest a couple of changes of clothing be available. As with all of your child's belongings, we ask that each piece of your child's clothing is clearly labeled with their name.

## **Infant/Toddler Care**

Your child's personal bottles/food containers must be clearly labeled with your child's name. Parents are responsible for supplying diapers, wipes, creams, and changes of clothing for their child. A great deal of large equipment is needed to care for an infant/toddler (for example: playpen, high chair, stroller, etc.). If the Provider does not have access to the equipment

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required for your infant/toddler, you may be asked if you can provide it. The agency requires that this equipment is well maintained and CSA approved.

## **Outdoor Play and Field Trips**

Each day the Provider is expected to plan for outdoor activities for the children for 2 or more hours per day (weather permitting) to ensure they get fresh air and exercise. It is important to ensure your children have the appropriate clothing with them to be able to enjoy this time outdoors.

Providers often take children to local playgroups and/or younger children participate in the walk to school for older children. The time spent walking to such activities is included in the outdoor time.

From time-to-time, field trips are planned and parents are informed in advance and asked to sign consent forms giving your permission for your child to participate.

Local outings to parks and playgrounds are indicated in the contract that you sign upon admission where you give consent for your child to participate.

## **Inclement Weather**

It is important that children be dressed for the various types of weather to ensure that they can actively participate in outdoor play. Please ensure that adequate and suitable clothing and footwear is provided year-round for your child. Your child's outdoor time may be extended or shortened to ensure that children are active, engaged, and comfortable. Providers 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 offered during the summer and more physical activities during the colder months. THCC encourages sun safety practices and asks parents to provide child safe sunscreen and protective clothing such as a wide brimmed hat for outdoor times. The Provider will assist children to apply sunscreen as required.

## **Screen Time**

Sometimes children may watch TV, movies or have time on the computer/iPad. We strongly recommend that "screen time" be limited to a maximum of 30 minutes per day and all programs be "G"/Family rated.

We recommend that parents discuss with Providers from time to time to confirm the suitability of the "screen time". If the internet is available to the children, this will be discussed with you in

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advance to obtain your permission regarding your child's access. THCC requires that all games played by the children be suitable for children 12 years and under and that the internet does not disable the phone line.

## **Transportation**

Some Providers may use their own vehicle during the child care day. If so, THCC requires that they meet the appropriate insurance requirements. Parents must also sign permission forms allowing their children to be in the vehicle with the Provider. The Provider is not allowed to drive your child without the signed permission form, and safety seating must be in place for the age and weight of your child (meeting CSA standards). If your child travels to school by bus, you must give the Provider and the Agency the required busing information.

## **Child Health**

### **Illness**

Children who are ill or pose a risk of spreading illness to other children or the Provider should remain at home. High fever, diarrhea, vomiting and persistent cough, as well as contagious diseases are conditions that cause concern to the Provider and other parents with children in care. If your child becomes ill, while in the Providers care, he/she will assess:

- If your child is well enough to remain in care until the regular pick-up time.
- If the child's symptoms require that you need to come and get your child as soon as possible.
- If immediate, emergency medical attention is required

If your child is ill, he/she will be separated from the other children in care until they are picked up from the Provider home.

### **Medication**

Only medication that is prescribed and/or with a doctor's note can be administered by the Provider. If your child requires medication during the time he/she is in care, this will be given, providing you complete the form that provides clear directions regarding the time of administration, dosage etc. The medication must be prescribed for your child and in the original container with the child's name.

Medication such as children's fever medication can be given by the Provider as long as it is accompanied by a prescription note indicating the symptoms that are to be present when the medication is administered, the dosage and frequency. Parents will have to provide the medication in the original container and give it to the Provider for safe storage/lock up upon arrival.



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## Individual Medical Plan

The Provider, the Home Visitor and the Parent will prepare an individual medical plan for any child who has an identified medical condition. This may be developed in consultation with any regulated health professional who is involved in the child's health care as identified by the parent. The plan will include the steps to reduce the risk of the condition worsening, medical devices used with instructions on how to use them, a description of the procedures to be followed, supports that are available and additional procedures to be followed during an evacuation or off-site field trip.

## Fire Evacuation / Emergency Preparedness

Each Provider home has a written fire evacuation plan posted. Each home does a fire drill with the children on a monthly basis and must demonstrate the ability to evacuate the home safely. Emergency phone numbers are posted in each Provider home for quick reference. Each Provider has an alternate evacuation site that has been identified to the agency for use in an emergency. There is an evacuation bag that is kept in an accessible place and ready to go as required that contains the family contact information.

## Immunization

Providers, residents of the Provider home, and all children in care are required to meet Toronto Public Health requirements in regards to having current immunization information on file. One of the following must be provided:

- an up-to-date record of immunization,
- a Ministry of Education Immunization exemption form completed by a qualified medical practitioner which clearly states the medical reasons why they cannot be immunized, or
- a Ministry of Education Immunization exemption form that the immunization conflicts with the person's conscience or religious beliefs (this must be completed by a Notary or a Commissioner for Taking Affidavits).

If you would like further information, please speak to your Home Visitor. If an outbreak of a communicable disease occurs, any child who is not adequately immunized will not be able to attend child care unless the child receives the required vaccine or until the outbreak is over.

## Anaphylactic Allergies

Prior to the child's admission into THCC, the parent must supply a medical note stating the specifics of an allergy and provide an auto-injector (EpiPen). In conjunction with the parent, the Home Visitor and the Provider will develop an individual plan and emergency procedure, which will include a description of the child's allergy, monitoring and avoidance strategies, signs and symptoms of an anaphylactic allergy and action to be taken by the Provider in the event that

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their child has an anaphylactic reaction. If a parent does not supply an EpiPen, or fails to replace an expired EpiPen, the child will not be accepted into care. If a parent believes the child no longer needs an EpiPen, a medical note confirming the information is required.

When children bring meals and snacks from home, the food restrictions in the Provider home must be strictly adhered to. Providers must ensure all foods brought into the home do not contain ingredients that could trigger an allergic or anaphylactic reaction, and that the food is clearly labeled with the child's name and ingredients.

## **Attendance in the Child Care Home**

Children are expected to attend daily (or as per your contracted hours of care), and if your child is not attending, we ask that you notify the Provider as early as possible in the day for unplanned absences, and in advance if it is a planned absence such as vacation. For families receiving fee assistance (subsidy), you will be given guidelines for the amount of absent days allowed. Please follow these guidelines.

## **Contracted Hours of Care**

Parent, Provider and Home Visitor discuss hours of care at the placement visit to decide on a scheduled pick up and drop off time that will best meet the families' needs.

## **Statutory Holidays**

Child care will only be available on Statutory Holidays to those with prior authorization from Children's Services. For those requiring care on Statutory Holidays, your Home Visitor will work with you to find back up care should your regular Provider be unavailable.

THCC has designated the following days as Statutory Holidays for Providers:

- New Year's Day
- Family Day
- Good Friday
- Victoria Day
- Canada Day
- Civic Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day
- Boxing Day

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Please note, THCC offices are closed on the above dates, as well as being closed on Easter Monday and Remembrance Day. Child Care is available to you on these 2 days.

## Back-up Child Care

If your Provider is ill or cannot provide care for your child, we will do our best to offer back-up care. In case of a planned absence, your Home Visitor will help arrange back-up care. This is not guaranteed. In an emergency, your Provider will give you names of other agency Providers for back up care, and then she will notify the Agency.

Providers are self-employed small business owners and may choose to take vacation as they wish. THCC requires that they give us ample notice so we can make back-up plans for your child's continued care.

## Child Vacations

Assessed fees must be paid for all days that your child is away from care for vacation or for any other reason. Please discuss planned vacation time as much in advance as possible with both your Provider and Home Visitor.

## Child Care Fees

Toronto Home Child Care is enrolled in the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care System. For more information regarding our fees or cost of care, visit [toronto.ca/telccs](https://toronto.ca/telccs).

Daily fees are all-inclusive and there are no additional charges over and above these base fees.

The Children's Services Central Billing Office sends you an invoice each month for your child's care, if you have been assessed and assigned a fee. Fees are billed and are to be paid in advance.

Your fees are to be paid to the central billing office, not to the Provider or Home Visitor. Fees are charged for all days of enrolment, as your Provider is paid for all days your child is enrolled, whether your child is in care or not.

If your Provider is not available and you make your own arrangements versus using a back-up Provider, you will not be billed for those days of care. If this occurs, inform your Home Visitor so he/she can inform the central billing office to waive the fees for the appropriate number of days.

At the end of each month, you must sign the invoice/attendance form that is completed by the Provider. This record of attendance acts as the Providers invoice to the City and allows

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him/her to be paid for caring for your child. It is your responsibility, as a client of THCC to ensure that your child's attendance is recorded accurately on the attendance form. For that reason, please do not sign blank or incomplete attendance sheets. Your signature is your agreement that the Provider has recorded your child's attendance accurately.

If you have difficulty with your child care fees, please contact your billing representative directly (contact information is on the monthly invoice you receive).

Failure to pay your fees could result in your child being withdrawn from care. Children who are in receipt of fee assistance are able to be away from care without additional charges for a total of 35 days in the calendar year (or 18 days for children enrolled in or after July of the current year). Absences exceeding these days or exceeding 20 consecutive days will result in your being responsible for the full fee for any additional absent days. Please discuss any specific situations you may have with your Home Visitor in advance of the occurrence.

## **Withdrawals**

We require two weeks notice if you plan to remove your child from THCC permanently or transfer to another service Provider.

Should you fail to provide the required notice, you will be charged the fees for one week of care after the child is withdrawn. All outstanding fees must be paid in full. Any debts will be pursued by the City of Toronto. All amounts owing must be paid prior to your child's re-entry into the child care system.

Providers are also encouraged to give a two week notice of withdrawal if they will no longer be able to provide care for a child. Sometimes, child care arrangements break down. It is important for you to discuss any concerns as they occur so the Provider can meet your needs, and the Home Visitor can support him/her in doing so.

In the event of a break down in the child care arrangement where it is not in the best interest of the family or the Provider to continue care, the agency may decide to waive the notice period. The Home Visitor will attempt to arrange alternate child care arrangements for the family so that child care will not be disrupted.

## **Anti-Racism Policy**

Toronto Children's Services has a responsibility for and is committed to supporting equity throughout all levels of our service delivery system. Families and Providers come from a wide variety of ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds. We believe that children and families, as well as staff and Providers, must be treated with dignity and respect and that the services must be non-discriminatory, racially sensitive, and culturally appropriate.

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## 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 Provider homes 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 home/ agency.

## Community Partners

Many Providers are involved in their communities and choose to participate in various groups. Some of these groups could include parenting centres, EarlyON programs, libraries, community centres and many other programs offered in their local communities. The Provider will inform you of programs that they attend with the children and list these activities on the program plan posted in their homes.

## Continuous Professional Learning

The agency plans and offers evening information sessions for Providers to enhance the program that they offer to the children on an ongoing basis. These sessions can include topics such as, nutrition, programming activities, health & safety, literacy, child guidance, and many more. If you have any input on areas that you would like to see information sessions offered, please contact the Agency office to discuss.

## 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 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.

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- 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.

### **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.

### **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 your assigned Toronto Home Child Care Visitor or Home Child Care Supervisor directly.

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 bulletin board in your Provider home.

### **What can you do if you do not agree with the resolution to your complaint?**

#### **Toronto Home Child Care Supervisor Office**

By phone: 416-392-3326

By email: [thcc@toronto.ca](mailto:thcc@toronto.ca)

By Fax: 416 392-3450

By Mail: 1118 Finch Avenue West, Unit 4, Toronto, Ontario, M3J 3J4

#### **Toronto Early Learning & Child Care Services Head Office**

By phone: 416 392-3317

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

By Fax: 416 397-1680

By Mail: 55 John Street, Metro Hall, 10th Floor, Toronto, Ontario, M5V 3C6

### **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.

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- 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 to 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.

## **Our Commitment**

Toronto Children's Services staff 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.

## **Administration – Forms**

Every family in THCC must fill out registration forms to enroll in our program. This information is collected to ensure that your Provider and Home Visitor have information about you and your child and that we can contact you or other authorized people, in the case of an emergency.

At the City of Toronto, we respect your privacy. Your information is kept confidential and used only for the purposes for which it is intended.

## **Updates to the Parent Handbook**

A hard copy of the comprehensive Toronto Early Learning & Child Care Services Program Statement is included in the TELCCS HCC Parent Handbook package and is also available online at [toronto.ca/children/telccs/thcc](https://toronto.ca/children/telccs/thcc). Changes will be made as required and reflected in the online version available.

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## **Municipal Freedom of Information & Protection of Privacy Act**

The personal information on this form is 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 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 at Toronto Early Learning and Child Care Services, Children's Services Division, Metro Hall, 55 John Street, 10th Floor, Toronto, Ontario M5V 3C6 or by telephone at 416 392-3317.