

# LITTLE ACORN EARLY LEARNING CENTRE

**TOMORROW TAKES ROOT TODAY**



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## **WELCOME**

This handbook is your guide to the services of the Little Acorn Early Learning Centre. We encourage parents to ask questions of the staff and Directors. These guidelines should be read and agreed to prior to enrolment.

We look forward to your partnership as we endeavour to provide the best education and care for your children through best practice.

Joanne Saunders, Executive Director

## **PROGRAM STATEMENT**

We believe that learning is an active process of self-construction which occurs as we, children, parents, educators and friends, go about our everyday routines and special times in the company of others.

We believe that all learning is intertwined: physical, intellectual, emotional, social, moral, aesthetic, and creative. Schools, homes and the community are all social learning environments and need to have strong partnerships to enhance the child's learning. We are your partners.

Our goal is to provide developmentally appropriate and experiential programs for children from 18 months to 12 years, to encourage feelings of belonging and well-being, to be engaged with their environment and with those around them, and to be able to express themselves in the ways of "The Hundred Languages of Children".

We endeavour to achieve this by promoting the highest quality of professionalism, consistency and a respectful school environment with dedicated staff who are qualified and truly care.

The process starts with the Enrollment package which will ask you for a lot of information about your child and their needs to be submitted in advance of your first day. Next is the Integration Process when your family starts their journey with us officially. We require you (parent/caregiver) to spend the first two half days with your child on premises and/or in the program so that the process of developing relationships with the Educators and yourselves begins. We each, children and adults, bring our own unique personal history. We, as educators, need to listen, in the deepest sense, to the children's and parent's personal stories (perspectives), in order to make our curriculum and everyday classroom experiences meaningful.

Our environment, inside and out, will be organized to offer rich learning opportunities connected to those experiences. Children are invited to explore and problem solve, individually

and in groups, to be involved in small and large projects, to learn and to respect their world as well as themselves and others. We are cognizant of our responsibility to prepare children for a more formal school setting and will offer experiences that will meet that need as well.

Educators treat and listen to children as individuals: competent, resourceful, curious, imaginative, and inventive, each desiring to communicate with each other and their environment. The Educators will not only interact with the children as partners in learning, observing the progression of their learning, but they will document using photos and anecdotes of conversations and body language. This will provide the Educator with the evidence needed to continue programming using the children's ideas and thoughts. These ideas are then recorded on a Curriculum Board observable by the Parents and other partners in learning.

The Curriculum Board will give evidence of the children's interests and questions that they are wondering about. This Curriculum Board will be the basis for most of the learning in the program. At times, there may be deviations to meet the children's needs for other explorations. These will be recorded through observations. Parents can be informed through informal meetings with staff at pickup times, pictures sent to parents via Storypark, and through periodic emails.

Learning panels are developed from the observations and posted in places where families can read them, ask questions, and celebrate their child's learning. On a continuous basis, the Educator is developing the Child's Portfolio to give evidence of the child's learning, to create the child's social story while in attendance at Acorn ELC. Every six months approximately, the Educators assess each of the children on an individual basis through a Progress Report. The report is then presented to the family through a more formal meeting. The first report becomes the baseline of learning on which all other reports are built on. This process is important to us in the assessment of our programming and environments, but also can become the documentation for an early intervention program for your child, if necessary.

Health, Safety and Nutrition are the basis of the program. Our meals are made by Red Apron, a well-known food service noted for being organic and local. Our menu is posted on our Website. Good Nutrition leads to good health. Our environment is kept clean and inviting. Each week and whenever necessary, we make sure that our classrooms are disinfected and washed. This is one of the most important components of health along with fresh air and lots of exercise.

A fire drill shall be conducted in respect of every child care centre at least once a month in accordance with Ontario Regulation 213/07 (Fire Code) made under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997.

### **Inclusion – All Children Belong**

We believe....

- An inclusive active learning environment supports all children's uniqueness, dignity, development;

- Principles** □ Children with special needs are first and foremost children, with the right to be included in all aspects of their community;
- Through using exemplary practices to focus on children’s interest, strengths and needs, we can support all children’s development;
  - Partnerships between families and their support systems reflect involvement, input and ongoing collaboration from all participants;
  - Diversity in all forms enriches communities to be better and more productive places to Learn, Play and Care.

We believe that all children will develop to the best of their ability if they have a positive, nurturing, secure developmental environment that promotes physical, social, emotional and cognitive growth.

We are committed to responding to the needs of the community and children with special requirements who may physically, developmentally or socially require access to a range of services that will assist them in maximizing their learning opportunities.

The Special Needs Programs offered at Acorn Early Learning Centre gives all children and their families an opportunity to participate in quality early learning and child care. Children with special needs are able to maximize their learning opportunities through individualized programs, supports and services which are supported through Children’s Integrated Support Services.

We believe that it is important for Educators of young children to continue their growth and will provide and support professional development as well as encourage independent study. This will ensure that the Educator is ready for the challenges of providing the most up-to-date programming and best practice for children’s optimum growth and development. Little Acorn is dedicated to provide some funding throughout the year for each Educator for out-of-centre study as well as one Little Acorn organized Professional Development Day per year.

We recognize the value of strong partnerships with families and the community in the education of young children and will promote opportunities for this growth. Throughout the year, Acorn will organize many events in which we require these partnerships. Ex. Fundraisers for local groups, partnerships with local Colleges for ECE students to train and practise, mentors for other childcare centres to name a few.

Finally, we embrace the important responsibility given to us by parents, to care and love their children, to provide safe and beautiful environments for the children to learn, grow and play in, and to be your partners in this important time of their lives.

The Ministry of Education has developed a resource called “How Does Learning Happen?”. This is a professional learning resource designed to support our program development and pedagogy in our early years setting. We rely on this resource to further our professional development and suggest that you might also access this resource for further information.

## **STAFFING**

Our staff are dedicated Early Childhood Educators who belong to the College. As part of their employment with Little Acorn ELC, they have agreed to continue their education in Early Childhood.

## **LICENSING**

Little Acorn ELC is licensed by the Provincial Government, Ministry of Education, under the Childcare and Early Years Act.

## **ADMINISTRATION**

Although Little Acorn ELC is solely administered by its Directors, it seeks guidance and advice from its employees, the parents through parent committees, and the community in order to remain a community based Preschool in every way possible. Our responsibilities include the general administration of the Preschool, working with Ministries and other government bodies, personnel management, maintaining enrollment capacity, sound financial management, behaviour management and maintaining relationships with children, families, staff, and community members.

The Directors main focus will be the education and care of the children. We will do this by hiring qualified, caring and dedicated staff of like philosophy, maintaining enriched, developmentally appropriate environments to enhance children's learning, by providing healthy, mostly organic meals and snacks, outdoor gross motor experiences utilizing community parks and learning spaces, and by providing parent education nights open to the community.

## **REGISTRATION**

The Little Acorn ELC is open year round. When a space becomes available, or when a family gives notice of withdrawal, the centre will look to its own waiting list and to the Centralized Waiting List to find a replacement child. A non-refundable \$250 deposit will be required to secure a space when it becomes available and will be applied to the first month's fees.

## **WAIT LIST POLICY**

Little Acorn Early Learning Centre prides itself in offering many options for families. We encourage all families to come to visit us before making a decision about the care and education

for their children. We also ask that all families register with the Centralized Wait List, indicating that Little Acorn Early Learning Centre is one of their choices.

We do have some priorities that we consider when inviting new families to join us. In order of priority, care will be offered to

- Children currently enrolled in the program who want to continue
- Siblings of children currently enrolled in the program who have submitted a waitlist registration form
- Children of current Acorn Employees who have submitted a waitlist registration form
- Returning families. The time span between the withdrawal of a family and their new waitlist registration must not exceed three years.
- Families of Federal Government as per an initial agreement prior to construction
- Families who are on the centralized wait list already and who have chosen to put their children on our in-house waitlist after visiting/touring the centre □ Families who are on the centralized wait list.
- *Special Consideration* may be given to families with children who have been identified as special learners.

## **CHILDREN'S GROUPINGS**

The Preschool is licensed as follows:

- 30 Toddler children, 18 to 30 months of age
- 48 Preschool children, 30 to 60 months of age
- 10 Kindergarten children, 44 to 60 months of age

## **HOURS OF OPERATION**

The Little Acorn ELC is open from 7:45 am to 5:30 pm, Monday through Friday, except on specified preschool closures and Statutory Holidays.

## **SIGNING IN/OUT PROCEDURES**

Your child will be signed in daily by the Educator who has welcomed them. They will also be signed out at the end of the day.

## **ALTERNATE/EMERGENCY PICKUP**

As part of your registration package and in accordance with the Childcare and Early Years Act, you are required to identify two (2) emergency and pickup persons in case the parent(s)/guardian(s)

cannot be contacted. It is important that this list is kept current. No child will be allowed to leave Little Acorn ELC with anyone other than their parent(s)/guardian(s) without prior consent. Anyone other than the parent(s)/guardian(s) picking up the child must be at least 16 years of age. Anyone picking up the child from Little Acorn ELC for the first time, with parental consent, will be asked to provide identification.

### **CENTRE CLOSURES/STATUTORY HOLIDAYS**

Labour Day

Thanksgiving Day

Note: We are open on Remembrance Day

Between Christmas and New Years - Holiday week

Family Day

Good Friday and Easter Monday

Victoria Day

Canada Day

August Civic holiday

Last 2 school days of August/September tbc - Centre closed, professional development

### **FEES**

We have been accepted by the Canada Wide Early Learning and Childcare program (CWELCC). This agreement establishes the path forward for providing a national system of high quality, affordable and inclusive early learning and childcare services for all families. The amended fees will reflect the reduction for the toddler and preschool program, and for children under 6 years attending for the day. Please refer to the Fee Schedule for details on payments.

When your child turns 6 years old, they will not qualify for the program and the fee will be as per the schedule.

It is also to be noted that this is a Base Fee as per the CWELCC program. This will mean that all extra curricular activities such as field trips etc. will have to be charged extra as a non-base fee. I will always do my best to keep this to a minimum.

As always, this is such an amazing way to support families and we are excited to be part of it. Fees are to be paid monthly by direct payment, credit card, e-transfer or cheque. Direct payments and credit card payments are processed on the first of the month unless other arrangements have been made. Credit card payments are subject to a 1.75% service charge. Monthly fees are based on a yearly tuition and divided equally into 12 payments. There is no fee reduction for vacations or sick days. To keep fees as low as possible and our budget unpadding, you are required to continue to pay regular fees to maintain your space when your child is absent.

It is also important to make your payment early in the month (unless otherwise arranged) as I will have to make reports to the City for accountability.

### **BASE FEE SCHEDULE**

**Toddler Program/Preschool/ Kinder Program \$478.50 - Full Time**

**Daily Rate: Children under 6 years of age \$22**

**Daily Rate : Children over 6 years of age \$55**

\*Refunds and/or credits for any unforeseen reason will be at the discretion of the Director.

### **VACATION/SICK DAYS/SAFE ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL POLICY**

It is imperative that a parent/guardian phone the centre when a child is absent for any reason. Good communication ensures that children are where they should be and are safe at all times.

We ask also that the centre is notified in writing, as soon as possible about vacation plans. This is particularly important during the summer months, so that staffing arrangements can be made.

Little Acorn Early Learning Centre will ensure that any child receiving child care at the child care centre is only released to the child's parent/guardian or an individual that the parent/guardian has provided written authorization the child care centre may release the child to.

-Where a child does not arrive in care as expected or is not picked up as expected, staff must follow the save arrival and dismissal procedures. For furthers details, please contact Joanne Saunders.

## **LATE FEE POLICY**

The centre is closed at 5:30 pm daily. Although there is no late fee charged, reoccurring lateness, more than three times, will result in a meeting with the Directors to assess and review whether the program meets your needs.

## **FOOD**

All lunches and snacks are catered by Red Apron and are included in the monthly day care fee. If your child has dietary restrictions including allergies which cannot be met by our caterer, you will be required to sign an “Exemption from Meal Plan” form and provide lunch and snacks for your child.

The menu for each month is posted on the parent information board and on the website. The entire centre is nut free. Please see **ALLERGIES AND FOOD RESTRICTIONS** for more details.

We acknowledge that while Red Apron takes all possible precautions to ensure that cross contamination of food does not occur, Red Apron has nuts, peanuts, fish/shellfish and pork in its kitchens at any given time and that cross-contact with our meals may occur at any time. Parents need to be aware of the possibility, that meals provided by Red Apron may contain allergens or have come into contact with products with allergens, and are comfortable assuming that risk. Red Apron is not responsible for providing food for children with food allergies as part of their service.

## **ALLERGIES AND FOOD RESTRICTIONS**

At the time of enrolment, you will be asked to give written details of any allergies that your child has, including all possible reactions. All allergies will be posted in all classrooms, as well as in the office. In the case of anaphylactic reactions, you will be required to provide an epi-pen to the centre, as well as a picture of your child, emergency contacts and your doctor’s contact information. This epi-pen will be carried by the staff person who is caring for your child at all times. The centre has a strict protocol as to how an emergency of this sort would be handled, which all staff will regularly review.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

On your child’s birthday, please inform your child’s teacher whether you will be providing a “nut free” snack for their celebration. We invite you to join us for the celebration as this is such an important time in their lives.

## **CLOTHING**

Your child will require two extra sets of clothing if he/she is a toddler, and one if older to include socks, underwear, shirt, pants, indoor shoes, hat and mittens. Please check daily so that extra clothing can be replaced as required. Please try to label all clothing with your child's name. As well, please provide a variety of outdoor wear including hats and appropriate clothing to protect them from the sun in summer, rain coats and boots, and outdoor shoes. Long scarves and anything worn around the neck, which may be considered dangerous by staff, will not be permitted.

## **DIAPERS/WIPES**

You are responsible to provide diapers and wipes for your child. Please check daily so that extra diapers/wipes can be replaced as required. If your child requires any creams, you will be required to sign a form authorizing its application. A record will be kept every time it is applied.

## **SUNSCREEN POLICY**

You are responsible to provide sunscreen of your choice to the centre upon registration. You will be asked to fill in and sign a form to authorize its application on a daily basis as needed. Especially in the summer months, please put sunscreen on your child prior to drop off.

## **BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT POLICY**

At Little Acorn ELC, we acknowledge the fact that children will occasionally experience difficulties in managing their behaviour. When a child is in need of behaviour guidance, staff will consider the age of the child and the nature of the incident. Every problem has a solution and an immediate response is essential. Staff will maintain open communication with all adults involved with the child at all times.

Children are problem-solvers by nature. When adult intervention is necessary, strategies must reflect a problem-solving approach whose goal is to encourage the child to think out and articulate the problem rather than solving it for him/her and imposing a solution. While problem-solving can be developed in very young children, this process must be geared to the developmental level of each child.

The Educator's role to support the problem-solving is to establish and clearly communicate limits to behaviour in order to ensure children's physical and emotional well-being.

## **Prohibited 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.

## **SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS AND VOLUNTEERS**

At times, we give back to our ECE community by offering placements to Early Childhood Education Students seeking their ECE diploma. We may also have volunteers for various reasons. They will need to submit a valid up-to-date Vulnerable Sector Check. They will not have direct unsupervised access to children at any time.

## **HEALTH POLICY**

In order to enrol in the Little Acorn ELC, each child is required by the Childcare and Early Years Act and the Health Department to provide a doctor's report showing evidence of up-to-date immunization.

Vigilance about health matters is critical in a day care centre. The health of all the children depends on the co-operation of all parents/guardians and staff based on the current health standards.

Sending a sick child to daycare jeopardizes not only that child's health, but also that of the others in the daycare. It is imperative therefore, that parents/guardians plan for alternative care for their

sick child. Parents/guardians are encouraged to keep us informed and up-to-date about any concerns they may have with respect to their child's health.

**The following are some important health policies that will protect the child as well as the health of other members of the daycare:**

- The parent/guardian is required to phone the daycare when a child is absent due to illness.
- If staff considers a child too sick to be exposed to the other children, the parent will be informed and asked to pick up the child. This includes symptoms of a severe cold such as chronic cough.
- The parent/guardian of a child with a high fever will be asked to pick him/her up immediately.
- A child with a communicable disease will not be accepted into the centre and will not be accepted back without a doctor's note or in accordance with the Health Department guidelines.
- A child who is vomiting or has diarrhea will not be accepted into the centre for 24 hours after the illness has ceased.
- A child having been diagnosed with head lice will be immediately sent home for treatment of the condition and will be advised of our lice policy as outlined by the Health Department.

**REST PERIODS**

Children requiring a nap will do so between 12:15 pm and 2:30 pm in their individual rooms. Of course, this can be flexible to meet the needs of our children and families. As per the Childcare and Early Years Act, all preschool children are required to have a rest period. Children not requiring a nap and after a short rest period will be part of a "wakers" program where openended activities will be set up. You are asked to provide a sleep sack or to purchase one from us at cost. You will be asked to take it home and launder it once a week. We will sterilize the cot once a week.

Each child is encouraged to bring a soft, cuddly from their home. These will be sent home at the first of every month for laundering.

**MUSIC**

We recognize that music is an important part of a child's intellectual growth and will have a music teacher on staff to instruct a separate music program. The program will be in partnership with the children's curriculum as well as offering a variety of musical experiences.

## **ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICINE POLICY**

Parents must fill out a “Permission to Administer Medication” form before any medication may be given to a child. Only Acorn ELC staff may administer prescription medication to a child. Prescription medicines will be given according to the labelled instructions on the bottle brought to the learning centre. Medication that is not doctor prescribed can only be administered when accompanied by a note from the doctor.

All medicine must be in the original pharmacy bottle in order for it to be administered to children. We recommend that you ask the pharmacist to give you two bottles, one for home and one to be left at the learning centre. All medicine is kept in a locked box. Parents should inform staff whether the medication must be refrigerated or not.

In cases where a child has one or more acute or chronic medical condition such that he or she requires additional supports, accommodation or assistance, you will be asked to fill in an

“Individualized Plan for a Child with Medical Needs”. Please let either the Director or the Administrator know.

## **ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES**

All Little Acorn ELC staff are qualified to administer basic first aid and CPR. When an accident or injury occurs, staff members are required to fill out an accident report documenting the details of the accident. Parent/guardians are requested to review, sign the form, and will have a copy for take-home. One will be kept in the child’s file.

In an emergency, staff will follow appropriate emergency procedures as outlined in the Little Acorn ELC policies and procedures and the child will be taken to the hospital. The parent/guardian or their emergency contact person will be notified as soon as possible and will be asked to meet the child and staff at the hospital.

Staff are not permitted to drive children in their own vehicles. If a child must go to the hospital, either an ambulance or a taxi will be summoned.

In the event of a Serious Occurrence as identified under the Childcare and Early Years Act, it is our responsibility to be accountable to/within the Ministry, and that our service delivery is consistent with relevant legislation, regulations and/or Ministry Policy. If a Serious Occurrence occurs, it will be posted conspicuously in Little Acorn for a minimum of 10 business days. When the form is updated, it will remain for another 10 days. This form will be kept on premises for at least two years.

## **FIRE DRILL PROCEDURES**

Fire drills and/or lockdown drills are conducted on a monthly basis, as required by the Childcare and Early Years Act.

## **EMERGENCY SHELTER**

In the case of an emergency where alternative shelter is required, Little Acorn ELC's first option is to go to **4-1459 Ogilvie Road (Starbucks)**. Staff will bring all the pertinent information with them such as emergency information, sign in sheets, as well as medications and cell phones.

Little Acorn has an emergency Measures Policy.

Upon arrival at the emergency evacuation site, Joanne Saunders or her designates will notify parents/guardians of the emergency situation, evacuation and the location to pick up their children by way of e-mail.

Where possible, Joanne Saunders or her designates will update the child care centre's voicemail box as soon as possible to inform parents/guardians that the child care centre has been evacuated, and include the details of the evacuation site location and contact information in the message.

Contact with parents

As soon as possible, Joanne Saunders and Shannon Smith will notify parents/guardians of the emergency situation and that the all-clear has been given.

Where disasters have occurred that did not require evacuation of the child care centre, Joanne Saunders and Shannon Smith must provide a notice of the incident to parents/guardians by way of email.

If normal operations do not resume the same day that an emergency situation has taken place, Joanne Saunders must provide parents/guardians with information as to when and how normal operations will resume as soon as this is determined.

## **FIELD TRIP POLICY**

At Little Acorn ELC, we believe that the community is also a partner in your child's education and that field trips are an important part of our program. We will take advantage of community spaces, parks and ponds for gross motor activities and learning opportunities. No other permission will

be required once the Parent Handbook Sign Off has been signed for walking trips. Any field trip costs will be collected beforehand.

When trips are taken on chartered buses, please be aware that there will be no seatbelts. Your written permission will be required for your child to attend these field trips.

Parent volunteers are welcome to participate on all trips. A lottery may be necessary at times when the volunteer response exceeds the requested ratio, but we will try to accommodate everyone as we know how important it is to accompany your child during these events.

## **PARKING**

The Preschool has obtained parking spots for pickup and drop-off which are indicated by signage. These spots need to be shared with others throughout the morning and afternoon. We ask that your usage of them is kept to a minimum in the interest of all. There is parking on the street when available. Please do not leave your vehicle idling in the parking lot. If you qualify, you may be able to use the parkade after 4pm. More information available upon request.

## **SECURITY**

Your child's safety while at the centre is of utmost importance. The entrance door is secured by an electronic card system. Each card will require a \$25.00 deposit which will be returned on your child's last day at the centre. The system is enabled at 7:45am and will be disabled at 5:30pm daily. In the case that you have forgotten your card, there is a door bell. Please be patient as a staff will have to free themselves from the children in order to let you in. It is very important that these cards are not given to anyone else as your child's safety may be at risk. In the event that a card is lost, please notify the day care as soon as possible.

## **PHOTOGRAPHS**

During the program, photographs will be taken of your child engaged in many activities.

As part of your enrolment package, you will be asked to give permission with respect to photographs, media coverage and website usage. We ask that you read this carefully before signing it and notify us of any changes.

## **STORYPARK**

We offer Storypark.com as an option as well. Please fill in the Permission Form for this service.

## **WITHDRAWAL POLICY**

Parents are required to provide a minimum of one month's notice either by email or by written note when you withdraw your child from Little Acorn ELC.

## **DISMISSAL POLICY**

There may be circumstances when a child or family may not be suited to be in a group setting. If this is suspected, a meeting will be requested by Little Acorn ELC or the parents to discuss the options available and ways to meeting your child's needs. We will assist in every way possible to provide information, and if the situation does not rectify itself, Little Acorn ELC retains the right to give two weeks notice of dismissal.

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

Name of Child Care Centre: Acorn Early Learning Centre

Date Policy and Procedures Established: August 20, 2017

Date Policy and Procedures Updated: - July 5, 2022

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide a transparent process for parents/guardians, the child care licensee and staff to use when parents/guardians bring forward issues/concerns.

### **Definitions**

*Licensee:* The individual or agency licensed by the Ministry of Education responsible for the operation and management of each child care centre it operates (i.e. the operator).

*Staff:* Individual employed by the licensee (e.g. program room staff).

### **Policy - General**

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

All issues and concerns raised by parents/guardians are taken seriously by Acorn Early Learning Centre and Joanne Saunders and will be addressed. Every effort will be made to address and resolve issues and concerns to the satisfaction of all parties and as quickly as possible.

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

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

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

### **Confidentiality**

Every issue and concern will be treated confidentially and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of parents/guardians, children, staff, students and volunteers, except when information must be disclosed for legal reasons (e.g. to the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities or a Children's Aid Society).

### **Conduct**

Our centre maintains high standards for positive interaction, communication and role-modeling for children. Harassment and discrimination will therefore not be tolerated from any party.

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

### **Concerns about the Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a child**

Everyone, including members of the public and professionals who work closely with children, is required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.

If a parent/guardian expresses concerns that a child is being abused or neglected, the parent will be advised to contact the [local Children's Aid Society](#) (CAS) directly.

Persons who become aware of such concerns are also responsible for reporting this information to CAS as per the "Duty to Report" requirement under the *Child and Family Services Act*. For more information, visit

<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childremsaid/reportingabuse/index.aspx>

## Procedures

Nature of Issue or Concern	Steps for Parent and/or Guardian to Report Issue/Concern:	Steps for Staff and/or Licensee in responding to issue/concern:
<p><b>Program RoomRelated</b></p> <p>E.g: schedule, sleep arrangements, toilet training, indoor/outdoor program activities, feeding arrangements, etc.</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the classroom staff directly</li> <li>or</li> <li>- Joanne Saunders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Address the issue/concern at the time it is raised</li> <li>or</li> <li>- arrange for a meeting with the parent/guardian within 2 business days.</li> </ul> <p>Document the issues/concerns in detail. Documentation should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the date and time the issue/concern was received;</li> <li>- the name of the person who received the issue/concern;</li> <li>- the name of the person reporting the issue/concern;</li> <li>- the details of the issue/concern; and</li> <li>- any steps taken to resolve the issue/concern and/or information given to the parent/guardian regarding next steps or referral.</li> </ul>
<p><b>General, Centre- or Operations-Related</b></p> <p>E.g: child care fees, hours of operation, staffing, waiting lists, menus, etc.</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Joanne Saunders</p> <p style="text-align: center;">or</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Shannon Smith</p>	<p>Provide contact information for the appropriate person if the person being notified is unable to address the matter.</p>
<p><b>Staff-, Duty parent-, Supervisor-, and/or Licensee-Related</b></p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the individual directly or</li> <li>- Joanne Saunders</li> </ul> <p>All issues or concerns about the conduct of staff, duty parents, etc. that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the supervisor as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.</p>	<p>Ensure the investigation of the issue/concern is initiated by the appropriate party within one business days or as soon as reasonably possible thereafter. Document reasons for delays in writing.</p> <p>Provide a resolution or outcome to the parent(s)/guardian(s) who raised the issue/concern.</p>
Nature of Issue or Concern	Steps for Parent and/or Guardian to Report Issue/Concern:	Steps for Staff and/or Licensee in responding to issue/concern:

<b>Student- / Volunteer-Related</b>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the staff responsible for supervising the volunteer or student</li> </ul> <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Joanne Saunders</li> </ul> <p>All issues or concerns about the conduct of students and/or volunteers that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the supervisor as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.</p>	
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**Escalation of Issues or Concerns:** Where parents/guardians are not satisfied with the response or outcome of an issue or concern, they may escalate the issue or concern verbally or in writing to Joanne Saunders.

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

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

**Contacts: Joanne Saunders, 613 741-7668, cell 613 794-2406 or [Joanne.Saunders@acornelc.com](mailto:Joanne.Saunders@acornelc.com)**

**Shannon Smith, [Shannon.Smith@acornelc.com](mailto:Shannon.Smith@acornelc.com)**

Ministry of Education, Licensed Child Care Help Desk: 1-877-510-5333 or [childcare\\_ontario@ontario.ca](mailto:childcare_ontario@ontario.ca)

**WELCOME TO LITTLE ACORN ELC**