

THE ELEPHANT ROOM PARENT HANDBOOK

Welcome to the Elephant Room! We look forward to meeting you and your child(ren) and helping you through these wonderful preschool years and with your family. Please take some time to go through our policies and procedures that are in place to ensure the quality care of your child(ren). Thank you for choosing The Elephant Room as your child care choice.

Hours of Operation

The Elephant Room Day-care Centre is open Monday to Friday from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm. We are closed on statutory holidays. Fee payment is required for all statutory holidays. In addition, there may be possible early closing on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

Statutory Holidays

- New Years Day
- Christmas Day
- Boxing Day
- Good Friday
- Victoria Day
- Canada Day
- Civic Holiday
- Labour Day
- Thanksgiving
- Family Day

The center will not be open for care on statutory holidays. These include: *New year's day , Good Friday , Victoria day , July first , Labour day , Thanksgiving day , Christmas day , Boxing day , Civic holiday and Family day.*

Absenteeism

If your child is going to be absent for any reason, please call the office before 10:00am @ 905-683-8399. **Fees are charged when your child is absent for the day.**

Arrival and Pick-up

Young children depend upon regular routines for their own sense of security. We recommend that you establish fixed hours to pick up and drop off your child. Parents are responsible for the transportation of their child to and from the centre.

Children are to be accompanied into the centre and a teacher notified of their arrival. You are responsible for your child until a teacher is notified of their arrival. Parents are responsible at all times for any children not registered in the program (siblings, friends, etc.) that they bring with them to the centre. Regular contact with the parents is very important. Please take the time to speak with staff about your child's day.

Staff

The Elephant Room Daycare Centre's staff consists of an Administrator, Program Supervisor, Early Childhood Educators, Educational Assistants, and a Cook/Nutritionist. All Early Childhood Educators hold a diploma or degree in Early Childhood Education. The educator/student ratio is as per the Day Nurseries Act.

In addition to ratios, student teachers in training from various colleges, universities and educational institutions are involved in our program. Students are a great asset to our program, however are not included in required program ratios.

Early Childhood Educators are selected because of their teaching abilities and their specialized knowledge and experience in child guidance in accordance with the Ontario Day Nurseries Act and Regulations. Professional staff at the centre have a Diploma in Early Childhood Education, or are working towards their diploma or equivalency. Workshops, seminars and conferences are attended each year to keep up to date and to further professional knowledge and teaching skills.

The centre has a supervisor who is responsible for administering the programs. Please address any and all concerns to the supervisor. All staff members are aware of the important role that you, as the parent, play in making the childcare experience a valuable and enjoyable one for your child. We want to maintain open communication with you. Please keep in touch with us regarding your child's needs and any significant changes or events in his/her life. We will be sure that you are aware of your child's progress, happenings at the centre and any incidents involving your child.

Volunteers/Students

It is the policy of The Elephant Room that direct unsupervised access (i.e. when the adult is alone with a child) is not permitted for persons who are not employees of our child care centres.

Any placement students or volunteer may not be counted in the staffing ratios.

Volunteers and Students are required to review Behaviour Management Policies and Procedures prior to start date and annually thereafter. In addition, a written procedure is documented for monitoring the behaviour management practices.

The individual plan for a child with anaphylaxis and the emergency procedures are reviewed by volunteers and students prior to date start and annually thereafter.

Criminal reference checks are required for all volunteers having direct contact with children in our centres. This policy does not apply to students placed in our program by an educational institution; however criminal reference checks are routinely required by community colleges and universities prior to students beginning a placement in child care.

No child is to be supervised by a person less than 18 years of age.

Volunteers and students will be supervised to ensure that they are only aiding the teachers in the activities set out in our programs.

Our centres' insurance does cover volunteers and students.

Our centres' supervisors are responsible for the implementation, review and evaluation of this policy.

Our centres' orientation procedures include, how volunteers and students are informed about the setting's policies and procedures, program philosophy and needs of individual children. Also, they will ensure the volunteer or student has reviewed a copy of our parent handbook.

Parking

A drop off area is provided in the front and sides of the day-care. Please park your car, turning off the ignition, and walk your child to the centre. This is extremely important for the safety of all the children. Please remember to drive slowly while in the parking lot as children may be coming and going.

Files

The Day Nurseries Act requires that the centre keep a file on each child. Each file includes registration and medical forms, and pertinent information about the child. Parents have access to these files.

Bulletin Boards

Parents are asked to check the Parent Info Board in the main lobby area. This board will have weekly snack and lunch menus, special activities, monthly fire drills, communicable disease information and other pertinent information that the parents need to know.

Program Development

Programs are re-evaluated regularly to reflect changes within the Day Nurseries Act and ideologies in Early Childhood Education. Workshops are periodically offered for both staff and parents.

Clothing and Possessions

Children should be dressed in clothing that is appropriate for physical activity, the weather and the season. Remember that outdoor activities are part of our program. A second set of clothing should be brought each day in case of accidents. Each child will have his/her own-labelled hook and a basket for your child's belongings. These can be used for extra clothing, outdoor clothing, sleep toys, etc.

THE ELEPHANT ROOM IS A PEANUT FREE ENVIRONMENT. PLEASE DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD TO DAYCARE WITH PEANUT BUTTER, COCONUT, AND ALL RELATED PRODUCTS FOR ANY REASON WHATSOEVER.

Nutrition

The Elephant Room offers a nutritious morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack (all prepared on premises). Children's special dietary needs and allergies will be posted in the kitchen and serving areas. Weekly menu plans will be posted for the current and following week to assist you in menu planning at home.

Rest Period

The Day Nurseries Act requires that all children who are in our care for six hours or more have a rest period that is at least one hour in length. If a child has not fallen asleep after the first hour, he/she is permitted to do quiet activities on their bed until their classmates awaken. The Elephant Room provides each child with his or her own cot. We ask that the parents supply a crib sheet and a blanket. PLEASE NOTE: it is the parent's responsibility to take home the blankets at the end of each week for washing.

Immunization

The Day Nurseries Act requires that, prior to admission, each child be immunized as recommended by the Local Officer of Health. The Elephant Room also requires that the parents, prior to admission, complete a medical form for their children. It is imperative that parents provide the office with any updated medical information pertaining to their child as soon as it has occurred. Whether it may be that a child has received an immunization needle or has developed a new allergy, this information must be updated immediately to ensure the safety and well being of your child.

Illness

If a child becomes ill during the day, the parent will be contacted to pick up the child as soon as possible for his/her well being, as well as that of the other children. It is therefore essential that the staff is able to locate the parent(s) or the emergency contact should an illness or an emergency arise.

At the time of registration a written consent form is to be completed by the parent, which authorizes the centre to transport a child to the hospital via ambulance in the event of an emergency.

A child may not attend the program if they are suffering from the following:

- Unusual skin rash
- Heavy coloured (green/yellow) mucous
- Red and/or irritated eyes, discharge from one or both eyes
- Fever reaches 101 F (38.3 C) or higher **(MUST BE FEVER FREE FOR 24 HOURS BEFORE RETURNING TO THE CENTRE)**
- Irritability, lethargic, excessive crying, refusing to eat, vomiting
- Diarrhea (3 loose bowel movements in a 12 hour period)
- Head lice

If a child has been absent due to an infectious disease, a doctor's note maybe required the day the child returns. Health Unit needs to be notified of any communicable diseases. All communicable diseases will be posted in the front lobby and/or outside the classrooms. In addition, a yearly record of all communicable diseases are posted on the bulletin board in the lobby.

Medication

The Elephant Room will administer prescription or non-prescription drugs, in accordance with the Day Nurseries Act. Parents must provide the following:

- Written authorization, including dosage and times the medication is to be taken.
- Medication in the original container clearly labeled with the child's name, name of drug, the dosage, the date of purchase and instructions for the storage and administration of the drug.

Parents are required to complete a medication form for every medication that is administered by the day-care centre.

The Early Childhood Educator in each room has the responsibility of administering all medication to the children in the group as required. Two staff members are present, and will sign off on the administering of any medication.

Any medication must be given directly to a program staff member. All medication will be stored in a locked box.

Sun Safety

It is imperative that parents provide sun hats, proper outerwear and sunscreen for their children. The sunscreen should not contain coconut fragrances or by-products and should be approved by a supervisor before labeling it with the child's name and left at the centre.

Field Trips

Throughout the year, trips are made to special places of interest. A notice will be posted in your child's clipboard in advance of the excursion, informing you of the destination, time, date and cost (if any). It will also include a spot for you to sign and give us consent for your child to accompany us on the trip.

Parents will be asked to sign a permission form in order to allow The Elephant Room and/or external persons to occasionally photograph and/or videotape their child. Photographs are usually taken of children engaging in fun activities throughout the day, during classroom parties, and on planned excursions. The photographs are posted for parents to enjoy and are later placed in a classroom book.

Late Pick-up

A late fee of \$1.00 per minute will be charged if your child is picked up after 6:15 pm. This is payable in cash at the time you pick up your child. This fee is to be paid directly to the teacher who stayed behind to look after your child. This payment is separate from any other payment to The Elephant Room

Withdrawal Policy

The Elephant Room Day-care Centre reserves the right to withdraw a child from our program with 2 weeks notice, under the following circumstances.

- A child's opposition to authority
- Willful destruction of property
- Use of profane and improper language
- Conduct which is injurious to moral tone of the Centre or physical or mental well-being of others in the Centre
- Behaviour that manifests itself into a potential safety hazard to other children and staff
- Parent(s) failure to comply with policies agreed upon
- Parent(s) more than two weeks arrears in program fees, with no written explanation or payment schedule approved by the Director of the program

Behaviour Management Policy

Discipline is carried out in a non-threatening, positive manner that is appropriate to the child's level of development. We seek to promote self-discipline, ensure health and safety, respect for the rights of others, and respect for the property. Corporal punishment is NOT permitted.

Therefore, The Elephant Room will not permit:

- Staff to administer corporal punishment of a child
- Staff to use deliberate harsh or degrading measures on a child that would humiliate a child or undermine said child's self respect
- Staff to deprive a child of basic needs, including food, shelter, clothing or bedding

- A child to be locked within a room or structure for the purposes of confining a child who has been withdrawn from other children

In the case where a child requires redirection the staff will apply positive reinforcements in order to ensure said child does not experience feelings or fear of isolation. The child will then immediately rejoin the activities.

We try to make sure that they are aware that their behaviour has hurt or frightened another child. We do not try to make the children say that they are sorry (when they don't understand). The emphasis is on learning, rather than punishment.

Contravention of Behaviour Management Policies

- All staff, supply staff, volunteers and students are to read the Behaviour Management Policy and sign a form indicating understanding and agreement to abide by the outlined policy. This will be done upon employment, or beginning of placement. This will be renewed annually.
- Behaviour management will be monitored through observations, regular discussions and recording of time outs or any circumstances using unusual behaviour management techniques.
- Contravention of the Behaviour Management Policy will be dealt with according to the "Discipline Policy", as per The Elephant Room Policies and Procedures.
- Any breach of these policies that, upon investigation, is found to be abusive, will result in immediate dismissal. At that point, further action with the proper authorities (CAS, Police) will be taken. Where action is necessary, it will be taken as soon as possible.

Record Retention

All records related to the review and sign off of behaviour management policies as well as the monitoring of behaviour management practices will be kept on file at the child care centre for two (2) years.

Parent Involvement

We have an open door policy for parents and parental visits are encouraged. We encourage parents to give constructive criticism, ask questions, and also to give us positive feedback.

Child Abuse

Staff members have received training regarding the observation of signs and symptoms of abuse. We are required by law to report any occurrences of suspected child abuse to the Children's Aid Society.

Confidentiality

Information collected from parents/guardians is for the use of Centre staff only and is of the type to aid in providing quality care for the children. Information is kept in confidence and only released at the consent of the parent/guardian. All children's records are property of The Elephant Room. Parents/Guardians have access to their child's records when requested. Parents are encouraged to follow the same guidelines as centre staff and not share any personal information they may have about other children or families or staff that have contact with the centre.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that there is a plan to IDENTIFY, RESPOND, AND REPORT WITHIN 24 HOURS of becoming aware of any serious occurrence, which may affect the health and safety of individuals or of the premises. In addition, this policy is included in our parent handbook.

Serious Occurrence

1. Any death of a child while in attendance at The Elephant Room.
2. Any serious injury to a child while in attendance at the Elephant Room; resulting from abuse, accident, medical, or non-accidental causes. Abuse includes physical harm, malnutrition, or mental ill health which if not remedied could seriously impair growth and development, or result in permanent injury or death; or, sexual molestation.
3. All allegations and accusations of abuse or mistreatment of children in care including injuries complained of by children where abuse or mistreatment by staff is suspected. In addition, this include situations where injuries are caused by neglect of the caregiver.
4. Any situation were a child is missing from the Elephant Room.
5. All disasters on the premises at The Elephant Room such as fire, flooding, long term power outage, gas leak, detection of carbon monoxide, outbreak, lockdown at the child care centre.
6. Complaints made about operational and or physical/safety standards of the program at when judged to be of serious nature: including reports of adverse water quality, lead exceedance, fire safety, hygiene, staff ratios, hazardous substance, microbiological exceedance, complaint about the service, food, playground, supervision, behaviour management, missing stolen files.
7. All allegations and accusations against staff, volunteers, parents, field placement students and temporary caregivers of children, when judged to be of serious nature by

the Program Supervisor (including those attributable to the use of specific clinical techniques, apparatus of facilities of a clinical or educational nature).

Responding to a Serious Occurrence

1. The child shall be provided with immediate medical attention when warranted. In addition, the Supervisor or designate will notify the fire/police/ambulance....911
2. All persons having knowledge of the occurrence will remain at the program location until they are excused by the Supervisor or designate conducting the preliminary inquiry. The staff or any other witnessing or having knowledge of the occurrence shall orally report the occurrence immediately to the Supervisor or designate.
3. Supervisor or designate will contact parent(s) to meet the child and staff at the hospital.
4. Supervisor or designate will meet staff at the hospital with child's file. (Staff will not leave the centre without "Emergency Records" for each child).

Reporting a Serious Occurrence

1. The Serious Occurrence Report will be filed using the Child Care Licensing System (within 24 hours of becoming aware of the serious occurrence).
2. Generate and complete the Serious Occurrence Notification form in CCLS.
3. Print and post the Serious Occurrence form in a conspicuous place highly visible to parents for at least 10 days from the date of the final update.
4. The Ontario government requires licensed child care centres to retain Serious Occurrence Notification Form(s) on file for at least two years.
5. Where and possible after consultation with the Ministry, contact the Police, and Children's Aid Society.