



Region of Waterloo

Region of Waterloo Children's Services

Home Child Care

Equity and Inclusion Commitment

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Organization Information

Name of Organization: Region of Waterloo Home Child Care

Policy and Commitment Date (Established): April 16, 2026

Policy and Commitment Date (Updated): Date

For more information about this policy, please contact Michelle Galloway at MGalloway@regionofwaterloo.ca.

Introduction

Our organization seeks to create a warm, welcoming environment for all children. We are committed to doing better to ensure that all children can thrive and see themselves and their background represented in our programs. We acknowledge that some communities and groups have faced a long history of injustice and may need additional support. We are committed to continuous learning and challenging ourselves and our established beliefs. By developing and implementing this Equity and Inclusion Commitment, we are demonstrating our dedication to our staff, caregivers, and the families we serve. This supports our overall goal in upholding an equitable child care system.

Our organization will inform the caregivers and families we serve of our commitment and its key elements. All staff within our programs will comply with the principles outlined in our policy. This commitment will be updated and reviewed as necessary to ensure continuous commitment to quality and inclusive early years programming. We are committed to having a shared understanding of our equity and inclusion goals within our organization.

2026 Equity and Inclusion Focus Area

We are committed to the following focus area(s) for 2026:

Supporting All Positions

- Our organization is committed to focus on the area of **Supporting All Positions** for 2026.
- We commit to actively support staff and caregivers who initiate concern about their work environment or interactions with families or colleagues, and work toward a solution.
- We commit to opportunities for staff to engage in reflective practice and self-directed learning that incorporates principles of reconciliation, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Indigenous Reconciliation

Indigenous Reconciliation means that we recognize, support, and value the deep connections that Indigenous Peoples have to this land in which we are situated (The Haldimand Tract, the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe, and Chonnonton Peoples). We are learning the full history of Turtle Island and how to build ongoing, positive relationships with local Indigenous families, community partners, and communities. We believe in the interconnectedness and the sacred role of the land in everything we do. Our organization will make every effort to address the harms caused by colonization and the residential school system, reflect on our role as part of the early years sector, and take action to improve outcomes for our Indigenous children, families, and community members.

Indigenous Reconciliation Commitments

We commit to the following to advance indigenous reconciliation in our organization:

- We thoughtfully and intentionally incorporate Indigenous ways of being into the learning experience.
- We encourage caregivers to utilize and/or create outdoor play spaces that reflect Indigenous pedagogy.

- We acknowledge that we all come with unconscious bias and actively commit to self-reflection to understand the role of unconscious bias in our work with all caregivers and families.
- We acknowledge the impacts of intergenerational trauma on families and young children and work to problem-solve alongside caregivers and families to determine solutions.
- We give all caregivers and families the benefit of the doubt when a challenge arises. We listen closely to caregivers and families to understand their experiences.
- We have a public-facing land acknowledgement that recognizes the traditional lands upon which our site is situated.
- We are committed to learning more about and following the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Calls to Action and creating a plan to implement the recommendations relevant to our program.
- We are learning more on how to work and collaborate with Indigenous organizations, Indigenous Elders, and/or Knowledge Keepers to inform our program practices.
- We are committed to learning about Indigenous-led early years and child care settings and incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing and being in our program.
- We prioritize the use of funding within our budget for staff and caregiver professional development training on the topics of Indigenous reconciliation.

Equity

Equity means that systemic barriers are identified and removed to ensure inclusive treatment for all children and families accessing our programs. It is a continuous process of fair and just distribution of resources to reduce harm and create a sense of belonging and well-being. Moving beyond equality, we strive to meet families where they are, understanding that historic and current realities mean that we will meet their needs through various strategies that may not look the same for everyone. We ensure each child receives appropriate and quality care for their needs and abilities.

Equity Commitments

We commit to the following to advance equity in our organization:

- We incorporate external feedback on learning materials (e.g., utilizing external subject matter experts).

- We support caregivers to implement a curriculum that supports the foundational principles of equity.
- Our organization works with external organizations to learn about recent best practices in the sector to implement new materials.
- We participate in the Subsidy Access Pilot and are working hard to understand barriers and inequitable processes in our waitlist procedures.
- We support the prioritization process for families experiencing crisis.
- We are committed to reviewing our internal policies with the lens of equity and inclusion, with the goal of eliminating structural barriers to entry and participation.

Diversity

Diversity means that we value and uplift the differences among people, encompassing race, ethnicity, age, ability, gender, sexuality, and beyond. We honour and follow the Ontario Human Rights Code, which outlines our responsibility as an early year's organization. We strive to deliver quality early years programs that celebrate our varied identities and cultures, provide materials that represent a wide range of life experiences, and promote engagement and active commitment.

Diversity Commitments

We commit to the following to advance diversity in our organization:

- We help caregivers access play materials that represent children of diverse cultures, races, ethnicities, languages, faiths, genders, family compositions, ages, and life experiences.
- We include reading materials from authors of diverse backgrounds, including those that are 2SLGBTQIA+, Indigenous, Black, and racialized.
- We implement signage at the entrance of our regional buildings indicating we are a safe space for all families and children.
- We encourage families and caregivers to highlight their language and cultural experiences within our program (e.g., food, music, dances, cultural traditions, etc.).
- We acknowledge and celebrate a wide range of cultural celebrations, particularly those celebrated by the caregivers and families in our community.

Participation

Participation means that every child has access, can participate meaningfully, and has the necessary supports in place. Genuine inclusion is more than just a child's presence; it ensures active, meaningful participation of every child regardless of mental, physical, or health needs, gender, ethnicity, race, religion, and beyond. How this occurs will be different for each child, based on individual abilities and needs. We achieve meaningful participation by ensuring all children have the means and ability to attend excursions, have play materials for a wide range of abilities, and monitor play so we are responsive to needs as they arise. Our program promotes participation by being responsive and attuned to the abilities of each child, allowing them the opportunity to express themselves based on their abilities and developmental level.

Participation Commitments

We commit to the following to advance participation in our organization:

- We plan play groups for caregivers and children in advance to allow them ample time to arrange for a child's participation needs.
- Staff and caregivers acknowledge and respect the needs of all children and ensure all children can participate in planned activities.
- Goal setting is implemented, in consultation and direct involvement with a child's family, to determine priorities for their learning and care.
- We explore early intervention options with families, who are encouraged to take an active role in decision-making.
- We actively document to remain responsive to children's individual participation needs.
- We support caregivers to make adjustments to routines and transitions to ensure a seamless, positive experience for all children.

Access

Access means that we reduce barriers to enrollment (i.e., physical, financial, program philosophies, etc.) to support a diverse group of children attending our programs, now and in the future. We ensure that all program areas, materials, and activities are accessible. We achieve these objectives by supporting caregivers to design the physical environment with accessibility in mind, such as using only the main floor of their homes, rearranging the environment, and/or providing adjustable heights for seating and activity areas. Our organization's information, including important notices and policies, are available in both print format and online through our website.

Access Commitments

We commit to the following to advance access in our organization:

- We prioritize placements from families in crisis and referred by Family and Children Services or through the shelter system.
- Our caregiver contracts support children from equity-seeking groups or identified priority groups.
- We are understanding of families' different financial realities and are mindful of this throughout our billing practices.
- Our regional sites are physically accessible, regardless of physical ability.
- We support caregivers to ensure materials and equipment are visible and at the children's height so that every child can access items independently.
- We support caregivers to offer adjustments to equipment and furniture to reduce or remove barriers (e.g., height-adjustable tables and seating).
- We support caregivers to provide areas for different levels of stimulation (e.g., quiet zones, movement zones, etc.).
- We support caregivers to provide various colours, lighting options, textures, and seating options.
- We support caregivers to offer toileting modifications.
- Our organization's information is easy to find on the internet and through print materials.
- Our organization's website complies with digital accessibility guidelines as outlined in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).
- We translate our organization's information to be available in additional languages and encourage interpretation supports when needed.
- We will translate parent handbooks, website, and Home Child Care program information as needed.

Support for Diverse Abilities

Supports for Diverse Abilities means that we take a strength-based approach when looking at individual needs and supports. Diverse abilities can include behavioural, communication, intellectual, physical, or other additional and intersecting needs. We work with caregivers to help create a welcoming and nurturing environment where everyone can thrive and where each person feels a sense of belonging. We foster supportive and empowering relationships and embrace the whole person.

We make every reasonable effort to ensure children with diverse abilities are included, supported, and given the tools they need for a successful experience.

Supports for Diverse Abilities Commitments

We commit to the following to provide support for diverse abilities in our organization:

- We make all reasonable efforts to enroll children with additional support needs.
- A child's additional support needs do not hinder a family's ability to enroll in our programs.
- We support families to have access to the hours and days of care they need.
- During the enrolment process, we encourage families to share information on their children's needs to be able to better support them.
- We strive to empower families to build their capacity for self-advocacy.
- When applicable, we utilize resource professionals (e.g., resource consultants, occupational therapists, speech and language pathologists, etc.).
- We complete Individualized Plans for children identified with special needs and special rights.
- We have a dedicated staff member to support and coach caregivers that care for children with diverse abilities.
- We support staff with diverse abilities to ensure they have equal opportunity to succeed and have a sense of community and belonging. We respect the individual's privacy, confidentiality, and autonomy.

Supporting All Positions

Supporting All Positions means that we value the diversity and experiences of the staff and caregivers in our program and reflect this through access to meaningful professional learning opportunities. We strive to provide open communication channels to encourage staff and caregiver feedback and promote continuous improvements in our organization. Our organization is actively committed to supporting staff and caregivers from diverse backgrounds (i.e., of various ethnic origins, races, sexualities, genders, etc.) by providing specific supports, resources and specialized training dedicated to different equity-seeking groups.

Supporting All Positions Commitments

We commit to the following to support staff and caregivers in our organization:

- We provide opportunities to staff and caregivers on an ongoing basis, for professional learning.
- We provide training for staff and caregivers on how to best support 2SLGBTQIA+ families and children.
- **We actively support staff and caregivers who initiate a concern about their work environment or interactions with families or colleagues, and work toward a solution.**
- We acknowledge that we all come with unconscious bias and are conducting a review of our hiring processes and interview questions to make the hiring and contracting process more equitable.
- We commit to hiring staff and contracting with caregivers that represent diverse groups (i.e., Indigenous, Black and racialized groups) and the community of which they serve.
- We offer mental health supports tailored to the diverse needs of staff from equity-seeking groups.
- We support staff through equitable hiring practices, benefit packages and competitive salaries.
- Staff are well-informed of the reporting mechanisms in place should they experience discrimination in the workplace.
- We allocate adequate time for staff to attend professional learning events and workshops.
- Professional learning opportunities are available for staff and incorporate principles of reconciliation, diversity, equity, and inclusion. Trainings and

workshops speak to frameworks such as anti-racism, anti-Black racism, and anti-oppressive practice.

- **Staff engage in reflective practice and self-directed learning that incorporates principles of reconciliation, diversity, equity, and inclusion.**
- Staff participate in communities of practice (COPs).
- We commit to having a diverse interview panel when hiring staff for new positions.
- Management staff support Indigenous, Black and racialized staff through mentorship and coaching and help identify pathways to leadership for those with interest.

Accountability Measures for Staff, Caregivers and Families

The Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC) recognizes the dignity and worth of every person and to provide equal rights and opportunities without discrimination. The protected grounds recognized in the OHRC are: age, ancestry, colour, race, citizenship, ethnic origin, place of origin, creed, disability, family status, marital status, gender identity, gender expression, sex, and sexual orientation.

The College of Early Childhood Educators (CECE) outlines a Code of Ethics, which must be adhered to by all registered early childhood educators (RECE). The Code outlines a RECE's responsibility to children, families, colleagues, the community, and the public, which includes respecting the diversity, languages, and culture of all. If you have a concern about the conduct or actions of a RECE, you may complete the [CECE Complaint Intake Form](#) to report.

Additionally, RECEs have a duty to report any child abuse, child neglect, or suspicion of harm to children. The CECE's [Professional Advisory: Duty to Report](#) document provides information on the professional obligation of RECEs, and includes a section on Bias, Racism and Stereotypes in Reporting to a CAS (p. 14) and overall guidance to support the reporting process.

If a family has a concern about their child's care, they may schedule a time to meet with the child care provider or the consultant to discuss the issue. 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 the Home Child Care Management Team.

If the concern cannot be resolved, the family may report their complaint to the Ministry of Education: Licensed child care: childcare_ontario@ontario.ca, 1-877-510-5333.

Further information on the complaint process can be found on the [Government of Ontario website](#).