



## **Region Of Waterloo Home Child Care**

### **Parent Handbook**

Dear Home Child Care Parent,

Welcome to Home Child Care!

The purpose of this handbook is to give you helpful information about Home Child Care. The information in this handbook will be useful to you now, as a new parent in our program, and later, as a reference guide to our program and its policies.

Please call us any time you have questions or concerns. We want to work in partnership with you to make Home Child Care a positive experience for you and your child.

Office Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday - Friday

Consultants' voice mail available 24 hours a day

**Waterloo Office** – 99 Regina St S, Waterloo, ON N2J 4G6

**Kitchener Office** – 20 Weber St. E., Kitchener, ON N2H 1C3

**Cambridge Office** – 150 Main St, Cambridge, ON N1R 6P9

Phone: 519-575-4400 and ask for Home Child Care

To request an alternative format of this document, please call 519-575-4400 or email [regionalenquiries@regionofwaterloo.ca](mailto:regionalenquiries@regionofwaterloo.ca).

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## **Region of Waterloo Home Child Care Welcome**

### **Who We Are**

Welcome to the Region of Waterloo Home Child Care program. Our program is the largest municipally operated Home Child Care program in Ontario. Our staff are Region of Waterloo employees and registered with the College of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario. We contract Home Child Care services from approved caregivers and visit their homes to support them and to ensure they continue to meet Home Child Care policies and the Child Care and Early Years Act legislation.

### **Vision**

The Region of Waterloo has a vibrant, comprehensive system of early learning and childcare that supports the healthy development of all children in our community.

### **Mission**

To be leaders in the development and delivery of early learning and childcare programs and services by:

- Putting the needs and best interests of children first
- Promoting standards of excellence in early childhood education, care and support
- Meeting the needs of children and their families for quality, flexible, accessible and affordable services
- Planning and managing services that are responsive to community needs

## **Philosophy and Program Statement**

The Region of Waterloo Home Child Care program views children as competent, capable of complex thinking, curious and rich in potential. We strive to ensure all children receive quality childcare, which promotes healthy, social, emotional, cognitive and physical development. We do this by:

Assisting parents in choosing care for their children in a supervised home environment that respects all cultures and family values.

### **Established by:**

- **Valuing diversity and inclusion across the program**
- **Asking parents questions about values and beliefs**
- **Sharing information about the caregiver with the parent**
- **Promoting strong partnerships between the parent and caregiver**

Supporting and endorsing positive and supportive learning environments in a home based setting which fosters children's exploration, play and inquiry.

### **Established by:**

- **Monthly observations at home visits to caregiver homes**
- **Providing training opportunities and other resources to consultants and caregivers**
- **Providing pedagogical leadership to caregivers to arrange their homes as supportive learning environments**

Involving local community partners when appropriate and allow these partners to support children, families and our agency.

### **Established by:**

- **Conducting referrals to other agencies as needed in consultation with the parent and caregiver**

- **Conducting case conferences to foster support**
- **Organizing joint events with libraries, community centres and other agencies**
- **Planning and organizing playgroups to encourage caregiver networking and supportive learning environments**

Encouraging children to interact and communicate in a positive way and supporting their ability to self-regulate.

**Established by:**

- **Consultants and caregivers engaging children in conversations that encourage them to understand their feelings**
- **Consultants and caregivers engaging children in problem solving**
- **Sharing resources about positive communication and self-regulation with caregivers, parents and children**
- **Promoting a safe environment to engage children in reflective learning**

Providing indoor and outdoor play as well as active play, rest and quiet time through a blend of child initiated and adult supported experiences.

**Established by:**

- **Caregivers utilizing outdoor spaces daily (e.g. backyards, parks, walks, trails)**
- **Providing a balance of active play, rest and quiet time**
- **Engaging children in the planning of activities**
- **Consultants exploring options with caregivers to fully utilize their unique Home Child Care space**

Offering resources and providing consultation to caregivers in child development, behavior guidance, nutrition, health, safety and other child related topics.

**Established by:**

- **Consultants reviewing these items with caregivers during monthly visits to their home**
- **Offering workshops and resources on these topics to both consultants and caregivers**
- **Referring caregivers, parents and children to other agencies as needed**

Facilitating and encouraging continuous professional learning amongst Home Child caregivers and staff.

**Established by:**

- **Encouraging continuous professional learning for consultants and caregivers, promoting ongoing self-reflection**
- **Providing conferences, workshops and resources for consultants and caregivers**

Seeking ongoing communication with parents about their children and the program, looking to incorporate feedback into future planning.

**Established by:**

- **Caregivers and consultants communicating with parents on a regular basis regarding their children**
- **Seeking feedback from parents through conversations and surveys**
- **Using parent feedback in future planning of the program**

Supporting caregivers to ensure that they continue to meet Home Child Care policies and the Child Care and Early Years Act.

**Established by:**

- **Ongoing communication between consultants and caregivers to confirm they understand requirements**
- **Monthly visits to homes to document compliance**

- **Quarterly house inspections completed to ensure further compliance**
- **Developing policies that support children, parents and caregivers**

This Program Statement is reviewed annually by the Home Child Care program. When reviewing the Program Statement, we take into consideration feedback from parents, caregivers and staff. This feedback is received both formally (e.g. surveys) and informally through conversations and observations.

## Prohibited Practices

The Region of Waterloo wants to ensure each child has a safe and positive experience that promotes their healthy growth and development. Consultants will observe caregiver interactions with children ensuring that they align with our program statement and beliefs in adult-child interactions. The following practices are prohibited at all times in our caregiver's homes:

- corporal punishment of the child;
- 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;
- 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;
- 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;
- all forms of abuse including physical, psychological, sexual, emotional and verbal.
- depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding; or
- inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

**Region of Waterloo Home Child Care operates under regulations set out in The Child Care and Early Years Act.**

## Home Child Care

### What is Home Child Care?

Home Child Care is daily care given in an approved private residence. It is childcare given to a maximum of 6 children from birth to twelve years of age. The caregiver's children under 4 years are included in this count.

Our agency is licensed by the Ministry of Education. Each home is visited and inspected regularly by a Home Child Care Consultant. The caregivers and our program must follow the legislation in the Child Care and Early Years Act.

Our aim is to assist you in choosing a caregiver who best suits the needs of your child and your family.

### Who Are The Staff in Home Child Care?

All Home Child Care staff have a diploma or degree in Early Childhood Education, which is obtained from a Community College or University program. They are registered with the College of Early Childhood Educators (RECE).

Your consultant will work with you to find a suitable placement for your child and will visit your child regularly at the caregiver's home. During regular visits to your child's caregiver, your consultant will make sure the program policies and Child Care and Early Years Act legislations are being met.

Your consultant's supervisor or the manager of Home Child Care is also available to answer your questions, comments or hear your concerns.

Do not hesitate to call!

### Who Are the Caregivers And How Are They Chosen?

Caregivers are chosen through a process, which includes:

- a home safety Quarterly inspection
- a file check with Family and Children's Services
- personal references
- a criminal record check for the vulnerable sector
- an interview



Once approved, they sign an agreement with the Region of Waterloo as an independent contractor and agree to follow the regulations in the Child Care and Yearly Years Act.

Home child caregivers are offered opportunities to attend workshops, playgroups and courses as a way to stay current in early childhood education practices.

All caregiver homes are smoke free.

### **Hours of Operation**

The program can be available seven days a week, up to 24 hours a day depending on caregiver availability.

### **Parent Forms**

Your Consultant will send you a number of forms to complete prior to your child starting with our program. Please ensure that these forms are completed—incomplete forms can result in a delay to your child starting care.

## **Process for Referral to Caregiver Home**

### **Before Choosing Your Caregiver**

It is important for you and your child to visit the prospective caregiver before your child starts care. Your consultant will try to offer you more than one caregiver to meet. You and your child will decide on the best fit.

Introduce your child to the caregiver and talk about what the child will call the caregiver. You can expect some shyness from your child. Your child may just want to watch what is going on around them. Talk about the items on the parent checklist with the caregiver. Have the caregiver show you where your child will play, eat and rest.

If you feel this is a good setting, please follow up with your consultant to review your decision, start date and to complete forms.

### **The First Day**

The first day at the caregiver's home can be hard for you and your child. Give yourself extra time when dropping off your child. Your child may need time to separate from you.

Reassure your child that you will be back and give a time of day as a guideline (e.g. I'll be here to pick you up after naptime, or during outside time). Always say goodbye - never try to sneak away.

Younger children might like having a favourite stuffed animal or blanket from home. Older children may like to bring a favourite game or toy. In either case, you may want to contact the caregiver later to see how your child is settling.

## **Your Child in Home Child Care**

During visits to the caregiver's home, the consultant involves the children in age appropriate crafts and activities.

### **Infants/Toddlers**

Infants in Home Child Care will develop a special relationship with their caregiver. It is very important to talk to your caregiver about your child's growth and development.

You must supply and label all food, formula or milk with your child's name until he/she is able to eat table food. Feeding instructions for all infants less than one year of age must be given to the caregiver in writing on the "Child's Feeding Schedule" and updated as changes or additions to the diet occur.

Infants should have an extra set or two of clothing and a good supply of diapers at the caregiver's home.

### **Preschoolers**

Preschoolers in Home Child Care have a chance to be in a group setting and get special attention from a caring adult.

Caregivers will plan a day that includes:

- early learning activities
- outdoor play
- quiet activities
- nutritious snacks and meals

Please remember to dress your child in comfortable play clothes suitable to the season as outdoor play is an important part of each day

### **School Age Children**

School age children in Home Child Care have the chance to be a part of their home neighborhood. Children this age might go to a caregiver's home before school, after school and on school holidays. Caregivers work with the children to plan a varied program of activities.

Parent, caregiver and consultant need to work together to set boundaries for the school age child's outdoor activities ("Outdoor Supervision" form).

If your child is suspended from school for any reason, it is important that the Home Child Care office is informed.

You must speak to your consultant or a supervisor before further childcare services are used.

### **Child Development/Evaluation**

We will give you regular feedback on how your child is progressing. Consultants contact parents every three months formally as well as many other informal contacts.

We have a range of supports and services available to you and your child should you have any concerns about your child's development. These include: referrals for speech assessments, occupational therapy, physiotherapy assessments and behavioural support services. If you would like more information about any of these services, please speak to your consultant.

### **Developmental Screening**

Caregivers and consultants will observe your child's developmental progress. Consultants use the Looksee Developmental Screening Tool which is a checklist designed to help monitor your child's development.

### **Sleeping Arrangements and Supervision**

Parents complete the Sleeping Arrangement Permission Form with their consultant and caregiver. The form includes our practices for sleep policy according to the Ministry of Education. It is important that your requests for your child's sleep are met. The caregiver will do an hourly documented visual sleep check during the day when your child is sleeping. Our full policy can be [found here](#).

### **Emergency Contact**

In the event that you are unable to escort your child(ren) from the caregiver's home, they can be released to one of the people whom you have named on the Application and Consent Form.

### **Supervision of Volunteers, Students and Other Persons in the Home**

Caregivers are solely responsible for each child in their care. Your Home Child Care consultant and caregiver will tell you who else is living in their home. Students /

volunteers may come to the home. They are directly supervised by the Home Child Care consultant or caregiver at all times. There is no unsupervised contact. You will be informed if a student is planning a visit in your Home Child Care location.

Staff from outside agencies who may visit your child in the caregiver home will sign a Release of Information Agreement and specify access to your child. These staff will also have current criminal reference checks. Your consultant and caregiver will also sign a document agreeing to the access of your child. You will also sign the Release of Information document.

### **Serious Occurrences**

The safety and wellbeing of the children in our program is our highest priority. An example of a serious occurrence is an unplanned disruption of the normal operations of a Home Child Care premise. The Ministry of Education requires that our Home Child Care locations post information about serious occurrences that happen in homes. In order to provide transparency and access to information, a “Serious Occurrence Notification Form” must be posted at the contracted home in a visible area for 10 days. We are required to report serious occurrences to the Ministry of Education.

The posting will give parents information about the incident, outline follow-up actions taken, and list outcomes, while respecting the privacy of the individuals involved. Many factors lead to a serious occurrence report. A serious occurrence does not necessarily mean that the contracted home is not in compliance with licensing requirements or that the children are at risk in the home.

### **Standing and Recreation Bodies of Water - On Premise**

The Ministry of Education specifies that we prohibit the use of and access to all standing bodies of water (e.g., ponds, rivers, lakes, streams) and recreational in-ground/above-ground swimming, portable/“kiddie”/inflatable wading-type, and hydro-massage pools, hot tubs, and spas located on the premises of any single or multi-dwelling private residence, including the caregiver’s own house, townhouse.

Swimming pools must also be fenced and or emptied and access from the house or yard must be locked. Ornamental ponds are included in this policy.

Use of caregivers own pool must be approved by Home Child Care and can only be used by children 6 years and older.

### **Standing and Recreation Bodies of Water – Off Premise**

Caregivers may decide to use Public pools where there is a qualified lifeguard on duty at all times. Visits to lakes or other bodies of water for swimming not on caregiver premises require a lifeguard on duty. Caregiver is still to directly supervisor children at all times and have signed consent from parents.

If you have any questions or concerns, please ask your Home Child Care consultant.

### **Outdoor Play and Supervision**

The Private Home Child Care legislation states, that supervision of outdoor play be agreed upon by the parent, caregiver and Home Child Care consultant. An Outdoor Play Supervision Agreement must be completed before a child starts in caregiver home.

Children under 5 years of age must be directly supervised and with the caregiver at all times.

For children 5 years and older, the outdoor supervision agreement will vary with the maturity of the individual child and the location of the caregiver's home, complex or apartment building where the caregiver resides.

## **Enrollment and Service Termination**

### **Admission and Discharge Policy**

The program is available to children newborn to age twelve. Once a parent has met with their Home Child Care consultant, the prospective caregiver(s) name(s) and address(s) will be supplied by the consultant. Once a parent selects a Caregiver, their Consultant will send them forms to complete.

If you would like your child to go to a different caregiver home, you must contact your consultant. You are required to give your current caregiver two weeks (10 business days) of notice. We may not be able to provide care during this period if notice is not given. Home Child Care can be used until your child's 13th birthday.

### **Withdrawal from Program/Placement Change**

Two weeks' notice is required to withdraw your child from the program. Fees will not be adjusted if sufficient notice is not provided.

## **Making the Placement Work**

### **Arrival**

- Always give a written schedule to your caregiver if your days or times of work/school vary.
- Always go with your child to and from the caregiver's home at the agreed upon time each day.
- Advise your caregiver as early as possible if your child is going to be absent or arriving late.
- Tell your caregiver how your child is feeling, how their night was, etc.
- Please bring clothing that is appropriate for the weather as the children will be outside for a minimum of 2 hours each day (except in extreme weather conditions).

### **Departures and Release of Children**

- Your child and the caregiver will be expecting you at a certain time. If you must be late please let the caregiver know.
- If you are sending someone else to pick-up your child, you must let the caregiver know in advance as she will not give your children to anyone without being informed by you, the parent.

### **Confidentiality**

We do not share personal information about your family and child with other parents/guardians or agencies without your written consent. We are not able to discuss personal circumstances of other children in the home with you and ask that you respect this in your conversations with your caregiver and consultant.

### **Opportunities for Parent Involvement**

We encourage parents/guardians to be involved in our program. Parents are invited to join us at playgroups that are planned at community centres, Ontario Early Years Centres and public libraries as well as other events scheduled throughout the year. Parents/guardians are asked to complete surveys to evaluate their satisfaction with the program. The feedback helps us to plan for our program and to look at areas of improvement or change.

### **Time to Talk**

- Talk regularly with your caregiver about your child. Discuss things like changes in routines, health, sleep or any other concerns you may have.
- Plan a time to talk that is good for both of you, for example, a telephone call during the day or evening.
- Share good things as well as concerns.
- School age children may want to take part in making decisions that involve them (i.e. outdoor boundaries, activities, snacks).

Your Home Child Care consultant can assist, please call anytime.

## Questions Parents Frequently Ask

### **What will my child do all day?**

Caregivers plan a program of different activities that are appropriate for the age, interest and developmental level of the children in their care. The children's day must include time outside, quiet activities and creative activities.

Caregivers are encouraged to take the children to the local park and on outings in the neighbourhood. The program does not permit caregivers to enroll in programs for themselves (such as bowling, fitness classes) and to place the children with another person.

While not all children need a mid-day nap, young children benefit from periods of quiet relaxation to balance their day.

A daily rest/sleep time must be arranged that:

- Each toddler or preschool child who receives child care for six hours or more in a day has a rest period not exceeding two hours in length: and
- A toddler, in preschool or kindergarten child is permitted to sleep, rest or engage in quiet activities based on the based on the child's needs.

Your consultant and caregiver will complete a Sleeping Arrangement Permission Form.

### **What if my child needs to stay overnight?**

If your child is in care overnight, please discuss the sleeping arrangements with your caregiver. Each child must have their own bed. Basements may not be used for sleeping unless there is a direct exit to the outside. Your child should be comfortable and not feel isolated from the rest of the household.

### **What if my child is sick?**

Consideration of the other children and adults in the caregiver's home is important. Caregivers are not required to care for your child when they are sick. You will need to make other plans for your child in the event of illness. It is important for you to have a "back-up" childcare plan. Your consultant may be able to help you with this.

If your child becomes sick during the day, the caregiver will call you. You may need to take your child home or to your doctor.

## Administration of Medication?

Only medication that you bring may be given to your child by the caregiver.

- Prescription medication must be in the original container, clearly labeled with your child's name, name of the medication, the dosage, the date of purchase, and instructions for storage and administration.
- Non-prescription medication (Tylenol, Tempra, cough preparations, creams, sunscreen, etc....) must be in original container or package and must be clearly labelled with the child's name, name of medication, the dosage and instructions for storage.

In order for the caregiver to give your child **any** medication, you must give permission by completing an "[Administration of Medication](#)" form that you can get from your caregiver.

## Children with Allergies

- An [Anaphylaxis Plan](#) is created for any child enrolled in Home Child Care who is identified as having a severe allergic reaction that requires an Epinephrine Auto Injector.
- A copy of the Individual Anaphylaxis Plan Form is posted in the caregiver's home and in the child's file. All Home Child Caregivers are required to review the Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan including temporary Home Child Caregivers who may be providing care from time to time.
- For food allergies, the key to preventing an anaphylactic emergency is absolute avoidance of the allergen. People with food allergies should not share food or eat unmarked / bulk foods or products with a "may contain" warning.
  - All foods brought from home must be labelled with the child's name
  - Children with food allergies cannot share food with other children
  - Caregivers must share food allergies with other parents using their program, without disclosing the name of the child with an allergy.
- The parent reviews and approves the Individual Anaphylaxis Plan Form, which is

initiated by the Region of Waterloo Consultant, the Home Child Caregiver and the parent. The Individual Anaphylaxis Plan Form following administration of an Epinephrine Auto-Injector must include a 911 call for an ambulance/emergency medical response.

- Caregiver, parents and the HCC consultant will review and develop a strategy to reduce the risk of exposure to anaphylactic causative agents.

### **Children with Allergies**

- Epinephrine Auto-Injectors will be stored in an inaccessible location in the Home Child Caregiver's home to ensure quick access when and if needed. Epinephrine Auto-Injectors along with instructions for administration will be stored in a pouch, which is affixed to the medication. An Epinephrine auto-Injector should be kept in the Home Child Caregiver's home anytime the child is in attendance.
- A child may carry his or her own asthma medication or emergency allergy medication in accordance with the procedures established. When child is in attendance in the caregiver home use of the medication is recorded on the [Individual Anaphylaxis Plan Form](#) and medication administration is recorded on the [Administration of Prescribed and Non Prescribed Medication form](#).
- Epinephrine Auto-Injectors are to be taken on all excursions that the child participates in.
- Training and administration instructions for use of the epinephrine Auto-Injector will be provided through the parent, physician or other qualified professional.
- Epinephrine Auto-Injectors must be in their original package and checked regularly for expiry dates.

**Note:** School age children may be allowed to carry their own emergency allergy medication as long as it is clearly labelled.

In order for the caregiver to give your child **any** medication, you must give permission by completing an "[Administration of Medication](#)" form that you can get from your caregiver.

Your caregiver has a choice whether or not she wishes to give medication to the children in her care.

### **What if there is an emergency with my child?**

In all cases of accident, injury or other serious occurrences involving your child, your caregiver will take the following steps:

1. The caregiver will take immediate action to help the child and call 911 if she needs help from police, fire, ambulance or other emergency services.
2. The caregiver will make plans for emergency care for the other children in her care.
3. The caregiver will call you, the parent.
4. The caregiver will call the Home Child Care office.
5. The caregiver will call the school if an incident occurs to a child who is expected at school.
6. The caregiver will fill out an Incident Form and have it signed by you. The form must be given by the caregiver to the Home Child Care office within 24 hours.

### **Will my child receive meals and snacks?**

A caregiver will give the children meals and snacks appropriate for the time of day. Caregivers are asked to follow Canada's Food guide when planning meals.

**Note:** Parents must supply food or payment for the following:

- additional meals, outside of normal meal times
- special diets for religious or health reason
- school snacks, bagged lunches or special event costs for school aged children

All infants under one year of age require written feeding instructions.

**\*\*All food brought from home must be labelled with the child's name.**

### **How will the caregiver guide my child's behaviour?**

Caregivers will practice behaviour guidance methods that support your child to grow and develop as a healthy individual. The Caregiver or anyone in the household will not use time out, slapping, etc. or harsh or degrading measures that would humiliate or undermine a child's self-respect - even with your permission.

Methods of behaviour guidance are discussed with caregivers during their initial interview and annually thereafter. Caregivers also review behavior guidance with other members of their household.

### **Parent Issues, Concerns and Complaints**

Concerns about your child's care should be dealt with immediately. Please talk about these concerns with your caregiver. You can also discuss your concerns with your consultant.

If it is not resolved or you do not feel comfortable talking to your caregiver, please call the Home Child Care office and talk to your consultant, a supervisor or the manager. It is our duty to report any concerns about abuse and neglect to Family and Children's Services.

Any concerns about abuse/or neglect should be reported by you directly to Family and Children's Services.

Kitchener (519) 576-0540 / Cambridge (519) 623-6970

### **Complaints or Concerns**

[Parent Issues and Concerns Policy](#) is available online for review.

### **What if my child is not getting along well at the caregiver's home?**

Talk to your caregiver about your concerns. It is important to approach issues in a positive manner with the plan of working toward a solution that is best for your child and others in the home. Your Home Child Care consultant is always willing to meet with you and the caregiver to try and resolve the problem.

**Note:** If you would like your child to go to a different caregiver home, contact your consultant. You must give your current caregiver two weeks of notice.

### **Who will care for my child during my caregiver's vacation?**

Your child's caregiver will inform you and your consultant of their vacation plans as far in advance as possible. Often, parents and caregivers are able to work out their vacation plans together.

Otherwise, notify your consultant as soon as possible so child care with another caregiver may be arranged. We cannot guarantee another caregiver will be available, please try to have a back up plan if possible. Please also notify your consultant of your vacation plans. Please remember, that we can only pay **approved contracted caregivers** to do childcare.

### **What if my caregiver is sick or suddenly cannot care for my child?**

Sometimes your caregiver may be unable to do care and will call you as early as possible. You may call your consultant and ask for another caregiver. Your consultant will try to offer other care; however, this is not always possible. It is wise to have an emergency back-up plan of your own. If another Caregiver is available, you will have additional paperwork to complete prior to care starting, which normally can be done quickly through electronic forms.

If the caregiver is not able to continue to care for your child during the day, she will call you to arrange for the child to be picked up. Even in an emergency situation, the caregiver must make sure that a responsible adult over the age of 18 is in charge of the children at all times.

### **School Drop off and Pick up**

Schools have different policies for who the responsible person can be. The arrangement for escort of the child is the responsibility of the parent. A caregiver may agree to do this, but it is not part of the responsibility for providing childcare. Parents must write the name of the "escort" on the Outdoor Play and Supervision Form.

## Fees

**Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) Plan** – the Home Child Care program has opted into CWELCC. As of April 1, 2022 fees for eligible children were reduced by 25%. On January 1, 2023, non-subsidized child care fees were further reduced by 52.75% of the original rates, and eligible parent contributions were reduced by 50% for parents accessing child care subsidy. As of January 1, 2025, fees for eligible children have been further reduced to a daily fee of \$22.00. Parents who are currently paying less than \$22.00 per day will continue to pay the lesser amount. For an up-to-date list of our parent fees which include the CWELCC rebate, [please visit our website](#).

Children turning 6 years old between the months of January and June will be enrolled in the CWELCC program until June 30 of that year by remaining at the preschool rate. For children turning 6 years old between the months of July and December they will be enrolled in CWELCC until the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the following month.

**Subsidy** - is available for eligible families. If you require subsidy call (519) 575-4400 and ask for the Subsidy office or [apply for subsidy online](#). Some families may be eligible for subsidy but still have to pay a portion of their care cost with a daily parent contribution. Effective May 1, 2023 the Region of Waterloo began collecting parent contributions. Families will no longer pay their caregiver directly for their parent contribution.

**Payment of Fees** – our program collects fees through pre-authorized debit (automatic withdrawal from your account). Your Consultant will work to collect the relevant banking details. Fees will be automatically withdrawn 5 business days after you receive your invoice (on or around the 17<sup>th</sup> of each month)

**Fees and Invoices** -Fees owing to the Region of Waterloo are charged to you once the month has been completed – you can expect your invoice on or around the 10<sup>th</sup> business day of the month that follows your care (Example: You will receive an invoice for May care on the 10<sup>th</sup> business day of June). Your monthly fees are calculated based on the number of days your child is enrolled to attend the program multiplied by the daily rate you pay. Your invoice will be emailed to the email address on your fee agreement. You will also receive a statement following the invoice, which will show any adjustments from the previous month. CWELCC rebates will be applied directly to your account each month but may appear on a separate invoice.

**Statements** - The statement is a running record of invoices and payments the Finance Department has processed during the prior month. The statement will list any outstanding balances and applicable finance charges. In order for your payment to show up on the statement it must be received by the last day of the month when it is due.

**Changes to fee schedule** - any permanent changes to your child's schedule require two weeks' notice to the program.

**Withdrawal from Program/Placement Change** - two weeks' notice is required to withdraw your child from the program. Fees will not be adjusted if sufficient notice is not provided.

**Overdue Accounts** - you are required to pay for your childcare each month. Our program uses pre-authorized debit. If there are insufficient funds in your account, full-fee families will be charged a \$35 NSF fee. After a second failed withdrawal, a Supervisor from our program will follow up to ensure payment. Finance charges are applied to any overdue accounts on a monthly basis.

**Attendance** - parents must verify their child's/children's attendance and absence by signing the attendance register at the end of each month. Parents must obtain and keep a copy of the attendance register for their records.

**Contacts/Questions** - if you have questions about your invoice, daily fee adjustments or changing hours or days of care please speak with your Home Child Care consultant. If you have questions about your payments, statement or outstanding account please contact Finance at

(519) 575-4490 or e-mail [ARAdmin@regionofwaterloo.ca](mailto:ARAdmin@regionofwaterloo.ca)

**Fee Payment Policy for Absences due to Vacation, Statutory Holidays or Illness** - billing is based on the child's schedule. Caregivers will bill absent for Statutory Holidays, Vacation and Sick for sick days if it is a day your child would normally attend. You are billed for these types of days to hold the space. If the caregiver is unavailable or the child was not scheduled to attend, the caregiver cannot bill.

**Additional Days** - If you have confirmed extra days of care with your caregiver, you must give 24 hours' notice to cancel or you are responsible for payment. If you are receiving child care subsidy and use days of care that are not approved, you will be



billed the total cost of care. This also applies if you run out of absent day coverage through subsidy before the end of the year. Please see rates of care on our [website](#).

**Billing for confirmed care** – If parent forms have been submitted and parents have verbally agreed to a placement with the Caregiver or Consultant, we consider the placement confirmed. If a parent changes their mind beyond that point, notice fees will apply.

### **Attendance Registers**

At the end of each month, your child's caregiver will ask you to sign the attendance register for your child's care. When you sign the attendance register, you are making sure that the information is correct.

- Never sign a blank or incomplete attendance form
- Never sign an attendance form before the last day of care in the month (unless your child will be absent and the absent days are already marked in)
- Always get a copy of the attendance register after you sign it

## Parent Checklist

**(Please take this with you when you first visit the caregiver.)**

1. In what part of the house will my child be spending most of his/her time? Where will he/she eat/rest?
  - discuss child's sleep habits
  - Time of nap, etc.
2. What kind of activities will you be doing with my child throughout the day?
  - daily routine
  - special trips
  - craft activities
  - outdoor play (supervision)
  - appropriate play materials (toys)
  - TV/Video, computer limitations
3. What do you do when a child misbehaves?
4. What kinds of snacks and meals will you be providing?
5. How would you make my child feel comfortable in your home?
6. What I am responsible for bringing? For example:
  - clothing
  - infant equipment
  - extra meals
  - favorite toy, etc.
7. Overtime or extra hours of care required
8. Arrival and pick-up time

9. Administering medication

10. When is an appropriate time to discuss any issues, which might arise during your child's placement?

## **Resource Websites**

[Region of Waterloo Home Child Care](#)

[Child Care Subsidy](#)

[Ontario Early Years Centers](#)

[Ministry of Education – Child Care Rules](#)



## Region of Waterloo Home Child Care Equity and Inclusion Commitment

### Organization Information

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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](mailto:MGalloway@regionofwaterloo.ca).

### Introduction

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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

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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

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**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

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**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

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**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

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**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

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**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

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**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

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**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

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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](mailto:childcare_ontario@ontario.ca), 1-877-510-5333.

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