



Oak Park
*Neighbourhood
Centre*

Preschool Handbook



Who We Are

Support, Connect, Contribute. People Belong, Families are Strong, Neighbours care, Everyone Shares

We are a community based agency that began in 1999 with 6 women meeting together. We have an inviting, non-institutional, barrier free space that is a reflection of the needs, talents and gifts of our neighbours and friends so that it is relevant to the whole community.

- To relieve poverty by providing basic amenities - food, education, counselling and clothing.
- To provide parenting education and support
- To provide educational, recreational, and social opportunities for people of all abilities

Our centre has various programs including: multicultural programs (Spanish, Japanese, German and South Asian), a food bank, community garden, financial literacy & support, tutoring, parent support group and Child Development Resource Centre. We run infant, family, preschool and school-age programs. We provide free or affordable space to a number of local agencies.

Program Philosophy

Our program supports The Ministry of Educations “How does learning Happen?” document. sees children as competent, capable, curious, contributors and rich in potential. All of the programs at the centre reflect our Vision of “Support, Connect, Contribute”. This relates to the importance of helping children reach their full potential for well-being and success; helping them to connect to each other, the centre and adults; and providing opportunities for them to share their unique talents and gifts. The Preschool prepares children age 2.5-5 years for school routines so that they are comfortable when they start school and know what to expect. Children learn classroom expectations like taking turns, how to sit in a circle for teacher directed time, learn ABC’s, days of the week and months of the year rhymes. Children also learn to recognize and print their name, learn colours, shapes and early math and literacy skills. This is evaluated annually with surveys to ensure we are meeting our goals.

Relationships

We support positive relationships between staff –parent; child-child; staff-child, parent-parent and parent-child and with community partners. We understand the family is the primary source of knowledge concerning the child and support that relationship. We support families and we encourage family members to share skills, seek and receive assistance as needed. Staff use their knowledge of child development and positive reinforcement to interact appropriately with children and to role model for parents. They learn and respond to each child’s unique way of communicating, respond to the child’s interests and model the behaviour they want to teach. Positive relationships between children are encouraged and supported. We recognize emerging social skills and respect the child’s developmental level.

Environment

The atmosphere is homelike, welcoming, safe and comfortable for children, families and community partners. Materials, activities and equipment meet the developmental needs of the children. Occasionally the park around the centre is used for play. Staff set up the environment to support positive experiences and provide child initiated experiences that foster exploration, play and inquiry. A selection of toys are rotated to encourage play and learning. Children experience smooth transitions in the programs. A balance between quiet and active play is provided. The importance of Support, Connect and Contribute are reflected daily.

Diversity and Inclusion

Staff understand that there are many different child-rearing practices and are respectful of families’ choices. We support, honour and appreciate cultural diversity. All children, regardless of challenge, are welcome and accommodated at our program. Our programs are adjusted when needed to ensure that all children are able to fully participate in all aspects of the program. To ensure we have a supportive learning environment no more than two children age 2.5 to 5 in our preschool will have a developmental challenge. Parents are always included in ensuring inclusion in our programs. Individualized support plans with descriptive instructions are put in place developed with the parent, child and supporting agencies. The Executive Director of OPNC will report to the board of directors at least annually on inclusive activities.

Prohibited Practices

Our centre must be a safe place for everyone. Therefore hitting, shaking, spanking, kicking, pushing, shoving, grabbing, biting, squeezing, pinching, humiliating language, yelling, screaming or threatening behaviour are not allowed. Degrading or harsh treatment that would humiliate, single out or undermine a child's self-esteem or self-respect is not permitted. Confining a child in a room, any form of deprivation or corporal punishment is not permitted under any circumstances. Staff who are in contravention of this will be let go.

Positive Interaction

All physical contact with a child is done in the presence of other adults. If a child requires comforting, permission is asked, "Do you need a hug?" If a child initiates contact, staff respond with gentle reassurance. Hold their hand, a pat on the back or an arm around their shoulders is acceptable caring behaviour. Prolonged contact is discouraged. Any contact that makes a child uncomfortable should be stopped immediately. No abuse of any child will be accepted, verbal or otherwise. If a child is harming or intending to harm another child staff will intervene to ensure everyone is safe. Children will be supported to communicate their needs in a healthy way and to develop their ability to self-regulate.

Staff Training

Staff are required to have current First Aid and Standard CPR training and Health and Safety Certificate. At least one staff has a current food Handlers Certificate. Our Preschool Lead teacher is an RECE. We are a member of Quality First and our staff receive regular training through this program. We are committed to provide training for staff based on their goals and our program philosophy.

PROGRAM FORMAT

Overview of Program Activities

Sensory area that may include play-doh or various materials that encourage handling, measuring, and pouring. Art area with easy access to tools to create art Math, and science tables that have learning tools to encourage exploration, patterning, sorting and matching to increase knowledge. Circletime that incorporates stories, rhymes, songs, discussion to increase confidence, math, literacy and general knowledge. Literacy opportunities that include printing, reading, rhymes and tools that include letters and sounds. Gross motor with dancing, exercise, and movement.

Daily Plan

9:30 - 9:45	Arrival	12:45-1:00
9:45-10:00	Large Group Activities	1:00-1:15
10:00-11:00	Learning Centres and Small Groups	1:15-2:15
11:00-11:30	Nutrition Break	2:15-2:45
11:30-11:45	Music & Movement	2:45-3:00
11:45-12:00	Story & Dismissal	3:00-3:15

Child Development Strands

Self Concept Development- All about Me- To develop a positive picture of self.

- Show respect and support for the child's positive interactions with their environment
- Recognize a child's needs and respond to them in a timely fashion.
- Provide a safe environment for positive interaction, stimulation and learning
- Display children's creations

Child Benchmarks:

Feels safe, comfortable, valued and attached to others

Becomes aware of self as a unique individual

Demonstrates increasing sense of competence and confidence in growing abilities

Asserts independence

Concentrate for 20 minutes

Understand weather and appropriate clothes

Emotional Development- How I Feel- To understand and express their own emotions and develop empathy

- Let children know that their feelings are understood
- Discuss emotional expressions with children and identify them when they are evident.

Child Benchmarks:

Displays a wide range of feelings and emotions

Expresses feelings and emotions through gestures, sounds and words

Uses words rather than actions when frustrated

Social Development- Let's Be Friends - To develop social interaction skills and enjoy being with others

- Support emerging skills like taking turns, sharing and empathy
- Model appropriate social behaviours
- Provide opportunities for children to interact

Child Benchmarks:

Develops trusting relationships with adults and peers

Demonstrates caring and cooperation

Tries out roles and relationships through imitation and pretend play

Language Development- Please Listen to Me- To communicate successfully with others

- Respond, listen and understand children's communication (verbal & nonverbal)
- Encourage language development and communication through interaction, rhyme, reading & song.
- Provide experiences that reflect families cultures

Child Benchmarks:

Expresses needs and thoughts without words

Identifies with a home language

Responds to verbal and non-verbal communication

Communicates through language using sentences, proper grammar and word tenses

Shows enjoyment of stories and questions what is happening in the picture/story

Learn rhymes and songs & moves to rhythm

Understand spatial words like "on top, under, middle, bottom"

Knows how to use a book – understands words are read from left to right

Recognizes letters and sounds and first name

Physical Development- Look What I can Do.- To develop physical skills necessary to move and do in the world

- Provide opportunities for fine and gross motor development.
- Gross motor development in indoor play, movement and exercises

Child Benchmarks:

Develop gross motor skills: hop, stand on one foot, kick, walk on tip toe, gallop, throw/catch, balance

Develop fine motor skills: puzzles, cut, paint, fold, paste, play-doh, lace, trace, print, tweezer

Coordinate eye and hand movements

Develop self-help skills including independence with buttons and zippers and eating

Cognitive Development- I Know about this- To develop problem solving abilities and concept attainment

- Provide opportunities & experiences to explore the environment through senses, activity and play.

Child Benchmarks:

Develops strategies for solving problems and applies knowledge to new situations

Sort, match, compare, recognize shapes, colours and sizes

Understand closest and longest

Count to 10 and understand number concepts

Understand real vs. imaginary

Understands yesterday, today and tomorrow

PROGRAM DETAILS



Inclement Weather

If both school boards are closed then we will also be closed. There will be a message posted on our facebook page that morning.

Licensing & Ratios:

We are licensed by the Ministry of education under the Child Care and Early years Act. Our daycare license and decal are posted by our door. The ratio is one staff person to every 6 children age 2.5 to 5 years old for a class size of 12. (If the class size is under 8 then we have one teacher) College and University students are not counted in the ratio and are never left alone with preschool children.

Fees/ Admission/Discharge

Monthly Rate	1 day a week	2 days a week	3 days a week	4 days a week	5 days a week
Mornings 9:30-noon.	\$105	\$210	\$315	\$420	\$515
Afternoons 12:45pm to 3:15pm	\$105	\$210	\$315	\$420	\$515

We are a non-profit centre so our fees are directly related to the program costs. Members will receive notification of fee increases if they occur. Payment is made by cheque dated the 15th of the preceding month. Income tax receipts will be issued each year. The same fee is paid each month regardless of holidays, inclement weather or days a child is not in attendance. The OPNC membership fee is not included in the Preschool fee and can be paid separately if the family wishes to join Drop In programs. Late pick-ups are charged at \$6 per 15 minutes. All registration forms **must** be completed and signed **before** your child starts. Parents are welcome to stay for a few minutes the first day if needed to ensure their child is settled in to the program. Not every program meets the needs of every child/family. In a case where the family or OPNC do not feel the program meets the family/child's specific needs, every effort will be made to assist you in finding more suitable care. Your child may be withdrawn/discharged with 1 months' notice or fees in lieu.

If there are insufficient funds in a member's account to cover their monthly payment, the member is expected to replace the cheque immediately. There is an additional \$10 fee payable to OPNC for returned cheques.

Pick Up & Drop Off

Parents are encouraged to have their children ready to join their class on time to benefit fully from the program. Children can only be picked up by the people listed on the child's registration form. There is a fee of \$6 for every 15 min. after the designated pick-up time. In the event of an emergency at the centre we will take the children to "Wellspring" which is located at 2545 Sixth Line, Oakville, ON L6H 7V9. You will be notified as soon as we have reached the above mentioned destination safely.

Holidays

We are closed for all statutory holidays, Easter Monday, March Break, and Christmas break.



HEALTH POLICY

The Board of Oak Park Neighbourhood Centre is interested in the health and safety of its employees, volunteers and members. We will make every effort to provide a safe, healthy environment. All workers and volunteers must be dedicated to the continuing objective of reducing risk of injury. This Policy will be reviewed yearly at an Oak Park Neighbourhood Centre Board meeting and at staff reviews. The Children's Program Manager is our Health and Safety representative. Online training is provided to all staff through <http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/training/>

Immunization

Staff will refer families to the region of Halton for immunization information. Children in our Preschool program must provide proof of up to date immunization at registration according to the requirements of the Medical Officer of Health. You may decide because of medical, or religious reasons not to immunize your child. In this case, you will need to provide an exemption affidavit that you can obtain from Halton Region. Halton Public Health is allowed access to the health records at our centre to ensure immunizations are kept up to date.

Injuries

All scrapes, bruises and cuts that happen at the centre are recorded in the classroom communication book. The parent is notified of the injury at pick up time if it is not serious and is provided with a copy of an incident report. More serious injuries are dealt with under the Serious Occurrence section listed in the Safety Policy and parents are notified immediately. All open cuts or sores are to be covered.

Children that are Ill

A child is not to be brought to the program if he or she is ill, for clarification on what is considered "ill" please refer to the "periods of exclusion" as determined by the "Halton Region Health Department". If a parent is unsure as to whether or not their child should come to the program, they should call ahead, call the telehealth line 1-866- 797-0007 and/or visit the doctor. Children will be observed by the staff when they arrive to ensure they are healthy enough to participate in the program. If a child becomes ill the family will be contacted and asked to pick up the child as soon as possible. The centre will make every attempt to separate the ill child from the other children until the parents arrives. In the event of an emergency 911 will be called and the child will be taken to hospital by ambulance with the signed "Emergency Treatment Release Form" that is completed at the time of registration. Parents will be notified of the emergency as soon as possible. Any communicable disease outbreak will be communicated by email or letter to all parents.

Medication

The staff at OPNC are not permitted to administer any medications to children at the centre. The only exception to this rule are EpiPens and Inhalers. Parents are encouraged to administer any prescribed antibiotics before or after they are at the centre so that there is no medication on the premise.

Anaphylactic, Asthma & Allergy Policy

We are a nut free centre and ask that children who have had peanut butter or peanuts at home wash their hands and face with soap before coming to the centre. Nuts are not allowed at the centre and signs are posted to that effect. Parents must fill out an "Anaphylaxis, Asthma Package" that includes an Individualized Action Plan for their child with detailed emergency procedures. The information is kept in the program binder and it is also posted on the inside of the cupboard door over the sink. Staff are required to attend Anaphylactic and Standard First Aid Training that we provide every three years in accordance with the Child Care Early Years Act. The parent will train staff on the procedures required for their child's allergy. EpiPen's or puffers are kept in the cupboard to the left of the sink in the preschool classroom. This policy and the Individualized Action Plan for individual children will be reviewed with staff when the child is enrolled, during hiring and annually by staff/volunteers/students and a written record kept. We ask that children, parents and staff refrain from using strong perfumes, while in our centre. We do not purchase scented toys or use strong scented markers.

Smoking

Smoking or handling cigarettes inside the centre or on our property is not allowed. People doing so will be asked to leave.

Cleaning

We clean the toys on a rotating basis at the centre to ensure that all the toys are cleaned once a month. This is a great volunteer opportunity for parents. Toys are washed in soap and water. We wash mouthed toys daily and do a general tidy up of any mess made that day. In the event of an outbreak toys are washed in 1/9 parts bleach. An “outbreak” is defined as an occurrence where “more than 2 children have vomited or had diarrhea in the last 48 hours”. The preschool toilet seat is wiped after every use with disinfectant wipes. The preschool food table is cleaned with a bleach solution. The centre is cleaned once a week by cleaners.

Toilet Training

We will work with parents and children to assist with toilet training so that the child moves towards independence. Please have your child go to the washroom before class and send them in pull-ups if needed and clothing that is easy for them to take on and off. Provide an extra set of clothing in the child’s bag in case of accidents

Periods of Exclusion for Illness as Indicated by the Halton Region Health Department

Children with the following diseases should remain at home and away from others:

Chickenpox- Until well enough to participate in all activities regardless of the state of the rash.

Diarrhea - until 24 hours after it stops

Fifth’s Disease (Parvovirus) - No exclusion. If the child is well enough to participate in all activities

Head lice or scabies- must have one treatment to return

Hepatitis A -safe to return 7 days after the jaundice began

Impetigo - Until the antibiotic prescribed by a doctor has been taken for at least 1 full day (a full 24 hour cycle).

Measles - For at least 4 days after the rash begins.

Mumps - For at least 5 days after the swollen glands first appear.

Pink-eye, bacterial conjunctivitis - Until antibiotic prescribed by doctor is taken for a full 24 hour cycle.

Ringworm - Until treatment has started.

Rubella (German Measles) - Until at least 7 days after the rash first appears.

Scarlet Fever - Until antibiotic treatment prescribed by a doctor has been taken for 1 full day (a full 24 hour cycle).

Strep Throat - Until antibiotic treatment prescribed by a doctor has been taken for 1 full day (a full 24 hour cycle).

Whooping Cough (pertussis) - Until antibiotic taken for 5 days or 3 weeks from when the cough began without antibiotic.

Pandemic Flu Policy

Flu symptoms are fever, muscle aches, sore throat, coughing and weakness. Young children, those with chronic illness and the elderly can become more seriously ill. Pandemic flu is not your average flu. It causes serious illness and spreads easily from person to person. In Halton as many as 35% of the population could be affected at one time.

1. Staff are encouraged to get the flu vaccine each fall, however we respect that this is a personal choice.
2. Flu vaccination clinic information is available at the centre for our families
3. Waterless hand sanitizer is available.
4. Staff will encourage people to cough into the crook of their elbow and not their hands.
5. Phones will be wiped off at the end of each shift, and all regular health procedures followed
6. If a staff person is ill then other staff and volunteers will be asked to help out
7. If we are required to close then parents will be emailed and told about online chat times for them to connect

SAFETY ISSUES

The centre meets all of the bylaw requirements of the Town of Oakville (zoning, and fire), the requirements of the Ministry of Education and the Halton Region Health Department. Emergency phone numbers are kept by the phone and Staff have alternate phones in the event internet is down.



Equipment

Toys are inspected on a rotating basis so that all are cleaned and checked once a month to ensure that all broken toys are removed from the collection. Staff work vigilantly to ensure any sharp or dangerous office items are out of reach of children. Care is taken to purchase equipment that is safe, durable, and environmentally friendly as well as age appropriate for use in the classroom and various other programs.

Preschool Snack & Food Safety

If parents must provide food for children in the Preschool Program due to food allergies or special diets then they must provide a letter and clearly label their nut free children's food containers. Children are not permitted to share their food. Food can only be consumed at the snack table. Children will wash their hands before snack. All snack will be provided on a disposable plate or napkin. The centre will provide juice boxes or water in disposable cups. A snack schedule that is for at least two weeks will be posted by the front door for parents. The centre will provide a daily snack that is in keeping with Canada's Food Guide and will include at least two food groups. Water will be available at all times.

Arrival & Leaving

The parent must ensure the staff person is aware the parent is leaving. At dismissal time the child will only be released to the parent or designated person who has been listed on the child's file.

Building Security

There is a reception desk by the front door where visitors check in. The doors have a chime and sound when they are opened. The back door is to be locked at all times and windows are to be locked shut after use.

First Aid

There are always at least two staff on duty with up to date first aid, EpiPen and CPR training. The centre offers a Standard First Aid & Child CPR course that is open to members and volunteers. A first aid kit and manual is kept in both kitchens and a cold pack is in the fridge. Any open sores or cuts are to be covered. The first aid kit is checked four times a year to ensure that it has all items that it requires. All injuries including bruises and scrapes are written in the daily log book. An incident form is completed and a copy provided to the parent. If a child needs to go to hospital, and it is not an urgent need requiring an ambulance the parent will be called to take the child. In the event of an injury requiring immediate care program the parent will be called as well as the ambulance.

Insurance

Oak Park Neighbourhood Centre has 5 million dollars general liability insurance. Staff and volunteers are not covered if they act in a negligent manner. Our insurance does not cover personal vehicles.

Water

Cold water in the preschool kitchen is to be turned on and let run for five minutes Monday mornings before the preschool program starts. Staff are to document this in the daily communication book with their full name and flushing beginning and end times. Water is to be available for children at all times. Water sampling is completed between May 1 and October 1 every 2 yrs and records are kept in the preschool binder for review.

Criminal Reference Checks

All staff and volunteers over 18 must provide police checks and vulnerable sector screens that are no older than 6 months at the time of hire. Work can begin under supervision with proof of police check application. Checks and screens are done at the Halton Regional Police Headquarters at 95 Oak Walk Drive, Oakville (M-F 8:30-10pm). Two pieces of valid government ID (one photo ID) must be provided. These must be renewed every five years and submitted to the Program Director for review. The Executive Director will review all police checks and will meet with the individual regarding any

issue that may be documented on the report. At the meeting the safety of the individual continuing to work or volunteer at the centre will be discussed. An offence declaration must be completed annually by staff and volunteers for the four years between police checks.

Staff Qualifications

The Executive Director, the Children's Program Manager and the Lead Preschool teacher of Oak Park Neighbourhood Centre all have a diploma in Early Childhood Education and are RECE's. All staff are eligible to work in Canada, have provided a doctor's note that they are fit to work, their references have been checked and they have up to date Immunizations, vulnerable screens and police checks. There is always at least one RECE staff in the preschool room.