



**Oak Park**  
*Neighbourhood*  
*Centre*

# Preschool Handbook

## **Oak Park Neighbourhood Centre -Who We Are**

Support, Connect, Engage. 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, and parent support group. We run infant, family, preschool and school-age programs. We provide free or affordable space to a number of local agencies.

### **Philosophy Statement**

This program statement meets the requirements of the Child Care and Early Years Act, incorporates “How Does Learning Happen” and aligns with our agency’s vision of “Support, Connect, Engage”

Oak Park Neighbourhood Centre is a welcoming community that supports self-esteem, family bonds, meaningful relationships, skill development and building community capacity. We believe that all children are competent, capable of complex thinking, curious and rich in potential. Our program helps prepare preschoolers and their parents for the transition to full time kindergarten. We believe that children are most successful when they know what to expect, have a sense of belonging in their community, have friends, and strong self-esteem. Children are introduced to classroom routines, social interaction and early math and literacy concepts.

### **Relationships**

We support positive and responsive interactions not only among children but also families, caregivers, educators, and our community partners.

**Parents** -We view families as experts on their children and recognize that they are the first and most powerful influence on children’s learning, development, health and wellbeing. We support families with guidance and community information when requested. We engage families by providing opportunities to share their skills, resources, culture, and experiences. We support family connections by providing on-going communication about the program and the children through emails, monthly newsletters, progress reports, and collaboration meetings with the classroom educators to ensure that each child reaches their full potential. We invite parents in to the classroom for special events throughout the year where they are encouraged to interact with their children, educators, and other preschool families. Family friendships are supported and encouraged.

**Community Partners** - We involve local community partners in our program and acknowledge that they play an important role at OPNC. We allow these partners to support the children, their families and staff. We call on community partners for assistance.

**Children** – We greet each child as they arrive and say good bye individually at home time. Our educators use their knowledge of child development and positive reinforcement to support children’s self-esteem, self-regulation and positive interactions in the classroom. Our educators model developmentally appropriate conflict resolution strategies and assist children in developing skills to negotiate, collaborate, communicate, empathize and compromise with others. Teachers take time to listen to and observe children to learn how to respond to their unique way of communicating and to provide meaningful learning opportunities. Please refer to our “Interaction Guideline Policy” for additional information

### **Environment**

The atmosphere within the classroom is welcoming, safe, comfortable and a “home away from home” for children, families and community partners. Educators use their knowledge of child development to plan for and create positive learning environments, transitions and experiences where each child’s learning and development are supported. The classroom is divided into interest areas which foster children’s exploration play and inquiry and provide opportunities for child initiated experiences. Materials are accessible, carefully chosen and are open-ended, varied, plentiful and are labelled to promote independence. Our educators view our outdoor environment as an extension of the classroom and incorporate outdoor exploration and play. There are opportunities for both quiet and active play provided within the classroom depending on the individual needs of the children in the program.

### **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. We encourage the sharing of traditions, culture and heritage in the classroom. 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 in our preschool classroom will have a developmental challenge. Individualized support plans with descriptive instructions are put in place and developed with the parent, child, educator and supporting agencies. Details on our requirements for Individual Plans for children with Medical Needs are found in our Health Policy. The Executive Director of OPNC will report to the Board of Directors at least annually on inclusive activities.

### **Training**

Aligning with the College of Early Childhood Educators' Standards of Practice, OPNC is committed to supporting continuous professional development for all its educators, placement students and volunteers. We offer in-house training and support opportunities for educators to participate in external professional development. Please refer to our human resources detailed "Staff Training Policy"

### **Health**

At OPNC we recognize that health, safety and nutrition contribute to the well-being and optimal growth of the children and community we serve. We have centre wide policies to ensure all children, families and educators in our program are safe. Please refer to the "Health and Safety" section in our policies and procedures for detailed information.

### **Impact Assessment**

Our preschool program is evaluated by our families annually with surveys to ensure we are meeting our goals as well as their needs.

### **Program Statement Review**

The Program Statement will be reviewed by educators, students and volunteers prior to interacting with children and anytime the statement is modified. Our annual review checklist and employee performance review ensures expectations are understood and met.

## FOUNDATIONS FOR LEARNING

Support	Child Evidence	Teacher Support
Physically Active	Can kick, throw, catch, balance, hop and jump	Variety of daily physical activity
	Enjoys physical activity	Limit extended sedentary activities
Has a sense of self and confidence	Can draw a person	Support efforts to gain competence & mastery
	Is happy, safe, feels included & competent	Listen to child, encourage, engage in conversation, welcome, pay attention to cues and needs.
	Feels good about abilities and interests	Recognize and value unique abilities, interests and spirit verbally, & in environment.
		Be attuned to physical & emotional needs of child and be warm & sensitive
		Document individual conversations to revisit thoughts and ideas
Able to make choices	Weighs benefits of a choice	Provide opportunities for choice
Aware of health	Knowledge of healthy food choice	Healthy snacks
	Healthy physical activity & self-care choices	Positive snack experience
Is able to self-regulate	Using words to express displeasure	Recognize & support self-regulation
	Has coping strategies for frustrations	
	Independent in snack, dressing and toileting	Provide time to practice tasks and encourage independence
Takes initiative and tackles challenges	Child looks to self first for ideas to meet challenges	Facilitate opportunities to take reasonable risks
Explores materials	Sort, match, compare, graph, classify, estimate	Provide opportunities and learning resources that encourage exploration, questions and curiosity
	Can count 1-10 & recognize numbers	Provide open ended materials to match numbers and materials
	Knows colours and shapes	Provide open ended colour and shape activities.
		All spaces & experiences promote play & inquiry that increase awareness and understanding of key concepts including numeracy & literacy development.
Supports in place where needed	Has supports in place for success	Provide connections to other families and community supports

<b>Connect</b>	<b>Child Evidence</b>	<b>Teacher Support</b>
Has Empathy for & Values others	Learning to take turns	Support & encourage positive child interactions
	Comforts	Role model positive interactions
	Beginning ability to recognize, value and respect perspectives of others	Encourage children to support and rely on each other to develop friendships
	Connects with the community	Provide empathy project opportunities
	Listens to others	Facilitate successful communication by helping with listening & expression
Connects & engages with others	Initiates, collaborates, engages, plays, creates, negotiates with others	Take time to connect children to each other and introduce parents to each other.
	Has meaningful communication & interaction with peers & adults	Engage in authentic, reciprocal conversations with children
	Connects with the community	Invite community members to the centre
Has focused attention	can focus on activity of interest with purpose	Plan the flow of the day with limited interruptions and transitions to provide for large blocks of time for sustained complex play & inquiry
	Can listen to a story and teacher lead activities	Provide engaging group activities that reflect child interests.
<b>Engage</b>	<b>Child Evidence</b>	<b>Teacher Support</b>
Engages	Expresses joy and wonder	Explore ideas and provide set up and materials that allow for exploration for all
		Consider what children are doing with objects to allow for expansion of learning.
		Design environment to spark curiosity
		Participate with child as a co-learner
Participates	Shares culture, traditions, interests, talents	Connect with families to and invite participation and ensure class activities reflect and are relevant to everyday lives
		Make children's thinking, learning, competence visible to children, families & others
Creative expression	Comfortable exploring mediums and creating	Provide time, space, materials to encourage expression that reflect capabilities and background
		Provide open ended, varied, accessible materials.
Literacy skill & competence	Gains competence in language acquisition	Include language & literacy in all daily activities and spaces
	Expresses themselves through language	Provide individual support so all voices are heard
	Knows 26 letters and sounds	Provide time, space, materials
	Can recognize and print first name	Provide opportunities for learning & assist with pencil grip
	Fine motor skills developed	Provide lacing, tracing, cutting activities
	Beginning reading	Cultivate love of books, stories & rhymes

## Preschool Daily Plan

9:30 - 9:40	Arrival and Hand washing
9:40-10:00	Morning Greeting and Opening Circle
10:00-11:00	Learning Centres and Small Groups
11:00-11:30	Nutrition Break
11:30-11:45	Music & Movement
11:45-12:00	Outdoor & Dismissal

## Licensing & Ratios

Our Preschool is 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
9:30-noon or 1-3:30	\$115	\$220	\$325	\$428	\$535

Members will receive advanced notification of any fee increases. We have a one-time administration fee of \$35 at the time of enrolment. Post-dated cheques are required dated the 15<sup>th</sup> 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 and cheques **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. 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 with 1 months' notice or fees in lieu. If there are insufficient funds in a member's account to cover their monthly payment, the cheque is to be replaced immediately with an additional \$10 fee to cover bank charges.

## Wait List

We do not have wait list fees. If programs are full your name and phone number will be added to our wait list file in the order they are received. Your information is never given out to anyone but you. You will be called when a space becomes available. If you want to know your place in the wait list please call us.

## Pick Up & Drop Off

Please have your child use the bathroom at arrival and wash their hands. Ensure the teacher knows you are leaving and have dropped off your child. Children can only be picked up by the people listed on the child's registration form. There is a fee of \$7 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\_2545 Sixth Line, Oakville, ON L6H 7V9\_and you will be notified.

## Holidays & Inclement Weather Closures

We are closed for all statutory holidays, March Break, Easter Monday, Christmas Break and the last week of August. If both school boards are closed for inclement weather then we will also be closed. There will be a message posted on our Facebook page.

## Activities Off Premises

At times we may go off-site for field trips, and will get parent consent to do so

### **Preschool Toilet Learning**

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

### **Parent Issues and Concerns**

Every member of our community has the right to file a complaint with our Child and Family Services Manager, our Executive Director, the Board of Directors or the Chairperson of the Board. The complaint can be made verbally in person, over the phone, by email or in writing. Please ensure the complaint is directed to one of the people mentioned above. The staff and/or board will respond within 24 hours to your concern. If the concern relates to health and safety then an Incident Report is to be completed which includes steps to be taken to reduce or eliminate future risk. The form is provided to the Executive Director for review and approval and is provided to the parent for discussion and sign off on the steps to be taken to address the concern. If the concern is relates to discrimination or harassment then those policies are to be followed as outlined in that policy. Staff are required to notify the Executive Director of any concerns or the Board Chairperson. The Executive Director is required to notify the Board Chair of any complaints immediately and notify the Board at the next meeting. Complaints will be dealt with promptly. In the event that there have been no complaints in a previous year, the Executive Director is required to report this at a Board Meeting once a year.

### **Emergency Management Policies**

Our centre has emergency management policies and procedures. An emergency at our center means an urgent or pressing situation in which immediate action is required to ensure the safety of children and adults in the center. Staff are responsible for the safety of the children and will co-ordinate actions between themselves and emergency first responders. The intent of this plan is to assist staff in responding to emergencies, provide information to family members concerning emergency planning, and provide a basis for restoration of services. In the event of an emergency parents will receive an email as soon as possible with details of the emergency and any potential arrangements for pick up that may be required. If possible a phone call to each family will also be made. A post will be made on social media if appropriate to explain the emergency, the steps taken, if needed a plan for resuming normal operations and follow up supports available. In the event of an evacuation a call will be made, an email sent to families and a sign will be put on the front door with the address for family pick up. Our emergency evacuation location is WellSpring\_2545 Sixth Line.

### **Prohibited Practices**

Our center 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.

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 will 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.

## **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. In un-parented programs the parent is notified of any injury at pick up time and provided a copy of the incident report. More serious injuries are dealt with under the Serious Occurrence 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 centre if they are ill. Please see the Halton Region "periods of exclusion policy" in this manual". A parent who is unsure if their child should come to the centre should call ahead, call the telehealth line 1-866-797-0007 and/or visit a doctor. Children will be observed by staff at arrival to ensure they are healthy enough to participate. If a child becomes ill during a parented program the parent will be asked to take them home. If a child becomes ill in an un-parented program 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.

## **Anaphylactic, Asthma & Allergy Policy**

We are a nut free centre and ask that children and adults 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 registration binder and posted on the inside of the cupboard door over the sink, in the classroom and in the fridge. 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 of the child 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 classroom. Staff must record all dates and times for administering puffers or Epi-pens on the "Medical Authorization & Administration Record" This policy and the Individualized Action Plans 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 use scented toys or strong scented markers.

## **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.

## **Smoking**

Smoking or vaping, handling cigarettes, cigars, or marijuana inside the centre or on our property is not allowed. People doing so will be asked to leave or stop smoking.



## **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.

## **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.

## **SAFETY ISSUES**

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

## **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. Tables and chairs are checked daily. Staff 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.

## **Preschool Snack & Food Safety**

If parents must provide food for children in the Preschool Program due to allergies or special diets, they must put the request in writing and clearly label their nut free children's food containers. Staff will check the food to ensure it meets the centre's requirements. 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 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.

## **Building Security**

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

## **First Aid**

There is always at least one staff on duty with up to date first aid, EpiPen and CPR training. The centre offers a Standard First Aid & Child CPR course.. 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 for parented programs. In un-parented programs all injuries are recorded in the daily communication book and an accident/incident form is completed. 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 emergency in a parented program the child and parent(s) would be picked up by ambulance and taken to hospital. In the event of an injury requiring immediate care in an un-parented 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**

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 the date, time, and location of the flushing with name of the person doing it in the daily log book. Water is to be available for children always. Water sampling is completed between May 1 and October 1 every 3 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. We will not hire any staff who have been convicted of sexual interference, child pornography, duty of persons to provide necessaries, murder, or infanticide. We will not hire anyone who has committed an offence that has resulted in the permanent revocation of their membership, certificate or documentation in the regulatory bodies for the following acts: Child Care and Early Years Act, The Early Childhood Educators Act 2007, the Ontario College of Teachers Act 1996, or the Social Work and Social Service Work Act. An offence declaration must be completed annually by staff and volunteers for the four years between police checks. A verification and Tracking workbook will be updated annually.

## **Staff Qualifications**

The Executive Director of Oak Park Neighbourhood Centre has a diploma in Early Childhood Education RECE and in Community Work with over 30 years' experience. The Children's Program Manager has RECE and the Lead Preschool teacher is an RECE. 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. We are committed to supporting our staff with continuous learning as we view our educators as co-learners.

## **Preschool Childcare Supervision Policy for Volunteers and Students**

Every child in the licensed preschool program will be supervised by an employee of the centre at all times. Direct unsupervised access is not permitted for persons who are not employees of our centre. Supervision is not permitted by people less than 18yrs of age. Placement students or volunteers at the centre are not counted in the staffing ratios in the licensed preschool program. OPNC's Behaviour Management Policy, Volunteer Policy, Emergency Procedures, Individual Anaphylaxis and Asthma Plans are reviewed by students and volunteers before they assist in the classroom and every year after that. Police checks, vulnerable sector screens and annual offence declarations are required by all volunteers and students.