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**Philosophy**

The McMaster Students Union Child Care Centre provides high quality child care to enrich all aspects of development of children in a “home away from home” atmosphere for both the child and families.

# Program Statement

The McMaster Students Union Child Care Centre is a service of the McMaster Students Union which provides play-based educational child care for the McMaster student community as well as the community at large. The centre is licensed under the Ministry of Education and governed by the **Child Care and Early Years Act of 2014**. The program follows the ministry’s statement on programming and pedagogy using the four foundations: *Belonging, Well-being, Engagement and Expression*found in the document, “**How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years 2014”**

Understanding that children are competent, capable, curious, and rich in potential, educators provide engaging activities and planned and spontaneous experiences that build on their strengths and abilities allowing them the opportunity to be successful. Children receive encouragement to inspire self- esteem and positive interactions. Staff will not engage in any of the **prohibited practices** as outlined on page 6. The child care staff functions as a team to ensure that each child is relaxed and secure in his/her environment responding to their individual needs, sensitive to social, cultural or developmental differences. All educators are knowledgeable, caring, reflective and resourceful professionals who engage in life-long learning.

Recognizing that the family is most influential to their child’s learning, development, health and well-being, the educators encourage the parents’ input, and work together to foster optimal development for the whole child.

**Goals and Approaches** (strategies include but are not limited to the following)

1. **To ensure the Health, safety, nutrition and well-being of the children**.

* Providing nutritious meals and snacks based on Canada’s Food Guide taking into consideration each child’s nutritional needs as well as cultural and family preferences to promote healthy eating habits.
* Creating positive eating environments that respond to children’s cues of hunger and fullness.
* Teaching and modeling the proper sanitary/hygiene practices.
* Creating safe play opportunities that allow children to build confidence in their abilities.
* Providing a balance of quiet and active activities during the day. 

1. **To support positive, respectful, and responsive interactions with all families, children and colleagues**.

* Having orientations sessions with each family before their child begins in the program.
* Welcoming children and parents each morning at drop off encouraging information sharing and helping each child to settle into the program.
* Demonstrating/modeling a sense of respect with children, parents and colleagues.
* Hosting special family events creating a sense of community.

1. **To encourage positive interactions with and between children, that promotes self-esteem, problem solving and supports their ability to self-regulate.**

* Modeling positive behaviour and language.
* Helping children to identify their feelings and, if needed, offer them the words to express how they feel.
* Helping the children to problem solve and encouraging them to work out conflicts on their own.
* Maintaining calm and organized routines.
* Acknowledging a child’s need to have their own space and providing places for individual play or quiet time.

1. **To plan a fluid program based on children’s interests and development that foster the children’s exploration, play and inquiry.**

* Getting down to the children’s level and engaging in their play encouraging questioning and exploration of their environment.
* Listening and observing the children to determine areas of interest and providing experiences that build on these interests.

1. **To provide opportunities for child-initiated and adult supported experiences.**

* Providing new and diverse materials and experiences that follow the children’s interests and enhance their learning.
* By being co-learners researching and finding answers or resources to expand on the children’s ideas and questions, furthering their experience & knowledge.

1. **Plan for positive and creative learning environments and experiences in which each child’s learning and development will be supported.**

* Considering the four foundations of Belonging, Wellbeing, Engagement and Expression in creating a positive learning environment that fosters age and developmentally appropriate experiences.
* Using the continuum of development as a reference to plan for age appropriate activities that support their current level of skill and provide challenges to advance their learning.



1. **To have a balanced schedule that engages children with an opportunity for active play as well as quiet and rest time**.

* Giving the children the opportunity to have gross motor play indoors and/or outdoors (when weather permits) each day.
* Providing equipment that encourages this active play i.e. tricycle, climbing equipment, balls etc.
* Providing quiet spaces where children can relax and spend time by themselves when desired.
* Providing a comfortable quiet, familiar space for rest time.
* Providing quiet activities at rest time for children that don’t sleep.

1. **To foster the engagement of, and ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children**.

* Have a minimum of 6 monthly Parent meeting excluding July and August, to discuss the program and implications.
* Sending out a monthly calendar with birthdays and special activities planned as well as messages from educators.
* Maintaining a parent bulletin board for information of interest to parents.
* Using a parent contact list to email families to send messages about happenings at the centre.
* Sending out newsletter twice a year to inform parents about our centre and program.
* Encouraging an ongoing communication with families each day.
* Completing a daily communication book or chart for parents to read.
* Posting documentations of the children’s activities.
* Keeping an ongoing portfolio of each child’s experiences and ongoing development.

1. **To engage with community partners to enhance the program and support an inclusive environment.**

* A designated Resource teacher assigned to the centre works with the staff to support an integrated program.
* Local community partners and associated professionals are engaged to ensure the best support for the children and families at the centre.
* Allowing clinicians to come to the centre to work with children.
* Providing parents with information regarding community resources.
* Arranging for community partners such as the local librarian to provide interesting experiences for the children.
* Allowing agencies such as MUMC to do child-based research with our families.

1. **To encourage and support ongoing professional learning for all staff**.

* The centre supports Educators in the “Continuous Professional Learning” cycle as outline by the College of Early Childhood Educators.
* Upcoming professional learning opportunities are posted for all staff. They are encouraged to engage in activities that they will be able to put to practice in their program.
* Current issues and topics of interest are presented at staff meetings to keep staff informed/updated particularly with new trends and changes in legislation.
* The centre will financially support staff to participate in professional learning opportunities.

1. **To document and review these goals with staff to ensure we are following our program statement.**

* The program will be observed, documented and reviewed with staff to ensure that the Program Statement is guiding the practice.
* Areas for improvement, mentoring and strategic planning will be put in place.
* Staff, students and volunteers will review and sign off on the program statement & implementation strategies annually for reflection, planning and understanding.



**Implementation Policy and Procedure**

It is expected that goals described in the Program Statement will be implemented by employees and students/volunteers using the approaches such as outlined in the statement.

The Director or designate will observe the program and staff for compliance of the Program Statement and the Prohibited Practices Policy.

**Methods to guide behavior in a positive manner that maintain the child’s self-esteem.**

* Children will be guided in a positive manner that is appropriate to their age and developmental level.
* Guidance will assist the children to learn problem solving and self-regulation.
* Regular staff intervention will acknowledge positive behavior using encouraging comments and reminders to children of acceptable behavior. Where possible intervention will permit logical consequences.
* Children are encouraged to verbalize their feelings and concerns to the other children.
* Staff will use soft, supportive voices, model acceptable behaviour and not discuss the children’s inappropriate behavior to other staff in front of them.
* Staff and student/volunteers will not engage in any of the prohibited practices as listed in the Implementation Policy.

The following **Prohibited Practices** will not be tolerated including:

* Corporal punishment of any kind;
* Deliberate 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, self worth;
* Depriving the child of basic needs including food, shelter clothing or bedding;
* Using physical restraint such as confining the child to a high chair, stroller or other device for the purpose of discipline or in lieu of supervision;
* Locking the exits of the child care centre for the purposes of confining the child or using a locked or lockable room or structure to confine the child if he or she has been separated from other children;
* Inflicting bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

**Contravention of Policies and Procedures and Commission of Prohibited Practices**

If there is a contravention of the policies and prohibited Practices, the following actions will be taken:

1. Staff member will be brought in for discussion.

2. He/She will be given suggestions and additional training if warranted. Potential consequences will be discussed

3. If problems persist it will be reason for some time without pay to consider suitability for the position and possibly dismissal.

4. Any form of corporal punishment will be reason for dismissal.

5. Any contraventions to the prohibited practices will be reported to the College of ECE’s as per the “Duty to Report” document.

The Director and program staff will continue to review and reflect on the approaches outlined in the Program Statement to ensure a positive learning environment for all children and their families

***Hours of Operation***

The Child Care Centre opens at 7:30 a.m. and closes at 6:00 p.m. from Monday to Friday from September to June and 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday to Friday for the months of July and August.

Parents, who arrive at the centre prior to opening time, may **not** leave their child unattended.

***Holidays***

The Child Care Centre is closed on all statutory holidays and between Christmas and New Year.

# Registration & Waitlist Policy

The McMaster Students Union Child Care Centre provides care for toddlers 18 months to 2.5 years and Preschool children from 2.5 to 4 years. Parents must complete an application form with all applicable information to be included on the waiting list at this time you may wish to come in for a tour of the

centre.

The following priorities will be followed when enrolling children from the wait list.

1. McMaster Student parents have priority for a position at the centre.
2. Staff and faculty of McMaster University & Students Union
3. Community members
4. Note: Children from families already in the centre will get priority as well.
5. On inquiry, parents will be informed as to their position on the wait list as accurately as possible while maintaining the confidentiality of the children on it.
6. Enrollment is based on the position coming available i.e. full or part time/toddler or preschool.
7. No fee is required to be on the waitlist

When a position becomes available families on the list will be called, and an orientation session will be set up and various forms given to be filled out including immunization, emergency numbers, permission for photographs & sunscreen, further information about your child as well as a list of items to bring. At this time, the registration fee is due. All forms must be in before your child may begin at the centre.

***Orientation***

Before your child begins in the Child Care Centre, we have an orientation visit. You & your child will spend a morning from 9:30 a.m. until ~12:00 p.m. at the centre. You may participate in indoor & outdoor activities, circle time, stay for lunch & an introduction to sleep time. Parents are not billed for these days. This orientation introduces parent and child to the centre and staff so that both are comfortable.

Any messages may be left with the teacher verbally or in writing and handed to your child’s teacher. Your child may want to wave to you from the preschool “Goodbye window” or toddler deck door, as you leave.

***Fees, Enrolment and Service Termination***

Current fees may be found on our web site at [www.msumcmaster.ca/childcare](http://www.msumcmaster.ca/childcare) Fees are payable in advance on the first Monday of each month. The billing binder is in the information file in the hall by the kitchen, so you may keep track of your payments. Receipts will be sent out at the end of the year or when you are finished at the centre. Cheques are to be made payable to MSU Child Care Centre. If you wish to post-date a series of cheques, they may be given in to the office for filing. We are now able to accept Visa or MasterCard payments through our website. Parents are required to pay the full rate per month whether children are present or not. Monthly fees include all statutory holidays and as well as any closures that occur due to forces beyond our control i.e. snow days. Fees not paid by the end of the month will be subject to a $20.00 late payment charge.

A late fee will be charged to persons arriving after closing hour of 6:00 p.m. (5:30 in the summer) at the rate of $20.00 for every 15 minutes or part thereof. ($25.00 for those with more than one child.) Parents will be charged for every late arrival. After two late pick-ups, parents will receive a warning from the board. A third occurrence could result in the forfeit of the child’s place in the centre. The Child Care reserves the right to terminate the agreement with a family if the staff feels that we are unable to meet the child’s/family’s needs.

 Notice in writing is required **twenty** working/school days in advance of withdrawing your child. If proper notice is not given, the parent will be required to pay for 4 additional weeks of fees.

The Child Care fees are tax deductible.

# Subsidy

# Subsidies may be available through the City of Hamilton Child Care Services Management Program for persons with limited incomes. For further information please contact the Child Care Centre Director

Subsidy parents must make their own appointments with Social Services to update their contract. Please let us know the reason for the absence so we may bill appropriately. Days over and above those allowed by the subsidy agreement must be covered by parents.

***Arrival, Departure and Release of Children***

On arrival parents must bring their children into the playroom and notify a teacher that the child has arrived. Make sure all belongings are placed in the child’s cubby. Children need to arrive by 9:30 a.m. unless there are unusual circumstances i.e. doctor’s appointment.

Please remember to wash your child’s hands before coming into the classroom and before going home.

**Please be careful to leave the gate closed and chain looped at all times.**

Notice is required if persons, other than those specified, are to pick up your child. **No** **child will be released from the centre unless verified by you**. Such persons who are attending the centre for the first time will be required to show identification. When leaving please make sure staff are aware of your departure.

# Severe Weather & Emergency Procedures

If the Child Care Centre is to be closed due to severe weather conditions, an announcement will be made over the Hamilton radio stations under **School Closures** on **CHML (900) and K-Lite FM (102.9). (Note: if both local school boards close the schools, the child care centre will be closed).** Regular fees apply to these days. The Child Care will email you if we must close early. If you have not received an email and are concerned, please check with the Centre. All children must be picked up within **two** hours from emergency closing time or the late fee will be in effect.

In the event of disaster, the above procedure will apply. Parents who arrive at the Centre may remain with their child but **not remove the child** without first informing the Director or designate staff who will then adjust the attendance record. The designated place of Emergency Shelter is **Dalewood School/Recreation Centre.**

****\*\*This Program has emergency management policies and procedures. Parents will be notified in the event of such emergency via email or phone.**

***Nutrition***

A nutritious hot meal is served at 11:15 a.m. for toddler groups, 11:30 a.m. for intermediate group and 11:30/45 for preschool groups. Late arrivals need to eat prior to arrival. In addition, a nutritious snack is provided in the morning and afternoon. Children’s special dietary needs and allergies will be posted in the cooking and serving areas as well as on the attendance lists. To assist you in menu planning at home, our menus are posted on the kitchen door in advance and any changes noted.

**Due to allergies, we are a nut free facility. Please make sure any food brought in is nut free** and make sure your child’s face and hands are washed on arrival particularly if they have had nut products for breakfast**.**

**All teachers are trained in Infant/Child CPR and First Aid** renewed every three years. If your child has an **anaphylactic allergy** or a **medical issue** (i.e. seizures or asthma etc.)**,** an emergency process form must be filled out and kept visible for all staff.

As Early Child Educators, we are required by law to report any suspicion of Child Abuse and/or neglect.

***Immunization Policy***

1. Prior to admission each child and staff member must be immunized as recommended by the local Medical Officer of Health.
2. If a parent of a child objects to vaccination, the parent submits an approved form – either a notarized Statement of Conscience or Religious Belief for Child Affidavit or, where there are medical reasons why the child should not be vaccinated, a Statement of Medical Exemption for Child signed by a regulated health professional.
3. The original notarized Statement of Conscience or Religious Belief Affidavit or signed Statement of Medical Exemption must be submitted by the parent to Hamilton Public Health Services in person or by mail, and a copy should be kept on file. **Note**: Unvaccinated children may be excluded from attending the child care centre during a communicable disease outbreak.

###### ***Responding to and Reporting Child Illness or Health Concerns***

Children must not attend the centre if they are contagious or unwell and unable to participate in the program.

1. Each morning staff greeting children will do a quick health check to ensure child is well enough to attend day care. This health check is recorded on the attendance/health checklist following the legend attached to each attendance binder.
2. If the child is not well enough to participate in indoor and outdoor activities, then he/she will not attend the child care.
3. When a child displays signs of illness during the day will be separated from other children. To determine if a child may be ill, consider each of these signs or symptoms: • COUGH • FEVER • RED EYES • DIARRHEA • RASH • VOMITING
4. The staff will provide separate toys for the child to play with, and then clean and disinfect the toys immediately after use. Staff will ensure the ill child washes his/her hands frequently. Staff wash their hands after caring for a sick child.
5. The parent/guardian will be called to take the child home. If we are unable to reach a parent, then the designated contact person will be notified.
6. Parents are required to notify the centre when their child is sick including the nature of the illness. If a child is sent home twice in a week with the same illness/symptoms, the child must be seen by a physician before returning.
7. Children on medication for strep throat, eye infections diarrhea or other infectious diseases must stay off for the required amount of time (see Exclusion of Ill Children p.10 in Infection Control Guidelines for Child Care Centres)
8. The Director or designate will inform the Health Department of reportable communicable diseases current in the center

***Accident Policy***

If child sustains an injury at the centre, a form will be filled out by the staff present, indicating what happened, the type of injury, and what actions were taken. The parent will be asked to initial that they have seen the form; one copy will be filed in the child’s file at the centre. Another copy will be given to the parent.

***Administration of Medications***

A medication form, prescription as well as approved non-prescription drugs, must be completed by the child’s parent.

Medication must be in its **original container, clearly labeled with the child’s name, name of the drug, dosage, date of purchase, expiry date and instruction for storage**.

Each prescription requires a separate consent and approval form from the parent. A daily record must be signed by the teacher. All medication must be given to the teacher on arrival to be put in a locked container. ***Under no circumstances will medication be given without a completed ‘Authorization Form’.***

***Serious Occurrence Notification***: All serious occurrences will be posted for the required 10 days on the bulletin board at the front entrance. A serious occurrence is defined by A serious occurrence is defined as:

: The death of a child in whom in receiving care at the centre whether on or off

premises

: abuse, neglect or allegation of such while receiving care at the centre

: a life-threatening injury or illness of a child receiving care at the centre

: an incident where a child who is receiving care at the centre goes missing

: an unplanned disruption of the normal operations of the centre that poses a

risk to the health, safety or well being of the children.

The following are other examples of serious occurrences:

: when a child has a high fever at the centre and dies at home later.

: a staff member grabbing a child forcefully

: A child is unattended – i.e. left in a room when the others have left to go outside

*Please keep us informed:*

***It is essential that centre files be kept up to date. Parents must notify the staff immediately of any changes to telephone numbers or other information on the enrolment form of your child.***

**Special events** are planned for each year including our Annual Potluck Supper in October, Holiday Celebration in December and Family Picnic in June.

A **calendar** is sent out at the beginning of each month to let parents know what is happening during the month, children’s birthdays as well as any special events or trips. In addition, it includes messages that the staff would like to convey to parents.

Twice a year a **newsletter** will go out to families with information about the centre, the Parent committee, current Early Childhood issues, recipes from the cook and information about the child’s individual group: what they are working on and messages from staff.

Parents are encouraged to take note of the **Parent** **Board** daily where important memos and current bulletins will be posted.

**Daily charts** and **posted documentations** will inform you about some of the experiences and discoveries the children have made. Be sure to check your child’s chart for information about your child’s day. These are good tools to use when talking to your child about his/her day.

Each child will have their own **portfolio** with some of the documentations and art work they have done over their time with us.

The Child Care **Parent Committee** is an advisory committee that meets once a month to discuss program, staff issues, planning for events, liaison issues, fundraising etc. The committee consists of interested parents, the Child Care Centre Director, a staff representative, the M.S.U Business Manager, the M.S.U. V.P. Finance and representative from the S.R.A. (Student Representative Assembly). All parents are encouraged to participate by attending this meeting.

**Parent Issues and Concerns Policy and Procedures**

McMaster Students Union Child Care promotes a family friendly, professional environment with an open-door policy. Communication is encouraged through our HiMama app/daily charts as well as in day to day conversations with staff about their child and the program.

Parents are encouraged and welcome to express concerns regarding their child, to staff and/or director at any time when necessary. In order to deal with concerns respectfully, the following procedure has been put in place.

Steps for Parents:

1. Issues or concerns that are program or room related may be discussed with classroom teachers.
2. If issue or concern is with your child’s classroom teacher or any staff in the centre, approach the staff and express your issue or concern, when necessary set a time and place for discussion when the staff can be totally engaged. Strive to reach a resolution that is mutually agreeable. If a parent is not satisfied with a resolution with the staff then,
3. Approach the Director of the centre and discuss the issue or concern and attempt to resolve the issue with the staff.
4. When a resolution is in place all involved will meet to discuss the implementation of the plan to resolve the issue or address the concern.

Note Staff and Director are available by phone, email and in person. (If needed, see contact information for the McMaster Students Union General Manager, the Ministry of Education or The College of Early Childhood Educators)

Steps for Staff/Director

1. Be available to listen and respond to parent’s issues or concerns. When necessary, identify a place and time when discussion can occur.
2. Clarify individual perceptions involved in the issue, listen actively and empathetically.
3. Generate options for a win-win outcome
4. Develop an agreement that works for all as soon as possible and agree on a time line to implement the plan.
5. Parents issues and concerns of an urgent manner will be responded to within 24 hours.
6. All issues will be kept confidential.

Our centre maintains high standards for positive interactions, communication and role-modeling for children. Harassment and discrimination will therefore not be tolerated from any party.

If at any point a parent/guardian or staff feels uncomfortable, threatened, abused or belittled, they may immediately end the conversation and report the situation to the Director.

***Children’s Belongings***

Every child has a cubby with their name on it for their outdoor clothes as well as a bag or knaps sack with extra seasonally appropriate clothes. Spare clothes should include shirts/sweatshirts, pants or skirt, underpants and socks. Please label all your child’s clothes and belongings to avoid mix-ups and missing items. Soiled clothes are put in a bag and left on the child’s hook. Please replace immediately with fresh clothes. **Everything** in your child’s cubby must be taken home each night as per Fire Department rules.

# Rest Time

Cots are provided for the children to have a nap/quiet time after lunch.

1. Each child is assigned an individual cot.
2. Children may bring their own blanket from home for nap/quiet time to be kept on their bed. Blankets will be sent home regularly for laundering.
3. Each child may bring a soft toy/soother etc. for nap time.
4. Parents will be consulted via the initial questionnaire about specific sleeping arrangements. Anything special instruction for sleep time must be put in writing by the child’s parent.
5. Children may sit quietly with books or quiet toys if not sleeping.
6. Regular direct visual checks during sleep time will be made and these will be documented on the chart on the back of the attendance lists.
7. Any significant changes in a child’s sleep patterns will be communicated to parents via the daily chart.

***Creative Work***

Preschool children’s work is filed in a picture file in their classroom. Please check your child’s file regularly for pictures to take home. The toddler & intermediate children’s art work will be put in their cubbies for you to take home. Your child’s art work is important to him/her and can provide a great way to communicate with your child about his/her day.

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***Field Trips and Off-Site Activities***

Field trips are occasionally planned to places of interest in and around the city. Notices of trips are printed on the monthly calendar - an extra fee may apply. A permission form must be signed to allow their child to go on the trip. Parents who choose not to have children participate in a field trip must notify the director and make alternate arrangements. The fee for that day will not be waived. Occasionally, there will be a request for parent, volunteers for these excursions.

***Research Policy***

The child care centre occasionally participates in child related research studies being done by, students or associated professionals.

1. Forms for requests for research participants are sent out to parents.
2. Signed consent by the parent must be collected before a child will be allowed to participate in a research project.
3. Participating parents are sent a report on the findings of the research being done when complete.
4. Children will always be accompanied by the parent or staff during studies completed outside the classroom

***Volunteers & Students***

The child care center has placement students from the Early Childhood Education program at Mohawk College with us at various times during the year. In addition, we have several McMaster University students volunteering in our program and occasionally Coop students from the local high school.

~ All volunteer or placement students are subject to interviews and **Vulnerable Sector Police checks.** ~ Students and volunteers must read the Philosophy and Program Statement and the Policies and Procedures of the Centre including the list of Prohibited Practices as well as the Playground Safety Policies before beginning their placement and, if applicable, annually thereafter. The policies must be agreed to and signed off on the sheets attached before they begin and if applicable, annually thereafter.

~ Volunteers and students will be given an orientation including expectations during their time with us, a tour of the centre, and an introduction to the designated staff members who will be responsible for their supervision and mentoring.

~ A checklist of orientation procedures will be filled out and signed off to ensure understanding of the centre Program Statement, policies, procedures and expectations. Only **employees** will have direct unsupervised access to children,

**~ *Students/volunteers are not included in child to teacher ratios and are not to be left alone with the children at any time.***

NOTE: Our McMaster teacher’s assistants are paid employees.

