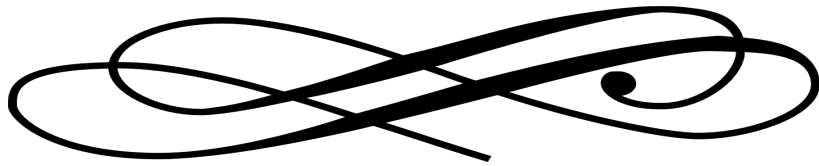


University of Waterloo
Department of Psychology
**Early Childhood
Education Centre
ECEC**



Parent Handbook

519-888-4567 ext. 33167

updated May 18 2021

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Program Statement

The Early Childhood Education Centre (ECEC) was established in 1974 by the Psychology Department of the University of Waterloo. We provide a top quality preschool program to the University community, as well as to the larger community of the Region of Waterloo. The ECEC is a laboratory school for the research of child development and a placement facility for MASc Interns in Developmental Communication Science, Early Childhood Education College students, High School and University volunteers. The ECEC is influenced by traditional and contemporary theorists in child development and education. We are inspired by the educators of Reggio Emilia and subscribe to an emergent approach to curriculum. Our practice is guided by the Ministry of Education document *How Does Learning Happen?*

We provide a positive, warm and nurturing climate where meaningful learning can take place. The ECEC is a child centred, family focused community where the strengths and uniqueness of individuals are valued and respected. Children are seen as curious, competent human beings who are intrinsically motivated to learn. They are capable of making choices and becoming deeply engaged in constructing their own knowledge. Within our play-based, hands-on environment learning takes place in a social context as the child explores materials, asks questions, makes predictions, experiments and assesses outcomes. We believe that children learn in a variety of ways and therefore we encourage them to draw from a wide range of resources including their past experiences, their surroundings, their peers and the adults they encounter.

We recognize that children need to develop and grow emotionally, physically, socially, creatively and cognitively. At the ECEC we offer experiences in dramatic (pretend) play, early literacy, art, emergent numeracy, outdoor play, science, games and music.

We support the development of self-help skills and the awareness of one's place in our larger community. Equal value is given to all aspects of development. We offer a balanced curriculum with opportunities for small and large group activities, active and quiet play, structured and unstructured times and individual experiences as well as peer interactions. We employ a fluid and flexible schedule in order for us to respond to individual children's needs, to extend learning moments and to be respectful of children's need to have blocks of time to be engaged in the activities that capture them.

At the ECEC we foster strong reciprocal relationships. These relationships are facilitated between teachers and children, parents and teachers, parents and children, children and children. We provide a welcoming environment for all and demonstrate respect in all interactions. Children are given time to express themselves, are listened to and supported through challenges with a positive outlook. We invite parents into our classrooms, to participate in special events and to be resources in supporting the children's program. Teachers emphasize communication with parents using documentation of learning, individual chats and written messages as tools. Many opportunities are provided for teachers and parents to connect about their child and the program in structured and unstructured ways. Teachers have time built into their day that allows for the casual connections needed and the ECEC sets aside formal opportunities for communication as well.

Teachers take responsibility for establishing the environment based on the ongoing input of the children with a goal of fostering each child's exploration, play and inquiry.

Open-ended materials and activities that allow for flexibility suit the varying needs of children. Appealing provocations to learning are offered to children for their full exploration.

Teachers reflect on their observations of the children in the environment in order to be intentional about the experiences they offer. Teachers highlight the links between the resources in the environment and the pursuits of the children. By observing, questioning, supporting and modeling, teachers challenge and encourage children, sharing in their enthusiasm and excitement. Activities can be teacher planned, child initiated, spontaneous, self-guided, project based and emergent.

Each child is an individual and has his/her own path to building knowledge. Teachers recognize this and make adjustments to materials, experiences and interactions to suit each child. At times a child may have significant individual needs that require extra support in assessment of the needs, intensive goal setting and monitoring of growth. Community resources may be accessed to meet these needs.

A strong component of our program is the development of perspective taking including understanding another person's thoughts and feelings as well as the development of social problem solving skills including helping, turn-taking, co-operating with others and sharing. Teachers provide modelling of these skills, consistent positive messaging and support to children as they express themselves with peers. It is important to us that children communicate in a positive way with others. We help children to rephrase messages, to verbally express themselves and to be respectful of others. Self-regulation is an essential skill that we can help children develop by building awareness of their emotions and individual needs. Teachers' physical and emotional presence plays a role as they assist children in self-awareness and in learning strategies to self-regulate.

Outdoor play is an essential daily component of our program. The teachers provide equipment, materials and suggestions in order to help children engage in the outdoor environment. Our goal is to offer open ended opportunities for children to connect with nature, to explore the properties of natural materials, to move their bodies, to use all of their senses, to challenge themselves and to take appropriate risks for their age and abilities. We wish for them to observe, investigate, problem solve, create and dramatize in the freedom of the outdoor classroom. It is important to us that children experience the natural rhythm of the seasons and weather by feeling rain and sun on their faces, exploring mud, experimenting with moving on snowy surfaces and feeling a soft breeze in their hair. Relationship building with peers, adults and natural materials can be facilitated in our outdoor classroom as well as a sense of wonder and connectedness to something larger than ourselves. This connecting to nature contributes to physical, mental and spiritual health of children and adults in the ECEC setting.

Ongoing pursuit of good health and safety for children and adults is taken into consideration. Healthy food choices are offered in a flexible format as we help children learn to self-regulate. If I feel hungry I should go for snack, if not I don't need a snack. Chances to challenge ourselves physically are offered with varying levels of difficulty and risk as we guide children through making good decisions about what they personally can manage and in identifying when they are ready for the next challenge. Teachers are there to support children in these important steps both physically with a helping hand and emotionally with encouragement.

We have many partners in our ECEC community with University MASc Interns, researchers and volunteers, College level ECE students on placement and high school co-op students exploring early childhood education. We view these additional members of our community as valuable contributors in providing diversity to our children's

experiences, in providing opportunities for building relationships and in providing new perspectives to our teaching staff. We consciously engage other community partners in our important work with children. We seek outside guests that can contribute to the current learning in the centre and explore the larger University environment for opportunities to experience unique natural spaces and to provide interesting and new environments for children to engage with.

Parents and teachers rely on community members to provide professional support to our program as resource consultants, occupational therapists and speech and language consultants for special needs children. These professionals help facilitate a consistent approach to supporting children at home and school for ongoing growth and facilitate goal setting and monitoring for individual children.

The ECEC is often called upon to provide professional development opportunities to other early childhood professionals, to university students and to researchers in the form of observational visits to our centre, hosting teaching reflection sessions and providing opportunities for course assignment work and research study.

Just as we provide professional development to others we value ongoing life-long learning for our staff as well. Our staff engage in reflective practice sessions with colleagues to consider next steps, attend workshops, pursue individual professional reading and participate in Waterloo Community of Practice events. At times the full ECEC staff develop an action research question as an area to study deeper over a period of time. We focus our reflective sessions on this topic, study related literature, seek professional development in this area and record what we have learned in an appropriate format.

With a priority being that we provide a top quality program to children and their families it is essential for our ongoing growth, development and relevance as an early childhood program that we continually review our goals and approaches, seek input from others and make alterations as needed. We do this using many tools such as parent surveys, staff input, program advisor suggestions, parent/teacher conferences, staff performance reviews and annual end of year review and goal setting meetings.

Overall, we want to ensure that we provide a safe, comfortable setting for quality interactions and learning for young children in a fun and engaging manner. As an early childhood education setting, the aim is to meet the diverse range of needs of young children in a developmentally appropriate, anti-biased, multicultural and non-sexist environment. We want to provide an amazing introduction to the world, to empower children's ideas and to help children and parents recognize the strengths of each child.



Guiding Children's Behaviour

We believe that behaviour management and conduct by the Early Childhood Education Centre full time teaching, part time teaching, administrative and volunteer staff is a statement of our professionalism. Our verbal and physical interactions with the children, staff, parents and consultants should provide socially acceptable and appropriate models at all times. Behaviour management is considered a continuous teaching and learning process by which skills are developed, fine-tuned and improved. Acknowledging consistent, appropriate and outstanding conduct performance is as vital as correcting unacceptable behaviour. We believe that by attaining excellence in professional levels of self-monitoring, self-discipline and interpersonal skills, the ECEC program will be recognized as an outstanding learning environment for children and adults.

The goal of the Early Childhood Education Centre is to provide emotional, physical, psychological and environmental safety and security for both children and adults. While a wide variety of strategies may be employed in the process of behaviour management, the goal of assisting children and adults in developing self-control, self-confidence, self-discipline and sensitivity in their interactions with others remains constant. This includes prohibiting harassment and discrimination. The recommended practices for behaviour management at the Early Childhood Education Centre (ECEC) are based on positive, non-punitive, anti-biased and non-sexist approaches to interacting with children and adults in the environment. Each situation is a combination of people, space, time and materials. As adults who interact with children the commitment to creating an atmosphere which fosters trust, security and comfort is imperative. Communication skills are critical in modelling the kinds of

behaviour we wish children and other adults to learn. When an environment that encourages caring and cooperation is supported, relating with each other in a respectful manner is possible.

The way in which space is used can either encourage or discourage desired behaviour. Space which is aesthetically pleasing, organized and ordered, contributes to an environment which promotes positive interactions and diminishes the potential for problems. Schedules, routines and transitions serve as the framework from which individuals gain trust, security and order. These can be flexible to some degree but they must provide children and adults with clear guidelines about what is expected. Materials that are in good supply and repair, familiar and developmentally appropriate, attractive and challenging encourage productive learning experiences for all.

Main Points of Behaviour Management Practices

1. The environment is structured and maintained to minimize or prevent problems.
2. Positive behaviour guidance techniques are the primary means of maintaining consistent and appropriate performance.
3. Minor disruptions are handled immediately with a brief quiet reminder of appropriate behaviour before situations escalate.
4. Problem solving through difficult situations with the child's perspective included is the preferred approach.

Prohibited Practices

The ECEC does not permit

- a) corporal punishment of a child.
- b) 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
- c) locking the exits 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 centre's emergency management policies and procedures
- d) 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
- e) depriving the child of basic needs including food, shelter, clothing or bedding
- f) inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

Program Personnel

The staff at the Early Childhood Education Centre includes a Director, Teachers, Teaching Assistants and an ECEC Administrative Assistant. Teachers have University degrees as well as specific Early Childhood Education training. Our staff are all suitably qualified for the jobs they are performing. We follow the child: staff ratios outlined in the Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA). Resource Teachers and ECE Consultants may be added to the ECEC's teaching staff to assist children with special needs. Program aides, MASc Interns and University of Waterloo student volunteers may also be working in the ECEC. The ECEC serves as a practicum placement site for Conestoga College Early Childhood Education students and high school students.

The role of the Director includes developing the program's theoretical rationale, establishing curriculum guidelines, evaluating the program, supervising and supporting the teachers, coordinating and monitoring research, observing the progress of the children and communicating with the parents. The role of the Teachers includes developing curriculum materials, planning and implementing the daily program activities, interacting with the children and communicating with the parents. The role of the Teaching Assistants includes supporting the Teachers and Director in their positions and planning and implementing some aspects of the curriculum.

Programs offered

The Early Childhood Education Centre operated by the Psychology Department of the University of Waterloo is located on the ground floor of the PAS Building. Our phone number is 519-888-4567, extension 33167.

We provide programs for children 30 months to 4 years of age in morning and afternoon sessions from September to June of any given year.

Fees for Preschool Program 2021-2022

*2 mornings a week (Tues/Thurs) from 9:00-11:30 a.m.

(\$220.40 a month)

*3 mornings a week (Mon/Wed/Fri) from 9:00-11:30 a.m.

(\$316.10 a month)

*5 mornings a week (Mon.-Fri.) from 9:00-11:30 a.m.

(\$536.50 a month)

*2 afternoons a week (Mon/Wed) from 1:00-3:30 p.m.

(\$208.80 a month)

* 2 afternoons (Tues/Thurs.) from 1:00-3:30 p.m.

(\$220.40 a month)

*4 afternoons a week (Mon to Thurs) from 1:00-3:30 p.m.

(\$429.20 a month)

Observation Booths

Parents are encouraged to visit the program and observe the children from the observation booths. The observation booths are also open to students, faculty and visiting groups interested in early childhood education. Children are permitted in the observation booths only if accompanied by a responsible adult and not disrupting any other observers or researchers conducting their work in the booths. All observers are required to “sign in” at the ECEC main entrance.

Children with Special Needs

The ECEC will provide an integrated program for children with special needs to the best of our ability. Support and assistance from outside agencies will be sought if needed. From time to time we may have outside agency Resource Teachers or Therapists working within the ECEC to assist children with special needs and to assist the teachers in the delivery of an appropriate program. It is most helpful for any identified or suspected special needs to be brought to our attention at the time of registration.

Calendar

When the ECEC opens in September it will not begin its full schedule immediately. **Parents will be sent a notice indicating their child’s starting date.** During the first week children’s entry into the ECEC will be staggered in order to facilitate their adjustment to the new setting. This means that only a small group of “new” children will start on each of the first few days of school. With fewer children, the staff is able to devote more time to each child’s special needs on that important “first day of school”.

During the year, the ECEC will be closed for several identified holidays. These include Thanksgiving, Family Day, Good Friday and Victoria Day. We will also be closed for the Christmas holidays and during the week of March Break. During the school year, staff will have regular curriculum planning sessions, materials and room preparation, contact with researchers and staff meetings on Friday afternoons. Staff attendance at conferences, workshops and seminars may also occur during the year. Parents will be notified in advance if school closures are necessary. Parents will also receive an ECEC Important Date List indicating all important dates for the school year.

Hours

Sessions begin at 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. and end promptly at 11:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Teachers are not available to provide child care before or after these hours except in the case of emergencies. The daily schedule is posted by the Main Office. Prior to each session, the teachers are involved in set-up and preparation. After the session is over, the teachers have responsibilities and commitments such as meeting with parents and resource people, providing information and feedback to students, volunteers and researchers and general clean up.

These duties keep the teachers occupied and, therefore, adherence to the school operating hours is expected. Should an emergency or special occasion occur, which prevents you from picking up your child at the end of a session please advise the ECEC Administrative Assistant or the Director as soon as possible. Late fees will be charged if you fail to pick up your child on time. The late fees are \$1.00 per minute.

ECEC Flexible Schedule

Morning	Afternoon	
9:00 a.m.	1:00 p.m.	Program begins with drop off to the Outdoor Classroom
Experiences Offered		Outdoor explorations Cubbies & Washrooms Small group activities Free Play
11:30 a.m.	3:30 p.m.	Parents and children meet up at the end of the session

Experiences may vary due to weather or other special events. We incorporate flexibility into our schedule to accommodate children's needs and interests.

ECEC Inclement Weather Schedule

Morning	Afternoon	
9:00 a.m.	1:00 p.m.	Program begins with drop off to the Hub Classroom
Experiences Offered		Cubbies & Washrooms Small group activities Free Play
11:30 a.m.	3:30 p.m.	Parents and Children meet up at the end of the session



Registration, Waitlist and Orientation Procedure

The Early Childhood Education Centre (ECEC) maintains a wait list of families wishing to attend our program. An interested parent should contact the ECEC via phone, mail or e-mail to have information about our wait list procedure sent to them. We recommend you place your child on our wait list early. For online application, please visit [One List Waterloo Region](http://www.onelistwaterlooregion.ca) (www.onelistwaterlooregion.ca) Create a parent profile and a child profile keeping in mind that the ECEC is listed under “centre-based” programs at this time. Put your child on the wait list for ECEC-University of Waterloo. **There is no fee charged to parents to put their child on our ECEC wait list.** Children’s names will be placed on the wait list based on their date of application and their date of birth. Admission to the ECEC will be on the basis of available space and the child being the correct age for the program. Parents can ask about their child’s place on the wait list and the ECEC Director or Administrative Assistant can tell a parent the number they are on the wait list. As a spot becomes available in our program we will go directly to our wait list to offer the available spot. When a parent is offered a spot for their child they will be invited to the ECEC for a tour and orientation to our program. After the tour the parent is given a couple of days to make a decision about accepting the spot and to follow through with registration. Once a family has registered every attempt will be made to schedule a play visit for the child, accompanied by their parent, before the child begins in the program. Each year registration for the next fall starts with the children currently enrolled in the ECEC. This means that children who are enrolled in our preschool program will have first chance at registering for the available spots for the next fall. This internal registration is handled on a first come first serve basis with families handing in their

requests for the next fall in February. It will be decided if the ECEC can accommodate all of these internal requests first and then external registrations will proceed as above. Siblings of children presently enrolled in the ECEC will need to be entered on the One List wait list and will be contacted according to their date of application.

Financial Policies

Fees are to be paid monthly, in advance, dated the first of each month. Fees for June of the current school year must be paid at the time of enrollment and are non-refundable. If a child is withdrawn from the Early Childhood Education Centre after registering, the parent will forfeit the June payment. There is a non-refundable \$55.00 registration fee paid at the time of registration. Upon acceptance of a child into the program the following will be required to secure the spot:

- a completed contract
- \$55.00 registration fee and June monthly fees, per child (current date)

9 post-dated cheques dated September 1st to May 1st for the amount of your program fees.

All fees are to be made payable to the University of Waterloo.

The ECEC requires at least one month’s written notice of intent to withdraw from the Centre. Withdrawal, without such notice, will result in the forfeit of one month’s fees. A family discount of 15% reduction on the lesser fee will be given to families with two or more children enrolled in the ECEC. Receipts will be given and should be kept for income tax purposes. No refunds will be made for absenteeism due to illness, severe weather or vacation. There is a \$15.00 charge for an NSF cheque.

The ECEC reserves the right to ask a child to be withdrawn at any time.

Parking

A special transition parking lot available for the ECEC is located between the Psychology and Environmental Studies Buildings. **This lot is only to be used by parents dropping off or picking up children from the ECEC.** To use the lot, each car must have an ECEC hang tag as well as a parking control card which will open the gate. Upon payment of fees, 1 parking hang tag and 1 parking control card will be issued. Additional cards and hang tags may be obtained from the ECEC office at a cost of \$10.00 per card, for the school year. The hang tag must be displayed by hanging it from the rearview mirror on your windshield. The parking control card when inserted in the slot of the control gate will activate the barrier. Your card will operate only during the time your child is in attendance at the ECEC (9:00-11:30 a.m. or 1:00-3:30 p.m.). After 3:45 p.m., \$5.00 in coin is required to access the parking lot.

A waiting bay is located on the road at the front of the parking lot and may be used in the event that the lot is full at the time of your arrival. You may not use that waiting bay as a long term parking spot as it creates a traffic hazard. Your vehicle could be towed or ticketed.

Parents are encouraged to park carefully between the painted lines and to ensure a smooth traffic flow by being cautious and courteous. The ECEC parking lot may only be used for extended parking if parents are involved directly with business in the Early Childhood Education Centre including interviews, observations of their child, meetings, workshops or parties. Any violation of the above parking regulations could result in parking privileges being revoked.

For safety, do not allow a child to leave the car alone or to stay in a car unattended. Escort each child to the playground or playrooms.

You are responsible for your child at arrival until s/he is signed in on the teacher's attendance sheet and at pick up once the teacher has dismissed them to you. Children must be supervised at all times. Keep your child with you when walking through the building. We share our 1st floor space with the other Psychology Department programs and must recognize that others are working as well. Children running ahead risk collisions with other people. Bring younger siblings into the ECEC with you. It is unsafe to leave them in the parking lot, playground or car.

Arrival, Departures and Release of Children

Upon arrival and departure you are requested to notify a teacher of your child's arrival/departure so they can record it on their teacher attendance form. This is essential as it signifies who is responsible for the child and assists the ECEC staff to know exactly how many children are in our care should an emergency arise. Only those listed on the child's registration form will be allowed to pick up your child unless a parent has given instructions of special arrangements. If the person picking up is not known to the ECEC staff we may ask the person to provide personal identification as verification of who they are. We ask that you phone the Centre if your child will be absent and provide the reason for the absence. The details of the absence are important as we are required to document illnesses related to the ECEC by Region of Waterloo Health Department guidelines. At drop off and pick up times we ask that families not use the ECEC playground unless an ECEC staff member is present for liability reasons.

Clothing

The children should be free and relaxed to play. Parents can help accomplish this by sending children dressed in comfortable, washable, loose fitting clothes which are appropriate for painting, crawling, running and climbing. “Special” clothes should be saved for dress-up occasions. Teachers will not restrict your child’s access to any play area, indoors or outdoors in order to protect clothing. We ask that you provide an extra set of clothes to keep at school in case of an accident or spill. Please label all clothes with your child’s name.

Children’s Belongings

Items brought from home including toys and books risk being lost, broken or can be the cause of disagreements among the children. For these reasons, the staff requests that children leave toys at home. From time to time the teachers may request your child bring in an object from home to supplement the learning around a particular topic. In these instances the teacher will do everything in his/her power to keep your child’s items safe at school. If your child has a “security” toy, blanket or other object, please bring this to the staff’s attention. It is best to label any items brought in with your child’s name.

Food

It is essential that no food items are brought to the ECEC from home due to life threatening allergies of some children in our program. A daily self-serve snack of fruits and vegetables is provided by the ECEC. We also provide milk and water as drink options. The children are encouraged to decide for themselves if and when they will have a snack. Weekly snack menus are posted on the bulletin board near the playground door. Our staff are trained in Safe Food Handling practices.

If your child has any dietary restrictions, please notify the teachers so that menu adaptations can be made. The ECEC strives to be ‘Nut Free’. No nuts or nut products are used for snack, special events or projects.

Gum and candy are not permitted at school. These can be a choking hazard during active play and also cause “I want some too” problems for other children.

Allergies

There are often children or adults in the ECEC with allergies that are not food related. Many people in our setting are sensitive to smells and scents causing physical reactions to strong smells and scented products such as perfumes, shampoo, hair gels, deodorants, etc. Scented products can aggravate health problems for some people with medical conditions. We ask that children, parents, staff and volunteers not wear scented products in the ECEC area. Your cooperation is appreciated.

Health and Illness

In order for children to participate in the early childhood education program, they must be healthy.

The following Health Policies are maintained in the Early Childhood Education Centre.

1. Parents are required to submit a medical form at the time of the child's admission to the Early Childhood Education Centre.
2. The child's immunizations must be up to date. This is a Public Health requirement and failure to comply will mean that your child will not be able to attend. If for medical reasons a child has not received all required immunizations a "Statement of Medical exemption form" must be completed by a Regulated Health Professional. If for conscience or religious beliefs, a "Statement of Conscience or Religious Belief" form must be completed by a "commissioner for taking affidavits". It is possible in this case that your child may not be able to attend school in order to avoid the possibility of infection of communicable diseases if there is an outbreak of some kind.
3. Each child will be monitored daily by the ECEC staff and will be sent home if the child is unwell or if the child's condition appears to jeopardize the health of the other children. The staff will refer to the Region of Waterloo Community Health Department guidelines when assessing symptoms and for exclusion guidelines.
4. Ill children who are unable to fully participate in the program will not be accepted at the ECEC. Parents are asked to keep ill children at home. Should a child become ill during a session, parents or caregivers will be called to come and pick the child up.

5. If a child shows any of the following symptoms, the child should be kept home and the parent should call the ECEC Office to let us know they will be absent and the symptoms. If a message is left an ECEC staff member will follow up with the parent to determine the child's symptoms.

- a) an acute cold, nasal discharge or coughing
- b) a sore throat
- c) an ear ache
- d) swollen neck glands
- e) a cough that produces coloured mucous
- f) an elevated temperature, flushing, fever
- g) digestive upset; vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours
- h) unexplained rash or skin eruption
- i) red or discharging eyes or ears
- j) difficult or laboured breathing
- k) any behaviour that seems out of character and might indicate illness such as irritability, fussiness and restlessness.
- l) inability to fully participate in all aspects of the program including outdoor play.

6. Parents should report a child's exposure to a communicable disease to the ECEC staff.

7. A child may return to the ECEC after illness if:
- a) they have had no diarrhea or vomiting in the last 24 hours
 - b) they have been taking antibiotics for 24 hours for their bacterial infection
 - c) they have a non-productive cough
 - d) their fever has subsided
 - e) the doctor has indicated a cause for the skin rash or eruption and the child is no longer contagious
8. Weather permitting, children will play outdoors every day. If a child is well enough to come to a session, s/he is deemed well enough to go outdoors. In order to maintain licensed child/staff ratios, the ECEC teachers must be outdoors with the children and cannot provide care for children who request indoor supervision.
9. Children should be dressed in clothing suitable for outdoor play. Heavy rain or extreme cold may result in the cancellation of outdoor play.
10. The staff prefer not to administer medication. However, if it is necessary for medication to be given to a child during the day, parents must complete an authorization form, stating dosage, times, and signed approval for the Director or Designate to give the medication. It must be in its original container with the physician's directions clearly visible. We cannot store more than 5 days dosage at a time.
11. All allergies, recurring health problems and dietary restrictions should be noted on the child's health form.
12. In case of illness or injury during school hours, the following procedure will be followed. The ECEC staff will attempt to contact one or both parents. If parents cannot be reached, the emergency contact person listed on the Registration Form will be contacted.

13. In the case of an emergency, a staff member will call 911. A staff member will accompany the child by ambulance to the Hospital. Parents will be contacted to meet the child and staff member at the hospital. All expenses incurred in transportation of the child to the hospital and treatment of the child will be charged to the parent or guardian.

Outdoor Playtime

Outdoor playtime is part of our daily schedule at the ECEC throughout the seasons. Most days we are able to enjoy some gross motor activities on our playground. It is important that children are dressed for the weather of the day. In the winter months layering of clothing is most effective in keeping children warm when outside. In spring and fall rain pants and boots are most helpful as we often play outside even in the rain. When children come in from outside we will ask them to change their footwear into their indoor shoes. The teachers will decide about 10 minutes before the session begins if the weather is suitable for outdoor play or not. If it is an indoor day a sign will be posted on the outside of the playground fence indicating it is an indoor day and to enter the ECEC via the main entrance. You will assist your child in removing their outdoor clothing and take them to the Hub for sign in.



Emergency Situations

The ECEC has established an [Emergency Management Policy and Procedure](#) to deal with emergency situations. For details of the Emergency Management Policy and Procedure please see the Director of the ECEC. We teach the children about fire drills and practice them each month throughout the year in order for the routine to be well rehearsed and smooth. The ECEC will be closed for the day if the Waterloo Region District School Board cancels classes at all of its schools due to severe weather. If only rural schools are closed, or if buses are cancelled but schools stay open, the ECEC remains open. The ECEC follows the school board's lead since it has an effective system for evaluating weather conditions appropriate for young children across Waterloo Region and a procedure in place for informing the public through media.

The University of Waterloo has a set procedure for determining whether the University is open or closed during severe weather. The University does not necessarily close if the Waterloo Region District School Board cancels classes as they are dealing with a different population of travelers. In the event the University closes for severe weather and the school board does not close all schools, the ECEC will also be closed. We are not able to operate our centre when the University is closed.

A closing of the Waterloo Region District Schools, the University and/or the ECEC will be announced on local radio stations (570 News, CHYM FM) or on their websites (www.chymfm.com, www.570news.com). A closing of the ECEC will be announced on the UW online Daily Bulletin news page and an appropriate phone message will be provided on the ECEC phone line (519-888-4567 ext 33167). Should it become necessary to close the ECEC during the course of the day, parents will be contacted by phone and advised to either pick up their children or to keep them at home.

In the event the ECEC building requires an evacuation the children and teachers will relocate in the Environmental Studies 2 building across from our ECEC parking lot. If necessary, parents will be notified by telephone where to pick up their children. If a complete evacuation of the University is called for the children and teachers will be relocated to a safe place and we will notify parents by phone of that location. We will be requesting parents come to pick up their child at this safe location.

Role of Parents

The ECEC enters into a partnership with parents when a child is enrolled in our program. We are committed to helping parents and children to feel welcome in our centre and to building trusting relationships with families. We encourage and support these relationships by keeping open lines of communication using newsletters, notes, e-mail and face-to-face chats. We welcome families to participate in our program. We recognize that the ECEC is a community of people with diverse beliefs, values and parenting practices. We respect these differences and pass our interest in and respect for diversity on to the children in our care.

Parent involvement in our program is important to us. We include parents by providing a newsletter, providing parent teacher conferences, inviting parents to volunteer for snack duty or other duties as needed, having parties and celebrations, going on field trips, having parent guests and yearly family gatherings.

From time to time there may be a need to seek parent volunteers as a focus group related to a particular topic.

Parents will be notified as these opportunities arise. During the year, teachers will meet individually with parents to discuss their child's progress. In addition, general parent meetings may be held to discuss a variety of topics relevant to families.

The staff is eager to make these meetings most relevant for parents and would appreciate parents' suggestions for topics and/or speakers. Parents are always special visitors in the ECEC. Everyone enjoys it when a parent comes in to share an interest or hobby or to sit, read stories and talk with the children. Parents who are interested in sharing with the school in this manner should speak to the director or a teacher about planning a specific time for the visits. Newsletters, receipts and notices to parents are left in the children's cubbies. This area needs to be cleared daily.

Field Trips

During the course of the school year, children may participate in several walking field trips which will require them to leave the ECEC. Depending on the destination and the number of children attending, parent assistance may be requested. These special trips are an important aspect of the curriculum and parents' presence often enhances the experience. We will not transport children by any means other than walking or wagons .

Birthdays

As each child's birthday approaches an ECEC teacher will approach the parents and ask about your willingness to have us celebrate the child's birthday at the ECEC. The family is invited to participate in the celebration. We keep birthdays low key and suitable for preschool aged children. Often the child and teacher plan together what games or activities might be included in the birthday event which is carried out with a small group of children. The birthday child will have the opportunity to wear a birthday crown, hat or cape for the day to let others know it is their birthday. They will also have the opportunity to choose a small gift from our birthday treasure box. Food items are not part of the birthday celebrations at the ECEC events.

With the many food allergies and very strict public health rules related to food it is much too complicated to have food items included in birthday events. We generally prefer that families not prepare gifts or loot bags for birthdays at the ECEC. Loot bags and gifts can cause stress for some families who feel the need to reciprocate on their child's day. However, we do understand that you may feel strongly about bringing in a small gift for friends to help celebrate and we will give you a birthday note in the fall outlining some guidelines. If your child's birthday is in a month that they are not attending school the teachers will ask if you would like to pick a date closest to their day or maybe celebrate their half-birthday. We want to be sure we recognize each child's special day.

Cultural Celebrations

The families and staff of the ECEC have many different cultural histories and experiences that contribute to their beliefs and values. As a community of people we are interested in what events or traditions your family might celebrate and in what ways children would participate in those celebrations. We provide each family with a Family Participation sheet where you can indicate your cultural traditions and celebrations. The ECEC staff may plan experiences or provide materials to the children that expose them to varying traditions. We may host a celebration of a particular holiday if it is of particular interest that year. Families should not necessarily expect that the traditional Canadian celebrations or events will be highlighted.

Our wish is to embrace diversity, to let children know that different families may celebrate different things and that is OK. We focus on how children would celebrate these events by highlighting if there are special clothes that we wear, foods that we eat or games that we play. We may ask parents to share some of their own family's traditions with us as a special visitor.

Volunteers and Students

The ECEC is committed to having volunteers and students working alongside the ECEC staff. These volunteers may be parents, University students, MASc Interns, Conestoga College ECE students or High School Co-op students. We believe that by providing volunteer opportunities we are contributing to a quality experience for the children as more one-to-one interactions will occur between adults and children. The children become accustomed to new and different adults and become enlightened about the interests of a varying group of people. The volunteers gain experience working with young children and address their need to give back to the community. The ECEC staff gain valuable assistance in the day to day activities of the program. At no time are students or volunteers counted in the staffing ratios maintained in the child care centre, nor will they be left alone, unsupervised with a child.

Guidelines for Communicating with Parents

It is important to us that parents, teachers and staff at the University of Waterloo's Early Childhood Education Centre maintain open lines of communication. Throughout the year daily pickup arrangements change, children and staff contract illnesses and families have information to share with the ECEC staff. Several communication formats are located throughout the ECEC to ensure that the necessary information is shared.

Messages from parents can be left at the 24 hour automated phone number **519-888-4567 extension 33167**. It is best to not send absence messages by e-mail on the day they are occurring, as the staff do not always have time to check e-mail before joining the children in program. They may not receive the message until lunch time or the end of the day.

Daily Communication Book: (maintained by ECEC staff)

Messages received by phone or in person inform all of us of sick children and sick staff, absent children and absent staff, drivers for the children and special arrangements. The staff will record these items in our Staff Daily Communication Book to insure all ECEC staff are informed.

From time to time notices are posted on the entrance doors indicating any important details for the day. You will see many forms of documentation displayed throughout the halls for parents and visitors to see.

Process for Expressing Parent Issues and Concerns

We support positive and responsive interactions between parents and ECEC staff and encourage ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children. We believe that our relationships with parents involve respectful consideration of parent's issues and concerns. We need to listen to their concerns, consider their viewpoints, respond in a timely manner and endeavor to address their concerns in a respectful way.

Issues and concerns raised by parents are taken seriously and will be addressed. Every effort will be made to address and resolve issues and concerns to the satisfaction of all parties and as quickly as possible

Steps for Parents:

- If a parent has a Program or Classroom related concern they should approach one of the classroom Teachers or Teaching Assistants to discuss their concern, preferably at a time when the staff are not engaged in program with children.

Steps for Parents:

- If the parent does not feel comfortable approaching one of the Teachers or Teaching Assistants or if the issue is related to something other than the program or classroom setting they can speak to the ECEC Director.
- Parents can refer to the attached summary chart outlining who to approach for various issues or concerns.

Parents can choose to connect with the ECEC staff members in person, via phone or e-mail.

Steps for Staff Members:

- Any ECEC staff member that is approached by a parent in person with an issue or concern will invite the parent to a quiet, more private space for further discussion so the parent feels more comfortable and their privacy is protected.
- If the parent or staff member cannot meet right at that moment the staff member will assume responsibility for arranging a time to meet with the parent to address their concern. If the staff member needs help in planning a time out of program to meet with the parent they will coordinate with the Director.
- If a parent raises a concern in a phone conversation the staff member will again arrange for a private conversation whether by phone or in person.

If an email message of a concern is received the staff member will respond by arranging a time to meet in person with the parent to avoid any misunderstandings in written communication.

- If it is not at all possible for the parent to come in for a personal meeting the staff member should arrange a phone conversation with the parent to discuss the issue.

- When meeting with parents the staff member will listen carefully to understand the parent's concern, take notes and provide information relevant to the situation if they are able. If the staff member needs to look into the concern or seek input from other staff members they will explain this to the parent and make a plan to respond back to the parent within 5 business days. If for any reason this follow up meeting cannot be scheduled within 5 days the staff member will still connect with the parent before the 5 days are up to arrange the follow up meeting time.
- The staff member should inform the Director of any issues or concerns that come up so they are aware of parent concerns and can provide input to the solution if needed and note any ongoing issues.
- The level of detail provided to the parent will respect and maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved.
- The ECEC maintains a high standard for positive interaction, communication and role-modelling for children. Harassment and discrimination will therefore not be tolerated from any party.
- If at any point a parent or staff feels uncomfortable, threatened, abused or belittled, they may immediately end the conversation and report the situation to the ECEC Director.

Escalation of issues or concerns

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 Administrative Officer of Psychology – Janice da Silva (519) 888-4567 ext.32032.

Issues/concerns related to compliance with requirements set out in the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 8670* and Ontario Regulation 137/15 should be reported to the Ministry of Education's Child Care Quality Assurance and Licensing Branch. For information or to report a complaint about a licensed child care centre or private-home day care agency, please contact us at 1-877-510-5333 or information.met@ontario.ca

Nature of Issue or Concern	Steps for Parent and/or Guardian to Report Issue/Concern:	Steps for Staff and/or Licensee in responding to issue/concern
<p>Program or Classroom Related</p> <p>E.g: schedule, sleep arrangements, toilet training, indoor/outdoor program activities, feeding arrangements, etc.</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <p>-the classroom staff directly</p> <p>Or</p> <p>- the ECEC Director</p>	<p>-Address the issue/concern at the time it is raised</p> <p>Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● arrange for a meeting with the parent within 5 business days.
<p>General Centre or Operations Related</p> <p>Eg. Child care fees, hours of operation, staffing, waiting lists, menus, etc.</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <p>- The ECEC Director</p>	<p>Document the issues/concerns in detail. Documentation should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the date and time the issue/concern was received ● The name of the person who received the issue/concern ● The name of the person reporting the issue/concern ● The details of the issue/concern; and ● Any steps taken to resolve the issue/concern and/or information given to the parent regarding next steps or referral
<p>Staff, Supervisor, and/or Licensee Related</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <p>-the individual directly</p> <p>Or</p> <p>-the ECEC Director</p> <p>All issues or concerns about the conduct of staff, duty parents, etc. that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the Director as soon as parents become aware of the situation.</p>	<p>Provide contact information for the appropriate person if the person being notified is unable to address the matter. Ensure the investigation of the issue/concern is initiated by the appropriate party within 5 business days or as soon as reasonably possible thereafter. Document reasons for delays in writing.</p>
<p>Student, Volunteer, Researcher Related</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <p>-the staff responsible for supervising the volunteer or student</p> <p>Or</p> <p>-the ECEC Director</p> <p>All issues or concerns about the conduct of students, researchers and/or volunteers that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the Director as soon as parents become aware of the situation</p>	<p>Provide a resolution or outcome to the parent(s) who raised the issue/concern.</p>

Guidelines for Contact Outside Regular Hours

These guidelines were written to ensure and establish that employees, volunteers and student teachers at the University of Waterloo's Early Childhood Education Centre follow specific steps when arranging to offer additional child care services to families after ECEC hours and beyond the ECEC premises.

In **all** cases of additional child care including babysitting, position of nanny, weekend care, holiday assistance and summer employment, the following steps must be adhered to:

- The arrangement for outside contact **cannot** be initiated or discussed between the individual parties on the premises of the Early Childhood Education Centre or the University of Waterloo.
- The agreement for outside contact must be arranged, contracted and conducted between the individual parties after operating hours with no involvement by the Early Childhood Education Centre or the University of Waterloo.
- Staff must communicate with families for this purpose utilizing their personal phone numbers and e-mail accounts. It must be clear this arrangement is separate from University of Waterloo business.
- The verbal or written contract must be made between the individual parties with no liability or responsibility of the Early Childhood Education Centre or the University of Waterloo as a third party.

Research

1. Preamble

The Early Childhood Education Centre serves not only as a model setting for 2 yr. 6months to 4 year olds but also as a resource for University students and faculty involved in research in developmental and educational psychology. This research contributes to a growing body of knowledge concerning child development, thereby benefiting children and parents, students and faculty. When enrolling a child in the ECEC, parents should recognize that opportunities for ongoing research with, and observation of, children who attend the ECEC, is a major function of the school. With permission from their parents, children will have the opportunity to participate in research at some time. Consequently, it is important for parents to be aware of the ways in which children may be involved in research. If parents are reluctant to have their child participate in any research at all, they should consider another preschool setting other than the Early Childhood Education Centre.

2. Research Policy

Research at the ECEC normally is conducted by undergraduate students, graduate students and faculty in the Psychology Department. Occasionally, students from other departments within the University will also conduct research at the ECEC. Projects may be student theses at the undergraduate, masters and doctoral levels, course assignments or ongoing faculty research. Results of these research projects may be published in books and/or in established academic journals and/or may be presented at national or international conferences.

Regardless of the source or purpose of the research, every project conducted at the ECEC must undergo prior ethics review and clearance through the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Waterloo.

This process is intended to ensure the proposed research is consistent with the University's Guidelines for Research with Human Participants. Only those projects which receive ethics clearance from the Office of Research Ethics will be considered appropriate for the ECEC. In addition to ethics review through the ORE, projects are also reviewed by the ECEC Director and on occasion a liaison person from the ECEC Advisory Committee. Each project is evaluated in terms of ethical and methodological soundness, suitability to the setting and the long term benefit to children in general. Only after a research project has been approved at all levels, can it be implemented at the ECEC.

3. Types of Research

Generally, there are two broad categories of research conducted at the ECEC: **observational research** and **interactive research**.

3.1 Observational research does not require any direct contact between researchers and the children or their parents, and the children are not interrupted from their normal activities.

There are three types of **observational research** projects:

- 1) those in which the children are observed from the many ECEC observation booths during normal school activities;
- 2) those in which teachers evaluate some aspect of the children's behaviour or development
- 3) those in which researchers use specific non-confidential information provided by the parents.

3.2 Interactive research includes those projects in which the researcher interacts directly with the children or their parents, either on a one-to-one basis or in groups.

There are three general types of **interactive research** projects:

- 1) a researcher may ask children to participate in individual or small group tasks
- 2) a researcher may ask parents to participate in a project through interviews, questionnaires or direct participation in a research task, with or without their child
- 3) a researcher may manipulate materials or activities which are not part of the normal school routine (for example, a study in which the researcher looks at the effect of the availability of certain types of toys on children's interactions).

Unless otherwise arranged, all **interactive research** is conducted in rooms adjacent to the ECEC's activity rooms and can be observed by interested staff or parents of the children involved in the activity. **All information gathered from observational or interactive research projects is considered confidential and will be used for research purposes only.**

4. Procedures for Obtaining Parent Permission for Research

At the beginning of the school year, parents will be asked to sign a Parent Permission Form that will give permission for their child to participate in all approved **observational research** projects at the Early Childhood Education Centre.

4.1 Observational Research

- Prior to the start of any observational research project, parents will be informed of the project by a notice on the research bulletin board. Detailed information about each project also will be available at the ECEC office.

- Due to the nature of observational research, we anticipate that all children enrolled in the ECEC normally will be involved. Parents may, however, withdraw permission for their child's participation in any study involving teacher evaluations.

4.2 For Involvement in General Interactive Research

Interactive research projects typically involve studies of children's general language development, their developing thinking skills and their understanding of knowledge and other issues having to do with cognitive development. In these types of projects, children will be involved in activities that are very much like their everyday experiences at the ECEC. For example, children might learn about different toys, listen to a story and then answer questions about it, or make a picture with stickers and colouring markers. These projects are designed to be enjoyable and stimulating experiences for the children.

- At least two weeks before the start of every interactive research project, an **information letter** will be sent home to parents describing the purpose of the project and the tasks involved. The letter will remind parents that they can decline permission for their child's involvement in the study and will include a **permission form** for parents to return to the ECEC indicating **'Yes' or 'No'** for their child to participate in the specific project.
- In addition to the information letter sent home to parents, any new interactive research project will have a description that will be posted on the research bulletin board. A full copy of the research proposal also will be available at the ECEC office for parents to read.
- Participation in any interactive research project typically will take **no more than 15 to 20 minutes** of your child's time. Further, children are likely to take part in **no more than 3** such interactive research projects in **one term**.

- In addition to seeking permission from parents, researchers will also **ask the children for their agreement to participate** in an interactive project before involving them. If a child indicates that he/she does not wish to take part, or wishes to delay participation, this decision will be respected.

- On the day that a child participates in the research project, **notification** will be placed in the child's cubby.
- Researchers normally will make a short summary of the findings of the research available as soon as possible after completion of each study. However, some research is done over extended periods of time and thus provision of results may be delayed.
- A child's privacy will be maintained in all reports or publications resulting from the studies. Any videotapes made by researchers in conjunction with the research will be used only for research and educational purposes.

More information about any interactive or observational research project may be obtained from the researcher directly or from a detailed description of the project available in the ECEC office.

Please note again that the final decision about participating in any of these interactive projects will be made by the child. Although we recognize the importance of conducting research at the ECEC, our first priority is always the well-being of the children. A research experience, like every aspect of school, should always be an enjoyable one for the child.

Your decision or that of your child, either not to participate in any of the interactive studies or to withdraw consent, will not impact your relationship with the ECEC.

Privacy

The ECEC respects the privacy of parents, children, students, volunteers, researchers and staff members. We collect, use, maintain, disclose and dispose of information for the purposes of operating the ECEC program and business in a manner consistent with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA). We have an obligation to protect private and confidential information gathered as part of our regular business in keeping with the University of Waterloo Privacy Policy and FIPPA.

***Welcome
to the
ECEC!***