



Parent Handbook

EarlyON Child and Family Centre

March 2024

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Who We Are

Since 1931, the Canadian Mothercraft Society (“Mothercraft”) has dedicated itself to the promotion of healthy child development and support for families with young children. We believe every child is competent, curious, capable of complex thinking, and rich in potential. Mothercraft’s EarlyON Child and Family Centre (CFC) delivers FREE inclusive programs for families, caregivers, and their children (newborns to age six) at various locations in Toronto (check our website – www.mothercraft.ca - for program times and locations). We offer play and inquiry–based programs that promote inclusive, safe, and welcoming environments open to all families. Families and caregivers will be able to find support, get advice, make personal connections, and access a network of resources.

Our Staff Team

Our team of early learning professionals includes:

- Family Support Workers (all of whom are Registered Early Childhood Educators) who work together to deliver a variety of high-quality programs and services that support early learning and development, engage parents and caregivers, and make connections for families through a variety of methods that support the health and safety and well-being of children and families.
- EarlyON Manager (who is a Registered Early Childhood Educator) who oversees all aspects of the EarlyON Child and Family Centre operations and planning of high-quality programs and services in collaboration with the EarlyON staff team.

All EarlyON staff have Standard First Aid and Infant/Child CPR Certification. As per Ontario’s Child Care and Early Years Act 2014 (CCEYA) as well as its Criminal Records Act, staff are also required to provide a clear Vulnerable Sector Check prior to their employment and to renew as per Ministry of Education requirements. Mothercraft’s Registered Early Childhood Educators are in good standing with the Ontario College of Early Childhood Educators, the regulatory body for the profession. All Mothercraft staff, students on placement are required to be fully vaccinated with a recognized COVID-19 vaccine.

Our Approach to Service Delivery

Mothercraft’s Mission is **“To support healthy child development and strengthen families.”**

Across all our service areas, we strive to ensure that, regardless of where children begin in life, they are on a path to reach their full potential. For over 90 years, we have been leaders in supporting healthy child development, while working with our many community partners to meet the changing needs of families. We are committed to excellence, continually testing new concepts and ideas related to early childhood mental health, early learning and family support. We are known for our ability to translate critical research learnings into everything we do – from our high-quality childcare and enrichment programs to our services for children and families with special needs, and specialized training programs for childcare providers and other professionals.

Mothercraft values diversity and strives to create an environment that is welcoming and inclusive.

Framework for EarlyON Program Delivery

Mothercraft utilizes Ontario's Pedagogy for the early years using the *'How Does Learning Happen?'* document: <https://files.ontario.ca/edu-how-does-learning-happen-en-2021-03-23.pdf> as its framework for service delivery. We are committed to providing an environment that engages parents and caregivers as co-learners and leaders in influencing positive child, family, and community experiences and outcomes. We guide our practices around four foundations: Belonging, Well-Being, Engagement, and Expression.

We believe **children** are competent, capable of complex thinking, curious, and rich in potential that grow up in diverse families.

We believe **families** are the experts on their children. They are the first and most powerful influence on children's learning, development, health, and well-being.

We believe **educators** are knowledgeable, caring, reflective, and resourceful professionals. They collaborate with others to create engaging environments and experiences to further children's learning and development.



Figure 1. The four foundations ensure optimal learning and development. Adapted from "How Does Learning Happen?, Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years," 2014.

What to Expect when attending EarlyON Programs:

Supervision of Children and Security

Mothercraft is not responsible for the supervision of children attending the EarlyON program. Children must be supervised by their parent/caregiver at all times. The parent/caregiver needs to remain on premises and may not leave the building while their child is in program.

On your First Visit

All adults attending Mothercraft EarlyON CFC programs will be asked to create a *free* membership account on [KeyON.ca](https://www.keyon.ca). The account can be created prior to visiting a Mothercraft EarlyON CFC or it can be done on the first visit to the Centre. Family Support Workers will provide parents/ caregivers with an iPad to create their KeyON account. Once an account is created, the parent/caregiver will receive a key fob with a QR Code. Parents/caregivers can use this key fob to sign in and out of all Mothercraft EarlyON Programs.

[How to register for Mothercraft EarlyON programs through KeyON](#)



Please note: Each adult attending the Mothercraft EarlyON program must have their own individual KeyON account. *

Program Expectations and Goals

We know, based on evidence and research, that young children learn through play. We also know that parents and caregivers are children's first and most important teachers; as such, parents/caregivers are expected to fully engage with their child(ren) while attending an EarlyON program to support their development and stimulate learning. Our Family Support Workers have specialized knowledge about child development, learning through play and inquiry-based learning; as such, they will lead and facilitate age-appropriate activities for parents/caregivers and children to participate in during drop-in and pre-registered programs.

Parent/Caregiver Fees

EarlyON programs are available to families free of charge.

Program Times

1. Mothercraft EarlyON operates at various sites and program hours vary at each location. Please scan the below QR Code to view locations and hours of operation.

Please scan QR Code
for Hours of Operation



Registering for Pre -registered Programs on KeyON

[How to register for Mothercraft
EarlyON programs through KeyON](#)



To view our monthly program calendar please visit our website mothercraft.ca or call us at 416 – 920 - 3515 ext. 100.

Supporting Students

We mentor students on placement from Mothercraft's Early Childhood Education program and other community colleges. These students contribute many new and exciting ideas to our EarlyON programs. Staff supervise the students while on placement, and students are not left alone to supervise the child(ren). Each student within the program room will have a photo and a short bio posted on the information board so parents know who they are.

Educational Workshops

We offer virtual workshops which are delivered every Wednesday between 2:00-3:00 pm on Zoom. We strive to provide accurate information during workshop presentations. We work together with community professionals and organizations to offer a variety of services that support families with young children. ***Mothercraft is not responsible for how the information is used and does not promote any service provided by external workshop facilitators.***

Room Capacities

In compliance with fire and safety regulations, program rooms have designated person capacities. A sign is posted on the door of program rooms indicating when the program has reached capacity. We ask participants to adhere to the room capacities at each location.

Shoes and Socks in Program

Socks are required at all EarlyON locations, with some exceptions where footwear such as running shoes must be worn to adhere to footwear requirements. Parents/caregivers are asked to please **bring socks to cover bare feet and to adhere to footwear requirements at each location.** Please check the program calendar at www.mothercraft.ca for program specific requirements.

Personal Belongings

Mothercraft is not responsible for any lost or stolen items. Parents and/or caregivers are responsible for their personal belongings. To maintain a safe play environment, please keep all outerwear, diaper bags, knapsacks, grocery bags, car seats, etc. in designated areas.

Diapering Areas

Designated diaper change areas are available at each program site. Please follow the diapering procedures posted by each diapering area.

Food and Beverages/ Snack Areas

There are designated eating areas at each program site. To avoid accidents, parents and caregivers are asked to drink hot or cold beverages in the designated area or to label and leave the hot beverages in the designated area until leaving the site.

Allergen and Scent Aware Environment

All the Mothercraft EarlyON CFCs are allergen aware. We also strongly discourage the use of scented products in all Mothercraft EarlyON CFC program spaces. **Please note that the Mothercraft EarlyON Main Site and Mothercraft West locations are peanut/nut-free and scent-free.**

Program Toys and Equipment

All toys, books, and equipment belonging to the Mothercraft EarlyON program are to remain on the premises so that all participants using our programs can have access to these materials.

Vehicle Parking

Parking is not provided at any of the Mothercraft EarlyON Child and Family Centre locations.

Stroller Parking

Strollers are to be parked in the designated areas at each location. Please do not leave valuables in your strollers. Please ask a Family Support Worker for the designated stroller parking area at each site. ***Mothercraft is not responsible for any lost or stolen items.***

Personal Electronic Devices

Cell phones, iPad, cameras, and video cameras are **NOT allowed** within program areas at any time. Pictures and recordings are **not permitted in program areas.** If you need to make an emergency phone call or are expecting a call, please step outside the room with your child.

Mothercraft EarlyON Policies

Mothercraft has policies and guidelines in place that benefit parents, caregivers and children who participate in the programs.

Health and Safety

Mothercraft will take every precaution to protect the health and safety of participants and staff. In the event of a public health issue, Mothercraft is required to comply with directions from the Toronto Public Health Department.

Handwashing

To help avoid the unnecessary spread of germs, assist your children with frequent hand washing, i.e., before participating in a sensory experience, after coughing or sneezing and after each bathroom visit. Please follow the procedures posted in each bathroom at program sites.

Environmental Cleaning and Maintenance

EarlyON Staff will maintain and implement procedures to address infection prevention which includes cleaning of play spaces, toys and equipment and other meeting spaces. Toys and equipment will be disinfected after each drop-in/pre-registered program. "Mouthing Bins" are in each program room and parents/caregivers are responsible for monitoring toys that have been mouthed. Parents must place these toys into the Mouthing Bin once their child is finished playing with them. Laundry will be washed immediately when soiled and the EarlyON staff will keep a log of all cleaning procedures.

Health Policy

If you feel sick or have any new or worsening symptoms of illness listed below, whether they are COVID related or not, you should stay home until your symptoms are improving for 24 hours (or 48 hours for nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea) and contact your health care provider if needed. EarlyON professionals may refuse entry and/or ask you to end your visit early if you have symptoms or if symptoms of illness get worse during your visit.

If you or your child(ren) display more than one of the following symptoms, please stay at home:

- Fever
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Discharge from eyes, ears, nose
- Undetermined skin rashes and marks
- Lethargy, unusual tiredness, and weakness
- Excessive coughing and sneezing
- Low coping i.e., crying

For more information, click [School and childcare screening](#) or contact the EarlyON centre directly to learn more about their onsite health and safety policies and practices.

Emergency Evacuation Procedure

As part of our fire safety procedures, all parents/caregivers must sign themselves in and out of the program upon each visit. All parents/caregivers must participate in fire drills and other safety procedures. Upon hearing a fire alarm parents/caregivers must:

1. Leave the room immediately, ensuring all children are accompanied.
2. Follow staff directions.
3. **DO NOT** gather belongings, calmly escort children outside to the designated meeting areas.
4. Always supervise children.
5. Written fire evacuation procedures are posted in each program room and in conspicuous places for parents/caregivers to see.
6. Mothercraft will use the Yorkminster Park Baptist Church for emergency shelter in an extreme situation.

Duty to Report Child Abuse

Mothercraft is committed to the safety of children, and it is the responsibility of all staff who work with children to follow Section 125 of the Child, Youth and Family Services Act. Where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a child may be in need of protection, the staff must immediately report his/her suspicions and the information on which the concern is based to a Children's Aid Society (CAS). Mothercraft staff are required to follow instructions provided by the Children's Aid Society.

Complaint and Resolution Process

Mothercraft values the creation of positive learning environments and experiences for children, supporting positive and responsive interactions among children, parents, staff, and childcare providers. Mothercraft values and encourages the feedback of parents, students and community members about the programs and services of the organization.

Complaints can provide important opportunities for improving programs and services. A complaint may be defined as an expression of dissatisfaction or unmet expectation. A complaint can be made by a parent, student, or community member with support if necessary. The complaint can relate to any aspect of the organization's programs and services.

Mothercraft is committed to listening to parents, students and community member issues and concerns and responding in a fair, timely and respectful manner. All complaints will be given due consideration without reprisal or discrimination. All aspects of a complaint will be handled in confidence. All complaints are documented. The following outlines the steps to be followed when parents have any issues or concerns:

STEP 1: Making a Complaint

Parents are encouraged to raise any issues, concerns, or complaints with the staff member directly involved with their child/ren and family. The staff member will offer to discuss a concern at the earliest convenience and within 2 working days. If the staff member is unable to satisfactorily resolve the issue, or if the concerns are staff-related or operational, parents have the option to proceed to Step 2.

STEP 2: Discussion with the EarlyON Manager

Parents are invited to discuss unresolved issues, concerns, or complaints with the EarlyON Manager. The Manager will meet with parent within five working days of initial contact with the parent regarding a complaint. The role of the Manager is to resolve the matter to the mutual satisfaction of the parents,

the staff and Mothercraft. Failing this, the Manager will inform the parent of their right to seek resolution through a meeting with the Director of Child and Family Services and will provide the Director's contact information. The parent will receive a written response from the manager within two weeks, summarizing their discussion.

STEP 3: Discussion with Director of Child and Family Services

Upon the request of the parent, the Director will meet with the parent within two weeks. The Director will attempt to resolve the problem to the mutual satisfaction of the parent, staff, and Mothercraft. The Director will summarize the discussion and outcome with the parent in writing not more than two weeks after the meeting. If the parent is not satisfied with the response from the Director, the Director will inform the parent of their right to contact the Executive Director and will provide the name and contact information of the Executive Director.

STEP 4: Meeting the Executive Director Upon the request of the parent, the Executive Director will meet with the parent within two weeks. The Executive Director will attempt to resolve the problem to the mutual satisfaction of the parent, staff, and Mothercraft. The Executive Director will summarize the discussion and outcome with the parent in writing not more than two weeks after the meeting. If the parent is not satisfied with the response from the Executive Director, the parent will be informed of their right to contact any of the following:

At any time during or following this process, you have the option to access:

Ministry of Education	1-877-510-5333
Toronto Public Health	416-338-7600
City of Toronto – Children's Services	416-397-7359

[Personal Conduct Policy](#)

All parents and/or caregivers are expected to treat all families, children, and staff with respect. It is the responsibility of Mothercraft staff to ensure the safety and privacy of children and families who attend our programs, and to ensure compliance with all Mothercraft policies and procedures. It is our expectation that parents and caregivers will respect and comply with direction and guidance provided by Mothercraft staff to ensure child safety and well-being while in our program areas. Mothercraft has a no tolerance policy for behaviour that affects the emotional and physical safety of children, families and staff while attending a Mothercraft EarlyON program. We encourage you to speak to a staff member concerning any issues you may have while on site.

[Inclusion and Diversity](#)

We recognize that each family has a diverse range of strengths and needs. We aim to provide opportunities for every parent, caregiver, and child so that they can participate and develop regardless of class, culture, disability, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic/national origin, or race. This approach seeks to create an environment that accepts, and respects differences and embraces diversity.

We have a commitment to inclusion, and strive to:

- Provide a welcoming environment that is inclusive for parents, caregivers, extended family members and children from all backgrounds
- Ensure that learning and display materials celebrate the diversities in society
- Offer a range of support to meet the needs of all parents, caregivers, and children

- Provide staff training and support to enhance existing skills and to develop new skills in the area of diversity, equity and inclusion

Valuing Diversity All staff, parents, caregivers, and children are equally valued. Inclusion is most likely to be achieved when diversity is recognized and regarded positively.

Dignity All families and children are entitled to be treated with respect and have their views considered.

Collective Responsibility Extending the principle of inclusion into society as a whole is everyone's responsibility.

Mothercraft EarlyON Child and Family Centre Locations:

Mothercraft (Main Site)

31 Heath Street West
(416) 920-3515 Extension 100

Mothercraft West

646 St Clair Avenue West

Oakwood Library

341 Oakwood Avenue

Yorkminster Park Baptist Church

1585 Yonge Street

Contact Us:

If you have any questions or comments, please contact EarlyON Manager, Anna Tyzler at Anna.Tyzler@mothercraft.org