PARENT HANDBOOK

Mothercraft Centres for Early Development

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Mothercraft®

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Welcome to Mothercraft

Dear Families:

Thank you for choosing Mothercraft for your child's care. Each one of our Centres for Early Development (CED) offers a safe, warm and nurturing environment for your child to learn and develop. We are committed to engaging your child in positive experiences each day, to help them build confidence and strengthen their self-esteem. Our childcare programs are designed to support your child to reach their full potential.

Your child will learn:

- Respect for self and others
- How to problem solve
- To play and learn cooperatively with other children
- To think in different ways

Whether you're enrolling your child at Robertson House, Brookfield Place, The Eaton Centre, Midtown, or Avondale CED, our staff is committed to maintaining open and ongoing communication about your child's care and development. We firmly believe that families are the child's most important teachers and caregivers, and we are dedicated to respecting and valuing your perspectives and cultural background.

This handbook has been designed to help make your and your child's transition into Mothercraft as smooth as possible. It includes information on what to expect during the transition and how you can best support your child. It includes a summary of key policies that we have in place to ensure your child's safety and well-being. For a complete listing of our policies, please speak with your Centre Manager. We hope it provides a clear understanding of our approach and addresses any initial questions. If you have further questions or wish to speak with us, please do not hesitate to reach out.

We look forward to welcoming your child and family to Mothercraft.

Sincerely,

Centres for Early Development, Manager

Our Commitment to Excellence

Across the organization, core values and beliefs form the basis of our work.

Mission

To support healthy child development and strengthen families.

Vision

Every family has the knowledge and support they need to provide a loving environment in which their child is able to thrive. Every professional who works with families is confident in their skills and committed to providing the highest quality services to their communities.

Values

Mothercraft is committed to delivering its programs and services based on evidence, research and current best practices. As a result, our work is rooted in a framework that is built upon three theories - attachment, relational and developmental - to ensure that we are meeting the highest standards of service delivery. This commitment is articulated in a set of values that encompass all that we do:

The First 3 Years Matter

We believe that infancy and early childhood are critical periods in every child's life and that healthy attachments are the foundation of healthy development.

Diversity & Inclusion

We believe in diversity and practice inclusion to ensure that each child and every family is accepted for who they are.

Partnership & Leadership

We believe in working collaboratively with our community partners to strengthen communities and build a system of services in which children and families are at the centre.

Professional Excellence

We believe that fostering strong, positive working relationships is integral to our commitment to our staff and are fundamental to the provision of high-quality services. We believe in accountability and integrity in all our relationships.

What Can You Expect from Mothercraft?

At Mothercraft, we believe that there are no limits to what children can achieve if given the right start in life. Since 1931, we have been a leader in healthy child development. Our success is based on our ability to listen to the needs of children and their families and on our commitment to continually test new concepts and ideas at our Centres for Early Development. Specifically, here's what you can expect for your child:

Resources:

http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/howlearninghappens.pdf
https://www.ontario.ca/page/find-and-pay-child-care?_ga=1.55682723.904026985.1408107104

Program Statement

Since 1931, 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 (as articulated in *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years*, 2014).

Regularly documented observations and bi-annual developmental summaries help Mothercraft staff to set goals and objectives that will ensure your child builds the important social, emotional, cognitive, language and physical skills they need to prepare them for a life of learning, wellness and active participation in society.

Mothercraft's licensed child care programs, known as our Centres for Early Development or CEDs, provide a play-based, child-centred approach to early learning and care. We believe that the health, safety, nutrition and social-emotional needs of every child are paramount. We encourage children to explore, play and inquire throughout their day. Our success is based on our ability to listen and respond to the needs of the children and their families, as well as to utilize new or emerging, evidence-informed practices to continually improve our programs. Mothercraft's curriculum balances the individual developmental needs of each child with the unique characteristics of every group of children to provide a caring and inclusive environment.

The following principles and approaches guide us in our day-to-day work:

- Emotional wellbeing enables children to interact and communicate in a positive way, which supports their ability to self-regulate. Through responsive, individualized and age-appropriate interactions (such as positive guidance, modeling, redirection, and space to regulate emotions), children are empowered to problem-solve.

- Parents are their children's first teachers. We support the whole child through transition and intake meetings, which enable us to gather information such as interests, needs and temperament. Transition plans are designed on an individual basis and take into account the unique strengths and/or needs of each child and their family.

- Children are active participants in their own learning. They are involved in the program planning process through expression, inquiry, choice, play and exploration. Responsive programming, documentation and learning objectives allow for extension and adaptation of plans.

- Children develop at their own rate so opportunities for learning are planned accordingly. One way this is achieved is through small group experiences which allow for more one-on-one interactions.

- Learning environments are carefully designed to foster a sense of belonging and to encourage exploration. A variety of concrete, representational and symbolic play materials are provided to accommodate all learning styles and needs.

- Our centres are designed to maximize health, safety and well-being through secure door-code access, sleep monitoring and monthly safety checks of all play spaces. Nutritious catered meals are provided at most locations, while meals are prepared daily on-site at Avondale, Robertson House and Midtown.

- Indoor and outdoor active play, as well as rest and quiet time, are part of the day. Our environments, schedules and routines are responsive to children's needs for rest and wakefulness. Staff support individual sleep routines and provide opportunities for small group experiences, transitions and routines that allow for more individualized care. Daily

opportunities for physical activity are provided indoors and outdoors. Outdoor activities are planned and documented. During inclement weather, alternative gross motor activities are provided indoors.

- A balance of teacher-supported and child-initiated learning opportunities is embedded in the curriculum. Our programs use a play-based, child-centred approach that support the individual development needs of each child. Educators observe children's play, follow the child's lead and provide appropriate scaffolding to extend learning. Developmentally appropriate challenges and open-ended materials encourage exploration, creativity and problem-solving. Ongoing observation and documentation help educators assess interests, strengths and progress, and inform meaningful learning opportunities.

- Engaging local community partners such as resource consultants, family resource programs, referring agencies, libraries, schools and community colleges helps to build partnerships that support the children, their families and staff.

- Children are engaged learners who explore the world with body, mind and senses. We encourage this by incorporating children's interests and developmental needs into the program. We also create opportunities for spontaneous learning by incorporating activities like neighbourhood walks into our curriculum as appropriate. Creativity, innovation and global citizenship are encouraged.

- Each child's progress and development is assessed in a variety of ways: through daily observations, administering of the LOOKSEE Checklist by NDDS, review of developmental checklists, and overall assessment of children's interests and development.

- Ongoing communication and engagement with families ensures meaningful participation in the program. Parents receive important information about their child's learning and development in a variety of ways: individual child portfolios, developmental profiles, newsletters, calendars, curriculum meetings, parent handbook, parent surveys and Storypark.

- Highly-trained and well-qualified staff are critical to the success of the program and the achievement of child and family outcomes. Mothercraft staff are supported in their roles through regular professional development opportunities, agency-wide staff meetings and trainings, mentoring, classroom team meetings and reflection activities, and regular staff meetings. We are committed to ongoing documentation, discussion, review, reflection and improvement for all staff.

Theoretical Frameworks

Programs at Mothercraft are grounded in the following theoretical frameworks and are transferred to practice based on a comprehensive understanding of the individual needs and experiences of the infants, young children and families attending our programs:

1. Developmental Theory

Children's development is a product of the combination of their inborn qualities and the contributions from their experience. Developmental theory calls for the consideration of the combined contributions of both the prenatal and postnatal environments. This allows us to

understand and respond to every child in our programs based on their unique strengths and vulnerabilities, and to tailor our programs and interventions appropriately.

In our Centres for Early Development, the priority of Mothercraft educators is to fully understand every child in their care. This includes understanding the complex ways in which every child's temperament, as well as their prenatal and postnatal experiences, have combined to contribute to the way in which they experience their world. Through keen and sensitive observation, developmental screening/assessment, and ongoing communication with families, Mothercraft educators come to understand each child as completely as possible. Because of this, each child experiences a caregiving relationship that is respectful of and responsive to their unique developmental needs and experiences. Educators' interactions with children are empathic, consistent, affectionate, caring and growth-promoting.

Developmental theory recognizes the importance of the child's connectedness to a primary caregiver, to family, as well as to community and environment. A child's developmental outcome is described as a continuous dynamic process of interchange between the child and its environment over time.

2. Attachment Theory

Attachment theory proposes that it is within the emotional relationship between infant and primary caregiver that the young child's cognitive and emotional sense of self and others is developed, in ways that have a critical influence on the infant's perception of the environment and others, and on later personality development and social functioning, and on learning. The primary pathway to a secure attachment is caregiver sensitivity to the infant's cues and signals, as well as an appropriate and consistent response to those signals.

Attachment develops out of patterns of early interactions between the infant and his/her primary caregiver. As the attachment relationship develops, it serves four major functions: (a) providing a sense of security; (b) regulating affect and arousal; (c) promoting the expression of feelings and communication; and (d) serving as a base for exploration. A sensitive, responsive caregiver is fundamental to the development of a secure attachment bond during the early years of life. Consistency, sensitivity, and contingent responsiveness on the part of the primary caregivers are essential to the young child's cognitive and psychological development.

In our Centres for Early Development, attachment theory is applied through the implementation of a primary caregiver model. One Mothercraft educator is identified as the primary caregiver for each child, a model that is familiar to the children in our care and that ensures the integrity of individualized programming. Using small groups, Mothercraft educators promote quality interactions between staff and children and between the children themselves. In their day-to-day interactions and relationships with children, educators model prosocial interactions and respect for others. Through such interactions, children learn about their role in a civil society and interdependence with nature and all living things.

Through their interactions with children, Mothercraft educators also promote key social-emotional milestones during the infancy and preschool years, including regulation, attachment, and exploration of their social and physical worlds, all of which are the foundations for learning. We recognize the importance of consistency and predictability in routines to facilitate smooth transitionary processes as children move through various stages in their young lives.

3. Relational Theory

A central principle of relational theory is that people, institutions, and systems grow through relationships with others. Relational theory calls for attention to larger systems changes, including reduction of service fragmentation and access issues as part of the solution for families and

children. At Mothercraft, we have learned the importance of relationships and connections between previously disconnected service sectors and providers to create environments that facilitate engagement of children and families in services that promote child development, family functioning and access to services. Through the creation of strong program and cross departmental team we maximize internal expertise and internal capacity to respond to the complex needs of children, families and communities.

Strategic Plan

Over the next decade, Mothercraft's focus will be to align the success of our past with our ambitions for the future, while remaining steadfastly committed to helping improve child outcomes and the advancement of child well-being. We will continue to fulfill our Mission, Vision and Values as well as to broaden our impact in ways that are responsive, sustainable and measurable.

The full Strategic Plan (Vision 2031), can be reviewed here: https://mothercraft.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/MC-StrategicPlan-2021-2031.pdf.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

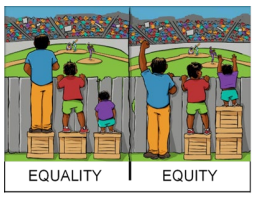
Mothercraft believes each child is unique, and in partnership with families, we are committed to meeting the developmental and educational needs of all children. We provide an inclusive environment for all families regardless of their child's abilities or needs. Children and families are provided with equitable access to racially sensitive and culturally responsive services. We acknowledge that inequities and barriers exist for groups that are represented by our families and children. We are committed to providing resources, learning, and programming that represents children and families attending our centres with an additional focus on Truth and Reconciliation, confronting Anti- Black Racism, and supporting 2SLGBTQ+ families and children. Mothercraft is committed to developing childcare environments and programs that are inclusive where every child and family feels a sense of belonging, well-being and valued.

Mothercraft endeavors to accept all children regardless of level or type of ability by:

1. Treating every individual with dignity and respect.
2. Empowering each person to take action when encountering unfairness.
3. Exposing and helping children become familiar with the areas of diversity including, but not limited to, ability, age, appearance, gender, culture, religious belief, family composition, race, sexuality, class.
4. Promoting an awareness of the needs, perspectives and rights of others
5. Reporting and posting any act of bias or racial incident as a serious occurrence

Childcare staff use teachable moments to enrich the children's understanding and curiosity about diversity. In age-appropriate ways, staff discourage stereotyping that may be associated with different backgrounds, practices and lifestyles. Staff endeavour to create a physical environment within the CED that reflects the diversity of the society in which we live and provides exposure to global diversity.

Mothercraft has developed a comprehensive Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Action Plan (2022-2031). Review the plan here: https://mothercraft.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/MC-DiversityActionPlan-2022-2031.pdf



Truth and Reconciliation

Mothercraft is committed to promoting Truth and Reconciliation (T&R) within our organization and in the communities we serve. We acknowledge the historical and ongoing trauma inflicted on Indigenous peoples and are committed to taking responsibility for our role in perpetuating these injustices and to actively working towards healing and reconciliation.

There are 4 main areas of focus in our T&R Action Plan:

- communication and engagement,
- knowledge and learning,
- programs and service delivery, and
- policies and procedures.

In order to better understand the impact of colonization and discrimination, we will engage in ongoing education and awareness-raising efforts and will actively engage and amplify the voices and perspectives of Indigenous peoples. We commit to creating spaces for truth-telling and relationship building and to implementing policies and practices that promote reconciliation and equity.

Mothercraft understands that Truth and Reconciliation is an ongoing process and is committed to walking this path with humility, openness and a willingness to learn and make meaningful changes. We believe that by taking these steps, we will be able to support and empower Indigenous individuals and communities, and help to create a more just and equitable society for all.



Mothercraft has also developed a comprehensive Truth and Reconciliation Action Plan (2022-2031) which has been approved by the Board. Review the plan here: https://mothercraft.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/MC-TruthReconciliationActionPlan-2022-2031.pdf.

Access to Service-Waitlist Policy

Mothercraft is committed to serving equity deserving communities. All families are entitled to fair and equitable treatment when accessing programming. Applications for space in a Centre for Early Development (CED) will be accepted on an ongoing basis, and families will be place on waiting lists based on the date and time their applications are received. Vacant spaces will be offered on a first-come, first- served basis, with a few exceptions. Priority will be given to the following groups: siblings of children already enrolled in a specific CED, tenants who work/live in the same building as a CED (including schools and other agreements), children enrolled in another CED who wish to transfer, children of staff employed by Mothercraft, and children in need of protection who require emergency placement. Mothercraft will enter into purchase service agreements with Service System Managers (SSMs) to accept and support families in receipt of fee subsidy so that ability to pay is not a barrier to accessing services. Information about parent fees and the fee subsidy system will be provided to all families as part of the application process. At no point in this process, will families be asked to disclose their financial status or whether they have applied for fee subsidy nor will this information play any role in the offering of a space or enrolment of a child in a Mothercraft CED. Applications must be renewed every year to keep your child's name active on the waiting list. **Please see full policy attached.**

Well-trained Staff

We pride ourselves on the professionalism of our staff. All staff in our Centre's for Early Development are trained Educators; RECE's at a diploma level and ECA's at certificate level or with relevant experience. In addition to this, all Early Childhood Educators are registered with the College of ECE and are expected to adhere to the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice. To help ensure consistency and excellence across our Centre's, all new staff members are matched with seasoned Mothercraft staff members, who help mentor them on how to apply Mothercraft's unique approach to childcare.

Supporting Students

Mothercraft staff mentor students from Mothercraft's Early Childhood Education program and other community colleges completing placements at our Centre's. These students contribute many new and exciting ideas to our childcare program. While on placement, students are not included as ratio's and are not left to supervise children on their own. Each college student in your child's room has a photo and a short bio posted so that you always know who is in the room with your child. Students are supervised at all times by Mothercraft staff.

Nutritious Snacks and Meals

At Mothercraft we believe that good nutrition (Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide) is essential for healthy growth and development of children. This is an important and intrinsic part of our program. Children are provided with snacks and a hot lunch each day. The menus are posted on the main family bulletin board and in each room. Children are encouraged to try everything that is served at each meal to promote good eating habits and may have several servings if they wish. If the children do not want to try a meal, the staff will respect their wishes. Mealtimes are made to be a pleasant experience for all children. The pace of mealtime is leisurely, the children can take their time to enjoy their food, and staff will model good eating habits. Special arrangements for allergies, religious observation, or restrictions can be discussed with the Manager. Families may be required to provide specific special foods that are portioned, labelled, and dated. Families provide bottles they would like their child to use. The bottles are marked for your infant, and the infant may have as many bottles as desired. As the infant grows to be a toddler, the need and desire for a bottle lessens, and training cups and regular cups take its place. If breast milk is provided, packaging must have the mother's full name, date, and child's name on it.

*NOTE: It is important to note that all Mothercraft Centre for Early Development adhere to an allergen awareness policy. Foods containing any nut-associated product are not permitted in any Centre for Early Development, e.g. peanut oil, peanut butter, raw peanuts, almonds, etc.

Daily Sleep or Rest Time

Children under 44 months of age at the Centre will be expected to have some sleep or rest time, by lying down on a cot after lunch. This is stipulated by the Child Care and Early Years Act.
Sleep or rest time allows the child to relax and gain energy to carry on their day. For children not sleeping, quiet activities will be provided.

Toddlers and younger preschoolers can sleep for up to two (2) hours between lunch and the afternoon snack. The child's blanket should be brought from home, along with a soft sleep friend, if desired. Infants' sleep routine adheres to the Joint Statement on Safe Sleep, unless a child's physician recommends otherwise in writing.

The Joint Statement on Safe Sleep is part of the Government of Canada's continuing commitment to raise awareness of sudden infant deaths and safe sleeping environments. At Mothercraft we

conduct sleep monitoring as part of our commitment to safe sleep environments. Infants and toddlers are checked periodically for signs of distress, and this process is documented daily.

A Safe Environment with Clearly Set Limits

In the childcare setting, there are behaviours that are acceptable and behaviours that are not permitted, to ensure the children are protected, safe and healthy, and to ensure that the rights of others are protected. Therefore, educators will set clear limits for the children. These limits are consistent, relevant to the developmental stage of the child, and fair. It is our belief that by setting limits children will feel secure in their environment. A major goal in guiding behaviours based on the ages and stages of each child self-control-helping the children take steps towards responsible self-direction. This varies based on the ages and stages of each child.

Our behaviour management strategies focus on redirecting the infant and having an environment with interesting toys, (i.e. if one infant were to take a toy from another infant, the educator would give the toy back to the original child, while redirecting the other infant to another toy or activity.) This redirection is carried out with a lot of verbal communication about what is happening, so that both infants can begin to understand.

In some situations, with toddlers, the focus is placed on redirection along with encouragement for the child to use verbal language or non-verbal skills. The educator would explain feelings and give the toddler words to help him/her start using language. In certain situations, such as the one above, the toddler would be encouraged to say, “That’s mine”.

Redirecting preschoolers more fully involves allowing children to problem solve for themselves and encouraging the use of verbal/nonverbal language. If the children themselves cannot resolve a problem, the educator acts as a facilitator and provides direction in the solution and possibly, to set restrictions.

Prohibited Practices/Unacceptable Staff Behaviour

- Corporal punishment of the child.
- 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.
- Locking the exits of the child care centre or home child care premises 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 licensee’s emergency management policies and procedures.
- Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.
- Depriving a child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding.
- 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.
- Any individuals convicted of the following offences: sexual abuse, sexual misconduct and prescribed sexual acts (as defined under the Early Childhood Education Act, 2007).

It is recognized that in some extreme situations (wherein a child is endangering his/herself or others), staff may find themselves having to respond to a crisis using physical guidance as a method to defuse and/or de-escalate a volatile situation. Physical restraint is only used in situations

where a child is in imminent danger of compromising the safety to themselves, staff or to other children in the program. Any time physical restraint is used a serious occurrence must be filed with the Ministry of Education.

Open Communication Regarding your Child's Care

At Mothercraft, we are committed to keeping the lines of communication open. Each family has a primary educator along with the support of additional staff in the room. The primary educator is responsible for helping your child with transitions, conducting regular developmental assessments, and addressing any specific concerns. You will receive daily communication from our staff so that you are kept informed of the day's events. Electronic mail is sent to families by the CED Manager along with messages posted within the Centre. Families can receive resources on several topics relating to early childhood, development, health and safety (for example, Canada's Food Guide for nutrition in various languages, activities to try at home and product/food recalls). In addition, family involvement opportunities would include but not limited to (Parent Advisory Committee, Family Engagements and Gatherings) are a great way to meet other Mothercraft families and learn more about plans for the childcare program.

A Respectful Environment

We believe that all children and adults have the right to feel safe and to be treated with dignity and respect. Harassment and discrimination will therefore not be tolerated by any party. Mothercraft expects all staff, families and people entering any of the Centre's and Mothercraft facilities to conduct themselves in a respectful manner. Mothercraft has a no tolerance policy for behavior that affects the emotional and physical safety of children, families and staff while attending a Mothercraft program and facility. If at any point a family or staff member feels uncomfortable, threatened, abused or belittled, they may immediately end the conversation and report the situation to the Centre Manager or other supervisor/manager. Failure to adhere to this expectation may result in denied access to the program, Centre, and/or facility.

Complaints Process

Mothercraft values the creation of positive learning environments and experiences for children, supporting positive and responsive interactions among children, families, staff and childcare providers, and fostering the engagement of, and ongoing communication, with families about the program and their children. Mothercraft values and encourages the feedback of families, 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 family, 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 families, 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 families have any issues or concerns:

STEP 1: **Making a Complaint**

families 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, families have the option to proceed to Step 2.

STEP 2: **Discussion with a Manager**
Families are invited to discuss unresolved issues, concerns or complaints with a manager. The Manager will meet with families within five working days of initial contact with the family regarding a complaint. The role of the Manager is to resolve the matter to the mutual satisfaction of the family, the staff and Mothercraft. Failing this, the Manager will inform the family of their right to seek resolution through a meeting with the Director and will provide the Director's contact information. The family will receive a written response from the manager within two weeks, summarizing their discussion.

STEP 3: **Discussion with an Associate Director/ Director**
Upon the request of the family, the Director will meet with the family within two weeks. The Director will attempt to resolve the problem to the mutual satisfaction of the family, staff and Mothercraft. The Director will summarize the discussion and outcome with the family in writing not more than two weeks after the meeting. If the family, is not satisfied with the response from the Director, the director will inform the family 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 family, the Executive Director will meet with the family within two weeks. The Executive Director will attempt to resolve the problem to the mutual satisfaction of the family, staff and Mothercraft. The Executive Director will summarize the discussion and outcome with the family in writing not more than two weeks after the meeting. If the family is not satisfied with the response from the Executive Director, the family 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
Peel Public Health	905-799-7700
Region of Peel	905-791-1585

*Please find attached the full Parent, Student and Community Complaints Policy.

Regular Summaries of your Child's Progress

Profiles are completed twice a year, in December and June, to assess the progress of your child. To accommodate all families, interviews will be limited to 20 minutes. Families or staff may wish to meet regarding a particular concern, and this can be arranged on an individual basis, at any time throughout the year. The assessments are not a diagnostic tool, however, should a developmental profile indicate a need for further investigation in some areas of development, your child's educator or the Centre manager would come to the meeting with suggestions for further testing. Families are required to confirm receipt of this document and are provided with the opportunity to meet with the educators.

Storypark

Mothercraft uses Storypark, a secure online platform that supports communication between educators and families and helps us manage information related to your child's enrolment and childcare account. Through Storypark, families can receive updates about their child's learning and daily activities, and educators and families can share photos, videos, stories and notes. Storypark is also used to maintain family and child contact and enrolment information and to support account and payment administration. Payments are processed securely through Stripe.

How to Support your Child at a Mothercraft Centre for Early Development

Your support and involvement are critical to your child's ability to adjust to his/her new childcare environment. Here are some of the ways we suggest families help make their child's experience a positive one:

Transition Week(s)

The first week or two of the child's entry can be used as a transition week. We recognize that this is an exciting, but difficult time for both the child and the families, while everyone becomes familiar with their surroundings and new faces.

For families who can arrange an entry transition, a flexible schedule can be made with the Manager and staff. We do recognize that for many busy families, this time is not available. Families should be reassured that staff understand this situation and will try to make this time as smooth as possible. Families should feel free to contact/email the centre at any time to find out how their child is doing.

When your Child Moves to the Next Age Group

Movement to the next age group is available only if space is open in that group. Movement is based on the child's age as well as the child's developmental readiness, and is determined by the Manager and staff, in conjunction with families. A transition schedule will follow.

Drop-off and Pick-up Times

Some Centres are open from 7:30 a.m. to 5:45 p.m., some are from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and Norton Lake is from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday to Friday. Families are free to drop off their child at any time. However, if your child comes in later than normal, it would be ideal to notify the Centre by 11:00 a.m. if they will not attend. CED program staff will mark the child absent in Storypark if not notified by 11:00 a.m. We ask that all families leave enough time to pick up their child on time to be respectful of staff and their time by doing so. (Refer to Safe Arrival and Dismissal Policy attached)

Late pick-up Fee-Non-Base

On rare occasions, a family could be late picking up their child. In these exceptional cases, a late fee will be charged. The late fee schedule is:

- $5.00 for any time within the first 5 minutes
- $1.00 for each minute thereafter

Families are required to sign off indicating the late time and the amount charged. Payment is collected upon arrival by staff.

Parking

Robertson House

Parking rules must be followed. Parking at Robertson House is free in the designated areas for 15 minutes to drop off and pick up only. At Robertson House there is no family parking allowed on the West side of the childcare. Families wishing to stay longer can park in the Public Parking lot located across the street from the Centre. Classrooms have parking vouchers that will validate ½ hour free of parking.

Brookfield Place
Parking rules must be followed. Parking is provided in the Brookfield Place Centre underground parking lot. Bring your ticket to the Centre to receive validation for ½ hour free parking.

Eaton Centre
Parking is provided in the Toronto Eaton Centre parking lots. Families must register their license plate number with the Centre Manager. The manager will then submit the license plate information to Cadillac Fairview Parking, which will allow 30 minutes of free parking.

Midtown Centre
Parking rules must be followed. Parking at Midtown is free in the designated circular area outside the Centre for 15 minutes for drop-off and pick-up only.

Avondale Centre
Parking rules must adhere to TDSB. Parking at Avondale School is free in the designated areas for 10 minutes to drop-off and pick-up only.

York Heights Centre
Three parking spaces are available adjacent to the building for drop-off and pick-up only.

Village Gate
Parking rules must be followed. parking is provided in Village Gate in the underground visitor parking. There is designated pick up and drop off spaces are located on P1 of the building.

Access and Security

Mothercraft childcare staff will provide a safe and secure environment at all times for all children within their care. Families are additionally expected to follow security protocol.

- Families must supervise their children at all times while in their care.
- All doors/gates are closed when exiting or entering an area.
- Door codes are periodically changed.
- To ensure security, families, staff, and students will only receive the code.
- **It is imperative that families take responsibility and follow safety protocol and do not share access code with others without CED manager's approval.**
- Only people listed on the child's release form have permission to pick up. People not known to the staff will be asked for photo identification.
- Staff are always informed of scheduled visitors.
- Authorized, uniformed personnel from Brookfield Place and Toronto Eaton Centre are permitted access.
- Any outside visitors who arrive without an appointment will not be granted access to the childcare Centre.
- In an emergency, people can be given authorization to pick up writing from the family for that day (i.e. email). Otherwise, permanent changes need to be made to the original form that families can obtain from the staff/manager.

When your Child is Sick

If your child is sick, we ask that you please keep him/her home from the Centre. We find that treating the illness quickly and at home results in children recovering faster, and it reduces the risk of cross infection to other children. Specifically, you should keep your child at home if his/her activity levels are reduced and coping mechanisms are low, or there are physical symptoms present including vomiting, diarrhea, fever, discharge from the eye, skin rash or difficulty breathing. **Children must be free from fever, diarrhea or vomiting for 24 hours before returning to the Centre.** In the event of an outbreak, the exclusion period may be increased. Please notify the Centre if your child is going to be absent.

Individualized Plans for Children with Medical Needs or Life-Threatening Allergies

Families are requested to advise the Manager if their child develops an allergy or requires medication for chronic or acute condition (for example diabetes, seizure or asthma). An individual anaphylaxis emergency plan or medical needs plan shall be developed in consultation with the family of the child and with any regulated health professional who is involved in the child's health care and who, in the family's opinion, should be included in the consultation to prevent serious reactions and to support each child's treatment and health. The Manager will make families, staff, students and visitors aware of any life-threatening allergic reactions (anaphylaxis) that may pose a risk to any child enrolled at the CED. Individual plans will be reviewed as a child transition to an older age group or as needed.

Become an Active Participant in your Child's Care

Mothercraft encourages families to participate in both their child's program and childcare. Family participation in the program can be done in a variety of ways:

- Participating in special events
- Visiting your child throughout the day*
- Sharing family traditions

*For some children and families, visiting the Centre during the day can be difficult. Some children go through stages that make it difficult for them to understand the difference between a visit and home time. This may be upsetting for the child. If this occurs, it may be in the best interest of the child to stop the visits until the child is ready to enjoy them. This can be discussed and monitored by families and staff together.

Each Mothercraft Centre supports the participation of families through the Parent Advisory Committee (PAC). PACs inform families of issues and external information and situations and make recommendations to improve the operation of the Centre. Families who cannot attend PAC meetings are encouraged to read the minutes of the meeting and discuss any issues with the Centre manager or by requesting agenda items to be placed before PAC when an issue of particular concern or interest arises.

Open communication between families and Mothercraft staff will ensure that we are creating the best environment for your child. Families should inform staff of any relevant information that would help them better understand and care for their child. Families should always feel free to discuss their concerns and suggestions with staff.

Scheduling and Fees

Hours of Operation

Mothercraft Robertson House, Midtown CED, Avondale CED, York Heights, and Village Gate are open from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday to Friday. Brookfield CED and The Eaton Centre CED are open from 7:30 a.m. to 5:45 p.m. The Centres will be closed on Statutory Holidays, as well as Easter Monday to accommodate our annual Staff Professional Development Day. The Centre's also close at 3:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve and are closed from December 25th and reopen on January 2nd.

Base Fee Rate schedule for January 2026 * Including taxes.

Age Group	Ages	Rate/month	Ratios (staff : child)
Infants	3 – 18 mths (approx.)	$473	1 : 3
Toddlers	18 mths. – 2 ½ yrs. (approx.)	$473	1 : 5
Preschool	2 ½ - 4 yrs.	$473	1 : 8

Please Note- Mothercraft has opted into CWELCC (Canada Wide Early Learning and Childcare programs)

Included in Your Fee

Included in your childcare fee are all snacks and meals. Families are required to provide diapers for all age groups and formulas for infants.

Fee Payment

On the day of acceptance, a non-refundable deposit equal to one month's fee is due. The deposit may be paid by cheque or credit card through Stripe.

Monthly childcare fees are paid by pre-authorised debit through Stripe. Families will be provided with instructions to securely enter their banking information through Stripe. Mothercraft does not see or store families' full banking information.

Monthly fees are due on the first business day of each month and will be automatically withdrawn using the payment information provided through Stripe.

A $15.00 non-base service charge is applicable to any unsuccessful or returned payment. When fee payments are in arrears for two months and an agreed-upon payment schedule is not maintained, a two-week withdrawal notice will be given to the family.

Cash will not be accepted as a payment method. Fee payment receipts are distributed by the end of February each year for income tax purposes.

Families are charged for all days regardless of whether their child is in attendance, including family vacations and medical leave. If a change in CWELCC funding or another circumstance results in an overpayment, a refund will be issued, or a credit will be applied to the child's future fees.

Withdrawal Notice Requirement

If you are planning to withdraw your child from our childcare program, you must provide a minimum of **4 weeks' written notice** to the Centre Manager.

Families will be charged four weeks of full fees from the day we are notified of your child's

withdrawal, regardless of whether your child is in attendance. Provided with sufficient withdrawal notice, your original deposit is applied to your last month's fee, or a refund will be issued.

Celebrating Your Child's Birthday

Birthdays are special occasions, and they should be celebrated. Snack time on the child's birthday will be set aside to acknowledge their day with candles and singing. Unfortunately, due to our **allergies and nutritional needs policy**, we cannot allow families to bring birthday cakes. We will arrange for staff to prepare a special cake with the children so that they can still have a celebration.

In order that all children are treated equally and in accordance with each family's beliefs, no other form of celebration is encouraged (i.e. loot bags). Families, siblings, and grandparents are welcome to join us at this snack time.

Illness

For everyone's well-being, ill children cannot be admitted to the Centre. It has been our experience that prompt treatment of any illness will facilitate the child's early return to health and to the Centre and will minimize the possibility of cross infection for the other children.

If the childcare staff consider a child too ill to be exposed to other children, the child will be removed from the group and the parent(s) notified. The families are expected to make arrangements to pick up their child as soon as possible.

The following signs and symptoms will be used as indications that the child is ill: activity level of the child is reduced, coping mechanisms are low, as well as physical symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhea, fever, and discharge from the eye, skin rash and difficulty in breathing.

Your child should not return to the Centre until he/she has been without symptoms for 24 hours.

This is in order to support the health and safety and well-being of all children, staff, and families within our programs in compliance with the Toronto Public Health Regulations. A detailed Health Policy is available from your Centre Manager. In some cases, at the discretion of the Manager, families may be asked to provide a doctor's note before the child is able to return to the Centre.

Emergencies

Families must fill out a form with information on where they can be reached and provide alternative emergency phone numbers. Should an emergency occur, families will be notified, and the child will be taken to the nearest hospital. If the child needs to be transported by the staff, this will be done by ambulance. On enrolment at the Centre, families must sign an emergency release form, giving the childcare staff permission to act in an emergency. This form has relevant information needed in an emergency. Staff are trained in First Aid/Child CPR, and there is always at least one designated First Aid staff member to deal with any minor or major situations.

Health and Safety Emergencies

In case of an emergency where we need to close the Centres for Early Development (i.e. hydro outage, weather emergency, disease outbreak, etc.) families will be initially notified with an electronic message (e-mail), followed by telephone call if necessary.

The decision to close programs is at the discretion of Mothercraft's Executive Director or designate. Families are required to ensure contact information is correct and updated.

Mothercraft will take every precaution to protect the health and safety of children, families, staff, and students, in the event of a communicable disease pandemic. In the event of an outbreak, Mothercraft must comply with any directives from Toronto Public Health to shut down childcare centres or programs where people congregate.

Emergency Procedures

Robertson House
Mothercraft has an emergency management policy and procedures. In the case that it has been deemed 'unsafe to return' to the Centre for Early Development, we will proceed to our evacuation site at **York minster Park Baptist Church at 1585 Yonge Street**. As soon as possible, the CED Manager or designate will notify families of the emergency by email.

Brookfield Place
Mothercraft has an emergency management policy and procedures. In the case that it has been deemed 'unsafe to return' to the Centre for Early Development, we will proceed to our evacuation site at the **lobby of 33 Yonge Street**. As soon as possible, the CED Manager or designate will notify families of the emergency by email.

Eaton Centre
Mothercraft has an emergency management policy and procedures. In the case that it has been deemed 'unsafe to return' to the Centre for Early Development, we will proceed to our evacuation site at **Hester How Child Care Centre (City Hall)-100 Queen Street West**. As soon as possible, the CED Manager or designate will notify families of the emergency by email or telephone as suitable.

Midtown Centre
Mothercraft has an emergency management policy and procedures. In the case that it has been deemed 'unsafe to return' to the Centre for Early Development, we will proceed to our evacuation site at **45 Dunfield Ave**. Toronto, Ontario, M4S 2H4. When the childcare is unable to use their primary location, we will evacuate to **Church of Transfiguration, located at 111 Manor Road East**, Toronto, Ontario, M4S 1R4. As soon as possible, the CED Manager or designate will notify families of the emergency by email or telephone as suitable.

Avondale Centre
Mothercraft has an emergency management policy and procedures. In the case that it has been deemed 'unsafe to return' to the Centre for Early Development, we will proceed to our evacuation site. **The Peoples Church, 374 Sheppard Ave East**, North York, M2N 3B6. As soon as possible, the CED Manager or designate will notify families of the emergency by email or telephone as suitable.

York Heights Centre
Mothercraft has an emergency management policy and procedures. In the case that it has been deemed 'unsafe to return' to the Centre for Early Development, we will proceed to our evacuation site. **Sloane South Tower C, 5 York Garden Way,** North York, M6A 2V1. As soon as possible, the CED Manager or designate will notify families of the emergency by email or telephone as suitable.

Village Gate Centre
Mothercraft has an emergency management policy and procedures. In the case that it has been deemed unsafe to return to the Centre for Early Development, we will proceed to our evacuation site **Resurrection Parish- Lithuanian** located at **1 Resurrection Rd**, Etobicoke, Ontario. As soon

as possible the CED manager or designate will notify families of the emergency by email or telephone as suitable.

Serious Occurrence Reporting

The safety and well-being of our children in licensed childcare programs is the highest priority. Operators of licensed childcare centres work diligently to provide a safe, creative, and nurturing environment for each child. Despite all the best precautions, serious occurrences can sometimes take place.

Serious occurrence reporting policies require CED's to post Notification Forms in a visible place for 10 days. The posting requirements support greater transparency for families about licensed childcare while protecting personal information. The Ministry of Education requires this serious occurrence policy to further support the safety and well-being of children in licensed childcare. Should you require further information, please speak to your centre's Manager or refer to the CED policy and procedure manual at the centre.

Duty to Report-Child Abuse

Mothercraft is committed to the safety of all children. Mothercraft is obligated under the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017 (CYFSA) to report any concerns and suspicions of abuse. All staff are responsible for keeping children safe and following Section 72(1) of the CYSFA (2017). We have a duty to report any concerns related to the safety and wellbeing of a child and the Children's Aid Society (CAS) determines if an investigation is required. Where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a child may be in need of protection, the staff will report his/her concern and the information on which the concern is based to the local CAS. We recognise that should a report to CAS be necessary, we will do our best to support families.

Discussions around ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children take place regularly in team meetings. Staff are required to review the Duty to Report – Child Abuse Policy on an annual basis. Families are welcome to request a full copy of this policy by contacting the CED Manager.

Evacuation

Fire drills are held monthly. Centre staff and students know and practice these routines regularly and copies of the procedures are posted in each room. Verbal review and orientation of this procedure is given to all staff, students and families upon enrolment.

Medication

Prescription medication can be given by the RECE educator in your child's room. The medication must be a recent prescription, in its original container, dated and families must sign a Medication Form indicating permission to administer the medication, times and dose of the medication. Two staff will sign this form twice to confirm that the medication has been given. Over-the-counter medication may only be given with the written authorization of a medical doctor.

Supervision

Mothercraft staff are responsible for ensuring that no child is ever left without adequate supervision. In particular, on the playground, staff will ensure that children are visible at all times. Any accidents that do occur are documented; a report will be given to families requiring their signature of acknowledgment. A copy will be provided to the families, and the original will be kept on file at the Centre.

Ratios of Staff to Children

Mothercraft employs a policy of staff to children's ratios that are above the requirements of the provincial Child Care and Early Years Act. These are our "ratio" staff.

Smoke and Vape-Free Environment

All Mothercraft properties are smoke-free and vape-free. This also includes playgrounds and entrances to the building whether children are present or not.

Scent Free

Mothercraft maintains a scent free workplace to prevent respiratory and other symptoms from irritants. Please refrain from wearing or bringing scented products into the Centre.

Food Products and Snacks from Home

Due to severe, life-threatening allergies to peanuts and nut products, all the Mothercraft Centre's for Early Development are allergen aware. If you give your child a snack in the morning, please ensure that they eat it before entering the Centre. Please do not leave food in the child's cubby.

Celebrating Holidays

To provide respectful and appropriate planning regarding holiday celebrations, we actively seek input from our families and staff regarding knowledge and information around holidays of importance and of value to them. This information is re-evaluated on an ongoing basis and incorporated into our practices pertaining to holidays.

The following is our position regarding holiday practices (as we learn more and discuss each celebration as it comes along, our position may be adopted or/changed):

1. Holidays/celebrations will be talked about, activities engaged in, and celebrations will occur:
   - in an age-appropriate manner for each group
   - in a manner sensitive to the cultural diversity of all the families and staff in the Centre
   - where appropriate, extending understanding of holidays in a global perspective
2. Families, children and staff will be encouraged to talk about how they do or do not celebrate holidays/special days.
3. Appropriate learning opportunities will be offered as long as we remember our curriculum goal: to help children develop a positive understanding and respect for the world around them.
4. Holidays can be fun when everyone feels acknowledged and respected.

We hope these guidelines will enable all families, children and staff in our Centre's to feel valued and included.

Guidelines for Outings/Walks

Special community outings are included in the program, with family consent. Families will be notified in advance of any outings. Only Mothercraft staff and placement students will be permitted on the outings/walks. At Mothercraft we do not have volunteers.

At the time of entry to the childcare centre, families are asked to sign a general waiver form for outings in the community that do not require transportation (i.e. walk to the local park).

Bringing Toys to the Centre

Any toys brought to the Centre from home must be left in the child's cubby to avoid damage or loss.

Exceptions will be made for transitional toys including blankets, soft toys or puppets. Research suggests that “superhero action figures” (i.e. Ninjas, Spider Man and Batman) promote aggressive behaviour. Please do not allow your child to bring these toys to the Centre. Similarly, weapons of any kind (i.e. water guns, swords, Nerf guns, light sabers, etc.) are not permitted at the Centre.

What Happens if your Child Needs Extra Support?

Mothercraft provides a number of additional programs and services that can be accessed should your child or family require extra support. Through referrals to community services, we support families to access developmental assessments, early intervention, enrichment programs, family support groups and workshops, and professional help. If you would like to learn more about our other programs and services, please speak with your Centre Manager.

Policies, Practices and Procedures

We have tried to include the most relevant information for you in this handbook however, it is not possible to touch on every aspect. Please consult your Centre Manager or your child’s educator if you have any other questions about our policies, practices, and procedures.

Service User and Community Complaints Policy

Policy Name:	Service User and Community Complaints
Category:	Programs and Services
Approved by:	Board of Directors
Approved:	February 27, 2012, 2015
To be Reviewed/Revised:	As needed
Scope:	Applies to All Staff

PURPOSE
Mothercraft values and encourages the feedback of service users and community members about the programs and practices of the organization. Complaints can provide important opportunities for improving service. A complaint may be defined as an expression of dissatisfaction or unmet expectation. A complaint can be made by the service user or community member with support if necessary. The complaint can relate to any aspect of the organization's programs and services.

POLICY
Mothercraft is committed to listening to service user and community member complaints and responding in a fair, timely and respectful manner. All complaints will be given due consideration without reprisal or discrimination. Language support for non-English speaking service users or community members will be provided.

Mothercraft actively informs service users and community members of their right to register complaints (verbal or written) and seek resolution. This information is accessible and publicized in Mothercraft's *Service Users' Rights and Responsibilities Statement*. Service users or community members who speak languages other than those covered by the latter documents or who have reading difficulties are encouraged to have this policy explained to them by a Mothercraft staff person at the beginning of service.

All aspects of a complaint will be handled in confidence. However, if the complaint involves allegations of illegal or unethical behavior, information may need to be shared with external authorities.

All complaints are documented. The maintenance of complaint files is the responsibility of department Directors.

Complaints deemed a risk to the organization are brought forward to the board of directors by the Executive Director. Complaints related to the violation of board governance policies are reviewed by the board. Directors (senior management) will provide information about complaints to the Executive Director's office so that a summary report can be created and submitted to the board annually.

Responses to complaints that involve an allegation of child abuse or neglect should be guided by the *Child Abuse Reporting* Policy.

Service Users with questions, comments or complaints about Mothercraft privacy policies and procedures or about the collection, use or disclosure of their personal information will be directed to the Privacy Officer.

PROCEDURES

To provide maximum support to the staff-service user and community member relationship, the complaint resolution process begins with the involvement of the staff person who provided service, unless this is not in the best interests of the service user or community members.

STEP 1: Receiving a Complaint

a. If the person providing service receives the complaint the service user or community member should be offered the earliest opportunity to discuss their concern(s).
b. If the complaint is received by any staff member or volunteer of the organization other than the person providing service, the service user or community member should be directed to the person providing service with an explanation of Mothercraft's policy. If the complainant is reluctant to speak directly to the person providing service, they should be referred to that person's immediate manager. The person providing service should be alerted to the existence of the complaint.
c. In hearing a complaint, the person providing service may decide to involve or consult their manager at any stage. This option should be taken if the service user brings a friend or advisor.
d. If the complaint is handled to the mutual satisfaction of the complainant and the person providing service, the complaint and resolution is documented on the *Complaint Form* and a copy is forwarded to the manager of the person providing service and the department director.

STEP 2: Discussion with a Manager

If the person providing service is unable to resolve a complaint, the complainant is offered the opportunity to speak with the manager.

a. The preferred method is to have the manager call the service user or community member. This affords the staff person the opportunity to discuss the matter with the manager prior to any further action or outreach to the complainant.
b. The manager calls the service user or community member as soon as possible after consulting with the person who provided the service.
c. If a service user or community member calls a manager to complain about the person providing the service or about the service provided, the manager should hear the complaint but offer no action without discussing the matter with the staff person involved.
d. From the point a manager takes a call from a service user or community member or calls a complainant about a complaint, a meeting between the manager and complainant should be offered within five working days.
e. The staff person(s) and manager should jointly plan the response to the service user's or community member's complaint. Whenever possible the plan should support the integrity of the service user/community/member/staff relationship and unless clearly contraindicated, the staff person will be present at any meeting between the manager and complainant.
f. The role of the manager is to resolve the matter to the satisfaction of the service user or community member and staff person(s) or, failing this, to inform the complainant of their right to seek resolution through a meeting with the Director.
g. A letter must be sent to the service user or community member within two weeks of the meeting. The appropriate director is informed of the complaint and the resolution or lack of resolution.

STEP 3: Meeting the Department Director

a. If the service user or community member is not satisfied with the response from the manager, the initiative for carrying the complaint to the Director rests with the complainant.

b. The service user or community member should be informed of the name and phone number of the Director if she/he wishes to pursue the complaint. The Director is alerted immediately if a call is anticipated and a copy of the completed *Complaint Form* is provided.
c. If requested, the Director will meet with the service user or community member within two weeks of receiving the request.
d. Prior to this the Director will contact the manager and the staff person and seek any necessary consultation. Whenever possible the Director will attempt to involve the staff and manager in the planning process and may invite one or both to the meeting.
e. The Director will attempt to resolve the problem with the service user or community member. Whatever the outcome the Director will inform the complainant by mail not more than two weeks after the meeting.
f. The Director will inform the Executive Director of the meeting with the service user or community member and the outcome.

STEP 4: Meeting the Executive Director

a. If the service user or community member is not satisfied with the response from the Director, the complainant may take the complaint to the Executive Director and should be informed of the name and phone number of the Executive Director.
b. The Executive Director should be alerted immediately if a call is anticipated, and a copy of the completed *Complaint Form* should be provided.
c. If requested, the Executive Director or her or his designate will meet with the service user or community member within two weeks and attempt to resolve the matter.
d. Prior to this, the Executive Director will inform the Director, manager and the staff person(s) of the approach and seek any necessary consultation.
e. Whenever possible the Executive Director will involve the staff person(s) and manager in the planning process and may invite one or all of them to the meeting.
f. Prior to the meeting the Director will ensure that a letter bearing his/her signature is sent to both the service user or community member and the Executive Director outlining the complaint and all the steps taken to resolve the complaint.
g. Within two weeks of meeting the service user or community member, the Executive Director or her/his designate will send a letter to the complainant setting out any agreement reached, or failing this, the Executive Director's decision regarding the complaint.

The person(s) providing the service and those at the first level of authority will be kept informed throughout all attempts to resolve complaints. In instances where there is an allegation of criminal or serious ethical breach of conduct by Mothercraft personnel, the Executive Director may waive the requirement to inform personnel until legal and/or police advice is sought and may continue to refrain from informing the person during the course of an investigation providing there is no breach of a legal or contractual standard.

While every attempt should be made to achieve a positive resolution with the complainant, the integrity of Mothercraft policies and the integrity and safety of Mothercraft personnel and other service users or community members must be maintained.

Documentation

All complaints received from a service user or community member are initially documented by the staff person who received the complaint using the *Complaint Form*. A flag noting that a complaint has been received is placed in the service user or community member’s record. A copy of the complaint is forwarded to the staff person’s manager.

The complaint file (includes all documentation, correspondence, resolution and follow up) is maintained separately from the service user's record or the community member's file in the appropriate director's office.

A record of the complaint will be made available to the complainant on request except in the case where the confidentiality of another service user or community member may be breached. These records will be retained for the same period of time as the service user or community member record (currently this period is 10 years).

FORMS/ATTACHMENTS

- Complaint Form

CROSS-REFERENCE

- *Child Abuse Reporting* Policy
- *Serious Occurrence* Policy

Safe Arrival and Dismissal Policy

Policy Name:	Safe Arrival and Dismissal
Category:	Programs and Services
Approved By:	Executive Director
Approved:	2023, 2024, 2025, 2026
To be Reviewed/Revised:	As needed
Scope:	All staff and students on placement in CEDs

PURPOSE
The safety and well-being of children in the care of Mothercraft is of primary importance. This policy is intended to fulfill Mothercraft's obligations regarding the safe arrival and dismissal of children at Centres for Early Development (CED), as set out under Regulation 137/15 of the *Child Care and Early Years Act*, *2014*.

POLICY
When a child does not arrive as expected at a CED, Mothercraft notify the parent/guardian via the Absence Notification system in Storypark. Should the system be unavailable, Mothercraft will make a courtesy notification call. Mothercraft will ensure that children are only released to the child's parent/guardian or an individual for whom the parent/guardian has provided written authorization.

Centres will not release children from care without supervision. Where a child does not arrive or is not picked up at a CED as expected, staff will follow the safe arrival and dismissal procedures set out below.

DEFINITIONS
Individual authorized to pick-up/authorized individual*:* a person that the parent/guardian has identified on Mothercraft's release form as having the authority to pick-up their child(ren) from care. This may include a youth under 18 years of age but not less than 16 years of age, provided the parent/caregiver has given written permission on the Release Form.

Parent/guardian*:* A person having lawful custody of a child.

PROCEDURES

Arrival

1. Parents/guardians will be asked to inform the CED manager of any planned absences (i.e., vacation) or unanticipated absences (i.e., illness or late arrival).

2. When accepting a child into care, program staff in the room will:
   2.1 Greet the parent/guardian and child and record any changes to the child's daily pick-up (i.e., someone other than the parent/guardian picking up).
   2.2 Document the change in pick-up procedure in the daily written record.
   2.3 Sign in the child on the classroom attendance record.

3. In the event that a child does not arrive at the CED by 11:00 am and the parent/guardian has not advised the CED of a late arrival or absence, program staff in the room will inform the CED Manager or designate.

4. Program staff mark the child absent in Storypark's Absence Notification system, triggering an automatic email to the child's parent/guardian, notifying of the child's absence. Should the system be unavailable, the CED Manager or designate will notify the child's parent/guardian by phone or email, including leaving a voice message when necessary.

5. The CED Manager or designate will document the steps taken to confirm the absence and program staff will document the child's absence on the attendance record and any additional information about the child's absence in the daily written record.

Dismissal

1. Program staff will only release a child to the child's parent/guardian or an individual for whom the parent/guardian has provided written authorization. Where the parent/guardian has indicated that someone other than the child's parent/guardian will be picking up, staff will confirm that the person is listed on the CED Release Form. Where the person is not listed, staff will ask the parent/guardian to provide all required details in writing (e.g., add to Release Form, provide note or send email). No children will be dismissed without supervision.

2. Where the staff does not know the individual picking up the child (i.e., parent/guardian or authorized individual), staff will:
   - 2.1 Confirm with another staff member that the individual picking up is the child's parent/guardian/authorized individual.
   - 2.2 where the above is not possible, ask the parent/guardian/authorized individual for photo identification and confirm the individual's information against the parent/guardian/authorized individual's name on the child's file or written authorization.
   - 2.3 Where the individual is not the parent/guardian or an authorized individual, staff will contact the parent/guardian to confirm that the person is authorized to pick up the child and request that the parent/guardian send a written confirmation (i.e., email or text) authorizing staff to release the child to the person. The person will be added to the list of authorized individuals who may pick up the child on the Release Form.

3. Where a parent/guardian has not picked up their child by the CED closure time, at least two staff will remain in the centre to supervise the child until the parent/guardian, or an authorized individual arrives. One staff may provide a snack and will engage the child in appropriate activities.

4. A second staff will contact the parent/guardian by phone. If they can't be reached, staff will call the emergency contact. If they can't be reached a call will be made to an authorized individual an authorized individual(s) will be contacted and, if necessary, the emergency contact(s).

5. Where staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian or any other authorized individual listed on the child's file after 30 minutes of the CED closure, the Manager and then the Associate Director will be informed. The Director will be informed within 24 hours.

6. Where staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian or any other authorized individual listed on the child's file one hour after the closure of the CED, the staff will contact the Children's Aid Society of Toronto (416-924-4646) and follow their direction regarding next steps.

7. Staff will remain with the child until they may be safely released into the custody of a parent/guardian, authorized individual or the Children's Aid Society.

Late Fee Policy

1.1 Parents are expected to pick up their child(ren) by the centre's closing time. In the event that parents arrived after that time, late fees will be charged as follows (except in extreme circumstances e.g. inclement weather, accidents, etc.):

- $5.00 for any time within the first 5 minutes.
- $1.00 for each minute thereafter.

1.2 Parents are required to sign a form confirming late pick-up and the amount being charged. Payment is collected by staff on duty. If late pick-up occurs repeatedly, the CED Manager will meet with the family to discuss the issue and advise that repeated failure to pick up on time may result in a withdrawal from the centre.

FORMS:

- CED – Release Form

CROSS REFERENCE:

- *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*; Regulation 137/15, Sec. [O. Reg. 137/15: GENERAL (ontario.ca)]
- CED Release Form
- *Attendance/Head Count Practice* Policy
- *Missing Child* Policy
- *Child Safety* Policy

Access to Service Policy

Policy Name:	Access to Service
Category:	Programs and Services
Approved by:	Executive Director
Approved:	2001, 2010, 2012, 2025, 2026
To be Reviewed/Revised:	As needed
Scope:	All Staff and Students on Placement in CEDs

PURPOSE
To outline the process for families wishing to access licensed child care services at Mothercraft Centres for Early Development. Mothercraft is committed to serving equity deserving communities.

POLICY
All families are entitled to fair and equitable treatment when accessing services delivered by Mothercraft. Applications for space in a Centre for Early Development (CED) are accepted on an ongoing basis, and families are placed on waiting lists based on the date and time their applications are received, subject to the priorities outlined in this policy.

PROCEDURE

1. Access to service process for families

1.3 Families interested in enrolling their child at a Mothercraft CED must complete the waitlist application and submit it to the location of their first choice. There is no fee required to be placed on the waiting list. Any fees associated with the delivery of services will not be collected until a space is guaranteed. Families may contact the centre Manager to receive updates regarding their waitlist status, however, information will only be shared in a manner that maintains privacy/confidentiality.

1.4 Vacant spaces will be offered on a first-come, first-served basis, with a few exceptions. Priority will be given to the following groups: siblings of children already enrolled in a specific CED, tenants who work/live in the same building as a CED (including schools and other agreements), children enrolled in another CED who wish to transfer, children of staff employed by Mothercraft, and children in need of protection who require emergency placement.

1.5 Mothercraft will enter into purchase of service agreements with Service System Managers (SSMs) to accept and support families in receipt of fee subsidy so that ability to pay is not a barrier to accessing services. Information about parent fees and the fee subsidy system will be provided to all families as part of the application process. Families seeking fee subsidy must apply to both the subsidy waitlist (through the SSM) and Mothercraft's waitlist. At no point in this process, will families be asked to disclose their financial status or whether they have applied for fee subsidy nor will this information play any role in the offering of a space or enrolment of a child in a Mothercraft CED. Applications must be renewed every year to keep your child's name active on the waiting list.

1.6 Once a space has been offered and a date of enrolment has been confirmed, the child is expected to begin attending the program. Spaces cannot be reserved without attendance.

1.7 If Mothercraft does not have the program or service needed by a family, Mothercraft will refer the family to external community resources.

FORMS

- Waitlist Application

CROSS REFERENCE

- *Orientation* Policy
- *Privacy* Policy

Mothercraft Centres for Early Development Contact List

Avondale CED Manager: Sheyda Manavi Sheyda.Manavi@mothercraft.org 171 Avondale Avenue Toronto, ON M2N 2V4 Tel: 416-941-2121	Eaton Centre Manager: Lalaine Tan Lalaine.Tan@mothercraft.org 14 Trinity Square Toronto, ON M5G 1B1 Tel: 416-340-9651
Brookfield Place CED Manager: Kimberly Wint Kimberly.Wint@mothercraft.org 10 Front Street West 161 Bay Street PO Box 510 Toronto, ON M5J 2S1 Tel: 416-367-1758	Robertson House Manager: Jessica Tran Jessica.Tran@mothercraft.org Assistant Manager: Winnie Ho Winnie.Ho@mothercraft.org 32 Heath Street West Toronto, ON M4V 1T3 Tel: 416-920-3515 ext. 5115
Midtown CED Manager: Anita Chang Anita. Chang @mothercraft.org 44 Lillian Street Toronto, ON M4S 0B7 Tel: 416-362-0333	York Heights CED Manager: Sonia Ferreira Sonia.ferreira@mothercraft.org 15 York Garden Way Toronto, ON M6A 0G4 Tel: TBD
Village Gate CED Manager: TBD VillageGateCED@mothercraft.org 5143 Dundas Street West Etobicoke, ON M9A 1C2 Tel: TBD	Norton Lake CED Manager: TBD NortonLakeCED@mothercraft.org 1155 Queen Street East Brampton, ON L6T 0G2 Tel: TBD