

Licensed Child Care Centres **PARENT / GUARDIAN HANDBOOK**

January 2024



Welcome to Our Program!

Niagara Region Children's Services is committed to providing the best quality child care possible. This handbook was developed to provide important information parents/guardians should know about the Region's Centre-Based Child Care Program.



Your family is participating at the following centre:

Branscombe Early Learning and Family Centre

6271 Glengate Street, Niagara Falls, L2E 5S4

Contact: 905-356-7677

cscf-nf@niagararegion.ca

Age Groups: Infants, 0-18 months, Toddlers, 18-30 months and Preschoolers, 30 months to school age

Hours of Operation: 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Fort Erie Regional Child Care Centre

94 Catherine Street, Fort Erie, L2A 5W6

Contact: 905-871-7706

cscf-fte@niagararegion.ca

Age Groups: Toddlers, 18-30 months & Preschoolers, 30 months to school age

Hours of Operation: 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

St. Catharines Regional Child Care Centre

179 Carlton Street, St. Catharines, L2R 1S1

Contact: 905-684-9927

cscf-stc@niagararegion.ca

Age Groups: Infants 0-18 months, Toddlers, 18-30 months and Preschoolers, 30 months to school age

Hours of Operation: 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Welland Regional Child Care Centre

25 Bruce Street, Welland, L3B 3P9

Contact: 905-735-2665

cscf-we@niagararegion.ca

Age Groups: Toddlers, 18-30 months & Preschoolers, 30 months to school age

Hours of Operation: 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Port Colborne Regional Child Care Centre

214 Steele Street, Port Colborne, L3K 4B3

Contact: 905-835-2394

cscf-pc@niagararegion.ca

Age Groups: Toddlers, 18-30 months & Preschoolers, 30 months to school age, School age

Hours of Operation: 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

For more information:

niagararegion.ca/living/childcare/regional-child-care

School Aged Children (Port Colborne Regional Child Care Centre)

Afternoon Snack

Nutritious snacks will be provided daily and recorded on a menu.

Playground

Outdoor active play will be provided each afternoon with the use of Steel Street School playground.

Classroom Use

The school aged children will utilize classrooms that have been approved in licensing by the Ministry of Education which includes the school gym, computer room and library.

Supervision

School aged children will be supervised at all times by a Registered Early Childhood Educators with the exception of school age washroom requests. The “buddy system” will be implemented where two children will be permitted in the washroom, when required, unsupervised by an adult, similar to the practice being followed during school hours.

Should you require Child Care fee subsidy or need to speak to a Fee Subsidy Caseworker, they can be contacted through the Subsidy Intake Line at: **905-984-6000**.

Useful Information:

The days and hours of operation of this child care operation are:

Day	Open time	Close time
Monday	:	:
Tuesday	:	:
Wednesday	:	:
Thursday	:	:
Friday	:	:

Your child will be in group:

Staff currently working in this group are:

Emergency Closure

Children’s Services child care centres have Emergency Management policies and procedures which include Lock Down, Fire Evacuation, Evacuation Shelter and Emergency Numbers policies. In the case of an emergency that forced the immediate closure of the centre, a notice would be posted at the Centre’s entrance and where possible we would contact you by phone. Should the closure be required after we have opened for the day, the Centre’s emergency locations are:

The Centre Supervisor’s business card is supplied for you to keep with you.

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Role of the Agency

The goal of Niagara Region Centre-Based Child Care Program (the agency) is to provide your child with the best possible quality child care. We work closely with you to help guide your child through all the stages of childhood development and growth. Our policies and procedures have been created to comply with the Ontario government's *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*, Niagara Region Corporate policies and Children's Services policies. The five Regional Child Care Centres are participating in the Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) Agreement where the focus is to increase quality, accessibility, affordability and inclusivity in early learning and child care.

Licensing

Our centres operate under the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* and are licensed by the Ministry of Education (MEDU), Early Learning Division. In order to maintain our license, the centre is inspected regularly by a MEDU program advisor to ensure compliance with the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*. A summary of the most recent licensing inspection findings is posted at each of our centres.

Our Staff

Each of our Centres is lead by a Supervisor who is responsible for the daily operation of the Centre.

The Supervisor is responsible to oversee the following staff:

- Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs). RECEs are responsible to develop and implement a curriculum for learning and to support the health and safety of the children in our care
- All of our RECEs hold at a minimum a two year diploma in Early Childhood Education from a recognized educational institution. Each teacher is registered with the College of Early Childhood Educators, which regulates the RECE profession in Ontario

- All of our RECEs are required to maintain up to date first aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)
- Our Program Assistant supports the five Regional Child Care Centres in completing administrative duties

Dietary Staff

Our Cooks prepare meals and snacks for the children on site. Menus have been developed in consultation with a Registered Dietician.

Child Care Custodians

Our Child Care Custodians maintain the cleanliness of our Centres and perform minor repairs to our equipment and facilities.

Staff Requirements

The Ministry of Education requires Criminal Reference Checks of all child care centre employees who are part of Niagara Region's hiring process, as well as students and volunteers over the age of 18, every five years. All child care centre employees complete an Annual Declaration. These provisions ensure that employees continue to be fit and suitable to interact with children. These measures protect the health and safety of children in licensed child care settings.

Staff carry out their duties according to the requirements, policies and procedures of Niagara Region and the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* which apply to areas such as program implementation of activities, playground safety, serious occurrences, duty to report suspected child abuse, and confidentiality.

Training

All of our staff participate in training which is relevant to the positions and duties they perform.

All of our RECEs participate in Quality Child Care Niagara (QCCN) – a research-based model of program development that provides RECEs with tools and ongoing training they need to help children be successful in their learning activities and in their social, emotional and physical development. We also value children's creative, aesthetic and spiritual dimensions of experience.

Important operational notes for all of our Child Care Centres

- **We promote idle free parking**
 - Please turn off your car
- **Please do not leave your child unattended in your car**
 - Your child's safety is important to us
- **We are a smoke-free environment**
 - Please do not smoke on the premises of the child care centre (Smoke Free Ontario Act 2017)
- **We are a scent free environment**

Our Values and Approach

We believe that learning and development happens within the context of relationships among children, families, educators and their environments. Belonging, Wellbeing, Engagement and Expression are the four foundations that ensure optimal learning and development. These foundations inform the goals for children and expectations for our programs. *How Does Learning Happen?*, Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years, provides our programs with guidance and direction when implementing quality child care programs.

Children

We believe that children are competent, capable of complex thinking, curious and rich in potential. They grow up in families with diverse social, cultural and linguistic perspectives. We believe that every child should feel that he or she belongs, is a valuable contributor to his or her surroundings, and deserves the opportunity to succeed.

Families

We recognize that parents are the first and best teachers of their own children. We assist families in their roles through the provision of resources, training and support. We believe that families should feel that they belong, are valuable contributors to their child's learning and deserve to be engaged in a meaningful way.

Community

We have relationships with many community service organizations and agencies to support and enhance our services. In addition, staff representatives sit on many advisory committees and organizations that support early childhood development. Opportunities to engage with people, places, and the natural world in the local environment help children, families, educators, and communities build connections, learn and discover, and make contributions to the world around them.

Educators

The best educators, first and foremost, use a warm, responsive, and inclusive approach, building positive relationships with children families, colleagues and communities. Educators participate as co-learners with families and children.

Knowledgeable educators are involved in play with children to support development, challenge thinking and extend learning. They engage in reciprocal relationships with families and caregivers, learning about, with, and from them.

Educators share their professional knowledge and experience and also seek out the knowledge and perspectives of families.

Our Program Statement

The Ministry of Education has required all licensed child care programs to develop and implement a Program Statement, which guides the day-to-day beliefs, values and best practices of our program.

Niagara Region Children's Services licensed child care programs recognize that all children are competent, capable, curious and rich in potential.

We provide learning environments where educators act as co-learners and facilitators to children's learning by planning for play opportunities to explore, investigate and nurture authentic relationships through adult supported provocations/invitations and children initiated interests. We document children's learning to enable us to reflect on each child's unique development and to share heartfelt experiences to the child and families within our programs.

We support Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECE) /Home Child Care Providers in providing open ended materials, and flexibility within the day that maintains safety and allows children to engage in complex exploration incorporating their natural curiosity.

We value and support the families we serve and recognize them as partners in their children's learning as we believe they are their first educators. RECE's/Home Child Care Providers are true professionals who build relationships with children and their families and connect with organizations within their community recognizing that "it takes a village to raise a child".

We encourage our RECE's /Home Child Care Providers to recognize the importance of self-reflective practice and on-going professional learning opportunities to provide nurturing, responsive learning environments.

This program statement aligns with our local Quality Child Care Niagara (QCCN) initiative which provides educators with the tools and training to ensure that all children can experience the maximum developmental benefit of all learning opportunities.

We provide an environment that supports the diverse needs of all children and families in the Niagara Region. We strive to be accepting of all exceptionalities and we adjust our environment to meet the needs of each unique child.

To access the complete Child Care Centres Program Statement: niagararegion.ca/living/childcare/regional-child-care/program-statement

Program and Routine

Our child care centres offer high quality programs where each child is an active participant in their environment. We view learning as a process, where children grow and develop by exploring, interacting and problem-solving.

Our centres are committed to providing an inclusive environment for all children. The goal of our programs is to foster independence, trust, confidence and positive self-esteem for each child.

Our RECEs provide pedagogical direction by:

Cultivating authentic, caring relationships and connections to create a sense of belonging among and between children, adults, and the world around them. Nurturing children's healthy development and support their growing sense of self. Providing environments and experiences to engage children in active, creative and meaningful exploration, play and inquiry. Fostering communication and expression in all forms.

When parents or staff identify developmental concerns, we refer children, upon parental consent, for further assessment and develop individual plans to support the child's development as appropriate.

Students and Volunteers

All volunteers and students must have a clear criminal reference check, (over the age of 18), and up to date immunizations to be considered for a volunteer or student placement in the program. Student or volunteers will never be left alone with the children at any time and will be supervised by an employee.

Prohibited Practices

This provision forbids corporal punishment and other harmful disciplinary practices to protect the emotional and physical well-being of children. These practices are never permitted in a child care centre.

Young children benefit from an affirming approach that encourages positive interactions with other children and with adults, rather than from a negative or punitive approach to managing unwanted behaviour.

The following shall not be permitted:

- a. Corporal punishment of the child
- b. Physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a high chair, car seat, stroller or other device for the purposes of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting himself, herself or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent
- c. Locking the exits of the child care centre 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
- d. Use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child or undermine his or her self-respect, dignity or self-worth
- e. Depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding
- f. Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will

DISC Preschool Screen (DPS)

Children in our centres are screened using the DPS tool, which determines if children are developing in accordance with their age. It helps staff identify children who may be in need of supports for healthy development. The screening is performed annually with your signed consent.

Daily Physical Activity (DPA)

Each of our centres deliver a Daily Physical Activity program where children are led through a series of age-appropriate exercises for about ten minutes each day. Promoting exercise at a young age helps control weight, strengthens muscles and bones and can help children as they get older to choose a healthy lifestyle that includes regular exercise.

Meals/Snacks

Adequate and appropriate nutrition is vital to children's health, growth, development and well-being. Our menus have been developed in consultation with a Registered Dietician. Canada's Food Guide", "Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide - First Nations, Inuit and Metis" and "Nutrition for Healthy Term Infants", and are varied and nutritious to promote healthy eating from an early age. Snacks and meals are served at regular meal times. Menu consultation and alternatives are available for children who require special diets. Drinking water is available at all times during the day including snack and meal times.

Toileting

If your child is ready to begin toilet training, please speak to staff regarding a plan of action for your child. Toileting doesn't happen quickly for some children and can be very stressful for the child and family.

Diapers

Please provide diapers and wipes, labeled with your child's name. Disposable and cloth diapers can be used in our facilities. Soiled cloth diapers and clothing will be placed in a plastic bag and returned to the parent for laundering. Due to Public Health guidelines, we are not able to rinse or spray soiled articles.

Rest/Sleeping

While not all children need a mid-day nap, young children benefit from periods of quiet relaxation to balance their active play. Some children who are tired may take a relatively long time to relax and sleep, while others only require a short rest period. Children's needs may also change from day to day or week to week.

The need for rest and sleep varies greatly at different ages, and even among children of the same age; however, rest is an important part of the day for all children.

This provision allows for a period during which quiet activities are encouraged and children can nap if required. This is a nurturing environment and is established through positive interactions and responsive relationships. Often times, children rest better when they bring a favourite comfort item from home, such as a small stuffed animal. You are encouraged to provide a small blanket for your child to keep at the centre and use during nap time. Toddler and preschool rest periods do not exceed two hours in length. Parents will be consulted regarding their children's sleeping arrangements at enrolment, at any other appropriate time or upon request.

Parents will be consulted regarding their children's sleeping arrangements at enrolment, at any other appropriate time or upon request.

Child care centres are required to ensure that centre based Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECE) periodically perform a direct visual check of each sleeping child. A direct visual check requires RECE's to go over to the sleeping child and look for indicators of distress or unusual behavior. Parents will be notified if there are any significant changes observed in a child's sleeping pattern or behaviours during sleep. These will result in adjustments to the manner in which the child is supervised during sleep and documented in the Child Care Centre program.

Infants

Children between the ages of 0-12 months of age will be placed for sleep in a manner consistent with the recommendations set out in the Joint Statement of Safe Sleep; Preventing Sudden Infant Deaths in Canada, Public Health Agency of Canada. Written documentation from a medical doctor will be kept in your child's file if you are choosing to waive this requirement.

Field Trips and Walks

Staff may take children on walks throughout the neighbourhood and from time to time lead them on field trips to visit locations outside of our community. You will be notified of any field trips and must sign a consent form allowing them to attend.

Video Recording/Pictures/iPads

Staff frequently capture wonderful moments by taking pictures to demonstrate your child's learning and understanding of the world around them visible. In addition, video recording may occur for staff training or to use for promotional purposes. You must give your consent for your child to participate. From time to time should you not wish your child to be video recorded or to have their picture taken, you are responsible to notify the Supervisor if you have previously given consent.

Attendance and Communication

Pick-up and drop-off times are natural opportunities for communication with centre staff. When dropping off, please take your child to their group and educator. At that time, the educator will indicate your child's arrival in their daily log. When picking up, make sure that the supervising educator acknowledges your departure and is able to mark the attendance accordingly. If pick-up and drop-off times are too busy, please call your child's educator during the day to arrange a time to talk. You are also welcome to communicate with us by email. Please refer to page 2 for your Centre's email address.

Safe Arrival and Dismissal Policy

Your child's safety and well-being is of the greatest importance to us.

Parent/Guardian Responsibility

You must notify the child care centre if your child is going to be absent or if your child's schedule has changed for the day i.e. different arrival time. Notification must occur no later than 10 a.m.

Child Care Centre Responsibility

Where a child does not arrive for care and the parent/guardian has not communicated the absence or change in arrival time, the child care centre staff must contact the parent/guardian to confirm the child's absence.

Please see the complete policy found here: niagararegion.ca/living/childcare/regional-child-care/default.aspx. Which will include procedures regarding releasing a child from care.

Parent Issues or Concerns Policy

Authority

Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014. College of Early Childhood Educators Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice for Early Childhood Educators in Ontario, July 2017, Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007. Children's Services, Niagara Region.

Definitions

Complaint: An expression of grievance or resentment where the family is seeking redress or justice

Licensee: The individual or agency licensed by the Ministry of Education responsible for the operation and management of each child care centre it operates (e.g. the operator)

Staff: Individual employed by the licensee (e.g. Registered Early Childhood Educator)

CECE: College of Early Childhood Educators

CAS: Children's Aid Society

FACS: Family and Children Services

MEDU: Ministry of Education

RECE: Registered Early Childhood Educator

OCCMS: Ontario Child Care Management System

CECE Expectations: Registered Early Childhood

Educators must also follow the expectations set out in the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, July 2017. Specifically the following:

- Responsibilities to Children
- Responsibilities to Families
- Responsibilities to Colleagues and to the Profession
- Standard 111: Safety, Health and Well-being in the Learning Environment

Intent

The purpose of this policy is to provide a transparent process for parent/guardians, the child care licensee and staff to use when parents/guardians bring forward issues/concerns. Children Services, Child Care Centres, are dedicated to ensure the delivery of high quality child care to all families. Children should be in a healthy, safe, happy environment. Children's Services is committed to work in partnership with families to resolve any concerns and complaints that they may have about their child's care.

Policy

Children's Services, Child Care Centres will provide clear and transparent information to parents, the community and staff on how concerns and complaints will be managed and resolutions will be found. This will ensure that families have access to support and direction when attempting to resolve a complaint. Parents/guardians are encouraged to take an active role in our child care centres and regularly discuss what their child(ren) are experiencing with our program. As supported by our program statement, we support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents/guardians, child care providers and staff, and foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents/guardians about the program and their children. Our staff are available to engage parents/guardians in conversations and support a positive experience during every interaction.

Families can expect their concerns will be responded to in a courteous, respectful and timely manner. All issues and concerns raised by parents/guardians are taken seriously by the supervisor and staff of the child care centre. Every effort will be made to address and resolve issues and concerns to the satisfaction of all parties as quickly as possible. Families can expect an initial response within

five (5) business days from the supervisor, designate or manager, after becoming aware of the complaint. The person who raised the issue/concern will be kept informed throughout the resolution. Supervisors will maintain a record of parent complaints on the Family Complaint Log Form and in OCCMS case notes.

At any time during the process the family may choose to involve an external agency such as the Ministry of Education, the College of Early Childhood Educators (CECE) or Family and Children's Services (FACS).

Confidentiality should be adhered to throughout the complaint resolution process. Every effort will be made to protect the privacy of parents/guardians, children, staff, students and volunteers, except when information must be disclosed for legal reasons (e.g. the MEDU, CECE, law enforcement authorities or FACS). This means that the complaint should only be discussed by those people directly involved in the resolution process and/or governing bodies/agencies.

Steps to be taken by Parent/ Guardian to Report Issue/Concern

- 1. First Point of Contact (should always be the child care centre).
The family should:**
 - Contact the centre staff and/or supervisor to discuss the concern
 - Schedule a time with the supervisor to talk about your concerns
 - Be prepared to make notes ahead of time about your concerns
 - Issues or concerns may be brought forward verbally or in writing
 - Be clear about what's being said (if you need clarification or have concerns about the Centre's response, ask them to explain further)
 - Arrange a follow up meeting if necessary

Families can expect an initial response within five (5) business days after becoming aware of the complaint. If you are unsatisfied or still have concerns you may want to then move to the second point of contact.

- 2. Second Point of Contact. The family should:**
 - Connect with the Program Manager of Children's Services, Direct Operations by calling **905-980-6000 ext. 3823**
 - Move to the third point of contact if unsatisfied or still have concerns.
- 3. Third Point of Contact. The family should:**
 - Connect with the Manager of Children's Services, Direct Operations by calling **905-980-6000 ext. 3877**
- 4. Fourth Point of Contact. The family should:**
 - Connect with the Director of Children's Services by calling **905-980-6000. ext. 3876**

Additional Points of Contact

You may make a complaint to the Ministry of Education's Child Care Complaint line, regarding program concerns at:

MEDU Licensed child care complaint line
(program concerns) Phone: 1-877-510-5333 or
childcare_ontario@ontario.ca

Complaints regarding Registered Early Childhood Educators can be filed with the regulatory body of the College of Early Childhood Educators at:
Phone: 1-888-961-8558 or info@college-ece.ca

Family and Children's Services (FACS) Niagara
(children in need of protection) Phone: 905-937-7731

- Everyone, including members of the public and professionals who work closely with children, is required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect
- If a parent/guardian expresses concerns that a child is being abused or neglected, the parent will be advised to contact the local Children's Aid Society (CAS) directly. The CAS in Niagara is FACS.

- Persons who become aware of such concerns are also responsible for reporting this information to FACS as per the “Duty to Report” requirement under the Child and Family Services Act
- For more information visit: ontario.ca/page/child-welfare-and-child-protection-services

Public Health, Niagara Region (environmental concerns)
Phone: 905-688-3762 or 1-800-263-7248

Steps for Staff, Supervisor and/or Licensee in Responding to Issue Concern

- Address the initial issue/concern at the time it is raised or arrange a meeting with the parent/guardian within 5 business days
- Advise the supervisor or designate
- Advise the Children’s Services manager or designate
- Document the issue/complaint in the Daily Log when the complaint affects the health, safety and wellbeing of a child
- Document the issue/concerns in detail. Documentation should include:
 - The date and time the issue/concern was received
 - The name of the person who received the issue concern
 - The name of the person reporting the issue concern
 - The details of the issue/concern
 - Any steps taken to resolve the issue/concern and/or information given to the parent/guardian regarding next steps or referral
 - Provide contact information for the appropriate person if the person being notified is unable to address the matter
- Ensure the investigation of the issue/concern is initiated by the appropriate party within 5 business days or as soon as reasonably possible thereafter
- Document reasons for delays in writing
- Provide resolution or outcome to the parent(s)/guardian(s) who raised the issue/concern

- Document issue/concern in the Family Complaint Log
- Indicate parent’s needs/feelings
- Indicate the follow-up
- Indicate that the detailed notes can be found in the child’s file
- Indicate the final outcome of the issue/concern

Conduct

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

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

To access the complete policy on Parent Issue or Concerns: niagararegion.ca/living/childcare/regional-child-care/parent-issues

Administration

Waitlist

Children Services, Directly Operated Child Care Centres, will not charge parents a fee or deposit for the placement of their child on a waiting list for an unsecured spot in a Regionally operated child care centre or home child care program. This policy will be reviewed with staff, volunteers and students, implemented and monitored for compliance and contraventions in accordance with subsection 6.1 of the CCEYA (See Child Care Manual Subsection 1.2).

Families that would like to be waitlisted for child care at Children’s Services Directly Operated programs will:

- Submit an online application to the Niagara Child Care Registry
- Need to provide information about their family on the application form
- Place their child on as many lists (child care programs) as they wish
- Not be a charge and a fee to be placed on the waitlist

- For assistance with the website, contact OneHSN Support at 1-888-722-1540 or **Support@OneHSN.com**
- The Supervisor or designate will contact the family when a child care space becomes available at a Regional child care centre that the parent has selected
- Families will be offered admission from the waitlist based on space available of required age group and date of request
- Information will only be accessed by the centre supervisor or designate and is password protected to ensure that the child's information remains confidential
- Families may contact the Regional child care centre directly to inquire about their position on the waitlist for admission

Access the policy on Registration/Waiting Lists:
niagararegion.ca/living/childcare/regional-child-care/registration-policy

Registration

Registration forms must be completed prior to your child attending the centre and each time there is a change of information, such as a change of phone number or guardian. Please be sure to forward your child's updated immunization records, child's health card number, two names for emergency contact with phone numbers and full address. If there is an objection or exemption to immunization, please ask the supervisor for the Ministry approved form.

Orientation

Before your child is enrolled in the centre an orientation meeting will be held for you and your child. This gives you and your child the opportunity to tour the centre, ask questions and complete all documentation.

Fees

Child care fees are paid through automatic withdrawal. Invoices will be issued for all fees owing. Payments will be withdrawn on the 20th and last day of the month for the previous month's child care. Direct debit authorization forms and full fee agreements (if applicable) must be completed at the time of registration. Full fee families must sign an agreement binding them to a minimum total days used and minimum fees required. There will be no fees charged for Statutory Holidays.

Child Care Centre Base Rates

Canada Wide Early Learning Child Care System reduced rates are for children under the age of six (zero to five years old).

Children under the age of six (zero to five years old). There are some exceptions for children with birthdays early in the year who are six years of age, but still in kindergarten. Eligible children for whom fees must be reduced are defined under O. Reg. 137/15. This includes:

- Any child, until the last day of the month in which the child turns six years old
- Up until June 30 in a calendar year, any child who:
 - Turns six years old between Jan. 1 and June 30 in that calendar year
 - Is enrolled in a licensed infant, toddler, preschool or kindergarten group

Eligible infant, toddler, preschool and kindergarten age (3.8 years old - six years old)

Age group	Parent fee (effective January 1, 2023)
Infant care	Full day: \$25.09
	Half day: \$12.51
	Less than three hours: \$12.00
Toddler care	Full day: \$21.26
	Half day: \$12.00
	Less than three hours: \$12.00
Preschool care	Full day: \$21.26
	Half day: \$12.00
	Less than three hours: \$12.00
Junior/senior kindergarten	Full day: \$19.10
	Half day: \$12.00
	Before school: \$10.00
	After school: \$12.00
	Before and after school: \$12.00

Ineligible school age (6.1 years old - 12 years old)

Age group	Parent fee
School age	Full day: \$40.43
	Half day: \$23.00
	Before school: \$10.00
	After School: \$13.00
	Before and after school: \$23.00

Access Child Care Base Rates:

niagararegion.ca/living/childcare/regional-child-care/rates

Non-Payment of Fees

Failure to make fee payments will result in the following: After 4 weeks without payment, the child care space will no longer be available. Unpaid fees will be identified by the Region’s Finance Department for immediate collection. Re-registration will only occur after full payment of fees if there is a space available. Two weeks’ notice in writing must be given to the Supervisor of your intent to withdraw

Income Tax Receipts

Niagara Region Children’s Services will provide you with a year-end receipt for income tax purposes.

Absent Days

If you are receiving subsidy, you are given a number of absent days per year for use when your child is ill or away on vacation. Should you use all of the absent days before the end of a 12-month period, you will be charged the daily rate for any further absences.

Clients not receiving subsidy will be required to book days of care upon enrollment. If your child is absent on a day which has been booked, you will be required to pay the daily fee for that day. Fees are not charged when the centres are closed for holidays or due to disruptions in service such as weather-related closures.

Hours of Care

If you are receiving subsidy, the hours of approved care are set by your Children’s Services Caseworker. Any changes to those hours must be approved by the Caseworker. It is your responsibility to keep the Caseworker informed of any changes, including employment, school hours, etc.

Your Children’s Services Caseworker is:

and can be contacted at **905-984-3750**.

The hours of care for those not receiving a fee subsidy will be set by the centre Supervisor. Changes to those hours must be approved by the Supervisor. Please pick up your children at the appointed time. In case of emergency, call the centre as soon as possible so that appropriate arrangements can be made for the pick-up of your child.

Closures

Closure notices for holidays are posted at the centre entrance. Centres are closed on the following holidays:

- New Years Day
- Family Day
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- Victoria Day
- Canada Day
- Civic Holiday
- Labour Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day
- Boxing Day
- New Year's Eve

Weather and Emergency

From time to time our centres may be closed due to severe weather conditions. Closure will be announced on the following radio stations:

- 610 AM CKTB
- 97.7 FM CHTZ
- 1220 CHSC
- 1470 AM CHOW

If the centre is closed, the information will also be left on our telephone answering machine. If you are uncertain, please call the centre.

Late Pick-Up

Our centres close promptly at 6 p.m. It is imperative that your child is picked up on time. We understand that emergencies do happen from time to time, and we will make every effort to accommodate you should such an event occur. It is important that you make arrangements for an emergency back-up person who can pick up your child should you be unable to do so yourself. If your child is not picked up by 6 p.m., we will attempt to contact you. If unable to reach you or your emergency contact by 6:30 p.m., we will call Family and Children's Services. All late pick-ups are recorded and result in our sending a letter of reminder about our pick-up policy. After three late pick-up occurrences, the centre reserves the right to terminate your child's care with three days' notice.

Discharge of Care

Please notify us immediately if you plan on terminating your care. We require at a minimum two weeks' notice. Should you wish to suspend care temporarily, please notify the Supervisor and your Children's Services Caseworker (if applicable) to arrange for a break in service. We cannot guarantee that a space will be available for your child once service is suspended.

We ask that you remove from the centre all items belonging to your child within one week of termination. Any items left at the centre past this period will be donated or disposed of.

Health

The safety and well-being of children is the highest priority in our program. We understand the concerns and needs of working parents and try to accommodate the difficulties associated with a sick child.

Sickness

We follow several policies and procedures based on Public Health guidelines to minimize the spread of infections and promote a healthy environment. We ask that you sanitize your hands before entering the main area of the centre. You are also required to keep your child home if he or she shows any of the following symptoms of illness:

- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Impetigo
- Fever
- Rashes

Rashes

If you suspect that your child may have an infectious disease such as measles, rubella or chicken pox, please have the condition diagnosed by a Doctor and notify us. If your child has a contagious illness or condition, your child is required to be absent from the centre for a prescribed period.

It is very important that you have back-up child care arranged for your child. We are unable to care for ill children and cannot accommodate children who are not able to participate in the program if they are feeling unwell.

Fever

A child with a temperature of 37.8°C taken by ear thermometer or 37.2°C taken by forehead (thermal) thermometer or higher is considered to have a fever. You are required to make alternate child care arrangements if your child is running a temperature.

Medication

Staff may administer prescription medications. The medication must be in the original container labeled with the child's name and the Doctor's name. A medication form must also be completed for the medicine to be administered.

Allergies

Should your child have environmental or food allergies please make sure that staff is aware of his or her condition. For safety purposes, we post pictures identifying children and staff within our centres who are anaphylactic. We have an anaphylactic policy which will be shared with parents, as appropriate. Treatment information must be documented for your child's safety.

Individualized Plans

Individualized plans of action are developed for each child with medical needs in consultation with the parent and any regulated health professional who is involved in the child's health care and whom the parent wishes to include in this consultation. Medical needs could include chronic conditions such as asthma, diabetes and seizure, such as epilepsy, acute conditions or concussions.

Special Diet

We will accommodate children with special diet requirements due to medical conditions, allergies or religion. There may be instances where you will be required to provide the food for your children. When this occurs, each item must be individually packaged with the child's name on each item. Specialized diet forms must be completed in order for us to provide these items to your child.

Nut Aware

Food allergies are a serious concern for some children. As "nut aware" Centres, our staff actively avoid serving children foods which may contain nuts. To help ensure the safety of all children in our care, we ask that you not bring food/drinks from home into the centre.

Head Lice

The occurrence of head lice in a child care centre happens from time to time. There is no medical reason for excluding your child with nits or live lice from child care. Best practice indicates that they can go home at the end of the day, be treated and return after treatment has begun.

For additional information about head lice visit niagararegion.ca/parents/children/body-care.aspx

Safety

The safety of everyone who attends our program is very important to us. Each of our centres has a Health and Safety Representative who is responsible to survey our programs, identify any safety or potential safety issues and ensure that any deficiencies are addressed as quickly as possible.

Clothing

Children should wear weather appropriate clothing that is casual and comfortable. Some items of clothing can be a potential safety hazard. During winter, scarves and mittens with strings are not allowed. Please provide a full change of clothing marked with your child's name as clothing can become wet or soiled during normal play routines. Providing extra clothing is especially important if your child is being toilet trained. We are not responsible for any items that are lost or misplaced. We have limited amounts of extra clothing and ask that should your child be dressed in clothing from the centre that you wash and return it.

Footwear

In order for your child to play safely in our program, it is important that they wear proper fitting shoes. Running shoes or a closed toe/heel shoe are the recommended footwear in our centres.

Sun Safety

Centre activities include playing outside. We ask that you apply sunscreen to your child prior to their arrival. We will apply sun screen prior to afternoon outdoor play with your signed permission. Sun hats with a brim are also recommended to protect your child from the sun's harmful rays.

Accidents

Centre staff will advise you of any accidents that result in a minor injury to your child. We will ask you to review an accident report and sign it, indicating that you have been made aware.

Serious Occurrences

In case of serious injury, we have an obligation to report the injury to the Ministry of Education. A serious occurrence is defined as any injury requiring medical attention.

Duty to Report

Under the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*, our staff is obligated to report any suspected child abuse to Family and Children's Services of Niagara.

Custody & Access to Child on Premises

Where custodial arrangements are in place, the custodian must provide all relevant legal documentation to the Supervisor regarding the conditions of custody.

If no custodial arrangements are in place, we are obligated by the Courts of Justice Act to provide access to your child. No person's providing care, or operating a premises at which child care is provided, shall prevent a parent from accessing their child or entering the premises, except when the parent has no legal right, if the person believes on reasonable grounds that the parent could be dangerous to the children, and/or if the parent is behaving in a disruptive manner.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up

If someone else is picking up your child, Children's Services recommends that children under sixteen (16) years of age do not pick up children from child care programs. However, if a parent or guardian chooses to have a child who is under sixteen (16) years of age but thirteen (13) years of age or older to pick up their child, the centre will release the child to the authorized individual with the completion of the "Release of Child to Person Under Age of 16 Form". Please note identification required upon pick up (i.e. health card). Should this information change, please provide it to us in writing. Please know that we will not release your child to someone who is under the age of 16, unless you complete documentation indicating your consent.

If we suspect that an individual picking up your child is intoxicated or under the influence of drugs we will not release the child into their care. If the individual insists on taking your child we may call the police or Family and Children's Services. Once staff release your child to you or your designate, the child is your responsibility, even if you are still on centre property.

Checklist for Parents

A change of clothes for indoors marked with your child's name

An extra pair of mittens and winter hat marked with your child's name

Remove drawstrings from clothing

If your hours of arrival and departure time need to be changed, confirm with the Supervisor and Children's Services Caseworker if you are receiving subsidy

If you move, change jobs or change any of your telephone numbers, please notify us and, if you are receiving subsidy, your Children's Services Caseworker

Provide the name of an emergency back-up person

Have a back-up plan for care if your child becomes ill

If your child is sick, call the centre and advise staff of the nature of the illness and the expected return date

Do not bring food to the centre unless your child requires a specialized diet that is verified by a physician.

Make sure you notify us if your child has any food or other allergies

Let us know if there are any routines or articles that will help your child through transition times (e.g. sleep, lunch)

When you are unable to pick up your child, make sure staff are notified and that you document any special arrangements

Please note that staff will only administer prescribed medication if provided in the original container labeled with your child's name and date of birth, Doctor's name, and with the completion of written authorization by the parent.

Diapers and disposable wipes

Electronic versions of the Parent Handbook, Program Statement, Issues or Concerns Policy or the Registration/Waitlist Policy will be emailed or printed in hard copy form when requested.

Licensed Regional Child Care Centres

Niagara Region operates five licensed child care centres staffed by Registered Early Childhood Educators registered with the College of Early Childhood Educators.



Branscombe Early Learning and Family Centre

6271 Glengate Street,
Niagara Falls, L2E 5S4
905-356-7677
csc-nf@niagararegion.ca



Fort Erie Regional Child Care Centre

94 Catherine Street,
Fort Erie, L2A 5W6
905-871-7706
csc-fte@niagararegion.ca

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St. Catharines Regional Child Care Centre

179 Carlton Street,
St. Catharines, L2R 1S1
905-684-9927
csc-stc@niagararegion.ca



Port Colborne Regional Child Care Centre

214 Steele Street,
Port Colborne, L3K 4B3
905-835-2394
csc-pc@niagararegion.ca

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Welland Regional Child Care Centre

25 Bruce Street,
Welland, L3B 3P9
905-735-2665
csc-we@niagararegion.ca

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Niagara Region Children's Services
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way
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January 2024

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