



PARENT HANDBOOK

January 1, 2024

Welcome!

Dear Families,

Welcome to Kids' Stuff...the Family Learning Centre on the Thames! Since 1991, Kids' Stuff has been dedicated to providing high quality early learning and care. Thank you for continuing to entrust us with that privilege and responsibility.

It is our hope that the *Parent Handbook* will help you to better understand our programs, policies, philosophy, goals and objectives. Please take the time to read all of the following information, and keep it handy for future reference.

The contents of this handbook may vary from time to time due to changes in policies and procedures. Please see the Director or a Program Supervisor for any necessary verification or clarification.

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Purpose

Kids' Stuff...the Family Learning Centre on the Thames, as a charitable organization licensed by the Ministry of Education provides non-parental childcare in an inclusive, non-discriminatory, high quality early learning environment for children aged three months to thirteen years. As a family learning centre, Kids' Stuff provides support to parents/guardians as their children grow and develop and the needs of their families change.

The Organization Locations are as Follows:

Head Office/Main Site: 519-351-5364
520 McNaughton Ave., East, Chatham-Kent N7L 2G9

Winston Churchill Public School: 519-351-4464
30 Crystal Dr., Chatham-Kent N7M 3C7

Gregory Drive Public School: 519-351-0550
180 Gregory Dr., West Chatham-Kent N7L 2L4

Victor Lauriston Public School: 519-365-6449 or 519-351-0550 for registration
44 Alexandra Ave., Chatham-Kent N7M 1Y1

Queen Elizabeth II Public School: 519-437-7096 or 519-351-4464 for registration
79 Eugenie St., Chatham-Kent N7M 3Y9

The organization provides service for children in the following programs:

Infant: 3 months to 18 months

Toddler: 18 months to 30 months

Preschool: 30 months to 6 years

JK/SK: 44 months to 7 years

Primary/Junior School Age: 68 months to 13 years

(Some programs are site specific. Please call for further information.)

Philosophy

Kids' Stuff...the Family Learning Centre on the Thames believes that all children and their families should have access to high quality early learning and care. Kids' Stuff...the Family Learning Centre on the Thames believes that all children are entitled to emergent opportunities that support their emotional, social, creative, cognitive and physical growth and development in an inclusive, non-discriminatory environment that fosters active learning, autonomy, and a sense of responsibility and good citizenship.

Parents/guardians have the primary responsibility for the care and education of their children. They also have the right to pursue financial security, further education and/or personal fulfillment. Parents/guardians are entitled to be a part of the operation of the childcare program within the legal framework. They should also be involved in and informed of the daily life of the program as an integral part of their childcare experience. Kids' Stuff will support parents'/guardians' participation in their children's early learning care and development.

Staff members are the central component of the early learning and care environment at Kids' Stuff. They have the important task and responsibility of providing opportunities for the development of the children. Staff will support and guide learning as it emerges within the program, in the natural world and in our community as a whole. Inherent in the staff's commitment to their work is their right to open communication, job descriptions, performance reviews, financial recognition of the value of their work, opportunities for professional development, and direct input into making decisions.

Kids' Stuff...the Family Learning Centre on the Thames believes that an optimum early learning and care program must support positive relations between children, families and staff. Such programs supplement and complement family care in a nurturing, learning environment that promotes good citizenry. Working together, we lay the foundation for children to grow into caring and contributing adults.

Curriculum

What is Emergent Curriculum?

- Emergent curriculum is a method of planning based on the observed interests of the children and interactions between teachers and children.
- Implementing an emergent curriculum requires observation, documentation, creativity and flexibility. Rather than starting with a structured plan, emergent curriculum begins with the children's interests.
- When staff observe an "emerging" interest, they use this information to begin planning relevant experiences to assist the children to explore their ideas. This thought process is known as "webbing" and is used because of its flexible nature as it does not restrict children's learning and focuses more on the possibilities of learning. As webs are based on the children's interests, they are constantly changed to reflect these interests.
- With staff continually observing each child's development and personal and social growth, individualized activities will be brought into the lesson plan. Children are able to bring to each activity, their own level of interest and development.

Program Statement

Kids' Stuff utilizes the professional learning resource guide, "*How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years*" to ensure high quality experiences that lead to positive outcomes in relation to children's learning, development, health and well being. Children between the ages of one and five do not learn because they are taught. They learn as a result of their own doing...through actions, relationships, inquiries, opportunities, and repetition. This knowledge is the foundation of our emergent curriculum. Our staff become research partners with children, seeking answers to questions and supporting investigation. Our centre is their laboratory, offering the materials and tools to inspire each child. At Kids' Stuff, our first and most important goal is to inspire delight, curiosity, and inquiry in the classroom. Doing so has been proven to build *intrinsic* motivation (coming from within the child) and a long-term love of learning. Kids' Stuff staff recognize children as competent and capable, curious and rich in potential.

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The following goals guide our programs and the approaches listed are samples of how these goals are implemented in the programs. (O. Reg. 137/15 46),

Goals:

- a) To promote the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of the children;
sample approach: By incorporating opportunities and time to practice self-help and self-care skills based on each child's capabilities throughout daily routines and activities.

- b) To support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents, child care providers and staff;
sample approach: By supporting relationships between children as they initiate, respond, collaborate, celebrate, and demonstrate care for others.

- c) To encourage the children to interact and communicate in a positive way and support their ability to self-regulate;
sample approach: By documenting children's communication to help them re-visit thoughts and ideas expressed in order to extend their understanding.

- d) To foster the children's exploration, play and inquiry;
sample approach: By continuously questioning and testing their theories and strategies and seeking new ideas to facilitate children's exploration and understanding of the world around them in meaningful ways.

- e) To provide child-initiated and adult-supported experiences;
sample approach: By providing a wide variety of interesting objects and open-ended materials for children to explore with their senses, manipulate and investigate and by participating with children as a co-investigator and co-planner, rather than as a director in a way that is separate and apart from the children.

- f) To plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development will be supported and which is inclusive of all children, including children with individualized support plans;
sample approach: By designing indoor and outdoor environments and experiences that spark curiosity, invite investigation and provide challenges that are responsive to individual capabilities to help children extend the boundaries of their learning.

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- g) To incorporate indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play, rest and quiet time, into the day, and give consideration to the individual needs of the children receiving child care;
sample approach: Designing environments that are attuned to children's varied sensitivities, arousal states, and need for maintaining calm, focused, and alert state.
- h) To foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children;
sample approach: By finding ways to intentionally integrate the unique perspectives and gifts of parents, caregivers and extended family throughout all elements of the program in a meaningful and authentic way.
- i) To involve local community partners and allow those partners to support the children, their families and staff;
sample approach: By working with families and community partners to ensure that environments and experiences provide equal learning experiences for all children by way of flexible program adaptations and providing special equipment and/or adaptive devices (as recommended by a regulated health professional)
- j) To support staff or others who interact with the children of Kids' Stuff in relation to continuous professional learning as per the *Staff Development and Training Policy*;
sample approach: By participating in professional learning and connecting with community partners to ensure the program fosters social and emotional well-being and resilience for children and families.
- k) To document and review the impact of the strategies set out in clauses (a) to (j) on the children and their families. This may be completed by, but is not limited to the following:

ASQs (Ages and Stages Questionnaire) (a,c,f,g,h,i)

Parent Surveys (a,b,h)

Learning Stories (a,b,c,d,e,f,g,h,j)

Program Plans and Implementation Documentation (a,b,c,d,e,f,g,h)

Meetings with Community Partners (a,b,c,f,g,h,l,j)

ISPs (Individual Support Plans) (a,b,c,d,f,g,h)

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Kids' Stuff shall ensure that the program statement is reviewed with families upon admission.

Kids' Stuff shall ensure that all new staff, students and volunteers review and sign off on the program statement prior to interacting with children and any time the program statement is modified. (O. Reg. 137/15 46 SS (4))

Kids' Stuff shall ensure that the approaches set out in its program statement are implemented in the operation of its programs at each childcare location it operates.

To ensure that the approaches set out in the program statement are implemented in the operation of the program (O. Reg. 137/15 46 SS 46 (5)), Kids' Stuff will complete regular *Program Statement Compliance Monitoring* on all programs.

Holiday Celebrations

In addition to reflecting the cultural lives of individual children, Kids' Stuff's approach to holidays also advocates anti-bias goals, including helping children feel good about themselves, and teaching about valuing similarities and differences. We encourage families to share their special rituals and traditions throughout the year. Each of us has something special to share, making our style of celebration unique. Your child and all of the children and staff will grow and benefit from this diversity.

Activities Off Premises

From time to time, field trips related to emerging interests may be planned. Parents will be notified in advance as to the details of the scheduled field trip excursion and written parental authorization forms will be distributed and must be signed and returned to the Centre in order for your child to participate. Parents are encouraged to accompany his/her child on field trips.

The children may go for walks in the local community (site specific). In this case an authorization form, in the registration package, acknowledges parental permission for a child to leave the premises for neighbourhood walks and visits to local parks.

During all trips and walks, the individual ratios of each program will be maintained or increased for all children.

Parental Involvement

The board and staff of Kids' Stuff are continually looking for volunteers to serve on committees and participate in activities. If you wish to get involved, please do not hesitate to contact the Director or a Program Supervisor. We can use your help!! After all, Kids' Stuff not only provides early learning and childcare but also supports family learning. Parents, who are able, are encouraged to participate in the childcare program. Visits during the day are welcome. One-way observation rooms/windows (McNaughton Ave. location only) are also available for you if you wish to observe your child's activities. Parent communication is facilitated through notes, conversation, e-mail, newsletters, and parent meetings and/or interviews.

Student Training

The childcare program will be used in partnership with community colleges and universities as a training and observation site for students. This is of benefit to our staff, families, and children, as students bring in new ideas and energy! All student placements will be posted, for your information. Students are required to have a current health assessment and criminal reference check specific to vulnerable populations prior to their placement. Students on placement are not included in our supervision ratios.

Staff Development and Training

Kids' Stuff is committed to providing the highest quality childcare through ongoing staff training and development. It is our belief that the quality of the program depends on staff having knowledge of current theory and practice in the early childhood profession. All Early Childhood Educators are registered with the Ontario College of ECE and trained in Infant/Child CPR and First Aid. Staff are involved in both in service and out of service training on a regular basis throughout the year.

Supervision of New Staff, Volunteers and Students

Kids' Stuff...the Family Learning Centre on the Thames has established practices that ensure all children enrolled in the centre will be effectively supervised at all times. It is the operator's responsibility in accordance with Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 to ensure that an adult supervises every child who is in attendance at a childcare location, at all times.

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Under no circumstance will direct unsupervised access be granted to anyone under the age of 18 years and who is not an employee of Kids' Stuff. Volunteers, Co-op students and Placement students will not be counted in staffing ratios. In addition, no member of staff will work independently until their competence and suitability has been established through periods of direct supervision and completion of internal competencies, unless otherwise approved by the Director. Kids' Stuff...the Family Learning Centre on the Thames is responsible for orientation procedures to help new staff, students and volunteers understand the operation of the program and the expectations of their position/placement/volunteer experience.

Partnerships

Kids' Stuff ...the Family Learning Centre on the Thames works collaboratively with parents and outside service providers to ensure that the needs of all children are met. With the consent of the parents, children may be referred to outside service providers should there be a need for additional support. Staff, parents and children all serve to benefit from the support and expertise of our community partners. Support workers, consultants and supervisors from LinCK as well as therapists from CTC are in our buildings quite frequently to support Kids' Stuff staff and children as well as provide consultation on our programs.

Hours of Service

All Kids' Stuff full day locations will be open from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Hours of service for school age programs is site specific and may vary according to the school bell times. Please contact individual sites for this information. The Victor Lauriston and Queen Elizabeth school age programs will operate on instructional days (school days) only, with the option of care at an alternate site for PA days, March break and summer care.

A late pick up fee of \$7.50 per child will be charged on each 15 minute period or portion thereof, after 5:30 p.m. (i.e. \$7.50 per child 5:31 - 5:45 p.m.; an additional \$7:50 per child 5:46 p.m. - 6:00 p.m., etc.)

Program Closures

Holiday Closures

Kids' Stuff will be closed on the following days. If the day falls on a weekend, an alternate date will be recognized in lieu. Actual dates will be posted well in advance.

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

Kids' Stuff is closed for two weeks over the Christmas holidays. (Closure dates will be consistent with the local School Boards). Any additional closures (one week in the summer, staff PD) will be posted well in advance.

Unforeseen Closures

Director, Supervisor and Staff will make every effort to notify parents when the centre has to shut down due to unforeseen reasons such as:

- Fire Evacuation
- Power Failure
- Heating System Failure
- Inclement Weather

Notification on the centre's voice mail message system and/or announcements on the local radio stations will be made where applicable.

Emergency Management

Kids' Stuff recognizes that clear policies and procedures will support all individuals to manage responses and responsibilities during an emergency, resulting in the safest outcomes possible. As such, Kids' Stuff has developed an ***Emergency Management*** policy and procedures.

In the event of an emergency, families will be contacted directly by telephone. Where applicable, information regarding the nature of the emergency and further instructions will be announced on local radio stations and the affected site's voice mail message system.

Registration

Kids' Stuff will make every effort to assist you in enrolling your child(ren) in the program. A completed registration, health including immunization, and an in case of emergency form must be completed and submitted for each child along with a registration fee, due upon commencement of care. An advance payment equivalent to one month's fees for each child will also be due upon commencement of care.

Childcare Registry/Waitlist Policy

Policy

Kids' Stuff is aware of the limited number of child care spaces in the community that it serves, as well as the potential for a long waiting period to gain access to childcare service. For this reason, Kids' Stuff has worked to develop a waitlist and admission policy and procedures that are transparent, fair and consistent. No family will be discriminated against on the basis of race, language, culture, sex, sexual orientation or extra needs.

Program Waitlist

Kids' Stuff provides service for children in the following programs:

- Infant: 3 months to 18 months
- Toddler: 18 months to 30 months
- Preschool: 30 months to 6 years
- JK/SK: 44 months to 7 years

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- Primary/Junior: 68 months to 13 years

(Some programs are site specific. Please call for further information.)

When a parent is interested in obtaining child care services at Kids' Stuff, the parents' name must first be placed on the Municipality of Chatham Kent Childcare Registry (www.Chatham-KentChildCare.ca). There is no fee charged to place a child on the waitlist. Kids' Stuff will refer to the municipal childcare registry when placing a child in the above age groups.

Waitlist Management Procedures

- Kids' Stuff will place new children when there are vacancies, according to the date of registration on the childcare registry, subject to the priorities listed below.
- Upon receiving notification of a new waitlist registrant, Kids' Stuff will contact the family, acknowledging their request for childcare.
- When a space becomes available, every effort is made to fill that opening promptly. Once a phone call has been placed, the family has 24 hours to respond before moving to the next family waiting. A space cannot be held if a family does not need care on it's opening, unless full fees are paid.
- Kids' Stuff will assist in keeping the registry current by contacting families on a regular basis to determine whether their childcare needs have changed. Once contacted, a family who fails to respond within 48 hours will retain priority on the waitlist, with notes made in their file. Once contacted a second time, a family who fails to respond to Kids' Stuff within 48 hours, will again retain priority on the waitlist and have notes made in their file. Kids' Stuff will make a third and final attempt to contact the family. If the family fails to respond to Kids' Stuff within 48 hours, we will assume the family's childcare needs have changed and they will be removed from the waitlist.
- In special circumstances, a family may be re-activated assuming their original registry date.
- It is the parent's responsibility to call or e-mail Kids' Stuff to communicate any changes to their contact information.
- A child's space on the waitlist is not transferrable to another family.

Waitlist Priority

Families will be offered a space based on the date they were placed on the waitlist subject to the following priorities:

- To promote the retention of Kids' Stuff staff, employees will be given first priority for childcare space.
- Families who currently have a child enrolled will be given second priority when placing siblings.
- Full time registration will be given third priority.

Waitlist priorities render the waitlist fluid. This means that a new child on the waitlist who qualifies as a priority, may move a child who was previously first, further down on the list.

For general inquiries including their status on the waitlist, parents may contact the childcare.

Planning Ahead

Communication is the key to positive interactions. At Kids' Stuff, we focus on working with each family, to provide loving, quality care for the time your child(ren) are away from their nurturing home environment. We want you to feel welcome and supported, and to talk with us openly, on a regular basis.

Our staff has been chosen for their commitment and love of children, as well as education, experience, and training. Attitudes of warmth, love, nurturing, and acceptance are encouraged and supported in our staff.

Introducing your child(ren) to child care may be a very new experience. Adjusting to the new environment and people, and establishing routines takes time and patience. Your child will accept the changes with a greater feeling of security and confidence if it is done gradually. Here are some suggestions:

- Talk about the childcare program with your child at home. Discuss the things he/she will be doing, the other children, etc.

- Bring your child in for a visit (if possible) before he/she comes for a full session. On the first day, plan on spending some time with your child, easing into the day.
- Say good-bye to your child. Keep it casual, and assure him/her that you will be back. **NO SNEAKING OFF!**
- Once you have said good-bye, it is best to leave. Tears or anger are short, and a few minutes after you leave, he/she will without a doubt be playing busily and happily with other children.

Let us support and help you through this transition. We are here for you, in working towards our common goal of providing quality care for your child(ren).

What to Bring - Day 1

- Change of clothing, please label (this can stay at the childcare).
- Outdoor clothing, appropriate for the season - we are outside every day!
- Diapering accessories for infants and toddlers
- Favourite toy, book, stuffy - please remember to label these
- Light weight blanket for sleep (may remain at the childcare, or come and go with your child)
- Extra pair of close-toed shoes for indoor wear only
- Non-aerosol sunscreen (this can stay at the childcare)

Parents are required to provide a complete change of clothing to be kept in their child's cubby at all times. Fostering independence and providing pride in achievement are enhanced when a child is able to manage his/her own clothing. Parents are required to provide clothing that facilitates easy toileting. The clothing provided must be washable, sturdy, not too tight, and closed toed shoes should have rubber soles to avoid slipping. All clothing should be clearly labeled with the child's name. Please send your child in play clothes.

Since we live in a varying climate, it is often impossible to predict the temperature changes when dressing a child early in the morning. Therefore, it is necessary for parents to provide appropriate clothing to accommodate weather changes and to allow

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staff to exercise their professional judgment and common sense when dressing the children for outdoor play. A child's health and comfort greatly depend on having proper clothing available.

Change of Information

Any changes or additions to the enrollment forms must be submitted to the childcare Program Supervisor, in writing, as soon as possible.

Arrival and Pick-up

For the safety of the children in the childcare, please ensure your car is not left running. Also, remember that **your child(ren) may not leave the building without your accompaniment.**

Young children depend on regular routines for their own sense of security. We recommend that parents establish regular work hours to pick-up and drop-off children, if possible.

When you arrive, please communicate your child's presence to the staff. Similarly, when picking up your child, be sure the staff are notified that your child is leaving. In addition, each parent is required to sign their child in and out each day. Forms are provided for this purpose.

Parents are responsible for their child(ren) prior to signing in and following signing out of a child. This precaution ensures that the child(ren) are well supervised at all times and are accompanied directly to the classroom and from the childcare. **UNLESS OTHERWISE ARRANGED, CHILDREN WILL NOT BE RELEASED TO ANY PERSON OTHER THAN THOSE SPECIFIED ON THE REGISTRATION FORMS.**

McNaughton Avenue location

Please park in the designated childcare spaces in the front of the building.

Winston Churchill Public School location

Please park in the designated childcare spaces at either the front or the north side of the building.

Gregory Drive Public School location

Please park in the designated childcare spaces along the east side of the building.

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Victor Lauriston Public School Location

Please use the school parking lot south of the building, accessible from Willomac Street.

Queen Elizabeth Public School Location

Please use the school parking lot in front of the building.

Safe Arrival and Dismissal Policy and Procedures

Purpose

This policy and the procedures within help support the safe arrival and dismissal of children receiving care.

This policy will provide staff, students and volunteers with a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities for ensuring the safe arrival and dismissal of children receiving care, including what steps are to be taken when a child does not arrive at the child care centre as expected, as well as steps to follow to ensure the safe dismissal of children.

This policy is intended to fulfill the obligations set out under Ontario Regulation 137/15 for policies and procedures regarding the safe arrival and dismissal of children in care.

Note: definitions for terms used throughout this policy are provided in a Glossary at the end of the document.

Policy

General

- Kids' Stuff...the Family Learning Centre on the Thames will ensure that any child receiving child care is only released to the child's parent/guardian or an individual that the parent/guardian has provided authorization the child care may release the child to.
- Kids' Stuff...the Family Learning Centre on the Thames will only dismiss children into the care of their parent/guardian or another authorized individual. The child care will not release any children from care without supervision.
- Where a child does not arrive in care as expected or is not picked up as expected, staff must follow the safe arrival and dismissal procedures set out below.

Additional Policy Statements

- Children will not be released from care without supervision.
- Children may only be released to individuals over the age of 16 years.
- Parent/guardians or authorized individuals, unknown to the childcare personnel will be required to provide picture identification.

Procedures

Accepting a child into care

1. When accepting a child into care at the time of drop-off, program staff in the room must:
 - greet the parent/guardian and child.
 - ask the parent/guardian how the child's evening/morning has been and if there are any changes to the child's pick-up procedure (i.e., someone other than the parent/guardian picking up). Where the parent/guardian has indicated that someone other than the child's parent/guardians will be picking up, the staff must confirm that the person is listed on the child's registration form (in SMART) or where the individual is not listed, ask the parent/guardian to provide authorization for pick-up.
 - document the change in pick-up procedure in the daily written record.
 - have the parent/guardian sign the child into care.
 - mark the child present on the classroom attendance record.

Where a child has not arrived in care as expected

1. Where a child does not arrive at the child care program and the parent/guardian has not communicated a change in drop-off (e.g., left a voice message or advised the closing staff at pick-up), the staff in the classroom must:
 - inform the supervisor or designate, who must commence contacting the child's parent/guardian no later than 9:30 a.m. Staff must contact parent/guardian at least once, and attempt to leave a message.
 - Should staff be unable to reach the parent/guardian to confirm the child's absence from care, an attempt to reach the emergency contacts listed on the child's registration form will then be made. Staff must contact at least once, and attempt to leave a message.

2. Once the child's absence has been confirmed, program staff shall document the child's absence on the attendance record and any additional information about the child's absence in the daily written record.

Releasing a child from care

1. The staff who is supervising the child at the time of pick-up shall only release the child to the child's parent/guardian or individual that the parent/guardian has provided documented authorization that the child care may release the child to. Where the staff does not know the individual picking up the child (i.e., parent/guardian or authorized individual),
 - confirm with another staff member that the individual picking up is the child's parent/guardian/authorized individual.
 - 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.

Where a child has not been picked up as expected (before the program closes)

1. Where a parent/guardian has previously communicated with the staff a specific time or timeframe that their child is to be picked up from care and the child has not been picked up within ½ hour, the supervisor, designate or available staff shall contact the parent/guardian by telephone or text message and advise that the child is still in care and has not been picked up.
 - Where the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian, staff must call again and leave a message for the parent/guardian. Where the individual picking up the child is an authorized individual and their contact information is available, the staff shall proceed with contacting the individual to confirm pick-up as per the parent/guardian's instructions or leave a voice message to contact the centre.
 - Where the staff has not heard back from the parent/guardian or authorized individual who was to pick up the child the staff shall contact emergency contacts listed on the child's registration form (in SMART), wait until the program closes and then refer to procedures under "where a child has not been picked up and program is closed".

Where a child has not been picked up and the centre is closed

1. Where a parent/guardian or authorized individual who was supposed to pick up a child from care and has not arrived by 5:30 p.m., staff shall ensure that the child is given a snack and activity, while they await their pick-up.

2. One staff shall stay with the child, while a second staff proceeds with calling the parent/guardian to advise that the child is still in care and inquire their pick-up time. In the case where the person picking up the child is an authorized individual, the staff shall contact the parent/guardian first and then proceed to contact the authorized individual responsible for pick-up if unable to reach the parent/guardian.
3. If the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian or authorized individual who was responsible for picking up the child, the staff shall begin contacting authorized emergency contacts listed on the child's registration form (in SMART).
4. Where the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian or any other authorized individual listed on the child's file by 7:00 p.m., the staff shall proceed with contacting the local Children's Aid Society (CAS) at 519-352-0440. Staff shall follow the CAS's direction with respect to next steps.

Dismissing a child from care without supervision procedures

Staff will only release children from care to the parent/guardian or other authorized adult. Under no circumstances will children be released from care to walk home alone.

Additional Procedures

The childcare should be informed by telephone, written or verbal message each and every time someone other than a parent/guardian will be picking up a child.

Glossary

Individual authorized to pick-up/authorized individual: a person that the parent/guardian has advised the child care program staff in writing can pick-up their child from care.

Licensee: The individual or corporation named on the license issued by the Ministry of Education responsible for the operation and management of the child care program.

Parent/guardian: A person having lawful custody of a child or a person who has demonstrated a settled intention to treat a child as a child of his or her family.

Your Child's Health

Outdoor Play

Except during inclement weather, the Child Care and Early Years Act requires that children in our care for more than 6 hours be taken out-of-doors for a minimum of two hours each day, throughout the year. Among many benefits, outdoor play is a time when children have the opportunity to develop and practice their large muscle skills, which are a very important part of a child's development. Children are expected to participate in all aspects of the program. Staff are not available to supervise any children indoors while their class is participating in outdoor play. Please ensure that your child has appropriate clothing for the weather.

Nutrition

The childcare provides a nutritious mid-day meal and morning and afternoon snacks. The menu is based on Canada's Food Guide and developed with input from the Public Health Unit. Menus are posted to assist with menu planning at home.

In the Infant areas, each child is on an individual schedule based on the parent's written instructions. Parents must provide food and formula for their child. Parents providing formula and/or food must label all containers with the child's name. The childcare will provide homogenized milk. When the child is capable of eating foods that are on the menu, food will also be supplied and adapted to the consistency necessary for the child's age/stage.

Allergies and Special Diets

Kids' Stuff... the Family Learning Centre recognizes children with food allergies or food restrictions. Minor substitutions to the menu can be accommodated. If the parent(s) prefer, they may provide alternate foods for their child. In addition, the childcare will supplement the child's snacks with allowable items from the menu. If a child has special dietary needs and the parent chooses to supply meals the Program Supervisor must be informed, in writing to arrange the necessary adjustment to the family's monthly child care bill. This rate only applies to children with food allergies or restrictions AND parents who are supplying alternate meals on all attended days. Parents and Program Supervisors will establish in advance an alternate menu plan, should a lunch or snack for an anaphylactic child be forgotten at home.

Cont'd

This will be comprised of groceries typically available at the childcare. The Program Supervisor will modify any previously arranged adjustments to the monthly bill.

In the case of a food restriction or allergy, details are posted in any areas occupied by the child's room, in the kitchen, and in other areas as required. Due to potentially life threatening anaphylactic reactions no foods other than those approved by the Program Supervisor or designate are permitted in the childcare. All food coming into the childcare must be labeled clearly with the child's name. Lunch pails and containers will be disinfected prior to being put in the refrigerator. Lunch pails will be kept in the refrigerator throughout the day to guarantee the food stays at a safe temperature and nutritional value is maintained.

Sleep Supervision

Kids' Stuff recognizes that the health and well being of a child is fundamental to their development. It is our duty of care to ensure that children are provided with a safe, well-supervised environment that meets the needs of comfort, rest, and relaxation. The *Safe Sleep Policy and Procedures* will be reviewed with parents and/or guardians of children who regularly sleep, upon registration in the program. Parents will be consulted with respect to a child's sleeping arrangements at this time and at any other appropriate time, such as transitions between rooms and upon a parent's request.

Health Policy

Illness

Our primary health goal is to provide a safe, clean, germ-free environment for our families at Kids' Stuff. A cooperative effort is the only way to ensure this goal. Please assist by complying with our health policies, telling us about health/safety issues that are of concern to you at Kids' Stuff, and by filling us in on new "environmentally friendly" concepts that we could adopt as well.

Cont'd

Illness

The following signs/symptoms may indicate a medical problem.

1. Profuse, thick, nasal discharge
2. Redness in and/or discharge from one or both eye or ear
3. Fever
4. Vomiting
5. Any type of rash
6. Loose, watery or frequent stools
7. Untreated pediculosis (head-lice)

For the protection and comfort of the ill child, and for the preventative care of the other children, if any of these medical concerns are discovered while your child is in our care, you may be notified immediately and your child may be isolated (with supervision) until you arrive to pick up your child. Should you receive a call that your child is ill, please be prepared to either pick them up immediately or make alternate arrangements to have them picked up.

Please call Kids' Stuff if your child is not coming in due to an illness. This will help us monitor the spread of illness to other children within the childcare.

Any communicable diseases will be appropriately posted. Children must meet guidelines provided by the Public Health Unit to return to group care at Kids' Stuff. Please note that in some situations a Doctor's note may be required in order to return to care. Upon return please be certain your child is able to participate in all aspects of the program, including outdoor play.

Parents are required to maintain their child's recommended immunization schedule. Please advise the Program Supervisor after any new immunization.

Medication

Medication will be administered ONLY under the following conditions:

All medications must be in the original container and the child's name clearly visible. Parents will provide a medication dispensing tool. Prescription medicines must go home at the end of the day.

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Medications will be stored in locked containers in the refrigerator or medication cupboard to be accessed by staff only. Medications will be administered by Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECE) only and must be authorized by written permission. Sign in forms are available in your child's classroom. Staff will not administer medications if they are not signed in completely or correctly.

Prescriptions that are not currently dated or medicines that have expired will not be administered. Long term sign in forms may be used only for prescription medicine that is necessary on an ongoing basis for recognized medical conditions.

Non-prescription medications will not be administered without written direction from a physician or health care practitioner.

Safety and Accident Prevention

While planning our physical environments, particular attention and priority was placed on designing a safe environment for the children, parents, and staff. However, no matter how much attention to safety is emphasized, accidents will happen. Where medical attention is required for a child, the parents(s) will be notified immediately.

The staff of Kids' Stuff have appropriate training in First Aid and C.P.R. (including infant and child artificial resuscitation, choking and C.P.R.) If the accident is less severe (i.e. bump, scrape, small cut) the injury will immediately be given the necessary medical attention, an injury report completed and the child monitored throughout the remainder of the day. The staff will inform the parent of the incident by one or more of the following means;

- a) telephone
- b) verbally upon pick up
- c) report

Any head injuries, which may pose a concern will be communicated immediately.

The staff at Kids' Stuff are continuously reassessing the facilities. Where improvements to the environment can be made to help reduce or prevent occurrences, Kids' Stuff will react. If you have any questions or recommendations regarding safety, please contact the Director or a Program Supervisor.

Operating Policies

Fees

Kids' Stuff...the Family Learning Centre on the Thames has enrolled in the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) agreement between the Province of Ontario and the Government of Canada.

We believe that child care provides a strong foundation for early childhood development and well-being of children while parents work and we are committed to providing child care services that meet the needs of your children and families. Participating in the CWELCC System will help us continue to provide high quality child care that is accessible, affordable, inclusive, and sustainable.

Families will see financial relief through reduced average parent fees every year, with \$10.00/day average for children 0-6 yrs. by September 2025. Please refer to the fee schedule insert for current rates and the rate reduction schedule.

Payment

Invoices will be issued during the first week of each month. All fees will be due upon receipt of invoice. Fees not paid by final due date (as noted on the invoice) may be subject to a overdue payment charge per month thereafter. Unpaid accounts risk the loss of childcare services.

Fees for emergency care must be paid for the days booked and on that day.

For your protection and ours, payment by e-transfer or cheque is requested.

Please do not leave payments with the program staff. In the case of the satellite school age programs payment may be left with the supervising RECE in the program.

NSF CHEQUES will be charged \$10.00 plus any late payment fee charges.

Receipts

Child Care tax receipts for fees received by December 31st (less the registration fee) will be issued by February 28th of the following year.

Subsidized Care

You may be eligible to apply for financial assistance for childcare fees.

1. When you apply for child care through the [Chatham-Kent Child Care and Supports Registry](#) check 'yes' for child care subsidy. (Only apply if a child care provider has confirmed that you have a spot at their centre, and have a start date.)
2. Create an account, or log in to your existing account, on the [Child Care and Early Years Portal](#).
3. Once signed into your account, click on the Child Care Fee Subsidy Application. This will launch the [online application form](#) for you to complete.

If approved, you will be invoiced according to your assessed contribution amount.

Transportation

Transportation to/from the childcare is the responsibility of the parent, although we will assist in coordinating arrangements where possible.

If your child is enrolled in a before or after school program, Kids' Stuff will accompany your child to/from the program.

Absenteeism

All absent days are payable if registered. For example, if your child is registered to attend Monday, Wednesday and Friday these days will be invoiced regardless of absenteeism.

Please contact Kids' Stuff prior to the child's expected time of arrival if your child is unable to attend. For your convenience voice mail is available.

Emergency Care

If a family's normal childcare arrangement fails, there *may* be extra spaces available on a daily/part day basis. The parent must first call and if an opening is available it can be reserved. To use this program, the child **MUST** be registered with the agency. There is a \$2.00 per day (\$1.00 per half day) premium charged for this service.

Part-time Use

Kids' Stuff offers Infant care at our McNaughton Ave. and Winston Churchill Public School locations only. No part-time infant spaces are available.

Part-time placement in the Toddler, Preschool, JK/SK and School Age programs may be available. All half-day programs include lunch. Half day = 7:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. or 12:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Enrollment on a "per schedule" basis may be considered on a temporary basis, should space be available.

Withdrawal Policy

The childcare Program Supervisor must be notified, in writing, a minimum of two weeks prior to the withdrawal of the child. If proper notice is not received, two weeks payment is required in lieu of notice. Any balance owing at the time of withdrawal will be deducted from the initial advance payment.

Parent Concerns

Definitions

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

Staff: Individual employed by the licensee (e.g. program room staff).

General

Parents/guardians are encouraged to take an active role in our child care centre 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.

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Issues/concerns may be brought forward verbally or in writing. Responses and outcomes will be provided verbally, or in writing upon request. The level of detail provided to the parent/guardian will respect and maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved

All issues and concerns raised by parents/guardians are taken seriously by Kids' Stuff and will be addressed. Every effort will be made to address and resolve issues and concerns to the satisfaction of all parties and as quickly as possible.

An initial response to an issue or concern will be provided to parents/guardians within 5 business day(s). The person who raised the issue/concern will be kept informed throughout the resolution process.

Investigations of issues and concerns will be fair, impartial and respectful to parties involved.

Confidentiality

Every issue and concern will be treated confidentially and 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. to the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities or a Children's Aid Society).

Conduct

Kids' Stuff 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 a Program Supervisor, the Director and/or licensee.

Procedures:

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

Nature of Issue or Concern	Steps for Parent and/or Guardian to Report Issue/Concern:	Steps for Staff and/or Licensee in responding to issue/concern:
	soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.	Provide a resolution or outcome to the parent(s)/ guardian(s) who raised the issue/concern.
Student/ Volunteer Related	Raise the issue or concern to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the staff responsible for supervising the volunteer or student OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the supervisor and/or licensee. *All issues or concerns about the conduct of students and/or volunteers that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the supervisor as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.	

Concerns about the Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a child

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.

Persons who become aware of such concerns are also responsible for reporting this information to CAS as per the "Duty to Report" requirement under the *Child and Family Services Act*.

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For more information, visit

<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childrensaidthereportingabuse/index.aspx>

Escalation of Issues or Concerns

Where parents/guardians are not satisfied with the response or outcome of an issue or concern, they may escalate the issue or concern verbally or in writing to the Kids' Stuff Board of Directors.

Issues/concerns related to compliance with requirements set out in the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* and Ontario Regulation 137/15 should be reported to the Ministry of Education's Child Care Quality Assurance and Licensing Branch.

Issues/concerns may also be reported to other relevant regulatory bodies (e.g. local public health department, police department, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Labour, fire department, College of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario College of Teachers, College of Social Workers etc.) where appropriate.

Contacts:

Ministry of Education, Licensed Child Care Help Desk: 1-877-510-5333 or childcare_ontario@ontario.ca

College of ECE: 1-888-961-8558 Ext. 224

Current contact information for the Kids' Stuff Board of Directors can be obtained by contacting the Executive Director at 519-351-5364 or at www.kidsstuffchildcare.com

Guiding Behaviour

Behaviour guidance should promote children's growing autonomy, promote cooperation and set and reinforce limits.

Procedures:

1. The schedules and routines are set to meet children's needs and understanding of time.
2. Physical space is clearly organized and defines what kinds of activities are permissible.
3. Play materials and activities are set up to engage children's active interest and participation.
4. Staff and other adults interact directly with the children as much of the time as possible.
5. Staff members provide opportunities for children to take part in activities that require helping, taking turns, talking to solve problems, and group work.
6. Staff members support children's independence in daily routines and activities such as toileting, eating, picking up toys, washing tables, and dressing.
7. Children are encouraged to solve problems by identifying them, thinking about alternatives, and making decisions. Staff involvement varies according to the development of the child.
8. The expectations for children are embedded in the environment and routines. Staff members anticipate problems and may be able to intervene before they happen.

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9. Staff members are consistent in following through when limitations are not met.

Positive redirection is a follow-through behaviour guidance strategy. (E.g. It's time to leave the blocks now. Would you like to paint or look at a book?)

Positive reinforcement is also used to reinforce a desired behaviour. (E.g. "I see you are waiting for your turn, thank you.")

10. Staff members will not use time-out (removing the child from the situation, leaving him or her alone), threats, or corporal punishment at any time.

Prohibited Practices

The following are prohibited practices under the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014:

- 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 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;

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- 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 a child of basic needs including food, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding; or
- f) inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

Licensing

Kids' Stuff...the Family Learning Centre on the Thames is licensed by the Ministry of Education and operates in compliance with the Child Care and Early Years Act and all applicable building, health and fire regulations.