



WALDORF

Toronto Waldorf School
since 1968

Toronto Waldorf School



Childcare Parent Handbook



HISTORY OF THE ORGANIZATION

The Toronto Waldorf School was established by visionary pioneers who recognized a great need for a school to inspire in children, *clarity of thinking, sensitivity of feeling* and *strength* to serve as a model for educational renewal in a rapidly changing world.

Francis Edmunds, an experience Waldorf teacher from England, gave his first lecture on Waldorf Education at the University of Toronto in 1957, inspiring a small group of enthusiastic participants to form a Waldorf Education Committee. They concentrated on the questions and quality of education and from 1959 onwards attended conferences annually at the Green Meadow Waldorf School in Spring Valley, New York.

By 1962, this visionary group, committed to having a Waldorf school in Canada, organized their first conference in Toronto with Mr. Edmunds returning annually to lecture. The Waldorf School Association of Ontario (WSAO) was formed, with the aim to explain and promote the ideals and principles of Waldorf education amongst educators and the general public. Three years later, 1965, a nursery school was purchased in Toronto and on September 3, 1968 the first Waldorf School in Canada, the *Toronto Waldorf School* opened.

Several years later, 1971, a generous gift of land was donated to the school, located north of the city where additional acres were purchased from a neighboring farmer, resulting in a good site to build a Waldorf school. Excavation began summer of 1972 and September 1973, five years later establishing the first Canadian Waldorf School, the *Toronto Waldorf School* moved to its current location on Bathurst Street. June of 1976, TWS celebrated its first Grade 8 graduation and hosted the AWSNA, (Association of Waldorf Schools of North America), summer conference.

Expanding into the High School in the academic year 1976-1977, accreditation from the Ontario Ministry of Education was required and by June 1980, the first Grade 12 class graduated. Funds were raised to add the arts and sports wing, which opened in 1991. That same year, the Village Market was founded onsite, a broad link to the community and continues every Saturday. TWS was accredited by AWSNA in 1999.

A new faculty of governance model was adopted September 2002, composed of the Chairs of the High School, Lower School and Early Childhood Faculties, Faculty chair and Administrative Coordinator, called the ‘Circle of Chairs’ to manage day to day administration of the school. After three years working with the ‘Circle of Chairs’ model, the Faculty of Chair became a full-time position beginning September 2006, with a second AWSNA accreditation completed that year. TWS is accredited by two organizations AWSNA and CAIS, Canadian Accredited Independent Schools.

TWS Childcare evolved from the ongoing Waldorf Nursery Programs, designed to meet the needs of children who were ready to experience *'home away from home.'* The Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 (CCEYA) legislation replaced the Day Nurseries Act, establishing new governing rules for child care in Ontario. So the previous Waldorf Nursery classrooms, Dandelion Room and Elderberry room, became licensed Preschool rooms October 2015 and in January 2017, TWS Childcare added a third licensed room called Rosebud, for toddlers.

Early Childhood Facilities at the Toronto Waldorf School are located on the ground floor, with close access to outdoor playgrounds and the wooded fields surrounding the school, where children can experience nature. Childcare programs offered at TWS are consistent with Waldorf principles and practices, supporting expecting, new and working parents.

PHILOSOPHY

To promote Education from a Deeper Perspective™, children at TWS are inspired to become creative thinkers who are strongly connected to humanity, nature and the environment.

Our programs nurture wonder and imagination in young children, building a strong base for future learning and development. Natural childhood experiences help to build core skills such as sequencing, sensory integration, eye-hand co-ordination, social skills and more.

- The warm, protective environment of the classrooms, creates a secure base for children to explore the broader world and cultivate positive self-perceptions.
- Our Early Childhood Educators focus on developing healthy sensory and social integration among the children.
- The Early Childhood programs prepare the foundation for academic learning in Lower School.

The foundations of education from a deeper perspective™ are:

1. The Right Thing at the Right Time

- TWS Childcare programs are designed to meet the specific needs children experienced at different stages of their development.
- Early Childhood Educators work on building a foundation to sustain a young child's physical, intellectual and social/emotional development.
- Ample time is given for free play, allowing children to engage their imaginations, natural interest at this age, for building a strong base in creative thinking.
- Free play also enables children to become comfortable in their bodies and further develop their large motor skills.

2. Appreciation of Individuality

- Each child has a unique learning style; our programs help children to access information through all the senses to encounter a wider range of learning styles.
- Puppet shows present both visual and auditory input, stimulating the child's imagination.
- Our programs present a full range of activities, indoors and outdoors each day to meet the needs of the individual child.

3. *How to Think, Not What to Think*

- The foundation in Early Childhood is important to prepare the basis out of which abstract thought and the development of the intellect can emerge. The preparatory work yields a strength for building intelligence throughout life and the power of abstract thought blossoms in High School years and beyond.
- The Early Childhood Educator's role is to support and provide children with a rich variety of experiences in the classroom and outside in nature. These experiences are allowed to live in the thoughts of children to bear fruit at later stages of development.
- The focus on free play and imagination helps children to easily create mental images which lead to creative thinking later and enhances their mobility of intellectual concepts

4. *Environmental Stewardship*

- Environment stewardship, is crucial to our children's future, beginning with a strong relationship with nature. The Early Childhood programs provide a profound opportunity for children to build a connection to nature that is lifelong and will lead to responsible environmental stewardship as adults.
- Children are encouraged to spend generous amounts of time outdoors every day, in varying weather.
- The TWS playgrounds and wooded fields in the wider campus offer experiences of the natural world in a protected setting.
- Cultivated gardens around the playground help to create opportunities for the children to appreciate and care for the natural landscape.

5. *Experiential Learning*

- TWS Early Childhood programs are pure experiential learning with the focus on doing; cities are built in the sandbox; treasures for the nature table are found on walks, dramas are enacted with simple costumes.
- Movement permeates the program from fine motor activities such as painting or bread making to large motor activities like running, jumping and climbing in the outdoors.
- Simple props and toys allow children to engage their imaginations and develop their capacities to support intelligence. A wooden play stand can become a ship, castle, restaurant or anything else the child brings into play. Natural materials such as driftwood or shells can be phones, plates or furniture.
- To support the children's capacity to consider and imagine evolves from the openness needed to develop solutions for creative thinkers in the future.

The learning environment of the Early Childhood programs, is intentionally and carefully crafted, to provide ideal educational context for children to develop the capacities to promote physical health, sense of well-being, academic success and social responsibility.

This document is provided to parents whose children are enrolled in our TWS Childcare and to those considering enrollment. It will be updated regularly; the current version will be available through our website at http://www.torontowaldorfschool.com/early_childhood/nursery/index.php#.VmOibr-Oyfw/.

The format of this document complies with requirements of the **Child Care Early Years Act 2014** (Ontario Ministry of Education) and its distribution is in compliance with Ontario Regulation 137/15.

DAILY PROGRAMS – SERVICES OFFERED

TWS Childcare welcomes the opportunity to nurture and support young children in our TWS Childcare programs. Children engage in a safe and supportive environment of warmth and care, in a range of developmentally age appropriate experiences, fostering healthy rhythms and sense of well-being. New families are warmly welcomed into our community to mutually support the children's growth and development. Each of the childcare programs strive to meet the children in age appropriate ways based on Rudolf Steiner's indications and philosophy of child development.

Our Childcare rooms have many elements similar to a home environment: a kitchen and table where food can be prepared and shared; places to play, both indoors and out, spaces beautifully labelled to keep indoor/outdoor clothes, a cozy sofa and comfortable chairs to snuggle in as needed. Full-day children have their own beds with warm blankets and pillows to nap or rest on. The room design is intended to support the transition young children make from home to school; familiar home-like spaces help the children to be calm and self-regulate as they transition.



The design of the classroom is aesthetically beautiful and welcoming. The walls are painted in swirls of soft pastel shades. Decorations are minimal, allowing the beautiful and natural materials in the room to exude warmth and provide pleasing sensorial experiences. Materials from nature abound: wooden play stands, soft pastel silk play cloths; pieces of wood that serve many purposes to the imagination of the child, a nature table or corner, puppets of silk and felted wool. Furniture is made of wood, and sized for the 1.5 – 4-year-old child, creating a solid and secure base from which children can experience, play and explore the world around them.

The classrooms extend further into the outdoors, where play areas for our TWS Childcare Programs are large enough for exploration and surrounded by nature. With lots of green spaces in a fenced playground the children play safely. Opportunity abounds for sensory play with sand, water and snow. The children practice gross motor skills rolling, climbing and sledding on the small hills alongside the playground. When

children see the Early Childhood Educators gardening or raking leaves, they too, want to participate in caring for the natural environment.

AGE CATEGORIES SERVED

Toddler (Rosebud)

Our toddler program is for ages 18 months to 2 ½ years old. Our ratio is 1:4 is provided during programming time.

Preschool (Dandelion & Elderberry)

Our two preschool programs are for ages 2 ½ to 5 years old. Our ratio is 1:6 is provided during the programming time.

TWS Childcare offers both half (in preschool only) and full-day programs in two, three or five day blocks for children aged 1.5 – 4 years.

- The half-day program runs from 8:30 am to noon and includes a morning snack each day
- The full-day program runs from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm including morning and afternoon snack and a nutritious lunch
- *All* children may be dropped off as early as 8 am; formal programming begins at 8:30 am.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Days and Hours of Operation

Our general hours of operation are from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm with some exceptions.

We will not be in operation on the following statutory/civic holidays:

HOLIDAYS OBSERVED

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

TWS Childcare is open all year round with the exception for the last week of August, one week in December and 3 Professional Days. One professional development day December 22, 2017, one day in February 2018 and one day in March 2018.

TWS Childcare offers a 50-week schedule. Dates can be seen on the TWS school calendars at this link: <http://www.torontowaldorfschool.com/calendar/index.php> Dates relating to school operation and closure are labelled “Essential dates” on the calendar and are marked by a red apple graphic 🍏.

- The specific dates for each of these non-school days are posted on the website calendar at the beginning of each academic year (September). A listing of these dates is distributed to each family at the beginning of the school year.

FEES

Fees for Services:

Enrollment Information with fees, dates and times is available on the Toronto Waldorf School website: <http://www.torontowaldorfschool.com/admissions/fees/index.php#.Vip7aivSi34>

ADMISSIONS

Admission Process

1. Submit an Application

- A application is available to [Download](#) on our Website
- The complete package is then return to Katie Ketchum, Admissions Director
- Enclose the application fee (non-refundable) - \$125 for Childcare (waived when on the waitlist)

2. Admissions Interview

Parents and Early Childhood Educator will have the opportunity to meet prior to acceptance of application. Following acceptance in the program, parents are contacted and when application is received, a contract will be made.

3. Sign the Contract

- Upon acceptance, the Admissions Office will produce a contract.
- Review of the contract and payment options.
- Parents are required to pay their first and last month before they start.
- Two to three weeks is the normal return deadline for new contracts rolling contracts.

Payment Options

Fees in the form of monthly pre-authorization payment will be debited. Parents have billing option to pay for their fees either the 1st or the 15th of the month.

NSF

If any payments are returned from the bank (i.e. NSF) the parent will be charged \$40 processing fee to cover the bank charges.

Refunds

Fees will **not** be refunded for Statutory or Civic Holidays or any absent days due to vacation or illness.

WAITLIST

Families may be added to a waitlist due to limited availability in the program and are accepted into the program on first-come, first-served basis. Please click to link below to access our Waitlist Policy for more information. (Priority is given to siblings and transfers from other Waldorf Childcare). Please click on link below to view our waitlist policy for more information.

DISCHARGE POLICY

TWS Childcare makes every effort to serve all the children and their families. We work collaboratively with parents, staff and various community support organizations to meet the individual needs of each child.

A written notice for permanent discharging of care is to be provided by the parent and must be given two month in advance. If notice is not received, full program fees will be charged.

It is our policy to assist children and parents to make any behaviour changes that requires the support of staff, administration and/or outside agencies necessary for the health, well-being and safety of the child. Assistance will be made to find appropriate solutions to resolve the issues. Support and guidance through this process will be provided by the Supervisor and the Early Childhood Faculty. Parents are actively involved throughout the decisions making process.

In the event a child is experiencing challenges that may pose a direct threat to the safety of self and others, the parent/guardian may be required to withdraw the child from the program.

The following procedure will be followed when a child's behaviour is an issue:

1. The initial interview will be an informal meeting between the parent(s) and teacher. At this meeting, the parent(s) will be informed of the child's social behaviour(s).
2. Support of a medical practitioner or the Therapeutic Circle may be requested by the Supervisor and Early Childhood Educator (parental consent required).

In most cases, the above steps will be sufficient. If not, the following course of action will be followed:

1. Written notice for a conference to take place with members of the EC Faculty, Supervisor and/or Early Childhood Educator. An action plan will be developed so that all parties are consistent with the strategies that need to be put in place. The type of supports needed will be determined at the time.
2. The parent may be asked to provide 'on-call' support or removal of the child from the classroom when safety is questioned. An action plan will be developed in order to plan for the child to return to the program.
3. Should the child's needs be deemed by the Supervisor, EC Executive or the parent to be beyond the expertise of the staff, recommendation will be made in writing for the parent(s) to withdraw their child and to enroll the child in an alternate facility where his/her needs may be addressed.

4. Whenever possible, the parent/guardian will be given sufficient notice to make alternate arrangements. However, in the event that a child's individual needs or behaviour pose a serious threat to the safety of self or others the parent may be required to immediately withdraw the child from the school at the Administrator's written request.

ACTIVITIES OFF THE PREMISES

TWS Childcare children remain on Toronto Waldorf School grounds where they have ready access to the many riches of nature on the TWS campus, including the enclosed licensed Childcare playground, and the wooded fields for nature walks. Families must fill out a Field Trip Permission form in order for their children to visit the wider campus.

OUR STAFF

The developing relationship between children and Early Childhood Educators is important to support the child's need to feel safe and secure. Our Early Childhood Educators view young children as competent and capable, engaging in age appropriate activities supporting their growth and learning development. With the view children's work is learning through exploration and play, they are fully supported, to be competent, engaging in activities full of wonder and imagination. Their curiosity leads them to explore, learn and develop their rich potential.

Our Early Childhood Educators support the children's important learning experiences with warm, loving and positive aspects of involvement they cultivate in their daily working routine; be it sweeping the floor, folding laundry, working with children to prepare snack, or building a bridge on the floor with the child. The consistency of this warm, gentle presence helps the child to feel secure to reach out and connect with others.

This warm and positive demeanour extends to parents and families. Early Childhood Educators welcome and encourage the engagement of parents and want to learn about the family's culture and values, and how the child is supported by the family.

Our Early Childhood Educators are required to complete the following prior to hiring:

- Record of Qualification (including proof of credentials/training)
- Proof of Registration with the College of Early Childhood Educators (If applicable)
- Waldorf Teacher Education Certification (or in process)
- Current Health Assessment and Immunization Records
- Clear Response to a current Police Vulnerable Sector Check (PVSC)
- Standard First Aid & Infant/Child CPR Training (If applicable)
- Sign, date, review and acknowledge TSW Childcare Policies (Reviewed Annually) including, but not limited to:
 - Legislative Policies
 - Prohibited Practices
 - Sanitary Practices

- Children's Medical and Individualized Plans

Supply Staff

When our permanent Early Childhood Educator are absent, supply staff are employed to meet the same requirements as the Educators they are replacing.

SUPERVISION OF VOLUNTEERS AND STUDENTS

Volunteer and Students

Volunteers and students are expected to meet the same criteria as our Early Childhood Educators, although they may not have the same credentials. They take direction from Registered Early Childhood Educator, RECE and all staff at TWS Childcare. Students enrolled in Early Childhood Education or Waldorf Early Years Training courses only will be accepted to complete placement at TWS Childcare.

In respect of volunteers and students, O. Reg. 262 under the CCEYA (2.9 Supervision of Volunteer and Students) provides that:

- Only staff will have direct unsupervised access to children.
- Every volunteer or student is supervised by a staff and is not permitted to be alone with any child receiving care.
- Volunteers or students shall review all policies, procedures and individualized plans with the supervisor or designate, prior to interacting with the children at TWS Childcare.
- Our registered Early Childhood Educators RECE, are designated to mentor and orient volunteers and students in the classrooms
- Volunteers and students may not be counted in the staffing ratios.
- No child is supervised by a person under 18 years of age.

Each student or volunteer will receive a tour and orientation before commencing placement or volunteering at TWS Childcare. This orientation will be carried out by the supervisor or designate. At this time students and volunteers will receive a copy of the parent handbook or be asked to visit the TWS Childcare website where this manual is posted. During the orientation, a full review of policies, procedures and individualized plans are outlined and a record of is kept with date of each review conducted.

PARENTS ISSUES AND CONCERNS

At TWS Childcare our staff is responsible for working with families to resolve issues and concerns in a prompt, respectful and transparent manner. Understanding parent involvement is essential to the provision of childcare and partnership between parents and staff is important to the development of each child. Should an issue or concern arise, relating to the care of a child and/or the operation of the program it becomes the individual and collective responsibility of those involved to take action. The goal is to resolve concerns supporting individuals to be able to work together with a sense of fairness, respect comfort and clarity about what is expected and acceptable.



Toronto Waldorf School Childcare

Parents Issues and Concerns

Policy:

- All issues and concerns raised by parents at TWS Childcare are taken seriously and will be addressed. Every effort will be made to address and resolve issues and concerns to the satisfaction of all parties and as quickly as possible.
- Parents are encouraged to bring forward concerns, either verbally or in writing. Responses and outcomes will be communicated verbally, or in writing upon request. Responses provided must respect and maintain confidentiality of all parties involved.
- An initial response to each concern will be provided to parents within two (2) business days. Formalized steps will be taken to attempt to satisfactorily resolve the concern and parents will be kept informed throughout the resolution process.
- When a concern is expressed, efforts are made to address the concern in a fair, respectful and impartial way.

STEPS FOR PARENTS REPORTING ISSUES AND CONCERNS:

Parents who have issues and concerns can address the appropriate individual, according to the nature of their concerns:

Issues and concerns regarding their child's **classroom or program** should be raised with;

- The classroom staff directly or
- The supervisor or supervisor designate, if classroom staff are not able to successfully address concerns.

These concerns can involve, but are not limited to the following:

- Daily schedules
- Sleep arrangements
- Toilet training
- Indoor and outdoor program activities
- Feed arrangements
- Child conflicts

Issues and concerns regarding **general operation of TWS Childcare** should be raised with

- The supervisor or supervisor designate directly or
- If the supervisor or supervisor designate has not been able to successfully address concerns.

These concerns can involve, but are not limited to the following:

- Child care fees
- Staffing
- Waiting lists
- Menus

Issues and concerns regarding **staff or supervisor or supervisor designate conduct** should be raised

- Directly with individual involved or if resolution is not found

- With the Pedagogical Administrator or the Director of Finance and Administration.

Issues and concerns regarding the **conduct of students or volunteers** should be raised with

- The staff directly involved in supervising the individual or
- The supervisor or supervisor designate
- All issues or concerns about the conduct of staff, students or volunteers that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the supervisor as soon as parents become aware of the situation.

REPORTING ABUSE OR SUSPECTED ABUSE:

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 expresses concern 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 Children's Aid Society, (CAS) as per "Duty to Report" requirement under the *Child and Family Service Act*.

STEPS FOR STAFF RESPONDING TO ISSUES AND CONCERNS:

All staff will take the following steps to respond to parent concerns:

- Address the issue or concern at the time it is raised or arrange meeting with parents within five (5) business days.

Document concerns in detail including:

- Date and time the concern was reported
- Name of person who received and/or reported the concern
- Details of the concern and any steps taken to resolve the issue and/or information provided to the parent regarding next steps

Provide contact information for the appropriate person if the person being notified is unable to address the matter.

Ensure the investigation of the issue is initiated by the appropriate person within two (2) business days or as soon as reasonably possible thereafter. (Document reasons for delay, in writing).

Provide a resolution or outcome to the parent who raised the concern either verbally or in writing if requested. Written responses may be provided either in letter format or through electronic communication. Written communication with respect to concerns should include all parties involved in the resolution process where appropriate, and unless there is a risk of a breach confidentiality.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

Every issue and concern will be treated confidentially and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of those involved, unless information must be disclosed for legal reasons (e.g. to the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educator, law enforcement authorities or Children's Aid Society).

CONDUCT

TWS Childcare maintains high standards for positive interaction, communication and role-modeling for children. Harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated from any party. If at any time a parent or staff feels uncomfortable, threatened, abused or belittled conversation will immediately end and report the situation to the supervisor or supervisor designate.

ESCALATION OF ISSUES OR CONCERNS

Where parent are not satisfied with the response or outcome of a concern, they may escalate the issue verbally or in writing to:

Helene Gross, Pedagogical Administrator

hgross@torontowaldorfschool.com

905 881-1611 ext. 334

Or

Angelo Zaccheo

azaccheo@torontowaldorfschool.com

905 881-1611 ext. 323

Issues or concerns related to compliance with requirement set out in the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 (CCEYA) and Ontario Regulation 137/15 should be reported to the Ministry of Education's Child Care Quality Assurance and Licensing Branch:

Ministry of Education, Licensing Child Care Help Desk

childcare_ontario@ontario.ca

1-877-510-5333

Issues/concerns may be reported to other relevant regulatory bodies (local public health department, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Labour, Fire Department, College of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario College of Teachers, College of Social Worker etc.) where appropriate.

PROGRAM STATEMENT

TWS Childcare Program Statement is provided to current and prospective parents of the children in our care, describing goals used and how approaches are implemented in our programs. The Program Statement reflects the view of children as being competent capable, curious and rich in potential and is consistent with the Minister's policy statement on programming and pedagogy of the Child Care Early Years Act 2014, (CCEYA). It is used for guiding childcare and early years programs and services in developing their programs and services and is reviewed annually for this purpose.

TWS Childcare Program Statement supports continuous learning from the documents:

- **HDLH: How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy in the Early Years**
- **Think, Feel, Act: Lessons from Research About Young Children**

HDLH is a common provincial framework from professional learning resources, focusing on knowledge from research, theory and practice on the importance of early years child development. The program-

related requirements from Ontario Regulation 137/15 align with HDLH and is used as a guide in our Childcare to put our goals and approaches into practice aligning with our philosophy. It is intended to strengthen the quality of the programs we offer and the experiences that lead to positive outcomes in relation to children's learning development, health and well-being.

TWS Childcare Programs carry a view of the *whole* child, body, mind and spirit. This holistic perspective is reflected in the goals and approaches used in our programs. TWS Childcare Program Statement informs parents, families, staff, volunteers, students and others what we are striving to achieve as goals and how actions are put into practice in the following (A-K) goals

- (A) Promoting the Health, Safety, Nutrition and Well-being of the Child
- (B) Supporting Positive and Responsive interactions among the children, parents, child care providers and staff
- (C) Encourage children to interact and communicate in a positive way and support their ability to self-regulate
- (D) Foster children's exploration, play and inquiry
- (E) Provide child initiated and adult-supported experiences
- (F) Plan for and create a positive learning environment in which each child's learning and development will be supported
- (G) Incorporate indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play, rest, and quiet time, into the day, and give consideration to the unique needs of the children receiving child care
- (H) Foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children
- (I) Involve local community partners and allow those partners to support the children, their families, and staff
- (J) Support staff or others who interact with children in relation to continuous professional learning
- (K) Document and review the impact of strategies on children and their families

(A) Promoting the Health, Safety, Nutrition and Well-being of the Child

Goal:

Every child is a capable, curious and competent learner and can develop resilience, when provided with healthy food, nutrition and a sense of well-being in a loving, warm, nurturing and safe environment.

(B) Supporting Positive and Responsive interactions among the children, parents, childcare providers and staff

Goals:

Every child has a sense of belonging when they are connected to others in loving and secure relationships. Each child is encouraged to share, work together, care for each other and respect the needs of others in positive and interactive relationships in the classroom. Early Childhood Educators respect and regard the children positively to help them become capable communicators. Creating close familial interactions with parents, children and educators, strong connections are made to build the bridge between home and classroom for the child.

(C) Encourage children to interact and communicate in a positive way and support their ability to self-regulate

Goals:

Every child is an active and engaged learner who explores the world with their body, mind and senses, in different ways. Child initiated and creative play are encouraged in the classroom to help the children feel secure as they learn to trust, explore, interact and communicate in a positive way with the support of their Early Childhood Educators. Each child's individual needs are considered and respected in the rhythm of the day, supporting their needs and ability to self-regulate at their own pace.

(D) Foster children's exploration, play and inquiry

Goals:

Everything in a young child's environment has an impact on them inwardly and outwardly. Through play, exploration and inquiry children develop a curiosity about the world they live in and where they belong. Creative play enhances physical, emotional and social well-being allowing children to learn through investigation, exploration and discovery. Parents are encouraged to engage with the Childcare Programs and initiate meaningful, positive communication with Early Childhood Educators to support their children as curious learners.

(E) Provide child initiated and adult-supported experiences

Goal:

Children are encouraged to create their own learning situations in child-initiated and creative play enhancing their social, emotional cognitive and physical skills. Early Childhood Educators facilitate their learning experiences with patience and care to help the children become motivated and independent learners.

(F) Plan for and create a positive learning environment in which each child's learning and development will be supported

Goal:

The environment is a key factor in supporting children's development, learning experiences and because the environment is impressionable to the young child, the use of natural materials in the environment fosters a connection to the natural world, developing in the child an appreciation, awe and wonder for nature and the world they live in.

(G) Incorporate indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play, rest, and quiet time, into the day, and give consideration to the unique needs of the children receiving childcare

Goal:

The physical space, both indoor and outdoor, reflects a home-like environment where children can identify with a regular routine for active play, rest and quiet time. The rhythm of the day includes outdoor play twice daily; morning and afternoon, allowing for physical movement in the natural outdoors. Early Childhood Educators support regular rhythm and patterns of activities in the classroom to support the children physical, emotional, social and cognitive developmental needs.

(H) Foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children

Goal:

Parents and Early Childhood Educators share ongoing communication to support each other about observations of the children at home and in the classroom. The partnership between parents and Early Childhood Educators help support the child's sense of security and well-being, contributing to the development of positive, authentic and caring relationships. This bond serves to support the child's developmental needs.

(I) Involve local community partners and allow those partners to support the children, their families, and staff

Goal:

Early Childhood Educators support both children and their families through cultural events year round and have interest with local community partners. Early Childhood Educators encourage families to feel a sense of belonging and connection with their local communities.

(J) Support staff or others who interact with children in relation to continuous professional learning

Goal:

The role of the Early Childhood Educators is to be conscious and responsible to provide nurturing, warm and secure environments for the children to develop and grow holistically. Early Childhood Educators meet regularly to review their work and the children's development; attend lectures and continuing professional development workshops and trainings, have study groups and offer parent/teacher gatherings that support and update their knowledge of the health, safety and well-being of the children in their care.

(K) Document and review the impact of strategies on children and their families

Goal:

Observation of the whole child is an important part of understanding each child's development. Early Childhood Educators have interviews with parents to share observations of the children's development; record children's activities which are communicated daily to parents and weekly letters are sent via email of the program activities. At parent's/teachers gatherings, child development are openly discussed to reflect on the children's milestones of accomplishment.

PROHIBITED PRACTICES

When it is necessary to discipline a child for challenging behaviours, teachers use measures that are developmentally-appropriate for the 1.5 – 4-year-old child. This will often include drawing the child closer to the proximity of the Early Childhood Educator, or perhaps holding the child's hand. A child struggling with self-regulation may feel calmer sitting closer to the Early Childhood Educator. Distraction or redirection to another task, the particular child would find interesting can be used. Verbal cues are

gentle, and often may not be necessary. However if used, they focus on desirable, positive behaviours; for example, the teacher may say in calm, gentle and quiet voice “We keep our hands down”.

The following practices are prohibited in the Childcare rooms in accordance with Ontario Regulations 137/15

- Corporal punishment of the child
- Physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a high chair, car seat stroller or other device for the purposes of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting himself, herself or someone else and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent.
- Locking the exits of the Childcare centre 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.
- Deliberate 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/her self-respect, dignity or self-worth.
- Depriving the child of basic needs, including: food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing, bedding or comfort
- Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

The consequences of engaging in a prohibited policy are outlined in the TWS Childcare Serious Occurrence Policy.

SERIOUS OCCURRENCE POLICY

Toronto Waldorf School Childcare is in compliance with the Ministry of Education requirements to post a Serious Occurrence Notification Form at the child care centre. The Serious Occurrence Notification Form will be posted within the timelines of the Ministry requirements and will maintain the confidentiality of the parties involved. For detailed information about the policies, please consult with the Supervisor.

REPORTING ABUSE OR SUSPECTED ABUSE

You are obligated by law to report suspicions and information that a child is suffering or may have suffered abuse to a Children’s Aid Society. If there is reasonable grounds to suspect abuse or neglect a CAS member can be contacted at 905 895-2318.

EMERGENCY CLOSURES

Emergency Evacuation

In the event of an emergency, parents will be contacted via telephone and email . If we are unable to contact parents, the name given as an emergency contact will be called. In the event of an emergency evacuation procedure, the TWS Childcare will each go to the their designated emergency evacuation point:

**Hesperus Village
#1 Hesperus Road
Thornhill, ON L4J 4G9
905 764-0840**

Snow Days

When school is closed due to inclement weather conditions all other events in the school scheduled that day are cancelled as well. A 'snow day' decision is not made lightly, knowing the difficulty parents face to find proper childcare for their children on such short notice. We understand the impact school closures have on families where both parents are working outside the home. However it is a safety concern for children, parents and staff when driving may become risky and a 'snow day' is announced.

This process involves a team of widely dispersed staff conferring to make a decision by 6:20 am. A comprehensive communications plan is put into action: all parents and staff are sent an email regarding the closure; our website homepage is updated; the school's main phone number recording is changed; and we contact CBC, CFRB and 680 News to include the information in their 'closures report' in the mornings. The 'snow day' decision is not taken lightly, and is only taken when predicted road conditions at the beginning and/or the end of the day make driving especially risky.

Even when buses are running and school is open, we always want families to make their own decision on whether the roads conditions are safe enough to transport their children to school. Our decision to close school certainly factors the safety of parents and children driving to school, but also, the safety of our faculty and staff, many of whom drive from quite long distances. If the school is open, our faculty and staff are almost all needed. Our substitution pool is small and unpredictable on any given day, and so the options are quite limited if those who live farther away are unable to make it to school or decide under the circumstances it is too risky to drive and we were open with limited staff, we would not be able to operate in any semblance of what we believe appropriate for our students and the normal expectations at TWS Childcare.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

The purpose of our Emergency Management Procedures is to provide clear direction for staff at TWS Childcare to follow and deal with emergency situations. The procedures set out steps for staff to follow to support the safety and well-being of everyone involved including children with

special medical needs. It sets out safe and appropriate off-site meeting place in case of evacuation to ensure children's safety and maintain appropriate levels of supervision.

In the event of an emergency, parents will be contacted via telephone and/or email . If we are unable to contact parents, the name given as an emergency contact will be called.

Procedures outlined are:

- Communications with parents in the case of emergency
- Contacting appropriate local emergency response agencies
- Recovery from an emergency situation
- Debriefing staff, children and parents after emergency
- Supporting children and staff should they experience distress during an emergency.

The intent of this provision is to have in place procedures for staff to follow to ensure the safety of children and staff in the event in the event of an emergency. Please click on link below to view emergency evacuation procedures.

FIRE DRILL & CODE CARDINALS

Fire drills are conducted monthly and Code Cardinal drills are conducted quarterly in accordance with the guidelines set out by the *Fire Protection and Prevention Act 1997* and Ontario Regulations 213/07 (Fire Code). Children are assured of their safety and handled with care. Fire Drills are not always announced and a complete evacuation of the building is required, therefore it is necessary for the children to have footwear on at all times.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES PROCEDURES

When arriving with your child to begin the day with us, please **ensure that an early childhood educator is aware of your arrival and acknowledges child's arrival before parent departs. Children must never be left alone in a room unsupervised.**

At the end of day, we assume responsibility of the children, **until parent arrives to pick up their child and has made contact and communicated with staff about child's departure.** In the case a child's departure was not communicated and the child is not in the Childcare, playground and time of departure was not recorded, the police will be called to report a missing child.

Arrival and departure times are critical transition times for children and parents. The separation anxiety your child may be experiencing will lessened over time as your child becomes more confident and accustomed to the new environment, rhythm of the day and our Early Childhood Educators.

RELEASING A CHILD

TWS Childcare will not release a child to anyone other than the person or persons authorized by parents listed on the application form. If you are unable to pick up your child and have alternate arrangements, please contact the Childcare supervisor prior to departure time. A description of that person will be required and they will be asked to show identification when arriving to pick up a child. We will not release a child to anyone who is not on the authorized pick-up person list. You may add or delete people from this list at any time, but for the safety and security of your child, please do so in person and not by telephone.

It is the policy of TWS Childcare to uphold family law. Therefore, we are obliged to release a child to either parent unless we have a copy of Custody papers on file. In the event of one parent not being allowed to pick up a child, please inform the office immediately and the appropriate documentation and instructions for pick up will be given to the Childcare staff.

Late Pick-Up Fee Policy

We acknowledge that occasional, unforeseen circumstances may occur causing parents to arrive after closing time. Late fee charge will be applied and parents will be billed according to their lateness. Our Late fee is designed to encourage parents to arrive on time, as is not intended to be utilized as an extended hours of operation option.

In case of Late Pickups, the following will apply:

- There is a late charge fee of \$1 per minute.
- Please call or email Supervisor/designate before 6pm @ 905 881-1611 ext. 316 and leave message or email rmustapha-rutledge@torontowaldorfschool.com
- Waiting for a parent when the other children have left can create stress and anxiety for your child. Please ensure children are picked up on time.
- Each time you are late you will be charged the LATE FEE.

In the event of a late pick up without advance notice from the parent the following Emergency Procedure will be followed:

6:00pm	Staff will call parent
6:15pm	Staff will call emergency contact (if parents cannot be reached)
7:00pm	Staff will call the Children's Aid Society and notify the police (if parents and emergency contacts cannot be reached)

ILLNESS

Should your child be ill with a contagious condition or fever, it is recommended they stay at home to recuperate and return when they are able to participate in all areas of the program including outdoor playtime.

If your child becomes ill while attending a program (for example: bouts of vomiting or diarrhea within a short time), they will be cared for until arrangements for pickup have been made. You will be asked to pick up your child within one hour. Please ensure that your emergency contact information is updated including all phone numbers.

According to guidelines set by York Public Health, designed to protect all children, your child must be kept home when any of the following occur:

- Fever, diarrhea, Scabies, Pneumonia
- Pink Eye, Ringworm, Strep Throat, Norwalk
- Impetigo, vomiting
- Chicken Pox/Measles/Mumps/Whooping Cough/Rubella

TWS Childcare follow the guidelines set out by York Public Health regarding procedures for all communicable diseases that may arise periodically.

Please call to let us know if your child will late or absent for any reason, including illness, as it will allow the program to continue with the planned activities and Early Childcare Educators to be notified of your child's absence.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION

TWS Childcare will administer drugs and medications in accordance with CCEYA regulations. Prescription and non-prescription drugs and medications requested by a parent for short-term will be administered and stored accordingly.

Written parental authorization is required for all administration of drugs and medication. The Administration of Medication and Administration of Non-Medication Products form is available from the Early Childcare Educators and parents are required to fill it out and sign form before any medication is to be administered to a child.

Medication must be in the original container and clearly labeled with child's name as supplied by pharmacist with the name of the medication, the amount of medication to be administered, the time medication is to be given and expiry date. Medication accompanied by a Doctor's note should clearly state the child's name, name of medication, when it should be given and for duration period. Be assured that medication is stored in a locked box out of reach of children at all times or refrigerated if required.

NUTRITION

TWS Childcare is a *Nut-Aware* environment.

Children staying full days are served a healthy, mostly organic, vegetarian lunches catered by a sister organization "Hesperus." Children are served daily, two healthy snacks, morning and afternoon, and a

nutritious hot meal for lunch. Menus are posted outside classroom on the bulletin board. Lunch menus are rotated every three weeks throughout the year and reviewed as needed to meet the appetites and dietary restrictions of the children.

For the safety of the children with allergies, **we do not allow children to bring food of any type** to the Childcare.

REST TIME POLICY

All children in attendance will have a rest period after their noon meal. Early Childhood Educators will sit with the children, sing, or comfort them as need until they fall asleep to ensure a rich sleep experience. Children who are not sleeping will have a quiet rest time so the sleeping children are not disrupted..

Cots and sheets are provided by TWS Childcare. Bedding is washed weekly at the Childcare or more often if needed.

LEGISLATED POLICES

TWS Childcare requires all staff, volunteers and students to review all required legislated policies and procedures listed below, supporting the delivery of the TWS Childcare programs and to be aware of their roles and responsibilities to provide for the health, safety and well-being of the children receiving care. The policies outlined are kept and can be located in each classroom and are accessible to parents at any time:

- Playground Safety Policy
- Anaphylactic Policy
- Sanitary Practices Policy
- Sleep Supervision Policy
- Serious Occurrence Policy
- Medication Policy
- Supervision of Volunteers and Students Policy
- Program Statement Implementation Policy
- Staff Training and Development Policy
- Criminal Reference Check/Vulnerable Sector Check Policy
- Fire Safety/Evacuation Procedures
- Process for Monitoring Compliance and Contraventions
- Waiting List Policy
- Parent Issues and Concerns Policies and Procedures
- Emergency Management Policies and Procedures

PARENT HANDBOOK

TWS Childcare Parent Handbook supports transparent communication with parents and families about the services we offer, sharing the expectations of our programs. It is available free of charge to any parents considering or entering into an agreement for the provision of childcare or at any time when it is modified. Our Parent Handbook shall include, a copy of the TWS Childcare policies and procedures required under Ontario Regulations *{(O. Reg. 137/15, ss. 45(1) (a.2))}* regarding how parents' issues and concerns will be addressed. Please click on link below to view our parents' issues and concerns policy for more information.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parents and our Early Childhood Educators together support the growth and development of the children at TWS Childcare. Parents are encouraged to volunteer, fundraise, attend parent evenings, Community Council (parent association), lectures, festivals and celebrations.

Parent Evenings held through the year, provide an opportunity to discuss parenting issues and challenges, and explore the Waldorf approach to raising young children. These are an integral part of the program and one or both parents are invited to attend.

TWS Childcare programs requires an annual contractual commitment. The admissions process includes an individual meeting with the teacher

Parents who have consciously chosen to support this type of education for their children will find consistency and harmony in their children's growth.

Getting involved is another way to learn about the philosophy and beliefs behind Waldorf Education. These elements are critical in the developing community, the life of the TWS Childcare and the ground work for future involvement in the grade school.