

INCLUSION POLICY

At Child's Paradise Day Care Centre we believe that children have the right to attend the childcare centre of their choice and the parents are integral to a successful integration process into childcare. We will make every attempt possible to be responsive to the needs of the children and families within our community. Like all children, children with special needs are welcomed into our Programs and we feel that including children of varying needs and abilities enhances the entire childcare experience for all children, parents and caregivers. Children learn the uniqueness and individuality of people and learn to understand and accept that others. Our staff are dedicated to being collaborative and flexible in their approach to caring for and supporting all children to develop to their maximum potential. We believe in forming partnerships with families and outside service providers to find ways to include and meet the developmental needs of all children and remove barriers that prevent children from actively participating in our Programs.

According to the Canadian Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, "All individuals must be treated equally, regardless of their race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability. The Canadian Human Rights Act also states "employers and service providers are required to accommodate special needs, including those of people with disabilities, short of undue hardship".

Children with special needs require child care for the same reasons as all children:

- to grow, develop and learn
- friendship building and social inclusion
- parental employment, training, respite and support.

("Children with special needs: the need for child care," Fact Sheet, SpecialLink: The National Centre for Child Care Inclusion and "What do we mean by inclusion?" Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, Fact Sheet)

Definition of 'special needs':

The Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA) defines children with special needs as, "children who, due to emotional, familial, physical, behavioural, developmental, cognitive, communicative or emotional factors, are at risk of not maximizing their potential. 'Special needs' encompasses children who require support and assistance with daily living, whether formally diagnosed or not and whether a diagnosis is short or long term in nature."

Current research has determined that approximately 10% of children will require some level of additional support to ensure they can participate fully in community-based child care programs. These "special needs" can vary dramatically, from physical disability to intellectual delays, from social and behavioural challenges, to communication difficulties.

Disabilities may be visible or invisible; children may be born with them, or they may emerge later on; the cause may be known or unknown. Special needs can change over time with just about every child having extra support needs at some point in their childhood (Child and Family Canada, Fact Sheet #18).

Procedures:

Human Resources: All staff of Child's Paradise Day Care Centre understand and agree to support inclusive practices as outlined in the Inclusion Policy

Training: All staff attend special needs-focused training opportunities on effective inclusive programming whenever possible.

Programming: The staff adapt the environment and routines as necessary to meet the needs of the children enrolled. The staff develop flexible programming that can be adapted as needed

Confidentiality: All staff have signed confidentiality agreements upon hiring. Staff are aware that they will receive and have access to confidential information about children and families and they agree to keep this information in strict confidence.

Partnerships: Child's Paradise Day Care Centre will work collaboratively with parents and outside service providers to ensure that the needs of the children are met. We will, with the consent of the parents, refer children to outside service providers when we feel, or the parents feel, that a child may require additional support.

Admission/Registration: All families interested in registering their child are dealt with in a fair and equitable manner

Transitions: Children with special needs may require extra support when transitioning to a new age group. It is preferred that children move to the next age group as their same-age peers

Withdrawal: If the Centre is having difficulties meeting the child's needs, we will ensure that:

- All families asked to withdraw are dealt with in a fair and equitable manner
- The notice of withdrawal is consistent with the Withdrawal Policy of the Centre and is the same for all families
- Reasonable care has been taken in assessing the child's needs and the Program's ability to support those needs
- Special needs resources and outside agency support have been exhausted prior to the Notice of Withdrawal

Special Facilities:

Child's Paradise Day Care Centre is wheelchair accessible and has wheelchair accessible toilet facilities. When a child requires assistance with personal care, it will be done in a private and dignified manner. Where possible, we adapt resources in our Program Rooms and will move furniture to create a positive safe environment and ensure all areas are accessible for all children.