



SCHOOL AGE AND OUTDOOR PROGRAM PARENT HANDBOOK

School Age 6yrs+ & Outdoor Programs

We welcome you to our centers -

First Steps Early School Age/Outdoor Program

Program Statement

First Steps is committed to following the “How Does Learning Happen” document, Ontario’s pedagogy for the early years, 2014. The Child Care Early Years Act 2014(CCEYA) focuses on strengthening childcare programs and ensuring high quality care and experiences for children. The CCEYA is governed by the Ministry of Education, who issue policy statements regarding programming and pedagogy for the purpose of guiding licensee’s and their staff within childcare and early year’s programs.

The “How Does Learning Happen” document is a living and breathing resource, which is reviewed annually by the licensee, staff and volunteers of First Steps. It is rich in pedagogical focus, indicating that the pedagogy is not prescriptive to any specific curriculum, but offers the opportunity to challenge the status quo, and investigate how learning happens for children.

Our Staff are dedicated to supporting each child’s learning, health, development and well-being through responsive, caring, and compassionate guidance. We focus on active learning, exploration, expressional play and inquiry. We welcome, acknowledge and respect all children as individuals; rich in potential, capable, curious, active participants in all areas of our program. We understand and embrace the importance of family. When a child starts their journey with us, the whole family becomes connected, and a new relationship builds between our homes.

“I am not a teacher, but an awakener” Robert Frost.

“I do not teach anyone; I only provide the environment in which they learn” Albert Einstein.

The "How Does Learning Happen" document emphasizes four fundamental pillars essential for the growth, flourishing, and thriving of children. In the initial years of a child's life, the brain undergoes remarkable development, significantly shaped by the early experiences they encounter with people and their environment. Research from various disciplines indicates that children thrive in settings where adults exhibit care and responsiveness. Primary nurturing and learning opportunities are provided at home, with early years programs serving a crucial complementary role in supporting children's development, learning, health, and well-being.

The four foundations: **Belonging, Well-Being, Engagement, and Expression**. These foundations are a vision for all children’s future potential while with us at First Steps The foundations exist regardless of age, ability, culture, language, geography, or setting. Children naturally seek out these conditions for themselves. However, with our knowledge and understanding, we can provide a pathway for which each individual child can walk at their own pace and encounter their “First Steps” in our exemplary program.

Approaches to Support Belonging

We strive to help every individual who enters our environment feel like they belong, that they have a place in our surroundings and that they will feel welcomed, valued and respected. We provide the opportunity for connectedness to others and encourage children, staff, and parents to make contributions as part of a group. As each child joins us, it is not only the child who is welcomed into our little community, but the whole family. This inclusive spirit is visible in our center, where photos, celebrated achievements, and educational documentation abound. Documentation is used as a tool for educators to delve into the cognitive processes and learning patterns of children, offering insights and fostering dialogue among all community members—educators, children, their peers, and families. It serves as both a learning resource and a catalyst for meaningful conversations, enhancing our collective journey of discovery.



We pride ourselves on the relationships we form with the children in our care and their families new and old. We gain relevant, background family knowledge which enables us to have a better understanding and form a platform on which for us to build upon.

Each child has their own private space within our room. Each of these cubbies has the child's photo displayed on the front, and they know that this is their spot, where they can place pictures and personal items. Family photos are displayed around the rooms and are in easy reach if required by the children.

It is important for our families, and staff to feel their presence and voice is of relevance. Our staff liaises with families daily, and we work very closely in a partnership to provide time and opportunities to be available for any questions or concerns that they may have. Our staff maintain a positive, respectful, professional relationship with all. As a team, we collaborate on a regular basis where each member feels they can make an important contribution to our team. We guide and support each other, as well as working diligently to constantly improve on our knowledge, by attending the many professional development opportunities First Steps offers its staff. After attending any professional development, the staff are invited to share their new knowledge with the rest of the team during staff meetings and general meeting times. We discuss learnt new strategies and ideas taken from professional development, any documentation and handouts are gathered, reviewed and utilized by all staff. Staff can reflect on this information by using the reference file for professional development located in the office. We also offer this knowledge to our families during a family information/gathering event, or through our daily interactions.

“What we instill in our children will be the foundation upon which they build their future” –Steve Maraboli.

Approaches to Support Well-Being

It is our goal to support a sense of self, health, and well-being for every individual who is part of First Steps. We provide healthy meals and snacks prepared by our in-house experienced cook. Family style dining is

promoted, where staff members sit with the children, encourage good food practise, and awareness. Ample opportunity and time are given to work on self-help, and self-care skills within a positive environment that is responsive to children's needs. Families are often invited to come and join us for celebration lunches and share family recipes from their own cultural backgrounds.

We aim to foster environments where children can enjoy active, outdoor play in natural settings, balancing safety with the benefits of reasonable risk-taking. We ensure every child, especially those under our care for more than six hours a day, gets at least two hours of outdoor time. Our programs are designed to challenge children in ways that are meaningful and appropriate to their individual capabilities. In addition to promoting physical activity both indoors and outdoors, we emphasize the importance of good health and well-being practices, with our educators serving as positive role models. Recognizing the significance of rest, we provide safe resting spaces for all children, along with quiet activities for those who do not nap, carefully documenting and communicating sleep patterns to parents.

To highlight the value of health care, we engage with local businesses and invite professionals to share their expertise on self-care and health, enriching our community connections and extending learning opportunities beyond our center.



Self-care skills and self-regulation can prove to be challenging, we are proud of our mentoring techniques and strategies which have been put in place, our goal is to role model, teach and encourage these lifelong required skills. We guide children to deal effectively with the daily stresses they face and help them learn the skills to recover from them in a calm and focused manner. When children can use this approach, they become better equipped to modulate their emotions, attention spans, and ignore distractions. They learn to understand that there are consequences for their

actions and become aware of how others may feel or think. Our educators contribute and aid this learning by providing an environment with limited room for these stressors to arise. We build trusted relationships and gain an understanding and knowledge of children's ability and efforts to self-regulate; we are attuned with the children and develop the skill to anticipate individual's cues, arousal states, and responses to various stressors. We offer strategies which help calm and focus, and we are compassionate to everyone.

Our aim is to keep everyone's health and well-being a top priority. Upon hiring, all staff members are requested to read and adhere to our Health and Safety binder and. When each child/family starts their journey with us, they are presented with a parent package. Within this package we offer a parent handbook which provides valuable information regarding our daycare, also there will be a collection of in-depth forms to be completed and returned to us, providing ALL relevant information about each child. Before attendance commences, every staff member will read and understand the personal information regarding our new family member and their family. We understand and are compassionate that each child may have allergies some of which may even be life threatening. Policies and procedures are put in place to ensure optimum safety. We work closely together with our families so information can be shared at any given time regarding the child's health and well-being.

Our Families, Staff and children's health and well-being is of high priority and vital for life's long journey.

“Nurturing yourself is not selfish – it’s essential to your survival and well-being” Renee Peterson Trudeau.

Approaches to Support Engagement

“Engagement” refers to a state of being genuinely involved and interested in what one is doing. Children express this through engaged play and inquiry; as well as active, creative, meaningful experiences provided in positive environments. A child’s natural curiosity allows them to explore with their bodies, minds and senses; therefore, stimulating them to ask questions, solve problems, test theories, engage in creative thinking, and make sense of their world. We strive to achieve this with the children in our care.

We as educators and co-learners demonstrate interest and involvement with the children in our care; children are more likely to participate and engage in complex, lengthy time periods of play when educators welcome and value their contributions and ideas to the classroom and group. We collaborate, offering support when investigating new ideas, questions and “bumps in the road” rather than acting as the expert. This encourages the children to become involved and engaged in creative problem solving, discovery and shared thinking. As educators, our attitudes are very important when fostering children’s engagement. We fully believe and allow each child to participate and have the right to do so by using inclusive approaches and creating the environment and experiences that are meaningful and engaging. We are also mindful when creating such environments of our children who may have individualized plans. Knowing that children learn by repetition, our staff maintain daily routines and set clear limits, thus helping children to internalize positive strategies and promote the individual development of each child’s self-help, and self-regulation skills. Children also learn by cause and effect. From these actions, and from other reactions, staff respond by reasonably discussing the situation with the child/children and redirecting by offering alternative words or behaviours that will encourage the children to express themselves in a more positive, and calm manner. Corporal punishments, the use of verbal or emotional threats, shaming or name-calling are never used in our program and are responses that will not be tolerated.



We strongly feel that the children’s environment is a critical component in the quality of their exploration and play. We provide nurturing, and inviting indoor and outdoor spaces, with quality furnishings, materials, and staff that spend careful time planning and preparing the programs environment. Our staff make sure the classroom flows to ensure equitable learning opportunities and participation for all. The children will have the choice to engage in rich, well equipped and interesting open-ended play, which has a no rush emphases. This creates and supports an understanding of concepts associated with literacy and numeracy, encourages engagement with others, and helps the children to collaborate, negotiate, communicate ideas,

feelings and experiences. The staff are guided by the children through play, what inspires them, what their interests are, and feed from this to further their own knowledge and understanding as well as the child’s. Every child is valued; every child is heard and respected.



Our large natural outdoor space provides ample opportunities for our children to explore and investigate with their bodies and minds; physically and mentally. Our educators play a huge roll indoors and outdoors, thinking carefully when asking and answering questions, offering exploratory questions and answers. We are passionate, interested, and engaged co-learners providing a space for each child in our care to express themselves within their encounters with their environment, other people and the natural world around them.

“Quality is never accident; it is the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skillful execution, it represents the wise choice of many alternatives” – Willa A Foster.

Approaches to Support Expression

At First Steps, our aim is for each child to become a confident communicator, adept at expressing themselves in various forms. We encourage communication, expression, and connection, recognizing the diverse languages and modes children use to communicate. We honor every child's voice, background, and culture, incorporating books and signs in multiple languages and inviting families to share their culinary traditions, languages, and cultures.

Our engagement with the community enriches our understanding of the world. Conversations, even with toddlers, foster connection, enhance social and language skills, and stimulate cognitive development. We view all children as capable communicators, engaging in responsive "serve and return" interactions, which are crucial for brain development and learning. Through authentic conversations, we validate children's attempts to communicate, promoting a culture of sharing and respect. This approach extends to interactions with families, colleagues, and visitors, emphasizing meaningful communication across our community.

Creative expression is a key mode of communication. We encourage children to explore diverse artistic materials, engage in music, movement, and dramatic play, fostering emotional, cognitive, and physical development. Our approach uses a variety of resources to promote creativity, problem-solving, and critical

thinking. Through play, children explore language and literacy, with open-ended materials enhancing imaginative and symbolic play. Elements like signs, props, books, and songs support literacy, expression, and cognitive growth. We document interactions to deepen children's understanding, offering guidance to enhance communication skills. By providing time and space, we ensure children have the freedom to express themselves fully.

Closing Statement

At First Steps, our passion for children and their learning is tailored to each child in our care. Our environment is designed to be welcoming, safe, and rich with opportunities, allowing each child's unique talents and interests to thrive. We value strong partnerships with families, encouraging them to share their cultures, languages, and experiences, enhancing the diversity and richness of our program. We take pride in ensuring all children can attend and benefit from the high-quality childcare experiences we offer. Children and their families are offered support if required through inclusion support services and agencies such as: Canadian Mental Health Association, Kids Ability, Speech and Language Pathology, Family and Children Services. Our anti-bias approach fosters respect for diversity and inclusivity, preparing children to engage positively in diverse social environments.

The four foundations of learning – well-being, engagement, expression and belonging – will be documented and regularly reviewed through comprehensive observations, assessments and family feedback to ensure they are effectively meeting the needs of children and their families in our care.

Our team consists of qualified Early Childhood Educators and passionate staff, all of whom are well-versed in child development, the Child Care Early Years Act, and Ontario's early years pedagogy. We prioritize professional development and continuous program evaluation to uphold our standards of care.

As an equal opportunity employer, we ensure a safe and inclusive workplace for all staff, aligning with health and safety regulations. It is our responsibility to be the benchmark in effectively managing and communicating our program regarding health and safety, whilst maintaining compliance with the Ontario Occupation Health and Safety Act and related regulations. Thus, all staff are expected to read, understand, and embrace our health and safety handbook, complete the health and safety training booklet and sign and acknowledge all of First Steps ELC policies and procedures. Our staff are also required to be certified Standard First Aid responders and provide First Steps with a valid original police vulnerable sector check (PVSC). Our human resource binder is readily available for all our employees to read and digest.

We believe that together in connectedness with children, parents, staff, volunteers, and our community we offer a program rich in high quality, providing the necessary tools for every individual to grow and flourish under the blanket of First Steps Early Learning Center.

About Us

First Steps School Age is fully licensed and inspected by the Ministry of Education and adheres to all standards detailed in the Child Care Early Years Act 2014 (CCEYA).

We are licensed to care for children as follows:

First Steps School Age (7654 Conservation Rd) - 6 – 12 years

- Before and after school care September – June
- Full day care for PD Day days, March Break and Christmas Break
- Summer break camp June - September

First Steps Outdoor Program (7654 Conservation Rd) – 30 months – 5 years

- September – June (except for non-instructional UGDSB school days and breaks – PD days, March Break, Winter break)

First Steps School Age is closed on ALL statutory holidays (all are listed in this handbook). Surveys are presented to families over summer and Christmas to ascertain our family's childcare requirements. If it is deemed that no families require care, then the licensee will decide whether to close operation over the holiday periods. Full and part time care is available.

History and Background

Our doors first opened on Hwy #24 in 2001, starting with 10-15 children. As our reputation and intake of children grew, also with the requirement of high-quality childcare being prevalent in our community, we moved our location to 205 Speedvale Avenue. After several very successful, happy years there, we outgrew this site, and relocated to 81 Speedvale Ave, followed by 390 Speedvale Ave and 55 Delhi St. As time passed, we continued to grow and moved to our school age program to 7654 Conservation Rd which provides us with bountiful, endless outdoor space. This location also provided us to expand our toddler/preschool capacity welcome 26 new toddler and preschool aged children to our First Steps community.

For over 20 + years we have, with great pleasure served the families in our community, we continue, and will strive to provide our high-quality programs for many years to come.

Philosophy

At First Steps, our philosophy is as Emergent as our curriculum; our approach to teaching is tailored to each child in our care and the staff members are highly in tune with each student's individual needs and capabilities.

We endeavor to create an environment that is welcoming, warm and safe incorporating our educational philosophy that is student centered and constructivist using self-directed experiential learning in relationship driven environments. This will allow each individual child's unique abilities and interests to flourish. The warm atmosphere and loving staff at our center encourage the children to freely express their ideas and to learn at their own pace through carefully constructed hands-on active learning opportunities. Our *curriculum* develops as the children in each of our programs develops, emerging readily from their interests and ideas; in one moment we may be fully engrossed in learning about frogs and in the next we

may focus on the changing of seasons. The projects that the children and teachers collaboratively explore are always diverse and exciting and encourage the development of the whole child.

At First Steps we strive not only to be a child centered program, but to be family centered as well. We aim to create strong partnerships with parents and caregivers, and encourage them to share their culture, language and experiences with our center. We believe that families are an integral part of our team and the superb relationships we build with them are reflected in the richness of the programming.

Program Description

At First Steps School Age (7654 Conservation Rd.), we can accommodate 45 children ages 6 – 12. Our mixed aged grouping allows for us to care for a limited number kindergarten age children. These children are not eligible for CWELCC fee reduction as this program is not enrolled in CWELCC.

We can accommodate 16 preschool age children during the hours of 9:00am – 2:45pm, September to June on all days except for UGDSB PD days, March Break, Christmas Break and all other non instructional UGDSB school days.

First Steps ELC incorporates the “How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s pedagogy for the early years, this is a professional learning resource that we are guided by.

Within this document four foundations of development are focused upon: Belonging, Well-being, Engagement and Expression. We strive to ensure optimal opportunities for each child in our care to reach their full potential. We are very proud of our program statement (attached) within this statement all our goals and approaches are clearly visible. Our program is of a very high standard and displayed in this statement and outlined is how First Steps ELC lives and breathes what is written with passion, commitment and devotion.

Ratios

Toddlers: 15 months – 30 months require 1 adult to 5 toddlers

Preschoolers: 30 months – 6 years require 1 adult to 8 preschoolers

Kindergarten: 44 months – 68 months – 1 adult to 13 children

Primary/Junior 68 months – 12 years – 1 adult to 15 children

Junior School age: 9 years – 12years – 1 adult to 20 children

* Note: We follow a 2/3 ratio at beginning and end of day as advised by the Ministry of Education

Inclusive Practices

Our Programs at First Steps take pride in ensuring *all* children can attend and benefit from our high-quality childcare experiences. Children and their families are offered support through the County of Wellington Child Care Subsidy office, Inclusion Support Services and agencies such as Canadian Mental Health Association, Kids Ability, Speech and Language Pathology, Family and Children Services etc. In our inclusive setting, all children learn about respect for differences, new forms of communication, empathy, friendship and solidarity across difference. We believe inclusion begins at an early age and leads to a better inclusion for all citizens later in life.

Anti-bias Philosophy

At First Steps, we demonstrate an ongoing commitment to integrate an anti-bias approach into every aspect of our program. We live in a diverse world where interactions happen between children and adults different from each other. We promote the skills to identify and respect these differences, by interacting with others in a culturally and social diverse environment. A proactive approach is demonstrated and encouraged to reduce prejudice and promote inclusiveness. We commit to practice the value of diversity in a way the children can developmentally understand, we welcome and embrace cultural and structural interests of all our families.

We acknowledge that our programs, playing and learning takes place on the ancestral and traditional territory of the Mississauga's of the Credit First Nation of the Anishinabek Peoples.

Professional Childcare Staff

At First Steps, the teaching staff are qualified Registered Early Childhood Educators or equivalent. We employ staff with a background knowledge, passion and understanding for childcare; all prospective staff members are carefully chosen. They are knowledgeable regarding aspects of caring for young children, including child development. Each staff member is in understanding of the Child Care Early Years Act (CCEYA 2014) and the "How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the early years. www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare. Our staff have many opportunities to further their knowledge by attending professional development workshops, seminars, and conference's. The staff meet as a collective throughout the year. We encourage you to communicate daily with your child's teachers to ensure consistency, awareness and building of relationships. Vulnerable Sector Police Check, references, standard first aid certificate, and Immunization records are completed prior to our staff working at the Centre. In-depth interviews will be held, and orientation dates are mandated.

Our Licensee, Tammy Hayes RECE, BAA has been in the childcare field for over 36 years and has a wealth of knowledge, experience and understanding pertaining to this important foundation for children's early childhood learning. The licensee is responsible for overseeing the daily operations of the center and is available alongside the assistant supervisor, to assist you with matters concerning your child/family.

Volunteers/Students/Guests

Co-op students/volunteers/guests will be an active part of our program. Students/volunteers may come from varying levels of education and will be closely supervised by the staff. Interviews, vulnerable sector police check and Immunization records are completed prior to our volunteers/students working at the Centre.

Policy – Supervision of Volunteers and Students

First Steps has been privileged to have several students and volunteers choose to have their placement experiences within our learning environment. We have set aside the following policies and procedures to ensure the safety and adequate supervision of the children within our care.

- No child will ever be supervised by anyone under the age of 18.
- Only employees of First Steps Daycare (Guelph) Inc will have direct unsupervised access to the children - children will not be left in the supervision of a student or volunteer alone, there will ALWAYS be a staff member in ratio supervising the student or volunteer.
- Students and volunteers will NOT be counted in ratio, only staff members can be counted when calculating ratios.

- The licensee shall ensure that all students and volunteers have read, understood and signed the policy and procedure binder also read and adhere to our program statement, prior to being in the classroom with the children and staff members. Each student or volunteer will have a staff member designated to them, that staff member is directly responsible for supervising the student or volunteer and ensuring that they are NEVER left alone with the children. The member of staff acts as a mentor, guiding and educating within the day-to-day experiences at our center. In the absence of the designated staff member the RECE with the most seniority within the classroom will be responsible for supervising the student or volunteer.

Student Responsibilities

High school students are not responsible for diapering or toileting of children. High school students can supervise washroom routine with their mentor present. High school students are not to transport children (up/downstairs) without being supervised or watched by their designated staff member. College Students may be responsible for diapering or toileting children however must be supervised by their designated staff member (co-operating teacher); they may also supervise the washroom routine. College students are not to transport children (up/downstairs) without being supervised or watched by their designated staff member.

Volunteer Responsibilities

Volunteers are not responsible for diapering or toileting children. Volunteers may not be used to transport children (up/downstairs) without being supervised or watched by their designated staff member. This policy is to be reviewed prior to students or volunteers being in the classroom. Also, to be reviewed annually by all staff members.

Other Visitors/Trades Etc.

The safety of the children in our care is paramount. Our center has an electronic keypad system with a private code which is only given to clients and staff members. Only scheduled appointments with outside individuals will be granted entry into the building. We ask you to co-operate with us in maintaining a secure environment for the children in our care, by being aware of anyone who enters the building with you, and request that if an unknown person to you is requiring entry, please have them ring the bell.

Keypad codes are changed randomly, to assist safety measures.

First Steps, has an “open door” policy which invites parents of enrolled children to visit, observe or participate within our program at their convenience, we just ask you check ahead of time due to scheduling etc. Often, prospective clients will attend a scheduled tour of our facility, to minimize disruption and to respect the safety and space of the existing children in our care, these visits are arranged and carried out by the licensee or the assistant supervisor.

Parents

The quality of our program depends largely on the dedication and professionalism of our teaching staff, but also with the relationships that are formed with our clients. Positive parent-teacher partnership is instrumental to successful childcare experiences; we promote and demonstrate respectful interactions between staff and parents. Daily contact between us is a vital component of maintaining our high-quality

program. Information received between parents and staff will only be used for childcare purposes and is fully confidential.

To ensure high standards of fairness to all children, confidentiality between parents and staff, and to maintain professional ethics, staff employed in any capacity by First Steps may not enter into any caretaking arrangement for any enrolled family outside of the center.

First Steps offers many opportunities for parents to be involved in the program, i.e.:

- Family BBQ (an annual event every summer, where we may have a children's entertainer, face painting, Zumba dance lesson, bouncy castle, to mention a few. Good food and conversation, a great way to relax with the family, chat with other clients and meet new clients. All family/extended family members welcome)
- Fund raising events
- Bring your talent to the center (if you play an instrument, or have a specialized profession/expertise, we would love for you to come and share it with us)
- Parent assistance on field trips (with a up to date PVSC)
- Thanksgiving luncheon (an annual event where we entertain you/extended family with a delicious home cooked hearty meal for you to enjoy with your children. At this time, we make a donation to a local charity, donations from families are greatly appreciated)
- Christmas get together (sing-a-long, mince pies, cookies and maybe a special visitor)
- Every Christmas we adopt a family in our community, we are provided with items on their wish lists, the children and staff head out to purchase these items together. Cash donations are always greatly received.

Licensing and Inspections

First Steps School Age is fully licensed and inspected annually by the county of Wellington (operating criteria) and the Ministry of Education and adheres to all standards detailed in the Child Care Early Years Act 2014 (CCEYA).

First Steps is regularly inspected and abides by all the regulations required by the Guelph Fire Department, as well as Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Health Unit. Public Health's annual report is widely available on their website: www.wdgpUBLICHEALTH.ca

Operating Criteria

First Steps is supported and guided by the County of Wellington Child Care Services. The Child Care Services has developed The Operating Criteria document of which is to measure quality in childcare programs that have or wish to have a Service Agreement for fee subsidy and for wage subsidy with the County of Wellington. The Operating Criteria is a program evaluation tool that helps to distribute public childcare funding in a fair way that prioritizes high quality practices. Programs are required to meet the standards of quality that are defined in the Child Care Program Operating Criteria. Yearly inspections take place.

Positive Guidance and Direction

At First Steps, we model, encourage and implement the following positive guidance and direction strategies:

CHILDREN ARE IN THE PROCESS OF LEARNING ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

- It takes individuals many years to learn appropriate ways to express strong emotions and interact appropriately with others. Young children are just beginning to learn these difficult personal and social skills. Knowing that young children learn by repetition, teaching staff maintain daily routines and set clear limits with each group, thus helping children to internalize these skills, but also providing for the safety of all children, as well as promoting the individual development of each child's self-help and self-control skills. These routines and limits are frequently discussed and defined with the children. Consistency, or knowing what to expect throughout the day, helps children develop a sense of trust and understanding of their environment.

AN EFFECTIVE GUIDANCE APPROACH IS PREVENTIVE BECAUSE IT RESPECTS FEELINGS EVEN WHILE IT ADDRESSES BEHAVIOUR

- First Steps daily scheduling, curriculum plans, classroom arrangements, developmentally appropriate activities, and staffing patterns are designed to be preventive, as they promote positive and enjoyable learning experiences that encourage respectful and trusting relationships between adults, children and peers.

ADULTS NEED TO UNDERSTAND THE REASONS FOR CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOUR

- Children learn by cause and effect, from these actions, and from others' reactions. At First Steps appropriate and positive behaviours are recognized daily. Teachers respond by reasonably discussing the situation with the child and redirecting by offering alternate words or behaviours that will encourage the child to express her/himself in more positive ways.

A SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AN ADULT AND A CHILD IS A CRITICAL COMPONENT OF EFFECTIVE GUIDANCE

- Children who gain the understanding that they are valued and belong tend to develop positive self-concepts First Steps staff make every effort to build trusting, supportive relationships with each child enrolled in their care

ADULTS USE FORMS OF GUIDANCE THAT HELP CHILDREN LEARN SELF-CONTROL AND RESPONSIVENESS TO THE NEEDS OF OTHERS

- Clear and positive verbal communication with the child is our primary guidance practice. This form of guidance helps children develop a sense of independence, confidence, and competence in their own abilities to get along with peers and adults and to involve themselves positively within the classroom activities. Teaching staff model language and appropriate ways for the children to express their feelings and emotions. All children are encouraged to "use words" to explain what they want, what they need, and how they feel. Positive problem-solving skills include adults: narrating what is happening, suggesting optional behaviours to children before a "situation" occurs, and following through with necessary re-direction and acknowledgement of successful problem-solving situations.

Corporal punishment, the use of verbal or emotional threats, and shaming or name-calling are never used in our program and are not responses tolerated by First Steps Daycare (Guelph) Inc. Any such

behaviour by any staff member is just cause for a disciplinary action.

Child Care Subsidy and Canada Wide Early Learning Childcare Agreement (CWELCC)

Childcare subsidy is a financial help for families to pay for licensed childcare. Subsidy is available for children 0-12 years and is provided through the County of Wellington. We welcome subsidized families to our program, please consult with the licensee for further information and/or follow the link: www.wellington.ca

First Steps School Age is not enrolled in CWELCC. Our Outdoor Preschool Programs are not enrolled in CWELCC and therefore do not qualify for fee reduction through the Canada Wide Early Learning Childcare Agreement.

Fees and Schedules

You will find our fee schedule within this package. Payments are due in full on the **first** day of the month and can be E-transferred.

E-transfers are sent to: lakeside@firststepsguelph.ca

Please make sure your invoices are accurate and include the invoice number in the memo section. You are required to pay fees for any day which your child is scheduled to be at the center, whether they are in attendance or absent, whether that be days missed due to illness, inclement weather, statutory holidays, school breaks, emergency closer or vacation time. Any discrepancies you may have regarding your invoice please contact the Licensee as soon as possible, it is not permitted to make alterations without consulting the licensee prior.

For School age program - any changes in scheduled arranged PD days/camps/full day learning must be requested 2 working weeks prior. Refunds will not be guaranteed after this date.

All invoices will be mailed to you electronically, prior to the 1st of each month. If you do not receive an invoice via email please contact the licensee as soon as possible, so the matter can be dealt with accordingly. *Please note that any overdue accounts will be conducted and handled very seriously, when accumulated accounts are outstanding, additional non-base fees will be introduced and termination of agreement could be in jeopardy. It is your responsibility to keep your account balance current. If you leave the Center with an outstanding balance owing, we will use all measures available to us to collect the balance.

Deposits

School Age Program

A refundable Deposit of \$150 is required, deposit amounts will be based upon your child's schedule, deposits are fully refundable based on following our Withdrawal Notice Policy.

Any discrepancies you may have regarding your invoice please contact the Licensee as soon as possible, it is not permitted to make alterations without consulting the licensee prior. If you do not receive an invoice via email please contact the licensee as soon as possible, so the matter can be dealt with accordingly.

Outdoor Preschool

A refundable deposit of \$100 is required.

Hours of Operation

The Childcare is a year-round care facility, open Monday-Friday, apart from ALL statutory holidays.

LABOUR DAY
THANKSGIVING DAY
CHRISTMAS DAY (should this fall on a weekend the next working day will be taken as the stat)
BOXING DAY (should this fall on a weekend the next working day will be taken as the stat)
NEW YEARS DAY
AUGUST CIVIC HOLIDAY
GOOD FRIDAY
EASTER MONDAY
FAMILY DAY
VICTORIA DAY
CANADA DAY

We must have 24-hour notice if your child requires different hours of care. Please confirm this with the licensee/Staff so the required ratios for coverage can be in place. Sometimes we may be unable to accommodate your request due to staffing.

Hours of Operation – School Age

We offer before and after school care all year round, in addition we offer PD days, March break, summer and Christmas camps.

- Before School – 7:00 - 9:00 (Morning program and morning bus run with staff present)
- After School – 3:00 - 5:30 (Afternoon bus run with staff present, and afternoon program)
- Full day program - PD days and Camps 7:00 - 5:30 with a 9hr limit (times may be reduced due to demand).

Hours of Operation – Outdoor Preschool

- 9:00am – 2:45pm (lunch included)
- Outdoor preschool operates September – June with the exception of all elementary UGDSB non-instructional days (PD days, March Break, Winter Break and all other non-instructional school days). These dates change year to year – please refer to the current UGDSB ELEMENTARY School year calendar.

Vacation

We request parents to notify the licensee, in writing, of any vacation or other plans which may affect a child's attendance. It is not possible to grant financial credits for lost days due to absence, sickness, emergency closure or vacation.

Inclement Weather/Other Closures

When First Steps is closed due to inclement weather, we will inform families by 6.30am on the day of closure (more notice will be given if we have knowledge ahead of time) via Dojo app and/or text message. It is the parents' responsibility to check for weather updates and closures for their child's school (school age families) also to check the dojo and text messages. We will also post on CJOY 1460 AM.

***When it is deemed unsafe for children and staff to travel to school, and/or the school board closes schools, all sites will not operate.

The licensee will close or shorten the operation hours should inclement weather/other disruptions, force the need at any given time. As much notice will be given. Safety for all is our main priority.

Late Pick-Up Fees

First Steps School Age Programs close at 5:30pm (by electronic device Phone, etc.) First Steps Outdoor Programs close at 2:45pm. There is a 5-minute grace period after which, a charge of \$5.00 (non-base fee) will be incurred and \$5.00 (non-base fee) for each 5 minutes thereafter. The staff member on site will require you to sign a form stating the amount payable. In exceptional circumstances this non-base fee may be waived, this should be discussed with the licensee.

Withdrawal Policy

We require officially 2 working weeks written notice to withdraw your child from a reserved space, however, to receive a full deposit, 30 full days noticed is required. Please be advised the licensee must receive the letter 30 full days prior to your termination date. The deposit you paid on commencement will be deducted from your final invoice. Any changes you would like to make regarding your child's enrollment please see the licensee personally for discussion 2 working weeks prior to requested change date.

Two working weeks' notice is required to make any alterations to scheduled PD Days and camps. Notice after this time will not be reimburse.

Starting With Us

Helping children to adjust to being separated from their normal environment and the adults that are important to them can be difficult. It may be just as difficult for the parents who may feel a sense apprehension at leaving their child. The staffs empathize with these feelings and will work with you to develop an approach to starting daycare that will meet the needs of all involved.

Outdoor Preschool:

Prior to the commencement date you will be offered to visit with your child, these visits are complimentary, and are normally a 1 hour visit with you present and your child, this gives you and us the opportunity to discuss important information pertaining to your child. The second visit, if the educators feel your child will settle, you will be invited to leave your child with us for the morning and join us for lunch. We liaise with you and are guided by the child as to if further visits are required. Visits normally take place the week before the start date. As each child grows with us, they will follow the natural flow through our programs, the decision to progress to the next program will be determined on where each child lays developmentally, chronological age, space matching, dynamics of the program. Each parent will be notified in advance of when the graduation will occur.

Excursions

At First Steps, we offer many opportunities to venture out from the center, whether it is a walk in the neighbourhood, a visit to the local dentist, fire station, seniors' home, CJOY radio station, the library, or a field trip to the farm, Toronto aquarium, butterfly conservatory, the Guelph Museum, to name a few. The children enjoy these experiences and the opportunity to explore, learn and gain knowledge and understanding about the world around us.

Wherever we travel, this includes outside time in our garden, the children's safety is of the upmost importance, staff always have an accurate attendance, emergency information and a cell phone.

Permission forms for field trips which require transportation will be handed out to you prior to the upcoming trip.

Upon admission you will be asked to sign a local excursion form, this will allow First Steps staff to accompany the children on local walks etc. We always carry a first aid kit, and any life-threatening medication that is required.

Outside Classroom and Outdoor Play

Each child will have the opportunity to enjoy outside activities, when weather permits. Our outside experiences are just as important as our inside experiences, we like to have areas within our outside play space that offers the children guided activities as well as the freedom to learn and develop independently, with guidance and direction when required.

During the winter months we are mindful of the changing weather conditions. We carefully monitor the weather network and are guided by the warnings posted in the winter months and summer. We will follow cut off temperatures = Toddler -10 / preschool – 15.

When weather prohibits children from participating in outdoor play, alternative gross motor activities will be offered in the classroom or other available play space. In addition, children of all ages will not participate in outdoor play if they are not dressed appropriately for the weather or if a formal letter from the physician states the child is unable to participate in such activity and thus care may not be available if ratios do not permit.

Outdoor Preschool:

Our outdoor preschool program spends the majority of the day outside in nature. It is imperative that your child is prepared with adequate clothing and materials to allow for a successful day outdoors. A suggested clothing and materials list will be provided prior to your child's start. Children have access to indoor shelter throughout the day.

Clothing

Children should be dressed for active play. Your child will be exposed to art material, paint, crayons etc. Please provide simple play clothes that are washable and free of complicated fasteners. Each child should have a complete change or several changes of clothes, which can be stored in their backpacks. These clothes are required to be placed in a labeled bag. **Footwear must be worn at all times.** We ask that you provide a pair of indoor shoes or non-slip slippers as well as outdoor shoes/boots.

NOTE: that flip-flops and flimsy shoes are unsafe and should not be worn, if worn parents will be contacted to bring a replacement.

Toilet Training

We hope that our school age and preschool children are fully toilet trained, or working towards being fully toilet trained. Our preschool program spends time away from the building where access to a toilet may take a 10 minute walk. It is helpful if your child is able to communicate his/her needs. We are happy to support throughout the learning process for those who may need it.

Rest Time

Our school age and outdoor preschool programs are provided with ample opportunity to engage in quiet activities throughout the day to allow for times of rest and relaxation. There is no formal sleep period provided for preschool aged children in care from 9:00am – 2:45pm, rather quiet rest activities.

Sanitary Procedures

To ensure a healthy environment, we adhere to the following basics of infection control:

- Keeping premises, equipment and materials as clean as possible utilizing a strict disinfecting/sanitizing schedule.
- Ensuring that staff and children are appropriately immunized.
- Practicing consistent hand washing techniques for children and staff.
- Separating ill children from their peers and re-admitting only when recovery from infection is complete.
- Encouraging and implementing good hygiene practices.

Nutrition

Nutrition plays a major part in a child's development; we educate the children in our care by establishing nutritionally sound eating habits as well as helping them understand the relationship between food, health and growth. We offer menu items from different cultural backgrounds, as well as firm favorites, and encourage a family style table, where our staff sit and eat with the children, this allows for good role modeling and an excellent opportunity for social conversation.

Our menus are carefully planned, and a great deal of consideration is taken on board during this process. The menu is available for your perusal; it is conveniently located outside the kitchen. If your child has any food allergies or intolerances, please inform us and we will strive to accommodate their needs. Our cook is trained in food handling and holds a current Food Handling Certificate. A comprehensive list of allergens will be maintained in the food preparation area. All meals will be prepared on site using nut-free ingredients purchased by the center.

At First Steps, we provide nutritious homemade meals and snacks that follow Canada's Food Guide and is approved by the Wellington-Dufferin Public Health Unit. Snacks are offered morning and afternoon to complement the daily lunch. Water is available throughout the day. Every child must have their own water bottle that has their name clearly labeled on it. Milk is served daily with lunch.

In certain circumstances food from home may be permitted, please speak to the licensee/designate should you child require a special diet that we can not provide.

All nut-free ready to eat items (like granola bars, bread, crackers) will be purchased by the center except for ready to eat items for children with allergies/food restrictions (please note that the food must be peanut free) such as, soy/rice milk, dairy or egg-free breads and “cheeses”. Parents must provide these items for their child/children and must provide the center cook or program staff with an ingredient list of the foods that they bring into the center. Our Center cook will review the ingredient list of all foods each time a product is purchased and/or delivered by our wholesaler.

SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN ONLY:

On PD days and camp days, children attending the school age program will be required to bring a lunch for the days they are in attendance, please take note of the following when considering your child’s lunch.

We believe it is important to teach children right from the start about the value of making good food choices. If everything in their lunch bag is nutritious then every choice is a good choice! Your child will probably express preferences for particular foods but please bear in mind that your firmness now on the matter of nutrition is laying the groundwork for a lifetime of healthy eating.

NO PEANUTS OR NUT PRODUCTS OF ANY KIND. To protect children with severe allergies please refrain from including nuts eggs, soy or shellfish in your child’s lunch.

All lunch bags must have your child’s first name and last name on their lunch bags and containers. If this is not carried out during the first week of school, then our staff will add your child’s name to their lunch bag in indelible ink. This is a licensing requirement and to protect children with severe allergies.

Here are some suggestions:

Recommended

Please refrain from sending

SANDWICHES

NUTS OF ANY KIND!

FRUIT (in ready-to-eat form)

PEANUT BUTTER!

VEGETABLES

EGGS!

YOGURT

CANDY

COTTAGE CHEESE

CHIPS

CHEESE

POP, FRUIT DRINKS OR SUGARY BEVERAGES

PIZZA

SOY PRODUCTS

VEGETABLE SALAD

SHELLFISH

POTATO SALAD

BAGELS

CRACKERS

COOKIES

MUFFINS

Rice Cakes

First Steps Policies and Procedures

Admission

To be considered for an available space at First Steps School Age or for our Outdoor Preschool program, prospective clients must register through the online centralized wait list.

<https://www.wellington.ca/en/social-services/cey-LookingforChildCare.aspx>

Our wait list policy is available within this document, and MUST be read and understood before registration on the centralized wait list.

We highly recommend prospective clients take a tour of our website www.firststepsguelph.ca this site will give families a small idea of our facility. A more detailed tour will be arranged closer to admission time. You will be contacted by the licensee/assistant supervisor when a place becomes available. Upon acceptance, the licensee/assistant supervisor will arrange for further paperwork to be read and signed. You will then be required to pay a deposit (if required) to confirm your child's space. An orientation interview will be arranged this interview will be to familiarize you and your child with the center, answer any questions, and to ascertain if our amalgamation meets each parties' requirements. Once both parties are in agreement, a set of complementary visits will be scheduled prior to your child's start date.

Helping children to adjust to being separated from their normal environment and the adults who are important to them can be difficult. It may be just as difficult for the parents who may be leaving their child. The staff are empathetic to these feelings and will help the child and their parents adjust to the transition.

First Steps ELC/School Age
Policy and Procedure for Waiting list

When a prospective client/family is interested in our centers, they will be invited to visit the centralized wait list (link below) through the County of Wellington. Using this platform families will be requested to set up an account which will be necessary to join our wait list. This waitlist is maintained and managed by OneHSN. We maintain authority to ensure priority is being followed as described below.

<https://www.wellington.ca/en/social-services/cey-LookingforChildCare.aspx>

Determination of order of offered admission is as follows:

- The licensee/designate will keep track of the waiting lists and make adjustments when/if necessary.
- When a place within the center/s becomes available the waiting lists are consulted and admission will be determined primarily by the date of which commencement on the list started, along with the age of the child, and their requirements. Priority will be given in certain circumstances, i.e.- existing/past families/staff members. Certain factors must be taken into account. For example: A family is looking for a place for their child, and at present, by date puts them at the top of our list however, this family requires a 15-month-old place and the place we have available is for over 18 months. Due to our license, we cannot offer this place to this family at this time. In this case we consult our waiting lists again and by date and the factors mentioned above discover who is next on our list. The family requesting the 15-month-old place still remains top of our list and will be offered a place when it becomes available or when the child reaches 18 months.
- At any time, prospective clients can request to be informed where they are situated on the list. However, it is always explained that this is everchanging, and patience is appreciated.
- At any time, a prospective client can remove themselves from our list. It is the client's responsibility to keep their account active and up to date.
- When a place is successfully offered the admission process will begin with paperwork signed and dated. The required deposit will be paid to secure the space as stated in the attendance agreement. The deposit is deducted from the final and closing invoice. (providing a full 30 days notice is given) Should a client decide they no longer wish to proceed/take the spot; 50% of the deposit will be refunded, providing there is a 30-day full notice from receipt of deposit. Notice is required in writing. If First Steps does not receive such documents the deposit will not be refundable.
- Each application is carefully reviewed and the requirements/needs of each individual will be taken into consideration, to accommodate and provide our high-quality care.

Please note –An offer of space email will be sent confirming the space is available. Prospective clients have 3 days to respond to aforesaid email. Should a reply not be received during this time we will move onto the next family on our list. Once acceptance of space has been provided to us, (via email) we must receive the final paperwork and deposit no later than 2 working weeks from acceptance notification.

Smoking/Vape/Drugs

First Steps is a smoke/vape/drug/alcohol - free environment. Anyone within the vicinity, staff, parents, minors, visitors are not permitted to smoke/vape/use drugs, consume alcohol within the Childcare center or within 20 meters of its buildings. No person shall enter the center intoxicated or under the influence of any substance. We have a duty to report any person responsible for children who is intoxicated/under the influence or does not appear to be safe to be responsible for children to the correct authorities.

First Steps Policies and Procedures

Susception of Alcohol or Drug Use

First Steps staff have the responsibility and duty to report and/or allow a parent to pick up a child if they feel the well-being or the safety of the child is at risk. If the person picking up the child is impaired the staff must follow these steps:

- Verify suspicion that the individual is impaired.
- Make a non-confrontational statement to the individual about his/her condition and their concern for the child. Discuss alternative measures for pick-up of the child.
- Contact alternate person to pick-up the child or ask the individual if they will take a taxi at their own expense.
- If the adult tries to leave or leaves with the child, the staff will not try to stop them if the individual does not agree.
- Police and Children's Aid will be contacted if individual is insistent on taking the child in a vehicle.
- *** If a charge or arrest is made, the staff may be required to testify. The staff dealing with the situation is to make a written report of the incident. In the case of an accident, the Center will not be held responsible.

First Steps Policies and Procedures

Contravention of Prohibited Practices

First Steps has a Positive Guidance and Direction policy in place. Any practice based on a negative control technique will not be tolerated.

- Each staff member should implement positive guidance and direction adjacent with the program statement daily as part of their responsibilities; any inappropriate incidents MUST be reported and documented.
- A record of monitoring will be conducted regularly and annually.

Contravention of prohibited practices:

- Anyone observing or hearing a prohibited practice being used must report the incident to the licensee, supervisor or designate immediately.
- The licensee, supervisor or designate will complete a written account of the verbal information provided. This must be signed by the person reporting the incident, to verify it as a true record.
- If the incident is reported to the supervisor or designate, they will inform the licensee immediately, and the investigation process will commence.
- The investigation will involve discussion with the staff member alleged to have used a prohibited practise. Observation of the staff member may be used if deemed appropriate and other staff members may be questioned. The investigation and its outcome will be recorded in writing. Should the allegation be of a serious nature it may be necessary to suspend the staff member during the investigation.
- Depending on the outcome of the investigation action taken will be as follows:
- If the investigation proves the initial report was unfounded, no further action will be taken.
- If the investigation is inconclusive the licensee, supervisor or designate will be responsible for monitoring the situation and ensuring on-going documentation until such time as she is sure that the staff member in question is totally conforming to the Positive Guidance and Direction policies and procedures and program statement.
- If the licensee finds the report to be correct based on fact, action will be taken in accordance with the severity of the situation, and a serious occurrence will be filled.
- In the event of the licensee being reported to be using prohibited practice, the staff member should report directly to the supervisor or designate who will investigate the report and take appropriate action.
- The licensee will make all final decisions regarding suspension and payment while under suspension.
- The licensee shall not permit; with respect to a child receiving childcare at First Steps, the following prohibited practises:

(a) Corporal punishment of the child.

(b) physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a highchair, 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 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.

(d) use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child or undermine his or her self-respect, dignity or self-worth.

(e) depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding; or

(f) Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

- This provision forbids physical punishment and other harmful disciplinary practices to protect the emotional and physical well-being of the children within our care. These practices are never permitted at First Steps ELC

All staff, volunteers, parents, (when in the center) and students must comply with the policies expressed herein, while implementing the program statement, and with the Child Care and Early Years Act. (CCEYA)

Failure to comply may result in the following depending on the circumstances at hand:

- A warning, verbal or written followed by suspension or immediate permanent dismissal.
- Suspension or dismissal without warning.
- Emergency meeting to review situation.
- Consultation with the parent and the child involved.

Action to be taken in severe situations:

If during the investigation, evidence is found that indicates harsh discipline or abusive practises were used, the staff member will be suspended immediately and the incident will be reported as a Serious Occurrence to the Ministry of Education, as well as to the Family and Children's Services. Should the investigation undertaken by the Family and Children's Services substantiate abuse or inappropriate conduct the employee will be dismissed.

Action in less severe situations:

The staff member shall have an interview with the licensee (supervisor or designate in cases of licensee contravention). The Positive Guidance and Direction policies and procedures will be thoroughly reviewed and discussed in detail. Concerns in practice will be noted at the time and recommendations on how the employee can develop positive practices will be given. The employee will be encouraged to develop positive practices through professional development and training. The employee will be issued with a letter outlining the prohibited practice used and be added to their file. There will be a follow up meeting arranged.

Note: If a second instance of the use of prohibited practice is substantiated, for any employee, the employee will be dismissed and the reason for dismissal noted in the employee's record of employment, the collage of Early Childhood Educators will be notified.

Formal monitoring and annual review:

The Positive Guidance and Direction policy shall be reviewed with all employees, students, professionals and volunteers prior to commencing interaction with the children of First Steps Daycare (Guelph) Inc. and annually thereafter.

The licensee shall record a written document for each employee during their annual review and discuss their performance, goals, strengths and challenges. This review can take place at any given time and may be carried out more than once.

First Steps Policies and Procedures

Violence and Harassment

First Steps has zero tolerance for workplace violence or harassment of any kind and will be proactive in the prevention of workplace violence and harassment. We are committed to:

- Investigating reported incidents of violence and harassment in an objective and timely manner, taking necessary action; and providing appropriate support for victims.
- To ensure that employees at First Steps have a work environment that is free of violence or harassment of any kind, whether it arises from another employee or any other person visiting the workplace, i.e. client or outside personal, which are interacting with staff. This policy will ensure that:
- Individuals are aware of, and understand that, acts of violence or harassment are considered a serious offence for which necessary action will be imposed;
- Those subjected to acts of violence or harassment are encouraged to access any assistance they may require in order to pursue a complaint

The types of violence will be defined as:

Criminal Intent - Involves a person with no relationship to the workplace, who commits a violent act (e.g. theft, hostage taking/kidnapping, physical assault)

Customer/Client - A client with willful intent to cause harm to the employee.

Employee Related - Employee who engages in repeated and persistent negative acts towards one or more employees resulting in the creation of a toxic or unhealthy work environment.

Personal Relationship - Relationship violence that occurs at the workplace (e.g. family member that commits a violent act against a worker within the workplace)

Physical abuse or verbal abuse from a child/ren within our care - Should this kind of abuse happen, the child's parent/guardians will be informed immediately, and consequences will be put in place, if abuse persists, this could lead to exclusion/ or in serious situations higher authorities will be called upon.

If any employee/client outside personal engages in workplace violence or harassment, an investigation will take place immediately. If an employee is involved, they will face discipline which may include up to and including immediate termination. If a client /outside personal is involved the same will apply.

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Licensee of First Steps ELC to ensure that:

- All reasonable preventative measures to protect employees and others at First Steps from workplace violence and harassment.
- A workplace violence risk assessment is conducted.
- Advise the Health & Safety representative of the assessment results and provide a copy in writing.
- Establish procedures, policies and work environment arrangements to eliminate the risk to employees from violence.
- Proper maintenance and testing of all security systems in place.
- Ensure all employees are trained on this policy.
- Review the policy annually with the Health & Safety representative to ensure any new violence hazards are identified.

- Reporting procedures are established with respect to workplace violence and harassment.

First Steps Policies and Procedures

Safe Arrival and Dismissal

Name of Child Care Centre: First Steps School Age

Date Policy and Procedures Established: January 2024

Date Policy and Procedures Updated: January 2024

Purpose

This policy and the procedures within help support the safe arrival and dismissal of children receiving care. This policy will provide staff, students, volunteers and families 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 childcare center as expected, as well as steps to follow when a child is not picked up at the expected time. 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 the Glossary at the end of the document.

Policy - General

First Steps School Age will ensure that any child receiving care at the childcare center is only released to the child's parent/guardian or an individual that the parent/guardian has provided written authorization for, stating that the childcare center may release the child to said individual.

First Steps School age will only dismiss children into the care of their parent/guardian or another authorized individual. The center will not release any children from care without supervision.

Where a child does not arrive at the childcare as expected or is not picked up as expected, staff must follow the safe arrival and dismissal procedures set out below.

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to inform the center of ANY changes to their child's pick up and/or drop off in writing via Class Dojo and/or text message to the School Age phone number (519-400-4218). If such information is given to staff verbally in advance, the staff member must document the information in the DWR (daily written record) and attendance record.

Procedures

Accepting a child into care

When accepting a child into care at the time of drop-off:

- Staff will greet the parent/guardian and child.
- It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to **inform staff** of how the child's 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, early/late pick-up, etc.) 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 Registration Document in the child's file** or where the individual is not listed, the parent/guardian must provide authorization for pick-up in writing (**via class dojo app and/or text message**).

- Staff will document the change in pick-up procedure in the DWR (Daily Written Record) and the classroom attendance record.
- Staff will sign the child in on the classroom attendance record with the exact time of arrival.

Where a child has not arrived to care as expected

Where a child does not arrive at **First Steps School Age** as expected and the parent/guardian has not communicated a change in drop-off, (i.e. left a voice message, text message via School Age phone or informed the closing staff at pick-up previously) the staff member responsible at that time must:

- Inform the supervisor/designate via text and program staff via group text or verbally.
- Commence contacting the child's parent/guardian no later than **8:00am** as staff must have all attendance information prior to leaving the site for the morning bus run.
- Staff will send a message to the parent/guardian via School Age phone to inform that a response is required **within 15 minutes**. If a response is not received within that time, a single phone call will be made to the parent/guardian.
- Should staff fail to reach any of the above to confirm the child's absence from care **within one hour of first contact which is the initial text message**, CAS (or police, if necessary) will be contacted.
- Should the child's absence be confirmed by the parent/guardian within the given time, program staff shall document the child's absence on the classroom attendance record and any additional information about the child's absence in the Daily Written Record.

Where a child does not arrive at **First Steps Outdoor Preschool programs** as expected and the parent/guardian has not communicated a change in drop-off, (i.e. left a voice message, Dojo message or informed the closing staff at pick-up previously) the staff member responsible at that time must:

- Inform the supervisor/designate and program staff via group text
- Commence contacting the child's parent/guardian no later than **9:30am**.
- Staff will send a message to the parent/guardian via class Dojo app to inform that a response is required **within 15 minutes**. If a response is not received within that time, a single phone call will be made to the parent/guardian.
- Should staff fail to reach any of the above to confirm the child's absence from care **within one hour of first contact, being the initial Dojo message**, local authorities (CAS or police) will be contacted.

Note:

At **First Steps School Age** on full-day learning days, (such as PD and camp days) commencement of parent/guardian contact will be no later than **9:30am** if School Age staff have not been contacted by parent/guardian about any change in drop-off time.

Releasing a child from care

The First Steps 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 written authorization for,

stating that the childcare center may release the child to said individual. Should the supervising staff not know/recognize the individual picking up, regardless of the individual's relation to the child, staff will:

- Confirm with another staff member that the individual picking up is the child's parent/guardian/authorized individual.
- Where the above is not possible or any other staff member cannot confirm the individual's identity, staff will ask the parent/guardian/authorized individual for photo identification and compare the individual's information against the pre-authorized names on the child's file or written authorization previously provided to the child care by the parent/guardian.

Where a child has not been picked up as expected

Where a child has not been picked up from **First Steps** as expected and the parent/guardian has not communicated a change in pick-up time or procedure, (i.e. left a voice message, Dojo message or informed the closing staff at pick-up previously) the staff member responsible at that time must:

- Reference the previously communicated time or timeframe in which the child is to be picked up from care.
- If the child has not been picked up **15 minutes after the aforesaid time** arranged, staff shall proceed with contacting the parent/guardian/authorized individual via Dojo message to advise that the child has not yet been picked up and that a response is required **within 15 minutes** of said message. If a response is not received within that time, a single phone call will be made to the parent/guardian/authorized individual. Should the call go to the voicemail, staff will leave a message stating the aforesaid details and that a response is required immediately.
- Where the individual picking up is an authorized individual and their contact information is available, the above steps shall be taken; however, if no contact information is available, staff will proceed by calling the parent/guardian to inform them that they must contact the individual and report the intended pick-up time back to the staff.
- If staff have not heard back from the parent/guardian or authorized individual, they will call the emergency contact on file. Should the call go to voicemail, staff will leave a message stating that the child is still in their care. Staff will then wait 15 minutes before attempting to contact other authorized individuals listed in the child's file via phone call.
- If staff have not been able to successfully get through to any of the provided contacts and have not received a returned call, they will refer to the procedures under '*Where a child has not been picked up and the center is closed.*'

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

First Steps School Age closes at 5:30pm (unless informed otherwise). First Steps Outdoor Preschool programs end at 2:45pm.

Where a parent/guardian/authorized individual has not arrived by 5:25 (2:40 for outdoor preschool), staff must:

- Send a courtesy message to the parent/guardian/authorized individual inquiring their ETA and status of pick-up.
- Ensure that the child's well-being is considered and a snack/activity will be offered while they await their pick-up.

- Stay with the child and proceed with calling the parent/guardian/authorized individual to notify that the child has not been picked up and inquire their pick-up time if not already done so.
- If staff are unable to reach the parent/guardian or any other authorized individual listed in the child's file, (including emergency contacts) **within 15 minutes after close (5:45pm)**, staff must proceed by contacting the local Children's Aid Society (CAS, 519 824 2410.)
- Staff will then follow CAS's direction with respect to further steps.

Note:

There is a 5-minute grace period after which, a charge of \$5.00 will be incurred and \$5.00 for each 5 minutes thereafter. The staff member on site will require you to sign a form stating the amount payable. In exceptional circumstances this non-base fee may be waived, this should be discussed with the licensee.

Dismissing a child from care without supervision

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

Glossary

Individual authorized to pick-up/authorized individual: a person that the parent/guardian has informed the child care program staff in writing can pick their child up 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 center and/or home child agency.

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

Regulatory Requirements: Ontario Regulation 137/15 Arrival and Dismissal Policy

Health and Wellbeing

The Child Care and Early Years Act (2014) requires that prior to admission, each child must be immunized as recommended by the local Medical Officer of Health. You will be required to complete a medical form and return it with your registration package. Parents may request an exemption from immunization for their child. It is then the responsibility of the parent to complete an exemption form and abide by the exclusion regulations as defined by the local medical officer of health. The Center has the right to refuse entry of a child if forms are not completed as required.

The health and safety of your child is of the utmost importance and concern to us. You should be aware that a daily health and general appearance check is given upon the child's arrival. As Registered Early Childhood Educators, we have a "Duty to Report" policy in place. All staff are trained upon hire regarding this policy, and it is our duty to report any suspected ill treatment towards any child in our care. (Information can be sort after at the Ministry of Community, Family and Children's Services)

The children are closely supervised at all times, and each staff member is responsible for implementing accident prevention measures, maintaining active interactions and observations, however, accidents can happen. All staff are qualified in both Standard First Aid and CPR and will be able to assist your child in case of any injury. It is imperative that staff are able to reach you during the day in the case of injury or illness. Therefore, we do request that you provide us with updated contact numbers for yourself. In all cases of injury or incident, an Accident/Incident Form will be completed by a staff member and parents are asked to review a copy of the report given via the app Dojo for your records.

Our staff will often give a courtesy call to inform you of an injury they feel to be of a larger nature of importance, and you may be required to seek medical advice/attention.

Since regulations require daily outdoor play for each child in attendance, it is our policy that a child who is too ill to fully participate in all activities remains at home. In the event your child becomes ill while at the Center, they will be isolated from the other children and you will be notified to come and collect your child immediately, we expect this to take no longer than 30-60 minutes. Should you not be able to meet this time frame, it is the parent/guardian responsibility to arrange an alternative pick-up person and inform us accordingly. An Illness Form will be completed by a staff member and reviewed with you upon arrival. We strongly recommend that parents prepare and arrange for emergency back-up childcare arrangements in anticipation of these situations. A doctor's note must be provided for readmission if a child has been absent two weeks due to illness or due to hospitalization for a period of one week or longer. The Center also reserves the discretionary right to require a doctor's note in any situation whereby there is a concern for the health of the other children and/or staff. (i.e. Unexplained rash, conformation of non-contiguousness.)

Your child should be kept home if any of the following applies:

- Diarrhea - Excluded for 48 hours after last bout
- Vomiting – Excluded for 48 hrs after last bout.
- Eye infections – including any form of Conjunctivitis (eyes – redness, yellowish reoccurring discharge, watering, etc)
- Fever of 38 C / 100.4 C or higher – 24 hrs fever free with no medication before return.

- Unexplained rash or sores (physician's note required to attend with rash confirming not contagious).
- An illness that prevents the child from participating in the full program.
- The child requires more individual care than the staff can provide without compromising the group.
- Child risks infecting other child or caregivers with a particular illness.
- Head lice until after treatment and all lice are removed.
- If any pain relief medication/antihistamine/cough medicine and such has been given to a child within 24hrs of arriving at the center the child must remain at home until a full day has passed since administration. (i.e. if the medication has been given on a Monday at 12 noon, the child can not return until the Wednesday) Often children will need some pain relief for teething or a slight fever, please note that once a pain medication has been given and should a child be brought to the center, medicated this could mask something of a more serious nature and others present at the daycare could be put at risk. It is deemed that if a child requires such pain relief, they are not 100% and able to participate in the daily aspects within the program, therefore must stay at home.
- Should antibiotics be prescribed by a doctor, the child may attend daycare a full day after the first administration of the antibiotic. (i.e. if the medication has been given on a Monday at 12 noon, the child can not return until the Wednesday)
- Certain topical medication/antibiotics may be prescribed for eczema and other skin conditions. This may be excluded from the time frame return date after administration. However, where topical antibiotics/medication is prescribed for contagious/transmittable bacterial conditions on the skin, i.e. impetigo, thrush ringworm, the full day after first administration will be in place.
- Asthma- Children with asthma may attend care however, in some circumstances a medical plan will need to be put in place when inhalers are required frequently. (Details to be discussed with licensee/designate)
- Children are to be excluded until they have been improving of symptoms for a full day. If a child returns with symptoms that have not improved, parents will be contacted immediately to collect their child. In the case of an outbreak of infectious disease, children need to be excluded for longer full days after their last symptom as directed by WDPH.
- When a child requires collection due to illness/health, they will be picked up within 1 hour of an initial phone call, otherwise late fees (non-base) could apply. Late fees will be \$1.00 (non-base) for every five minutes therein after.

Please see attached exclusion guidelines from Wellington-Dufferin Public Health Unit.

Medication

First Steps follows the established policies on the dispensing of medication as established by the Childcare and Early Years Act (2014) CCYEA. These rules and regulations are written to protect the staff as well as the children. All staff and parents must adhere to these requirements:

- A Medication Form must be completed by the parent to give consent prior to the medication being administered.
- A Designated staff member will be in control of administering drugs and medication, and the administration will be witnessed by a colleague, as to ensure dosage etc.
- Medication must be handed directly to the staff member. Staff on duty is responsible for the proper storage of the medication and checking ALL information is correct and matches documentation.
- All medication must be in its original container.

- All medicine must be prescribed by a doctor. This means a pharmacist's label must be attached to such drugs as cough medicines and decongestants, showing that your doctor has prescribed the, or a doctor's note must accompany the medication.

The label or doctor's note must clearly state the following information:

- Child's name
- Date purchased
- Dosage of medication
- Name of medication
- Time of administration
- Storage of medication
- Any side effects

No medicine will be given if it has been prescribed to another family member. It must have your child's name.

No out-of-date medicine will be given. Medicine will be stored in a locked container and refrigerated if required.

We are aware that parents are often in a hurry in the morning and we have tried to make the form as simple as possible. Since the Childcare is bound by these regulations, medication will be given only if all the above instructions are followed. Records will be kept for parent review, indicating time and dosage administered.

** Please note any child on prescribed medication must have been receiving the medication a full 24hrs before returning to care. And have been improving for the policy stated time frame.

Life Threatening Allergies/Conditions

We often have children in our care with allergies, some of them life-threatening. The best cure is prevention. It is the parent's responsibility to inform us of their child's condition. An emergency medical plan form will be required to be completed and discussed before admission to the center.

One of the most common serious allergies over which we can exercise some control is to certain foods, especially nuts. Children and adults who are allergic to nuts are at risk from even the slightest contact and the consequences can be life threatening.

Parents with anaphylactic children must:

- complete an Individual Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan
- meet with staff to discuss details of their child's allergy and plan
- provide a dedicated EpiPen for their child in Ziploc bag which is clearly labelled with the child's name and the date of the medication's expiry/full prescription label. If medication out of date or no medication on site, the child will not be able to attend care. Staff will follow anaphylactic medical plan created by parents in regards to location and storage of EpiPen (on staff, hanging in classroom wall when inside/in staff backpack when outside). If the child carries his/her own medication and does not have it on his/her person, the child will not be permitted to enter the program. (ex. The transition period between school and

after-school program.) This measure is for the child's benefit, as we would not be in a position to administer the lifesaving medication should the need arise.

Anaphylactic children should (if have one) always wear a Medic Alert bracelet identifying their condition.

All staff will receive annual training on emergency procedures and how to administer an Epi pen. It is the parent/Guardian responsibility to replace their child's epi pen when expired and complete a new form annually which will be provided by FSELC/School Age. All staff will read and sign the Allergy list and emergency plan.

An Allergy List will be posted inside the classroom and in the daily attendance binder, detailing each child's medical instruction in addition to the emergency plan.

First Steps Policies and Procedures
Health and Medical Information Policy

The Child Care and Early Years Act-2014 require that children enrolling in licensed childcare programs must meet a number of requirements prior to admission. First Steps follows the requirements of WGD Public Health:

Each child is required to have:

- Immunization Data Form for Child Care Settings completed
- A copy of your child's immunization records

If you have chosen not to have your child immunized, you must meet the following requirements.

- Immunization Data Form for Child Care Settings completed
- Provide a Statement of Medical Exemption Form. (Available from WDG Public Health) It must be completed and signed by a qualified physician. Or
- Provide a Religious or Conscientious Exemption Affidavit- that is sworn or affirmed before a commissioner of oaths for taking affidavits and have a signed Immunization Waiver.
- If there is an Outbreak that could be prevented by a vaccine affected by legislation (tetanus, diphtheria, polio, measles, mumps or rubella), children who are exempt from immunization requirements or who have incomplete records will be excluded from attending the childcare during the outbreak.

Exclusion Guidelines:

- Children may not come to the center if they display any of the following symptoms:
- Fever- temperature of 38 degrees C or 100.4 degrees F or higher. A fever may be accompanied by symptoms such as listlessness or excessive sleepiness, respiratory symptoms such as a sore throat or trouble swallowing, coughing, runny nose and eyes and earache
- Difficulty breathing- wheezing or a persistent cough
- Infected skin or eyes, or an undiagnosed rash anywhere on the body
- Severe itching and / or dry skin on either body or scalp if caused by head lice, body lice or scabies
- Unexplained diarrhea or loose stools (may or may not be combined with nausea, vomiting or stomach cramps
- Nausea and vomiting
- Children and staff with known or suspected reportable or communicable diseases. A list of exclusion guidelines for identifying and handling communicable diseases is provided to parents
- Children must be free from fever, 1 Full day and diarrhea and vomiting for 2 full days before returning to the center. During an Outbreak the exclusion period may be longer.
- Please report the nature of any illness to the center. Please inform the center of a diagnosis of a serious illness or communicable disease/infection in your child. We are responsible to notify public health immediately when we know that a child is enrolled at First Steps has a reportable communicable disease.
- First Steps will follow the exclusion guidelines listed below as provided by the Wellington- Dufferin- Guelph Health Unit. These guidelines are followed unless there is an Outbreak and then the Outbreak exclusion guidelines will be followed.

We will exclude any child with any of the following conditions:

Chicken Pox	Until all of the blisters have dried into scabs, and child is well enough to participate in program
Conjunctivitis (Pinkeye) Or suspected pinkeye	Bacterial (with pus) until 24 hours/full day after treatment begins (Doctor must confirm in writing if a suspected case is not conjunctivitis, only then can a child return to care)
Diarrhea (Parent will be called after a child has full bm of diarrhea unless there are extenuating circumstances, or the center is in an Outbreak situation)	Must be 48 hours/2 full days free of diarrhea (longer if center is in Outbreak situation. For some infections, the person must also be treated with antibiotics before returning to daycare)
Fever	Axillary temperature:38.C/100 F or higher on the center thermometer. Child must be fever free for 24 hours/full day without medication
Impetigo	Until child has been treated with antibiotics for 24 hours/full day
Head Lice	Until after the first treatment and no live lice seen and all nits removed
Rash with or without fever or behavioral change	Until a medical exam indicates these symptoms are not that of a communicable disease/infection
Respiratory infections (viral)	Until child is without fever for 24 hours/full day without medication and is well enough to participate in normal activities
Ringworm	Until 24 hours/full day after treatment has been started
Scabies	Until 24 hours/full day after treatment has been started
Signs/ Symptoms of possible severe illness	Until a medical exam indicates the child may return (unusually tired, uncontrolled coughing, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, wheezing)
Streptococcal sore throat	Until at least 24 hours/full day after treatment begins and the child is without fever for 24 hours/full day without medication
Vomiting (parent will be called after one incident)	Until vomiting stops for at least 48 hours/2 full days (longer if center is in outbreak situation.

First Steps will treat every child with respect and dignity and will do their best to meet the needs of each child regardless of their dietary, medical or developmental needs. Staff will meet with the parents and any other required resource personnel to determine how to best accommodate the needs of the child.

Emergency Preparedness

All staff members are trained in emergency procedures. Children and staff participate in regular emergency drills. In the event of a fire or other emergency evacuations the children will be removed to our evacuation sites stated in the Emergency Management policy.

In the event of an evacuation, you and/or your designate will be contacted by telephone to make arrangements to collect your child immediately. Please note every effort will be made to make contact, if staff cannot successfully reach you or your designate, it will be deemed as an emergency situation, and our staff will then contact Family and Children's Services, for direction

During a fire drill or similar practice evacuation procedure, parents are asked not to interfere in any way with the evacuation. center staffs are trained and responsible to evacuate and account for all of the children present during these situations. Any attempts by a parent to remove their child without staff knowledge may endanger the safety of their child and /or other children in the program.

First Steps Policies and Procedures

Emergency Management

Date Policy and Procedures Established: Sept 2017

Date Policy and Procedures Updated: April 2020 Jan 2024

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear direction for staff and licensees to follow to deal with emergency situations. The procedures set out steps for staff to follow to support the safety and well-being of everyone involved.

Clear policies and procedures will support all individuals to manage responses and responsibilities during an emergency, resulting in the safest outcomes possible.

Definitions

All-Clear: A notification from an authority that a threat and/or disaster no longer pose a danger and it is deemed safe to return to the child care premises and/or resume normal operations.

Authority: A person or entity responsible for providing direction during an emergency situation (e.g. emergency services personnel, the licensee).

Emergency: An urgent or pressing situation where immediate action is required to ensure the safety of children and adults in attendance. These include situations that may not affect the whole child care centre (e.g. child-specific incidents) and where 911 is called.

Emergency Services Personnel: persons responsible for ensuring public safety and mitigating activities in an emergency (e.g. law enforcement, fire departments, emergency medical services, rescue services).

Evacuation Site: the designated off-site location where shelter is obtained during an emergency. The evacuation site is used when it is deemed unsafe to be at or return to the child care centre.

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).

Meeting Place: the designated safe place near the child care centre where everyone is to initially gather before proceeding to the evacuation site, or returning to the child care centre if evacuation is not necessary.

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

Unsafe to Return: A notification from an authority that a threat and/or disaster continue to pose a danger and it is unsafe to return to the child care premises.

Policy

Staff will follow the emergency response procedures outlined in this document by following these three phases:

- Immediate Emergency Response;
- Next Steps during an Emergency; and
- Recovery.

Staff will ensure that children are kept safe, are accounted for and are supervised at all times during an emergency situation.

For situations that require evacuation of the childcare centre, the **meeting place** to gather immediately will be located at:

**Left side of our building on Knightswood - Main site (390 Speedvale)
Trillium Waldorf School (540 Victoria Rd. N) – First Steps ELC - Lakeside**

If it is deemed 'unsafe to return' to the child care centre, the **evacuation site** to proceed to is located at:
For 7654 Conservation Rd: 540 Victoria Rd. N, Trillium Waldorf School.

Note: all directions given by emergency services personnel will be followed under all circumstances, including directions to evacuate to locations different than those listed above.

For any emergency situations involving a child with an individualized plan in place, the procedures in the child's individualized plan will be followed.

If any emergency situations happen that are not described in this document, the licensee or designate will provide direction to staff for the immediate response and next steps. Staff will follow the direction given.

If any emergency situations result in a serious occurrence, the serious occurrence policy and procedures will also be followed.

All emergency situations will be documented in detail by the licensee or designate in the daily written record.

Additional Policy Statements

Fire drills are carried out every month.
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Procedures

Phase 1: Immediate Emergency Response

Emergency Situation	Roles and Responsibilities
<p>Lockdown When a threat is on, very near, or inside the child care centre. Eg. a suspicious individual in the building who is posing a threat/or on our property.</p>	<p>The staff member who becomes aware of the threat must inform all other staff of the threat as quickly and safely as possible.</p> <p>Staff members who are outdoors must ensure everyone who is outdoors proceeds to a safe location.</p> <p>Staff inside the child care centre must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remain calm; • gather all children and move them away from doors and windows; • take children’s attendance to confirm all children are accounted for; • take shelter in closets and/or under furniture with the children, if appropriate; and deemed necessary • keep children calm; • ensure children remain in the sheltered space; • turn off/mute all cellular phones; and • wait for further instructions. <p>If possible, staff inside the program room(s) should also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • close all window coverings and doors; • barricade the room door; • gather emergency medication; and • join the rest of the group for shelter. <p>Licensee or designate will immediately:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • close and lock all child care centre entrance/exit doors, if possible; and • take shelter. • Call 911 if safe to do so, or send sos from an electronic device <p>Note: only emergency service personnel are allowed to enter or exit the child care centre during a lockdown.</p>

<p>Hold & Secure When a threat is in the general vicinity of the child care centre, but not on or inside the child care premises. E.g. a shooting at a nearby building, /Suspicious individual.</p>	<p>The staff member who becomes aware of the external threat must inform all other staff of the threat as quickly and safely as possible.</p> <p>Staff members who are outdoors must ensure everyone returns to their program room(s) immediately.</p> <p>Staff in the program room must immediately:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remain calm; • take children’s attendance to confirm all children are accounted for; • close all window coverings and windows in the program room; • continue normal operations of the program; and • wait for further instructions. <p>Licensee or designate must immediately:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • close and lock all entrances/exits of the child care center; • close all blinds and windows outside of the program rooms; and • place a note on the external doors with instructions that no one may enter or exit the child care centre. <p>Licensee/designate will call 911 if required</p> <p>Note: only emergency services personnel are allowed to enter or exit the centre during a hold and secure.</p>
<p>Bomb Threat A threat to detonate an explosive device to cause property damage, death, or injuries E.g. phone call bomb threat, receipt of a suspicious package.</p>	<p>The staff member who becomes aware of the threat or suspicious package must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remain calm; • call 911 if emergency services are not yet aware of the situation; • follow the directions of emergency services personnel; and • take children’s attendance to confirm all children are accounted for. <p>Where the threat is received by telephone, the person on the phone should try to keep the suspect on the line as long as possible while another individual calls 911 and communicates with emergency services personnel.</p> <p>Where the threat is received in the form of a suspicious package, staff must ensure that no one approaches or touches the package at any time.</p>

<p>Disaster Requiring Evacuation</p> <p>A serious incident that affects the physical building and requires everyone to leave the premises. E.g. fire, flood, power failure.</p>	<p>The staff member who becomes aware of the disaster must inform all other staff of the incident and that the centre must be evacuated, as quickly and safely as possible. If the disaster is a fire, the fire alarm pull station must be used and staff must follow the centre’s fire evacuation procedures.</p> <p>Staff must immediately:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remain calm; • gather all children, the attendance record, children’s emergency contact information any emergency medication; • exit the building with the children using the nearest safe exit, bringing children’s outdoor clothing (if possible) according to weather conditions; • escort children to the meeting place; and • take children’s attendance to confirm all children are accounted for; • keep children calm; and • wait for further instructions. <p>If possible, staff should also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • take a first aid kit; and • gather all non-emergency medications. <p>Designated staff will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • help any individuals with medical and/or special needs who need assistance to go to the meeting place (in accordance with the procedure in a child’s individualized plan, if the individual is a child); and • in doing so, follow the instructions posted on special needs equipment or assistive devices during the evacuation. • If individuals cannot be safely assisted to exit the building, the designated staff will assist them to safety and ensure their required medication is accessible, if applicable; and • wait for further instructions. <p>If possible, the site designate must conduct a walk-through of the child care centre to verify that everyone has exited the building and secure any windows or doors, unless otherwise directed by emergency services personnel.</p>
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<p>Disaster – External Environmental Threat An incident outside of the building that may have adverse effects on persons in the child care centre. E.g. gas leak, oil spill, chemical release, forest fire, nuclear emergency.</p>	<p>The staff member who becomes aware of the external environmental threat must inform all other staff of the threat as quickly and safely as possible and, according to directions from emergency services personnel, advise whether to remain on site or evacuate the premises.</p> <p>If remaining on site: Staff members who are outdoors with children must ensure everyone who is outdoors returns to their program room immediately.</p> <p>Staff must immediately:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remain calm; • take children’s attendance to confirm all children are accounted for; • close all program room windows and all doors that lead outside (where applicable); • seal off external air entryways located in the program rooms (where applicable); • continue with normal operations of the program; and • wait for further instructions. <p>Licensee or designate must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seal off external air entryways not located in program rooms (where applicable); • place a note on all external doors with instructions that no one may enter or exit the child care centre until further notice; and • turn off all air handling equipment (i.e. heating, ventilation and/or air conditioning, where applicable). <p>If emergency services personnel otherwise direct the child care centre to evacuate, follow the procedures outlined in the “Disaster Requiring Evacuation” section of this policy.</p>
<p>Natural Disaster: Tornado / Tornado Warning</p>	<p>The staff member who becomes aware of the tornado or tornado warning must inform all other staff as quickly and safely as possible.</p> <p>Staff members who are outdoors with children must ensure everyone who is outdoors returns to their program room(s) immediately.</p> <p>Staff must immediately:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remain calm; • gather all children; • go to the basement or take shelter in small interior ground floor rooms such as washrooms, closets or hallways; • take children’s attendance to confirm all children are accounted for; • remain and keep children away from windows, doors and exterior walls; • keep children calm; • conduct ongoing visual checks of the children; and • wait for further instructions.

<p>Natural Disaster: Major Earthquake</p>	<p>Staff in the program room must immediately:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remain calm; • instruct children to find shelter under a sturdy desk or table and away from unstable structures; • ensure that everyone is away from windows and outer walls; • help children who require assistance to find shelter; • for individuals in wheelchairs, lock the wheels and instruct the individual to duck as low as possible, and use a strong article (e.g. shelf, hard book, etc.) to protect their head and neck; • find safe shelter for themselves; • visually assess the safety of all children.; and • wait for the shaking to stop. <p>Staff members who are outdoors with children must immediately ensure that everyone outdoors stays away from buildings, power lines, trees, and other tall structures that may collapse, and wait for the shaking to stop.</p> <p>Once the shaking stops, staff must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gather the children, their emergency cards and emergency medication; and • exit the building through the nearest safe exit, where possible, in case of aftershock or damage to the building. <p>If possible, prior to exiting the building, staff should also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • take a first aid kit; and • gather all non-emergency medications. <p>Individuals who have exited the building must gather at the meeting place and wait for further instructions.</p> <p>Designated staff will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • help any individuals with medical and/or special needs who need assistance to go to the meeting place (in accordance with the procedure in a child’s individualized plan, if the individual is a child); and • in doing so, follow the instructions posted on special needs equipment or assistive devices during the evacuation. • If individuals cannot be safely assisted to exit the building, the designated staff will assist them to safety and ensure their required medication is accessible, if applicable; and • wait for further instructions. <p>The site designate must conduct a walkthrough of the childcare centre to ensure all individuals have evacuated, where possible.</p>
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<p>Health and safety issue Requiring Unexpected Temporally, short term/long term closure, due to outbreak of serious infection.</p>	<p>The staff member who becomes aware of the situation must inform all other staff of the incident and that the center must be evacuated, as quickly and safely as possible.</p> <p>Staff must immediately:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remain calm; • take children’s attendance to confirm all children are accounted for; • keep children calm; and • wait for further instructions. <p>Licensee/Designate will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be guided by the correct authorities, ie: Public health, Government etc. • Upon instructions, measures will be followed. • If the center is instructed to be closed immediately, families will be called personally by the licensee/Designate and informed accordingly, they must collect their child as soon as they can. If a time frame is allocated this will be information shared with the families at time of call. <p>Follow up information will be shared as and when developments happen and are brought to our attention from the correct authorities.</p>
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Phase 2: Next Steps During the Emergency

Where emergency services personnel are not already aware of the situation, the licensee or designate must notify emergency services personnel (911) of the emergency as soon as possible.

Where the child care centre has been evacuated, emergency services must be notified of individuals remaining inside the building, where applicable.

If the licensee is not already on site, the site designate must contact the licensee to inform them of the emergency situation and the current status, once it is possible and safe to do so.

List of Emergency Contact Persons:

- Local Police Department: 519-824-1212
- Ambulance: 911
- Local Fire Services: 519-824-3232
- Guelph General Hospital: 519-822-5350
- Poison Control: 1-800-268-9017
- Licensee Contact(s): Tammy Hayes 519-829-6277
- Child Care Centre Site Designate: Denise Mercer 519-546-6273
- Child Care Center Supervisor: Rebecca Hayes - 519-400-0023

Where any staff, students and/or volunteers are not on site, the Licensee or designate must notify these individuals of the situation and instruct them to proceed directly to the evacuation site if it is not safe or practical for them return to the childcare centre.

The Licensee or designate must wait for further instructions from emergency services personnel. Once instructions are received, they must communicate the instructions to staff and ensure they are followed.

Throughout the emergency, staff will:

- help keep children calm;
- take attendance to ensure that all children are accounted for;
- conduct ongoing visual checks and head counts of children;
- maintain constant supervision of the children; and
- engage children in activities, where possible.

In situations where injuries have been sustained, staff with first aid training will assist with administering first aid. Staff must inform emergency personnel of severe injuries requiring immediate attention and assistance.

8a) Procedures to Follow When “All-Clear” Notification is Given	
Procedures	<p>The individual who receives the ‘all-clear’ from an authority must inform all staff that the ‘all-clear’ has been given and that it is safe to return to the childcare centre.</p> <p>Designated staff who have assisted individuals with medical and/or special needs with exiting the building will assist and accompany these individuals with returning to the child care centre.</p> <p>Staff must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • take attendance to ensure all children are accounted for; • escort children back to their program room(s), where applicable; • take attendance upon returning to the program room(s) to ensure that all children are accounted for; where applicable; and • re-open closed/sealed blinds, windows and doors. <p>The Licensee or designate will determine if operations will resume and communicate this decision to staff.</p>
Communication with parents/guardians	<p>As soon as possible, Front line staff (under the guidance of the licensee or designate) must notify parents/guardians of the emergency and that the all-clear has been given.</p> <p>Where disasters have occurred that did not require evacuation of the childcare centre, the licensee or designate must provide a notice of the incident to parents/guardians by written notice on the parents notice board, staff will be required to orally inform parents, guardians at collection.</p> <p>If normal operations do not resume the same day that an emergency has taken place, the licensee or designate must provide parents/guardians with information as to when and how normal operations will resume as soon as this is determined.</p>

8b) Procedures to Follow When “Unsafe to Return” Notification is Given	
Procedures	<p>The individual who receives the ‘unsafe to return’ notification from an authority must inform all staff of this direction and instruct them to proceed from the meeting place to the evacuation site, or the site determined by emergency services personnel.</p> <p>Staff must take attendance to confirm that all children are accounted for, and escort children to the evacuation site.</p> <p>Designated staff who have assisted individuals with medical and/or special needs with exiting the building will assist and accompany these individuals to the evacuation site.</p> <p>The licensee or designate will post a note for parents/guardians on the childcare centre entrance with information on the evacuation site, where it is possible and safe to do so.</p> <p>Upon arrival at the evacuation site, staff must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remain calm; • take attendance to ensure all children are accounted for; • help keep children calm; • engage children in activities, where possible; • conduct ongoing visual checks and head counts of children; • maintain constant supervision of the children; • keep attendance as children are picked up by their parents, guardians or authorized pick-up persons; and • remain at the evacuation site until all children have been picked up.
Communication with parents/guardians	<p>Upon arrival at the emergency evacuation site, the licensee, designate or staff will notify parents/guardians of the emergency, evacuation and the location to pick up their children.</p> <p>Where possible, the licensee / designate will update the childcare centre’s voicemail box as soon as possible to inform parents/guardians that the child care centre has been evacuated, and include the details of the evacuation site location and contact information in the message.</p>

Additional Procedures for Next Steps During an Emergency

During any emergency, notes will be taken and documented, children’s well-being will be monitored and noted. Provisions will be distributed from the evacuation bins.

Phase 3: Recovery (After an Emergency Situation has Ended)

Procedures for Resuming Normal Operations	The licensee or designate will take all the necessary measures to allow the daycare to resume normal day to day running. For example: Contacting the ministry of education program advisor, and any other personal required.
Procedures for Providing Support to Children and Staff who Experience Distress	The licensee or designate will provide the necessary solutions/ guidance and support for any person experiencing distress from an emergency. Support will be offered in house or externally as required.
Procedures for Debriefing Staff, Children and Parents/ Guardians	<p>The licensee or designate must debrief staff, children and parents/guardians after the emergency.</p> <p>This will take place at the childcare center as soon as possible.</p>

First Steps Policies and Procedures

Conflict Resolution/Parent Concerns and Issues

Should any First Steps families/parents have a concern or/ and grievance, it is important that the matter be given the upmost attention, and dealt with in a professional, calm, respectful manner.

Parents are requested to raise any minor concerns they may have regarding their child's care initially with their child's teacher, this should then be followed up by speaking to the supervisor if the concern has not been satisfactorily resolved.

Should any client have a concern or grievance regarding a member of staff, they are requested to contact the supervisor as soon as possible. The supervisor will always be contactable via phone or email should the supervisor be out of the office.

Should a grievance/concern be with the licensee, the assistant supervisor should be informed

All concerns or/and grievances will be dealt with in the following manner:

- With confidentiality.
- An investigation will be implemented.
- Meetings with the staff member or members as a group if required to discuss the matter at hand. Discuss possible strategies to resolve the matter.
- Should the matter involve a discrepancy with a staff member, the supervisor will initiate an immediate conversation with the parent via phone or in person, to obtain the full details of the concern. A written report will be taken during the conversation and both parent and supervisor will sign and date the report.
- The supervisor will investigate the situation, a meeting with the staff member in question will be conducted, and written details will be documented. The supervisor will disclose findings with the parent in question.
- If the concern or/and grievance can be successfully resolved, all documents collected will be placed in the employees file and reviewed in 3 months from date on paperwork. A follow up conversation will take place between the parent and the supervisor within 24-48 hrs of the issue at hand.
- Strategies and professional development will be offered to assist the staff member with the particular matter.
- Should the matter not be resolved and possibly requires temporally dismissal or termination of contract the supervisor will sort professional advice from The County of Wellington Child Care Services or The Ministry of Education and make the final judgement call.
- Any such situation will be given careful consideration as to maintain the smooth operation within the program, and to allow a fair, precise and accurate outcome.
- Strategies and professional development will be offered to assist the staff member with the particular matter.
- Should the matter not be resolved and possibly requires temporally dismissal or termination of contract the supervisor will sort professional advice from The County of Wellington Child Care Services or The Ministry of Education and make the final judgement call.
- *Any such situation will be given careful consideration as to maintain the smooth operation within the program, and to allow a fair, precise and accurate outcome.*

Licensed Childcare General Inquiries/Concerns/Complaints

You can contact the county of wellington children’s Early Years Division if you have an inquiry, concern or complaint regarding a licensed childcare program. Calls/emails can be made in confidence.

Childcare information line-519-837-3620 ext 3095

Or-1 800-265-7294 ext 3095

Email childcareinquiries@wellington.ca

Conduct

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

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

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*.

For more information, visit

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

Procedures to follow regarding Issue/concern

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 E.g: schedule, sleep arrangements, toilet training, indoor/outdoor program activities, feeding arrangements, etc.</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to the classroom staff directly or the supervisor or licensee.</p>	<p>Address the issue/concern at the time it is raised or arrange for a meeting with the parent/guardian within 2 business days.</p> <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 E.g: child care fees, hours of operation, staffing, waiting lists, menus, etc.</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to the supervisor or licensee.</p>	<p>Provide contact information for the appropriate person if the person being notified is unable to address the matter.</p>
<p>Staff-, Duty parent-, Supervisor-, and/or Licensee-Related</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to the individual directly or the supervisor or licensee.</p> <p>All issues or concerns about the conduct of staff, duty parents, etc. 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.</p>	<p>Ensure the investigation of the issue/concern is initiated by the appropriate party within [1] business days or as soon as reasonably possible thereafter. Document reasons for delays in writing.</p> <p>Provide a resolution or outcome to the parent(s)/guardian(s) who raised the issue/concern.</p>
<p>Student- / Volunteer-Related</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to the staff responsible for supervising the volunteer or student or the supervisor and/or licensee.</p> <p>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.</p>	

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 Licensee/designate.

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: Tammy Hayes – Licensee - 519-829-6277
 Denise Mercer - Assistant Supervisor – 519-546-7263
 Rebecca Hayes – Supervisor (Lakeside) – 519-400-0023
 Ministry of Education, Licensed Child Care Help Desk: 1-877-510-5333 or childcare_ontario@ontario.ca



First Steps Early Learning Centre Fee Schedule (effective October 2024)
 Fee Subsidy available with the [County of Wellington](#)

7654 Conservation Rd School Age and Preschool Programs Daily BASE FEES

School Age Base Fees

	6 years and older			
	BEFORE SCHOOL	AFTER SCHOOL	BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL	PD Days/Summer Camp
7654 Cons. Rd.	\$13.00	\$19.00	\$31.00	\$50.00

Outdoor Preschool Program Base Fees

	30 months and older
	DAILY
7654 Conservation Rd.	\$65.00

Late Fee Service Charge:

A \$25 (non-base) fee will be charged if base fees are paid late.

Deposit (Base Fee) – 7654 Conservation Rd

Preschool Program - \$150

School Age - \$150

No rebate or reduction can be given for these absences. Enrolment in the Centre is conditional on full and timely payment of all fees. It is your responsibility to keep your account balance current. We reserve the right to add a non-base "Late Fee Service Charge" to your account, change your method of payment and/or terminate your child care space if your account is not kept current. Please note that if you leave the Center with an outstanding balance owing, we will use any and all measures available to us to collect the balance.

Child Care Center and Before/After School Withdrawal Policy & Summer Camp Cancellation:

We require two weeks written notice when withdrawing your child from the Centre, Before and After School, & Summer Camp Programs. Full fees for the two-week period is payable if inadequate notice is given.

Tax Receipts:

Tax receipts for all accounts that are not outstanding will be available by the end of February of each year, regardless whether the child remains enrolled at the Center or has withdrawn throughout the year.

Other Non-Base Fees: Please refer to Attendance Agreement for further details.

Late Pick-up Fine:

The Centres close at 5:30pm and all children should be dressed and off premises by that time. If late, there is a 5-minute grace period, and after this time a charge of \$5 (non-base fee) will be incurred and \$5 (non-base fee) for each 5 minutes after.

Please feel free to contact us with any further questions/concerns

*** Visit us at www.firststepsguelph.ca***

“With Every Step Your Child Will Grow with Us!”

Updated July 2024