

DISCOVERY
Early Learning & Care

FAMILY HANDBOOK

REVISED MARCH 2023

DiscoveryCare.ca

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WELCOME

Discovery Early Learning & Care Board of Directors, Leadership Team and employees welcome you to our programs. Our hope is that you will quickly feel at ease in our programs and invite opportunities to reflect and collaborate together. We believe that open communication is vital to the success of our relationship as we learn more about your family and your dreams for your child. It is through this dialogue with each other that we will be better equipped to learn, play and grow together.

The Board of Directors is composed of Discovery Early Learning & Care Parents/Guardians and community partners and collectively establish the governance policies of Discovery Early Learning & Care.

The Board of Directors meet monthly (10 months/year) and host an Annual Meeting for families in May of each year. Invitations to the meeting will be posted in programs, through social media and on our website discoverycare.ca

If you are interested in a position with our Board of Directors, please speak to the Executive Director or visit our website to download the Board Membership package and application form.



PROGRAM STATEMENT

Valuing Relationships with Each Other.

Grounding our Work in *How Does Learning Happen?* Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years

OUR VISION:

A community where children, families, and professionals are inspired and empowered with unlimited opportunities to develop to their maximum potential.

OUR MISSION:

Discovery Early Learning & Care is a not for profit charitable organization dedicated to providing children, families, and professionals with opportunities to learn through relationship building, collaboration, inquiry and play.

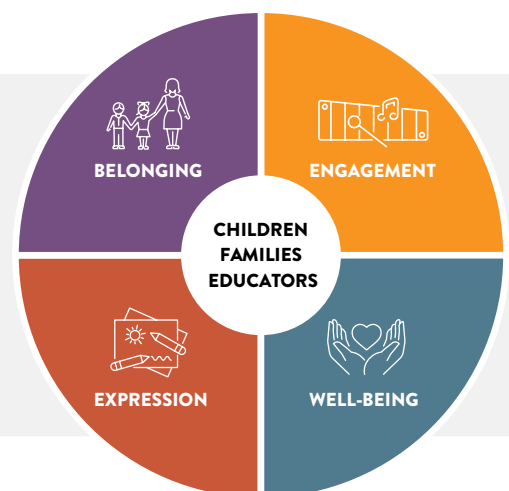
OUR VALUES:

Play, Lifelong Learning, Leadership and Inclusion. Our intent is that these values are visible throughout our programs, environments, relationships and communication.

PROGRAM AND POLICY RATIONALE:

Discovery Early Learning & Care values the four foundations of *How Does Learning Happen?* Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years. In our relationships with each other we strive to consider the Foundations of the Ministry of Education's pedagogical document including:

BELONGING | **WELL-BEING** | **ENGAGEMENT** | **EXPRESSION**



PROGRAM STATEMENT

(Continued)

The Foundations present themselves in “Goals for Children” and “Expectations for Programs” and it is within each of these that we acknowledge what children, parents and Discovery Early Learning & Care teams deserve with regards to learning, growing, and caring for young children and ourselves:

FOUNDATIONS	GOALS FOR CHILDREN	EXPECTATIONS FOR PROGRAMS
Belonging	Every child has a sense of belonging when he or she is connected to others and contributes to their world.	Early childhood programs cultivate authentic, caring relationships and connections to create a sense of belonging among and between children, adults, and the world around them.
Engagement	Every child is an active and engaged learner who explores the world with body, mind, and senses.	Early childhood programs provide environments and experiences to engage children in active, creative, and meaningful exploration, play, and inquiry.
Well-Being	Every child is developing a sense of self, health, and well-being.	Early childhood programs nurture children’s healthy development and support their growing sense of self.
Expression	Every child is a capable communicator who expresses themselves in many ways.	Early childhood programs foster communication and expression in all forms.

- ✓ Discovery Early Learning & Care sees children as competent, capable of complex thinking, curious, and rich in potential, we value and build on their strengths and abilities.
- ✓ Discovery Early Learning & Care’s Values include Play, Lifelong Learning, Leadership and Inclusion. Our intent is that these values are also visible throughout our programs, environments, relationships and communication.
- ✓ Discovery Early Learning & Care is an inclusive program where the uniqueness of each child, family and educator is considered in our daily practice. *“If a child can’t learn the way we teach, maybe we should teach the way they learn.”*
– Ignacio Estrada
- ✓ Discovery Early Learning & Care sees families as experts who know their children better than anyone else and have important information to share, we value and engage them in a meaningful way.
- ✓ Discovery Early Learning & Care sees our teams as knowledgeable, reflective, resourceful, and rich in experience, we value the experiences and environments they create for children.
- ✓ Discovery Early Learning & Care takes pride in our Leadership and values our ability to support each other, our children and families and our community. *“A leader is someone who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way.”*
– C. Maxwell.

PROGRAM STATEMENT

(Continued)

- ✓ Discovery Early Learning & Care has grounded these perspectives from *How Does Learning Happen?* Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years into this policy document, with the intent to demonstrate them in our visioning, planning, work, play, and thinking as we build on our relationships with children, families, community partners, and each other.
- ✓ Discovery Early Learning & Care values the care we offer to all stakeholders and believe that our learning environments should be visible of the work and thinking of those who build relationships within them.
- ✓ Discovery Early Learning & Care values inclusive environments that is dedicated to the safety and well-being of children, families and employees with opportunities to learn through relationship building, collaboration, inquiry and play.
- ✓ Discovery Early Learning & Care strives for authentic relationships that support positive and responsive interactions among the children, families, teams and the Leadership Team. We know that in building these relationships we must offer time and opportunity for reflection, questions and thinking about future possibilities in both our day to day work and in policy development.
- ✓ Discovery Early Learning & Care values the thinking of all, and invites opportunity for further collaboration with regards to change and future policy development.
- ✓ Play is the foundation of our early learning and care programs and embedded in our learning. *"Play is the highest form of research."* – Albert Einstein
- ✓ Discovery Early Learning & Care professional learning experiences are offered through Communities of Practice. All have a voice in our communities and we celebrate the collaboration and rich conversations that continue to challenge our thinking and provide opportunities for continued growth. Lifelong learning is valued and we also believe that professional learning can be offered "Side by Side" in the classroom through a variety of means; mentoring, discussions, collaboration, and transfer to practice.

"To enter into a style of teaching which is based on questioning what we're doing and why, on listening to children, on thinking about how theory is translated into practice and how practice informs theory, is to enter into a way of working where professional development takes place day after day in the classroom."

- Sonya Shoptaugh

- ✓ Lifelong Learning is treasured at Discovery Early Learning & Care. We take pride in learning together and building stronger communities. *"We cannot teach people anything, we can only help them discover it."* – Galileo Galilei
- ✓ Discovery Early Learning & Care strives to consider the rich teaching in this quote where we take time to reflect on our thinking and that of the children and families.

PROGRAM STATEMENT

(Continued)

- ✓ Discovery Early Learning & Care values relationships with community partners and professionals. Together with families, employees and community partners we plan for experiences and programs that build capacity and skills for all children through our community of practice planning experiences.
- ✓ Discovery Early Learning & Care celebrates the richness of the research documents of the Ministry of Education, including, “Think, Feel, Act” and the ELECT framework. Both documents guide our work in building relationships with children and families and understanding the development of each unique individual. Through communities of practice we will continue to explore these gifts in helping us guide and understand children more deeply. The Leadership Team will continue to offer these tools along with *How Does Learning Happen?* to our teams and families who need additional support in thinking about possibilities in new ways.
- ✓ Discovery Early Learning & Care’s environments are welcoming with rich experiences and documentation that reflects the work of the children and employees. We invite families to share their home experiences with us and to add images, reflections of learning stories and time to our environments. Our environments should mirror what we believe in and what our image of the child, family and each other is. Invitations and provocations guide our play and inquiry based experiences and our environments offer opportunities for children to explore, experiment, question, and create driven by the children’s thinking and interest.
- ✓ Discovery Early Learning & Care has embraced Learning Stories and Ages and Stages / Ages and Stages Social Emotional as a means of capturing the thinking and development of the children to share with families and each other. We invite families to respond to our documentation as a means of engagement in building stronger relationships. Learning stories help guide our thinking in what we can continue to offer in building on children’s interests and ideas.
- ✓ We value children and their time with us and capture their learning experiences in their own Portfolio. When families move on from Discovery Early Learning & Care we are able to offer them their child’s portfolio containing their learning stories, family responses, samples of creativity, images, learning goals (IPP) or speech and language goals and developmental checklists. Discovery Early Learning & Care invites families to build stronger relationships with our teams. When required or requested, we invite families to gather and share their story with us to help support the entire family. Communication through email, conversations, documentation and newsletters help keep families involved and informed.
- ✓ Revisiting documentation, goal setting, program evaluation and review of all policies and procedures will ensure that Discovery Early Learning & Care is living true to our work in what children, families and staff deserve.
- ✓ Discovery Early Learning & Care values the outdoor environment and incorporates both the outdoors inside and the inside outdoors. Moving equipment and furnishings outdoors and extending play experiences in the outdoors for longer periods of time increases physical activity and an appreciation of the world around them.
- ✓ Discovery Early Learning & Care’s program schedule is based around core periods of time. The Child Care and Early Years Act requirements are followed as we consider the interests and engagement of children in their learning and play. Providing experiences for active and quiet play, indoor and outdoor, rest and sharing of meals is incorporated into the children’s own schedules. Employees are flexible in their thinking in extending play and honouring children’s work.

PROGRAM STATEMENT

(Continued)

- ✓ The Ministry of Education's website has made available a copy of the entire *How Does Learning Happen?* Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years at www.ontario.ca/edu
- ✓ Discovery Early Learning & Care's Expectations for Learning and Care Policy, CCEYA Legislation and Prohibited Practices Legislation, enable us to be leaders in considering the needs of children and support staff in understanding opportunities to build skills in self-regulation, independence, and child growth and development. Continuing to question our role in co-construction of our learning with children will indeed build our own skills.
- ✓ Professional Learning opportunities have been and will continue to build on *How Does Learning Happen?* Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years to our teams.
- ✓ Coaching and mentoring documents will intentionally reflect the four foundations of *How Does Learning Happen?* Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years along with legislated requirements and Discovery Early Learning & Care's policies and procedures. This policy statement will be reviewed annually with Board of Directors and with all staff with understanding and acknowledgement.
- ✓ Upon licensing visits with the Ministry of Education's Program Advisor, it is the expectation of the Ministry and Discovery Early Learning & Care's Board of Directors that all employees are able to demonstrate transparency in their work as reflected through this document.



ADMISSION

All families requiring care must be registered on the Greater Sudbury Child Care Registry (onehnsn.com/sudbury) before admission to program is confirmed. We have an internal policy pertaining to the protocol that we will follow with regards to the registry, which can be accessed through the Program Supervisor at each site.

Registration on the Greater Sudbury child care registry or approval of subsidized child care with the City of Greater Sudbury's Childrens Services Division are two steps that could happen prior to being granted an early learning and child care space in any of our sites.

Once a space has been offered to your family, an intake meeting and tour will be arranged to familiarize you and your child with our early learning and care surroundings. The Program Supervisor will discuss with you the information outlined in this Family Handbook and will ask for specific information concerning the health and safety of your child. During this intake process we will also share information on how and when it is necessary to contact the site, your financial agreement as well as all policies and procedures. **There is no charge to be placed on a waitlist.**

A full Registration Package is available on our website at discoverycare.ca. You can download and complete the Registration Package once you have been contacted by a Program Supervisor of Discovery Early Learning & Care.

The first week can be difficult for some children. We would like to encourage you to stay with your child for a few minutes at the beginning of the day, in order to reassure the child, and to minimize fears until you and your child have started to build a stronger relationship with staff.



PROGRAMS & PEDAGOGY

Discovery Early Learning & Care has facilities to accommodate infant, toddler, preschool and school age children in Garson, Coniston and New Sudbury. The Holy Trinity Site and St. Paul Site are the only two sites offering infant care. During the summer months and school holidays we continue to offer flexible early learning & Care arrangements for your family. All of our four sites are licensed for care during the school year and summer months.

During the summer and school holidays, we attempt to operate in a fiscally responsible manner and there may be reasons to partner two sites together in order to utilize staff more efficiently. You will be provided with plenty of notice if this were to occur.

Due to the overwhelming need for part time care, Discovery Early Learning & Care also offers full time, part time, and before and after school care to accommodate your work, school or training schedules. Families who wish to enroll their children in an early learning and care environment for socialization and inquiry based play are welcomed.

At Discovery Early Learning & Care our teams observe, document, and interpret children's learning in order to understand, support and extend their thinking as well as assist in creating meaning in their experiences. The children are provided with opportunities to engage in on-going research, projects, and emergent activities inspired by their environment, community, family, and experiences.

Discovery Early Learning & Care welcomes student learners from the post secondary and secondary school communities. They are supervised by our team at all times and are not included in staffing ratios. Faculty from their schools also supervise their placement experiences.

All work is documented. Children's words, thoughts, hypotheses, theories, artwork, dialogues, projects, etc., are documented over the course of their time with us. Documentation is collected in portfolios that help present their development over time. An opportunity to review documentation and portfolios is welcomed. Families are encouraged to reflect on their child's learning and respond to learning stories and posted documentation.

Familial involvement in the program is also important and we invite families to share their home and work experiences with our teams. Photographs of families, sharing of culture and family traditions, and participating on field trips are only some of the ways that you can be involved in your child's early learning experiences.

Discovery Early Learning & Care has adopted **How Does Learning Happen?** Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years and builds on the four foundations of the document; Belonging, Well-being, Engagement and Expression. The Ministry of Education has named **How Does Learning Happen?** as the common provincial framework to guide programming and pedagogy in licensed child care settings. This document can be found on the Ministry of Education's website, at www.ontario.ca/edu



FEEDBACK AND EXPECTATIONS OF LEARNING AND CARE

As partners with you in providing early learning and care for your child, we need to maintain open and clear lines of communication. We know that from time to time, families may have questions, feedback or concerns about the program or other aspects of care.

We encourage families to speak with their child's Educators about any concerns or questions that may arise. Our Educators have the best understanding of what is taking place in each classroom, and are better equipped to answer your questions.

If you feel unsure about how to handle a situation or are uncomfortable speaking to your child's Educator directly, please approach the Program Supervisor directly with your concerns. They have full responsibility for the centre, and will answer your questions or direct you to the appropriate resource.

If after speaking with the Program Supervisor you feel further discussion is necessary, please contact the Executive Director of Discovery Early Learning & Care. Centre specific contact information as listed on page 2 of this Family Handbook.

Moving forward with legislation from the Child Care and Early Years Act, we have developed a Parent Issues and Concerns Policy and Procedures and Expectations for Learning and Care Policy. These policies would be used to help guide our conversations with families.

Another piece of legislation from the Child Care and Early Years Act is found in sub-section 6.7 – Prohibited Practices Ontario Regulation 137/15

This provision forbids physical punishment and other harmful disciplinary practices to protect the emotional, physical well-being of children. It sets out clear direction regarding prohibitive practices to support the overall well-being of children. A list of the prohibited practices can be found in Appendix A of this Family Handbook.



DAYS AND HOURS OF OPERATION

Throughout the year, all programs are offered, including a summer program for Full Day Kindergarten children and School Aged youth. All four sites are open Monday to Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. except for the following recognized holidays and other occasions:

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

In addition, all sites will be closed during the holidays for the week of Christmas Day, December 25, to New Year's Day, January 1, to spend time with our families and refresh for the new year.

There may be days other than the recognized holidays that a program may close for a number of reasons, including; construction/renovation, professional learning, or fiscal responsibility. We will attempt to provide as much notice as possible.

EMERGENCY AND EVACUATION

In the event of emergency conditions (ie. Blizzard or work conditions) families will be expected to pick up children early or to make arrangements for an authorized person to pick up children.

Families will be contacted by telephone if children have arrived and there is a need to close the program. In the event of any emergency conditions taking place prior to opening, every attempt will be made to have announcements made on the discoverycare.ca website and through social media.

Other emergency situations will follow internal policies. As permitted, updates will also be posted on the discoverycare.ca website. These may include: closure due to unforeseen circumstances, lock down, fire evacuation or poor air quality.

Should the schools close due to inclement weather Discovery Early Learning & Care programs will also close. You will not be notified by telephone when the schools or our programs are closed if decisions are made prior to the programs 6:30 a.m. opening. We will provide as much notice as possible through social media. If the school buses are pulled off the road but the schools remain open, our programs will remain open, but you are responsible to provide transportation to and from program and school. We are not licensed to have school age youth in our programs when schools are open.

Each Discovery Early Learning & Care program has a different evacuation plan and site for emergency purposes. The Program Supervisor at each site will inform you of the locations of each evacuation site during registration.

OUR TEAM AND MINISTRY OF EDUCATION RATIOS

Discovery Early Learning & Care is grateful for the dedicated, trained and professional teams in our programs.

Registered Early Childhood Educators, Child and Youth Workers, and Ontario Certified Teachers, bring research, observation tools, experience, skills, an understanding of how children learn, guiding principles, and commitment to pedagogy. Each of our teaching teams have training and hold post-secondary recognition. All Early Childhood Educators are registered with the College of Early Childhood Educators. Our support staff have alternate diplomas and participate in professional learning experiences. We provide learning experiences for students during placements from our high schools and post-secondary institutions in hopes that they gain experience for future employment.

The Child Care & Early Years Act regulates the Group Size and Ratios of children to program staff (Ontario Regulation 137/15):

NAME OF AGE CATEGORY	AGE RANGE OF AGE CATEGORY	RATIO OF EMPLOYEES TO CHILDREN	MAX # OF CHILDREN IN GROUP	PROPORTION OF EMPLOYEES THAT MUST BE QUALIFIED EMPLOYEES
Infant	Younger than 18 months	3:10	10	1/3
Toddler	18 months or older but younger than 30 months	1:5	15	1/3
Preschool	30 months or older but younger than 6 years	1:8	24	2/3
Kindergarten	44 months or older but younger than 7 years	1:13	26	1/2
Primary/Junior School Age	68 months or older but younger than 7 years	1:15	30	1/2
Junior School Age	9 years or older but younger than 13 years	1:20	20	1/1

Discovery Early Learning & Care will make every effort to go beyond regulation and increase the adult ratio through the involvement of students, special employment programs and volunteers.

All employees and volunteers are thoroughly screened before commencing work/volunteer experiences, meet all Child Care and Early Years Act regulations and hold an Infant/Child First Aid and CPR certificate. All employees, students/volunteers must hold a clear vulnerable sector check prior to working alongside children.

The Discovery Early Learning & Care Board of Directors and teams support each individual's rights to information and protection of privacy. We will ensure the safety and well-being of each child in our care by ensuring that volunteers and students are supervised by a Registered Early Childhood Educator or other staff at all times.

In order to maintain these rights and to adhere to regulations in the Child Care and Early Years Act (Ontario Regulation 137/15) Discovery Early Learning & Care also has a policy in place that guides our practice with regards to supervision, privacy and collection of information.

INCLUSION AND INTEGRATION

Discovery Early Learning & Care values inclusion and strives to live into a quote by Ignacio Estrada;

“If a child can’t learn the way we teach, maybe we should teach the way they learn.”

All children are welcomed into our programs. With the support of other community partners like, Child and Community Resources, Children’s Treatment Centre and Speech and Language Services (Wordplay) we build on their goals and plans for full integration into our programs. On any given day you might find professionals from these agencies working alongside and mentoring our teams in order to support inclusive services for all children.

Your Program Supervisor will be able to share more information about the supports that our community partners can offer and how Discovery Early Learning & Care can assist in referrals to supports.

Child and Community Resources has an Early Learning and Inclusion Consultant assigned to our program. This consultant works alongside our teams to support children and staff in optimizing full potentials. Together we also work with families and set goals, make referrals and develop plans for each child’s success in our programs.

Guiding Children’s Behaviour

Children will be redirected in a positive manner at a level that is appropriate to their actions, attitudes and ages. This serves to promote self-discipline and respect for the rights of others; to ensure health and safety; and to maintain equipment.

Methods of redirection will be discussed at team meetings, and consistent redirection measures will be agreed upon. All staff have a responsibility to the College of Early Childhood Educators, the Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics, and our own Expectations for Learning and Care policy with regards to guiding children’s behaviour.

Positive reinforcement will be communicated through verbal and non-verbal communications. Consistent acknowledgement of acceptable behaviours will send messages to the child of acceptance and self-worth.

Employees will be aware of their learning and play environments and the dispositions of children in their care. Therefore, foreseeing any negative action, employees will redirect a child into a more positive action or activity.

Spanking and other forms of corporal punishment, harsh or degrading measures of discipline **WILL NEVER BE PERMITTED**. Deprivation of a child’s basic needs is in contravention to our policies.

The key to guiding behaviour and supporting children’s thinking is to approach the situation with a strength based mindset and believing that children are capable and competent in thinking through situations. Together the children and Educators can approach situations positively and consistently and always respecting the child.

Recurrent challenging behaviours will be discussed as a team in supporting the child. A meeting with the family, educator and Program Supervisor will be offered to begin to work on safety plan to ensure that your child and others are safe and to look at additional services and supports that might be necessary for greater success in program.

NUTRITION

Food is an important part of every child's day, but food is more than just something to eat. Each child will be encouraged to feed themselves in order to develop motor skills and independence. Each and every day, children will be introduced to a variety of foods.

The menus will provide a nutritious mid-day lunch as well as a morning and afternoon snack. Families are asked to inform the Program Supervisor if a child has any special dietary restrictions or food allergies. This will be discussed at length during registration. Menus are posted at each site and copies are available as requested. Our meals are prepared by trained employees certified in food safety. It is very important that part time schedules of care are submitted by the Wednesday of each week so that we can order the appropriate number of meals for the following week. We plan children's menus based on the Canada's Food Guide recommendations.

In addition to our menus, should your infant child require additional food products and formulas, please speak directly to the infant program team for ease in transition to full menu options.

School Age youth and Full Day Kindergarten children provide their own Brown Bag Lunches during school holidays and summer vacation. In the rare circumstances that a child forgets their lunch, appropriate action on our part will be taken in order to provide a lunch substitute. We will also contact the family in case you would like to return with a prepared lunch for your child.

ALLERGIES AND SENSITIVITIES

Due to the increase in needs of children with allergies to nuts and nut products, Discovery Early Learning & Care programs make every attempt to ensure our environments are nut safe.

Children are not to bring any outside food products into our programs. For our school age youth, who supply their own brown bag lunch and follow our Brown Bag Lunch Policy, lunches should not comprise of food products that contain or may contain nuts and nut products on the ingredient list. All other food is provided in each program and there is no need to bring in snacks from home. Thank you in advance for keeping our children safe.

Families of all youth attending our FDK Extended Day and School Age programs will be required to sign our Brown Bag Lunch Policy, during the registration process. All our sites are peanut and nut safe environments and for this reason all the rules and recommendations with regards to this policy must be adhered to. On occasion there are some children with severe allergies to some specific foods and we will support those children and ask that you refrain from packing these food items in your child's lunch. We only want to keep all of our children safe. A notice will be provided to you in advance of any additional high-risk foods.

Children with severe identified food allergies and have their own Epi Pen, will be required to have an Individual Health Care Plan completed prior to enrolment in our programs. The Food Allergy Canada website www.foodallergycanada.ca has an abundance of information for your review and our own Anaphylaxis Policy will also help guide our conversations together about your child's needs.

We will work with families with regards to identified food allergies and requests due to religious beliefs.

Discovery Early Learning & Care has certified trainers, trained by Food Allergy Canada and all employees are also trained in infant/child First Aid and CPR and Anaphylaxis.



REST PERIOD

The Child Care and Early Years Act regulations directs our practice in supporting all children's rest and sleep periods (Ontario Regulation 137/15 Section 33).

Discovery Early Learning & Care has developed a Sleep Supervision Policy building from the regulations and the Joint Statement on Safe Sleep: Preventing Sudden Infant Deaths in Canada by the Public Health Agency of Canada.

The need for rest and sleep varies greatly at different ages, and even among children of the same age. This provision acknowledges that some children who are tired take a relatively long time to relax and sleep. Rest while in program will not be of such duration that normal sleep patterns at home are disturbed. Please feel free to discuss your child's schedule with any one of our staff.

All infants under 12 months of age are placed for sleep in a manner consistent with the recommendations set out in the document "Joint Statement on Safe Sleep: Preventing Sudden infant Deaths in Canada" published by the Public Health Agency of Canada.

The only exception to this statement of infants sleeping on their backs is under the consultation of a physician where a doctor's note is on file stating that in accordance with the physician that it is in the best interest of the child to sleep in an alternate position.

As your infant child prepares to transition to the toddler program, we will support their development and move to cots for sleeping /resting in the infant program.

ITEMS FROM HOME

Discovery Early Learning & Care has ample materials and loose parts to engage all ages involved. Along with the emergent curriculum are opportunities for children to explore items that are of interest to them from the natural world around them.

Bird nests, rocks, fossils, a flower, etc. are only some of the items that may be explored further in your child's day. We invite you and your child to share your treasures with us. Please ensure that any item from home is labelled with your child's name. This will prevent loss or damage to their belongings. We ask that you refrain from transporting electronic type devices to our programs.

FIELD TRIPS AND SPECIAL GUESTS

Throughout the year, trips are made to special places of interest for our school age children. A notice will be sent home in advance of each excursion informing you of the destination, time and date. It will include a permission form to be signed and returned prior to the excursion, indicating participation in the outing.

Any excursion outside of the fenced in area is considered a neighbourhood walk, even if it is still on the same property as the program. Your registration package will provide us with permission to explore our close neighbourhoods and surroundings. This form will remain in your child's file to cover all excursions of this nature.

We invite families to share talents, and interests with the children. We also open our environments to community members to share their interests and occupations with the children.

PROGRAM SCHEDULES AND FORMS SENT HOME (Paper & Electronic)

Occasionally, we will send home paper and/or electronic questionnaires or letters and ask for your response. This helps us in our programming and in keeping our files up to date. Please take a few minutes to complete them as you receive them.

It is very important that forms concerning holiday care and PA day care are returned as quickly as possible so that we can assure that additional staff be placed on the schedule to meet the licensing requirements. Please take some time to fully read all forms before filling out and returning to avoid delays, and the need to fill out additional forms.

Requests for care for children with part time schedules must be presented, at the latest, by the Wednesday afternoon prior to the week requesting care. Monthly schedules must be submitted to your Program Supervisor during the last week of the current month for the following month to support administrative responsibilities. Care is offered to part time/weekly schedule families on availability of space basis. All schedules and changes to schedules are to be submitted electronically to your Program Supervisor.



ARRIVAL, DEPARTURE AND LATENESS POLICY

Young children depend on regular routines for their own sense of security. Families are requested to notify the program any time their child will not be attending. Your contract with Discovery Early Learning & Care reads a specific drop off and pick up time.

This is very important so that staff be scheduled properly for licensing requirements. When your child arrives, a staff member must be made aware of their presence. Also, when picking up your child, enter the building and make sure the staff is aware that you are leaving. We ask that you initial and record the time on the attendance clip boards, both when dropping off and picking up your child. If you fail to sign your child in or out on the attendance boards for the day, staff will record the necessary documentation. Your day care invoice is based on these times recorded. If questions arise regarding your invoice, we will use the time recorded by the employee, as you are responsible for the documented time.

Under no circumstances will a child be released to anyone not known to the employee without authorization from a parent or guardian. This person must also supply photo identification before the child will be released to them. No child will be released to an adult that is incapacitated to the degree that the Executive Director or staff feels that the safety of the child is in danger. Authorities will be notified if necessary.

Discovery Early Learning & Care abides by all custody arrangements through court orders. It is very important that we receive a copy of your court order to ensure the safety of your child during the registration process. We are also instructed to follow the court order directives as presented. Any changes requested by the family must be presented as an amendment to the court order or a new order. We do understand that circumstances might change and the new order would assure safety of the child.

Our operating hours in all programs are 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Therefore, all families are required to arrive in accordance with your pick up time on your contract. If you pick up after your scheduled time, you will be charged the next applicable rate. (ie. If a part day is scheduled and you use over 6 hours, you will be charged a full day) When picking up after 6:00 p.m., a late fee of \$1.00 per minute will be charged. You will be asked to sign a Late Pick Up form along with our staff's signature and document the time of your arrival. All incidents of lateness will be monitored by staff and recorded in our daily log. Thank you for your co-operation and respect for our hours of service. If there is any need to change your hours of care, please speak to the Program Supervisor immediately so that we can better accommodate your family's needs.



CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR

We value exploration both indoors and outdoors and ask that your child be dressed in clothing that is appropriate for physical activities, weather and the season.

Please provide a second set of clothing to be kept at the program for emergency changes. All clothing should be labelled with your child's name so that it can stay out of the lost and found storage. We take the children outside daily, temperature permitting. Wind and rain are two weather conditions that are often overlooked. Children can learn many properties from both wind and rain and we often explore these elements in their outdoor environments. Proper clothing (ie. Mitts, hats, boots) is essential for children who play outside or who have to wait for their bus. Children are required to have proper indoor footwear for daily day care use. Sandals with a strap across the rear of the heel are welcomed.

"WHY ARE MY CHILD'S CLOTHES DIRTY"

Children are happy when they are busy and active. They do not learn very much when they are sitting down being quiet and neat. They learn best, and most, by **DOING**. The kinds of activities that children learn from and enjoy include painting, playdough, water, sand exploration and cooking. We also go outdoors every day to explore our world.

These, and other activities, prepare your children for further learning experiences in school. They are learning to use their hands and body. They are learning to think, to be creative, and to express themselves. They are learning to get along with other children and adults which is also important for school.

We do use aprons to keep clothes from getting too dirty. But some dirt is bound to happen. So please send your children to our programs in clothes that you don't mind getting dirty. When you see a dress or pants with a big stain, remember:

DIRTY CLOTHES = A HAPPY, ENGAGED, LEARNING CHILD! 

WET BAGS

In considering the environment and the use of single-use plastics, families are required to provide wet bags for your child each day. The wet bag will be used to collect soiled or wet clothing and will keep your child's additional clothing clean and dry in their backpack/cubbies.



SUN SAFETY AND EXTREME HOT WEATHER PRACTICES

Discovery Early Learning & Care recognizes sun safety practices and requests that each family provide sunscreen products for their child.

We ask that you provide a nut free sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or greater. As per the Public Health Sudbury & Districts' recommendations, a sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or more will be applied 30 minutes before going outside to all exposed areas and reapplied as necessary during the day.

Eyes should be protected by wearing a wide brimmed hat and sunglasses with 100% UVA/UVB protection. Sunscreen will be applied even on cloudy days as 80% of the sun's rays penetrate through the clouds. Educators will be aware of the need for shade, exposure time in the sun, protective clothing and the need for extra fluids.

If we are in a situation of extreme heat or cold conditions, we will follow the direction of the Ministry of Education and the Public Health Sudbury & Districts and either relocate children to an environment meeting the requirements or you will be asked to pick up your child and we will follow the Ministry of Education's serious occurrence policies.

In your registration package, there will be a Permission to Apply Non-Medicated External Products form that includes permission for application of the sunscreen product that you have supplied to the program.

DIAPERS

Families are required to supply diapers and wipes for infants and for children who are not independent enough to use the toilet. All children in diapers are required to have a supply of diapers, wipes and creams for the program. Any prescription applications will require a medical authorization. For safety purposes, we ask that you hand deliver all substances to staff.

If you are choosing to provide cloth diapers, you will be required to provide disposable liners and a wet bag for used diapers to transport home to launder.



BOTTLES AND PACIFIERS

Pacifiers will be permitted in the environments, depending on age appropriateness, during regular programming time. Your child will be permitted to have a pacifier during sleep time if you feel it is necessary. Families must ensure that the pacifier is in a safe and hygienic condition. Staff will also review the safety of the pacifier.

Bottles will not be permitted in the playrooms during regular programming for toddler children. However, your child will be permitted to have a bottle prior to sleep time. Your child may sit with an educator to have their bottle, however, as a safety precaution they may not nap with their bottle. If you feel it is necessary for your child to have a bottle, then please supply a clean bottle. Infant needs will be met with regards to their feeding schedules.



HEALTH, INJURY OR INCIDENT

The Child Care and Early Years Act stipulates that prior to admission; each child must be immunized as recommended by the local medical officer of health. Discovery Early Learning & Care requires that an up to date copy of your child's immunization record be submitted at the time of registration. As your child receives additional inoculations we will take a photocopy of the new information and forward it to the Public Health Sudbury & Districts.

Immunization and exemption requirements are detailed in our Immunization policy. Two forms are available for families choosing to withhold from the immunization schedule. They include the Statement of Conscience or Religious Belief for non-medical exemptions or the Statement of Medical Exemption to be completed by a regulated health professional. These forms will be added to your child's registration file.

If an outbreak of any infectious disease occur in program and your child is not immunized, the Public Health Sudbury & Districts could possibly insist on exclusion from our program until outbreak is over for the safety of all children and staff.

Regulations require daily outdoor play for each child. Therefore, it is our policy that children too ill to play outside or cannot function in the program must remain at home; parents/guardians will be asked to make other arrangements for their child. Children who are recovering from colds or other minor illnesses can be accommodated, but there may be no provisions for remaining indoors, according to staff/child ratios.

The following are important symptoms of illness to look for among children when deciding whether they are well enough to participate in program: diarrhea, severe coughing, difficult or rapid breathing, yellowish eyes or skin, pink eye, sore throat or trouble swallowing, infected skin patches, rash, unusually dark, tea-coloured urine, grey or white stool, headaches and stiff neck, vomiting, unusual behaviour, loss of appetite, fever, severe itching of body or scalp or scratching of scalp. Children with these symptoms should not be attending program.

If a child becomes ill while in program, we will provide temporary care until parents/guardians can be contacted and arrangements made to have the child picked up and taken home.

HEALTH, INJURY OR INCIDENT *(Continued)*

Discovery Early Learning & Care implements policies in regards to sickness as directed by the Public Health Sudbury & Districts. If your child has a fever, they can return to program 24 hours after the fever breaks. In regards to vomit and/or diarrhea, a child can return to program 48 hours after the last symptom. Some diseases, infections, etc. have specific isolation periods, so please check with our staff prior to returning to program. Under special circumstances, Public Health Sudbury and District has the authority to change these policies as they see fit.

If your child is not going to attend program as scheduled, we ask that you please call the program in the morning and share any symptoms of ill health with the Educator.

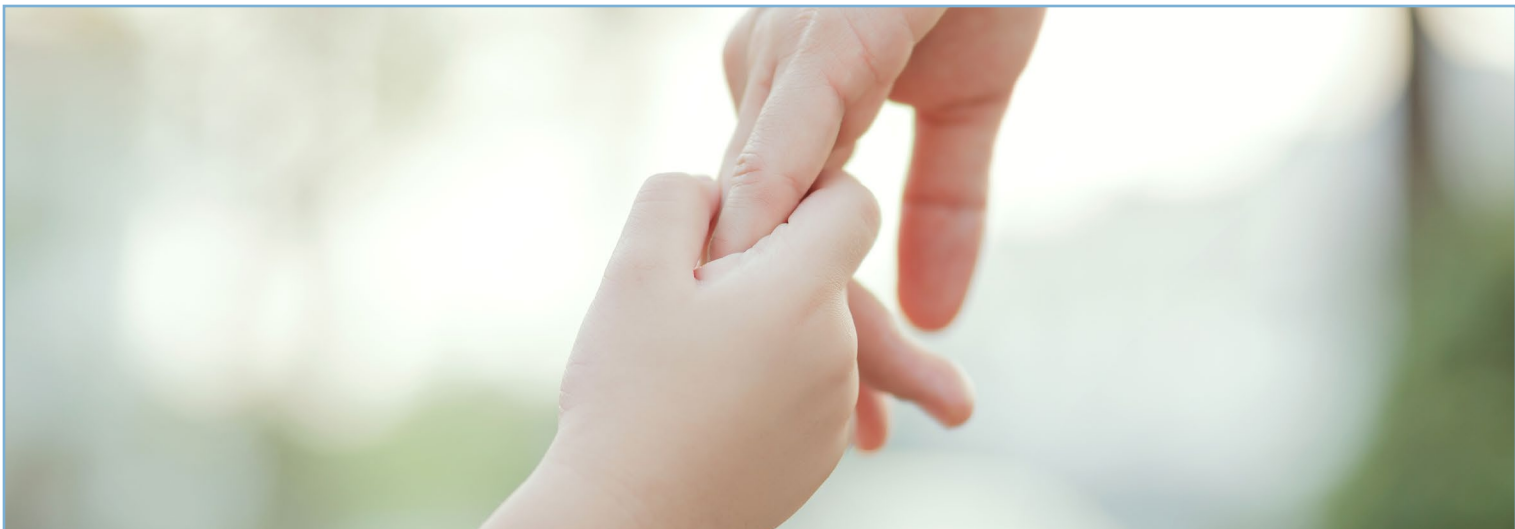
From time to time children will be screened for head lice and nits. Our programs follow a no nit policy. This policy indicates zero tolerance for the presence of nits/lice in the hair. If nits are found in your child's hair, you will be contacted to pick up your child. It is important that all children who are excluded for head lice infestation are screened before being readmitted to the program after treatment.

In the event of accidental injury requiring medical attention, the Program Supervisor or employee will make an immediate attempt to contact a parent/guardian or person named as emergency contact. If necessary, we will call an ambulance. Children with special medical needs will have an Individual Health Care Plan with instructions regarding medical emergencies.

Until the arrival of a parent/guardian, the physician at the hospital will support in making decisions about the medical care of the child. If necessary a Program Supervisor or designate will accompany the child to the hospital and meet up with parent/guardian there. The program will maintain a parent/guardian's signed consent form agreeing to this provision in the registration file.

It is in the child's best interest that the parent/guardian inform the Program Supervisor of any changes in places of employment, home address, telephone numbers and emergency contacts. They are advised to keep the Program Supervisor updated in matters relating to their child's health - allergies and medical conditions.

Should a child suffer a minor injury while in program, the staff will fill out an Accident Report notifying the parent/guardian of the incident - a description of the incident and the procedures administered by the staff. The parent/guardian will be asked to sign the Accident Report as it arises. Should the parent/guardian seek additional information regarding an incident, please contact the Program Supervisor. The parent/guardian will be provided with a copy of the Accident Report.



SERIOUS OCCURRENCE REPORTING

The safety and well-being of our children at Discovery Early Learning & Care is the highest priority. We work diligently to provide a safe, creative and nurturing environment for each child. In spite of all the best precautions, policies and procedures, accidents of a more serious nature can sometimes take place.

The Child Care and Early Years Act requires licensed programs to report these more serious incidents as a Serious Occurrence within 24 hours of the event and to post information about serious occurrences that happen that involve children and/or affect operations. To support increased transparency and access to information, a “Serious Occurrence Notification Form” is posted in the program in a visible area for 10 business days.

As defined under the Child Care and Early Years Act a serious occurrence could include:

1. Death of a Child
2. Allegation of Abuse and/or Neglect
3. Life-threatening Injury or Illness
4. Missing or Unsupervised Child(ren)
 - a. Child was found
 - b. Child is still missing
5. Unplanned Disruption of Normal Operations
 - a. Fire
 - b. Flood
 - c. Gas Leak
 - d. Detection of Carbon Monoxide
 - e. Outbreak
 - f. Lockdown
 - g. Other Emergency Relocation or Temporary Closure

Discovery Early Learning & Care has a lengthy Serious Occurrence Policy that guides our practice in supporting documentation, transparency and necessary changes/recommendations during and after the initial reports to the Ministry of Education, Executive Director, Chairperson of the Board of Directors or Children’s Aid Society.

SERIOUS OCCURRENCE REPORTING *(Continued)*

Many factors may lead to a serious occurrence report. A serious occurrence does not necessarily mean that Discovery Early Learning & Care is out of compliance with licensing requirements or that children are at risk in the program.

If your child is involved in any category of serious occurrence, you will be notified as soon as possible once all are safe.

Discovery Early Learning & Care has policies and procedures in place specific to emergencies. Depending on the specific type of emergency, families will be contacted through a number of ways:

1. Directly by telephone
2. E-Blast for an emergency situation
3. News Letter as follow-up to a situation
4. A request for a meeting as a follow-up to a situation
5. With regards to a site evacuation and depending on the number of families to contact, the Program Supervisor will decide at that time what would be the best way of notifying families
6. Website and social media



ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION

Discovery Early Learning & Care will administer prescription drugs to children in accordance with the Child Care and Early Years Act regulation. This requires that parents/guardians provide written authorization on our approved forms.

Medication must be in the original container, with the prescription label stating the child's name, name of drug, dosage, date of purchase, and instructions for storage and administration of the drug. Medication is not to be left in the cubby areas. Kindly give it directly to staff for proper locked storage. Together you will complete the required forms to administer the medication.

Once medication is finished, you will be asked to remove the empty container and dispose of it off property. If the medication is past the expiration date, or there remains any medication in the container after the specific number of days directed on the label, the staff cannot administer as requested and will ask you to remove the remaining medication/ container and dispose of it off property.

Discovery Early Learning & Care's Executive Director/Program Supervisor reserves the right to engage in conversation and decisions with regards to Homeopathic Treatment choices that are in compliance with labelling and nut safe practices on an individual basis.

NO SMOKING / VAPING POLICY

Discovery Early Learning & Care programs are pleased to be able to offer your family and our employees a completely smoke free environment at all our programs.

Smoking / vaping is not permitted at any time, by any person, within our programs or on properties including parking lots, and playgrounds. Your cooperation in helping us provide this smoke free environment is greatly appreciated.

DISCHARGE POLICY, ZERO TOLERANCE AND HARASSMENT

A zero tolerance policy with regards to bullying and physical aggressiveness towards self, others and equipment will be enforced. Threats to inflict serious bodily harm towards self or others will also be handled under a zero tolerance policy and you will be asked to pick up your child immediately.

If physically aggressive behaviours continue, a referral to community supports, and a program consultation with staff and family will be called. Team goals will be developed to help children learn to deal with aggressive behaviours in acceptable manners and support to the team may be necessary.

Discovery Early Learning & Care reserves the right to discharge a child who, in the opinion of the Executive Director/ Program Supervisor and employees, has needs that cannot be adequately met by the program. Families will be involved in this process, and all attempts to review or revise program routines will be made towards averting the discharge.

On a yearly basis all employees of Discovery Early Learning & Care sign an Expectations of Learning and Care policy and a Child Abuse and Neglect policy as a reminder of our roles and responsibilities.

We have developed a Harassment Policy to ensure the safety and well-being of all children, staff, and families. We believe that all individuals working or using the services of Discovery Early Learning & Care have the right to be treated fairly and with respect by everyone and have a responsibility to treat others with the same consideration under the authority of the Board of Directors, Executive Director and Program Supervisors.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Discovery Early Learning & Care collects personal information about its clients for the purposes of effectively communicating with, and providing a continuum of early learning and care services to our families. We are committed to respecting the privacy rights of all individuals, including families and employees by ensuring that their personal information is collected, used and disclosed in an appropriate manner.

Your registration package will contain a form for you to sign stating that you have read, understand and agree to abide by the Discovery Early Learning & Care's Family Handbook and all policies and procedures of the organization. This will ensure that we have open lines of communication as we build a relationship with your family.

CHANGE OF INFORMATION

It is the parents/guardians responsibility to inform the Program Supervisor or main office of any changes in their address, telephone number, place of employment, emergency contact person and any additional information regarding their child's health.

We also ask families to inform us of any change in their marital status to help us understand and accommodate related changes in their child's behaviour. We ask that this information be forwarded immediately in case of an emergency situation. Subsidized families must report any changes to the City of Greater Sudbury Children Services Section within 24 hours of the changes.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Written notice of permanent withdrawal must be provided 10 business days in advance of withdrawal date. If notice is not received, full program fees will be charged.

A permanent space cannot be guaranteed if you wish to temporarily withdraw your child. Discovery Early Learning & Care may terminate services if policies are not followed or if fees are not paid.



FEES AND PAYMENTS

Discovery Early Learning & Care's method of billing is computerized invoices. During the first week of each month, you will be invoiced for child care booked, based on your scheduled needs of the previous month and on the attached Fee Schedule for that current year. You are billed for space/care booked and not on attendance usage. In order to cancel care without charge, 10 business day notice is required. Any scheduled day not used for any reason will still be invoiced unless proper 10 business day notice is provided in advance of the requested change. Full time case is based on usage of 16 days per month and part time care is based on usage of 1 – 15 days per month.

Our policy states that if payment is not received by the 15th of each month, an automatic two weeks' notice will be given and care will be terminated on the last day of the month. If a balance is not paid, a child cannot continue care into a new month.

Please follow the link under the Registration & Information section discoverycare.ca for details on how to register for online banking payments.

Any accounts in arrears past 30 days will immediately be forwarded to a Collection Agency. At times, the City of Greater Sudbury, Children Services may contact the administration's main office to inquire about payments or attendance of families who qualify for a subsidy. On your behalf, we will release information directly related to your child's attendance or invoicing so that adjustments can be made.

Discovery Early Learning & Care signed the Canada Wide Early Learning & Child Care Agreement (CWELCC) in August 2022. As the CWELCC plans move forward over the next 4 years, eligible families will continue to see a decrease in their child care expenses to an average of \$12.00 / day.

ANNUAL MEETING

Each year during the month of May, an Annual Meeting is held in the evening for all Discovery Early Learning & Care families and teams. This Annual Meeting gives families the opportunity to meet the Discovery Early Learning & Care's Board of Directors, review the audited financial statements, discuss policies and procedures and voice questions or concerns.

It is during this time that decisions are made that will affect the care of your children and your input to these decisions is valued. An agenda of the Annual Meeting is handed out prior to the evening and you are notified well in advance of the specific date.

Prior to the Annual Meeting a Family Service Evaluation Survey is forwarded to you electronically through our communication platforms, MailChimp and Survey Monkey. This survey is used to gather useful information concerning the early learning and care experiences that we provide for your children. If you are unable to attend the Annual Meeting and still want to express a concern or comment, this form will also give you that opportunity to respond. All information collected in the Family Service Evaluation Survey will be presented as a whole at the Annual Meeting. Change cannot occur unless there is a means of evaluating current care, policies and procedures.

OPEN DOOR POLICY

Discovery Early Learning & Care is proud of our Open Door Policy.

If you are able to spend some extra time with your child while in program please feel free to join us at any time. If you would like to meet with your child's Educator for any reason, a meeting can be arranged at your convenience. Please speak directly to the Program Supervisor.



USE OF PHOTOGRAPHS OR VIDEOTAPES

We respect the privacy of our children, families, and teams. We strive to ensure that our work is created in an environment that is safe and respected by all those who view and learn from its use, and that it is utilized only for its intended purpose.

How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years, guides our practice in observing, documenting and collaborating children's thinking with families, and our teams. We regularly take photographs of the children as part of documenting children's learning and ideas.

On occasion, there are events held in our programs where other families and visitors are taking photographs. It is our expectation that any photographs taken of children, their families, or teams would be kept for personal use and not posted on any social media accounts without the consent of the family, caregiver or staff.

Discovery Early Learning & Care is a leader in the implementation of an inquiry, play based curriculum and other community professionals often visit our programs to learn how to move their programs forward. We will be sharing information about our journey and using examples of our documentation with them for growth and learning only.

Our website, DiscoveryCare.ca and social media accounts allow us the opportunity to share our work and journey with families and the community. We will be mindful of sharing images of our classroom environments and we will continue to work to uphold the privacy of our families and staff.

Discovery Early Learning & Care has developed a photo and video bank of captured experiences with children. We will request a Consent & Release Form - Video & Photo Bank to be signed for the sole purpose of promoting Discovery Early Learning & Care internally or externally.



HARASSMENT POLICY FOR ALL

Discovery Early Learning & Care employees have been placed in situations that have resulted in requiring support from the City of Greater Sudbury Police Services.

It is our goal to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all of our employees, volunteers, community support personnel and families.

Discovery Early Learning & Care does not tolerate or condone any degree of harassment by anyone associated with the organization. It is the responsibility of all staff, and in particular management, to promote harassment free environments in the workplace. All individuals working or those using the services of Discovery Early Learning & Care have the right to be treated fairly and with respect by everyone and have a responsibility to treat others with the same consideration.

Discovery Early Learning & Care believes in the prevention of harassment and promotes a harassment-free environment in which all people respect one another and work together to achieve common goals for our children and families. Harassment is defined as any unsolicited or unwelcome interaction, which directly or indirectly affects or threatens to affect a person's job security, prospects of promotions or earnings, working conditions or opportunity to secure a position. Harassment can include such things as verbal or physical abuse, threats, derogatory remarks, innuendo or taunts about any of the prohibited grounds. Sexual harassment can include pinching, patting, rubbing or leering, dirty jokes, pictures or pornographic materials, comments, suggestions, innuendos, requests or demands of a sexual nature. The behaviour need not be intentional in order to be considered harassment, but may be offensive and/or intimidating. Such action may also engender fear or mistrust, and thereby compromise an individual's dignity or sense of self-worth. Any act of harassment committed by or against any employee, volunteer, child, or any other individual is unacceptable conduct and will not be tolerated.

Discovery Early Learning & Care is committed to investigating reported incidents of harassment in a prompt, objective, and sensitive manner taking necessary corrective action and providing appropriate support for victims. No individual shall be penalized in any way for making a complaint or giving evidence in a harassment investigation.

The test to determine whether harassment has occurred is two-fold:

- Whether a person knew or ought to have known that the behaviour would be considered unwelcome or offensive by the recipient
- The recipient found the behaviour offensive

HARASSMENT POLICY FOR ALL *(Continued)*

If an individual(s) believes they are being harassed, they should:

1. Immediately make the individual(s) aware that the behaviour is unwelcome and ask them to stop.
2. Report the incident to their Program Supervisor, or Executive Director.
3. The recipient should keep a record of the incidents in question, which may include:
 - Name(s) of the individual(s) in question
 - The date, place, and time the incident(s) occurred
 - Name(s) of any witnesses
 - The events(s) that led up the incident(s) in question
 - Any particular reason why the event(s) occurred
 - The actual incident that led to a complaint
4. The confidentiality of the individuals concerned will be maintained. An investigation into the incident(s) will be undertaken immediately along with any additional steps necessary to resolve the problem. If the employee requires support or advice, they should contact their Program Supervisor or Executive Director.
5. The complainant and the individual in question will both have individual interviews along with any individuals who may be able to provide additional and relevant information. Once all relevant information has been gathered, it will be reviewed with the Executive Director and Board of Directors if necessary, to determine whether harassment has taken place. If the investigation reveals the occurrence of harassment or other unacceptable conduct, appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or services, will be taken and all documents will be placed on the offenders file.
6. The complainant will be advised of the results of the investigation and reference to the incident will appear in their personnel files if the complainant is making accusations about staff of Discovery Early Learning & Care.
7. Should the investigation fail to find fault, all documents will be destroyed and both parties will be notified of the results of the investigation.

All individuals also have the right to contact the Ontario Human Rights Commission to file a complaint of harassment after the internal process has been completed, but may file during the process if the process is taking a long period of time.

Examples of Harassment but not limited to include:

VERBAL HARASSMENT

Foul or obscene language, derogatory racial comments, demeaning ethnic jokes or slurs, unwanted sexual comments, implied or expressed promises of reward for complying with, or threats of reprisal for not complying with, a sexually-oriented request.

PHYSICAL HARASSMENT

Practical jokes, pushing, shoving, aggressive behaviour and the like. Acts of sexual harassment include any unwanted physical contact, unnecessary touching, or physical interference with work or movement.

VISUAL HARASSMENT

Obscene gestures, demeaning posters, cartoons, graffiti or drawing which are shown to an individual or a group or displayed in plain view. Where these have a sexual orientation, this will constitute sexual harassment.



PARENT ISSUES AND CONCERNS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Rationale:

Discovery Early Learning & Care values the four foundations of *How Does Learning Happen?* Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years. In our relationships with each other we strive to consider the Foundations of the Ministry of Education's pedagogical document including:

BELONGING | **WELL-BEING** | **ENGAGEMENT** | **EXPRESSION**

Communication is key to the success of the organization and in building relationships with families, community stakeholders and our teams. Our hope is that we live into our statements and in doing so invite engagement in conversation to resolve any conflicts.

Our Vision:

"A community where children, families, and professionals are inspired and empowered with unlimited opportunities to develop to their maximum potential."

In living into this vision we will consider a variety of opportunities that meet the minds of children, our staff and our families in order to inspire greatness in us all.

Pulling directly from our Program Statement; we want to consider the strengths in what we believe in and work collaboratively towards our Conflict Resolution Policy.

"Discovery Early Learning & Care sees children as competent, capable of complex thinking, curious, and rich in potential, we value and build on their strengths and abilities."

"Discovery Early Learning & Care sees families as experts who know their children better than anyone else and have important information to share, we value and engage them in a meaningful way."

"Discovery Early Learning & Care sees Educators as knowledgeable, reflective, resourceful, and rich in experience, we value the experiences and environments they create for children."

"Discovery Early Learning & Care has grounded these perspectives from How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years into this policy document, with the intent to demonstrate them in our visioning, planning, work, play, and thinking as we build on our relationships with children, families, community partners, and each other."

“Discovery Early Learning & Care values an environment that is dedicated to the safety and well-being of children, families and staff and that our learning environments should be visible of the work and thinking of those who build relationships within them.”

“Discovery Early Learning & Care strives for authentic relationships that support positive and responsive interactions among the children, families, RECE’s and support staff, and the Administrative and Leadership Team. We know that in building these relationships we must offer time and opportunity for reflection, questions and thinking about future possibilities in both our day to day work and in policy development.”

“Discovery Early Learning & Care values the thinking of all, and invites opportunity for further collaboration with regards to change and future policy development.”

“Discovery Early Learning & Care values relationships with community partners and professionals. Together with families, staff and community partners we plan for experiences and programs that build capacity and skills for all children through our community of practice planning experiences.”

“Discovery Early Learning & Care values the outdoor environment and incorporates both the outdoors inside and the inside outdoors. Moving equipment and furnishings outdoors and extending play experiences in the outdoors for longer periods of time increases physical activity and an appreciation of the world around them.”

“Discovery Early Learning & Care’s program schedule is based around core periods of time. Minimal Child Care and Early Years Act requirements are followed as we consider the interests and engagement of children in their learning and play. Providing experiences for active and quiet play, indoor and outdoor, rest and sharing of meals is incorporated into the children’s own schedules. Staff are flexible in their thinking in extending play or honouring children’s work.”

In supporting others through a difficult situation, Discovery Early Learning & Care will also consider other policies, procedures, legislation and practices that hold each other up in order to reach solutions and agreements to conflict.

The College of Early Childhood Educators’ Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics also plays a role in how Discovery Early Learning & Care employees conduct themselves in and out of the workplace. Membership in the CECE is also part of supporting communication in practice and in difficult situations.

Stakeholders are invited to raise any concerns they may have regarding their child’s early learning and care or workplace immediately with their Program Supervisor at their site. The Program Supervisor is required to take action and investigate concerns within 24 hours.

The Program Supervisor will report concerns and follow-up to the Executive Director as necessary, especially if the concern has not been satisfactorily resolved.

PARENT ISSUES AND CONCERNS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

(Continued)

All concerns will be dealt with in the following manner:

- With respect and in confidence.
- Promote open communication and foster a safe environment for addressing differences of opinions.
- Will involve all parties involved in the situation if necessary, to discuss the issue. Program Supervisor will invite others to participate in conversations as necessary to support all involved.
- Look at possible strategies and solutions to the concern.
- Meet with families to review outcomes and solutions.
- All involved will sign off of necessary documentation if applicable. Copies of documentation to included in stakeholders' files.
- Discovery Early Learning & Care will seek out additional resources to support conversations and development of an action plan if necessary.
- If there is a need for a third party mediator, Discovery Early Learning & Care will call one in to support discussion at no cost to the stakeholder.
- All policies and procedures of Discovery Early Learning & Care will be considered in discussions.
- We will all be reminded of our Program Statement and find strengths in our work as we look for solutions.
- Stakeholders are protected from retribution for raising legitimate complaints and concerns using the conflict resolution process.

During our conversations and collaboration we will be mindful of our [Harassment Policy for All](#), which includes the following:

Discovery Early Learning & Care believes in the prevention of harassment and promotes a harassment-free environment in which all people respect one another and work together to achieve common goals for our children and families. Harassment is defined as any unsolicited or unwelcome interaction, which directly or indirectly affects or threatens to affect a person's job security, prospects of promotions or earnings, working conditions or opportunity to secure a position. Harassment can include such things as verbal or physical abuse, threats, derogatory remarks, jobs/tasks, innuendo or taunts about any of the prohibited grounds. Sexual harassment can include pinching, patting, rubbing or leering, dirty jokes, pictures or pornographic materials, comments, suggestions, innuendos, requests or demands of a sexual nature. The behaviour need not be intentional in order to be considered harassment, but may be offensive and/or intimidating. Such action may also engender fear or mistrust, and thereby compromise an individual's dignity or sense of self-worth. Any act of harassment committed by or against any employee, volunteer, child, or any other individual is unacceptable conduct and will not be tolerated.

As a last resort if action plans, agreements and understandings can't be reached, and supports are unattainable for specific needs required, together the family and Leadership Team will make the decision to terminate care with Discovery Early Learning & Care.

PARENT ISSUES AND CONCERNS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

(Continued)

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 Sudbury and District Children’s Aid Society www.casdsm.on.ca (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*.

Procedures:

NATURE OF ISSUE OR CONCERN	STEPS FOR PARENT AND/OR GUARDIAN TO REPORT ISSUE/ CONCERN:	STEPS FOR STAFF AND/OR LICENSEE IN RESPONDING TO THE ISSUES/ CONCERNS:
Suspicion of Child Abuse or Neglect	Parent/Guardian can call directly to Children’s Aid Society (CAS) and report suspicion. CAS will take the lead in any reports.	Staff are to follow procedure in reporting suspicion of Child Abuse or Neglect to CAS with support of Program Supervisor. Staff that have witnessed or has concerns must directly report to CAS. CAS will take the lead in any reports.
Concern about early learning and care quality of service provided by Discovery Early Learning & Care. Ie) lost articles, repeated concerns of safety, health, well-being of children, or curriculum.	Parents/Guardians should immediately speak with the Program Supervisor with regards to any concerns they have regarding care, policies or procedures related to their child. Program Supervisor will address the concern within 24 hours of complaint / question.	Program Supervisor will investigate concern and report back to parent/guardian as soon as possible. If Program Supervisor feels that the Executive Director is required to support, then a meeting for clarification and collaboration will be set up.
Concerns with regards to invoicing, payments for child care services.	Parents/Guardians who have questions about their invoicing/payments to their accounts should contact the Executive Administrator of Discovery Early Learning & Care. admin@discoverycare.ca	Staff are asked to please direct parents/guardians to the Program Supervisor of the site and he/she will try and answer questions or seek clarification from the Executive Administrator and get back to the parent/guardian.
Concern directly related to the interactions and relationships of staff and parents/guardians.	Parents/Guardians are asked to bring any concerns with regards to staff to the Program Supervisor. Parents/Guardians are asked to bring any concerns with regards to Program Supervisors to the Executive Director. Parents/Guardians are asked to bring any concerns with regards to the Executive Director to the Chairperson of the Board of Directors of Discovery Early Learning & Care.	All matters will be discussed with the appropriate individuals immediately. Depending on the circumstance it may take some time in organizing meetings for all persons involved to be present for their voices to be heard. It is in the best interest to respond to concerns as a group to allow for conversations and to work towards a resolution.



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Expectations for Learning & Care

Discovery Early Learning & Care values the four foundations of *How Does Learning Happen?* In our relationships with each other we strive to consider the Foundations of Belonging, Well-Being, Engagement and Expression.

The Foundations present themselves in “Goals for Children” and “Expectations for Programs” and it is within each of these that we acknowledge what children, parents and Discovery Early Learning & Care teams deserve with regards to learning, growing, and caring for young children and ourselves:

FOUNDATIONS	GOALS FOR CHILDREN	EXPECTATIONS FOR PROGRAMS
Belonging	Every child has a sense of belonging when he or she is connected to others and contributes to their world.	Early childhood programs cultivate authentic, caring relationships and connections to create a sense of belonging among and between children, adults, and the world around them.
Engagement	Every child is an active and engaged learner who explores the world with body, mind, and senses.	Early childhood programs provide environments and experiences to engage children in active, creative, and meaningful exploration, play, and inquiry.
Well-Being	Every child is developing a sense of self, health, and well-being.	Early childhood programs nurture children’s healthy development and support their growing sense of self.
Expression	Every child is a capable communicator who expresses themselves in many ways.	Early childhood programs foster communication and expression in all forms.

- ✓ Discovery Early Learning & Care sees children as competent, capable of complex thinking, curious, and rich in potential, we value and build on their strengths and abilities.
- ✓ Discovery Early Learning & Care sees families as experts who know their children better than anyone else and have important information to share, we value and engage them in a meaningful way.
- ✓ Discovery Early Learning & Care sees Educators as knowledgeable, reflective, resourceful, and rich in experience, we value the experiences and environments they create for children. When necessary we will support, monitor, mentor and guide our teams in setting goals that reflect our image of the child, family, educator and community.
- ✓ Discovery Early Learning & Care has adopted these perspectives from HDLH? into this policy document, with the intent to demonstrate them in our work and thinking.
- ✓ This document is to be reviewed upon hiring and annually thereafter in following coaching procedures as necessary.
- ✓ Those Educators registered with the College of Early Childhood Educators and the Ontario College of Teachers also have further obligations to their practice with specific regards to the Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics of their professional college respectively, with regards to responsibilities and professional practice.

- ✓ It is Discovery Early Learning & Care's intent that all employees, board members and volunteers uphold the same standards as set out in this policy as well as the expectations of the professional colleges, both the CECE and OCT and our professional association, the AECEO.

Expectations of Learning and Care include:

We will hold high the "Image of the Child" as competent, capable of complex thinking, curious and rich in potential, we value and build on their strengths and abilities.

Valuing child development and understanding that all children require individual attention to meet their needs in order to learn and grow. With that; we will be intentional with regards to how we approach learning and guiding children through a strength based approach.

We will consider our language when engaging with children, families, each other and our community reaffirming our commitment to Discovery Early Learning & Care's Program Statement.

All legislation and regulations with regards to learning and care documented in the Child Care and Early Years Act will be implemented and visible in our conversations, programs, environments and professional learning opportunities.

As a partner in the Healthy Community Challenge we will meet dietary standards of Canada's Food Guide. We will meet dietary requests of families with regards to religious beliefs, and/or allergies/sensitivities.

Toilet learning is a milestone in a child's life and we will support the family and child in their journey to success.

We will support children in helping them understand the need for their body to slow down and rest during the day. Rest time includes calming environments that are reflective of their needs to settle their bodies with soft music, cots, something to cuddle or quiet activities for non-sleeping children.

We will support children in helping them self-regulate when finding themselves in difficult situations. We will look for cues of children's ability to communicate their needs. We will listen to the children and ask how we can support them, when to approach and why they are upset.

We will consider the Connecting, Directing, and Correcting Ratio in all programs. Think Feel Act has offered us research documents that support our learning, teaching and values. The C:D:C ratio is a constant reminder of our need to co-construct with children in our learning, care and environments.

We will offer programs that are rich in thinking, collaboration, exploration and wonder. Building on How Does Learning Happen? we will incorporate children's ideas and theories into our documentation and share their journey with families. Collections of learning will be placed in individual portfolios to move with the children while they are enrolled with us and then offered as a gift to families when they leave.

Professional learning is highly valued and we hold individuals accountable to their practice through professional and personal goal setting, CPL, and both internal and external professional learning opportunities through a variety of means.

We value our learning and care environments and they should demonstrate visibility in the community that lives and learns in it. Documentation, and images of children, families and educators should speak of the richness of the relationships and learning happening in these spaces.

Any adult who observes mistreatment of any child must contact the Executive Director or the Program Supervisor of the child care centre immediately. This is a legal responsibility.

Prohibited Practices from Child Care and Early Years Act Subsection 6.7 Ontario Regulation 137/15

None of the following practices are observed in the program and that employees verbally confirm that these practices are not allowed and do not occur in the program:

- a. Corporal punishment (which may include but is not limited to, hitting, spanking, slapping, pinching).
- b. Physical restraint of children, including but not limited to confining to high chair, car seat etc. for discipline or in lieu of supervision unless for the purposes described in the regulation (to prevent self-harm, harm to others and only until risk of harm/injury is no longer imminent).
- c. Locking the exits of the child care centre for the purpose of confining the child, or confining the area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency.
- d. Use of harsh, degrading, measures or threats or derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, scare or frighten the child or undermine their self-respect, dignity or self-worth.
- e. Depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding.
- f. Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.



DISCOVERY

Early Learning & Care

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