



# Mindwerx4kids Parent Handbook 2015-2016

## Program Philosophy

Mindwerx specializes in childcare and cultivating healthy development for toddlers and preschoolers. Our program is designed to meet the developmental needs of young children. We provide experiences that challenge and support each child's cognitive, language, social, emotional, physical and creative development. During the course of the day, each child has opportunities to create and explore their classroom environment, as they develop personal interaction and problem solving skills through firsthand experience. Early Childhood Professionals are supportive, nurturing, warm and responsive to each child. We respect the parent as the primary and most important person in their child's life. We try to complement your role by allowing the children to feel secure and a sense of belonging when they are in our care.

## Early Years Pedagogy

Our approach to learning and child development is guided by the Ministry of Education's *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years*. Goals for children and expectations for programs are based on the foundations of: belonging, well-being, engagement and expression.

<b>Foundations</b>	<b>Expectations for Programs</b>
Belonging	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.
Well-Being	Early childhood programs nurture children's healthy development and support their growing sense of self.
Engagement	Early childhood programs provide environments and experiences to engage children in active, creative, and meaningful exploration, play and inquiry.
Expression	Early childhood programs foster communication and expression in all forms.

*Adapted from How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years*

## **Early Learning Curriculum and Program Development**

At Mindwerx we believe that every child is unique and will grow at his or her own pace. Mindwerx is a highly focused environment where the emphasis is on understanding the distinctive characteristics of each child and providing a complimentary early learning and development program. Our planned curriculum encourages children to learn through exploration, play and inquiry.

*Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT)*, a resource developed by the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services, provides a framework for our program development. *ELECT* describes a continuum of developmental skills for children from birth to school age. It provides a reference point for Early Childhood Professionals to observe, document and assess children's emerging skills across five interrelated domains: social, emotional, communication, language and literacy, cognition and physical development.

Mindwerx programs incorporate indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play, rest and quiet time, into each day. Daily activities provide a balance of child-initiated and teacher supported learning experiences in a variety of curriculum areas, including math, literacy, cognitive development, sensory play and science. Ongoing adaptations are made to create an inclusive program, responsive to the diverse abilities and needs of each child.

### **Toddler Program**

Our toddler program encourages children to learn and discover through hands-on exploration, creative play and social interaction in our inclusive and purposefully designed classroom environment. Through the guidance and support of our experienced Early Childhood Professionals, toddlers will have the pleasure in learning independence skills along with strengthening their self-confidence.

### **Preschool Program**

Our preschool program is filled with investigation, probing, and discovery, where each child is an active learner engaged in an enthusiastic and rewarding classroom. Care is placed into providing materials and creating an environment that invites children to have conversations, collaborate, interact positively, and engage in meaningful learning moments with their peers and teachers. Our knowledgeable and dedicated Early Childhood Professionals spend time nurturing each child's strengths, interests and natural curiosity for learning.

### **Partnerships with Families**

Parents are encouraged to participate, as much and as frequently as possible in their child's experience at Mindwerx. We consider the care of children who come to Mindwerx to be a privilege and our partnerships with families have a profound impact on the children enrolled in our programs. Gaining knowledge about children's families and communities provides educators with an enriched understanding of each child's

development and learning. We value opportunities for educators to participate alongside parents as co-learners in gaining insight about their child's unique characteristics, interests, strengths and needs.

Updates about schedules, special events, announcements, and current curriculum plans are posted on parent information boards in each classroom. Monthly newsletters are also emailed outlining themes, learning activities and programming goals for children. Daily observation notes about learning and development are also written for each child. Notes are accessible to parents in children's individual binders located in the Supervisor's office. We also arrange parent-teacher conferences during regular intervals throughout the year. Prior to interviews, teachers complete *Ages and Stages Questionnaires* for each child, which includes input from parents' observations. Developmental screening assists both parents and teachers with identifying children's strengths, age-appropriate milestones and developmental concerns. Parents are encouraged to advise staff anytime they have questions, comments or concerns.

### **Specialized Services**

Each licensed child care centre in the City of Toronto has an assigned Resource Consultant. At Mindwerx, our Resource Consultant works closely with staff and families to support an integrated and inclusive child care program for children with extra support needs. Services include regular visits to classrooms, program adaptations, early identification and intervention, as well as staff and parent training.

### **Field Trips**

We plan field trips for the children throughout the year. A notice will be sent home in advance of the excursion informing you of the destination, cost, time and date. It will also include a permission slip to be signed and returned. You are always welcome to accompany us. Please note that parent volunteers during field trips must also obtain a vulnerable sector check.

### **Nutrition**

Our lunch menu is catered by Boaden's and Organic Kids. Weekly menus are posted on our parent information boards located in each classroom. We also provide nutritious morning and afternoon snacks. We follow Canada's Food Guide when planning our menus to ensure that children receive recommended servings of each food group daily.

Please inform us about allergies, sensitivities or food restrictions for your child. Substitutions will be catered to accommodate children's dietary needs. It is important to note that our centre is a nut-free facility. If you would like to provide your child with additional snacks, please ensure that containers and ziplock bags are clearly labelled with your child's name.

### **Services Offered and Ages of Children**

Mindwerx has facilities to accommodate the following children on a full or part-time basis:

1. 10 Toddlers – 18 months to 2.5 years
2. 32 Preschoolers – 2.5 to 4 years
3. Kindergarten/School Aged – 4 to 12 years

### **Hours of Operation and Centre Closures**

Both full and part-time care is provided approximately 50 weeks of each year, and is subject to change with notice. Full-time care is offered between the hours of 7:30am and 6:00pm, five days a week. Before and after care is available from 7:30 to 9:00 am and 3:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Our centre is closed on: New Years Day, Family Day, Good Friday, Victoria Day, Canada Day, Civic Holiday, Labour Day, and Thanksgiving Day. We are also closed for one week during the summer and from December 24-January 2.

In the event the school must be closed due to inclement weather, or for health and safety reasons (e.g. fire, flood), parents will be informed by email and a closure message outlining details will be recorded on our answering machine.

### **Admission and Withdrawal**

Prior to enrolment, an interview will be arranged to familiarize you and your child with the centre, answer questions, complete admission forms and child development questionnaires.

Written notice of permanent withdrawal must be given two weeks in advance. 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. Therefore, your child will be placed on a waiting list. Mindwerx may terminate services if policies are not followed or fees are not paid.

### **Arrival and Departure**

Please notify a member of the staff when your child arrives, and they will be signed in on their class attendance list. Entrance is accessible through any (of 2) doors using the door code. This code is provided to parents when children are admitted to the program. The code is changed periodically and the new one is immediately provided for parents so there is little or no disruption.

When picking up your child, please enter the classroom, verify that you are leaving and staff will sign your child out on the class attendance. Unless otherwise arranged, children will not be released to any person other than those specified on the admission form. Photo ID will be required for anyone picking up your child if the staff has not met them before, even if they are on your emergency pick-up list.

Please note that if your child remains at our centre after 6:00pm, there will be an applicable charge of \$1.00 each minute the child is in the facility after 6:00pm. If our staff members are unable to reach parents or emergency contacts after one hour, Children's Aid will be contacted.

## **Parking**

There is ample parking in our lots at the back or side of the school.

## **Health, Illness and Medication Policy**

In accordance to the Ministry of Education, each child must be immunized as recommended by the local medical officer of health, prior to admission. If a child becomes ill during the day, temporary care will be provided until you can be contacted, and your child can be taken home. We are committed to ensuring the overall health of all children in our care. We ask parents to please keep their child at home if they display signs of illness including:

- Fever of 101° or greater
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea – twice in one day
- Undiagnosed rash/skin condition
- Infected discharge from eyes/ears
- Severe cough
- Any communicable disease

Children absent due to illness must be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to the program. Your child should return when they are well enough to participate fully in the program and daily activities, including outdoor play.

Designated staff will administer prescription medication to children if required. Non-prescription medication (e.g. cough syrup, Tylenol) must have a doctor's note with written confirmation and instructions for administration. In accordance with provincial legislation, parents must provide written authorization, including the dosage and times any drug is to be given. Medication must be in the original container, clearly labelled with the child's name, name of the drug, the dosage, the date of expiry and instructions for storage and administration of the drug. Medication is not to be left in the classroom area or in the children's bag. Please give it directly to a program staff member for proper storage.

## **Behaviour Guidance and Prohibited Practices**

Emotion and behaviour regulation are important elements of human development. At Mindwerx children are supported to identify, express and process their feelings in ways that are positive and helpful to their growth. Behavioural limits are set and maintained in

a supportive manner, at a level that is appropriate to the child's actions and age in order to ensure health and safety, respect the rights of others and promote self-discipline.

Consistent with regulations under the Child Care and Early Years Act, the following practices are prohibited:

- Corporal punishment of the child;
- Deliberate use of harsh or degrading measures on the child that would humiliate the child or undermine his or her self-respect;
- Depriving the child of basic needs including food, shelter, clothing or bedding;
- Locking the exits of the child care centre or home child care premises for the purpose of confining the child; or
- Using a locked or lockable room or structure to confine the child if he or she has been separated from other children.

### **Serious Occurrences**

At Mindwerx, we work diligently to provide a safe, creative and nurturing learning environment for each child in our care. The Ministry of Education requires licensed child care centres to notify parents of any serious occurrences. A serious occurrence may include serious injury to a child, fire or other disaster on the site or a complaint about a service standard. In the event of a serious occurrence, parents will be informed by email and a Serious Occurrence Notification Form will be posted on the parent information board in the lobby of our centre.

### **Supervision of Volunteers and Students**

Mindwerx provides placement opportunities for student teachers enrolled in early childhood post-secondary programs. Volunteers and student teachers participate in an orientation day and obtain criminal record checks before attending our centre. Volunteers and student teachers are not permitted to be alone with the children and are not counted in staffing ratios at any time.

### **Clothing and Children's Belongings**

Diapers and creams are provided and renewed by parents. Your child should be dressed appropriately for physical activity and the season. A second set of clothing should be kept in your child's bag. All clothing and toys must be labelled with your child's name. We have a fundraiser with *Mabel's Labels*. If you are interested in purchasing labels for clothing please use our fundraiser website [www.Mindwerx.mabelslabels.com](http://www.Mindwerx.mabelslabels.com).



## Fees and Payment Policy

A non-refundable family registration of \$50 is required at time of registration. A security deposit of \$250 per student is also required and will be applied to your last week(s) of care when you withdraw from Mindwerx4kids.

Monthly tuition is payable on the first day of each month. If payment is made by cheque, please provide post-dated cheques for ten months from September to June. Fees may also be paid by money orders, email money transfer, or cash. A **2.9% administration charge** will be applied to payments using Visa and Mastercard.

### Fee Schedule As of September 2015

Preschool Program			Toddler Program		
Number of days per week	Monthly payments using cheques or e-transfers	Monthly payments using Visa or Mastercard	Number of days per week	Monthly payments using cheques or e-transfers	Monthly payments using Visa or Mastercard
5 days	\$1325	\$1363.43	5 days	\$1400	\$1440.60
4 days	\$1115	\$1147.34	4 days	\$1190	\$1224.51
3 days	\$845	\$869.51	3 days	\$920	\$946.68
2 days	\$570	\$586.53	2 days	\$645	\$663.71
1 day	\$290	\$298.41	1 day	\$365	\$375.59

A late fee of 3% may be charged if payments are not made on time. A tax receipt will be provided for income tax purposes in December.

We do not provide discounts or refunds for days your child is not in attendance due to illness, vacation, statutory holidays, school closures or other absences. Payment is required and we cannot reschedule missed days.

If a parent would like to arrange for their child to attend on a day that is not part of their child's regular schedule, there is a daily charge of \$95.00, payable as soon as possible.