



Parent Handbook Markham

March 2024

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Program Statement

Apple Blossoms Center is committed to providing our families and their children with a program that provides positive outcomes relating to the children's learning and well-being while in our care. In order to achieve this, the center applies the How Does Learning Happen (HDLH) document as our guide enabling our qualified staff to put into practice the wealth of knowledge from research and theory into practice. Apple Blossoms Center is proud of the work we do and the services we provide and is respectful of the trust invested in us. To ensure that Apple Blossoms Center remains current with the latest research and understanding of how children learn, our programs, policies and program statement will be reviewed annually by management and all staff.

Foundations of learning

At Apple Blossoms Center Inc our programs are designed based upon the four foundations of belonging, well-being, engagement, and expression. These concepts guide our program to provide the best experiences and outcomes for children, families, and educators. All children deserve an environment that views them as competent, capable, curious, and full of potential regardless of age, ability, gender, language, or cultural background. Our goal is to ensure that all children and their families feel welcomed and that they belong to our family as they are valuable contributors to our program.

How learning happens at Apple Blossoms Center.

Pedagogy is the understanding of how learning happens and the philosophy and practice that support that understanding of learning. Employing the HDLH pedagogical approach, ABC provides an environment that encourages children to establish positive, responsive adult-child relationship in an inclusive learning environment that promotes exploration, play, and inquiry while engaging children and their families as co-learners.

Curriculum is the content of learning and is focused on supporting the children's development of strategies and skills for lifelong learning through play and inquiry. Apple Blossoms Center Markham follows both the emergent style of programming that is based upon children's changing interests and developmental needs and incorporates teacher-supported and self-exploration learning opportunities. Our Markham location also provides a preschool Montessori program that is a specific child-

centered method of education that involves child-led activities (referred to as “work”), and teachers who encourage independence among the children. Children learn best through play as through play they are observing, moving, interacting, thinking, and discussing. The educators support their learning by setting up the room with the intent of providing materials that are of interest to the children and engaging. During their play, the educators support their learning by asking questions, listening, and discussing with the children and acting as co-regulators in their problem-solving. Educators document their observations of the children and their interactions and regularly conduct developmental assessments of the children. These observations/assessments are used to plan and create the environment with materials that meets all the various needs and interests of all the children. It enables the educators to devise specific goals for each child, including those with individualized support plans to ensure our program is inclusive.

Following the pedagogy of a positive inclusive learning environment, the rooms are designed as a third teacher that fosters independent exploration, play, inquiry, and learning. The children are provided with a variety of learning materials in on open, accessible shelving that are kept neat and free of clutter enabling them to explore materials of interest to them within a safe and meaningful manner. There are areas for large and small group experiences and areas for solitary and quiet play. The educators assist the children in their learning and play by creating a dialogue of questions and inquiry. The educators also adjust and adapt their rooms as children’s needs and interests continuously develop and change and to remain inclusive of all children.

ABC provides a daily program that includes a balance and provides 2 hours of outdoor play weather permitting. Our outdoor play areas are considered as an extension of our indoor classrooms and that includes a variety of activities such as sensory, science, math, construction, and gross motor. When the weather is inclement, gross motor activities will take place indoors and our classrooms, incorporate science and nature items thereby enabling children to continuously explore the elements of nature while indoors. Our program also includes a 2-hour rest period, with time allocated for self-exploration play. All components of our program are flexible to individual needs and adapted to ensure the participation of all children regardless of abilities, language, and cultural beliefs.

Apple Blossoms Center believes in creating an environment whereby all of our children and their families have a sense of belonging. Staff create displays, creative works and materials that reflect each child, their families, and cultures. The families are invited to participate in our program through positive and welcoming interactions, sharing stories and ideas, and engaging in various family events.

The staff foster ongoing positive and responsive communication with parents by ensuring they routinely and warmly acknowledge the parents during drop off and pick up times, allowing for open discussions with the parents, providing daily charts indicating their child's daily activities, accommodating parent requests to their best abilities and are available for meetings regarding children's developmental needs. Parents are also informed through our bulletin boards that contains pertinent center information, programming for each room, pedagogical documentations, such as pictures of children in action and their creative works, as well as a community board providing information of services available within the community. Parents also receive documentation such as reports pertaining to their child and newsletters keeping them informed.

ABC also establishes a sense of belonging to the community through involving local community partners such as York Region Public Health, York Region Police and Fire Department, and local businesses. Involvement with these community partners take form through either connecting families to their services or involving them in our programming through presentations and workshops for both the children and/or families.

Furthering our commitment to the well-being of children, all staff encourage children's freedom of expression and ability to self-regulate their emotions and behaviors. This is done through positive role-modeling, guidance and understanding by all staff. In order to enhance a child's ability to self-regulate, educators will not only role-model positive communications, they will employ all learning opportunities to guide and assist children to communicate and behave in ways to achieve positive outcomes. Staff will also include the parent/guardians via support, communication, and resources to enable parents/guardians to support their child's ability to self-regulate.

Our program promotes the health, safety, and nutrition for the well-being of all children. We provide a catered four-week rotational menu that follows the Canada Food Guide and caters to all food restrictions and allergies. All meals are prepped in our kitchen by a qualified staff with a current Food and Handling Certificate. Programming staff also incorporate learning about healthy lifestyles and habits into their programming and at mealtimes.

The center adheres to all Public Health requirements regarding infection control and food safety. Children are taught and encouraged to routinely wash hands properly to prevent the spread of infection. Staff also disinfected toys/equipment on daily basis to prevent the spread of illness. To ensure the safety of all children, staff always position themselves in the rooms or outdoors whereby they have a view all children and

conduct regular checks of the room to ensure the environment and all equipment is safe.

ABC also provides support for all educators, including management, to continuously learn and develop our skillsets and understanding through various learning and training opportunities such as workshops and webinars in order to continuously provide our families and children the best program.

Apple Blossoms Center strives to achieve a reflective and collaborative practice by continuously examining, reflecting and collaborating on our daily practices and programming, on why we are implementing our practices and how they impact children and their families. This is done through parent-surveys, review of all accident/incident reports and room, staff and child development assessments.

Center Info and Registration

Hours of Operation

Apple Blossoms Markham will operate between the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 P.M. daily Monday to Friday with the exception of program closures (see Program Closures)
We offer both full-time program (5 days a week). Enrolment is based on a monthly basis.

Ages Served

Toddler (18 months – 30 Months)

Ratio of Educators to Children 1:5

Preschool: 2 ½ years to 6 years

Ratio of Educators to Children: 1:8

School Age (6 years to 12 years) ---currently not available

Ratio of Educators to children 1:13

Fees

Program	Base Fee	*Reduced Fee with CWELCC Program		
		2022 (April to December)	2023	2024 (No change)
Toddler	\$1550	\$1162.50	\$732.38	\$732.38
Preschool	\$1400	\$1050.00	\$661.50	\$661.50
Preschool Montessori	\$1550	\$1162.50	\$732.38	\$732.38
SA After School	\$500	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
School Age PA Days/Breaks	\$30 per day			
School Age Summer Camp	Determined each spring			

*Starting 2022, Apple Blossoms Center Inc. has enrolled in the Canada-Wide Early Learning Child Care (CWELCC) Program. All children who are under 6 years old are eligible for CWELCC fee deduction.

*Children enrolled in a JK or SK program are eligible for the preschool program with CWELCC rates during school closures until the child turns 6 years of age. Children aged 6 and older are considered School Age.

*Monthly Fees are paid by Pre-authorized Debit on the first day of every month.

*Deposit, registration fees, missed fees are paid via cheque/money order.

*Fees are subject to change with notice provided through the CWELCC program

Registration Fee

There is a one-time non-refundable registration fee per child due upon registration and acceptance of space. Parent are obligated to pay the CWELCC Rate:

Registration Fee	Base	CWELCC Rate
	\$300	\$150

Extra-Curricular Program

The programs is running during our regular program hours and the additional cost will be \$50 per month (\$20 for Yoga class, and \$30 for Mandarin class).

Please note these additional costs are not associated with the CWELCC program. For further information, please do not hesitate to contact the office.

Deposit Policy

A deposit equal to one month's fee is required to be paid for all children, at the time of enrollment. This one-month fee deposit is retained by the Centre and applied to the last month's fees provided 30 days written withdrawal notice is given. It is forfeited if less than 30 days written notice is given. If the fees are increased, the last month's fee deposit will be adjusted at the time of the increased. If a child enters into an older age group with a lower fee, the last month's deposit will be adjusted through a rebate on the first month of the older age fee.

Non-Sufficient Funds

Apple Blossoms charges an administrative fee of \$45 for NSF payment. This fee is to be paid with the outstanding monthly fee by cheque. If the balance has not be paid by the 20th of a month, a second written notice will be given to the parent(s) warning them of possible consequences.

If a regular payment is missed or is a NSF while a balance for daycare fees from the previous month is still outstanding, Apple Blossoms reserves the right to suspend all child care services until all fees are paid in full.

Written notice will be given to parents/guardians who have submitted two NSF payments within an 11-month period warning them of possible consequences. If three NSF are recorded within a period of 12 months, Apple Blossoms Center reserves the right to withdraw services.

Program Closures

Apple Blossoms operates year-round, Monday to Friday 7:00 am-6:00pm, EXCEPT on the dates listed below:

New Years Day
Family Day
Good Friday
Easter Monday
Victoria Day
Canada Day
Simcoe Day (Civic Holiday)
Labour Day
Thanksgiving
Christmas Day
Boxing Day

**please note that these days are not subtracted from the monthly fees*

Emergency Program Closures

Apple Blossoms Center will do its best to remain open, but if the decision to close the Center early is made due to issues such as loss of building amenities, severe weather conditions, or any other concerns to health and safety, the parent(s) / guardian(s) will be notified via phone, email and/or our center app.

If there is a potential risk of closing, the center will inform parents in advance so they may make alternate arrangements if the need arises. If the decision is made prior to opening that day, parents will be notified via email, center app or on center voice message provided there is no power outage. If the center closes after opening, parents will be notified in the same manner and be permitted time to arrive in a safe manner to pick up their child(ren).

Fees will not be reimbursed for any emergency closures. If the closure lasts a week or longer, the center will provide a credit towards fees upon reopening. If the closure goes into the following month, no new fees will be charged until the center is operational.

Absence from Care

Refunds for childcare fees **will not be** processed for the following; missed days, vacation, sick days or inclement weather closures. Operating costs are based on the number of children enrolled.

Receipts

Income tax receipts are made available by the end of February for the previous calendar

year.

Registration

Upon the decision to enroll a child into our center, parents are required to confirm with the center supervisor on an agreed upon start date. Prior to enrollment, the parent must submit a completed enrolment package along with a copy of the child's immunization records. If a parent chooses not to have their child immunized due to personal and/or religious beliefs or based on medical exemptions, they must submit the appropriate Ministry approved Statement.

If a child has a medical need or anaphylactic allergy, all pertinent forms must also be completed before enrolment.

Along with the enrolment package and immunization, a parent is also required to pay the registration fee and last month's deposit to secure their child's space. Upon starting the first month's fees will be due.

What to bring

Please ensure all of your child's belongings are clearly labelled with their name.

- Diapers, wipes and any creams or lotions labelled with child's name and written instructions for application
- Bottles/sip cups (if applicable)
- Changes of clothing
- Seasonal outdoor clothing

*Comfortable, closed-toe indoor shoes (no slippers, crocks, flip flops are permitted)

*Blanket for rest time

Waitlist

Apple Blossoms Center maintains a Wait List, free of charge, for new applicants to the Centre. Applicants will be able to know their place on the list, in such a fashion that does not compromise confidentiality of the other applicants on the list.

When families would like a space and request to be added to the wait list, important information will be placed onto our waitlist form and placed in the waitlist binder based on the date they are added. This binder will be located in the supervisor's office.

Forms are filed and kept in chronological order based on the date they have been received. Applications are prioritized based on the date received, and then on the following criteria:

- 1) Siblings of families already enrolled
- 2) In-area children
- 3) Date of care required.

When a family requests an update on their spot on the list, the Supervisor will advise them of either their position and/or an anticipated opening date, based on anticipated space available by program, and the above criteria, thereby maintaining confidentiality of others on the list.

All communication is to be recorded using the waitlist form.

Withdrawal Notification

Should you choose to withdraw your child you will be required to submit one month written notice. Withdrawal can only occur on the 1st of a month. Withdrawal notifications received with less than one-month notice, will be charged for the one-month period.

Withdrawal of Services

Apple Blossoms Center strives to meet the individual needs of all children and families enrolled in our programs. However, situations do arise from time to time where it may be necessary for the center to withdraw childcare services for a child and/or their family. Apple Blossoms does not take these decisions lightly and takes reasonable care to ensure a thorough assessment of the child's needs, community supports available, and the program's ability to support the child have been undertaken before withdrawing services. Examples leading to withdrawal of services may include:

- Non-payment of program fees
- Frequent late pick up
- Parents/guardians or children who exhibit violent or harassing behaviour towards staff, volunteers, students on placement, other children, or families
- Community resources for children with special needs are unavailable or have been exhausted

Arrival and Departure

Parents/guardians or their designate are required to personally escort their child into the program and to pick up their child at the end of the day. Please ensure the staff is aware you have arrived or that you are departing with your child. Arrival and Departure times are recorded by staff on a daily basis.

Parking

Parking is available in the plaza parking lot. Please ensure that you do not park in front of the center as this impedes the traffic coming and going from the plaza.

Authorized Drop Off/Pick Up and Emergency Contacts

At the time of enrollment, you will be asked to provide the names and contact information including telephone numbers and addresses of any adults 16 years of age or older that you authorize to drop off/pick up your child or come to the centre in the event that you cannot be contacted when your child is ill or has been involved in an emergency. Apple Blossoms Center does not permit children 15 years of age or younger to escort younger children home. If you require an alternate person to pick up your child who is not on the list, please provide this information in writing (email) to the staff. Any new authorized pickup contacts who come to pick up a child will be asked to provide photo identification.

Late Pick Up

Our staff are counting on you to be on time to pick up your child at the end of the day so that they can meet their personal and family obligations. We do understand that that weather and traffic accidents happen, however we appreciate you calling the program to let us know you will be late or making arrangements for an alternate adult to pick up your child. Childcare arrangements may be withdrawn by the center for parents/guardians who frequently pick up their child late.

Late charges are \$10.00 if you pick up your child late with an additional \$1 per minute added after 6:10 p.m. Late fines are recorded, signed by you and paid directly to the staff member who stayed with your child. If payment is not received by the end of the month, you will be billed by the center.

If you are late three times, you will receive a written warning. If you are late a fourth time, the center reserves the right to withdraw services.

Changes to child/family information

The center relies on all the information being kept up-to-date in case of emergencies. It is the parent/guardian responsibly to ensure that their child's information is current provide the center with any changes. Information includes family/child contact information, emergency contact information, allergies, medical conditions, updated immunization records and changes to program type (part time to full time)

If you require to make changes to yours or your child's information, please provide via written notice, in person or center email.

Our Staff

Our Registered Early Childhood Educators and assistances come with a wide background of education and experience. Our staff must go through a screening process that includes demonstrating their values and skills, providing a police reference check that is renewed every 5 years, and hold a valid Standard First Aid and Infant and Child CPR certification. Once selected, new staff participate in orientation and training on policies and procedures, Ministry of Education regulations, and our curriculum.

Our Early Childhood Educators are trained to:

- Communicate regularly to families about their child's progress
- Plan classroom activities based on their knowledge of early childhood development
- Observe and document the progress of each individual child
- Practice high standards of child safety and protection

We recognize the importance of continued professional learning and provide all staff with various learning opportunities through group meetings, video tutorials and professional development webinars and workshops to gain a deeper understanding of child development, play, play partnership, program planning, extension of play and scaffolding of learning, effective communication, and providing positive learning environments.

College of Early Childhood Educators

The College of Early Childhood Educators is the professional self-regulatory body for registered early childhood educators (RECE) in Ontario. The College's role is to protect the public interest by setting requirements for registration to practice as a RECE, setting ethical and professional standards and holding RECEs accountable for their practice. RECEs are trained in child development and the planning and delivery of play-based learning in child care programs.

Our staff with an early childhood education diploma or equivalent qualifications degree must be current members of the College in good standing. RECEs must renew their membership with the College on an annual basis.

Our Volunteers and Students on Educational Placements

Our programs are enhanced by the involvement of volunteers and placement students. Volunteers and placement students are always under the supervision of a staff member and never left alone with children. All volunteers and placement students must provide a police reference check before interacting with children and are required to adhere to all policies and procedures and Ministry of Education regulations.

Policies and Procedures

Our Curriculum: Playing to Learn

Children learn best through play as they are observing, moving, interacting, thinking, and discussing and through this they are building a strong foundation for future academics. The educators support their learning by setting up the room with the intent of providing materials that are of interest to the children and engaging. Play-based centered programming is not about lack of structure or boundaries. Our program provides a balanced day which includes open-ended periods of uninterrupted time for the children to explore the space that the educators have created. There is also scheduled times set out for rest, meals and outdoor play.

During their play, the educators support their learning by asking questions, listening, and discussing with the children and acting as co-regulators in their problem-solving. Educators document their observations of the children and their interactions and regularly conduct developmental assessments of the children. These observations/assessments are used to plan and create the environment with materials that meets all the various needs and interests of all the children. It enables the educators to devise specific goals for each child, including those with individualized support plans to ensure our program is inclusive.

Montessori Preschool

Montessori programming is an educational approach where children will learn within an "intentional" environment providing children with the chance to explore and manipulate Montessori materials. The function of the environment (the room) is to allow the child to develop independence in all areas of development. Children use a variety of tactile materials to learn concepts such as printing and math. The room is also designed to meet children's inner need for order and help elicit their natural curiosity. Trained Montessori educators will set up their room with such intention and will present each child with a specific activity to encourage their development in a targeted area based upon their observations and understanding of each child's development.

After School Program

After each school day, after arriving at the center and having a nutritious snack, the educators will encourage homework completion unless otherwise instructed by the parents. They will provide children with assistance and resources to complete any homework they may have. Please note, it is not the educator's responsibility to enforce homework completion – they can only encourage them to complete any work provided by the school educator.

Policies and Procedures

Communication with Families

Communication with families is paramount in our abilities to fully meet the needs of the children and their families. Apple Blossoms' staff communicate with our families through talking in person at drop-off and pick up times, use of bulletin boards, center communication app, email, and phone. It is encouraged that parents/guardians become actively involved in our communications so they can be kept informed on pertinent information regarding the center and their child's well-being. We also welcome parent/guardian communication and feedback using our various mediums.

Sleep Supervision

At the time of enrolment, and any other appropriate time such as a change in sleep pattern or transition to older age group, the staff will discuss with the parents their child's sleep preferences, required accommodations and precautions. For example, if a child sleeps with a toy at home, they can bring the toy to the center to use during naptime provided it does not pose a hazard.

Staff will conduct routine sleep checks on the toddlers and document each child's sleep. If a child's sleep behaviour or pattern changes, the staff will make sure to write it in the classroom communication book and communicate the change with the parents in person or by phone. If adjustments during nap are needed based on the change in a child's sleep patterns, the staff will make sure to make the necessary changes to the classroom.

Nutrition

Apple Blossoms provides a catered nutritious lunch as well as morning and afternoon snacks. The catering company undergoes strict public health regulations, and their menu is designed with a nutrition specialist and all food items are geared towards a well-balanced diet that meets the Canada Food Guide.

Weekly menus are posted in the kitchen, on the Parent/Guardian Information Board and in all rooms. Copies of the weekly menus are also available to take home.

Alternate menu items are provided for children with allergies or dietary restrictions that will still meet the Canada Food Guide. Due to children with allergies and food restrictions the center discourages sending any food from home or eating while entering the center. Due to allergies and restrictions, Apple Blossoms does not permit outside food in the program rooms. If your child does have a life-threatening allergy, please refer to the Anaphylaxis policy.

Policies and Procedures

Birthdays and Celebrations

Apple Blossoms loves to celebrate holidays, events and birthdays with our families and children however we need to keep everyone safe. Therefore, we will provide birthday celebrations once a month for all the children who had a birthday in that month. This is to minimize the amount of treats children receive and control for allergens. If parents would like to bring in something on the day of their child's birthday, they may provide healthy snack (fruit platter for example) provided they receive permission prior to the day. Our staff also engage the children in holiday and cultural celebrations and will host family events to which we supply the foods. If your family has a holiday they celebrate and would like to be included in the planning of an event, please feel free to speak to your child's educators and contribute ideas for activities and food!

Outdoor Play

Our center follows Ministry guidelines and provides 2 hours of outdoor play per age group. Our outdoor play areas are considered as an extension of our indoor classrooms and that includes a variety of activities such as sensory, science, math, construction, and gross motor. When the weather is inclement, gross motor activities will take place indoors and our classrooms, incorporate science and nature items thereby enabling children to continuously explore the elements of nature while indoors.

Please ensure that your child arrives each day with items they will require for outdoor play. This includes outdoor footwear (shoes/boots – no sandals), weather appropriate outerwear (jackets/hats/mittens – no scarves), and sunscreen in the summer months.

Field Trips/Community Walks

Apple Blossoms plans occasional nature walks off site to expand on and enhance our regular curriculum. This can also be a planned bussed excursion to an off-site facility. Prior to any excursion, all parents will be informed in advance. The center may have bussed excursions for our groups except toddlers. In this event, parents must be informed in advance and sign off on a Trip Excursion form. All children attending the excursion must have a signed consent form by the parent before leaving the premise.

In the event that the planned event includes the use of recreational water (splash or spray pads, wading pools) or city park, the center will check for safety inspection reports at our regional health website for any inspection reports before going.

Anaphylaxis – life-threatening allergy

Anaphylaxis is a serious reaction and can be life threatening. The allergy may be related to food, insect stings, medication, latex or other allergens. Apple Blossoms has a policy

Policies and Procedures

that is intended to help support the needs of a child with any allergy, and provide information on anaphylaxis and awareness to parents, employees and students, and volunteers.

Parents of children with allergies must:

- Complete the required Anaphylaxis Plan, providing a detailed description of the allergy of their child. This form will be in the office and the child's classroom for the staff/volunteers/students to refer to at all times, and they will review all child plans on an annual basis.
- Provide the centre staff with the monitoring and avoidance strategies used in the home.
- Provide a written list of signs and symptoms for staff and volunteers to look for should a child have an allergic reaction and when to administer the EpiPen
- If their child may require a second EpiPen, parents must provide the instructions of when to administer the second EpiPen on the Authorization form
- Provide consent for Apple Blossoms staff to administer the child's EpiPen should the need arise.
- Ensure the centre has up-to-date emergency contact information.
- Update any changes to their child's allergy, medication or treatment, including if the child outgrows their allergy and no longer requires any medication to manage it.
- Provide centre with a current EpiPen, and any other medication that is required to treat the child's allergy, any required medical notes from the child's doctor stating the appropriate dosage to give the child based on their age and/or weight. The note will remain in the child's file and a copy in the room's emergency binder.
- At the commencement of attending childcare provide training to the centre Supervisor/designate who will then train all staff, students and volunteers on the signs and symptoms to look for as well as procedures to follow if their child has an anaphylactic reaction.
- Annually review their child's Anaphylaxis plan and either sign-off that no changes are required or update their child's plan following the above procedures.

In order to reduce the risk of exposure to anaphylactic reactions:

- An anaphylaxis plan must be posted or made accessible in each classroom for all children who have an anaphylactic Allergy
- An up-to-date allergy list must be posted in each classroom, in the main hallway, in the kitchen and kept accessible in each room's emergency binder.
- All Epi Pens will be stored in the child's classroom emergency bag that is temperature controlled. Each epi-pen is to be labelled with the child's name

Policies and Procedures

- When a child has a dietary restriction or limitation, the catering company will be notified, and all menus will be reviewed. A food substitution will be provided for all meals when appropriate. The child's food restrictions will be added to the allergy postings.
- Avoid certain foods/materials that may be contained in any craft or sensory programming materials.
- Do not use latex gloves - use vinyl gloves only.

Foods From Outside of Center

In order to prevent allergic reactions, the center has the right to limit or refuse foods not provided by the caterer or center. If a parent requires that their child bring any item not provided by the center/caterer, they must first discuss their child's needs/requests with the supervisor. The request must be put into writing and placed in the child's file.

All outside foods are subject to inspection prior to being brought into the center. All food/drinks from home need to be:

- Peanut/Nut free
- Free of any other allergens of other children enrolled as per our posted allergy list on the menu board.
- Labeled with child's full name.
- Kept in a temperature-controlled container to maintain their quality.
- Items such as milk must be labelled and kept in the center's refrigerator.
- It is recommended that parents provide healthy foods that meet the Canadian Food Guide.

Any changes to this request must be submitted in writing to the supervisor.

For school-age children who wish to finish their lunch/snacks from school will be permitted to upon approval from the school-age educators that the items meet the guidelines noted above.

Please note, this does not include children walking into the center while finishing their meals from home. Parents are to ensure that their child(ren) do not enter the center while eating.

Medical Needs

A child with medical needs is defined as: "a child who has one or more chronic or acute medical conditions which requires additional supports, accommodation or assistance". This will include, but not limited to children diagnosed with Asthma, Diabetes, Febrile Seizures, Epilepsy.

Policies and Procedures

Note: If a child already has an individualized plan for their anaphylactic allergy, and has no other medical needs, no other plan is required.

Apple Blossoms does employ policies and procedures to ensure the safety of all our children. If your child does have a medical need, you will be required to:

- Complete the required center documentation providing a detailed description of the child's medical need. This form will be posted in the office and the child's classroom for the staff to refer to at all times, and they will review all child Specific Emergency Plans on an annual basis.
- Provide the centre staff with the monitoring and avoidance strategies used in the home.
- Provide a written list of signs and symptoms for staff and volunteers to look for should a child have an allergic reaction.
- Provide consent for Apple Blossoms to administer the child's medications if the need arise.
- Ensure the centre has up-to-date emergency contact information.
- Update any changes to their child's condition, medication or treatment, including if the child outgrows their medical condition and no longer requires any medication to manage it.
- Provide centre with a current medications and any other equipment that is required along with a medical note from the child's doctor giving Apple Blossoms consent to administer the medication and the appropriate dosage to give the child based on their age and/or weight. All original documentation will be placed in the child's file and copies will be kept in the child's room at all times.
- At the commencement of attending childcare and annually thereafter, the parent will review the plan and provide training to the centre Supervisor/designate and staff (students and volunteers) on the signs and symptoms to look for as well as procedures to follow

Health and Illness

Young children do not have a fully developed immune system, therefore your child experiencing some illness while in care should be expected. The local Public Health unit sets out and monitors a comprehensive cleaning and sanitation routines and personal health care practices including frequent hand washing for staff and children. These routine practices are designed to minimize the spread of illness.

Parents can help prevent the spread of illness by keeping their child home from the program anytime they have the following signs and symptoms of illness and communicable diseases until symptoms have stopped for at least 24 hours or a doctor has determined your child is or is not experience a communicable illness

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- A temperature above 38 degrees Celsius (100 degrees Fahrenheit)
- Difficult or rapid breathing or a severe cough
- Vomiting more than twice in the last 24 hours
- Unexplained (i.e. not due to diet, or medication) diarrhea more than twice in the last 24 hours
- Sore throat especially if accompanied by a fever
- Undiagnosed skin rash
- Persistent scratching of body or head
- Eyes are red or yellow, bowel movement is gray or white, or urine is dark or tea coloured
- head lice or nits

If the center is experiencing an outbreak of children with the same symptoms, the amount of time required to be symptom-free can be extended to a minimum of 48 hours.

If your child becomes ill while at home, please call the center to inform them that your child will be absent and state not only that they are ill but list their symptoms. This will greatly assist the staff in detecting any spread of the same illness in other children and informing other parents or public health of an outbreak.

It is imperative that the parents accept the responsibility of updating the Center with any changes regarding their child's medical situation. Any changes, such as recent Reactions and Allergies, recent immunizations, and / or after a serious illness the Center must be notified.

Medications

Apple Blossoms Center Inc staff will only administer prescription medication only. Any topical medications will not be used on the children to clean or treat wounds unless prescribed by the child's physician. Any creams that are non-prescription, such as sunscreen, lotions and diaper-creams, can only be applied with written authorization from a parent using the Authorization for Non-Prescription Skin Products form.

All drug or medication containers must be clearly labelled with:

- The child's full name;
- The name of the drug or medication;
- The dosage of the drug or medication;
- Instructions for storage;
- Instructions for administration;
- The date of purchase of the medication for prescription medications; and
- The expiry date of the medication, if applicable.

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Please note, no over-the-counter medications will be administered without a doctor's note containing the all of the above.

All drugs and medications must be stored in their original containers as supplied by a pharmacist, or their original packages. Medications that have been removed from their original package or transferred into a different container will not be accepted or administered to children.

When a parent brings in a prescribed medication, they must complete the parent authorization form. For skin product with a DIN number, parents must still fill out the authorization form.

Where information is missing on a drug or medication label and/or the written parental authorization does not match the label on the labelled container, the child care centre will not accept or administer the medication until the label and/or written parental authorization accurately contains all the required information.

Advil, Tylenol, Motrin (Pain Relievers, Fever Reducers)

It is not our practice to administer medications such as Advil, Tylenol or Motrin to control for cold or flu symptoms. It is in the best interest of the child experiencing these symptoms to remain home, to rest and get better. If the child has a chronic illness (e.g. prone to headaches, migraines, seizures) we may administer such medications Tylenol by enacting our medical needs policy (see above).

Safe Arrival and Dismissal Policy and Procedures

- Apple Blossoms Center will ensure that any child receiving child care at the child care centre is only released to the child's parent/guardian or an individual that the parent/guardian has provided written authorization the child care centre may release the child to.
- Apple Blossoms Center will only dismiss children into the care of their parent/guardian or another authorized individual. The centre will not release any children from care without supervision.
- Where a child does not arrive in care as expected or is not picked up as expected, staff must follow the safe arrival and dismissal procedures set out below.

Additional Policy Statements

Procedures

Accepting a child into care

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1. When accepting a child into care at the time of drop-off, program staff in the room must:
 - o greet the parent/guardian and child.
 - o ask the parent/guardian how the child's evening/morning has been and if there are any changes to the child's pick-up procedure (i.e., someone other than the parent/guardian picking up). Where the parent/guardian has indicated that someone other than the child's parent/guardians will be picking up, the staff must confirm that the person is listed on Children's Information Form or where the individual is not listed, ask the parent/guardian to provide authorization for pick-up in writing (e.g., note or email).
 - o document the change in pick-up procedure in the daily written record (Log Book).
 - o sign the child in on the classroom attendance record.

Where a child has not arrived in care as expected

1. If a child is away sick with no determined date of return provided, parents must contact the center each morning indicating that they will still be absent.
2. If a child is away on vacation, parents are to notify the center what days the child will be away and what day they are expected to return. If the child does not return on the designate date, we will follow the procedure stated below.
3. Where a child does not arrive at the child care centre and the parent/guardian has not communicated a change in drop-off (e.g., sent email or advised the closing staff at pick-up), the staff in the classroom must:
 - o Inform the supervisor and they must commence contacting the child's parent/guardian no later than 10:00a.m. Staff shall message parent/guardian on the communication app at 10:00a.m. In the case the child's family cannot be contacted, staff shall call the family at 11:00a.m. to confirm details.
 - o Once the child's absence has been confirmed, program staff shall document the child's absence on the attendance record and any additional information about the child's absence in the daily written record.

Releasing a child from care

1. The staff who is supervising the child at the time of pick-up shall only release the child to the child's parent/guardian or individual that the parent/guardian has

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provided written authorization that the child care may release the child to. Where the staff does not know the individual picking up the child (i.e., parent/guardian or authorized individual),

- confirm with another staff member that the individual picking up is the child's parent/guardian/authorized individual.
- where the above is not possible, ask the parent/guardian/authorized individual for photo identification and confirm the individual's information against the parent/guardian/authorized individual's name on the child's file or written authorization.

Where a child has not been picked up as expected (before centre closes)

1. Where a parent/guardian has previously communicated with the staff a specific time or timeframe that their child is to be picked up from care and the child has not been picked up 30 minutes after the arranged pick-up time, the staff shall contact the parent/guardian via phone call and advise that the child is still in care and has not been picked up.
 - Where the individual picking up the child is an authorized individual and their contact information is available, the staff shall proceed with contacting the individual to confirm pick-up as per the parent/guardian's instructions or leave a voice message to contact the centre.

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

1. Where a parent/guardian or authorized individual who was supposed to pick up a child from care and has not arrived by 6:00p.m., staff shall ensure that the child is given a snack and activity, while they await their pick-up.
2. One staff shall stay with the child, while a second staff proceeds with calling the parent/guardian to advise that the child is still in care and inquire their pick-up time. In the case where the person picking up the child is an authorized individual, the staff shall contact the parent/guardian first and then proceed to contact the authorized individual responsible for pick-up if unable to reach the parent/guardian.
3. If the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian or authorized individual who was responsible for picking up the child, the staff shall contact emergency contacts listed on Children's Information Form. Where the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian or any other authorized individual listed on the child's file (e.g., the emergency contacts) by 6:30p.m., the staff shall proceed with contacting York Region Children's Aid Society (CAS) [(905) 895-2318]. Staff shall follow the CAS's direction with respect to next steps.

Harassment

Harassment is a form of discrimination and includes any unwanted physical or verbal behaviour that offends or humiliates another. All staff, parents/guardians, children,

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students, volunteers, and visitors are to be treated with respect and dignity at all times regardless of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or abilities.

We expect parents/guardians to conduct themselves in a manner that is conducive to the health and well-being of all the children and adults at the centre.

All Parents/Guardians and visitors are responsible for contributing to a safe and healthy environment for the children that attend our programs. This includes:

1. Being respectful and supportive of the learning environment, which includes all children, parents, and staff.
2. Respecting the guidance provided by staff at the centre and addressing any issues in a respectful way.
3. Acknowledging the differences in learning, developmental capabilities, and values that children and adults possess.

Should a problem arise, please follow the steps outlined in Resolving Concerns and Issues. Parents/guardians who do not follow our policy are subject to having services withdrawn.

Incident/Accident Reporting

It is not uncommon for young children to experience cuts, scrapes, and bruises while running, jumping, and playing. All Apple Blossoms Center staff hold valid certification in Standard First Aid and Infant and Child CPR and have been trained in emergency procedures.

Anytime your child has an accident, staff will record the details using our Accident Reporting Form and provide you with a copy.

In the event a more serious incident involving your child occurs, staff have been trained to respond based on the severity of the injury. Staff will either call emergency support services (911), parent/guardian or your designated emergency contacts to take your child for medical evaluation.

Duty to Report

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.

All suspicions of child abuse or neglect must be reported directly to a CAS. CASs have the exclusive mandate, under the [Child and Family Services Act](#), to investigate allegations of child abuse or neglect and to deliver child protection services.

Prohibited Practices

A prohibited practice is any behaviour by a staff, volunteer or placement student that puts children at risk or that can inhibit a child's growth, self-esteem or healthy

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development. All staff, volunteers and placement students are aware that the following practices are unacceptable:

- Corporal punishment
 - Physical restraint of a child, such as confining the child to a high chair, car seat, stroller or other device for the purpose of discipline in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting themselves or others. Is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent.
- Any form of abuse (physical, emotional, sexual or neglect)
- Depriving a child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding.
- Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.
- Leaving children unsupervised.
- Deliberately using harsh or degrading measures or threats, use of derogatory language directed at, or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child or undermine his or her self-respect dignity or self-worth.
- Locking the exits of the child care centre for the purpose of confining a child or confining a child in an area or room without adult supervision,
- Using a locked or lockable room or structure to confine a child when separating them from other children.

Emergency Response

The center follows the Fire Code and the CCEYA and conducts regular monthly fire drills all year to ensure the children and staff know the procedures for evacuating the building in a safe and timely manner in the event of an emergency. After each fire drill has been conducted, parents will be notified using our communication app.

The Center also has detailed Emergency Evacuation policies and procedures in the event they arise. In the Event of an emergency that requires evacuation or closure of the center, the parents will be notified by phone calls, email and/or through the center communication app once it is safe to do so. Our designated evacuation site is the Pierre Elliot Trudeau College located behind the center.

Serious Occurrence incidents are reportable by the center to the Ministry of Education Child Care Quality, Assurance and Licensing Unit within 24 hours of the supervisor becoming aware of the incident. Details regarding the serious occurrence will be posted

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near the entrance of the program for 10 days. A serious occurrence incident is defined as;

- the death of a child who received care
- abuse, neglect or an allegation of abuse or neglect of a child while receiving care at a childcare centre,
- a life-threatening injury to or a life-threatening illness of a child who receives care at a childcare centre,
- an incident where a child who is receiving care at a childcare centre or goes missing or is temporarily unsupervised, or
- an unplanned disruption of the normal operations or childcare centre that poses a risk to the health, safety or well-being of children receiving care

Smoke Free

Apple Blossoms Center is a smoke free environment under the Smoke Free Ontario Act 2005. Smoking or handling a cigarette or tobacco on the premise including all in-door and outdoor areas is prohibited.

Resolving Parent Concerns and Issues

It is our policy to provide a transparent process for parents/guardians and staff to use when parents/guardians bring forward issues/concerns.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to take an active role at Apple Blossoms Centers and regularly discuss what their children are experiencing with our program. As supported by our program statement, we support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents/guardians, and employees, and foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with families about the program and their children. Our staff are available to engage parents/guardians in conversations and support a positive experience during every interaction.

When a parent/guardian has concerns or issues regarding their child or the center, they are encouraged to bring the matter forth. All issues and concerns raised by parents/guardians are taken seriously and will be addressed. Every effort will be made to address and resolve issues and concerns to the satisfaction of all parties and as quickly as possible.

When the issue is regarding their child's development or care within the room, they are to first discuss the concern/issue with their child's main educators. All educators and parents are to remain professional and courteous while discussing the issue. Educators answer to the best of their ability. If the issue cannot be immediately addressed, employees are to assure the parent they will obtain the necessary information or resources to resolve issues and respond back to the parent in a mutually agreed upon time frame.

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Procedures for Staff

Address the issue/concern at the time it is raised or arrange for a meeting with the parent/guardian within 1-2 business days.

Document the issues/concerns in detail.

Documentation should include:

- the date and time the issue/concern was received;
- the name of the person who received the issue/concern;
- the name of the person reporting the issue/concern; the details of the issue/concern; and
- any steps taken to resolve the issue/concern and/or information given to the parent/guardian regarding next steps or referral.

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

Ensure the investigation of the issue/concern is initiated by the appropriate party within 1-2 business days or as soon as reasonably possible thereafter. Document reasons for delays in writing.

Provide a resolution or outcome to the parent(s)/guardian(s) who raised the issue/concern.

Escalation of Issues or Concerns

When the concern is about center operations or where parents/guardians are not satisfied with the response or outcome of an issue or concern from the educators, they may escalate the issue or concern to the supervisor or designate. The supervisor/designate can be contacted in-person, via the center email, or center phone. The supervisor or designate will then establish a meeting with the parent/guardian within 2 days. In advance of the meeting, they will gather any documentation already completed and conduct a thorough investigation into the issue.

Once the meeting has been conducted, all information will be documented. If a resolution has been agreed upon, this will be documented, and all pertinent members will sign in agreement.

If an agreement has not been established, a plan of action will be documented and signed by all parties and an agreed upon timeline with another meeting set that will involve the Director. This process will continue until a resolution is agreed upon.

Responses and outcomes will be provided verbally, or in writing upon request. The level of detail provided to the parent/guardian will respect and maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved.

An initial response to an issue or concern will be provided to parents/guardians within 1-2 business days. The person who raised the issue/concern will be kept informed throughout the resolution process. Investigations of issues and concerns will be fair, impartial, and respectful to parties involved.

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Issues/concerns related to compliance with requirements set out in the Child Care and Early Years Act., 2014 and Ontario Regulation 137/15 should be reported to the Ministry of Education. Issues/concerns may also be reported to other relevant regulatory bodies (e.g Public Health, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Labour, College of Early Childhood Educators,) where appropriate.

Confidentiality:

Every issue and concern will be treated confidentially, and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of parents/guardians, children, staff, students and volunteers, except when information must be disclosed for legal reasons (e.g. to the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities or a Children's Aid Society).

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

Concerns about the Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a child:

Everyone, including members of the public and professionals who work closely with children, is required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.

If a parent/guardian expresses concerns that a child is being abused or neglected, the parent will be advised to contact the local Children's Aid Society (CAS) directly.

Persons who become aware of such concerns are also responsible for reporting this information to CAS as per the "Duty to Report" requirement under the Child and Family Services Act.

Privacy Information

All Apple Blossoms staff, volunteers and placement students understand the importance of keeping all personal information in the strictest of confidence. Apple Blossoms Center will not share any personal information with outside agencies and resource consultants for children with special needs without written parental consent.