

3.3 INCLUSION POLICY

Date Approved: Oct. 24/16 April 24, 2017, Sept. 30, 2019, April 2026

Accountability: Read by all staff working at Growing Together and all parents whose children are enrolled in the early learning and Child Care Centre.

Part I Purpose (Mission)

In our inclusive learning environments, we welcome children of all abilities. Respect for diversity, equity and inclusion is vital for optimal development and learning. Here are some of the ways in which we create an inclusive environment in our programs:

- Recognize each child as having equal rights to participate in program activities, trips and events.
- Recognize and respect the unique qualities of each child and family, including ancestry, culture, ethnicity, race, language, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, socio-economic status, family environment, and developmental abilities and needs.
- Create strategies that value the culture and first language of all children.
- Establish programming strategies to foster an inclusive learning environment in which every child can participate.
- View the diversity of children and families as an asset, and plan programs to reflect differences and enrich the environment.

Part II Guiding Principles:

1. To provide an appropriate Child Development Plan for each child based on individual needs, and interest in the areas of Gross Motor, Fine Motor, Socialization, Life Skills, Cognitive and Language.
2. To provide appropriate experiences which contribute to the developmental needs of the child.
3. To provide opportunities for meaningful play that is based on the child's individual needs, interests, and abilities and that will build important foundations for future pursuits.
4. To involve the parents in the education of their child.
5. To provide a wide range of learning experiences such as art activity centres, learning circles, dramatic play areas, cognitive learning toys and outdoor play. Each child receives individual attention, as well as learning to participate as a member of a group in a warm nurturing atmosphere.

Part III Procedures:

- a) **Registering Families**
 - All families interested in registering their child in the early learning and child care centre will be treated in a fair and equitable manner.
 - Centre policies are followed for all families: centre philosophy, child guidance techniques, reporting child abuse and neglect, parent/guardian involvement and any other related policies.
 - Identifying additional needs in the enrolment documentation and discussing these with the parent/guardian.

- Collaborate with the Municipal centre Inclusion Coach to identify possible resources/strategies to help the child, parent/guardian and staff in the program which may include support from a GTFRC Inclusion Educator.
- Consulting with parents/guardians regarding the most appropriate strategies for integration of the child into the program.
- Considering the special needs of the existing children already enrolled in the early learning and child care classrooms.

Human Resources

- The centre's hiring process supports the centre's Inclusion Policy.
- All centre staff understand and agree to support inclusive practices.
- All centre staff sign off on the Inclusion Policy on an annual basis.
- All staff receive an orientation on the Inclusion Policy.
- Staff to attend training opportunities that focus on inclusive programming, cultural diversity, etc.
- Recognize that there are no well-defined markers that distinguish at-risk, and developmentally disabled children.
- Avoiding the possibility of limiting children's learning by labelling.

c) Training and Professional Development

- Educators will be encouraged to facilitate conversations with parents/guardians and share information with colleagues about a child's needs.
- Training specific to a child's diagnosis will be sought out and supported for educators.
- Cultural experiential training will be supported.
- Diversity and poverty training will be encouraged.

d) Programming

- The program staff will adapt the environment and routines as necessary to meet the needs of the children enrolled.
- Provide opportunities for discussion through the program to share relevant information about all children in the centre, thereby breaking down any discrimination or prejudices.
- Creating an appropriate environment that includes a range of materials and experiences to support the positive development of all children.
- Arrange a balance of large and small group experiences, both vigorous and quiet so that all children can be active and interactive participants at their own levels.

a) Confidentiality

- Staff understand that they will receive and have access to confidential information about children and families.
- Staff must maintain confidentiality.
- Before sharing information about a child with outside Agencies, schools or others, the child care program must obtain signed parent/guardian consent.
- Documentation of consent to share information will be kept at the centre in the child's file.

f) Inclusion Team / Collaboration:

- Working together to accomplish shared, identified goals.
- Collaboration identifies joint solutions, shared visions and service goals.

- Curriculum and classroom modifications and the implementation of individual support plans are decisions that are made through collaboration between the parents/guardians, the child care centre and the Municipal Inclusion Coach.
- g) Communication Protocols:
- The Board of Directors will be informed of all dismissals. The Municipal Early Years Division will be notified prior to a child's dismissal so that they are:
 - Prepared to support operators if parents/guardians call.
 - Able to assist where possible with problem solving to support children, parents/guardians and operators.
 - To identify climate in the community and know the needs and struggles of child care operators and families so that we can advocate for them.
 - Meetings may be called together by the childcare, Municipal Inclusion Coaches or the parent/guardian. The childcare will facilitate the meetings and delegate a recorder for minutes.
 - Growing Together will work with the Municipal Inclusion Coach to determine if supports are needed in programs. The Municipality will confirm funding for additional supports and Growing Together will arrange a staff to cover as an Inclusion Educator in the program.

Restriction or Dismissal

The following steps should be implemented prior to restriction of a child from the program. Due to the special circumstances regarding each situation the time frame and order of steps may differ according to the needs of the family.

1. Documentation will be kept by classroom educators and retained in the child's file. It should be factual, dated, signed. A summary of the events should be reported to the Supervisor i.e. Incident reports, behavior charts, parent/guardian communications/ correspondence.
2. The documentation including assessment reports should be evaluated regularly by the classroom educators and shared with the Supervisor. Strategies to support the child such as environmental changes may be implemented in the child's program.
3. Meeting with parent/guardian, child care educators, centre supervisor or director and Municipal Inclusion Coach, should be set up to discuss and document the concerns, the possible strategies and resources. This information will be highlighted on an Individual Support Plan for the child.
4. Regular meetings will be scheduled by the child care Supervisor to review outcomes and plan additional strategies if applicable. Ongoing written and verbal communication will be implemented by the classroom educators to maintain a positive open relationship with the parent/guardian.

5. A child may be restricted, or dismissed from the program if they are determined be a safety risk to themselves or to others. The decision for restriction is based on each individual circumstance and decided upon by; the Supervisor or Director in consultation with the classroom educator. Examples of restriction may include; hourly, half day or full exclusion.
6. A plan is developed by Supervisor or Director and parents/guardians to readmit the child. Included in this plan is a forum for communication with the parent/guardian when the child is not in attendance.
7. When the child is readmitted, a documented plan is implemented by the classroom educators and the Supervisor or Director to assess the child's progress and to communicate this to the parents/guardians. (Oct. 2008 / March 25, 2013 June 26/17)