

3.3 INCLUSION POLICY

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

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 involvement and any other related policies.
- Identifying additional needs in the enrolment documentation and discussing these with the parent.
- Referring a family with additional needs to support agencies, if they have not already sought assistance.
- Enlisting the assistance of support agencies and their staff who provide resources and support to the child, parents and staff.
- Consulting with parents 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.

b) 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 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.

e) 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 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 program plans are decisions that are made through collaboration between the parents, the early learning and child care centre and the special needs delivery agent.

If the delivery agent eg. Linck support staff requires additional support or resources this will not be an added responsibility of the GTFRC Child care Supervisor. (Sept 30, 2019)

g) Communication Protocols:

- The Board of Directors will be informed of all dismissals. Municipal Children's Services will be notified prior to the child's dismissal so that they are:
 - Be prepared to support our operators if parent calls
 - Assist where possible with problem solving to support children, families and operators (i.e. funding for staff to cover for short period while on wait)
- 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, delivery agent e.g. Linck or the parent. The childcare will facilitate the meetings and delegate a recorder for minutes.
- If the delivery agent can not provide the necessary support the Municipality will be contacted to authorize financial compensation for an available Growing Together employee to provide the required support. If the delivery agent e.g. Linck support is unavailable and a Growing Together employee is unavailable, a plan will be designed with the parent and the childcare to ensure the safety needs of the child are met, this may include restriction or exclusion until the necessary supports are available or the child's needs change. (Sept. 30, 2019)

- When the delivery agent e.g. Linck is unavailable to provide scheduled support, Growing Together will not assume the responsibility for the change in scheduling or contacting the parents. (Sept. 30, 2019)

Restriction or Termination

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 RECEs 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 communications/ correspondence.
2. The documentation including assessment reports should be evaluated regularly by RECEs and shared with the Supervisor. Strategies to support the child ie. Environmental changes may be implemented in the child's program.
3. Meeting with parent/guardian and RECEs, and Supervisor /Director, should be set up to discuss and document the concerns and the possible strategies and resources (ie. Community partners) using Parent / Staff - Childcare Service Review form. (see forms)
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 RECEs to maintain a positive open relationship with the parent/guardian.
5. A child may be restricted, or dismissed from the program if she/ he is determined be a safety risk to her/himself or to others. The decision for restriction is based on each individual circumstance and decided upon by; the Supervisor/Director in consultation with the RECE. Examples of restriction may include; hourly, half day or full exclusion.
6. A plan is developed by Supervisor/Director and parents 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 RECEs & Supervisor/Director to assess the child's progress and to communicate this to the parents. (Oct. 2008 / March 25, 2013 June 26/17)