

Growing Together Family Resource Centre Inc – Parent Handbook



Welcome to Growing Together Family Resource Center Inc, a nonprofit child care, which is licensed under the Ministry of Education Early Learning Division, and follows the standards set out in the Child Care and Early Years Act. The childcare is run by a volunteer Board of Directors, made up of parents and other interested members of the community.

Growing Together at St. Anne's, Growing Together at W. J Baird, Growing Together at Harwich Raleigh and Growing Together at Tecumseh are all located in schools. Growing Together at May Court is a stand-alone centre that is adjacent to Tecumseh Public School. Through professional staff, a quality emergent program is provided.

The Philosophy of the centers:

To provide a warm, safe, stimulating environment and program that enables each child to develop individually to his / her fullest potential physically, emotionally, socially and cognitively.

1. To provide an appropriate program experience for children based on individual needs, and interest in the areas of Gross motor, Fine Motor, Emotional/Social, Cognitive and Language.
2. To involve the whole family in the education of their child.
3. To provide a wide range of learning experiences such as art centers, learning circles, dramatic play areas, cognitive learning toys and outdoor play. Topics are established by evaluating the developmental needs of the children and their interests to guide the emergent programming process for all the weekly activities.



Achieving the Program Philosophy:

The “Emergent programming approach” fundamentals are;

- Planned programming
- Children are fundamentally competent
- The planning process leads to activities and interactions which respond to the children's development and relate to children's interests
- Play based
- Focus of RECE is play facilitation
- Group times are an opportunity to plan and reflect with children; and/or further their exploration through song, story.

Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement:

The Federal Government has committed to investing in a national child care system known as the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care System (CWELCC). Funding under the agreement, will be used to build and leverage the success of Ontario's existing early learning and child care system by increasing quality, accessibility, affordability and inclusivity in early learning and child care.

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Growing Together has enrolled in the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care System. All Infant, Toddler, Preschool and Eligible FDK children will receive discounts to their child care rates as scheduled by the Federal Government. A reduction of 25% off the base GTFRC rate for child care services was put in place on November 1st, 2022. Eligible parents received a credit of 25% for all child care services used between April 1st-October 31st, 2022. On January 1st, 2023 the discount rate for Infant, Toddler, Preschool and Eligible FDK children was increased to 52.75% off the base GTFRC rate for child care services. Growing Together will continue to apply discounts to child care rates as scheduled by the Federal Government.

Daily Schedule:

Activities follow a regular pattern so that your child can feel safe knowing what will happen next. The day will have indoor and outdoor, busy and quiet times. The program will have a wide variety of creative activities, music, and various small and large group experiences. Check with your child's RECE teacher for daily / weekly program plans.



Hours of Operation:

* Please note that if the schools are closed the child care will be also. If the child care must close in the middle of the day, parents will be notified by listening to CKSY radio station, looking at the website www.gtfr.org and receiving a personal phone call. The website (Twitter portion) and face book page will be updated often to keep parents informed of the situation.

Growing Together at St. Anne's

- ✓ Programs for children 18 months to 12 years old
- ✓ Before and After School Programs available
- ✓ PA Day and Summer Programs available
- ✓ Open from 6:30am – 6:00pm

Growing Together at Harwich Raleigh

- ✓ Programs for children 30 months – 12 years old
- ✓ Before and After School Programs available
- ✓ PA Day and Summer Programs available
- ✓ Open from 6:30am – 6:00pm

Growing Together at W.J. Baird

- ✓ Program for children 3 months- 12 years old
- ✓ Before and After School Programs available
- ✓ PA Day and Summer Programs available
- ✓ Open from 6:30am – 6:00pm

Growing Together at May Court

- ✓ Programs for children 3 months - 12 years old
- ✓ Open from 6:30am – 6:00pm with an **Extended Hour program (6:00pm – 10:00pm)-Currently Not Operating**



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Growing Together at Tecumseh

- ✓ Programs for children 4-12 years old
- ✓ Before and After School Programs available
- ✓ PA Day and Summer Programs available
- ✓ Open from 6:30am – 6:00pm with an **Extended Hour program (6:00pm – 10:00pm)-Currently Not Operating**

The Extended hour programs place a focus on play and social experiences. The goal is to provide children with a warm, safe, program that replicates a family, homey feel. The program includes a family style dinner, large and small group activities, outdoor play and wind down time with quieter activities e.g. puzzles, music, sewing, knitting, reading and stories. Bed time routine and sleeping arrangements need to be noted on the enrolment form and updates communicated with the supervisor. Contract information for after hours must be noted as well on the emergency information form.

Emergency Evacuation Information:

GTFRC has emergency management policies which reference Lock down, Hold & Secure and Shelter in Place procedures and evacuation procedures. In the event that the child care and/or school is no longer safe, the following are the Emergency Evacuation locations:

Growing Together at St. Anne's

- Primary site - GT at WJ Baird, 182 King St, Blenheim 676-1200
- Designated evacuation site - Gable Reese Rotary Pool, 66 Regent St, Blenheim 676-4544

Growing Together at Harwich Raleigh

- Primary site – GT at WJ Baird, 182 King St, Blenheim 676-1200
- Designated evacuation site – Gable Reese Rotary Pool, 66 Regent St, Blenheim 676-4544

Growing Together at W.J. Baird

- Primary site – GT at St. Anne's, 183 Snow Ave, Blenheim 676-1757
- Designated evacuation site – Gable Reese Rotary Pool, 66 Regent St, Blenheim 676-4544



Growing Together at May Court

- Primary Site – United Way of Chatham-Kent, 425 McNaughton Ave West, Chatham 519-354-0430
- Designated evacuation site-John D. Bradley Centre, 565 Richmond St. Chatham 598-0200

Growing Together at Tecumseh

- Primary Site-United Way of Chatham-Kent, 425 McNaughton Ave West, Chatham 519-354-0430
- Designated evacuation site-John D. Bradley Centre, 565 Richmond St. Chatham 598-0200

Parents will be notified if an emergency situation occurs, based on direction from the emergency personnel.

Missing Articles:

The child care cannot be held responsible for lost articles of clothing. Please report the missing item to the staff, which will then search for it and / or post a sign with a description for other families.

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Clothing:

- ❖ All clothing should be washable (the children do get dirty), comfortable and easy for your child to handle dressing him / herself.
- ❖ A full set of seasonal, change of clothing, should remain at the child care in case of accidents. (e.g. shirt, pants and socks)
- ❖ If child care clothing is borrowed, it should be laundered and returned promptly.
- ❖ As children are outside every day they must have appropriate outdoor clothing.

Parent Visits:

Visits from parents are always welcome. We do recommend you speak to the classroom educator to come up with a plan to ensure the visits are benefiting the child's well-being. It can be confusing for a child to see a parent mid-day. The RECE's want your child to feel safe and happy. Families are encouraged to share their culture, resources and special talents, please see your child's educator to explore this opportunity.



Infant/Toddlers:

Parents of infants and toddlers will provide; diapers, formula and jar food as needed. Each parent will have information about your child's day and activities by receiving a daily sheet or logging into the Lillio software.

Parent/ECE Meetings:

The RECE's are more than willing to set up a meeting to discuss your child's progress. Annual Parent/ RECE review meetings are scheduled each spring. For parents with children under the age of 5, the staff will ask you to complete a developmental checklist at home with your child. (Ages and Stages Questionnaire). Upon returning it to the RECE, they will score it and discuss the findings with you.

Fund Raising:

Growing Together hosts different fundraisers throughout the year. Participation is completely optional. The funds raised provide for extras in the programs e.g. toys and crafts.



Surveys:

Each year, a family survey will be available for comments. An opportunity to sit on the Board of Directors will also be offered. Please fill in your comments to assist the Board in making the child care a place to meet all family's needs.



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Messages:

All centres have answering machines. Please feel free to leave messages before or after hours. The child care does not take schedules over the phone.

Health:

Please include a copy of your child's immunization record upon enrolment.

Driver's License:

Please include a copy of your driver's license upon enrolment.

Behavior Guidance:

RECE's consider the environment, the routine and any other conditions that may be contributing to the negative behaviors.

Behavior guidance will be:

- Related to the intensity of the inappropriate behavior
- Appropriate to the developmental level of the child
- Used in a positive and consistent manner
- Designed to assist the child to learn appropriate behavior

Procedures:

- Positive behaviors are reinforced.
- Prevention - to anticipate problems and diffuse potential crisis
- Identify and address all concerns and conflicts.
- For further details see the Supervisor for the GTFRC Policy and Procedure Manual.

Prohibited Practices:

Under no circumstance will Corporal Punishment be used as behavior guidance.

The following are Prohibited Practices for staff, volunteers, students and anyone within the child care centre. They will not be tolerated at Growing Together and will initiate the protocol under 2.16

Monitoring Compliance and Interventions:

- Corporal Punishment (which may include but is not limited to, hitting, spanking, slapping, pinching)
- Physical Restraint of children, including but not limited to confining to high chair, car seat etc. for discipline or in lieu of supervision unless for the purposes described in the regulation (to prevent self-harm, harm to others and only until risk of harm/injury is no longer imminent)
- Locking the exits of the child care centre for the purpose of confining the child, or confining the area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency



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- Use of harsh, degrading, measures or threats or derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, scare or frighten the child or undermine their self-respect, dignity or self-worth
- Depriving the 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. And Staff confirm that these practices are not allowed and do not occur in the program

Accident Reports and Emergency Care:

When a child has an accident, a report will be completed, sent to the Child care Supervisor to review and sign. The parent will sign the report upon receipt of a copy. If a child suffers a serious injury or becomes very ill, the staff will contact the child's parents/guardian to inform them. In the event that an ambulance is required, the supervisor or designate will call 911 and (if staffing allows) will accompany the child to the hospital. The child's file will be taken along as well. This person will stay with the child until a parent assumes responsibility. The parent will assume any cost for the ambulance.



Field Trips:

Occasionally staff will bring the children for a short walk to discover our community. A permission form in the enrolment package will authorize your child to participate in this activity. Field Trips are scheduled in advanced to provide children opportunities to visit places of interest. Your child's educator will provide you with a permission form for the excursion informing you of the destination, time, and date. A minimal charge may be required to cover transportation and entrance fees.

Outdoor Play:

When your child is at the child care, it is hoped that he/she will be able to enjoy full participation in all activities. Children will be kept indoors under the following weather conditions: heavy rain and/or thunderstorms, below -10 Celsius, and extreme heat.

Withdrawal:

The office must be informed of a withdrawal in writing, two weeks before the child's last day. This allows the Supervisor the opportunity to replace your child's position without delay.

THANK YOU:

Finally, thank you for choosing Growing Together Family Resource Centre. We are look forward to working with your family to provide quality, play-based child care for your children. We hope your experience with our organization will be positive and memorable. experience for your whole family.



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3.8 Safe Arrival and Dismissal Policy and Procedures

Date Policy and Procedures Established: December 22, 2023

Date Policy and Procedure Updated: January 2, 2024, January 25, 2024, February 7, 2024

Purpose

This policy and the procedures within will help support the safe arrival and dismissal of children receiving care.

This policy will provide staff, students and volunteers with a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities for ensuring the safe arrival and dismissal of children receiving care, including what steps are to be taken when a child does not arrive at the Child Care Centre as expected, as well as steps to follow to ensure the safe dismissal of children.

This policy is intended to fulfill the obligations set out under Ontario Regulation 137/15 for the policies and procedures regarding the safe arrival and dismissal of children in care.

Note: definitions for terms used throughout this policy are provided in a Glossary at the end of the document.

Policy

General

- Growing Together Family Resource Centre will ensure that any child receiving 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 to Growing Together stating they are approved to pick up the child.
- Growing Together Family Resource Centre will only dismiss children into the care of their parent/guardian or another authorized individual as stated above. Growing Together 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.

Procedure

Accepting a Child into Care

When accepting a child into care at the time of drop-off, program staff in the classrooms must:

- Greet the parent/guardian and child.
- 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 child's emergency or where the individual is not listed, ask the parent/guardian to provide authorization for pick-up in writing (i.e. note or email).
- As applicable, document any change in pick-up procedures in the daily classroom communication binder.
- Sign the child in on the classroom attendance record.

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Where a child has not arrived in care as expected

1. Where a child does not arrive at the Child Care Centre and the parent/guardian has not communicated a change in drop-off (i.e. left a voice message, sent an email or advised the closing staff at pick-up), the staff in the classroom must:
 - Inform the Centre supervisor or acting supervisor of the child's absence.
 - The Centre supervisor or acting supervisor will contact the child's parent/guardian by phone within 3 hours of the child's scheduled start time. In the event the parent/guardian does not answer their phone, a voice message will be left and an email will also be sent asking for confirmation from the parent that their child is safe. If the parent/guardian does not respond and there is another parent/guardian listed, they will be contacted as stated above. In the event the parent/guardian does not respond to the phone call or email within 10 minutes, the Centre supervisor or acting supervisor will begin calling emergency contacts as listed on the child's emergency sheet until confirmation has been received by an authorized adult that the child is safe.
 - In the event confirmation has not been received within 1 hour of the initial phone call to the parent/guardian and all contacts for the child have been called with no confirmation by an authorized adult that the child is safe, the Centre supervisor or acting supervisor will contact the police to investigate. Growing Together will follow the directions of the police regarding next steps.
2. In the event a child arrives unscheduled to a Growing Together after school program including FDK, the following steps will occur:
 - The classroom educator will sign the child in the attendance log and include the child in ratio until the situation is resolved.
 - The classroom educator will contact the Centre supervisor or acting supervisor to investigate the child's schedule.
 - The Centre supervisor or acting supervisor will contact the parent/guardian by phone to confirm the child's schedule. If the parent/guardian does not answer their phone, a voice message will be left stating the child is in our care and requesting the parent/guardian to contact the Child Care Centre. An email will then be sent to the parent/guardian to contact the Child Care Centre.
3. In the event a child does not arrive to a Growing Together after school program including FDK, the following steps will occur:
 - The classroom educator will contact the Centre supervisor or acting supervisor.
 - The Centre supervisor or acting supervisor will contact the school office to see if the child was in-attendance at school.
 - The Centre supervisor or acting supervisor will contact the parent/guardian to clarify the information that was received by the school is correct.
 - If the child was at school and is missing, the supervisor or acting supervisor will work with the school to locate the child. The bus company will be contacted if the child is suspected of boarding a school bus when not scheduled to. The Child Care Director will be contacted. If the child is not found within 20 minutes of school being released, the police will be

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contacted to investigate. Growing Together will follow the direction of the police regarding next steps.

4. Once the child's absence has been confirmed, program staff will document the child's absence on the attendance record and any additional information regarding the child's absence in the daily communication binder.

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 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) the staff will:
 - Confirm with another staff member that the individual picking up is the child's parent/guardian or an authorized individual.
 - Where the above is not possible, ask the individual for photo identification. Confirm the individual's information as a parent/guardian or authorized individual on the child's emergency sheet or written authorization.

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

1. When a parent/guardian does not pick up their child within 30 minutes of the scheduled end time that they have submitted, the staff in the classroom will contact the Centre supervisor or acting supervisor. The Centre supervisor or acting supervisor will contact the child's parent/guardian by phone and advise them that the child is still in care and has not been picked up. If the Centre supervisor or acting supervisor are not present, the classroom staff will contact the parent/guardian.
 - If the parent/guardian does not answer the phone, a message will be left. If another parent/guardian is listed, they will be contacted by phone and a message will be left if they do not answer. A second phone call will be made to the parent/guardian. In the event the parent/guardian can not be reached, phone calls will be made to the authorized individuals listed on the child's emergency sheet.
 - Where the individual scheduled to pick up the child is an authorized individual and their contact information is available, the staff will contact them by phone to confirm pick-up as per the parent/guardian's instructions or leave a voice message to contact the Centre.
 - Where the staff has not heard back from the parent/guardian or authorized individual who was scheduled to pick-up the child, the staff will continue to call the parent/guardian and authorized individuals until the Centre closes. Once the Centre closes, the staff will refer to the procedures under "Where a child has not been picked up and the Centre is closed."

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

1. Where a parent/guardian or authorized individual who was scheduled to pick up a child from care and has not arrived by 6:00pm, the staff will provide an activity to the child while they await 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 event 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 will call the other authorized individuals on the child's emergency sheet.
4. Where the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian or any other authorized individual listed on the child's emergency sheet by 6:15pm, the staff will call their Centre supervisor or acting supervisor. The staff will then proceed with contacting the local Children's Aid Society (CAS) through Linck at (519)352-0440. The staff will follow the directions given by CAS in respect to next steps.

Dismissing a child from care without supervision procedures

Growing Together staff will only release children from care to the parent/guardian or other authorized individual. Under no circumstance will children be released from care to walk home alone.

Additional Procedures

In the event a parent/guardian requests to have a Minor-child under 16 years of age, listed as an authorized individual for pick-up, the following must occur:

- The supervisor and parent/guardian must come to an agreement and the details of the agreement must be documented in the child's file in the section that lists the person(s) authorized to pick-up. The decision will be made on an individual basis.
- The parent/guardian must complete a Growing Together "Picking Child up from Child Care Consent Form for Minors." The completed form will be signed by the parent/guardian and the Centre supervisor and stored in the child's personal file.

Glossary

Individual authorized to pick-up/authorized individual-a person that the parent/guardian has advised the child care staff in writing that is able to pick-up their child from care.

Licensee-The individual or corporation named on the License issued by the Ministry of Education responsible for the operation and management of the Child Care Centre.

Parent/guardian-A person having lawful custody of a child or a person who has demonstrated a settled intention to treat a child as a child of his or her family.

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Regulatory Requirements: Ontario Regulation 137/15

Safe arrival and dismissal policy

50. Every licensee shall ensure that each child care centre it operates and each premises where it oversees the provision of home child care has a policy respecting the safe arrival and dismissal of children that,

(a) provides that a child may only be released from the child care centre or home child care premises,

(i) to individuals indicated by a child's parent, or

(ii) in accordance with written permission from a child's parent to release the child from the program at a specified time without supervision; and

(b) sets out the steps that must be taken if,

(i) a child does not arrive as expected at the centre or home child care premises, or

(ii) a child is not picked up as expected from the centre or home child care premises.