

Brooklyn Early Learning & Childcare Centre

Parent Policy Manual

The Kinder Garden Preschool
& Childcare Centre
86 Dunlop Road
Brooklyn, NS
B0N 2A0

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Welcome to Brooklyn Early Learning & Childcare Centre. Thank you for considering us to be your professional childcare provider. We have developed this handbook as a reference guide to ensure that there are no misunderstandings about the care we provide for your child. Please read this handbook carefully, and feel free to discuss any questions that you may have.

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1. The following items are available for your review and can be found on our parent board in the main foyer:

- ✓ Daycare Act and Regulations
- ✓ Parent Handbook
- ✓ Our license
- ✓ Copy of the daycare's most recent inspection
- ✓ Our Behavior Guidance Policy
- ✓ Our current Menu
- ✓ Our Daily Program and Routine
- ✓ Parent Committee Members
- ✓ Most recent Parent Committee Minutes
- ✓ Funding Notification's from the Minister

2. Enrollment Policies

a. Communication

Communication is essential to the success of your child's care. When we accept a new family to our centre, we like to be sure that we can share openly any concerns or questions that may arise. It is important that there is a similar childcare philosophy between us. We welcome questions, feedback, or discussions of any kind that encourage a positive outcome for the child(ren.) We have a Facebook group "Brooklyn Early Learning & Childcare Centre" if you have an account, please send a request to be added.

Lillio is an app that parents will be invited to join upon registering. It is a means of communication for everyone, especially infant and toddler parents, as your child's 'daily report' will be e-mailed to you at 6pm every evening. This information will summarize your child's daily routines; naps, eating, toileting, activities, preferences and abilities and note any atypical responses.

Parent teacher interviews are offered twice a year to review progress reports. These reports are an opportunity for you to see the strengths and weaknesses that we have observed. They are not written in stone and have been age appropriately designed by the Department of Community Services. Progress reports are simply a tool to help you and the teachers better focus on the abilities and creativity of your child. We do not allow these reports to leave the daycare as we require them to be on file for licensing. A copy can be emailed to you at your request.

We also have a parent committee whereby we meet twice a year to discuss the safety and care of the children, programming, equipment and the status of our centre's license. Although we use this agenda as a guide, all parents are welcome to attend and discuss anything they wish: Concerns, ideas, or just attend for general participation.

b. Registration Information

There are several forms that must be completed before we can assume the responsibility of caring for your child. These documents are required by the Department of Community Services in accordance with The Day Care Act and Regulations. Although the registration forms are lengthy, they are designed to ensure that your child will get the very best possible care. You are required to keep us informed of any change in addresses, telephone numbers, and other pertinent information. Please inform us if you will be at any other location than what is listed on your registration forms and provide a telephone number for that place in case of emergency.

c. Drop Off & Pick Up Policy

Prior to 8:00am, all children must be escorted to our 'open room' in the toddler classroom and announced to a teacher. Please prepare your child by having their belongings placed on their designated hook, footwear changed and snack prepared for the teacher to give your child. *Do not bring them to their classroom and leave them unattended.* We cannot be held responsible for children that we do not know are in the building.

We prefer that children arrive no later than 9:00am but extend a cut-off time to 9:30am. Please note that our doors will be locked at this time and no entry will be allowed as it disrupts the program. If you have a scheduled appointment that will require you to be late you can prearrange this with the Director or your child's teacher. However, drop off is not permitted at all during rest time (between 12 and 2 pm.)

When in daycare, daycare rules apply. We encourage children to use inside voices and above all else emphasize respect in everything that we do here; for self, teachers, peers and property. This means that during arrivals and departures, we will expect children to act as if they would throughout the day here.

At the end of the day, please make sure that you tell a teacher that you are leaving again so that children can be signed out. We prefer that there are no pickups during the designated daily quiet time, if it is necessary, please let us know in advance so we can have your child ready.

We value communication with parents and drop-off and pickup times are an opportunity to briefly discuss your child's day. If you have an issue that requires more serious attention, please make arrangements with your child's teacher to discuss it more privately. Little ears and minds hear and understand everything. We respect your confidentiality and are not comfortable discussing children in the presence of anyone other than parents/guardians and associated professionals as necessary.

Our normal procedure is to release the child only to his/her parents or the designated alternative specified on the Release of Child Permission form. In the event that you need to have a person, other than who has been specified to pick up your child, we require that you notify us personally ahead of time. Please inform your alternate that they will be required to show picture ID before we can release the child into their care. If someone other than those designated to pick up your child arrives and we have not heard from you, we will not allow your child to leave until we have contacted you directly.

If there are people who specifically do not have access to your child, please list them on your registration papers as well so that we are aware of the issue. In cases where a parent has sole or shared custody of a child, we *must* have court orders on file in order to have grounds to deny/grant access to a child.

d. Hours, Fees & Billing

Normal hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 6:30am to 5:30pm but it is not our belief that children should be in care for 10-12 hours per day. Parents are requested to outline pick up and drop off times in your Contract and Rate Agreement in order for us to schedule staff accordingly. We require two-weeks written notice if you need to change your contracted days of care.

We bill monthly for the number of days you are contracted for in that month. Payment is due no later than the end of the first week of the month.

e. Payment Methods

All payments must be made through the Lillio app. You have the option to set up auto-pay to ensure your payments are never late, or you can use it like etransfer.

f. Absences

Parents are responsible for paying for their contracted days, regardless if your child comes or not; this includes vacations, sick days and storm days. You are required to let us know if and why your child will not be in attendance, no later than 9:30am. If ill, we need to record the symptoms as per community services regulations for public health.

g. Vacations

We offer a rate of 50% of the regular daily fee for vacations to a maximum of 7 days per year, per child. Vacation time must requested 2 weeks in advance.

h. Holidays & Closures

Brooklyn Early Learning & Childcare Centre closes for all civic and statutory holidays. If a holiday falls on a weekend, we will close the following Monday in lieu. We charge for all holidays.

Regular daycare fees will be charged for all partial and full day closures due to extreme or unforeseen circumstances. (Weather, power outages, flood, mechanical issues, electrical, water, etc.) You will be notified through Lillio and Facebook.

Snowstorm closures are based on current road conditions and anticipated accumulation. Forecasted white out or freezing rain conditions, regardless of accumulation, will result in closure. We also have a number of staff who live outside the daycare area, so our ability to operate in ratio may be impeded if they are unable to travel and we would be forced to close for safety and regulation reasons. We will try to, at the very least, delay opening but will only do so as late as 10:30, otherwise it will be a full day closure.

All closures/delays will be posted through the app and on Facebook by 6:00am.

i. Collections

In the event that all attempts to collect your childcare fees have been exhausted, your account will be sent to collections and subject to the following charges:

- 2% interest charge per month on the accumulative outstanding monthly balances.
- A 30% late fee charge on the entire balance, including interest.
- All court and legal fees allowable by law, should a judgment be necessary through small claims.

j. Termination

We reserve the right to terminate for any or all of the following reasons:

- Failure to pay
- Lack of parental cooperation
- Failure of child adjusting to child care, after a reasonable amount of time
- Physical or verbal abuse of any person or property
- Our inability to meet the child's needs
- False information given by parent either verbally or in writing.
- Knowingly sending your child medicated when ill.

We require a minimum of two weeks written notice when terminating and we will extend the same courtesy. The two weeks will be paid in full, regardless of whether your child is in attendance or not. We reserve the right to give written notice of immediate termination where there are extreme circumstances that affect the well being of our staff or other children in attendance. Final payment of current and outstanding balances is required in full within 2 weeks of the notice of termination.

3. Medical Policies

YOU ARE REQUIRED TO ALERT STAFF OF ANY AILMENT YOUR CHILD HAS OR RECENTLY HAD, REGARDLESS IF TREATMENT HAS ALREADY COMENCED OR IS COMPLETE. (IE. HEAD LICE)

a. Illness Policy

In order for us to provide an environment that promotes the health and well being of the families, children and staff in our care we have a strict illness policy. You must refrain from bringing children who are ill or have been ill within the last 24 hours (diarrhea or vomiting and/or fever.) This policy is established with the direction of the Department of Community Services and Public Health Services for all licensed child care facilities in the province.

Frequent hand washing and sanitization within classrooms helps to prevent the sharing of germs but ideally, prevention is the best medicine. Moreover, when children are sick, they want care from their parents in the

comfort of their own homes. Should your child become ill while here, we will call you to make arrangements to pick them up. Your cooperation on this issue is extremely important. The following exclusion criteria will be strictly enforced:

Vomiting

Unexplained Rash

Fever: Fever is defined as having a temperature over 99°F taken under the arm, over 100°F taken orally, or over 100.4°F taken in the ear. A child needs to be fever free for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to childcare; that means the child is fever free **without** the aid of Tylenol or any other fever reducing substance.

Diarrhea: Runny or watery stools, or 2 or more loose stools within 3 hours, or one episode with a fever. Children may not return to daycare until 24 hours after the last trace of diarrhea.

Runny nose: Your child may be brought to care if he/she has a common cold (slight cough, clear runny nose, occasional sneezing). Discharge of any color other than clear is not acceptable in childcare. Runny and/or Crusty Eyes: Watery, matted, and/or red/pink eyes are not acceptable in childcare.

Excessive Crankiness: Child is irritable, excessive whining or crying, wants constantly held, or requires more attention than we can provide without jeopardizing the health, safety, or well being of the other children in my care. Your child will not be accepted into childcare if he/she has had any of the above symptoms within the last 24 hours. A sick child should be allowed to recover fully after an illness so that other children in the group do not risk exposure and so that the child is able to fully participate in childcare activities.

If you are unable to remain at home with your sick child it will be necessary for you to make alternative child care arrangements at your own expense. If your child becomes ill while in our care, you will be notified immediately. ***You are required to pick up your child within 60 minutes of notification.*** If you cannot be reached then your emergency contact will be called. If your child is out ill regular fees still apply. Staff use guidelines provided by the Department of Health as well as their discretion when determining when a child should be sent home due to illness.

Children may return to care 24 hours after symptoms of illness end without the aid of medicine or with written authorization from your doctor stating the name of illness and when child may return to group care, with the exception of Hand Foot and Mouth (HFM.) We have had children misdiagnosed in the past, so it will be our discretion. Please notify us as soon as possible when your child becomes ill so that we may alert the other parents.

If your child is thought to have a communicable disease, you will be notified and asked to pick him/her up. They will be isolated from the other children and given special attention and comfort until you arrive. Your child will be accepted back into care only when they are no longer contagious. All other parents will be notified of the possibility of a communicable disease and what symptoms to watch for.

b. Sibling Exclusion

Siblings are not required to stay home unless an illness is deemed an outbreak. An outbreak is defined as an illness that is no longer contained to just one classroom and moves to another.

c. Medications

Both non-prescription and prescription medications, ointments, and creams can be given to your child if needed. Parents are required to fill out the proper forms and to supply all medications in their original containers. All written instructions shall be valid for six months unless a shorter time period is designated by the physician, dentist, or parent. These must be labeled with the child's name. When administering

nonprescription medication, we must follow the manufacturers or physician's written instructions for recommended dosage. ***We will not administer medication as a preventative measure.***

d. Medical Emergency

In case of EMERGENCY, we will administer the necessary first aid. In a case whereby an ambulance is called, your child will be transported to the hospital designated on your Emergency Transportation Authorization form. **YOU WILL BE NOTIFIED IMMEDIATELY.** You are responsible for all costs involved in emergency medical treatment, including emergency transportation, if required.

4. Daily Schedule & Routines

a. Activities & Curriculum

The main goal of this childcare facility is to have fun, improve social skills, and encourage creative expression. We will utilize a variety of activities to accomplish this goal. Free play, reading, arts and crafts, music/singing, dancing, dramatic/pretend play, puzzles, occasional educational TV/videos and outings within the community are just some of the activities we do.

Traditional "preschool" programming is incorporated into everything we do on a daily basis. We have worked with Brooklyn Elementary School to design and implement a comprehensive school readiness program. Children use hands on experience to develop their individual skills within arts & crafts, music, math, science, stories, games, letter, shape, color, number recognition as well as social interaction and self help skills. Programming for each class is posted within each classroom.

b. Daily Schedule

Young children enjoy a structured schedule that allows for flexibility. A schedule helps the day to flow smoothly, allows children to anticipate coming events, and aids in achieving a variety of goals. We will adhere to the daily schedule to the best of our ability, keeping in mind that anything can happen when children are involved and it may be necessary to adapt accordingly. Our daily schedule can be found on the parent board and in every classroom.

c. Meals & Nutrition

Brooklyn Early Learning & Childcare Centre uses a menu that has been developed according to the Food and Beverage criteria and meets the Standards for Food and Nutrition. All menus are posted at the front entrance and outside the kitchen.

You are welcome to provide your child with a snack that is easily prepared if they are arriving very early, however, it must follow the nutrition standards the centre adheres to or they will not be allowed to have it.

We are able to provide a small amount of milk for cereal only. Food brought by parents for social events during regular business hours and food donate to the centre must also follow the food and nutrition guidelines. We are not allowed to provide food from home during mealtime. However, if your child is a fussy eater, we will work with you to discuss options to get them to try new things.

We encourage breastfeeding and can offer mothers a quiet space within the centre if they are able to make these feeding arrangements. If not, breastmilk and/or formula can be brought from home and refrigerated here. Storage containers must be labeled with the child's name, contents and the date. Infant Feeding Plans are developed for every child and is used to record and communicate the infant's progress during the transition to solid foods and indicate, when requested by the parent, how menu items are prepared to accommodate the infant's developmental stage. Special instructions, allergies, religious or cultural requests will be made in this plan and communicated to the centre cook. We will allow infants to explore their food, feed themselves and respond to hunger and fullness cues. The only request we cannot comply with is allowing an infant to feed in a crib.

Mealtime should be a pleasant experience; therefore, children are always offered food but are not forced to eat it. We will encourage each child to try one or two bites of everything, and they must eat a little of everything before given seconds of something. We will be responsive to children's hunger cues and provide

snacks outside of the regular meal schedule. If your child requires a modified diet due to food allergy we will do what we can to accommodate, although milk alternatives and specific items may be required from home, and will be stored at the centre in accordance with Provincial guidelines.

d. Naps & Quiet Time

All children are required to rest for a period of time in the afternoon. If they do not require a nap they will be given a soft toy or book to use on their mat after a minimum of 30 minutes of quiet time. We understand that naps may prolong the time your children are up in the evening; however, we will not force a child to stay awake if their body clearly needs to rest. If you request that your child does not nap, we will do our best to accommodate or limit it. Individual nap mats and blankets are provided for every full day child. If your child has a special blanket or stuffed animal that he/she sleeps with you are welcome to send it in but it will only be provided at rest time.

e. Personal Belongings

Please do not bring toys from home. Some classes have a show and share day; please speak with your child's teacher for more details. Under no circumstances do we allow children to bring toys that promote violence such as guns or weapons. We will not be responsible for any loss or breakage of your child's personal items. All personal items must be clearly marked with the child's name.

f. Supplies

Children are required to have a change of clothes, indoor footwear and be dressed appropriately for the weather. **LABEL EVERYTHING!** We strongly recommend that children come in play clothes that you do not mind being *well* played in. Full day children may bring a blanket for naptime and favorite snuggle toy if they have one. We do have blankets here but have found that many children have a special blanket of their own that helps them to settle. They are welcome to leave it here or bring it back and forth on a daily basis.

Bedding in the infant and toddler rooms are washed twice a week and once per week, or more often as necessary, in the preschool rooms. Soiled clothing will be rinsed out, bagged and sent home. **If your child is supplied with daycare clothing please ensure it is returned the next day.** Please check your child's bag regularly to ensure that supplies are maintained and appropriate for the weather.

Infant and toddler parents are required to supply diapers, wipes and cream (if you use it) for your child. Supplies are labeled and staff will let you know when they have approximately a week's supply left. If you do not send daily supplies or replenish your daycare stock when asked, we will charge for daycare supplies used on your child. (\$1 per day for wipes and \$1 per diaper.) Wet bags must be supplied for children using cloth diapers.

g. Cleanliness & Hygiene

We maintain strict cleanliness and hygiene standards in all aspects of the centre. Every classroom follows a specific cleaning and sanitation schedule. Upon notification of a communicable disease we will sanitize the entire centre immediately.

Children's hands are washed before and after meals, after toileting and as necessary. Nap mats and bedding are individually bagged and washed weekly or as necessary. All kitchenware and utensils are washed in a commercial dishwasher and sanitized with 240+ degree temperature. Tables are disinfected with a bleach/water solution before and after each use. Classroom floors are washed with a disinfectant solution on a daily basis. Hand sanitation stations are available throughout the centre and we encourage parents and guardians to use it upon entering the centre.

h. Toileting and Training

Toilet training will be done in a relaxed manner with the cooperation of the family. If training is begun when your child is ready, the task is easy and quick. When the time is right for your child and until they are totally successful in their toileting, they should wear clothes that promote their independence.

In addition, your child must have two complete changes of clothes (don't forget the socks!) The best items are shorts and pants with elastic waists or dresses. Try to avoid tight clothing, pants with snaps and zippers, belts, overalls and onesies. These are difficult for children to remove in a hurry. If you choose to send your

child in underwear and they have not yet established bedtime control, please ensure they have a pull up that they can use for nap time.

We ask that you begin toilet training at home during a weekend or vacation. We will follow through and encourage your child while in our care. The child must be kept in pull-ups at all times. Putting a child in diapers part time, and training pants part time, can be confusing and delay the training process. Please keep in mind that the activity level here can distract your child from responding to an urge to use the potty, more so than at your home. Therefore, we will continue to use diapers or pull-ups until your child can and will announce that they must use the bathroom and can control their bladder and bowels for a few minutes beyond that announcement. Your child's readiness is something we can discuss because consistency between your home and the centre will be very important. This is a special time for your child, a sign that they are growing up. Toilet training should be a good experience.

i. Indoor and Outdoor Play

Indoor play: Each classroom at the Brooklyn Early Learning & Childcare Centre is equipped age appropriately with resources that encourage growth across all developmental areas. Toys are rotated in and out of use so that the children do not become bored. Younger children have less-developed organizational skills and can get easily frustrated or upset when there are too many toys to choose from. It is also more difficult for them to help with clean up when there are toys everywhere. For this reason, during free play times, we encourage children to put toys away when they are done before moving to another activity.

Outdoor play: We will be playing outdoors twice every day that weather permits and are firm believers that even 10 minutes outside is better than none if the weather is not cooperating. Keeping this in mind, please make sure that your child has everything they need to be dressed appropriately for outdoor play at all times. Our outdoor activities include taking walks, backyard playground, water play, bike/toy riding, and more.

j. Behaviour Guidance

Our program goals include encouraging independence by helping the children develop self-control and self-confidence so that he/she will have the ability to act appropriately in any situation.

The following are some methods we will use:

1. **Positive Modeling and Direction** – Staff will model appropriate behaviour by using calm voices and positive manners towards the children. They will praise freely, be flexible and be accepting of all children. They will use positive statements for expected behaviours ('please walk' instead of "don't run")
2. **Transitions** – We will give children advance warning of transition times.
3. **Positive Reinforcement** – We will help to develop appropriate behaviours by consistently praising positive actions, manners and choices.
4. **Developmental Levels** – We set age appropriate limits for each group of children and will periodically remind them of these limits.
5. **Redirect Children** - We will redirect a child away from a problem or conflict and show him/her a more constructive activity in order to reduce or avoid conflict.
6. **Alternatives** - We will offer children alternatives for unacceptable behaviour and give explanations as to why the behaviour is not appropriate, focusing on the behaviour, not the child ("When you throw sand at Jonny, it hurts his eyes. Please keep the sand in the box.")
7. **Choices** - We will give children choices so to avoid negative answers like 'no' and promote positive actions ("Would you like to clean up the play dough or put away the Lego?")
8. **Safety of All** - We will set clear limits and these will be enforced fairly and consistently. Children will not be permitted to:
 - Hurt themselves
 - Hurt others
 - Damage property or the environment

9. **Persistent Unacceptable Behaviour** – Unacceptable behaviours will be communicated to parents in a *behaviour report*; this will alert parents of noted changes or persistent unacceptable behaviour within the classroom. When staff feel that the behaviour has become relentless and/or of concern for the safety and wellbeing of others, a meeting will be requested with parents to design and implement a ***‘behaviour management plan’*** for use at the centre and at home.
10. **Prohibited Actions** - The following actions are prohibited by any staff member as per this policy and section 19(1) of the Day Care Act and Regulations:
Each licensee, facility director, agency director, family home consultant, care provider, staff member and volunteer of a licensee must behave in a manner that does not harm any child who is attending the day care program, and in particular must not do or permit any of the following,
- (a) use corporal punishment, including
 - (i) striking a child directly or with any physical object, and
 - (ii) shaking, shoving, spanking and other forms of aggressive physical conduct;
 - (b) require or force a child to repeat physical movements;
 - (c) use harsh, humiliating, belittling or degrading responses of any form, whether verbal, emotional or physical;
 - (d) confine or isolate a child;
 - (e) deprive a child of basic needs, including food, shelter, clothing and bedding.

k. Fire Safety

We have a written fire evacuation plan and practice a fire drill with the children at least once each month. In addition, we occasionally incorporate fire safety curriculum into our program.

Notes / Questions to ask:
