



*Our Children
The Future*

The Regional Municipality of Durham Social Services Department Child Care and Early Years Division

Directly Operated Early Learning and Child Care Parent Handbook



If you require this information in an accessible format, please contact 1-800-387-0642.

October 2025

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Regional Early Learning and Child Care Centres (ELCC)

Centre name	Address	Phone number	Email address	Ages served
Ajax ELCC	22 Centennial Road, Ajax, ON L1S 3K4	905-683-4001	ajax_elcc@durham.ca	Six weeks to five years
Clara Hughes ELCC	610 Taylor Ave., Oshawa, ON L1H 2E7	905-404-8012	clarahughes_elcc@durham.ca	12 months to 12 years
Edna Thomson ELCC	410 N Scugog Crt., Bowmanville, ON L1C 6T1	905-623-6717	ednat_elcc@durham.ca	12 months to five years
Lakewoods ELCC	353 Chaleur Ave., Oshawa, ON L1J 1G5	905-725-1425	lakewoods_elcc@durham.ca	Six weeks to four years
Lakewoods ELCC Before and After School	323 Chaleur Ave., Oshawa, ON L1J 1G5	905-725-1425	lakewoods_elcc@durham.ca	Four to 12 years
Pickering ELCC	1262 Radom St., Pickering, ON L1W 1J4	905-839-5831	pickering_elcc@durham.ca	12 months to five years
Sunderland ELCC	41 Albert St. S., Sunderland, ON L0C 1H0	905-404-4792 or 705-328-7171	sunderland_elcc@durham.ca	Two to 12 years
Village Union ELCC	155 Gibb St., Oshawa, ON L1J 1Y4	289-928-6301	villageunion_elcc@durham.ca	Four to 12 years
Whitby ELCC	501 Dunlop St. E., Whitby, ON L1N 1S8	905-668-4751	Whitby_elcc@durham.ca	12 months to five years

Welcome and thank you for picking a Regional Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) program for your child. We are pleased to be enrolled in the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) plan and have begun reducing child care fees since April 1, 2022. We will continue to reduce fees for families as outlined by the CWELCC guidelines moving forward into 2025. Current fees (base fees) are posted within the ELCC and online at <https://www.durham.ca/en/living-here/regional-early-learning-and-child-care-centres.aspx>

With over 40 years' experience providing child care; we know that each child and family's needs are different. We help all children reach their full potential with a program that enhances belonging, well-being, expression, and engagement.

The child care centres are positive spaces for both children and families. The programs are for all children regardless of race, age, ability, language, culture, ethnicity or family structure. Staff work with families and community partners to support all children in the programs. The ELCCs have developed a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Policy that sets out clear guidelines and expectations for staff and families and children. This policy is designed to ensure that every child, family, and educator feels welcomed, valued, and supported, and that our programs reflect a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all.

Hours of care are 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. including the before and after school programs during non-instructional school days. The before and after school programs offer care from 7 a.m. until the start of the school day and from the end of the school day until 6 p.m. Programs are led by Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECE). To look up an RECE staff by name to see any terms, condition or limitations on their Certificate of Registration from the College of Early Childhood Educators, or for more information on the college, visit www.college-ece.ca/en.

Wait list

Due to program sizes, a wait list for child care space is kept at each of the child care centres. You can put your child on a wait list by completing the online form, calling or visiting the centre you want your child to attend. There will be no charge, fee or deposit to place your child on the wait list, and the list is kept in order of contact date. An exception for placement from the list may be made for children receiving fee subsidy assistance, on-site school/Regional staff, siblings of children who are currently enrolled, and based on a “move-up” enrollment plan.

While on the list you are asked to call the child care every three months to update your information. At this time the staff can tell you your numbered position for placement on the list. If at one year there has been no contact by you, your child will be removed from the wait list.

Further information about the wait list can be found in Appendix A at the back of this publication.

Enrolling your child

When enrolling your child you are asked to fill out a registration package, provide proof of age and produce an immunization record before your child starts the program. Please give as much information as possible about your child to help us provide the best care. The supervisor will take you on a tour of the centre, so that you and your child can meet the staff. Our child care centres are locked and you will be given an access code to gain entry. Please do not share this code with anyone except people who are authorized pick-up your child.

Safe arrival and dismissal

Regional child care centres have adopted a safe arrival and dismissal policy to ensure the safety of the children at our centres. If a child does not arrive at the centre at the expected time and there has been no communication from the parent/guardian, staff will attempt to contact the parent/guardian using all methods of communication provided. When dismissing children, staff will only release children into the care of the parent/guardian or individual that the parent/guardian has provided written authorization for. If a child has not been picked-up and the centre has closed, staff will contact the parent/guardian using all methods of communication provided advising the child(ren) has not been picked up, a call will be made to the local Children's Aid Society (CAS) within one hour of centre closure for direction concerning next steps. Further information about the Safe Arrival and Dismissal Policy can be found in Appendix C at the back of this publication.

Program Statement

Capable, competent, curious and rich in potential; this is how the Regional Municipality of Durham sees children. We work with children, their families and educators to create high quality programs that focus on strengths. We are all co-learners.

How Does Learning Happen? forms the basis of our program

Using ***How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years***, the directly operated centres strive to support the children to achieve the following goals and will meet the expectations for programs building on the four foundations for healthy growth and development:

Foundations	Goals for Children	Expectations for Programs
Belonging	Every child has a sense of belonging when he/she is connected to others and contributes to his/her world.	Cultivate respectful relationships and connections to create a sense of belonging among and between children, adults and the world around them.
Well-Being	Every child is developing a sense of self and health and well-being.	Nurture children's healthy development and support their growing sense of self.
Engagement	Every child is an active and engaged learner who explores the world with her/his senses, bodies and minds.	Provide environments and experiences to engage children in active, creative, and meaningful exploration and learning.
Expression	Every child is a capable communicator who is able to express himself/herself in many ways.	Foster communication and expression in all forms.

Our overarching strategies

Our early learning and child care centres have incorporated and embedded the Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT) principles, along with the provincial pedagogy for early learning, to strengthen the quality of our programs and ensure high-quality experiences that promote the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of children.

Working collaboratively, the directly operated early learning and care sites will plan for and create positive early learning environments that:

1) Promote the health, safety and well-being of young children, families and educators.

You will see:

- Photographs and names of all the educators posted, and all Regional staff have a photo ID badge.
- Well organized environments, with lots of materials that are easily accessible to the children – the children don't have to ask for everything that they need.
- A process to sign your child in and out of the program, to ensure they are safely supervised.
- Healthy menus, following Canada's Food Guide developed by registered professionals with the Canadian Society Nutrition Management Certification.
- Children and educators washing their hands frequently throughout the day to promote good hygiene and to prevent the spread of illness.
- Snacks are available to the children who arrive early and are set out for the children to serve themselves. Water is always available to the children throughout the day.
- At meal times, the educators sit and eat with the children and there is lots of conversation.
- Children serve themselves and are encouraged but never forced to try new foods.
- Lots of opportunities for gross motor play; children are encouraged to use their entire bodies to explore the world.
- Positive language that emphasizes accomplishment and effort.
- The centre is kept clean throughout the day, and is professionally cleaned on a nightly basis.
- Security systems are installed at each site, and all visitors are required to sign in and out of the centre.

- Based on current research related to children and screen time, there are no televisions, video games or computers in the programs for the children. Educators will assist children to look up information on the Internet to expand or enhance their play and learning.
- Educators follow the health and safety guidelines set out by the Ministry of Education and the Durham Region Health Department.

Healthy food and active play make a difference

Additionally, opportunities for rest and a balance between active and more reflective play are strategies that will be implemented to support positive interactions and facilitate healthy development.

2) Support positive and responsive interactions between educators, children and families.

You will see:

- During the process to enrol your child at our centre, the Supervisor or designate will provide you with a tour of the facility, introduce you and your child to the educators, complete the Looksee Checklist and compile information about your child's specific needs, likes and dislikes, and what comforts your child. This will allow educators to begin to build an understanding of your child's individual needs.
- This Parent Handbook provides the operational details of our programs, hours of operations, fees and payment processes, and outlines our operational policies so families know what to expect when they choose our services.
- Educators who greet and welcome you and your child upon arrival at the program.
- Educators using calm voices and at the child's level for face-to-face interactions.
- Parents and educators talking together, sharing information and knowledge about each child.

Strategies to support and strengthen positive interactions

Positive interactions are encouraged and supported by the development of enriched environments where all children belong and where there are a range of interesting, intriguing and developmentally appropriate activity options to engage children. Educators are reflective practitioners whose knowledge and understanding of the individual children and child development supports positive behaviours on the part of children, educators and families. The focus on the positive is a key component of our affirming approach.

Questions educators ask themselves:

- How do I **engage** with children in a way that builds on their strengths as opposed to identifying what they are doing "wrong"?
- Am I **learning** too? How do I respond when a child asks me something that I don't know? Do I redirect the child to something else or do I respond: "Let's find out together!"
- Am I **moving away** from viewing play as just something children do and **moving towards** viewing play as intentional and inquiry based; a way for children to **express** themselves in multiple ways?
- Am I having fun? Is at least a part of each day filled with a **shared sense of joy** that is the wonder of new learning for me and the children with whom I engage? What are the clues that demonstrate that I am engaged and interested in what I am doing?

Supporting children to manage their behaviour

Children benefit socially, emotionally and physically from our positive approach. Educators focus on helping the child understand their feelings and emotions, and provide support to help children regulate their behaviour.

The following are unacceptable behaviour management strategies and are **not** permitted at any time under any circumstances:

- 1) Corporal punishment.
 - 2) Physical restraint of a child for the purposes of discipline or in lieu of supervision unless physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting self or others and is used only as a last resort until risk of injury no longer exists.
 - 3) Harsh or degrading measures or use of derogatory language that may humiliate or undermine a child's self-respect and self-esteem.
 - 4) Depriving a child of basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing, sleep, toilet use or bedding.
 - 5) Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against will.
 - 6) Confining a child by locking the exits of the centre or using a locked or lockable space to separate the child from other children.
- 3) Encourage and enable children to interact and communicate in a myriad of ways with each other, with educators and with their communities.**
- You will see:
- Many different ways for children to communicate their ideas, thoughts and feelings including:
 - Painting, drawing, modelling with clay, plasticine and other art and creative / sensory materials.
 - Telling or writing stories.
 - Singing.
 - Dancing.
 - Talking with educators.
 - Talking with other children.
 - Building with blocks and other building materials.
 - Conducting experiments.
 - Solving problems.
 - Planned excursions outside of the centre site, to promote children's connection to their local community.
- 4) Foster exploration and inquiry that is play based. Evidence from diverse fields of study tells us that when children are playing, they are learning.**
- You will see:
- Children making sense of the world around them through play.
 - Play that is supported by caring adults in environments with materials, space and time that encourage complex thinking and aid children to gain essential skills. These skills include: creative problem-solving, learning to get along with others, coping with challenges, overcoming obstacles, and learning to focus their attention. These are foundational activities that promote the development of literacy, numeracy and other important life skills.

Supporting healthy development and learning

At the Regional Early Learning and Child Care Centres each child's specific strengths, needs and developmental goals are identified. Educators set goals through individual attention, inquiry play-based learning activities, and positive learning environments in which each child's learning and development is supported. Educators focus on children's social, emotional, physical, creative, and cognitive development in a holistic way. This approach will be strengthened by:

- 1) Preparing the environment to foster learning and development.
- 2) Building on the children's ideas, questions and theories as observed in play.
- 3) A collaborative approach that incorporates discussion among team members about how to support deeper exploration.
- 4) Inviting and engaging others in the continuing process of program development, including parents, the children themselves and other community partners, including, but not limited to, educators within the school system.

Children learn through exploration, play, and inquiry with the educators as co-learners. Educators have thoughtful conversations with children, which encourages them to interact and communicate in a positive way, and promotes their ability to self-regulate. We use the Looksee Checklist, children's portfolios, learning stories, pictures and other pedagogical documentation of children's activities on an ongoing basis to study, interpret, make visible, and help inform children's learning and development, as well as the overall program.

5) Provide both child initiated and adult supported experiences to foster development.

You will see:

- Weekly Program Plans posted with a variety of educator planned activities that will be added to throughout the week as the children expand on the activities or move forward in new directions.
- The number of transitions during the day are limited; children do not spend a lot of time lining up or waiting for activities to take place.
- Times when the child takes the lead in planning the activity and times when the educator builds on observations to develop and implement activities that support each child to stretch his/her skills and abilities.

6) Provide many opportunities for a range of experiences that support each child's learning and development, incorporating children's individual support plans as necessary.

You will see:

- Children actively engaged in activities, usually in small groups.
- Children and educators are smiling, laughing and having fun; playing and learning together.
- Educators observing and making documentation about children to build experiences.
- Educators discussing the documentation with the children.
- A focus on learning through play with educators encouraging and supporting questions, answers and problem solving on the part of the children.

7) Incorporate a range of different experience modalities including indoor and outdoor play, active play, quiet play, rest and quiet time considering the individual needs of children.

You will see:

- Well stocked toy shelves and creative materials available to the children.
- Quiet comfortable spaces for reading or quiet individual activities or rest.
- Children engaged in a range of different activities throughout the day.
- Children taking the lead; actively shaping their play.
- Educators listen and learn from the children as much as the children listen and learn from the educators.
- Educators encouraging children to explore nature and their natural environments.
- Quiet activities provided for children who do not require a nap during rest times.

8) Foster engagement of and ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children.

You will see:

- Educators seek out opportunities to talk with parents without ignoring the needs of the children.
- For Infants and Toddlers, daily information sheets will be completed by the educators for parents.
- Educators will complete the Looksee Checklist in collaboration with parents upon child's entry into the early learning and child care program and then continue to assess each child's development with the results being shared with parents.

- Opportunities, both planned and informal for parents and educators to share ideas about how best to support each child.
- Portfolios for each child which are accessible to parents.
- Accident / Incident reports completed if your child has an accident to provide you with information as required.
- Notes posted as reminders for parents about upcoming activities.
- Newsletters for parents sharing information about our programs.
- The utilization of the Lillio child care communication app, formally referred to as HiMama.
 - Lillio will be used to record a child's activities and document updates throughout the day. Updates will be sent directly to families through the app.
 - Families must download the free Lillio app and register.
 - Once signed up on the platform, families will be able to receive communications from the Directly Operated Centers, updates on their child(ren)'s daily activities, snack updates, play experience, notifications regarding supply shortages (ex: child running low on diapers), etc.

Parents as partners

Educators foster engagement and ongoing communications with families regarding the program and their children. We strive to build positive and responsive relationships with children and their families. We recognize and value each family for their unique strengths, perspectives and contributions to our program. Families are encouraged to participate in the Region's early learning and child care centres—as we are partners in supporting the development of healthy, happy, capable and competent children.

A strong, respectful and equitable relationship with parents is key to our ability to fully engage as co-learners with the children and with their families. To this end, we seek out opportunities to engage parents in a way that meets their needs and builds on strengths while respecting the challenges that face young families, including long commutes, time pressures and the busyness inherent in raising a family. Strategies include but are not limited to:

- An “open door” policy that welcomes parents to drop off and pick up at the times that work best for their family within the hours that the centre is open and allows them to drop-in to observe whenever convenient for the parent.
- Informal discussions on a daily basis.
- Posted documentation of activities, interactions and engagement.
- Use of the Looksee Checklist and parent/educator (and sometimes child) interviews.
- Sharing resources and materials about community supports and activities.
- Inviting parent participation in the development of curriculum; to share cultural and family experiences.
- Inviting and encouraging parents to participate directly in the day to day activities of the centre.
- Social and open house activities.
- Annual questionnaires.

Key ideas and messages we share with parents:

- Our program is play and inquiry based because research tells us that this is the way children learn best. A play based program provides the kinds of opportunities that children need to be fully engaged and to learn how to express themselves many different ways. We will be sharing our learning with and about your children in many different ways.
- What do you think that it is important that I know about your child to support his/her well-being?

- These are our goals for your children and this is what we will be doing with your child to support the achievement of these goals. (outline the program expectations)
- How can we support your engagement with our program so that you feel that you belong? What works for you, your schedule and your family?

9) Actively engage with community partners and provide opportunities for the children and families to develop close connections with a range of community supports.

You will see:

- Parents are welcomed at any time and are encouraged to drop in when and if they have time to do so.
- Planned excursions to community services and programs such as the local library, grocery stores and other neighbourhood locations.
- Use of community partners as a resource and support to families, children and educators. These community partners may include but are not limited to Resources for Exceptional Children and Youth, Grandview Kids, Kinark and Children's Developmental and Behavioural Supports.
- Staff supporting parents to connect to community partners through referrals with parental consent.
- Staff working collaboratively with parents and community partners to best support the children and families in our Early Learning and Child Care Centres.

10) Strengthen the capacity of educators to collaborate effectively with children, families and their colleagues through the provision of ongoing opportunities for continuous professional learning.

You will see:

- Educators encouraged and supported to attend professional development.
- Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECE's) are required by their membership in the College of Early Childhood Educators to commit to their own ongoing professional learning.
- New ideas and strategies to support children's development introduced throughout the program.
- Materials and research shared with parents.

Continuous professional learning for educators

Our early learning and child care centres are environments that support educators, and others who interact with children, to continually self-reflect, have discussions, foster ongoing collaboration, and engage in continuous professional learning, in order to provide the best possible learning environment for children. Educators are provided with many mandatory health and safety related training sessions, such as Standard First Aid and Infant Child CPR; Occupational Health and Safety training, and WHIMIS. In addition,

- Educators are encouraged to participate in up to three personal professional learning opportunities each year, based on their annual Feedback and Development learning goals.
- Educators have scheduled planning time.
- Educators meet together to share ideas and information and to develop programs.
- Educators are encouraged and supported to participate on Divisional and/or Departmental Committees as well as community networks or committees.
- Educators are encouraged to participate in community learning opportunities through Capacity Building and the Durham Region Child Care Forum.
- RECEs are encouraged to participate in the College of Early Childhood Educators Continuous Professional Learning Program.

11) Use many languages to document and review the experiences of the children and the educators in order to:

- Provide an ongoing record of development.
- Provide tools to enable educators to reflect on the impact of their activities and strategies.
- Provide a visual and oral record that enables parents to review and explore the developmental trajectory of their child.

You will see:

- Documentation posted on the walls that tells and shows you what the children are doing.
- Different methods of recording observations about what the children are accomplishing.

A Commitment to continuous improvement

All new educators, students and volunteers are required to review the program statement prior to interaction with children in our care, and any time the program statement is updated. All educators are required to review the program statement on an annual basis. This will be accomplished at a year-end team meeting which provides an opportunity to reflect on the successes and challenges of the past year and to set goals for the upcoming year.

Students and volunteers

Early Childhood Educator (ECE) students and volunteers are a part of our centres and are required to obtain a Criminal Record Check if they are 18 years of age or older. Students and volunteers are not left alone with the children but gain experience when educators share their skills and knowledge. You will be notified when students and volunteers are in the programs. Staff responsible for the supervision of children must be at least 18 years of age and act in accordance with our Policy and Procedures Manual.

Duty to report

The *Child and Family Services Act* states that every person in Ontario must call the Children's Aid Society (CAS) immediately to report his/her belief that a child may have been abused or is at risk of abuse. The Act also says that a person who works with children has an added legal responsibility to immediately report any suspicion of child abuse. A professional who works with children and does not report a suspicion of abuse can be charged and fined. All Regional staff will call the CAS if they suspect abuse; this is to protect the safety of all children. Staff will take direction from the CAS about whether they can let a family know a call has been made. Staff who work with children are responsible for reporting any suspicions of child abuse, not for proving if the child abuse has occurred. It is the responsibility of the CAS to investigate (with police where necessary), and decide on the best plan of action.

Outdoor play

The *Child Care and Early Years Act* states that children in a full-day program are to play outdoors at least two hours per day, and half-an-hour per day in a school-age program. Planned and spontaneous outside activities are part of the children's learning. Please send your child dressed for the weather. Your child needs to be well enough to participate in outdoor programming to attend the child care centre.

On the admission form, we ask for written permission for your child to participate in neighbourhood outings. You will be asked to sign additional permission forms for any special trips.

Cubbies and clothing

Please send a spare set of clothing with your child's name on it that can be kept at the child care centre. This clothing should be rotated with the seasons, so your child can participate safely in the child care program. Please send your child in non-skid closed toed shoes.

Winter clothing should include the following as appropriate:

- Hat that covers ears.
- Waterproof mittens or gloves.
- Boots that are warm and waterproof.
- Indoor shoes.
- A warm coat and snow pants.

Children will be involved in many activities during the day so please ensure that they are dressed in comfortable play clothing. Smocks are provided for creative/sensory experiences to help protect children's clothing, but there is still a chance your child's clothing may get dirty.

Sun safety program

Regional programs have a Sun Safety Policy. Parents provide the centre with a bottle of Sunscreen to be kept at the centre labeled with your child's full name which is applied throughout the day as necessary. You will be asked to sign a form giving staff permission to apply it. Permission to participate in the centre's sunscreen routine is provided in writing on the admission form.

Things to provide your child with:

- A wide-brimmed hat that will protect your child's face, neck and ears. Baseball hats do not shield the neck, ears and cheeks.
- Protective clothing such as lightweight long-sleeved shirts and pants
- Sunscreen

Supplies

If your child is using diapers, you must supply the diapers, wipes and any necessary creams to be used at the centre. Parents must also supply infant formula.

Rest time

There is rest time for up to two hours every day for non-school aged children. When enrolling your child you will be asked about your child's sleeping routine. Activities are available for children who are unable to sleep. Staff follow the direction of the Public Health Agency of Canada when placing children under 12 months of age to sleep. In the infant and toddler program, staff will look closely at all sleeping children every 30 minutes to look for distress or unusual behaviour, and record this information on a sleep tracking chart. Any major changes in a child's sleep pattern or sleep behaviours are shared with you. Any changes needed to the way the child is supervised during sleep will be discussed. Each child (18 months to five years) is given a cot and bedding for rest time, which is washed weekly (or as needed).

Nutrition

The *Child Care and Early Years Act* requires that children in a full-day program have nutritious morning and afternoon snacks, as well as a balanced lunch. Menus and food substitutions are posted at all centres. Any allergy, religious or dietary needs must be written on the admission form

prior to your child starting. The child care centre will try to provide dietary alternatives. All allergies and dietary needs are posted in the rooms. If your child's allergy requires an EPI-PEN, an individual plan is made and you must provide the EPI-PEN. **Due to allergies of other children, please do not bring in food from home.** The use of nut products is not allowed at any of the centres.

Children aged 44 months and older in before and after school programs are permitted to bring food from home on non-instructional days only (e.g., Professional Activity (PA) days or school closures). No nut products are allowed to be brought into the centre. Food allergies are posted in each centre. Parents will be advised of any severe food allergies to avoid those food items from being brought into the centre.

Use of scented products

To help keep our child care centres safe and welcoming for everyone, we ask that families, staff, and visitors avoid wearing or bringing in scented products. Some children and adults experience allergies or sensitivities to scents, and exposure can cause serious health concerns.

Fragrances can be found in many products, such as colognes, perfumes, soaps, hair and skin products, cosmetics, laundry detergents, and cleaning supplies. For the well-being of all, we kindly ask that only scent-free or scent-reduced products be used when attending our centres.

We also recognize and respect that some cultural and spiritual practices involve the use of traditional medicines or ceremonies, which are exempt from this policy.

If a strong scent causes a health concern, we may need to ask the individual to step out of the centre until the issue is resolved, and in rare cases, parents may be contacted to pick up their child.

We appreciate your cooperation and understanding in helping us provide a healthy and inclusive environment. Please share this reminder with anyone who may be dropping off or picking up your child.

Potassium iodine pills

Four of the seven Regional child care centres are within 10 kilometres of a nuclear power plant. On the admission form, you are asked to provide permission for potassium iodine pills to be given to your child, in the event of a nuclear emergency. During a nuclear emergency, the centre would follow directions from the Medical Officer of Health. Please speak with the supervisor if you would like more information.

Ill children

To protect the health and wellness of the children and staff, we will complete a basic health check to ensure your child is asymptomatic when they arrive. Your child's wellness will be monitored throughout the day.

If your child is feeling sick or has any new or worsening symptoms, including those not listed below (e.g., eye infection, unexplained rash, lethargy, or is unable to participate in the program), they must stay home until their symptoms have improved for at least 24 hours, and/or they have been free of fever for 24 hours (48 hours for nausea, vomiting, and/or diarrhea).

Parents must give the centre information about why their child is away, as we are required to record symptoms of illness and reasons for absences for each child.

A parent or emergency contact will be called to pick up their child if they become sick while in care. We ask that your child be picked up within one hour of the time of the call. While waiting to be picked up, your child will be cared for away from the group.

If your child has any of the following symptoms they must stay home and follow the isolation guideline stated in the Ontario School and Child Care Screening Tool:

Symptom	Isolation Guideline*
Fever and/or chills (temperature of 37.8°C/100.0°F or greater)	24 hours fever-free (unmedicated)
Cough or barking cough (croup)	Symptom improved for 24 hours
Shortness of breath	Symptom improved for 24 hours
Decrease or loss of taste or smell	Symptom improved for 24 hours
Sore throat or difficulty swallowing	Symptom improved for 24 hours
Runny or stuffy nose/congested nose	Symptom improved for 24 hours
Headache	Symptom improved for 24 hours
Extreme tiredness	Symptom improved for 24 hours
Muscle aches or joint pain	Symptom improved for 24 hours
Abdominal Pain	Symptom improved for 24 hours
Pink Eye	Symptom improved for 24 hours
Decreased or no appetite (young children only)	Symptom improved for 24 hours
Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea	Symptom free for 48 hours

*Guidelines may change based on direction from Public Health

Ontario Ministry of Health states that a doctor's note may be required to ensure your child is healthy and able to return to the child care program. Please speak to your centre supervisor for more information regarding Public Health direction.

Medication

Please give your child their medication at home if it can be done without affecting the treatment schedule. If your child needs prescription medication while in care, please follow the instructions listed below.

- 1) Complete an Administration of Medication Form.
- 2) Give medication directly to a staff member in a clearly labelled prescription bottle for proper storage.
- 3) Always proofread your prescription labels. They need to have the information correctly printed on them as we must follow the directions exactly as printed. Please ask the pharmacy to place the prescription label on the puffer, EPI-PEN, or bottle, not on the box.

If your child needs non-prescription medication for a medical reason, the medication must come with a doctor's note which includes:

- Child's name.
- Name of medication.
- Date of doctor's note.
- Dosage.
- Frequency.
- Condition for which the medication is being used.

The doctor's note will be good for one year unless otherwise stated.

You can give the child care centre signed permission to use non-prescription items for your child like diaper cream, soap, sunscreen and skin cream. Staff will provide you with a form to sign and provide any specific instructions. Please label the product with your child's full name.

Emergency information

All staff is trained in Standard First Aid/Infant CPR. If your child has a minor accident, where first aid is needed, a report will be completed with the details of the accident for you to read, sign and keep a copy of. If your child needs to be seen by a doctor, 911 will be called to take your child to a hospital. You will be informed by telephone immediately.

All centres have an Emergency Management Policy. In an emergency, where we need to leave the child care centre, you will be contacted by telephone and asked to pick up your child from the emergency site. Staff will care for your child until you arrive. Families will be debriefed after an emergency has taken place.

When completing the admission form, you are asked to identify anyone, other than yourself, who may be able to pick your child up in an emergency if centre staff is unable to contact you. Only after we have tried to reach you, will your emergency contact person be called. It is important that all contact information is kept up-to-date, so we can reach you in an emergency.

Serious occurrences

If a serious occurrence happens at the child care centre, a Notification Form will be posted. This form has information about the incident, in addition to both short and long-term actions listed to help prevent similar incidents from taking place. For privacy reasons, no identifying information is shared on the form. A serious occurrence could include:

- Serious injury to a child.
- Fire or other disaster on site.
- Missing or temporarily unsupervised child/children.

Conflict resolution, issues or concerns

If you have any concerns about the centre, or the care your child is receiving, you can request a meeting with your child's teacher. If your concern continues after this meeting, please set up a time to speak with the supervisor. The supervisor will work with you to come to a solution. If you are not happy with the outcome of meeting with the supervisor, or your concern is about the supervisor, you can contact the program manager. If you still have concerns then you can write a formal complaint to the manager of the directly operated programs. All concerns will be followed up within 24 hours. If your concern is related to an allegation of abuse, please contact the Children's Aid Society at 905-433-1551.

Further information on conflict resolution, issues or concerns can be found in Appendix B at the back of this publication.

Children's code of conduct

Children are encouraged to treat other children, staff and adults with respect. Children are supported by educators to have good attitudes, including calming themselves, skills to work through disagreements, and the use of proper language. Verbal and physically unsafe issues are dealt with right away, recorded, and you are told what happened if your child was involved. If your child's behaviour is seen as a safety risk to themselves and/or others, you will be contacted and asked to pick up your child. Behaviour that is seen as a safety concern may result in changes to your child's program. For example, your child may not be allowed to go on a field trip. Field trip rules must be followed for the safety of everyone. In this case, the supervisor may ask to meet with you, in order to talk about any concerns. Although it is rare to withdraw services to a family, this may happen if the supervisor feels there may be safety issues for the other children or staff. In such cases, a minimum of two weeks' notice would be provided.

Public code of conduct

The Region of Durham is committed to providing excellent customer service by ensuring a respectful, equitable and harassment-free workplace and space for employees and customers. The Region has adopted a [Public Code of Conduct Policy](#) which outlines expectations for appropriate behaviour by all individuals when interacting with Regional Staff, Members of Regional Council, and other patrons and users of Regional facilities and services. All customers and employees of the Region of Durham are entitled to a respectful and harassment-free environment at all of our facilities and public spaces.

Attendance

At registration, you will be asked what hours your child will be attending the centre. This information helps us make sure we have the required amount of staff in programs.

At drop off in the morning, please bring your child to their room. Make contact with your child's educator so they know your child has arrived. At pick up time, please go to their room and let your child's educator know that your child is leaving for the day.

If for any reason your child is going to be absent, please notify the centre by 8 a.m. by phone or email. Please provide the reason for this absence.

Late pick up

Please pick up your child by 6 p.m. If you think you will be late picking up your child, please arrange for another person (on file) to come. Call the centre to give person's name. This person will need to show photo identification to staff before your child is released to them.

Regularly picking up late, absenteeism, or failure to comply with the agreed hours of care may result in withdrawal of care. You will be given two weeks' notice of withdrawal.

Release of children

Anyone picking up your child from child care should be 18 years of age or older.

Please give the child care centre the name and phone number of two people who can be called if we cannot reach you. Your child will only be released to these people if photo identification is provided.

If you are separated or divorced, the child care centre must have a copy of your legal custody papers, clearly stating custodial rights. Access cannot be denied to either parent unless it is stated in the court order. The child care centre will share information such as accident reports, portfolios or attendance about your child with both parents unless stated in the court order not to. Personal information about you or your child's other parent will not be shared.

Fee payments

Fee schedules are posted in each child care centre. Fees are to be paid in advance (either weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly). For your convenience you can pay by cheque, cash, or via e-transfer to childcarepayments@durham.ca. Please ensure you include the name of your Child Care Centre as well as your child's first and last name in the e-transfer. A non-sufficient fund (NSF) fee (non-base fee) of \$48 is charged for returned cheques. Receipts are issued immediately for all cash payments. Monthly invoices from the Region of Durham's Finance Department are emailed to you.

You may also pay your fee directly to the Finance Department via mail or in person at:

The Regional Municipality of Durham
Finance Department, 4th floor
605 Rossland Road, East, PO Box 623
Whitby, ON L1H 8B6
905-668-7711

Please note: if your account is outstanding after 30 days, child care services may be terminated. Any outstanding bills will be forwarded to a collection agency.

Tax receipts are issued yearly, directly to families, by the Finance Department.

You will be given 60 days notice of any fee increases.

Circumstances in which refunds or credits will or will not be provided (for example, refunds of pre-paid fees) will only be provided in the following circumstances:

- Advance payment with notice of withdrawal: Clients who have paid in advance will receive a refund for any fees paid beyond the child's last day of attendance, provided they give at least one week's notice of withdrawal.
- Child care fee subsidy adjustments: If a client has begun receiving the child care fee subsidy and is retroactively paying the amount, adjustments will be made accordingly.
- Billing errors: If a parent has been charged an incorrect amount due to our billing error, a refund or credit will be provided to correct the mistake.

Contact the centre supervisor for refund inquiries.

Child care fee subsidy

Child care fee subsidy helps with the cost of child care. Anyone can apply for child care fee subsidy.

For more information about the child care subsidy, or to apply, please visit:
durham.ca/childrensservices.

You can also contact us at: The Regional Municipality of Durham
Social Services Department
Child Care and Early Years Division
605 Rossland Road. East
Whitby, ON L1N 6A3
Telephone: 905-668-6238 or 1-800-387-0642

Designated holidays

The Regional Early Learning and Child Care Centres are closed on the following statutory holidays:

New Year's Day	Family Day	Good Friday	Victoria Day
Canada Day	Civic Holiday	Labour Day	Thanksgiving
Christmas Day	Boxing Day		Monday

Your regular child care fee includes the above holidays. Any other days the centre is closed including Easter Monday, Christmas Eve, and New Year's Eve, are free of charge. Due to low attendance during the holiday season, the centres may close from Christmas Eve to New Year's Day. Parents will be surveyed about their care needs between Christmas Eve and New Year's Day, prior to closing.

Absent, sick and vacation days (for non-subsidized clients)

You are required to pay the full cost of care for absent, sick and vacation days. Fees are charged based on the care that was expected to be given. For example, if your child was to be in care for a full day you will be charged for a full day.

Absent, sick and vacation days (for subsidized clients)

You are allowed a fixed number of absentee days, based on the month you enrolled your child the first year (see the chart below); with a maximum of 36 days per child, per year for each year after. These include absent, sick or vacation days. You are required to pay your regular fee rate for absent, sick and vacation days, and statutory holidays.

You will be charged a full day of care for the absent, sick or vacation days used over the number of days you are allowed.

Month of enrollment	Absentee allotment entitlement	Month of enrollment	Absentee allotment entitlement
January	36 days	July	18 days
February	33 days	August	15 days
March	30 days	September	12 days
April	27 days	October	9 days
May	24 days	November	6 days
June	21 days	December	3 days

Varied enrolment

If you are a subsidized client on a varied enrolment schedule, you will be asked to provide the dates you need care for as soon as you can, but no later than the Friday before the next week. These schedules are reviewed regularly, and may be changed or denied based on the number of children and staff at the centres.

Withdrawal

A minimum of one week's written notice is required to withdraw your child from a child care program. If you do not notify the centre, you will be responsible to pay for a maximum of five days fees.

Gift Giving

While gift-giving is a very kind and appreciated gesture, child care staff (managers, educators, volunteers, etc.) are unable to accept gifts. This includes but is not limited to any type of gift, gratuity, entertainment, service, discount, or any other favour. All client gifts will be auctioned and the proceeds donated to the Corporate United Way program.

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Appendix A



Regional Municipality of Durham Child Care and Early Years Division

Directly Operated Centres (DOC) Policy Manual

Title: Waitlist	
Policy #: 2-114	Page #: 1 of 1
Reviewed: April 2022	
Revised: April 2022	

1. Guiding Authority

1.1 [Wait List Information Form](#)

2. Policy

- A waitlist for care will be maintained at each of the directly operated early learning and child care centres. There will not be a charge, fee, or deposit for the placement of a child waiting for admission into any of our programs.

3. Procedures

- When a potential client calls, completes the online form, or visits and is interested in placing their child at the centre, a waitlist Information form will be completed by the supervisor/designate.
- The waitlist will be maintained in accordance with the initial contact date. An exception for placement from the list may be made for subsidized clients, siblings of currently enrolled children, on-site school/regional staff, and based on a proactive “move-up” planning strategy.
- The length of time that an incoming child will be eligible for any given age group will be considered in the context of the “move-up” planning strategy. Should the first child on the waitlist be very close in age to moving up to the next age group, and there will be no space available in the next age group, the next child on the list may be admitted first.
- It is the parents’ responsibility to contact the child care centre every three months to update the centre waitlist information. It is the supervisor/designate responsibility to review and confirm there are no changes to the existing information (i.e., phone numbers, change in days required). During the parent’s contact, they can request information on where they are on the waitlist, and they will be provided with their numerical position for placement.
- The child will be removed from the centre waitlist if the centre has not received contact from the parent for a year or there is a request to be removed.

Appendix B



Regional Municipality of Durham Child Care and Early Years Division

Directly Operated Centres (DOC) Policy Manual

Title: Conflict Resolution	
Policy #: 2-104	Page #: 1 of 2
Reviewed: April 2022	
Revised: April 2022	

1. Policy

- Parents are encouraged to bring forth any concerns/issues they have to promote open communication and relationships within the early learning child care centre. In a situation where a parent has issues/concerns, the staff speaking with the parent/guardian must work immediately to resolve the situation and inform the supervisor or designate. Should the issue/concern be about a staff member, parents will be redirected to speak to the supervisor/designate or the program manager (if the concern is in relation to the supervisor). If the concern is regarding an allegation of abuse, the parent will be directed to contact the Children's Aid Society. If the program manager is absent the parent will be redirected to the manager.

2. Procedures

- Staff will immediately address a parent's concern by:
 - Gathering all the information about the concern while remaining impartial and respectful
 - Sharing relevant information including legislation, policy, procedures, and resources
 - Working to come to a solution
 - Informing parents of the process if they are dissatisfied with the solution or outcome
 - Sharing clear and understandable reasons for how decisions relating to the concern were determined
 - Documenting the parent's concern and solution and sharing with the supervisor/designate within 24 hours
- If the concern/issue is unable to be addressed at the staff level, the supervisor/designate will be informed, and follow up within 24 hours with the parent. The supervisor/designate will:
 - Make a written account of the parent/guardian's concern, including details such as, but not limited to: what, where, when, and how it happened and who was involved in OCCMS.

- Investigate the matter immediately (if required) or provide the parent with relevant information including legislation, policy, procedures, and resources.
- Communicate with the parent/guardian relating to the concern/issue in a timely and appropriate manner. Work to establish a resolution.
- Upon resolution make recommendations for immediate follow-up actions to improve our future responses in similar instances.
- If the supervisor/designate is unable to resolve the parent's concern in a satisfactory manner through open communication, the supervisor will redirect the parent to the program manager. The program manager will follow the same steps as above and work towards a resolution with the parent.
- If a resolution cannot be obtained, the parent can proceed with a formal written complaint to the manager of the DOC programs. The manager will inform the Director of the Child Care and Early Years Division immediately once a formal complaint is filed. The manager will work to resolve the issue and document all outcomes. Written complaints will receive a written notice of the decision. All formal complaints will be kept on file by the manager of DOC and a yearly review will be conducted to identify issues, trends, areas of concern, and opportunities for improvement.

Appendix C



Regional Municipality of Durham Child Care and Early Years Division

Directly Operated Centres (DOC) Policy Manual

Title: Safe Arrival and Dismissal Policy #: 2-116	Page #: 1 of 4
Effective: January 2024	
Revised: October 2024	

Guiding Authority

[Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, O. Reg. 137/15: General](#)

Related Policies and Procedures

- See policy [2-102 Children's Files, Release of and Late Pick Up of Children](#), for additional details on pick-up protocols.
- See policy [2-113 Transporting Children](#) for more information.

Policy

- The Regional Municipality of Durham's Directly Operated Child Care Centres (DOCs) will ensure all children receiving child care at a DOC are only released to the child's parent/guardian or an individual that the parent/guardian has provided written authorization for, allowing the DOC to release the child into the care of that individual.
- DOC staff will only dismiss children into the care of a parent/guardian or individual for whom the parent/guardian has provided written authorization for, allowing the DOC to release the child into the care of that individual. DOC staff will not dismiss any children from child care without supervision.
- If a child does not arrive at the child care program as expected, or is not picked up as expected, DOC staff must follow the safe arrival and dismissal procedures set out below.

Procedures

- **Accepting a child into care:**
 - When accepting a child into child care at the time of drop-off, DOC staff in the room must:
 - Greet the parent/guardian and the child(ren).
 - 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). If the parent/guardian indicates someone other than parent/guardian will pick up, DOC staff must confirm that the person is listed on the Administration form. If

the individual is not listed on the Administration form, DOC staff must ask the parent/guardian to provide written authorization for the individual to pick up. Written authorization may include a handwritten note or an email.

- Document the change in pick-up procedure in the daily written record, if applicable.
- Sign the child in on the classroom attendance record.

- **Where a child has not arrived to care as expected:**

- When a child does not arrive at the child care centre as expected, and the parent/guardian has not communicated a change in drop off (i.e., left a voicemail message or advised the closing staff at pickup about a change) the DOC staff in the room must:
 - Inform the supervisor or designate and commence contacting the child's parent/guardian no later than 10 a.m. DOC staff must contact the parent/guardian at home, work, or other numbers provided. If the parent/guardian does not answer, DOC staff must contact them via text and/or the current communication app. DOC staff must leave a message where possible and request an immediate call back.
 - If unable to get in contact with the parent/guardian, DOC staff will call the list of emergency contacts.
 - If unable to reach the parent/guardian or emergency contacts, DOC staff must inform the supervisor or designate. The supervisor or designate will assume responsibility for attempting to contact the parent/guardian and emergency contacts.
 - If, after all attempts to reach the parent/guardian and emergency contacts for pick up are exhausted, the supervisor or designate must contact the police to report the absent child.
 - If staffing prohibits one staff member from making the necessary calls, the staff member must notify the supervisor or designate by 10 a.m. and the supervisor will initiate the contacting of parents/guardians and emergency contacts.
- Where a school-age child does not arrive at the child care centre as expected for before school care, DOC staff must notify the school office of the child's absence from care. It is the school's responsibility to contact the parent/guardian of a child that does not arrive as expected to school.
- Where a school-age child does not arrive as scheduled for after school care, DOC staff must contact the school to determine if the child was present at school.
 - If the child was absent from school, DOC staff or the supervisor/designate must contact the parent/guardian to remind them to notify the child care centre of any absences.
 - If the child was present for school but has not arrived as scheduled for after school care, DOC staff must notify the supervisor or designate immediately and then arrange for someone to look for the child.
 - The parent/guardian must be notified if the child has not arrived as scheduled and has not been found within five minutes.

- Once the child's absence has been confirmed/explained, DOC staff must document the child's absence on the attendance record along with any additional information about the child's absence in the daily written record.
- **Releasing a child from child care**
 - The DOC staff member supervising the child at the time of pick-up must only release the child to the child's parent/guardian or individual for whom the parent/guardian has provided written authorization for, allowing the DOC to release the child into the care of that individual. If the DOC staff member does not know the individual picking up the child (i.e., parent/guardian, or authorized individual) they must:
 - Confirm with another DOC staff member that the individual picking up is the child's parent/guardian/authorized individual.
 - If the above is not possible, request photo identification from the parent/guardian/authorized individual and confirm the individual's information against the parent/guardian/authorized individual's name on the child's file or document containing the written authorization.
- **Where a child has not been picked-up as expected (prior to centre close)**
 - Where a parent/guardian has communicated with the staff a timeframe that their child will be picked up from child care, and the child has not been picked up within one and a half hours of their expected pick-up window, the most senior staff in the room must:
 - Contact the parent/guardian by calling all contact numbers provided and advise that the child is still in care and has not been picked up.
 - If the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian, the staff must reach out to the parent/guardian via the current communication app and advise them 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 authorized individual to confirm pick-up as per the parent/guardian's instructions or leave a voice message requesting the individual immediately contact the centre.
 - If unable to reach the parent/guardian or authorized individual who was responsible for pick-up of the child, by the time the centre closes, the staff must contact the parent/guardian again via phone and the current communication app.
 - If, after all attempts to reach the parent/guardian or individual responsible for pick up are exhausted, the staff must follow the steps below regarding a child that has not been picked-up and the centre is closed.
- **Where a child has not been picked up and the centre is closed**
 - Where a parent/guardian, or authorized individual who was supposed to pick up a child from care has not arrived by 15 minutes after the centre is closed, staff must ensure the child is given a snack and an activity while they wait to be picked up.

- One staff member must stay with the child while another staff member commences calling the parent/guardian to advise that the child is still in care and inquire about their expected pick up time. In the event the person expected to pick up the child is an authorized individual, staff must contact the parent/guardian first, and then proceed to contact the authorized individual responsible for pick-up if unable to reach the parent/guardian. If there is only one staff remaining on-site at the end of the day, that staff will keep the child with them while they make the necessary calls.
- If the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian or authorized individual who was responsible for picking up the child, the staff must commence contacting the list of emergency contacts.
- If the supervisor or designate is not on the premises or is not aware of the situation, staff must contact the supervisor or designate to advise of the situation.
- If the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian, or any other authorized individual listed on the child's file (i.e., the authorized individual who was responsible for pick up or any emergency contacts) within one hour of the centre closing, the staff must contact the local Children's Aid Society (CAS) at 905-433-1551. Staff must follow CAS's direction concerning the next steps.
- In such situations, staff must ensure that the child is made as comfortable as possible, and an evening meal should be provided. Staff should remain calm, reassuring the child that they are safe and protected.
- Information regarding the situation must be recorded in the communication logbook. The supervisor must follow up with the parent/guardian and track regular late pick-ups to ensure the centres hours of operation meet the needs of the family. Regular late pick-ups will result in conversations with the parent/guardian and may result in withdrawal of care. The program manager should be informed of the situation.