



# Parent Guide

## Welcome to Today's Family, Central

Our program is located at 101 Catharine Street South, Hamilton

Today's Family Early Learning and Child Care is a non-profit, charitable agency servicing children and families in Hamilton, Halton, Haldimand-Norfolk and Oxford communities in addition to surrounding areas.

We offer a wide range of early learning and child care programs as well as parental support programs to help you and your child every step of the way. It's professional, caring support that makes a real difference in the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of children.

Today's Family Central is licensed for 10 infants, 25 toddlers and 32 preschool children.

**You are welcome to drop by any time during the program hours** in our early learning and child care programs, before and after school programs and licensed home early learning and child care programs to visit with your child.

You can reach the Program Supervisor at: 905-574-9344 ext. 1150 by email at: [central@todaysfamily.ca](mailto:central@todaysfamily.ca)

Melissa Stenhouse is the Associate Director for the Central program. You can reach Melissa at 905-574-9344 ext. 1103 or by email at: [mstenhouse@todaysfamily.ca](mailto:mstenhouse@todaysfamily.ca)

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the Central program, please do not hesitate to contact the Program Supervisor.

### Program Hours

Today's Family Central is open Monday to Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. The program is closed for all statutory holidays.

Today's Family   
Early Learning and Child Care

## Safe Arrivals and Departures

Your child must be accompanied to and from their program. In the interest of safety, we cannot allow your child to leave with someone who we do not know. It is the parent or guardian's responsibility to provide, in writing, a statement on who is authorized to pick up your child to the Program Supervisor. Make sure that we are advised of any changes, or alternate pickup arrangements. The authorized person will be asked for identification prior to releasing your child.

Parents or guardians of children registered to Today's Family programs must inform program staff of any absences of their child which would make the child late or absent from the program. In the event we do not hear from the parent or guardian regarding an absence, Today's Family Staff will try and contact the family.

## Admission Policy

Prior to admission, an application form must be completed and submitted. Before starting the program, there will be an opportunity to:

- tour the program or premises;
- meet staff or provider; and
- review all enrolment papers.

Space will not be confirmed until the program/provider has met with the family and child.

## Wait List Policy

Today's Family does not charge or collect a fee or request a deposit for the placement of a child on a wait list for admission to either our child care centre or home child care programs.

Children on a wait list are offered admission on a first-come, first-served basis. (The earlier the application is received, the higher on the list you will be). That said, whenever possible, priority will be given to siblings of children already enrolled in the program. Available spaces are based on license capacities for each of the programs operated by Today's Family. The wait list is specific to the program location. Parents will also be contacted by the program supervisor or placement consultant as spaces become available within a program.

Sorry, Today's Family cannot guarantee placement for every child on the wait list.

## Withdrawal, Discharge and Cancellation Policy

**For Infant, Toddler, Preschool and Before/After school Programming, the following withdrawal policy applies:**

Today's Family requests two weeks written notice for any child who is withdrawing from the program. If notice is not received, full program fees will be charged.

A permanent space cannot be guaranteed to any child that withdraws from the program for a temporary period. Children who are withdrawn from the program will be placed on the waiting list.

Today's Family may terminate services if policies are not followed.

Should the services of Today's Family not meet the needs of the child or family, we will provide assistance to finding an alternative solution.

**For PA Day Programming, the following cancellation policy applies:**

Parents/guardians of children in the before and after school programs have the option to register their child for all scheduled PA days from September to June or for none of them. Enrolment for PA days is subject to availability and is based on first come, first served as spaces fill quickly. PA day registration forms are shared with families prior to the beginning of the school year to determine interest in PA day programming registration. Once enrolled, it is understood that these days are accounted for in the billing cycle and are non-refundable.

For more information on PA Day withdrawal dates, please see the PA Day registration form for terms and conditions.

**For all Camp Programs, as well as Winter and March Break Programs, the following cancellation policy applies:**

Parents/guardians must give a minimum 30 days' written notice of intent to withdraw from any/all camp weeks from the first day of camp. For summer camp, regardless of impacted week, all withdrawal requests for the summer season must be submitted in writing before June 1st.

If notice is not received, full program fees will be charged. For more information on camp withdrawal dates, please see the camp registration form for terms and conditions.

## Community Outings

Community outings are encouraged as part of the program philosophy. When exploration extends beyond simple walks around our immediate neighbourhood, parents and families will be notified in advance of the destination, time and date and will be asked to sign a permission form. Volunteers are welcome to participate on our community outings.

## Parent and Family Engagement

Today's Family actively encourages volunteerism in our programs.

How you can become involved:

- Share your cultural experiences
- Participate in the programs by sharing a talent or skill
- Provide feedback on the services offered
- Participate on one of our advisory committees

## Inclement Weather

Today's Family will make every effort to provide child care services throughout the year. However, in the event of inclement weather and dangerous road conditions, we may need to close early or not open our centres. Programs located in school board properties will follow school board direction regarding closures. Please contact your child's program directly or tune into your local radio or television station for closure information.

## Health Information

When a child is ill, he or she should be kept at home to encourage recovery and reduce the risk of spreading the illness among the other children. Your child should not be in the program if he or she has:

- Severe coughing
- Difficulty breathing
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Pink eye
- Unusual spots or rashes
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Fever/headache
- Grey or white stools

If your child develops symptoms of illness while in the program, the parent or guardian will be notified and asked to pick up your child. If your child requires medication while in care, it will be dispensed in accordance with the guidelines of the Child Care and Early Years Act, which are:

- The medication is prescribed by a physician
- The child's name is on the prescription label
- The dosages and times to be administered are on the prescription label
- The prescription is current
- You have filled out a "Medical Authorization" form

Non-prescription medication cannot be administered by our staff. Only life-sustaining medication can be administered in Licensed Home Early Learning and Child Care Programs.

## Nutrition

Today's Family provides meals and snacks in accordance with the *Canada Food Guide*. Menus are posted and copies are also available to parents

and families. Please be sure to alert us of any allergies or food restrictions. If possible, we will try to provide an alternative.

For children with special dietary needs who are bringing food into our programs, parents may be required to share the ingredients.

Children enrolled in school-aged, full-day programs may be required to bring a nutritious nut-free, bagged lunch. Should a child forget their lunch Today's Family will provide a nutritious alternative. We ask that families label their child's lunch with their name.

Families will be made aware of the allergens in each site, and are required to pack a lunch that avoids such allergens where appropriate. Today's Family will share and post information regarding life-threatening and anaphylactic allergies.

All staff, providers, volunteers, students and parents will be notified of any life-threatening and anaphylactic allergies in the program location.

## Rest Period

It is a requirement that all children attending Licensed Child Care have a rest period every day. Children are welcome to bring a sleep toy and/or blanket for the rest period. Quiet activities are available for waking children or those who do not sleep. Cots/cribs with sheets and blankets are provided. Today's Family sleep policy will be reviewed with families at the time of enrolment.

## Toileting

Parents are required to supply diapers for children who are not yet toilet trained. We ask that parents bring in extra clothing to support toilet readiness.

## Guiding Behaviour

Today's Family uses re-direction and positive behaviour guidance techniques appropriate to the child's age to promote self-discipline and respect for others and their environment.

### We never permit:

- Corporal punishment of a child (i.e. spanking, shaking, shoving a child);
- Physical restraint of a child, such as confining the child to a high chair, car seat, stroller, or other device for the purposes of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting themselves or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent;
- Locking the exits of a child care centre or home child care premises for the purposes of confining the child, or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of emergency management policies and procedures;
- Use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child or undermine the child's self-respect, dignity or self-worth;
- The deliberate use of harsh or degrading measures that will humiliate

the child or undermine the child's self-respect;

- Deprivation of a child's 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.

## Serious Occurrences

Serious Occurrences that happen in your child's Early Learning and Child Care Centre are posted at your child's program location for your information.

## Supervision Policy

Only Today's Family staff and providers will have the direct responsibility for the supervision of children in the program. Volunteers and students are not considered part of the staff/caregiver to child ratio and will never be left alone with children.

## Emergency Management

Today's Family has emergency management procedures in place for all programs and services to ensure the safety of children and adults in the program.

If an emergency occurs, parents will be notified via phone call or email as to the situation and advised as to steps being taken to address the situation.

## Parent Issues and Concerns

Parents / guardians are encouraged to take an active role in our child care centres and home child care programs and regularly discuss what their child(ren) are experiencing in our programs. As supported by our program statement, we support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents/guardians, child care providers and staff, and foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents / guardians about the program and their children. Our staff and home visitors are available to engage parents/guardians in conversations and support a positive experience during every interaction.

All issues and concerns raised by parents / guardians are taken seriously by Today's Family and will be addressed. Every effort will be made to address and resolve issues and concerns to the satisfaction of all parties and as quickly as possible.

Issues / concerns may be brought forward verbally or in writing. Anonymous concerns will not be addressed. Responses and outcomes will be provided verbally, or in writing upon request. The level of detail provided to the parent/guardian will respect and maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved.

An initial response to an issue or concern will be provided to parents/guardians within 24 hours. The person who raised the issue / concern will be kept informed throughout the resolution process.

Investigations of issues and concerns will be fair, impartial and respectful to parties involved.

## Procedures

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### Procedure for Staff and Providers

Parents and community partners can communicate issues and concerns in person, by telephone or in writing.

Any issues or concerns brought to staff or providers must be documented.

If the complaint or concern brought forward pertains to suspected abuse or neglect, staff and providers will then follow the Child Abuse and Neglect Policy and Procedure.

All issues and concerns will be documented and acted on promptly by the staff or provider who receives the complaint.

All complaints and concerns will remain confidential in nature whenever possible. Anonymous complaints and concerns will not be addressed.

Staff or Providers must inform Supervisor or Home Visitor of issues and concerns brought forward within 24 hours of complaint.

Today's Family will make every attempt to resolve a concern or complaint as quickly as possible. It is the intent of Today's Family to resolve concerns in a timely manner. The goal is to resolve complaints within ten business days.

### Procedure for Operational Managers

When the Operational Manager has been notified of a complaint or concern, they will encourage the process of resolution to the complaint to take place at the direct level of the concern or complaint.

The Operational Manager will support staff/providers to directly gather and address concerns and complaints.

If a concern or complaint is not resolved directly at the level of concern, the Operational Manager will contact the complainant in a timely manner to attempt to address and resolve the concern.

If the complaint or concern is still not resolved, the Operational Manager will contact the Associate Director for the program for support and next steps to address resolution.

All concerns and complaints are to be addressed in a timely and responsive manner. The goal is to resolve complaints within ten business days.

Operational Managers will keep complaint forms on file for their locations.

### Procedure for Associate Directors

When an Associate Director has been notified of a complaint or concern, they will encourage the process of resolution to the complaint to take place at the direct level of the concern or complaint.

The Associate Director will support Operational Managers to directly address the concern or complaint.

If a concern or complaint is not resolved by the Associate Director, the concern will be brought forward with all supporting information to the Director of Programs, Chief Operating Officer or the Chief Executive Officer.

Associate Directors will keep complaint forms on file for their locations.

### Procedure for Director of Programs, Chief Operating Officer or Chief Executive Officer

When the Director of Programs, Chief Operating Officer or Chief Executive Officer has been notified of a complaint or concern, they will encourage the process of resolution to the complaint to take place at the direct level of the concern or complaint.

If all steps have been followed and the concern or complaint is not addressed, the Director of Programs, Chief Operating Officer or Chief Executive Officer will attempt to resolve the issue directly with the complainant.

If a concern or complaint is not resolved by the Director of Programs, Chief Operating Officer or Chief Executive Officer, the concern can be submitted in writing to Today's Family Board of Directors.

The Director of Programs and/or Chief Operating Officer will report on complaints and concerns quarterly to the Chief Executive Officer.

## Confidentiality

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Every issue and concern will be treated confidentially and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of parents/guardians, children, home child care providers, other persons in the home child care premises, staff, students and volunteers, except when information must be disclosed for legal reasons (e.g. to the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities or a Children's Aid Society).

## Conduct

Today's Family maintains high standards for positive interaction, communication and role-modeling for children. Harassment and discrimination will, therefore, not be tolerated from any party.

If at any point a parent/guardian, home child care provider and/or staff feels uncomfortable, threatened, abused or belittled, they may immediately end the conversation and report the situation to Today's Family.

## Concerns about the Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a Child

Everyone, including members of the public and professionals who work closely with children, is required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.

If a parent/guardian expresses concerns that a child is being abused or neglected, the parent will be advised to contact the local Children's Aid Society (CAS) directly.

Persons who become aware of such concerns are also responsible for reporting this information to CAS as per the "Duty to Report" requirement under the *Child and Family Services Act*.

For more information, please visit:  
<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childrensaidd/reportingabuse/index.aspx>

## Escalation of Issues or Concerns

Where parents / guardians are not satisfied with the response or outcome of an issue or concern, they may escalate the issue or concern verbally or in writing to the Chief Operating Officer or Chief Executive Officer.

Issues/concerns related to compliance with requirements set out in the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 and Ontario Regulation 137/15 should be reported to the Ministry of Education's Child Care Quality Assurance and Licensing Branch at 1-877-510-5333 or [childcare\\_ontario@ontario.ca](mailto:childcare_ontario@ontario.ca)

Issues/concerns may also be reported to other relevant regulatory bodies (e.g. local public health department, police department, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Labour, fire department, College of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario College of Teachers, College of Social Workers etc.) where appropriate.

# Today's Family Guiding Principles

## Caring

Caring is the essence of who we are. We care for the children who take part in our program, for their families, for our staff, for our community and for our environment. This is reflected throughout our organization.

## Innovation

We are creative; we embrace change and we do things differently. In order to provide appropriate, convenient services to our families, it is essential that our agency grows over time to reflect the changing needs of the communities we serve.

## Collaboration

Together, with other organizations in our city and our province, we can help to make change and chart new directions for all children.

## Accountability

Our primary responsibility is to serve children and families. It is our job to make sure they are nurtured and respected.

## Inclusion

Today's Family is committed to promoting diversity, advancing equity and fostering a culture of inclusion.

## Program Statement

Today's Family is a not-for-profit early learning and child care organization that is inclusive and advocates for all children and families. Programs in our Early Learning and Child Care Centres and in our Provider homes are based on the Emergent Curriculum philosophy. This approach is recognized internationally as the leading-edge approach for early learning programs. The approach is based on the view of the child as curious, competent and capable of constructing their own knowledge. The children are eager to learn and their inquisitive nature sets the stage for research, problem-solving and creativity as they engage in play-based learning experiences.

Today's Family has adopted *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years* (2014) as the resource document to guide the approach and curriculum. Learning and development happens within the context of relationships among children, families, educators and their environments and when there is a shared understanding that all children, educators and families are competent, capable, curious and rich in potential. *How Does Learning Happen?* is based on four foundations that are necessary for optimal healthy child development. These four foundations are Well-Being, Engagement, Expression, and Belonging.

The Program Statement is a living document that will evolve and change. It is reviewed by all Educators, Providers, students and volunteers prior to work and placement with the children, and annually thereafter after it is revised.

## Today's Family Program Goals and Approaches:

**a) Goal: promote the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of children.**

### APPROACHES: Safety and Well-Being

- Educators and Providers provide clear expectations/rules for safety, both indoors and outdoors, for all children.
- Educators and Providers teach and role-model for children how to use new materials, i.e. wire and clay.

### Health and Well-Being

- Educators and Providers are responsive and respectful of all children's needs.
- Educators and Providers create safe and stimulating indoor and outdoor spaces for intentional active play and exploration that support the needs of the group.

### Nutrition and Well-Being

- Children are served nutritious meals and snacks that meet all of the guidelines of Canada's Food Guide.
- Educators and Providers encourage children to try new foods.

**b) We support positive and responsive interactions among children, parents, childcare providers and educators and achieve foundations of belonging and well-being.**

**c) We encourage the children to interact and communicate in a positive way and support their ability to self-regulate.**

## APPROACHES: Positive and Responsive Interactions with Children

- Educators and Providers get down to the child's level to support play with the children and have many face to face interactions.
- Educators and Providers get to know each child in their group, their interests, backgrounds and current life happenings and respect each child's individual differences, thoughts, ideas and theories.
- Educators and Providers spend time each day listening to the children and observing the children at play and follow the child's lead and interest during play.
- Educators and Providers role-model and help children learn to express their feelings, recognize other's feelings and help others.

## Self-Regulation

- Educators and Providers help children understand expectations of the program by giving simple, clear explanations and encourage independence and exploration.
- Educators and Providers acknowledge children's accomplishments and work by describing what they have done well.
- Educators and Providers assist children to problem solve and work together to resolve conflicts and problems.
- Educators and Providers role-model respect, open communication and positive interactions with children and adults.

**d) We foster the children's exploration, play and inquiry.**

**e) We provide child-initiated and adult-supported experiences.**

**f) We plan for and create**

**positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development will be supported.**

**g) We incorporate indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play, rest and quiet time into the day and give consideration to the individual needs of the children receiving child care.**

**APPROACHES:**

**Program Planning and the Environment as the Third Teacher**

- Educators and Providers create environments both indoor and outdoor that promote learning through play, discovery, relationships and collaboration.
- Educators and Providers have play areas both indoor and outdoor for active and quiet play and space for quiet alone time.
- Outdoor programming may include sensory areas (sand/water play), visual arts (easels and drawing materials) and incorporate many elements of nature, i.e. gardens with vegetables, fruits, flowers and plants, bird feeders, birdbaths.

**Flexible Schedule**

- The program schedule is flexible and adapted to meet the needs of the group.

**Planning the Program as a Co-Learner and Co-Researcher**

- The Educators and Providers participate with the children as a co-learner, co-researcher and co-planner.
- Educators and Providers observe the children at play daily and capture it with photographs, written notes, tape recordings and videotape.

**h) We foster the engagement of ongoing communication with**

**parents about the program and their children.**

**APPROACHES:**

**Parent Engagement**

- Educators and Providers ask parents to assist with helping the children research their learning questions at home and give parents questions to work on with their children.
- Parents are invited to participate on Parent Advisory committees to assist with the development of the parent satisfaction surveys and provide feedback on the survey results and overall program.

**Positive and Responsive Interactions with Parents/Guardians**

- Educators and Providers communicate daily with parents to keep them informed about upcoming events and happenings at the programs and share honest positive feedback about the child's day. Today's Family Fridge App will be utilized to support daily communication.
- Educators and Providers share documentation (photos and learning stories) that makes the learning visible with the parents.
- Educators and Providers include parents in the program planning and ask them questions about their children's thinking and theories.

**i) We involve community partners and allow these partners to support the children, their families and staff.**

**APPROACHES:**

**Community Engagement**

- Educators and Providers reach out to all families, including those that may be experiencing challenging circumstances, and help them make connections to formal supports.

- Educators and Providers plan community outings with their children and families to local community/ neighbourhood destinations such as libraries, fire stations, recreation centres, museums, Royal Botanical Gardens, playgrounds and Ontario Early Years Centres to support learning, inquiry, health and wellness.

**j) We support staff, home child care providers and others who interact with children with continuous professional learning.**

**APPROACHES:**

**Professional Learning**

- Educators and Providers participate in ongoing professional learning opportunities. These professional learning opportunities enhance their practice.
- Educators and Providers are committed to the well-being and development of children. Ongoing professional learning opportunities provide us with the best skills to ensure quality early learning experience

**k) We document and review the impact of the program statement and strategies on the children and their families.**

**APPROACHES:**

**Review and Feedback**

- Our Program Statement and approaches are reflected in the work we do each day. Educators and Providers review the statement annually (or as changes arise in the statement) and use the approaches to guide the work that they do each day.
- As part of our commitment to quality, Educators and Providers will ask for feedback on the program statement from families on an ongoing basis.



**Fee Schedule**

	<b>Current Rate</b>
<b>EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE</b>	
Infant Full Day* .....	\$32.84
Toddler Full Day* .....	\$28.12
Preschool Full Day* .....	\$23.39

\*Indicates Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Plan fee reductions

**Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Plan**

**Today's Family is enrolled in the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Plan.**

Please note that fee reductions through the Canada-Wide plan are for children under six years old (and any child who turns six years of age before June 30). Fee reductions will lead to an average rate of \$12.00 per day for eligible families by 2026.

Subsidized rate reductions for eligible families are determined by the municipality and are reflective of the parental contribution.

Please note that daily rates and initial retainer fees are considered to be "base fees." Late fees, registration fees, fees related to extracurricular activities, and/or any fees beyond the base fees are determined on an as-needed basis and are considered to be non-base fees.

A \$25.00 registration fee (non-refundable) is due upon submission of your application.

An initial retainer fee equaling two weeks of care is required before care can begin. This fee is refundable with a two week written notice of termination and will be credited on your final invoice.

Parents / guardians must give two weeks written notice of intent to permanently withdraw from the program. If notice is not received, full program fees will be charged.

For Camp and PA Day withdrawals, please see terms and conditions on page 2 under withdrawal, discharge and cancellation policy for these programs.

A minimum of four days of care per week is required to register.

Please note that if your child's regular day falls on a holiday, school board scheduled closure or on an emergency closure day (i.e. inclement weather or external job action/strike), or if your child is sick or absent on a scheduled day, you will be billed for that day.

**LATE POLICY:**

Due to the operational costs incurred when a parent/guardian is late picking up their child, a late fee of \$10.00 will be charged for every 15 minutes per child.

**PAYMENT OPTIONS:**

**Pre-authorized Credit Card –**  
Please submit your completed form to the Supervisor or to Accounting at [accounting@todaysfamily.ca](mailto:accounting@todaysfamily.ca)

**Online Banking –**  
Pay your invoice directly from your bank account. Add **Today's Family** as the payee. Your account number is your customer code found on the top right hand side of your invoice.

Our caring staff are available to answer any questions about your invoice. For further assistance, please contact your Program Supervisor or Accounting.