

Colchester Early Learning Centre

Regulations and Policies

Revised 2024

COLCHESTER EARLY LEARNING CENTRE

Parent Handbook

The Colchester Early Learning Centre is an inclusive non-profit childcare centre providing care for children of all abilities, from ages 18 months to 11 years. The Centre is governed by a Board of Directors and is committed to providing a positive, safe, nurturing, and caring environment that promotes the growth of each child in all areas of their development. We follow the Nova Scotia Early Learning Curriculum Framework to guide our program and pedagogy. Staff are trained in Early Childhood Education.

The Colchester Early Learning Centre believes that children learn through play and exploration of their environment which includes the community where they live, the cultural background of each child, the different abilities of each child, and the different languages spoken. We believe that children have unique ideas, knowledge, and experience about their physical and social world. Play based learning provides an opportunity for all children to learn by doing, by exploring the world, and by interacting with peers and adults.

Program Objectives

1. To create a positive, relevant, and meaningful learning environment that takes into account each child's unique needs and interests while providing opportunities for all children to engage in creative problem solving, exploration, investigation and manageable risk taking.
2. Endeavor to provide supports to safely meet the needs of all children enrolled in the centre.
3. To engage in collaborative relationships with our community, parents, agencies, and each other. This will provide resources, information, and support to better meet the needs of our children families and educators.
4. To provide meal plans that are consistent with Canada's Food Guide and also the manual for Food and Nutrition in regulated childcare settings while respecting the different needs (cultural and medical) of each child and family.
5. To develop partnerships with families that are inclusive and respectful of cultures, values, language, and ethnicity.

The following documents can be viewed in the binder located in locker room:

- Day Care Act and Regulations
- Parent Handbook
- License for the Facility
- Most recent Inspection Reports
- Copy of Behaviour Guidance Policy
- Copy of the current menu
- Copy of Daily Program Plan and Routine
- List of names of the current members of the Parent Committee
- Notification of funding provided by the Minister

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM

Colchester Early Learning Centre's Afterschool Program serves students enrolled in Harmony Heights Elementary and Valley Elementary – Pre-Primary to Grade 4. The children are picked up at each school in our van by a licensed driver and transported back to the centre. The children must be picked up at the centre by 5:30pm by parent/guardian/designated alternate.

The Afterschool Program is full time only, we do not offer part time spaces. The centre is open to all children enrolled in the program for full days on Inservice days, Christmas Break, March Break, and storm days (if the centre is open) during the September to June academic year.

We have a full day Summer School Age Program running for July and August. Children enrolled in the afterschool program or entering the program will be given priority and any vacancies will be filled with children Pre-Primary to Grade 4 for these months. Full days the Centre is open regular hours 7:30am-5:30pm.

FEE PAYMENT POLICY

The Fee Payment Policy is in place to clearly state payment requirements for childcare services.

Fees for Afterschool Program:	Afterschool only	\$15.00 per day
	Full day	\$33.00 per day

Parents/Guardians of children in the after-school program will be billed for all full days the Centre is open to them (all Inservice, winter/spring break, storm days) whether their child is present, absent, or sick.

Fees for Preschool/Toddler:	18months-3 years	\$34.00 per day
	3-5 years	\$33.00 per day

Early Learning and Childcare Parent Fee Reduction

The Centre follows the Nova Scotia Fee Reduction Schedule that is in effect. In January 2023 the parent fees have been reduced by:

\$18.25 per day per Toddler

\$18.25 per day per Preschooler

\$10.00 per full day after schoolers

\$4.50 per afterschool care

The Fee Reduction will be shown and subtracted on your bill/invoice to reflect the total amount left owing.

If you qualify for subsidized childcare, you will need to have approval before your child starts and your rate will also be subtracted from the amount owing. A copy of the approval notice will be required. Any fees not covered by the subsidy are the responsibility of the parent/guardian.

Fees are due upon receipt of your invoice. **Fees must be paid in full or every 2 weeks unless other payment arrangements have been approved by the director.** Failure to make payment at the designated times may result in termination of services.

Payment can be made by e-transfer, payable to the email address, ccdc@bellaliant.com.

Late Fees: The Centre closes at 5:30pm each day. Late fees will be charged if your child is not picked up by the designated closing time. The fees are \$5.00 for the first ten minutes and \$1.00 for every minute after that. These fees will be added to your account balance.

Annual tax receipts are available upon request for parent-paid fees, and do not include payments from the Early Learning Parent Fee Reduction or Subsidy.

You are responsible to pay for all sick, absent, closure, vacation days and holidays.

The center closes for the following statutory holidays:

New Year's Day	Easter Monday	Civic Day	Remembrance Day
Family Day	Victoria Day	Labor Day	Christmas Day
Good Friday	Canada Day	Thanksgiving Day	Boxing Day
National Day for Truth & Reconciliation			

In the event that the building at 60 Lorne Street is closed due to weather conditions or other unforeseen reasons, then the Colchester Early Centre will remain closed until the building (60 Lorne Street) is reopened to employees and the public. Weather related closures will be included with the list of cancellations on the local radio station (Pure Country 99.5) and posted on our Seesaw App. Delayed opening would also be posted on that cancellation page and on Seesaw. In the event of a power outage, the centre can remain open for 2 hours. Should the outage persist after 2 hours, we would have to close the centre. Parents will have to enter through the front door to come get their child.

Notice to withdraw: We ask that you give two weeks' notice if you decide to leave the center. Failure to do so will place responsibility for payment of full fees even if child/children do not attend. If your child is subsidized, and you fail to give two weeks' notice you will be responsible to pay the appropriate full day rate for your child for the two weeks.

TERMINATION OF SERVICES:

The Admission Committee of the Colchester Early Learning Association may dismiss a child and their family for various reasons as outlined below. Each child's support needs are unique and will be addressed through discussions prior to consideration for dismissal. A decision to discontinue services will be forwarded in a letter, to the parent or guardian, within fourteen (14) days of the date of the decision and thirty (30) days before discharge from the program. The letter will state the reasons for discontinuation of services.

Children may no longer attend the day care for the following reasons:

1. The child is eligible to attend school or has had their 6th birthday in preschool program.
2. A child in the afterschool program moves on to Grade 5 or transfers to another school outside of Valley Elementary/Harmony Heights Elementary
3. Another available service is deemed more appropriate.
4. The day care is no longer able to provide adequate support for the child.
5. Should all supports and resources within capacity of the centre be exhausted (child may not adjust to the program, aggressive behaviours endangering the child, other attendees, and/or staff)

I have read the Fee Payment Policy and have set up the following payment plan with the director.

___ Monthly Payment (1st day of each month)

___ Biweekly Payment (1st and 15th of each month)

I hereby acknowledge and will follow the guidelines set out in this policy.

Signature of Parent/Guardian _____

Date _____

Director's signature _____

Date _____

HEALTH & ILLNESS POLICY

The Health and Illness Policy is designed to ensure the health and safety of both the children and families attending as well as the staff at the center.

Completion of a medical questionnaire and up to date immunization records OR associated medical documentation are required upon enrollment of your child/children.

Please contact the center prior to 9:30am if your child/children will not be attending due to illness. The Guardian must let the staff member know the symptoms of the child as we are required to report to Public Health in instances where we have 10% or more of our enrollment absent due to illness.

Following Public Health and Safety Guidelines we ask that you **do not send your child/children if they are experiencing any of the following symptoms**, fever, rash with a fever, difficulty breathing, persistent cough, vomiting, diarrhea, head lice, and any other communicable disease.

Should your child become ill while at the center, you will be contacted immediately and will be expected to make other arrangements until such a time that your child is feeling better and no longer contagious.

Children should be symptom free for AT LEAST 24 HOURS WITHOUT THE USE OF MEDICATION. In some cases, a note from a doctor may be required (ex. A suspicious rash requiring a diagnosis to determine whether it is contagious).

Upon return the child/children **must** be well enough to participate in all activities. **This includes indoor play and outdoor play.**

If your child requires medication to be administered while at the center, a guardian must sign a Medication Administration Form and provide medicine in **the original prescription container.** Non-prescription medication requires written authorization from both guardian and physician (ex. Benadryl for fly bite allergies).

ACCIDENT/INJURY

Though all staff in the centre are trained in emergency first aid and CPR, and will administer any necessary treatment as required, should a child have an accident and/or injury while at the centre. Staff will access the situation and follow the procedures below:

- If the accident/injury requires medical attention, the program staff will contact the parent/caregiver immediately for instruction.
- If the parent/caregiver is unavailable, staff will contact the alternate emergency contact (from the Emergency Medical Consent Form) for instructions.

- If both parent/caregiver or alternate emergency contact is unavailable staff will call for emergency transport as program staff may not transport any child in their personal vehicle.
- If the accident/injury is identified as needing immediate assistance emergency transport will be called first, then the parent/caregiver or alternate emergency contact will be called.
- Program staff may not be able to ride with a child in the emergency transport but will travel to the hospital in the event the parent/caregiver or alternate emergency contact cannot be reached.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Fire drills are practiced monthly.

Lock down drills are practiced quarterly.

Our Fire Evacuation Plan is located in our Parent Binder, as well as in each room of Colchester Early Learning Centre.

As our centre is located in a CCRCE Building, we follow the CCRCE Emergency Response for Schools. Outlined Emergency Procedures are located in the Parent Binder as well as posted in the centre.

FOOD & NUTRITION

The centre provides a morning snack, a lunch time meal, and an afternoon snack which follow the Nova Scotia Manual for Food and Nutrition in Regulated Childcare Settings.

1. Food and beverages received from an outside source (caterer or parent) must be from an establishment recognized by the Dept. of Agriculture and comply with the Food and Beverage Criteria. The product must include a clearly labelled list of ingredients, and any special preparation, storage or serving instructions. Please note there are significant allergies within the centre, therefore all food items are very closely reviewed by staff prior to serving.
2. Children may get hungry at different intervals throughout the day. Staff are responsive to children's cues around hunger and will provide snacks and meals outside the regular schedule as required.
3. Staff create an enjoyable and relaxing meal environment for the children.
4. Staff encourage children to respond to hunger and feelings of fullness and children are not forced to finish food that has been served.

Colchester Early Learning Centre is a breast-feeding friendly environment. A private area is available upon request.

PROGRAM / LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The learning environment for all children, including school aged, is inclusive and supports Nova Scotia's Early Learning and Curriculum Framework. The environment is designed to promote children's growth, development and wellbeing while providing children with flexible and spontaneous learning. Through exploration and inquiry, we build on children's knowledge with new experiences to extend their learning.

There is a daily schedule posted in the parent intake area.

Children receiving enhanced supports will have a Routine Based Program Plan (RBPP) developed by team members which would include the parents, the staff of the centre, and other professionals who are currently working with the child. The Routine Based Program Plan consists of goals the child is working on to enhance their development. In this inclusive environment, all children are viewed as being confident, capable and curious and all goals of the RBPP will be implemented in an integrated setting. All staff members participate in the program delivery.

Outdoor play is a very important component of your child's day. The children will enjoy the play yard as often as the weather allows. Parents are required to ensure that your child is properly dressed for the weather. Children enjoy playing in puddles and digging in the mud and in winter, playing in the snow! We often take impromptu walks around our community or trips out in the van.

EQUIPMENT:

We would ask that parents bring any special equipment that your child may need as part of their daily routine. This would include items such as buggies, inserts, communication devices, etc.

DRESS:

Please send your child /children in play clothes, and outdoor gear suitable for the season as we go out in all weather conditions.

All clothing should be labelled with their name.

Please provide your child with a complete change of clothes each day, including underwear and socks.

Please provide your child with the following if necessary:

- blanket and cuddly toy for rest time
- diapers/diaper cream

PARENT INVOLVEMENT:

The Colchester Early Learning Centre encourage partnerships with parents and families with relationships that are respectful of cultures, values, language, and family structure. We recognize the importance of parent’s unique perspective and welcome your experiences, skills, traditions, and talents. Parents are welcome to meet with staff at any time to talk about your child. This will provide staff with insight on your child’s uniqueness and provide a better appreciation of their individuality. Parent meetings will be held in the Spring and Fall of each year.

MISCELLANIOUS:

1. For the purpose of this Society and with respect to custody arrangements, this day care centre cannot be put in a position to interpret court orders. The day-to-day administration of the day care centre cannot be tailored to accommodate a court order. Unless your court order is extremely specific, we may not be able to accommodate your child. The daycare centre may require legal documentation of any restrictions for contact, drop-off, and/or pick-up arrangements. The staff and/or Board of the daycare centre will not be involved in any court matters relevant to custody arrangements between parents.

2. The Program is not responsible for any lost, misplaced, or damaged items.

It is the legal obligation of the Colchester Early Learning Centre staff to report any suspicion of child abuse.

The policies outlined in this manual are a necessary ingredient to the planning of an environment that ensures the wellbeing of your child/children during the time he or she spends at the Colchester Early Learning Centre. They have been arrived at through consultation with the Board of Directors, Staff, and Director. It is hoped that each parent will appreciate the importance of maintaining these policies.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO DISCUSS THEM WITH THE DIRECTOR.

I have read and understand the regulations and policies outlined in this parent handbook.

Parent(s) signature

Date

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT POLICY

A well-planned program which meets the needs of each child can help to eliminate inappropriate behaviour in the daycare centre. Staff will collaborate with families to develop a strategic plan(s) for any concerns identified by centre and/or families.

The following techniques shall be used to positively guide children:

1. Children in the program will be treated with respect as individuals.
2. Clear, consistent limits shall be set and reinforced consistently and equitably.
3. Redirection will be used when possible.
4. Under certain circumstances, staff may want to use physical contact to guide behaviour or regulate an upset child. An adult's touch during a frustrating situation may have a calming effect on the child.
5. Behaviour management should be expressed positively wherever possible. Tell the child what can be done, rather than what cannot be done.
6. Maintaining interaction with the child during periods of upset behaviour.
7. A brief period of co-regulation may sometimes be required. A child shall never be placed alone in a room but may be removed from an activity for a period of quiet time then reintroduced.

The following forms of discipline shall NOT be used:

1. Use corporal punishment including,
 - (a) Striking a child directly or with an object , and
 - (b) Shaking, shoving, spanking and other forms of aggressive physical conduct;
2. Require or force a child to repeat physical movements;
3. Use harsh, humiliating, belittling or degrading responses of any form, whether verbal, emotional or physical;
4. Confine or isolate a child
5. Deprive a child of basic needs, including food, shelter, clothing and bedding
6. Food used to reinforce positive behaviours
7. Withholding food as a consequence for inappropriate behaviour