



WATERBRIDGE PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

PARENT HANDBOOK

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Mothercraft Overview

Mission (Why we exist): Helping families in Ottawa grow and thrive.

Values (How we exist):

Nurturing – Supporting each other with compassion

Inclusivity – Welcoming and encouraging diversity

Collaborative Relationships - Built on respect and communication

Creativity - Exploring possibilities

Integrity - Acting with honesty and reliability

Programs and services (What we do to realize our mission):

Mothercraft Ottawa, a leader in early learning and care since 1944, is a charitable non-profit organization that enriches the well-being of families with infants and young children through responsive, high quality programs and services.

Mothercraft Ottawa delivers child care for children aged 6 weeks to 12 years through licensed child care centres and home child care, before-and-after-school programs and part-time/casual care.

We support the evolving needs of families in Ottawa through our diverse child and family services, including comprehensive prenatal and parenting classes and workshops, perinatal support, programming for children with special needs, as well as an array of programs and services offered through our EarlyON Child and Family Centres.

1. Licensing: Standards, Legislation and Inspections

In Ontario, anyone who cares for six or more unrelated children under the age of 10 must be licensed by the Ministry of Education. This includes home-based child care and centre-based child care.

Licensed child care programs must meet and maintain specific provincial standards set out in the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 (CCEYA)*. These standards provide for the health, safety and developmental needs of the children.

At least once a year, staff of the Ministry of Education make unannounced inspections of all licensed child care programs to:

- make sure that provincial standards are being met
- issue and renew licenses
- investigate complaints
- monitor operators who are having difficulty meeting licensing standards.

Licensing reports for all home-based and centre based licensed child care programs are available on the <https://www.earlyyears.edu.gov.on.ca/LCCWeb/childcare/search.xhtml>

Please refer to the Ministry of Education website for detailed licensing information:
<https://www.earlyyears.edu.gov.on.ca/LCCWeb/childcare/search.xhtml>

2. **Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Program**

Mothercraft Ottawa has enrolled in the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Program. The implementation of this new program will take several years. The first reduction in fees was a reduction of fees by 25%, retroactive to April 1, 2022, until December 31, 2022.

The second stage of fee reductions became effective as of January 2023. Childcare fees for eligible children were reduced by 52.75% based on 2022 fees, but not less than a daily rate of \$12.00 per day. Programs that were previously less than \$12.00 per day do not qualify for a fee reduction and remain unchanged.

The third stage of fee reductions is effective January 1, 2025. Childcare fees for eligible children will be capped at \$22.00 per day. Programs that daily rate less than \$22.00 per day do not qualify for a fee reduction in this phase and remain unchanged from their previously reduced rate.

Eligibility for reduced fees

Eligible children are entitled to a childcare fee reduction retroactive to April 1, 2022, up to a minimum of \$12.00 per day. Children aged 0-5 are eligible. In addition, children are also eligible if they are six (6) years old, up until a cut-off date determined as follows:

- If the child's sixth (6th) birthday falls between January and June, the child remains eligible until June 30 of that calendar year;
- If the child's sixth (6th) year birthday falls between July and December, the child remains eligible until the end of the month of their sixth (6th) birthday.

Children receiving a municipal subsidy

If your childcare fees are fully or partially subsidized, for any amount you pay directly to the City of Ottawa, the subsidy office will notify you if your fees are eligible for the CWELCCS.

3. Philosophy

The goal of Mothercraft Ottawa is to provide quality care for children in an early learning environment. This care is a shared responsibility between Parents and the Agency. Our Programs promote and enhance all components of the child's development and we believe that it is the right of all children to have the opportunity to develop in a safe, secure and nurturing environment.

4. Program Statement

Established in conjunction with the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014

Mothercraft Ottawa (Mothercraft), believes that all children are competent, capable, curious, and rich in potential. In alignment with the Minister of Education's Policy Statement on Programming and Pedagogy, Mothercraft Programs are guided by "How Does Learning Happen", Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years, and by "Early Learning for Every Child Today: A Framework for Ontario Early Childhood Settings (ELECT)". This program statement will describe the goals that guide the Mothercraft Waterbridge Program staff and will illustrate some approaches the staff practice in order to meet a high quality standard of child care and early years programming and pedagogy to support the children's learning and development.

"How Does Learning Happen" is based on four key foundations:

- **Belonging:** a sense of connectedness to others, an individual's experiences of being valued, of forming relationships with others and making contributions as part of a group, a community, the natural world.
- **Well-being:** the importance of physical and mental health and wellness incorporating capacities such as self-care, sense of self, and self-regulation.
- **Engagement:** which suggests a state of being involved and focused. When children are able to explore the world around them with their natural curiosity and exuberance, they are fully engaged. Through this type of play and inquiry, they develop skills such as problem solving, creative thinking and innovating which are essential for learning and success in school and beyond.
- **Expression or communication (to be heard as well as to listen):** takes many different forms. Their bodies, words, and use of materials, children develop capacities for increasingly complex communication. Opportunities to explore materials support creativity, problem solving, and mathematical behaviours. Language rich environments support growing communication skills which are foundation for literacy.

Program Goals	Approaches
To promote the health, safety, nutrition and wellbeing of the children.	<p>Health and safety workplace inspections are part of the monthly routine at Waterbridge.</p> <p>The meatless inspired menu meet expectations set out in the Canada Food Guide and have been reviewed by a dietician. Our cook takes advantage of the change in seasons to create seasonal inspired menus.</p> <p>In partnership with a child's parent/guardian, Individual Treatment Plans are developed for children who have life threatening food allergies. Food allergy and food restriction posters are visible for all staff, students, and volunteers to review and follow.</p>
To support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents, child care providers and staff.	Staff consistently model positive social interactions in an empathetic and supportive manner. The program's early childhood educators are knowledgeable in early childhood development and best practices. The educators willingly share their knowledge in order to help support children and their parents navigate the social, emotional, physical, language, and cognitive development continuum. The educators are reflective practitioners and believe that collaboration enhances relationships.
To encourage the children to interact and communicate in a positive way and support their ability to self-regulate.	The educators recognize that children use their bodies, words, senses, and environment to develop capacities for increasingly complex communication. Freedom to express a multitude of emotions in a safe and secure environment allows children the opportunity to practice appropriate responses for their emotions. As the children learn about themselves and the world around them, the educator's model and support evolving communication development through self-regulation and collaborative problem solving activities.

<p>To foster the children's exploration, play and inquiry.</p>	<p>The educators facilitate the children's play and skill building by setting up a developmentally appropriate environment which is based on the current interests of the children, their families, and of the educators. Through continual observation of the children interacting within the environment, and along with on-going reflective practices, the educators make intentional changes to the environment. These intentional environmental changes promote neverending experiences of exploration, inquiry, skill development, and learning through play.</p>
<p>To provide child-initiated and adult-supported experiences.</p>	<p>On-going communication with the children in our care allows the educator to get a true sense of what the children would like to do with their time in the program. By simply asking the children about what toys/equipment/materials they would like to have access to, the educators are able to facilitate the gathering of those items and support the play that evolves from them.</p> <p>Observation is a key tool the educators use in order to help identify what emerging interests could be imminent for an exploring and inquiring child. The educators have access to extensive resources which allows for 'in the moment' and 'responsive' program implementation.</p>
<p>To plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development will be supported, and which is inclusive of all children, including children with individualized plans.</p>	<p>The educators develop play-based program plans which are initiated from anecdotal and/or formal observations of the children. The environment is set up to be supportive and responsive to each child's individual journey along the social, emotional, cognitive, and physical developmental continuum.</p>

<p>To 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.</p>	<p>The daily schedules offer a balance of active and quiet play opportunities for both indoor and outdoor environments. On inclement weather days, the children and educators make use of the Farley Mowat Public School gymnasium for gross motor activities.</p> <p>The preschooler children have a daily rest period which allows for a nap and/or a quiet individual down time.</p> <p>The educators set up the environment with a variety of different types of play areas (e.g. active/quiet) and the children are encouraged to choose areas of the environment that fits best with how they are feeling in that moment.</p>
<p>To foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children.</p>	<p>The staff believe that each family is unique and establishing strong partnerships with them enhances our ability to meet the needs of the children in our care. Staff welcome families into our environments and value their perspective. Communication is an integral part of each day. Sharing information through posted program plans, message boards, learning stories, email, and daily conversations supports this essential partnership between families and the staff.</p>
<p>To involve local community partners and allow those partners to support the children, their families and staff.</p>	<p>Staff actively seeks out and supports collaboration with community partners for the benefit of all children, families, and team members. Some of our partners include Farley Mowat Public School and OCDSB staff, Children's Integration Support Services, Algonquin College, The City of Ottawa, Service Coordination, and The Children's Aid Society.</p>
<p>To support staff, or others who interact with the children at Mothercraft Waterbridge in relation to continuous professional learning.</p>	<p>Continuous professional learning is an integral part of Mothercraft Ottawa's commitment to children and families. We seek out, encourage and support all of our staff to engage in opportunities as they arise.</p>

<p>To document and review the impact of the approaches set out in the program goals on the children and their families.</p>	<p>This program statement is a living, breathing document that will continue to evolve with the program as our learning and understanding expands, our processes are adapted, and our families, educators, and children change. The Mothercraft team will continue to contribute to the development of this statement. Mothercraft will support all employees, students, and volunteers with the implementation of this statement through on-going discussion and reflection opportunities during their career and/or placement with Mothercraft. All program staff, students, and volunteers will review the statement annually and as changes arise.</p>
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Studies show that children who attend high-quality early childhood programs where they experience warm, supportive relationships are happier, less anxious, and more motivated to learn than children who do not. (Shaker, 2013)

This program statement is a guide intended to support the Mothercraft Waterbridge staff in its journey to providing a high quality standard in the early childhood education experiences the children and their families in our care have come to rely on.

5. Board Composition

Our Board is a team of volunteer directors and the Past-President, who is an ex-officio, nonvoting member. They are responsible for providing direction to the organization and are accountable for all affairs of the organization. The Executive Director is the staff person hired by and directly accountable to the Board.

We believe a diverse mix of skills, experience and interests strengthens the Board and benefits Mothercraft Ottawa. To that end, we seek to recruit board members from a range of disciplines and experience.

For more information on our Board of Directors and any volunteer opportunities, please see our website.

6. Hours of Service/Holidays

Mothercraft Ottawa, Waterbridge Preschool Program is open year round from 7:00a.m. to 5:45p.m., Monday to Friday with the exception of the following statutory holidays:

New Year's Day
Easter Monday

Family Day
Victoria Day

Good Friday
Canada Day

Civic Holiday
Christmas Day

Labour Day
Boxing Day

Thanksgiving

When Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve fall on a working day, the program closes at 3:00pm.

The agency will be closed between December 25th and January 1st.

The Program will be closed the following days:

- First PD Day after March Break (e.g. June 7th, 2024).

7. **Waiting List Policy**

Mothercraft Ottawa's Home Child Care and Centre based programs work with the **City of Ottawa Child Care Registry and Waitlist (CCRAW)**.

Families looking to register a child in a Mothercraft Ottawa child care program must register on the CCRAW. Each of Mothercraft Ottawa's child care programs manages its own waiting list. Families can search for us using the following program titles:

Mothercraft Ottawa – Daycare Evered
Mothercraft Ottawa – Home Child Care
Mothercraft Ottawa – Elmdale Kindergarten and School Age Program
Mothercraft Ottawa – Waterbridge Program

We do have some priorities that we consider when inviting new families to join us. In order of priority:

- meet the needs of the children currently enrolled;
- children of Mothercraft Ottawa Staff
- siblings of children currently enrolled;
- children of staff at our partner schools;
- Mothercraft service users

Children registered on CCRAW will be offered a space based in order of application date wherever possible. Other factors the programs must consider for enrolment are the needs of the child, program capacity, and the age of the child.

Families inquiring about their position on the CCRAW can contact the specific Mothercraft program for details. In order to maintain the privacy of the registrants, access to the CCRAW is limited to administrators.

8. Registration

Wherever possible parents will complete all forms required by the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 (CCEYA)* (included in your registration package) two weeks prior to the child's first day in the program. These forms will be stored in Digibot. It is important that the parents keep the program informed of any changes to phone numbers, address, emergency contacts, immunizations, and child's state of health.

9. Integration into Preschool Program

Integration into the Program will be at a minimum of a three day period and on an individual basis as determined by the Program Manager in consultation with Parents. It may be extended over a period of up to a maximum of 5 days.

10. Base Fee and Non-Base Fee Payments Policy

a) Registration:

- i. To confirm your Child's space, a non-refundable deposit equal to 10 days of care is required. This deposit will be applied to the first 10 days of care in your child's program. Interest is not paid on this deposit.

b) Program Base Fees:

The rates for eligible children for CWELCC, as of January 2026:

Program	Daily Base Fee 2022	Daily Base Fee as of January 2023	Daily Base Fee as of January 2026
Preschool	54.85	25.92	22.00

- i. The Parent will be charged from the first day the Child is in the Program, including any integration time.
- ii. Full charges will be levied regardless of absence, including but not limited to statutory holidays, holidays or illness.
- iii. There is no discount for siblings enrolled in other programs at Mothercraft Ottawa.
- iv. Fees are subject to change with a minimum of two (2) months' notice.
- v. As CWELCC funding continues to be reduced, any adjustments brought forward regarding funding, will be credited accordingly and in situations where fees must be reimbursed, they will be refunded within 30 days via the method used for payments.

c) Accounts:

- i. An account will be established for each family, as per our Accounts Receivable Policy.
- ii. Invoices are processed monthly for the child care services provided in the previous month.
- iii. Monthly statements are issued to the primary email account on file. If you wish to receive paper copies of statement, please notify the Program Manager or Accounting Department.
- iv. Receipts for income tax purposes will be issued at year-end.

d) Payment:

- i. Payments can be made by Debit, Visa Debit, Debit MasterCard, VISA, MasterCard, cash or cheque.
- ii. Payments made by Credit Card will be subject to **surcharge of 2.07%** of the transaction cost. Visa Debit and Mastercard Debit are not subject to this surcharge.
- i. You can choose to authorize automatic monthly payment through Debit, VISA or MasterCard. Automatic payments are typically processed on the 5th business day of the month.
- ii. Cheques are payable to Mothercraft Ottawa and must be provided to the Program Manager or mailed to the Accounting Department, Mothercraft Ottawa, 475 Evered Avenue, Ottawa, ON K1Z 5K9.
- iii. Cheques should include the name of your child, the program in which your child is enrolled and the period covered by that cheque.

e) Late, Non-Payment, Dishonoured Cheques:

- i. There will be a \$25.00 charge for each cheque returned to us from the bank due to insufficient funds.
- ii. An interest charge of 2% per month will be added to all overdue accounts with balance in arrears for more than 60 days.
- iii. Non-payment, late payment and dishonoured cheques will, at the absolute discretion of the Program, be deemed to be a breach of this agreement by the Parent, giving rise to the termination of services and withdrawal of the Child from the Program.

- iv. Mothercraft Ottawa reserves the right to discontinue child care when an account is 90 days overdue. However, Mothercraft Ottawa in special circumstances may, in its absolute discretion, agree to make alternative payment arrangements on a case by case basis. Mothercraft Ottawa shall be under no obligation to do so.

11. Withdrawal and Discharge

- a) Four (4) weeks (twenty (20) business days) written notice must be provided to Mothercraft Ottawa before a Child is withdrawn from the Program. If such notice period is not provided, the Parent agrees to provide Mothercraft Ottawa with payment in lieu of notice for this same period of time. The Parent would forfeit any paid time and pay the remaining balance equal to four weeks.
- b) When a Child reaches the age of 4 years, or is eligible to start Kindergarten, the Child will be discharged from the Waterbridge Preschool Program at the beginning of September (dependant on the child's start date at school). *Parents of children who will be attending Farley Mowat Public School, may register for the Waterbridge School Age Program at the time of Kindergarten registration (in January of the year the Child is to start Kindergarten).*
- c) Mothercraft Ottawa reserves the right to discharge a child if:
 - i) In the absolute discretion of the Executive Director, or Program Manager, the Child is not adjusting to the setting after a reasonable period of time;
 - ii) After exhausting all teaching resources at Mothercraft Ottawa's disposal, Mothercraft Ottawa is unable to address the needs of the Child;
 - iii) The Child continues to display behaviour which endangers the health, safety and security of other children or staff; or
 - iv) The policies, as outlined in the Contract and Parent Handbook, are not being followed.

12. Late Policy

Mothercraft Ottawa's Waterbridge Preschool Program is open from 7:00 a.m. to 5:45 p.m.

Mothercraft Ottawa understands that sometimes emergencies arise and lateness is unavoidable however it is our policy that lateness is not acceptable.

The Parent will:

- Prior to commencing care, provide Mothercraft Ottawa with the names and telephone numbers of one emergency contact who may be called upon to pick up the child if the Parent is unable to pick up the child at the scheduled pick up time; and advise the Program Manager immediately when such telephone numbers or emergency contacts change.

Mothercraft Ottawa will:

- Ask parents to update and verify the contact information at least once a year and every time a child moves to a new program.

It is expected that parents will be ready to leave the Child Care Centre building with their child(ren) no later than the end of scheduled hours of operation.

The first and second time that a Parent is late, the Educator in the Program will speak with the Parent, clarify the reason for the lateness and review the policy with the Parent. The Parent will sign a Late Parent Record form to acknowledge the situation. The Educator will notify the Manager.

If the Parent is late a third time, the Educator will again speak to the Parent. The Parent will sign a form to acknowledge the situation. The Manager will contact the Parent by phone/or in writing to address the difficulties and to arrive at a solution and may result in termination of services.

Parents who are late more than 3 times will be considered to be in violation of their contract and termination of services may occur.

13. Safe Arrival and Dismissal

Accepting a child into care

1. When accepting a child into care at the time of drop-off, program staff in the room must:
 - greet the parent/guardian and child.
 - ask the parent/guardian how the child's evening/morning has been and if there are any changes to the child's pick-up procedure (i.e., someone other than the parent/guardian picking up). Where the parent/guardian has indicated that someone other than the child's parent/guardians will be picking up, the staff must confirm that the person is listed on the child's authorized pick up list or where the individual is not listed, ask the parent/guardian to provide authorization for pick-up in writing (e.g., update Digibot, a note, email, or submit a Mothercraft take-home authorization form).
 - document the change in pick-up procedure in the Waterbridge Ministry Log Book.
 - sign the child in on the classroom attendance record.

Where a child has not arrived in care as expected

1. When a child does not arrive at the child care centre and the parent/guardian has not communicated a change in drop-off (e.g., left a voice message or advised the closing staff at pick-up, updated Digibot attendance record), the staff in the classroom must:

Full-Day Program

- Inform the manager/designate who will commence contacting the child's parent/guardian not later than 10:00 am.
 - The manager/designate must make contact with an adult to confirm the child's absence from the program.
 - The manager/designate will call applicable parent/guardian numbers listed for the absent child, leaving a voice mail as necessary. At 10:05 am, if voice mails have been left and no contact has been made, the manager/designate will send a 'high alert' email to applicable parent/guardian. If no response is received by 10:30 am the manager/designate will call applicable parent/guardian a second time and leave a second voice mail if necessary.
 - At 10:45 am, if contact with a parent/guardian has not been made and the child's absence from the program has not been confirmed, the manager/designate will reach out to other emergency contacts listed on the child's file leaving voice mail messages as necessary. Once all other emergency contacts have been called, the manager/designate will also call their immediate supervisor to inform and to seek further advice. Next steps may involve contacting Executive Director, calling police etc.
2. Once the child's absence has been confirmed, program staff shall document the child's absence on the attendance record and any additional information about the child's absence in the Waterbridge Ministry Log Book.

Releasing a child from care

1. The staff who is supervising the child at the time of pick-up shall only release the child to the child's parent/guardian or individual that the parent/guardian has provided written authorization that the child care may release the child to. Where the staff does not know the individual picking up the child (i.e., parent/guardian or authorized individual),
 - confirm with another staff member that the individual picking up is the child's parent/guardian/authorized individual.
 - where the above is not possible, ask the parent/guardian/authorized individual for photo identification and confirm the individual's information against the parent/guardian/authorized individual's name on the child's file or written authorization.

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

1. Where a parent/guardian has previously communicated with the staff a specific time or timeframe that their child is to be picked up from care and the child has not been picked up after 30 minutes of that specified time, the program staff will notify the manager/designate who will contact the parent/guardian by phone call to advise that the child is still in care and has not been picked up.

- Where the manager/designate is unable to reach the parent/guardian, they should send the parent/guardian an email (marking it 'high alert') notifying them that the child has not been picked up as expected. Where the individual picking up the child is an authorized individual and their contact information is available, the manager/designate shall proceed with contacting the individual to confirm pick-up as per the parent/guardian's instructions or leave a voice message to contact the centre.
- Where the staff has not heard back from the parent/guardian or authorized individual who was to pick up the child, the manager/designate shall communicate with classroom staff that the child should stay with their group until the program closing time. If the child is not picked up at closing time, staff will proceed with "Where a child has not been picked up and the centre is closed" as per below.

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

1. Where a parent/guardian or authorized individual who was supposed to pick up a child from care and has not arrived by 5:45 pm, staff shall ensure that the child is given a snack and activity, while they await their pick-up.
2. One staff shall stay with the child, while a second staff proceeds with calling the parent/guardian to advise that the child is still in care and will inquire about their pick-up time. In the case where the person picking up the child is an authorized individual; the staff shall contact the parent/guardian first and then proceed to contact the authorized individual responsible for pick-up if unable to reach the parent/guardian.
3. If the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian or authorized individual who was responsible for picking up the child, the staff and child(ren) will remain on the premises. The Educator may not take a child(ren) off the premises.
4. The Educator will contact, in order, one of the following to inform of the situation and seek support and/or guidance:
 - Program Manager
 - Executive Director
 - President of the Board of Directors or designated Board Member
 In the event that this is necessary, management may make alternative arrangements for supervision of the child(ren) on the premises of the child care centre.
5. Where the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian or any other authorized individual listed on the child's file (e.g., the emergency contacts) by 7:15 pm the staff shall proceed with contacting the Ottawa Children's Aid Society (CAS) (613) 747-7800 . Staff shall follow the CAS's direction with respect to next steps.

Dismissing a child from care without supervision procedures

Where a parent/guardian has provided written authorization for their child to be released from care without supervision, one staff in the program must be responsible for dismissing the child from care. Prior to dismissing the child from care, the staff shall review the written instructions for release provided by the parent/guardian and release the child at the time set out in the instructions. The staff shall document the time of departure from care and as well as their initials on the attendance record.

14. Reporting Child Abuse Is The Law

From time to time, we are faced with some very difficult situations in the Child Care Centre. We may see a mark on a child in an unusual place, witness what we deem may be an abusive situation or observe a type of behaviour or play that is not consistent with a child's normal range of experience. In these circumstances, we are legally bound to report these situations to the Children's Aid Society (CAS). We cannot judge or decide what child abuse is; we must leave that to a CAS worker. We are not allowed to contact parents first.

We must emphasize that in our experience at Mothercraft, we have rarely had reason to call CAS. When we have, the worker has always been a warm, caring person able to deal with the child at his/her own level. They are very willing to spend time, give explanations and to reassure the child, parents and teachers where appropriate. A paramount objective of Ontario's Child and Family Services Act "is to promote the best interest, protection and well-being of children."

We can assure you that the utmost confidentiality will be maintained by staff and only those persons directly involved would know of the call to CAS. Once we have contacted CAS the matter is closed from our end and we are not privy to any further information from CAS unless it involves us directly. We hope that you will understand our due diligence and legal responsibilities and that it would not impact the close, supportive relationship we have with all our parents.

15. Guiding Child's Behaviour

Mothercraft staff, students, volunteers encourage and support the development of positive social interactions which allow children to develop self-regulation and problem solving skills as they learn about themselves and the world around them. By establishing positive adult-child relationships, Mothercraft Ottawa staff guide a child's behaviour in a positive and supportive manner.

The *Child Care and Early Years Act*, 2014, S.O. 2014, c. 11, Sched. 1 and specifically **Regulation 137/15** indicate the following prohibited practices:

- corporal punishment of the child;
- physical restraint of the 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 children 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 the child care premises for the purpose 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 Mothercraft Ottawa's 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 their self-respect, dignity or self-worth;
- depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding; or
- inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

16. Immunization

The Ottawa Public Health Department encourages parents to update their children's immunization records online at www.ParentinginOttawa.ca/Immunization

We are required by the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 (CCEYA)* to have up-to-date records of immunization on file for the children in our care. Parents are required to provide the child care office with an up-to date copy of the child's immunization record. The child will not be accepted into the program until this record is provided. Please notify the Full-time Daycare office of any new immunization your child may receive.

If you choose not to immunize your child for any reason you will need to contact the Public Health Immunization Program at 613-580-6744, ext. 24108.

17. Children's Health

Health conditions requiring exclusion from the Mothercraft Ottawa, Waterbridge Preschool Program:

When is a child too sick or contagious to attend the Mothercraft Ottawa, Waterbridge Preschool Program? This is a question which may present itself during your Child's enrolment in the Program. In order to protect the other children and the staff, your Child cannot attend if he/she:

- a) Has a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Centigrade) or over. Children must be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to the Program.
- b) Has not been fever free for 24 hours. Children must be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to the Program.
- c) Has vomited while at daycare or within the last 24 hours (vomiting is more severe than an infant's "spit up"). Children cannot return to daycare until they experience a full waking day

after the last day with any episodes of vomiting. For example: Your child vomited at 9:00 Monday morning. There are no further episodes of vomiting. Your child will need to stay away from daycare for all of Monday AND Tuesday (as the 1 full waking day after the last episode).

- d) Has diarrhea (abnormally loose, watery bowel movements that are much more frequent than usual). Children will be sent home from the program upon the third incident of diarrhea during the day (unless the daycare is in Outbreak Mode). Children cannot return to daycare until they experience a full waking day after the last day with any episodes of diarrhea. For example: Your child had a last bout of diarrhea on Sunday at 6:00 in the morning. Your child will only be able to return to daycare on Tuesday at the earliest, assuming there are no episodes of diarrhea on Monday (Monday would be the one full waking day).
- e) Has been on a prescribed medication for less than 24 hours for a condition requiring exclusion from the Program according to the City of Ottawa *Guidelines for Communicable Diseases and Other Childhood Health Issues for Schools and Child Care Centres (CCC)* <http://www.ottawapublichealth.ca/en/professionals-and-partners/cd-guidelines-cccschools.aspx>. Your child must be symptom free and able to cope with all aspects of the Program.
- f) Has a rash that has not been identified by parent or physician or that seems to be worsening.
- g) Has a severe cold with fever, sneezing and heavy nasal drainage.
- h) Seems really sick without any obvious symptoms. In this case, the child may act and look different, may be unusually tired, listless or irritable.
- i) Is requiring one-to-one attention from a staff member in order to allow the child to cope and be reasonably comfortable.
- j) Has any disease/illness/condition listed in the City of Ottawa Guidelines for Schools and Child Care Facilities on Communicable Diseases and Other Childhood Health Issues requiring exclusion. These guidelines are posted in every Program, and are available on-line (see “e” above).
- k) Is unable to participate in all activities – indoor and outdoor. If a child is too sick to go outside, then he/she cannot attend the Program.
- l) Has chickenpox. Your child will be excluded from the onset of symptoms for five days until the majority of the pox are scabbed over. Your child must be able to fully participate in the Program upon his/her return.

If at any time the staff feel that a child is too sick to be in the Program, the child will not be allowed to attend.

IF YOUR CHILD IS GOING TO BE ABSENT FROM THE PROGRAM at his/her regularly scheduled time or is going to be late, please notify the staff as soon as possible.

18. Medication Policy

There are strict procedures in place concerning the administration of medication to children in the Program. In order to ensure the health of your Child, the steps listed below must be followed:

- a) Medications – prescription and/or over-the-counter must be in the original bottle and packaging. The Child's name must be clearly labeled on the bottle and packaging.
- b) Medication will only be administered once the Parent or Guardian has completed a Medication Authorization Form. These forms must be filled out with specific instructions as to medication, administration time, dosage, etc. We are required to follow the guidelines on the medication packaging. We cannot administer medication under instructions such as "if you feel it is necessary." **EXCEPTIONS:** Medications to ease asthma and/or allergic reactions will be administered as necessary, once the Parent or Guardian has outlined clearly the conditions requiring medication.
- c) Medication to control pain must be given at a specific time. If a low-grade fever persists for longer than 24 hours, your Child will need to stay at home until fever free (without the use of fever reducing medications) or returns to the Program with a note from your doctor. At no time can a Child stay in the Program with a fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Centigrade) or over.
- d) Medications will be stored in a locked container in the refrigerator or designated cupboard, as required. It is the Parent's responsibility to take the medication home at night. Auto injectors and puffers will be kept close at hand, as required by the Child's condition.
- e) Do not leave any medication – Tylenol, decongestant, vitamins or any prescription medication – in your Child's personal belongings.
- f) We cannot keep Tylenol, etc. on the premises in case your Child develops a fever unless we have a note from the doctor stating that it is medically necessary.
- g) If your Child becomes ill while in care, you will be notified immediately. If we cannot reach a parent within a reasonable amount of time, we may call the emergency contacts. You will be required to pick up your Child from care within one hour of notification of illness. The staff will keep sick children isolated from the other children when required until the Parent arrives.

19. Scent Free Policy

Mothercraft Ottawa is a scent-free environment. Scented products may cause adverse physical effects that threaten the ongoing health and safety of our staff, clients, visitors, and the public at large.

We ask for everyone's cooperation in our efforts to accommodate employee health concerns, and minimize unnecessary workplace health and safety hazards.

20. No Nut Policy

The Mothercraft Ottawa, Waterbridge Preschool Program and play grounds have been designated as no-nut zones due to children and staff having life threatening allergies to nuts. This means that no nuts or food containing nuts (oils, butters, etc.) are allowed on the premises at any time. This includes chocolates, chocolate bars, candies, cookies, baked goods, peanut butter sandwiches, etc.

21. Nutrition

Our program provides morning and afternoon snack and a main meal at lunch. The snacks and lunch are prepared by our Child Care Centre Cook. Menus are posted on the kitchen door.

For unique circumstances, a child may require to bring their own food/meals from home (e.g. food allergies). After consultation with the Program Manager, an agreement may be made whereby a parent will provide their child's food from home. Any food coming into the program from home must follow these guidelines:

- The lunch bag/box, all food and containers must be labelled with child's name.
- Food should be brought to school in an insulated lunch bag with a small ice pack. A frozen juice box or water bottle can substitute for an ice pack.
- Meals and snacks should provide nutritional value as well as refreshment.
- If a child arrives at the center without the proper nutritional requirements, the parent will be expected to bring the lunch and snacks back to the center in time for the child to eat.
- In an emergency a lunch may be provided by the child care center for a nominal cost
- All foods and beverages must not contain nuts or nut products. We cannot serve foods that are labelled as “may contain traces of nuts” and/or “Manufactured in a facility that processes nuts” so please check labels carefully if bringing food to the program. If we are in doubt that a food/beverage is not nut-free then we will err on the side of caution and not serve the food. An appropriate substitution will be found if necessary.
- The above information is taken from the Canada Food Guide and The Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 (CCEYA) (section 8.1.84-89).

22. Children with Allergies

Mothercraft Ottawa Child Care Programs will make every effort to enrol children with life-threatening allergies and create an environment that minimizes the risk of exposure to allergens. This policy recognizes that the risk of accidental exposure can be reduced, but not eliminated.

Prior to enrolment, program managers will discuss each child's needs with the parent to determine if the centre can manage the allergy safely. The centre reserves the right to refuse registration if it is determined that the allergy is not safely manageable.

Each child with an anaphylactic allergy has an *Anaphylaxis Individual Treatment Plan* which includes emergency procedures and has been developed in collaboration with the child's parent.

The parent will be able to meet and discuss the allergy with the centre's cook.

Children will not be accepted for attendance without their medication and auto injector (e.g. EpiPen, Allerject, or other epinephrine auto injector devices approved by Health Canada for the use in children)"

Should the center be unable to safely provide food for the child, the Program Manager and the parent will discuss options to meet the nutritional needs of the child.

It is the parent's responsibility to notify the Program Manager of any changes to the child's allergy.

The parent will review the plan at least annually and anytime there is a change to the treatment plan.

The *Anaphylaxis Policy* and all *Anaphylaxis Individual Treatment Plans* are reviewed with all staff/students/volunteers who work with the children before commencing employment/placement, annually, and whenever there is a substantive change.

All Mothercraft staff/students/volunteers who work with the children are required to complete the outlined Life Threatening Allergy Training Program established by Mothercraft Ottawa. The objectives for this program are:

- 1) That all staff working with children are knowledgeable and able to identify:
 - a. Signs and symptoms of life threatening allergies
 - b. How to respond to life threatening allergies
 - c. How to prevent and reduce exposure for children with life threatening allergies
- 2) Can successfully demonstrate how to respond to a child presenting an anaphylactic reaction.

REDUCING THE RISK OF EXPOSURE

Young children are dependent on parents and child care staff for assistance with everything from food preparation, label reading, hygiene, both in day-to-day circumstances and during special events. The following strategies are intended to minimize the risk of exposure to the allergen for the anaphylactic child without depriving them of normal participation in the daily program.

1) Identification and Communication Practices

- Anaphylaxis Individual Treatment Plan and Food Allergy and Food Restriction posters are visibly posted (or readily available) in the areas where the children may be present and in food preparation areas.
- Letters will be sent home re: anaphylaxis and what foods should not be sent to the child care centre, (where applicable) etc.
- If a restricted food is discovered, the food will be isolated in a sealed bag and returned home with a note describing the problem. Staff will offer the child an appropriate replacement.

2) Meal Time Practices

- Children and staff wash their hands before and after eating.
- Tables are disinfected before and after eating.
- Children are not allowed to share food, utensils or containers.
- Infant, Toddler and Preschool children with allergies, where possible, will sit with a regular staff member when eating at the child care program.
- Parents may choose to provide safe snacks for unplanned special occasions and will discuss options with the Program Manager at time of registration or upon notification of the allergy.
- Children with anaphylactic allergies will only eat food prepared/provided by the child care centre, or by their own parents, unless there is written consent from the child's parent(s).

3) Other Practices

- Avoid allergens in activities and materials such as play dough, stuffed toys and art.
- Mothercraft staff are not allowed to eat food containing nuts on the premises. Proper steps should be taken to wash hands, brush teeth, etc. if it should happen.
- Staff will be aware that nuts can be buried in the play yard by squirrels, etc. and will look for evidence of such when doing the daily yard check, during outdoor play, and while out on field trips.

23. Children's Activities

Our team of educators plan a variety of developmentally appropriate and engaging activities for the children. The Waterbridge Educators use Ontario's Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT) document and Full Day Learning Curriculum for planning activities. When planning, we value input from the children and consider their interests first. At times, activities may be sensory based and messy. We try our best to keep your child's clothing protected; however, we ask parents to send children to Waterbridge in washable play clothing.

24. Outdoor Play

Outdoor play is very important for the children and is a big part of our Program. The children will enjoy our lovely, secure play yards twice a day as long as the weather allows and our outdoor ratios can be maintained. (The Ministry of Education requires that 100% ratio is maintained while in the playgrounds.) Parents are required to ensure that their child is properly dressed for the weather. Children are allowed to play in puddles and dig in the sand and the mud. Neighbourhood walks may occur spontaneously.

25. Clothing and Footwear

Children should have an extra set of clothing on site.

For the health and safety of your child appropriate closed toe footwear should be worn to keep them safe and reduce the risk of loss of balance/slipping/tripping. Footwear should be appropriate for the setting and not be at risk of falling off.

26. Field Trips

Field trips and walks are a regular and carefully supervised part of our Program. Walks in the neighbourhood are often taken without previous planning. You will be notified prior to each field trip beyond the immediate neighbourhood.

27. Rest Period

While not all children need a mid-day nap, young children benefit from periods of quiet relaxation to balance their active play.

The need for rest and sleep varies greatly at different ages, and even among children of the same age; however, rest is an important part of the day for all children.

The Educators work with the families to prevent the disruption of normal sleep patterns at home.

Infants under the age of 18 months will sleep according to their developmental needs and as outlined by the parents.

Children over 18 months who attend the program for more than 6 hours per day, will have a rest period after the mid-day meal. Children are not required to sleep but are encouraged to rest quietly. Comfort toys from home are welcome. The rest period will not exceed 2 hours in length. The children are permitted to sleep, rest or engage in quiet activities based on the child's needs.

28. Accident Reports

If your child has an accident while in our care, the Educators will fill out an accident report for you to read and sign when you arrive to pick up your child. The accident report will be scanned and sent to you via email. Parents may request a hard copy of the accident report. The original reports are kept in the child's file.

29. Emergency Closures

Due to unforeseen circumstances or circumstances beyond Mothercraft Ottawa's control (e.g. fire, flood, loss of electricity, and/or property damage, building closure or lockout) the Centre may be deemed temporarily unsafe or inaccessible and the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board or Mothercraft Ottawa Board of Directors may make the decision to close the Mothercraft program. Parents will be notified of the closure and required to make alternative arrangements until official notice is given of the Centre reopening.

The centre will also close if the City of Ottawa declares a "State of Emergency". A centre or program may also close if directed by Ottawa Public Health.

No fee rebate will be given due to these above noted emergency closures, unless such closure is longer than 10 consecutive days.

30. Emergency Management

We have an Emergency Management Policy that provides clear direction for staff and Mothercraft Ottawa to follow and deal with emergency situations. Each of our child care locations have designated evacuation sites. In the event of an emergency situation parents will be notified as soon as possible by one or more of the following methods: phone, email, radio announcements, the Mothercraft Voice Mail System.

31. Fire Drill

Fire evacuation plans are posted in each room and at every exit. Fire drills are practiced monthly. The children are only expected to leave the building for a fire drill if the weather is good. If you arrive with your child during a fire drill, please stay with your child until the drill is completed and the children return to their Programs.

32. Medical Treatment

In case of an emergency, every effort will be made to contact the parents or their alternates. Sometimes this is not possible, and immediate treatment is necessary. If your Child is hurt or becomes seriously ill while in care at Mothercraft Ottawa, he/she may be treated at the emergency room of the hospital as required.

33. Parent Issues and Concerns

A. Intent

Mothercraft Ottawa is committed to providing a transparent process for parents/ guardians, Mothercraft Ottawa, and staff to use when parents/guardians bring forward issues/concerns.

B. Policy

Parents/guardians are encouraged to take an active role in the Mothercraft Ottawa Programs and regularly discuss what their child(ren) are experiencing. As supported by our program statement, we support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents/guardians, and staff. We foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents/guardians about the program and their children. Our staff are available to engage parents/guardians in conversations.

All issues and concerns raised by parents/guardians are taken seriously by Mothercraft Ottawa. Every effort will be made to address and resolve issues and concerns in a timely fashion.

C. Guidelines

1. Confidentiality

Every issue and concern will be treated confidentially and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of parents/guardians, children, 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).

2. Conduct

Mothercraft Ottawa 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, provider or staff feels uncomfortable, threatened, abused or belittled, they may immediately end the conversation and report the situation to the Program Manager/Director and/or Executive Director.

3. 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, visit

<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childrensaid/reportingabuse/index.aspx>

D. Procedure

Issues and/or concerns may be brought forward verbally or in writing to Mothercraft Ottawa staff. We believe in most instances the best, and most appropriate person to address a concern related to program issues is the staff person for the program for which the parent/guardian has a concern. Other concerns related to the organization, or general operations are better addressed with a Program Manager.

Further detail on the most appropriate staff to whom to report an issue or concern is outlined below.

Responses and outcomes will be provided verbally, or in writing upon request. Throughout the resolution process we 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 two business day(s). All parties involved with 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.

Nature of Issue or Concern	Steps for Parent and/or Guardian to Report Issue/Concern:
Program Room-Related E.g: schedule, sleep arrangements, toilet training, indoor/outdoor program activities, feeding arrangements, etc.	Raise the issue or concern to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the program staff directly, namely the Educator or Lead Educator as appropriate; or - the Program Manager.
General, Centre- or Operations-Related E.g: child care fees, hours of operation, staffing, waiting lists, menus, etc.	Raise the issue or concern to the Program Manager.

Staff or Agency Related	<p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the individual directly or - the Program Manager. <p>All issues or concerns about the conduct of staff that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the supervisor as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.</p>
Student / Volunteer-Related	<p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the staff responsible for supervising the volunteer or student or - the Program Manager. <p>All issues or concerns about the conduct of students and/or volunteers that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the Program Manager as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.</p>

Steps for Mothercraft Ottawa Staff in responding to issue/concern:

- Address the issue/concern at the time it is raised or
 - Arrange for a meeting with the parent/guardian within two business days.
- Document the issues/concerns in detail. Documentation should include:
- the date and time the issue/concern was received;
 - the name of the person who received the issue/concern;
 - the name of the person reporting the issue/concern;
 - the details of the issue/concern; and
 - any steps taken to resolve the issue/concern and/or information given to the parent/guardian regarding next steps or referral.
- Provide contact information for the appropriate person to address the matter.
- Ensure the investigation of the issue/concern is initiated by the appropriate party within two business days or as soon as reasonably possible thereafter. Document reasons for delays in writing.
- Provide a resolution or outcome to the parent(s)/guardian(s) who raised the issue/concern.
- Documentation will be stored in the appropriate secure location as it relates to the issue (e.g. staff issue stored in locked personnel files).

E. Escalation of Issues or Concerns

If the parent/guardian continues to feel there has not been a satisfactory response or resolution, they may escalate the issue or concern verbally or in writing as follows:

- 1) Program Educator or staff person
- 2) Lead Educator (if applicable)
- 3) Program Manager
- 4) Executive Director
- 5) Board President

The Board President will respond to issues/concerns only after all preceding individuals in this list have had opportunity to respond, and the parent/guardian feels the issue still has not been sufficiently addressed.

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.

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.

34. **Serious Occurrence Reporting/Posting**

All licensed Child Care Centres and licensed Home Child Care Agencies are required to report serious occurrences to the Ministry of Education.

Many factors may lead to a serious occurrence report and could include but are not limited to:

- Serious injury to a child;
- Fire or other disaster on site;

A serious occurrence does not necessarily mean that an operator is out of compliance with licensing* requirements or that children are at risk in the Child Care Program.

On November 1, 2011, the Ontario government introduced a new policy that requires licensed Child Care Centres and licensed Home Child Care Agencies to post information about serious occurrences that happen at a Centre or a home location. To support increased transparency and access to information, when a serious occurrence happens, a "Serious Occurrence Notification Form" must be posted at the Centre or home location in a visible area for ten days.

*Child care licensing inspection findings may be accessed through the Licensed Child Care Website which is available at

<https://www.earlyyears.edu.gov.on.ca/LCCWeb/childcare/search.xhtml>

35. Photography

Photos and videos are sometimes taken for use within the Child Care Program with the children. Occasionally these, or other pictures, may be used in the media or for educational or promotional purposes. Whenever possible, this will be cleared with parents, but this is sometimes difficult or impossible in cases where pictures contain large groups of children or are used several years after they are taken. Names of the children are never used with their photos. If you do not wish your Child's pictures to be used for publications or newspaper/television stories about the Child Care Program or for educational, or promotional purposes, please notify the Program Manager at the time of registration. We will then ensure that your Child's picture is not taken.

Parents are not allowed to take pictures of children in the Program other than their own without the expressed written permission of that child's parent/guardian and/or the Program staff.

36. Volunteers

Anyone (*including parents and family members of children registered in a Mothercraft Program and who is over the age of 16 years*) who wishes to volunteer in a Mothercraft Ottawa program is required to submit a Police Records Check - Vulnerable Sector prior to volunteering. Only volunteers with a clear Police Records Check will be permitted to volunteer. A volunteer letter may be obtained by the Program Manager in order to have the Police Records Check processed by the Ottawa Police Department, at no cost. A clear Police Records Check must be provided to Mothercraft Ottawa on an annual basis. Direct unsupervised access (i.e., when the adult is alone with a child) is not permitted for persons who are not employees of Mothercraft. Volunteers may not be counted in the staffing ratios

37. Students

In cooperation with high schools, community colleges and universities in the area, the Child Care Program may be used as a source of practical experience for students in early childhood education, child care, family day care and nursing, etc. These students enhance the staffing and permit individualized care and special activities which might otherwise not be possible. These students work under the direct supervision of the staff at all times. Students may not be counted in ratios.

38. Supervision

Child staff ratios will be maintained according to the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 (CCEYA)* at all times. The children are never left unsupervised.

Ratios

	Indoors	Outdoors
Preschoolers	1:8 between 8:30 am and 4:15 pm 1:12 before 8:30 am and after 4:15 pm	1:8

Parents are responsible for their children during arrival and departure times.

39. Proof of Identity

The staff may not release the children in care to anyone other than the Parent/legal guardian without the Parent/legal guardian's written authorization. In the event that someone else is picking up the Child, then the staff must be notified by the Parent prior to the Child leaving the Program. Anyone picking up the Child may be asked to provide photographic identification if the staff is not familiar with the individual; this includes parents. Please come prepared with identification.