



PARENT HANDBOOK

AWESOME BEGINNINGS CO-OPERATIVE NURSERY SCHOOL INC.

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Awesome Beginnings Cooperative Nursery School's Parent Handbook which includes a wealth of pertinent information about the program. Every member family is required to sign and confirm that they understand and agree to the policies and procedures set forth within this guide. The Board of Directors performs a formal review of this Handbook annually, however Handbook changes can be made at any time during the school year when applicable. If you have any questions regarding the following content, please contact a member of the Board of Directors to have your question(s) answered. We are looking forward to a great year ahead and we are happy to have your child and your family as part of the ABC family.

History of ABC

The Awesome Beginnings Co-operative (ABC) Nursery School in Carlisle, ON, has been dedicated to educating children since 1978. It came into existence when a group of local mothers discovered that the applications they had sent to another school had been misplaced. These mothers joined forces and it was as a result of their efforts that the Strabane Co-operative Nursery School was formed. In September of 1998, the Nursery School moved from the basement of the Strabane United Church to the Carlisle Community Center. In June 2001, the Nursery School officially changed its name to Awesome Beginnings Co-operative Nursery School, also known as ABC Co-operative Nursery School. ABC Co-operative Nursery School is licensed annually through the Ministry of Education under the Child Care and Early Years Act.

Vision Statement

To provide the highest quality of early childhood programming in a safe, respectful, inclusive, and play-based environment that builds a foundation for life-long learning.

Mission Statement

To offer a nurturing and developmentally appropriate program that supports the social, cognitive, language and physical growth of the children. Staff, caregivers, and students develop meaningful relationships and learn, grow, play and discover together.

Program Statement

The Awesome Beginnings Co-operative (ABC) Nursery School in Carlisle, ON, has been dedicated to educating children since 1978. **We recognize that young children have rapid brain development and that there is great opportunity to influence, shape and educate them at this early point in their lives.** Children, even at an early age, are competent individuals, capable of complex thinking and understanding. We have developed a program with

caring, experienced, and resourceful teachers that promotes the growth, learning and development of preschool-aged children.

The foundation of this program comes from the document, “How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years.” This is a well-researched document by the Ontario Government, which sets out to describe the four conditions of learning, which are listed as a sense of belonging, a sense of wellbeing, a sense of engagement and a sense of expression. Our teachers use these principles as a guide to help plan activities, create environments in the classroom, and set up engaging experiences that develop these positive traits.

At ABC, we encourage diversity and strive to understand each child as a unique individual. Our teachers consider the uniqueness of each child with respect to family environments, strengths, needs, disposition and motivations in order to formulate deeper learning experiences through positive interactions. While the sequence of learning may be similar for all children, the rate of development and the variety of the pathways are different. Understanding each child’s individuality is vital in creating positive learning environments and helping students to maximize their potential. We teach respect, kindness, inclusion and genuine acceptance of every child’s diverse abilities, beliefs and traditions. We encourage and strive for children to explore and learn many different traditions, cultures and languages. We welcome and encourage families to share their unique customs and traditions in the classroom.

Community is an integral part of our program. We invite community helpers such as firefighters, police officers, and dentists to visit our classroom and share their roles in order to promote an understanding of the importance of community amongst the students. We support local businesses whenever possible. As a not-for-profit, ABC Nursery School owes the success of our fundraising efforts to the generous support of businesses and local residents. We give back to the community and get involved in an effort to strengthen the ever-important relationships between our school, our students, and the community.

We understand that family is the first and most powerful influence on children’s early learning and development and strive to involve caregivers as active participants in our co-operative program. Students see family members helping in the classroom, attending school-related meetings, volunteering at fundraisers, attending school events, and directly contributing to the success of the program. By inviting parents to see our classroom in action, and be members of the ‘ABC Family’, we are encouraging caregivers to become engaged in their child’s early education and overall development, which in turn helps to ignite the child’s learning. The diversity and uniqueness of our families is represented in the classroom through books, songs, and activities. Our teachers also provide families with resources that can help them to engage and support their child’s early development (i.e. community resources, public health, health care, specialized services).

Establishing positive relationships and interactions between the students and their peers, teachers and family members is a primary goal of the ABC programming. When secure relationships are formed, a child’s capacity to learn and grow increases exponentially.

There are countless opportunities for children to engage in social play. Free play provides an ideal time for relationships to emerge and also gives students various opportunities to practice important problem solving skills. They are guided to express feelings appropriately and recognize the feelings of others, encouraging the development of both self-regulation and empathy. Educators model problem solving skills and successful communication strategies. They also teach awareness of self and acceptance of others by guiding discussions about the children's unique characteristics, abilities, preferences and feelings.

It is our belief that children learn best when they are fully engaged with their minds, bodies and senses in active exploration, play and inquiry. Students are encouraged to take an active role in hand-on learning experiences rather than being passive recipients of things adults already know. Our educators engage with children as co-learners by wondering, exploring, and discovering alongside them. Teachers collaborate with children, placing importance in the students' ideas and interests and developing their creative problem solving skills in a complex play environment. Children are naturally curious and it is the teachers' role to build on these curiosities and encourage students to ask questions, solve problems, think outside-the-box and try new things.

The programming at ABC Nursery School is shaped by the interests of the children and is play-based. The teachers use this model to expose the children to the fundamentals of early learning, including numeracy and literacy, and in a fun and engaging way. This involves planning intentional experiences that expose children to the basics they are just learning at preschool age such as letters, numbers, colours, songs, and fine-motor skills. The educators take advantage of teachable moments, and by asking the appropriate questions, are able to turn a 'play activity' into a learning opportunity. Children are encouraged to explore with open-ended materials, use their imaginations, and collaborate with their peers.

Documentation and Review of Impact

Teachers at ABC Nursery School follow pedagogical documentation to support the classroom experiences. Teachers continually assess the program and environment to ensure all needs are being met for each individual child. The environment and program will reflect the interests of the children to encourage learning. Pedagogical documents and program plans will be reviewed continuously by the supervisor to ensure the ABC Program Statement is followed. The ABC teachers will continue throughout the year to observe, implement and engage in conversation about how children learn and how to make learning happen. Learning in the classroom will be documented in a variety of ways and shared with families through SeeSaw, picture collages, monthly program plans and newsletters.

HEALTH, SAFETY, & WELL-BEING

Sleep/Rest

Due to the short program length at ABC, we do not provide a designated nap time. Young students who still require a nap attend our morning program option from 9-11:30 and nap at home afterwards. Children who are tired are encouraged to take a break and have some quiet time in the reading corner.

Physical Activity

The schedule includes many designated times for physical activity throughout the school day. ABC's spacious classroom allows for an indoor gross motor space where there are bikes, mats, hoops, balls and other toys available. The teachers set up and rotate activities that encourage the development of balance, hand-eye coordination, and other gross motor skills. Whenever the weather allows the students take their learning outdoors and engage in community walks, environmental exploration, and seasonal activities. Movement is incorporated into circle time with actions for songs or poems. In-school experiences which promote engaging gross motor opportunities are arranged throughout the school year.

Inclusion Policy

ABC Nursery School recognizes each student's individuality, uniqueness, strengths, needs and abilities. We respect the full range of human diversity with respect to ability, language, culture, gender, age and other forms of human differences. We encourage and strive for children to explore and learn many different traditions, cultures and languages and welcome families who are willing to share their unique qualities with the class. Our teachers strive to know each child as a unique individual by observing, listening, documenting, reflecting on their practices and communicating with families.

We are committed to supporting learners of varied abilities and learning styles to reach their full potential and provide accommodations to programming content and delivery as needed. Our educators pride themselves on maintaining an equitable classroom, where each child is provided with the tools they need to succeed. We work with the families of students who have exceptional needs, resource consultants, and other members of a child's support team to develop a plan that will allow the child to be fully supported in the most effective ways.

Parents of children with medical or developmental needs will have a scheduled meeting with our educators to review the information prior to their child's first day in the program.

We recognize that although all of our students may not require a specific learning tool (for example a visual calendar, first-then board, or a timer) that many students benefit from and enjoy these strategies alongside their peers who need them to succeed. Our teachers

encourage communication about uniqueness, and foster an environment of caring, camaraderie, leadership and acceptance.

Community Partners

At ABC, we appreciate and value the opportunity to build strong relationships with the local community. We enjoy having special guests in our classroom to further support our children's learning and we venture into the community on various curriculum-focused field trips. We welcome students to learn with us and as they complete placements through local highschools and community colleges. We are grateful to continue to have many wonderful local businesses that support our various fundraising efforts. We believe learning happens best when we collaborate with others.

Professional Development (PD) and Staff Training

Our teachers are skilled Early Childhood Educators (ECEs). Professional development courses are offered that broaden our educators' knowledge, skill base and personal growth, and in turn enhance the ABC program. The teachers partake in these learning opportunities whenever possible as part of their commitment to ongoing professional development. When a staff member is attending a workshop or other enhancement activity, every reasonable effort will be made to find a replacement teacher so that the school can remain open.

There will be 2 scheduled PD Days that will be reserved for parent-teacher interviews. ABC will not be open for students to attend on these days.

All staff must ensure their First Aid and CPR-C Training is kept up-to-date according to The Child Care and Early Years Act. Employees must also ensure that their Systems Priority Training requirements are met on an on-going basis.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Daily Schedule

Our Daily Schedule includes:

- at least 1 hour of uninterrupted free-play time
- at least 30 minutes of outdoor exploration time (weather dependent)
- gross motor time in the classroom 'gym'
- a scheduled sit down snack time
- large group gathering time to include stories, introduce activities, explore concepts
- small group invitations (facilitated or set-out by teachers)
- music and movement circle time
- washroom routine
- routines such as arrival, tidy up, dressing and dismissal

- scheduled lunch time (for full day children)
- additional outdoor exploration, gathering circles and free-play time (for full day children)

Arrival and Dismissal

Arrival

The doors to the building will open at 8:55 and Educators will welcome your child into the lobby at this time. Class will begin promptly at 9am.

- Please have your child dressed according to weather as we will begin our day with an outdoor walk
- Please ensure your child arrives with their backpacks and bagged lunches for those children in the full day program

Dismissal

- The teachers will bring the children downstairs to the lobby to dismiss at 11:30 and 2pm. We ask that caregivers wait outside the building at this time.
- The teacher will call students one at a time, their designated caregiver will meet them at the door to collect them and escort their child safely across the parking lot.

Unless otherwise arranged, children will not be released to any person other than those who are specified on the registration form. If someone other than yourself will be picking up your child, you must inform the educators in advance by email. Ensure the individual picking up is prepared to provide identification.

Late Drop Off & Pickup

If you will be late dropping off your child send an email prior to 9am informing the educators of your expected arrival time.

Please notify the school if you are running late for pickup. A late fee of \$15 will be charged for every additional 10 minutes or portion thereof. This fee can be paid in cash or by e-transfer.

Absence Reporting

If your child will be absent please advise the school prior to 9 am via email, voicemail or the SeeSaw app and provide a reason for the absence.

Inclement Weather

If HWDSB makes the decision to close their schools due to inclement weather conditions, ABC Nursery School will also be closed.

HWDSB announces the cancellation of school by 6 a.m. on the HWDSB website and on their Twitter account (<https://twitter.com/hwdsb/>).

Clothing

Children should arrive at school dressed appropriately for the weather, physical activity, and potentially messy activities. When the weather allows, your child will spend time outdoors. Indoor shoes should be rubber soled for safety and outdoor shoes should be weather appropriate. All items should be labeled with your child's name.

The following items should remain at school:

- Extra set of clothing including socks and underwear
- Rubber-soled indoor shoes
- Diapers/wipes (if needed)

The following items should come to school daily:

- Backpack large enough to fit all of the student's items
- Seasonal outdoor clothing (winter wear, raincoat/boots, sun hat)
- Nut-free lunch and a filled water bottle (for students staying until 2pm)

Snack & Lunch

Snack

ABC Nursery provides water and a morning snack for all students.

ABC is a nut-free environment and we adhere to the school anaphylaxis policy. Dietary restrictions and allergies are posted in the kitchen and dining area, clearly visible, for all members to review. We take into consideration allergies and restrictions when planning and serving snacks. The food is prepared carefully in a certified kitchen by a person who has their food-handling certification. Care is taken to ensure that cooking and serving temperatures are achieved and recorded daily.

The snack menu is reviewed and adjusted on a monthly basis and is shared with the families through the SeeSaw app. We take into account the children's likes and dislikes and provide nutritious snacks that include a minimum of 2 food groups.

Teachers discuss healthy eating and food safety with the children during meal times.

Lunch

Students attending the full day program (9-2) should send a lunch that is peanut and tree nut free. In accordance with O. Reg. 137/15, ss. 72(1)11, parents of children 44 months and younger who will be sending a lunch will need to provide written permission by completing the Bagged Lunch form. Children 44 months and over can bring a bagged lunch without an additional sign off by the parent.

Lunches should be placed in a labeled lunch bag and be packaged in labeled containers that the child can open mostly independently. ABC will store lunch bags in the refrigerator. If necessary, teachers will warm items in the microwave if packed in a microwave-safe container.

All food, whether provided by ABC or by the parent, will follow the Canada Food Guidelines.

Field Trips & In-School Experiences and Visitors

Waivers will be distributed as required and will be mandatory for participation in off site field trips and special in-school experiences.

Field Trips

Throughout the year, field trips will be planned to enhance the curriculum. Advance notice will be given informing parents of the details, date and times, and any additional fees associated with the trip.

All ABC students will be invited to attend field trips regardless of their enrollment day. A parent or caregiver must attend the field trip and remain with their child at all times. Siblings are welcome to attend, however extra costs may be associated and are the responsibility of the family. ABC will be closed on the day of an off-site field trip. If you choose for your child to not attend the field trip and it is their scheduled enrollment day, your child will have to remain at home that day. There will not be a refund of fees for any part of the school day that is missed due to an off-site field trip.

In-School Experiences

ABC makes arrangements for in-school experiences such as yoga or music classes, and special visitors such as a firefighter or police officer.

All children enrolled for the day on which the experience is scheduled automatically attend. The teacher's will make every effort to vary the days on which they schedule these special events so that all students have the opportunity to participate in the enriched programming.

There is a Program Enhancement form in the registration package allowing your child to participate in community walks and outdoor exploration under the direct supervision of the Educators.

Communication - The Parent Board

Communication to families from the Board of Directors will be delivered through email. Communication to families from the teachers will be delivered through email and SeeSaw. The Monthly Calendar, Newsletter, Snack Schedule and Volunteer Schedule will be sent by email. Reminders, updates, pictures, and many resources will be shared through the SeeSaw app.

This Parent Handbook and our website also contain a wealth of information about the ABC program.

OPERATIONS AND ADMINISTRATION

Ages & Class Size

ABC Nursery School is licensed by the Ministry of Education, and follows Ministry ratios for preschool designation. At any given time this allows us to accommodate the following:

16 Preschoolers aged 24 months to 5 years
(of which **3 children can be aged 24 to 30 months**)

Days and Hours of Operation

ABC operates from Monday to Friday. Students attend on a M/W/F schedule, a T/Th schedule, or a 5-day schedule. We offer both half-day and full-day enrollment options. Enrollment in the full-day program is based on individual student readiness and is subject to approval by the Educational Lead.

Program times are:

Half Day 9am to 11:30am

Full Day 9am to 2pm

Important Dates, Holidays, and Other Closures

ABC Nursery School is closed on the following holidays:

- Thanksgiving
- Christmas/New Year Break
- Family Day
- March Break
- Easter
- Victoria Day
- Summer Holidays

We follow the HWDSB School Year Calendar for these dates, with the exception of the summer break. The first and last day of summer holidays will be communicated yearly.

Please see the following link for a list of important dates specific to this school year:
<https://abcnurseryschool.ca/events/>

Fees

Registration Fee

The Registration Fee is \$45 and is required upon enrollment to secure your child's spot in the program. This fee is non-refundable and subject to increase in future years.

Snack Fee

Each morning, students are provided with a nutritious snack. The Snack Fee is \$35 and is due on or before your child's first day.

Snack fee - \$35

Tuition Fees

Fee payments can be made by e-transfer to abctreasurercarlisle@gmail.com. If an alternate payment method is preferred, this should be arranged directly with ABC Treasurer. There will be a \$25.00 charge for any NSF cheque. Your preferred payment method must be confirmed in your child's registration package.

Tuition is due on or prior to the first day of each month unless otherwise directed by the Treasurer.

Tuition fees are eligible for tax receipts. Parents will receive digital receipts in February for the respective tax filing year.

ABC Nursery strives to balance affordable fees alongside a high quality program and enriching experience for our students. Any changes in fees will be approved by a majority vote of the Membership.

Any questions regarding fees or deadlines are best directed to the ABC Treasurer. Teachers will direct any account specific queries to the Treasurer.

Volunteering Opt-Out Fee

As a co-op, ABC relies on family involvement, and encourages a member of each family to volunteer for a minimum of one 2.5 hour period each month. We recognize that some families may not be able to fulfill this requirement in any given month due to a variety of reasons including scheduling conflicts, vacation, illness, or restrictions on in-class visitors. For those who do not complete the required volunteer shift there is a Missed Volunteer Fee of \$35 per month. This fee should be paid alongside the monthly tuition payment.

If you know you will not be able to fulfill the volunteering requirement for the entire year, please speak to the Treasurer about the Volunteer Opt-Out option.

Families are not expected to volunteer or pay the volunteer fee for their child's first month in the program.

General Meeting Fee

The General Meeting fee is \$40. There are three General Meetings throughout the school year. Those who have at least one family member attend the meeting will have this fee waived. If a family misses a general meeting for any reason (opting out, scheduling conflicts, vacation, illness) then this \$40 fee should be paid alongside the monthly tuition payment.

Withdrawal Deposit

A deposit equal to the value of one month's tuition will be due prior to your child's first day in the program. The Board reserves the right to use this deposit towards any unpaid fees upon withdrawal. If there are no fees outstanding, and intent to withdraw is communicated with sufficient notice (<30 days), the deposit will be applied against your child's final month.

Summary of Fees

- Registration Fee = \$45
- Snack Fee = Determined by enrollment schedule
- Tuition Fee = Refer to our website for up-to-date monthly tuition fees based on your child's enrollment schedule
- Withdrawal Deposit: Equivalent to one month tuition
- Volunteer Fee = \$35/month (waived if volunteering requirement met)
- General Meeting Fee = \$40/meeting (waived if present at meeting)

Multiple Child Discount

For families with more than one child enrolled in any given month, a multi-child discount of 20% for the second and subsequent child within the same family will be applied to the Tuition Fee only.

CWELCC

In October 2022, ABC Nursery School Inc. opted-in and was approved for the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care System (CWELCC). The System was a result of the Ontario government signing a historic deal with the federal government to lower licensed child care fees to an average of \$10 a day by September 2025.

What does this mean?

Families will receive an average of 25% reduction in their mandatory base fees retroactive to April 1, 2022, which will be further reduced to an average of 50% by January 2023 onwards. ABC Nursery has automatically applied these fee reductions to our advertised tuition fees. In addition to making child care more affordable for families, the program seeks to provide more eligible child care spots in the province, attract more educators and provide better wages for Early Childhood Educators. As program roll-out has been fast tracked by our provincial and municipal government and is ever-evolving, ABC Nursery will do its utmost to adhere to new system requirements as the program unfolds and do our best to communicate important information to families.

Please be advised that fee reductions are only applied to *mandatory base fees* such as registration fee, snack fee and tuition (which is inclusive of play materials, equipment and furnishing, supervision by adults during operational hours, development and implementation of individualized plans, and administrative fees). Fee reduction is not applied to *non base fees* such as volunteer opt-out, missed AGM attendance fee, late pickup fees, NSF fines, field trips, optional transportation, diapers, sunscreen, fundraising fees, and toy cleaning fees.

For more information and updates, please see the City of Hamilton's Website. For more information and updates, please see the [City of Hamilton's Website](#).

Waitlist Policy

The program at ABC is highly sought after, and therefore, we often have a waitlist for enrollment. We add children to the waitlist on a first-come, first-serve basis determined by the date the waitlist request was made to our Educational Lead. ABC has 3 waitlists based on the child's age at the time of requested start date:

1. Age 2-2.5
2. Junior Preschool
3. Senior Preschool (pre-kindergarten)

In order to ensure the success and continuation of our program, we must ensure that we maintain a balance in regards to the ages of students enrolled in our program. Our license allows us to have 3 spots available for children aged 2-2.5 and of the remaining spaces we reserve approximately 40% for students of junior preschool age and 60% for students of senior preschool/pre-kindergarten age.

When a space becomes available, the child who is next in line on the waitlist of the appropriate age group would be offered admission via email and phone. The family has 48 hours to respond, otherwise, the next child on the waitlist will be contacted and offered admission.

Should a child age-out of their current waitlist before being offered a space, the educational lead will add them to the subsequent list based on the date the original waitlist request was made.

No fees are required to join the waitlist and the completion of the ABC application form is only needed when a space becomes available and the family accepts the admission.

Families can contact ABC about their child's position on the waiting list.

In the event that a family currently enrolled in the school would like to switch programs, or enroll a subsequent eligible child, they will take priority over the waitlist.

Late Enrollment Policy

It is not uncommon for new students to join our classes at ABC as the school year progresses. Children who are enrolled later can start prior to March 31st. Families requesting a start date in April, May, or June will be refused, but may join the following September. Any exceptions to this policy will be at the discretion of the teachers, and will be considered only in rare circumstances.

CO-OP MEMBERSHIP

Volunteer Roles

Co-operative programs rely on the active participation of caregivers. Volunteering not only assists with the daily and overall operation of the nursery school, but also gives parents an opportunity to be an active member of their child's education. One member of each family must fulfill a volunteer role and there are three options to fulfill this requirement. You will be invited to sign up for your chosen option at your child's orientation.

Option 1: In-Class Volunteering

In-class volunteering involves a family member spending one 2.5 hour block per month assisting in the classroom. Caregivers are welcome to volunteer at a time when their child is attending the program. Each in-class volunteer must have a current Vulnerable Sector Screening (VSS) and a Negative TB test result on file prior to volunteering.

Prior to the start of each month, an editable Google Sheet listing the available volunteer time slots will be emailed to all families. Time slots are on a first-come first-serve basis.

It is each family's responsibility to fulfill their volunteer shift. If you are unable to fulfill your volunteer shift, we ask that you switch with another family or find a replacement from your own family with a valid VSS and Negative TB test on file. Please advise the school of any changes at least 24 hours in advance. If a monthly volunteer shift is missed, a missed volunteering fee of \$35 will be required alongside your child's monthly tuition.

Families are not expected to volunteer during their child's first month of enrollment to allow their child a sufficient amount of time to adjust to the program

Option 2: Out-of-Class Volunteering

Out-of-class volunteering involves assisting with tasks that contribute to the overall operations of the nursery school but that can be completed outside of school hours. This includes tasks such as grocery shopping, cleaning, and making playdough. Families selecting this option should expect to spend a similar amount of time to those volunteering in class (2.5 hours per month). If selecting an out-of-class volunteering position, please make sure that you will be able to commit to your chosen role as failure to complete your tasks will result in more work for the educators.

Executive Board Member

The Nursery School is kept in operation by a parent volunteer Board of Directors. As families come and go, there are shifting positions within the Board. Where there is a void in a board position, you may opt to fill that position as your volunteer role.

Volunteer Opt-Out

If a member of your family will not be able to fulfill a volunteer role for the duration of your child's enrollment, please speak with the Treasurer. We do have a limited number of permanent opt-out spaces available. Those who opt-out will be required to pay the volunteer opt-out fee of \$35 each month.

Fundraising

ABC Nursery School relies on fundraising efforts to enhance the program. Participation in fundraising events is mandatory for all enrolled families. Funds raised through these efforts are put towards:

- Field trips
- In-class visitors and experiences
- Holiday and End-of-Year party
- Art materials, books, and toys

The more we raise, the more funds we have to put towards enriching the program for our students.

Each March, we host ABC Come Skate with Me; a community event that takes place at the Carlisle Arena. This event marks the launch of our online Silent Auction. All ABC families must participate in the planning and execution of these events. There is no opt-out option and all families must be available to help on the day of the community event.

The details regarding these planned fundraising efforts will be shared at the first General Meeting of the year.

Committees

Your commitment and participation in a committee helps to keep the school costs low. It is also a wonderful way to meet other parents and families from the school. Committees vary in time commitment depending on what works for your family.

Committee	Role Description
Playdough	
Grocery shopping	
Deep cleaning	
Special events	

More detailed descriptions of each committee will be provided at the first General Meeting and you will be given the opportunity to select your top 3 committee choices. You will be assigned to a committee based on your preferences and the number of members needed for each committee.

General Meetings

There are three General Meetings per year. At these meetings, important issues are discussed and decisions and plans are made, therefore at least one caregiver from each enrolled family **must** attend. The dates for these meetings will be provided to families at the ABC Orientation.

General Meetings take place virtually over Zoom and are approximately 1.5 hours in duration. Prior to each meeting, the Secretary will send a Zoom link and an agenda outlining items to be discussed.

If a caregiver from your family fails to attend a General Meeting for any reason, the missed General Meeting fee of \$40 should be paid alongside the monthly tuition fee.

The Co-op Executive Responsibilities

Position Title	Responsibilities
President	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Oversees all the functions/administration of the school - Plans and prepares Executive and General Meetings - Responsible for completing all licensing and Government forms/documents - Deals with issues/concerns which otherwise cannot be dealt with effectively
Vice President	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Works closely with the President - Performs duties and tasks delegated by the President - Oversees fundraising events throughout the year - Create/maintain database of past/present sponsors - Secure advertising for events with local newspapers, publications, etc. - Delegate roles/expectations to fundraising committee members for each event - Maintain schedules, timelines & deadlines for events - After completion of events, provide the board with a summary of the event
Treasurer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is responsible for the financial aspects of the school - Maintains a master list of membership fees received for each month - Reconciles bank statements and maintains the general ledger - Completes grant forms, income tax forms, audit exemption forms, tuition receipts, etc. - Prepares budgets - Retains financial records/receipts and work alongside bookkeeper in event of audit - Reviews financial statements prepared by bookkeeper - Manages incoming/outgoing cash disbursements
Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Takes the minutes of the Executive and General meetings and distributes these minutes to members - Tends to other letters and outgoing mail - Seeks information regarding advertising, flyers, etc. - Has contact information for members - Maintains and updates various forms - Is Co-Admin on social media accounts
Executive Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Answers questions brought forth by other Board Members regarding their roles and responsibilities - Uses their previous experience on the Board to provide guidance and training to new members

For a more detailed description of the roles and responsibilities of Board Members please refer to the Board of Directors Handbook.

Board Member (Parent/Caregiver) Responsibilities

- to be a member in good standing (fees paid on due date, forms completed, commitment to a committee etc.)
- to act in the school's best interest by adhering to the policies and procedures, rules and regulations
- to attend all General Meetings
- to read all newsletters and school communications
- to inform the Educators of any changes to personal information (phone number, address, allergies, medication etc.) or other pertinent information
- to bring children to school on time and dressed in clothing appropriate for the weather and messy play
- to inform the Educators by phone or email if their child will not attend or will be late
- to pick up their child on time and to inform the Educators, in writing, if someone other than the usual Caregiver is picking up the child
- to be an active member of the ABC team by performing all duties of their volunteer/committee/fundraising positions

Have a Question or Suggestion?

If it pertains to:	Contact:
Enrollment, your specific child, programming, snack/lunch, an absence or early pickup, materials for the classroom, illness or injury, volunteering, child development	Teachers
Policies and procedures	President
Fundraising initiatives If you cannot get a hold of the President	Vice-President
Fee payments, budget	Treasurer
Changes to emergency or contact information	Secretary & Teachers
Withdraw your child	Teachers & Treasurer

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Vulnerable Sector Screening (VSS) Policy

As per Ministry regulations, the intent of requiring a VSS is as follows:

Obtaining a vulnerable sector check is a precautionary measure that is used to help determine whether individuals who are involved in the provision of childcare are fit and suitable to hold these positions of trust. Considering a person's relevant criminal history helps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children in care.

A Vulnerable Sector Screening (VSS) must be completed by all staff prior to the commencement of their employment duties.

A Vulnerable Sector Screening (VSS) must be completed by all in-class volunteers and placement students prior to the commencement of their volunteer duties. The cost of the VSS is the responsibility of the person obtaining it and will not be reimbursed by ABC.

Caregivers without a VSS on file can attend special events and field trips, however they cannot volunteer in the classroom or be alone with any student at any time.

A VSS is considered valid if it is less than 6 months old from the date it is presented to ABC Nursery School. A copy of the VSS will be kept on file at ABC.

There are a variety of Police Security Clearances available. Please ensure you apply for the Vulnerable Sector Screening which is specific for working with vulnerable populations including children. The Vulnerable Sector Screening is the only police clearance that can be accepted at ABC Nursery School as per Ministry regulations.

Municipality	Cost	Time to Process	Link to Application
Hamilton Residents	\$25.00	Approx. 30 days	https://hamiltonpolice.on.ca/how-to/get-background-check
Halton Residents	\$30.00	2-4 weeks	https://www.haltonpolice.ca/en/services-and-reporting/record-checks.aspx#Vulnerable-Sector-Check-

Transition Period

A transitional period has been put in place by the Ministry due to possible wait times for VSS applications to be processed. This policy is as follows:

ABC Nursery School does not necessarily need to obtain the Vulnerable Sector Screening from a staff or volunteer person before the commencement of his/her duties, but they must have proof (i.e. a receipt) that the individual has applied for a Vulnerable Sector Screening.

ABC Nursery School has the following provisions in place to support the safety and wellbeing of children in the program until the Vulnerable Sector Screening is obtained:

- ABC Nursery School will not permit a person awaiting a Vulnerable Sector Screening to be unsupervised with any registered child
- The staff/student/volunteer who are waiting for their VSS must complete a declaration form, indicating any previous offenses that may contravene their ability to work with children

Annual Offense Declarations

After a there is a copy of a valid VSS on file, an Offense Declaration, indicating any changes must be signed annually within 15 days of the anniversary of the VSS or the most recent annual Offense Declaration.

An Offense Declaration is a written declaration signed by an individual that lists all of the individual's convictions for offenses under the Canadian Criminal Code, if any, up to the date of the declaration, that are not included in the most recent Vulnerable Sector Screening obtained by the licensee.

Licensees must ensure that all staff, volunteers, and students obtain a new Vulnerable Sector Screening every five (5) years and provide Offense Declarations for every year that Vulnerable Sector Screenings are not required.

If ABC Nursery School's relationship with an individual who has previously provided a VSS terminates and then subsequently resumes after six or more months, the individual must provide a new VSS to ABC.

Tuberculosis (TB) Test

It is a Ministry requirement that all adults volunteering in the classroom provide a negative TB Test result prior to starting, dated no more than 30 days before volunteering commences. This is not covered by OHIP, and the fee is the responsibility of the family. We recommend you inquire with your family doctor about where you can obtain a TB test as this varies by region.

Supervision of Volunteers and Students

Only RECE staff and assistant staff will be counted in our staffing ratios. Other volunteers (parents, placement students, volunteers, resource teachers, etc.) will not be left alone with a child, nor included in meeting staff ratios.

RECE staff and assistant staff members, with completed criminal reference checks including Vulnerable Sector Screening, will be the only people allowed to be in direct/unsupervised company of the children.

All volunteers and placement students must have a valid Vulnerable Sector Screening and Negative TB Test on file, and will not be left unsupervised with any child or group of children. All other visitors will be supervised at all times.

All volunteers must be familiar with and follow the Supervision of Volunteers Policy when in the classroom. ABC Nursery School staff will be responsible on a daily basis for making sure the policy is being followed.

In the event that the school is short a staff member on a given day, and a supply teacher is not available, two volunteers with CPR-C, can replace one staff member to maintain ratio.

Bagged Lunch

Caregivers with children enrolled in the 5-hour program will give written consent stating that they will provide their child with a bagged lunch. The lunch will meet the following guidelines:

- The lunch must adhere to the Canada Food Guide (<https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/>)
- **NO peanut or tree nut products are to be included**
- Food items cannot be shared amongst students
- Lunch bags and containers must be labeled with the child's first and last name
- Lunches should be packed in containers and lunch bags that the child can operate with minimal assistance
- An ice pack must included in a lunch bag that contains perishable items
- Staff will check the contents of the lunches to ensure they meet the above criteria\

Procedure for Forgotten Lunch

If a child arrives at school without a bagged lunch the parent/guardian will be notified as soon as possible and asked to drop off a bagged lunch.

If a parent/guardian cannot be reached or cannot drop off a bagged lunch prior to lunch time, ABC school will provide lunch for that child. Items such as bread, cereal, fruit, fresh vegetables, crackers, milk and cheese will be available.

Health Records

The Child Care and Early Years Act stipulates that prior to admission each child must be immunized according to the appropriate immunization schedule or provide the appropriate documentation stating the choice to abstain from immunizations. Immunization records must be kept up to date in your child's file at all times. According to Ministry regulations, ABC Nursery

School reserves the right to refuse attendance to a child in the program if the above information has not been submitted by the parent.

Severe Allergy and Anaphylaxis Policy

“Anaphylaxis” means a serious systemic allergic reaction and can be life threatening; resulting in circulatory collapse or shock, and “anaphylactic” has a corresponding meaning. The allergy may be to food, insect stings, or other substances. Signs and symptoms may include ANY of the following hives, swelling (face, lips, tongue), itching, warmth, redness, coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, chest pain or tightness, throat tightness, hoarse voice, nasal congestion or hay fever-like symptoms (runny, itchy nose and watery eyes, sneezing), trouble swallowing, nausea, pain or cramps, vomiting, diarrhea, paler than normal skin colour / blue colour, weak pulse, passing out, dizziness or lightheadedness, shock, anxiety, sense of doom (the feeling that something bad is about to happen), headache, uterine cramps, metallic taste. Early recognition of symptoms and immediate treatment can save a life.

ABC Nursery School strives to reduce the risk to severely allergic or anaphylactic children and has implemented a comprehensive policy regarding children with severe allergies and anaphylaxis, to make parents and staff aware of their seriousness, and to ensure the well-being of all children. ABC will make every reasonable effort to reduce the risk to children with severe allergies or anaphylaxis in accordance with this policy. Consideration is also given to children who have special dietary requirements.

ABC nursery school will not use foods or materials containing significant allergens such as nuts or nut products. As part of this policy we ask your co-operation in ensuring that:

- 1) your child is cleaned of any consumed allergens such as peanut butter which could be spilled on their clothing when eating at home and,
- 2) that your child does not bring any food into the preschool classroom or preschool area, including hallway and coat hook area.

The policy is in place to help support the needs of a child with a severe allergy or anaphylaxis and to provide information on anaphylaxis and awareness to parents, staff, students and visitors at the school. This provision aligns with Sabrina’s Law, 2005 legislation which came into effect on January 1, 2006, requiring all district school boards and school authorities in Ontario to develop an anaphylactic policy.

Risk Reduction Strategies

The school will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that the risk of exposure to the allergy is reduced.

These strategies will include:

- Eating surfaces will be cleaned with soap and water then bleach and water, before and after eating, as per Ministry of Health regulations
- Staff and children will wash hands thoroughly before and after eating

- Children will eat only food that they have been provided by the teacher or their caregiver
- Children will not share food, utensils or containers
- Food will be placed on a napkin rather than in direct contact with a table
- The snack menu will be reviewed with the caregiver of the child with anaphylaxis; if possible, the allergen will be removed from the menu on days the child is attending
- Staff will monitor lunches to ensure food does not enter the classroom if it contains nuts or has the warning sign “may contain with nuts”
- Staff will supervise the child that has a life threatening allergy closely by sitting next to or across from them during the lunch time
- A policy regarding outside food will be implemented and enforced
- This list will be revised as necessary based on the allergies of enrolled children

Communication Plan

It is the responsibility of the parent to:

- Inform the school if their child has allergies or is anaphylactic or potentially anaphylactic, upon registration or at any time an allergy develops
- In a timely manner, complete medical forms and the Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan and have it signed by a physician (Appendix A) which includes a photograph, description of the child's allergy, emergency procedure, contact information, and consent to administer medication. This will be posted in the child's classroom in a key area with parents' permission. This form must be updated annually
- It is recommended that the child wear medical identification (e.g. MedicAlert® bracelet).
- Provide the school with a letter from their child's physician if their child has outgrown an allergy or no longer requires an epinephrine auto-injector
- Provide the child care facility with two unexpired adrenaline auto-injectors
- Ensure that auto-injectors are taken on field trips
- Be willing to provide safe foods for their child as necessary or for special occasions
- Provide support to the facility and staff as required

It is the responsibility of the staff and volunteers to:

- Be aware of children with anaphylactic or potentially anaphylactic allergies
 - A list of all children with allergies and their individual action plan will be displayed inside the classroom near the attendance binder and on the kitchen counter (Parental permission is required to post the child's plan)
- Upon the child's admission to the school, the supervisor and the relevant teaching staff will discuss the child's allergies with the parent
- Ensure annual training in caring for a child with anaphylaxis is provided and received
- Discuss anaphylaxis with the other children, in age-appropriate terms as needed
- Encourage children not to share lunches or trade snacks
- Work with the parents to choose foods for the menu that are safe for all children in the school if possible
- Reinforce hand washing for all children and staff/volunteers before and after eating
- Follow policies for reducing risk in eating and common areas

- Ensure that the auto-injector is in a safe, UNLOCKED location and accessible in an emergency but out of the reach of young children. This area will be labeled and identified in the individual plan. Our school's location is on top of the white refrigerator in the kitchen.
- Place posters describing signs and symptoms and emergency procedures in relevant school areas
- Supervise children while eating to the best of their ability to ensure there is no sharing of food
- Share information about anaphylaxis and strategies put in place to reduce the risk of reaction with the entire school community (e.g. students, parents)
- Provide on-going reminders in newsletters, bulletins, and during information events as needed

Individual Plan

The parent or caregiver of an enrolled child with an anaphylactic allergy are required to provide input on the child's individual Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan. This will include the following:

- A description of the child's allergy
- Monitoring and avoidance strategies
- Signs and symptoms of an anaphylactic allergy
- Action to be taken by nursery school staff in the event the child has an anaphylactic reaction
- Parent/guardian consent that allows the nursery school staff to administer the allergy medication in the event their child has an anaphylactic reaction
- Emergency contact information

A sample of an Individual Plan will be provided if requested. The Individual Plan must be signed by the parent/guardian and the child's physician.

The individual plan for a child with anaphylaxis and the emergency procedures for each child shall be reviewed as follows:

- By the supervisor before the child is placed in the school and at least annually afterwards
- By all employees before they begin their employment and at least annually afterwards
- By volunteers and students who will be providing care or guidance at the nursery school before they begin providing that care or guidance and at least annually afterwards

School Emergency Plan

Staff should be able to recognize an allergic reaction. A person having an anaphylactic reaction might have ANY of these signs and symptoms:

- Skin system: Hives, swelling (face, lips, tongue), itching, warmth, redness
- Respiratory system: Coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, chest pain or tightness, throat tightness, hoarse voice, nasal congestion or hay fever-like symptoms (runny, itchy nose and watery eyes, sneezing), trouble swallowing

- Gastrointestinal system: Nausea, pain or cramps, vomiting, diarrhea
- Cardiovascular system: Paler than normal skin colour/blue colour, weak pulse, passing out, dizziness or light-headedness, shock
- Other: anxiety, sense of doom (the feeling that something bad is about to happen), headache, uterine cramps, metallic taste

Early recognition of symptoms and immediate treatment could save a person's life.

To respond effectively during an emergency, a routine has been established and practiced, similar to a fire drill. During an emergency:

- Give epinephrine auto-injector at the first sign of a known or suspected anaphylactic reaction
- Call 9-1-1 or local emergency medical services and tell them someone is having a life-threatening allergic reaction
- Give a second dose of epinephrine in 5 to 15 minutes IF the reaction continues or worsens
- Go to the nearest hospital immediately (ideally by ambulance), even if symptoms are mild or have stopped as the reaction could worsen or come back
- Call emergency contact person (e.g. parent, guardian) as soon as possible

Location of Auto-Injectors

All auto-injectors are to be kept in a labeled, unlocked box, out of reach of children. This location will be outlined in the Individual Anaphylactic Emergency Plan. The location for our school is on top of the white refrigerator in the kitchen.

Staff and Volunteer Training

All staff and volunteers will receive training from a physician or a parent on procedures to be followed in the event of a child having an anaphylactic reaction. Training will be provided at the beginning of the school year and as needed for new staff and volunteers and as new children attend preschool.

The policy and procedures will be reviewed, annually, by staff and volunteers. This will be documented and records will be kept indicating that staff and volunteers have reviewed the policy. Staff and volunteers will also be encouraged to review anaphylaxis training online. Families will also see a demonstration of how to use an Epi-pen at the first General Meeting of the school year.

<http://www.eworkshop.on.ca/edu/anaphylaxis/sc00.cfm?L=1>

Outside Food Policy

At this time, no outside food will be permitted for special occasions/events/birthdays, as the school will provide a special snack for these celebrations. The educators will communicate with

families about holidays such as Halloween and Valentine's Day. We do ask that any items sent in for special days such as these are non-edible (i.e. pencils, stickers, etc.).

Administration of Medication

ABC Nursery School will administer provided medications that are required as immediate emergency treatment such as **emergency puffers and auto-injectors only**. Written authorization by the parent is required and must be given by completing the top portion of the Drug Administration Form. Each time a drug is administered it will be immediately documented on the same form and kept in the child's file.

Educators cannot administer prescribed daily medication, antibiotics, etc. If your child requires such medication while at school, a caregiver must come to the school to administer the medication.

Teachers cannot apply sunscreen. Please apply sunscreen in the morning before school on days your child will require it.

IMPORTANT – Any kind of medication should not be kept in the child's school bag. It is the caregiver's responsibility to hand the medication to a Teacher to be properly stored out of the reach of children. Please keep all other medications, including over the counter medications, at home.

Infection and Illness Prevention and Control

These policies may be amended based on changing information from Public Health or the Ministry of Education.

1) Everyone connected with a childcare setting (i.e. staff, volunteers, parents, children) must make an effort to reduce and prevent the spread of germs. Most of the principles of infection prevention and control for child care settings involve common and simple procedures such as hand hygiene, cleaning environmental surfaces and isolation of ill persons from the group. Infection prevention and control measures must be used to reduce or prevent the spread of infection.

2) Upon arrival, staff will monitor and address any physical/obvious/ signs of illness and those children deemed unwell will not be permitted to attend that session. Staff experiencing any physical/obvious signs of illness will also not be permitted to attend that session.

3) No child should attend school if any of the following communicable disease symptoms/conditions are true:

- Fever within the last 24 hours.
- Began taking a prescribed antibiotic within the last 24 hours (includes for pink eye, chest infection, strep throat).

- Continuous dry hacking cough.
- Diarrhea and/or vomiting (within the last 48 hours).
- He/she or their immediate family has come in contact with, or is under quarantine for, a serious respiratory illness. This includes the child, volunteer parent and/or direct family members (i.e. Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome [SARS]).
- Constant running nose that is NOT clear in colour.
- Communicable diseases or prolonged illness should be reported to the teacher as soon as possible.
- Any child who has contracted head lice shall not attend the preschool until such time as they have been checked by a health professional and been deemed to be clear of all live lice and eggs. A note from a health professional (Family Physician, RN, or RPN) shall be submitted to the Supervisor at the time the child re-enters the school. It is the parent's responsibility to obtain this documentation. Any parent of a child deemed to have head lice is asked to inform the preschool supervisor so that parents of other children in the class may check their child for head lice.

4) Emergency information must be kept on file at the school as well as a signed parent consent form, to make possible emergency care if the parent is not available. Please notify school immediately if these names and/or phone numbers change.

5) In the event of an outbreak, the preschool will follow the protocol from the Medical Officer of Health. In addition, it is the Supervisor's responsibility to report certain communicable diseases to the Medical Officer of Health. In addition, signs would be posted in the school alerting parents of an outbreak or a possible outbreak, as well as an email communication would be sent to alert the membership.

6) In the case of a child who comes down with illness such as vomiting or diarrhea at school, that child will be comforted, kept with a teacher and away from the other children as best as possible. An "illness form" will be completed with the symptoms and details and kept in your child's file.

When to Keep Your Child Home

If you aren't sure if your child should attend school, the Ontario School Screening Tool is a valuable tool:

<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/>

If the question still remains, please consult the educators who can give you information about specific conditions and how long your child will need to remain at home.

Absence Due to Illness

In the event that your child is ill and cannot attend ABC, please call, email, or send a message on the SeeSaw app to inform the educators of their absence and any related symptoms.

Cleaning and Hygiene Practices

In an effort to reduce the spread of germs, the educators will carry out cleaning and hygiene procedures as advised by the Health Department, including:

- Cleaning of table surfaces with bleach solution
- Practicing and enforcing proper hand hygiene amongst staff and students
- Regular cleaning of toys with bleach solution
- Using proper diapering and toileting procedures

During an outbreak of a communicable disease, extra cleaning and disinfecting will be performed.

All cleaning supplies, disinfectants or chemicals of any type are to be specifically labeled are always kept out of reach of children.

Snack tables have to be disinfected before and after use. The Health Department requires the following method be used:

- Clean with the **soap and water** spray solution.
- Disinfect with the **bleach and water** spray solution.
- Let surface air dry.

Children and staff are required to wash hands after using the toilet, wiping a nose and before handling food. Single service disposable paper towels and a liquid hand soap dispenser are provided in the school facilities.

Diapering procedures are posted above the change table. The change table is disinfected after each child using the same method listed above. Hands are washed after each diaper change by both the child and person changing the diaper. Soiled diapers are to be first placed in a plastic bag, tied then disposed of in the garbage can.

Kitchen and bathroom floors are kept clean, and the carpets cleaned a minimum of once per school year. Bathrooms, including toilets, sinks and change table are disinfected and thoroughly cleaned after each session. Toys and equipment are washed and disinfected on a regular basis.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

These are minimum recommendations and apply to normal operating conditions. During an outbreak of a communicable disease, extra cleaning and disinfecting is necessary.

Toys		
Toy	When	How

Small toys that go into mouth	Daily or more often as observed by staff	clean (soap/water) > disinfect (bleach/water) > air dry Hard plastic toys can go into the sanitizer and cloth toys into the washing machine
Large toys	Weekly	clean (soap/water) > disinfect (bleach/water) > air dry
Dress up clothes	Weekly	clean (launder) > dry on hottest setting
Hats/Headwear	After each play session	clean (wipe or launder)
Play Areas/Surfaces		
Dining table tops	Before & after meals	clean (soap/water) > disinfect (bleach/water) > air dry
Floors – tiles, vinyl	Daily in infant & toddler areas and eating areas. Weekly in other areas.	clean with soap and water
Floors – carpet	Twice weekly Twice per year	vacuum steam clean
Small rugs	Twice weekly	vacuum or launder
Toilet and Potty Chairs		
Toilet bowls	Weekly	clean > toilet bowl cleaner
Toilet seats and rims	Daily	clean (soap/water) > disinfect (bleach/water) > air dry
Flushing handle, door knobs, counters, faucets	Daily	clean (soap/water) > disinfect (bleach/water) > air dry
Counters, faucets	After each use	clean (soap/water) > disinfect (bleach/water) > air dry
Diaper change surface	After each use	clean (soap/water) > disinfect (bleach/water) > wipe dry before next child is placed on table

Dish Washing

Reusable eating utensils and dishes must be washed, disinfected, rinsed, and air-dried. According to Ministry regulations the 3 sink method or an industrial sanitizing machine must be used in washing dishes. Both methods are posted above the sinks in the kitchen.

The 3 Sink Method

Sink 1	Sink 2	Sink 3
Hot water and dish soap	Hot rinse	Warm rinse and 10% bleach

Alternatively, the following method can be used if an approved industrial sanitizing machine is on site:

Sink 1: Scrape and rinse dishes

Sink 2: Water in hot soapy water

Sink 3: Rinse and then place dishes on trays and insert into industrial sanitizing machine; when done air dry

Communicable Disease Outbreak

The Medical Officer of Health provides guidelines that ABC must follow in the event of an outbreak. Certain communicable diseases must be reported to the Medical Officer of Health by the Supervisor. In the event of an outbreak, or a case of one of these communicable diseases within the school, parents would be alerted through the SeeSaw app and a paper copy posted on the parent board.

Fire Safety

Fire drills will be conducted once per month and records shall be maintained for a minimum of 24 months.

Fire Drill Procedures

- Teacher leads the group of children to the nearest fire exit taking attendance clipboard
 - there are two exits – main doors at the front of the class and rear door through the kitchen
- Second teacher ensures all kitchen appliances are off, checks all the rooms and closes all doors and evacuates with the backpack containing all emergency records, first aid kit and emergency medications (epi-pens, puffers)
- Staff, children, and volunteers assemble at the east side of portable
- Teacher takes attendance of the group
- Teacher ensures that 911 has been called

- Teacher meets the fire department and immediately notifies responding Fire Emergency Personnel if any occupants are missing
- Staff, children, co-op parents and volunteers remain at the emergency assembly point waiting for direction from the fire emergency personnel
- If unable to reenter the building, staff, children, and volunteers proceed to the designated Emergency Evacuation location:

**Carlisle Medical Centre
1493 Centre Road, Carlisle
905-689-3301**

- Parents or emergency contacts will be notified immediately by telephone and will be required to pick up their child

Serious Occurrence Policy and Procedures

The intent of this Serious Occurrence Policy is to ensure that there is a plan to deal with any serious incidents that may affect the health, safety and wellbeing of children and staff and to ensure that any serious incidents are reported, tracked and followed up on.

Serious Occurrences are defined as follows:

- Death of a child
- Allegation of abuse and/or neglect
- Life-threatening injury or illness
- Missing or unsupervised child(ren)
 - Child was found
 - Child is still missing
- Unplanned disruption of normal operations
 - Fire
 - Flood
 - Gas leak
 - Detection of carbon monoxide
 - Outbreak
 - Lockdown
 - Other emergency relocation or temporary closure

Responding to a Serious Occurrence

Immediate Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Health and safety of students/staff/volunteers is addressed - Appropriate emergency personnel (fire, police, ambulance, Children's Aid Society, etc.) are contacted - Notify parent/guardian as necessary - Notify the President or Vice-President - Complete an Accident Report to be provided to the parent as necessary
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Within 24 Hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Report the Serious Occurrence, using the Serious Occurrence Notification Form, found within the online Child Care Licensing System (CCLS) - Post a summary of the report on the parent information board
Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teacher completes an Annual Summary and Analysis Report to summarize the serious occurrences throughout the year and identify issues, trends and actions taken - This report must be kept on file and reviewed during licensing inspections
Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct follow up actions to serious occurrences in a timely manner to prevent future events - Accident Reports are to be kept on file for 2 years - Serious Occurrence Reports and Summary Reports are to be kept on file for 3 years

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

All staff, volunteers and members have the responsibility and obligation to report suspected child abuse and/or neglect promptly to the Children's Aid Society.

Abuse is defined and includes the following:

- To suffer physical harm as a result of another person
- To be sexually molested or sexually exploited
- To require but not be provided with medical treatment

The following is quoted from the Government of Ontario pamphlet Your Responsibility under the Child and Family Services Act, Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect:

"If a person has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection, the person must promptly report the suspicion and the information upon which it is based to a children's aid society. The person who has the reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection must make the report directly to a children's aid society. The person must not rely on anyone else to report on his or her behalf.

You do not need to be sure that a child is or may be in need of protection to make a report to a children's aid society. "Reasonable grounds" are what an average person, given his or her training, background and experience, exercising normal and honest judgment, would suspect. Any professional or official who fails to report a suspicion that a child is or may be in need of protection, where the information on which that suspicion is based was obtained in the course of his or her professional or official duties, is liable on conviction to a fine of up to \$1000."

A Serious Occurrence form only needs to be submitted if the allegation or abuse or neglect has been made against an employee of ABC Nursery School.

Positive Child Guidance

Positive Child Guidance refers to efforts intended to model appropriate behavior. Teachers, volunteers, placement students, and parents will model positive interactions for children. Positive Child Guidance also includes any efforts to encourage, produce, and maintain appropriate and acceptable behavior.

Prohibited Practices

Staff, volunteer, placement student, and members at ABC must **NOT** use any of the following prohibited practices to manage a child behavior:

- (a) corporal punishment of the child;
- (b) 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 a child from hurting himself, herself or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent;
- (c) locking the exits of the child care center or home 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 the licensee's emergency management policies and procedures;
- (d) 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 his or her self-respect, dignity or self-worth;
- (e) depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding; or
- (f) inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

Recommended Behavior Management Techniques

When interacting with children, teachers, students and volunteers will practice the following:

- Praise: encouraging and positive comments and reminders to the children of acceptable behavior
- Ignorance: many behaviors can be ignored; no attention is given including warnings or reprimands
- Positive redirection: children having a difficult time managing in a particular play area can be redirected to another activity
- Offering choice: two options are given and children are encouraged to make their own choice and follow through with their decision
- Clear language: educators get on the childrens' level, use words age-appropriate words and short sentences, and speak clearly and slowly
- Problem solving: children are encouraged by the teachers to come up solutions to the problem they are experiencing; educators guide students to come up with a plan to put these strategies into practice

Severe behavior problems – If a child displays severe behavioral problems beyond the capability and control of the Teacher, assistance shall be sought by an appropriate authority i.e. Resource Teacher

Prohibited Practices and Positive Child Guidance Policy Monitoring

All staff, volunteers, placement students, and parents must sign the Prohibited Practices and Positive Child Guidance Policy acknowledging that the policy has been reviewed, and that the policy is understood and will be adhered to.

If any individual involved with the Co-operative fails to comply with the above regulations, it will be necessary for the Supervisor to take the following measures:

- Conduct an interview with those involved to discuss what occurred
- Prepare a written description of what occurred, sign/date and file in a locked Cabinet
- Contact MoE within 24 hours, if necessary, to report the incident and inform them as to the final outcome of the incident
- Inform the President as soon as possible. The President will hold an Executive meeting to evaluate the best course of action.
- The parent/student/volunteer/staff member in question will not assist at the school until the President, with consent from the Board of Directors, states in writing they may do so
- A record of each review will be kept for at least three (3) years

Parent Issues and Concerns

The purpose of this policy is to provide a transparent process for parents/guardians and staff to use when parents/guardians bring forward issues/concerns.

All issues and concerns raised by parents/guardians are taken seriously by our Board of Directors and ABC Teachers 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. 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 2 business days. 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.

Confidentiality

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

ABC 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 supervisor and/or Board of Directors.

Procedures

Nature of Issue or Concern	Steps for Parent and/or Guardian to Report Issue/Concern:	Steps for Staff/Board of Directors in responding to issue/concern:
Program Related E.g: schedule, indoor/ outdoor program activities, etc.	Raise the issue or concern to a staff member.	When possible, address the issue/concern at the time it is raised and notify the Supervisor while also documenting the resolution in the Daily Log. If further discussion is needed: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Schedule a meeting with the parent/guardian to discuss the issue/concern within 2 business days of receiving the issue or concern.- Request the parent/guardian to submit the issue/concern in writing to the school- Document the issues/concerns in detail. Documentation should include:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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
Operations-Related E.g: fees, wait lists, etc.	Raise the issue or concern to the Chairperson or Board of Directors.	

Staff-Related E.g: conduct of staff, volunteers, etc.	<p>Raise the issue or concern to the individual directly or Supervisor.</p> <p>Note: All issues or concerns about the conduct of the staff/volunteers that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the Supervisor/Board of Directors as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.</p>	<p>information given to the parent/guardian regarding next steps or referral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide a resolution or outcome to the parent(s)/guardian(s) who raised the issue/concern in writing.
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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 members of the executive. See contact info below.

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.

Child Care Centre

Safe Arrival and Dismissal Policy and Procedures

Name of Child Care Centre: **Awesome Beginnings Cooperative Nursery School**

Date Policy and Procedures Established: **November 20, 2023**

Date Policy and Procedures Updated: **November 24, 2023**

Purpose

This policy and the procedures within help support the safe arrival and dismissal of children receiving care.

This policy will provide staff, students and volunteers with a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities for ensuring the safe arrival and dismissal of children receiving care, including what steps are to be taken when a child does not arrive at the child care centre as expected, as well as steps to follow to ensure the safe dismissal of children.

This policy is intended to fulfill the obligations set out under Ontario Regulation 137/15 for policies and procedures regarding the safe arrival and dismissal of children in care.

Note: definitions for terms used throughout this policy are provided in a Glossary at the end of the document.

Policy

General

- **ABC Nursery School** will ensure that any child receiving child care at the child care centre is only released to the child's parent/guardian or an individual that the parent/guardian has provided written authorization the child care centre may release the child to.
- **ABC Nursery School** will only dismiss children into the care of their parent/guardian or another authorized individual. The centre will not release any children from care without supervision.
- Where a child does not arrive in care as expected or is not picked up as expected, staff must follow the safe arrival and dismissal procedures set out below.

Additional Policy Statements

Children may only be released to an adult. Either the parent/guardian or an adult that has been approved by the parent/guardian. Emergency contacts are on file. Staff will follow the safe dismissal procedure if a child is being released to an adult that is not the parent/guardian.

Procedures

Accepting a child into care

1. When accepting a child into care at the time of drop-off, program staff in the room must:
 - o greet the parent/guardian and child.
 - o 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 registration forms** or where the individual is not listed, ask the parent/guardian to provide authorization for pick-up in writing (e.g., note or email).
 - o document the change in pick-up procedure in the daily written communication book.
 - o sign the child in on the classroom attendance record.

Where a child has not arrived in care as expected

1. Where 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), the staff in the classroom must:
 - o inform **the supervisor and all other program staff** and they must commence contacting the child's parent/guardian no later than **10:30 am**. Staff shall send the parent/guardian an email either via SeeSaw or school email. Staff must contact the parent/guardian once and leave a message. **Staff must contact the parent/guardian once and leave a message. If no response is received by 1pm staff will contact the parent/guardian again. Staff must confirm absence with an adult.**
 - o **If staff are not able to make contact with an adult to confirm the child's absence, staff should report to the centre supervisor and president of the board.**
 - o 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 daily written record.

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),
 - o confirm with another staff member that the individual picking up is the child's parent/guardian/authorized individual.
 - o 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 time frame that their child is to be picked up from care and the child has not been picked up **within 15 minutes of this time frame, the supervisor or program staff** shall contact the parent/guardian **via phone call** and advise that the child is still in care and has not been picked up.
 - o Where the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian, **staff must call again and leave a message for the parent/guardian.** Where the individual picking up the child is an authorized individual and their contact information is available, the staff 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.
 - o Where the staff has not heard back from the parent/guardian or authorized individual who was to pick up the child **the staff shall call the emergency contacts listed on the child's registration/emergency contact forms.**

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 **2:15pm**, 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 inquire 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 shall begin contacting authorized individuals listed on the child's file.
4. 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 3pm, the staff shall proceed with contacting the local Children's Aid Society (CAS) **905-522-1121**. Staff shall follow the CAS's direction with respect to next steps.

Dismissing a child from care without supervision procedures

Staff will only release children from care to the parent/guardian or other authorized adult. Under no circumstances will children be released from care to walk home alone.

ABC Nursery School Outdoor Play Space Safety Policy and Procedures

Purpose

Outdoor play is an integral part of the daily schedule and plays an important role in the development of children's overall well-being. In order for children to thrive in outdoor play, it is crucial that there be sufficient toys and equipment for children to engage in active play and that educators engage as active participants in the play.

The *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years* document describes how children thrive in programs where they can engage in vigorous physical play in natural outdoor spaces and playgrounds that present manageable levels of challenge. In addition to providing physical benefits, active play outdoors strengthens functioning in cognitive areas such as perception, attention, creative problem solving, and complex thinking.

While these environments need to be safe, it is also important for them to provide children with interesting opportunities for a reasonable degree of risk-taking.

The purpose of this policy is to set out the responsibilities of the licensee, staff and volunteers in ensuring that the outdoor play space provides a safe and well-supervised environment for children's play.

Policy

General

- ABC Nursery School will ensure that there are enough play materials available that are appropriate for the children's age and learning and developmental needs during outdoor play.
- The maximum capacity of the playground will not be exceeded at any time.

Play Space Inspections/Checks

- Outdoor play space and surfacing checks will be conducted on a daily, monthly and annual basis.
- All play space inspections will be documented. All documentation and reports will be filed by the educators in the outdoor play space safety section of the teacher binder.
- The licensee will ensure proper insurance coverage

Repairs and Maintenance

- All items identified in the checklists as requiring repair will be documented in the repair log and repaired or addressed in a timely manner. Note: the amount of time required will depend on the scope of the work and who is required to conduct the repairs.
- Documentation on the repair log will also include:
 - the date the issue was identified;
 - documentation of what steps and efforts have been taken to address any identified items which cannot be repaired immediately due to circumstances out of the child care centre's control
 - the date the related repairs were completed.
- Where outdoor play space repairs cannot be completed immediately, the area or space requiring repairs will be sectioned off to prevent children from using that area in order to protect their safety and reduce the risk of injury. Children will be supervised at all times during outdoor play to ensure that they do not approach or use spaces that are sectioned off pending repairs.
 - If damage or vandalism occurs photos will be taken for documentation and a report will be made to the police. Documentation of damage and police report will be kept on file.

Supervision

- Children will be supervised at all times during outdoor play.
- Staff will position themselves throughout the playground and rotate their position where required to ensure children can be visually supervised while engaging in play.

- Staff to child ratios will be maintained on the playground at all times.
- Staff will ensure that there all gates are securely closed at all times.

Documentation and Report Retention

- All documentation and reports related to the outdoor play space will be:
 - Kept for three years from the date they were created and/or updated (whichever date is most recent)
 - Made available for Ministry staff to review at all times.

Play Space Safety Procedures

Timeline	Steps to Follow
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<p>Daily: before using the outdoor play space</p>	<p>1. Staff or Volunteer must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) walk around the entire outdoor play space to look for and identify hazards and defects as indicated in the daily playground inspection checklist b) remove any garbage, hazards or defects using gloves c) complete the play space inspection checklist, sign and date it d) file the play space inspection checklist in the play space safety section of the teacher binder . <p>Where hazards or defects cannot immediately be removed or repaired, Staff or Volunteer must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) report the hazards or defects to the supervisor who will log and maintain the information in the repair log and take appropriate action to initiate any repairs. b) Section off the area with the hazard/defect if it poses a hazard to children. <p>2. In preparation to exit the nursery school to use the outdoor play space, staff must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) ensure all emergency medication/epi-pens accompanies children, where applicable; b) ensure all emergency contact information is readily available c). ensure the attendance record is readily available d) ensure that the allergy and dietary restriction lists are readily available e) ensure appropriate steps related to environmental factors have been implemented (e.g.: children are appropriately dressed for the weather) f) conduct head counts prior to leaving the nursery school, and while transitioning them to the outdoor play space. g) prior to leaving the nursery school entrance ensure all children are holding the walking rope and no moving cars or hazards in the parking lot
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Timeline	Steps to Follow
Daily: while using the outdoor play space	<p>1. Staff must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) position themselves in areas that ensure that all children and areas of the play space can be properly supervised at all times b) complete head counts of children every 10 minutes c) implement the goals and approaches of the program statement, such as engaging with the children in play <p>Where a child is injured on the playground, staff must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) administer first aid, where appropriate b) contact emergency services, where appropriate c) notify the parent of the child immediately, where appropriate, or at dismissal time d) complete an accident report and provide a copy to the child's parent, photocopy the report place copy in child's file e) follow the serious occurrence policy and procedures, where appropriate.
Daily: When returning from the outdoor play space	<p>1. Staff must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) conduct head count prior to returning indoors from the outdoor play space, while transitioning indoors, and upon returning to the indoor space. b) Ensure that attendance records, emergency medication, epi-pens and children's emergency contact information is brought indoors with the group. c) prior to leaving the outdoor play space ensure all children are holding the walking rope and no cars are moving in the parking lot

Monthly	1. Staff must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) walk around the entire outdoor play space to look for and identify hazards and defects as indicated in the monthly play space inspection checklist b) remove any hazards or defects, where possible c) complete the monthly inspection checklist, sign and date it
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Timeline	Steps to Follow
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d) file the play space inspection checklist in the play space safety section of the teacher binder <p>Where hazards or defects cannot immediately be removed or repaired, Staff must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) report the hazards or defects to the supervisor who will log and maintain the information in the repair log and take appropriate action to initiate any repairs. b) Section off the area with the hazard/defect if it poses a hazard to children. <p>2. Supervisor must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) review outdoor injuries and accidents that have occurred to look for trends b) take appropriate action to prevent similar injuries and accidents from happening in the future. <p>3. Supervisor must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) review the repair logs and follow up on any outstanding identified issues still requiring repair.

Annually	<p>1. Where the play space does not have fixed equipment staff must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) walk around the entire outdoor play space to look for and identify hazards and defects as indicated in the annual play space inspection checklist b) remove any hazards or defects, where possible c) complete the annual inspection checklist, sign and date it d) develop a written plan to address any hazards and/or defects, including a timeline to address the issues identified during the inspection.
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Timeline	Steps to Follow
	<p>2. Where hazards or defects cannot immediately be removed or repaired, staff must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) report the hazards or defects to the supervisor who will log and maintain the information in the repair log and take appropriate action to initiate any repairs. b) section off the area with the hazard/defect if it poses a hazard to children.

Glossary

Individual authorized to pick-up/authorized individual: a person that the parent/guardian has advised the child care program staff in writing can pick-up their child from care.

Licensee: The individual or corporation named on the licence issued by the Ministry of Education responsible for the operation and management of the child care centre and home child agency.

Parent/guardian: A person having lawful custody of a child or a person who has demonstrated a settled intention to treat a child as a child of his or her family.

Regulatory Requirements: Ontario Regulation 137/15

Safe arrival and dismissal policy

50. Every licensee shall ensure that each child care centre it operates and each premises where it oversees the provision of home child care has a policy respecting the safe arrival and dismissal of children that,

- (a) provides that a child may only be released from the child care centre or home child care premises,
 - (i) to individuals indicated by a child's parent, or
 - (ii) in accordance with written permission from a child's parent to release the child from the program at a specified time without supervision; and
- (b) sets out the steps that must be taken if,
 - (i) a child does not arrive as expected at the centre or home child care premises, or
 - (ii) a child is not picked up as expected from the centre or home child care premises.

Contacts

Teachers	
Lindsay Murray, RECE and Educational Team Leader/Supervisor	abcnurseryteachers@gmail.com
Tianna Jeffers, RECE, Educational Team Teacher	abcnurseryteachers@gmail.com
Board of Directors	
President	abcnurserypresident@gmail.com
Vice-President	abcnurseryvp@gmail.com
Treasurer	abctreasurercarlisle@gmail.com
Secretary	abcsecretarycarlisle@gmail.com
Executive Officer	abcexecutiveofficer@gmail.com
Additional Contacts	
Hamilton Children's Aid Society	(905) 522-1121
Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton	(905) 525-2012
Hamilton Public Health	(905) 546-2424 x 3577
Ministry Program Advisor	(289) 244-1058
Ministry of Education, Licensed Child Care Help Desk	1-877-510-5333 childcare_ontario@ontario.ca