

CATEGORY: Staff Recruitment, Orientation & Training

DATE: July 2015

SUBJECT: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

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Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Policy Statement

Centennial Infant and Child Centre strengthens families and their young children with special needs to develop the confidence and skills for the best start in life. Centennial Infant and Child Centre recognizes that we do not all start from the same place, and imbalances exist.

Centennial Infant and Child Centre is committed to fairness and justice and to making adjustments to these imbalances.

Centennial Infant and Child Centre is committed to providing equity to the diverse groups in our community regardless of race, ethnicity, cultural orientation, national origin, language, religious belief, disability, sexual orientation, gender, and age.

Centennial Infant and Child Centre is committed to creating an environment where everyone feels they belong, where everyone's unique backgrounds, experiences, and diversities are respected and celebrated, and where everyone is able to fully participate and contribute to our mission.

Purpose

Children are impressionable during early childhood and are still learning about fairness and right from wrong. Teachers help children understand, accept, respect, and appreciate people's differences. Over time, children learn to form their own opinions, feelings, and attitudes towards people who may be completely different from them.

Although children can subconsciously pick up on these differences as young as six months of age, they are not yet at an age where they can form opinions on their differences. However, early childhood education opens the door to having these conversations and molding minds to approach these topics positively and openly.

Policy

As reflected in CICC's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Statement, equity, diversity, and inclusionary practices will be incorporated into all aspects of the preschool program at Centennial Infant and Child Centre to ensure that all children have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

What is Equity?

Equity focuses on taking those opportunities presented to children and infusing them with support and resources to turn the education system into a level playing field. This means that children who are disadvantaged will get the support they need to become equal to children who are not disadvantaged.

Advancing equity in early childhood education requires understanding this broader societal context, these biases, and the ways in which historical and current inequities have shaped the profession, as they have shaped a nation. The biases we refer to here are based on race, class, culture, gender, sexual orientation, ability and disability, language, national origin, indigenous heritage, religion, and other identities.

What is Diversity?

Diversity is the difference and uniqueness that each person brings to the early years setting. Culture is the understanding, patterns of behaviour, practices, and values that a group of people share. The Code of Ethics says that RECEs recognize the uniqueness and diversity of children and families.

Exposing children to diverse ways of being ultimately instill compassion, kindness, open-mindedness, empathy and teaches children how to treat others with respect, regardless of their background. Celebrating these differences also improves their self-confidence and how they see themselves.

What is Inclusion?

Childcare inclusion means that all children can attend and benefit from the same childcare programs. Inclusion as a core principle in a pan-Canadian Childcare system would eliminate any exclusion based on disability and would go beyond non-discrimination – assuring that children with disabilities get the supports they need to benefit from childcare. The principal of inclusion fully incorporates basic value that promote and advance participation, friendship, and a celebration of diversity. (Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada definition).

Special Needs is defined as:

Children who, due to emotional, familial, physical, behavioural, developmental, cognitive, communicative, or emotional factors, are at risk of not maximizing their potential. Special needs encompass children who require support and assistance with daily living, whether formally diagnosed or not, and whether a diagnosis is short or long term in nature. (Ontario Municipal Social Services Association definition).

Procedure:

1. Human Resources

- Centennial Infant and Child Centre's hiring process supports the Centre's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy.
- All staff, volunteers and students understand and agree with EDI practices.

- Board recruitment involves electing members who understand and support inclusion practices.
- Staff and volunteers review and sign off on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy on annual basis.

2. Training

- All Staff to receive an orientation to the principles of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and receive ongoing training to further develop their skills in supporting children and families with extra support needs.

3. Programming

- Staff will adapt the environment and individual programming for each child to ensure full inclusion in every aspect of the program.

4. Confidentiality

- All information pertaining to individual children and their families must be kept in the strictest confidence.
- The importance of maintaining confidentiality to be reviewed on a regular basis with all staff, volunteers and students at Centennial Infant and Child Centre.
- Prior to any information being shared with outside agencies, schools and professionals informed consent will be obtained from the parents/guardians.
- All Documentation of consent to share information will be kept in the child's file at the centre.

5. Partnerships

- The Centre will foster partnerships and work collaboratively with families and community supports in order to meet the needs of the children.
- The Centre, with parental/guardian consent will make referrals for appropriate supports (i.e., Speech and Language Services, Occupational Therapy) to ensure children obtain all the supports/services they need.

6. Admission/Registration

- All families interested in registering their child at Centennial will be dealt with in a fair and equitable manner
- Admission procedures are followed for all families. This includes sharing centre policies such as the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, Anti Racism/Anti-Oppression Policy,

Withdrawal, Behaviour Management, Health Policies, Child Abuse and Attendance Policies.

7. Transitions

- Each family will have a team meeting at CICC prior to starting preschool. At this time, a planned transition to school will be discussed.
- Children will be placed in a classroom with their age-appropriate peers.

8. Withdrawal

If the program is having difficulty meeting the child's needs, the program will ensure:

- All families asked to withdraw from the Centre are dealt with in a fair and equitable manner.
- Notice of withdrawal is consistent with the Withdrawal Policy of the program and is the same for all children.
- Reasonable care has been taken in assessing the child's needs, including the program's ability to support those needs.
- Special needs resources and other outside agency supports have been exhausted prior to notice of withdrawal.

Accountability:

- The childcare program will review its Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policies and procedures regularly to ensure it is current with respect to language and legislation.
- The policy will be reviewed and signed off by current board members, staff, volunteers, and students.
- The childcare program will include Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy in its Parent Handbook.

This Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy will be reviewed with staff, volunteers, and students upon employment and at least annually thereafter.