

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear description of what constitutes an inclusive and safe environment, while promoting healthy relationships based on equity and respect for diversity at the Caledon Parent-Child Centre (CPCC).

SCOPE

This policy provides guidance and direction to all individuals engaged in CPCC activities and the management of those activities. It applies to all staff, volunteers and individuals or groups in all programs and projects undertaken by or on behalf of the CPCC. This includes Board of Directors, advisory committees, consultants and partners, in all aspects of its operations, and at all levels of the organization.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Ministry of Education - Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 – Part VI - Service System planning for child care and early years programs and services. Provincial Interest - #49 (1) It is a matter of provincial interest that there be a system of child care and early years programs and services that, (f) respects equity, inclusiveness and diversity in communities.

The Canadian Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms – states that: all individuals must be treated equally, regardless of their race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

Canadian Human Rights Act – states that: employer and service providers are required to accommodate special needs, including those of people with disabilities, short of undue hardship.

DEFINITIONS

Equity

Equity is an attempt to ensure fair treatment, equality of opportunity, and fairness in access to information and resources for all.

Diversity

Diversity is the representation of varied identities and differences including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender identity, mental or physical ability, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, neighbourhood, socio-economic status and language; collectively and as individuals. It also includes diversity of thought, ideas, perspective, and values.



Inclusion

Inclusion creates a space to show that we value people and encourage them to bring more of themselves. It builds a culture of belonging by actively inviting the contribution and participation of all people. We recognize every person's voice adds value, and we strive to create balance in the face of power differences and equal opportunities.

(Ford Foundation for Social Justice)

PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH

"An approach to practice in early learning and care settings where all children are accepted and served within a program and where each child and family experiences a sense of belonging and no child or family is stigmatized or marginalized. Inclusion means to bring people in, rather than to exclude them – in thought, word or deed." (College of Early Childhood Educators Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, p. 30 – Source: Child Care Human Resources Sector Council, Occupational Standards for Early Childhood Educators, p. 110.)

POLICY STATEMENT

The CPCC shares a vision where everyone belongs and deserves to be supported in reaching their dreams and fullest potential. In order to meet this vision, CPCC settings are committed to supporting diverse populations, attracting and retaining a diverse workforce, building and strengthening partnerships, and fostering an equitable environment, free of discrimination and harassment in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We Believe:

- Each and every child is a unique and valued individual;
- Every family brings unique life experiences and orientations that enrich and influence the environment and human interactions;
- Educators and early years practitioners are valuable contributors, rich in experience and knowledge, who create inclusive environments that enrich the development of all children and families;
- All employees and volunteers contribute to the continuity of high quality, supportive and responsive programming and operations;
- Welcoming environments and inclusive design create friendly access points that enhance child and family well-being;
- Equitable and inclusive practices celebrate diversity, foster a culture of acceptance and belonging and support the optimal development of all children and families; and

- Active collaboration with diverse communities and professionals facilitates partnerships in support of all children and families.

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The Caledon Parent-Child Centre acknowledges, respects, values and celebrates the diversity of the people who make up our community. Diversity includes, but is not limited to: age, appearance, beliefs, culture, education, ethnicity, gender, geographical location, family composition, income, language, literacy levels, marital or parental status, occupation, ability, place of origin/nationality, race, religion or creed, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, political affiliation.

Inclusion and belonging are core values at the CPCC and are reflected in all aspects of the organizational culture. *“We operate in the spirit of inclusion and acceptance whereby all individuals belong, feel valued and connected to each other and the community”*. Every effort is made to ensure that its structure, policies and systems reflect all aspects of the community and promote equal access to all. CPCC encourages individuals to participate fully and to have complete access to its services, employment, governance structure and volunteer opportunities.

The CPCC strives to ensure that:

1. Programs are delivered in such a way that systemic barriers to full participation and access are addressed so that positive relations and attitudinal change towards marginalized groups are promoted;
2. Discriminatory or oppressive behaviours are not acceptable and will be addressed through our complaint process;
3. Services are provided with sensitivity to the influence of power and privilege in all relationships, including service relationships, and are delivered in keeping with anti-oppression principles;
4. Individuals who engage in CPCC services are valued participants who have opportunities to shape and evaluate our programs;
5. Physical environments, including toys, books, equipment and resources, reflect a rich and diverse demographic landscape and respond to unique needs and abilities;
6. Communication materials present a positive and balanced portrayal of people’s diverse backgrounds and experiences;
7. Services and locations are flexible, accessible and responsive to participants’ diverse needs;
8. Administrative practices, programs and learning environments promote equity and inclusion, creating an environment that celebrates everyone.
9. Board leadership and employees acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours necessary for identifying and eliminating bias and discrimination through training and ongoing professional development;

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10. Staff gain new perspectives from their own self-reflections and that of others to nurture a sense of belonging, engagement, expression and well-being;
11. Work force practices foster a culture of equity, diversity and inclusion amongst employees and team members (volunteers);
12. Collaboration with diverse community partners and professionals serves to strengthen responsiveness to unique needs and abilities.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The CPCC commits to an annual review to ensure the policy remains relevant, effective and appropriate. Any concerns or complaints relating to this policy should be brought to the attention of the Executive Director and/or Board Chair for further review in compliance with the Complaints Policy.

SUPPORTING POLICIES

In addition to the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, the CPCC has developed workplace policies that further support the standards of inclusion including the Human Resources Policy, Human Rights/Anti-Bias Policy, Anti-Harassment Policy, Anti-Violence Policy, Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy and Complaints Policy.