



## **Parent Handbook**

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## Welcome

This handbook is meant to be a basic guide to the services PCDC provides. We encourage parents to ask questions of the staff and supervisor and attend board meetings if, at anytime, they require more detailed information regarding a particular issue.

It is our goal to provide the families, children, staff, students and community members of Palmerston Community Daycare with the best service available.

The daycare office is located on the third floor and parents/guardians are welcome to drop in for a visit anytime.

Any comments or opinions are always welcomed.

**Background: Palmerston Junior Public School Circa 1918**

### **LOCATION**

Palmerston Community Day Care (PCDC) is located on the second and third floors of the Annex Building of Palmerston Avenue Public School, northwest of Bathurst and Bloor Streets. The address is:

734 Palmerston Avenue,  
Toronto, ON M6G 2R4.

Tel: 416.533.9526 Fax: 416.533.5196  
Email: palmerstondaycare@bellnet.ca.  
Website: www.palmerstoncommunitydaycare.com

### **LICENSING**

Palmerston Community Day Care is licensed with the Ministry of Community and Social Services under the Day Nurseries Act.

### **HOURS**

The day care operates from 7:45 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.  
Monday through Friday.  
The nursery program runs from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.  
Monday through Friday from  
September to June, except on PD days, school holidays and breaks.

### **LATE PICK-UP FINE**

There is an initial fine of \$5.00 for any minute within the first five minutes after 6:00 p.m. and an additional \$1.00 for each minute thereafter when you are late picking up your child after 6:00 p.m. (e.g., if you arrive at 6:10 p.m. your late fee would be \$10.00). Recurring lateness (more than four times per year) will be reviewed by staff and the Board of Directors. The fine is to be paid to the staff member on duty. For Nursery School Families the fine as stated above applies for late pick up after 11:30 a.m.

### **ADMINISTRATION**

PCDC is administered by a Supervisor and Assistant Supervisor. The supervisor is hired by the Board of Directors and evaluated annually by the Personnel Committee Chair. Some of the responsibilities of the supervisor include: General administration of the daycare, working with Ministries and other government bodies, personnel management, maintaining enrolment capacity, sound financial management, behaviour management and maintaining relationships with families, staff, school members and community members. The supervisor keeps the Board of Directors informed of the day to day operations through monthly reports at board meetings.



## **HISTORY**

Palmerston Community Daycare officially opened in November 1980. Six families got together and decided to create a very special place for their children. The day care was run as a collective and co-operative venture with parents, 18 children, four teachers and a cook. The Rabbit Room was the play room, the Rainbow Room was the sleep room and the School Age Room was the dining room and office. Food was prepared in the kitchen in the main school building.

Palmerston School became a French Immersion School in 1981 and in 1982 the enrolment at the day care was increased to 32 preschoolers. A school-age program was started for children up to 10 years of age. When the kindergarten-aged children began school for a half day it was decided that a nursery program would be opened enabling children to use the daycare facilities from 9 to 11:30 a.m.

In July 1994 a program was created to accommodate children between the ages of 10 and 12. This program had a recreational focus geared towards the needs of older children.

Today our enrolment is approximately 96 children. We have 8 Early Childhood Education professionals (ECE's) on staff as well as 5 assistants (ECA's).

Parents and guardians have always played a key role in the daycare, from the early days when a parent kept the financial records and others did the cleaning and laundry. Parents/guardians have come in and shared their talents, interests and cultures with children and staff, thereby continuing to help PCDC remain an integral and community-oriented centre.

Today the daycare is run by a Board of Directors that consists of as little as 10 or as many as 15 parent/community members. PCDC is still a parent/guardian and staff-managed daycare. Parent/guardian ideas and input are vital in the smooth functioning of the centre.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

At PCDC our aim is to enhance the growth of a child as an individual within a co-operative, child-centered environment. We foster the social, emotional, physical and intellectual growth of the child.

We promote individual freedom within a structured framework. This provides the child with the opportunity to make choices, to respect themselves and the rights of others and to understand that their input into decision making is valued and respected.

We maintain a warm, relaxed, caring atmosphere where children feel secure, happy and loved. We always strive to take the family's diverse needs into consideration. Our program stimulates and intrigues children, encouraging their natural curiosity and desire for learning.

A sense of community is built through outings, social functions and exposure to various ethnic groups, cultures and religions. Our activities involve the children in a wealth of experiences, including exposure to the arts and sciences. We take pride in the fact that our outings and special events are numerous, versatile and in tune with up-to-date events taking place in the city.

We promote anti-biased behaviour in all aspects of our program. Boys and girls are encouraged to participate in all activities equally and in a non-violent manner. We focus on constructive problem-solving, both in interactions between children and between children and adults.

Our program encourages respect, regardless of gender, race, creed, colour, religion, class, age, sexual orientation, marital status, physical challenges, ethnic origin, ancestry or citizenship.

The all-encompassing goal is for the children to achieve a strong sense of accomplishment, independence and self-esteem.

The staff's continuing high degree of professionalism in conjunction with the valued contribution of the parents/guardians makes Palmerston Community Daycare an enriched child-centered environment. The daycare's affiliation with Palmerston Junior Public School is vital and full co-operation between the staff and students of the school is encouraged for the benefit of the children.

### **GROUPING**

The concept of "family grouping" has always been practiced in the daycare. This creates an environment that allows younger and older children to play and learn from one another.

### **PRESCHOOL (AGES 2.5 TO 5)**

The preschool group consists of a maximum of 32 children who are placed in either the Rabbit Room or the Rainbow Room. There are two qualified ECE teachers in each room, as well as an ECA from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. and from 3:45 to 6:00 p.m.

The preschool program runs from 7:45 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. A catered lunch and morning and afternoon snacks are provided. Children attending the school's kindergarten classes are escorted to and from their classes by daycare staff.

### **NURSERY (AGES 2.5 TO 5)**

PCDC offers a two-and-a-half hour nursery program within the preschool groups. Enrolment numbers depend on the number of children attending morning kindergarten. The nursery program was introduced in order to offer care to children during the hours that full-time preschoolers attend kindergarten.

The nursery program hours are 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. A morning snack is provided. The program begins the second week of September and ends the second last week in June. The Nursery program is closed on school holidays, professional development days and summer holidays.



### **SCHOOL-AGE (AGES 6 TO 12)**

The school age program has a maximum enrolment of 48 children. Two qualified ECE teachers plus one ECA run the program.

The school age program starts at 7:45 a.m. in one of the family grouping rooms supervised by an ECE and ECA staff member. The children are supervised in their room during the lunch period from 11:40 a.m. to 12:40p.m. and after school from 3:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

School age children have the option of a catered lunch or bringing their own lunch during the school year. All school age children enjoy a nutritious afternoon snack. On school holidays and professional development (PD) days, a morning snack is also provided.

School age part-time care is available to families who require care in the morning, lunch time or afternoon, based on five days per week. The children attend daycare at their scheduled times of the day as determined at time of registration. Children are registered according to space availability and priority is given to full time students. The part-time school age program does not operate on school holidays, professional development days and summer holidays. Children needing care on these days ( excluding summer camp ) may register two weeks in advance for an additional cost per day if space is available.

Children attending the after school portion of the day receive a snack daily.

### **SUMMER CAMP (AGES 6—12)**

During July and August PCDC's school age program operates as a summer day camp which other children in the community may join. Park visits, swimming and picnic outings, outdoor arts and crafts, indoor quiet time, trips and additional special events are planned during this time.

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND COMMITTEES**

The Board of Directors, in conjunction with the Supervisor, is responsible for hiring and dismissing of staff, managing finances and legal questions, determining fees and policy, direction and program content and organizing fundraising.

The Board is represented by members from the parent/guardian body and is composed of the following: Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, 3 to 5 members from the preschool component, 3 to 5 members from the school age component and 1 to 2 members from the nursery school component. Also sitting on the board is 1 member from the Palmerston Public School staff, the Supervisor and Assistant Supervisor of PCDC and one staff representative.

The board meets approximately once a month. The Annual General Meeting is held in May when new Board members are elected.

All families of children at PCDC are encouraged to attend board meetings and to serve as members of the board. Voting is restricted to elected members of the board.

The following standing committees are formed each year to deal with issues such as: Fundraising, Policy, Personnel, Finance, Safety and Governance. Ad hoc committees that address other issues as they arise are formed when needed. All parents/guardians are welcome to participate on any committee of interest.

## **STAFFING**

PCDC is administered by a Supervisor and an Assistant Supervisor. The school age room has two qualified Early Childhood Education Teachers (ECE's), plus an assistant teacher (ECA). The preschool rooms each have two qualified ECE teachers and one ECA teacher. A Resource Teacher is provided to PCDC by

Toronto Children's Services to aid with meeting specific needs of children when necessary.

In addition, Early Childhood Assistants (ECA) assist during the school year in the early and latter parts of the day as the ECE teacher's shifts vary. There are also screened volunteers, high school students and ECE college students at various times throughout the year. A maintenance staff cleans toys, cots, shelves and cubbies weekly. The school caretakers clean floors, entrances and washrooms.

As of January 1995, a law concerning all staff and volunteers working with children was passed by the provincial government, requiring that all applicants undergo a criminal check. Offences considered unacceptable for the position applied for will be determined by the Supervisor and the Board of Directors.

## **STATUTORY HOLIDAYS**

PCDC is closed on the following  
Statutory holidays

**New Year's Day**

**Good Friday**

**Victoria Day**

**Canada Day**

**Civic Holiday**

**Labour Day**

**Thanksgiving Day**

**Christmas Day**

**Boxing Day**

PCDC's hours of operation change on the  
following days

**Christmas Eve Day**

**New Year's Eve Day**

**Easter Monday**

**Hours are posted in advance  
for each holiday**

PCDC may be closed on other days around the winter holiday at the request of the School Board (i.e., social contract days) and the discretion of the Board of Directors. All parents/guardians will be notified of unscheduled closures in advance.

### **REST PERIODS**

Children requiring a nap do so between 1 and 2:30 p.m. in the sleep room. The children who do not require a nap are taken to the play room where open-ended activities are set up. They then rest for a one hour period. The children in the sleep room join the play room as they wake up. Each child has his/her personal sheets provided by the daycare that are laundered once a week and a cot which is sterilized once a week.

### **FOOD**

Nutritious morning and afternoon snacks are prepared by the daycare staff. A catered lunch is provided for all preschool children year round and full time school age children during the school year only. During any school breaks the school age children are required to bring their own lunch. They receive an after school snack throughout the school year as well as a morning snack when they are in attendance for the whole day.

The menu for each week is posted on the parent information board by the landing on the second floor, as well as in each classroom. The entire centre is nut, sesame seed, kiwi and mango free and includes all by-products of these items. Parents/guardians should inform staff of any **food restrictions** or **allergies** that their child may have. Please be sure to indicate these on the registration form and the appropriate foods will be served as a substitute.

Parents/guardians may be required to provide alternate foods if food restrictions cannot be accommodated.

### **BIRTHDAYS**

We celebrate children's birthdays on the third Wednesday of every month with one cake that honours the children who have a birthday during that month. On each child's individual birthday they get a birthday crown to wear on their special day and all the children sing Happy Birthday during snack time.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

At PCDC we believe that community trips are an important part of our program. We go on trips on some PD days and during school holidays. In addition, weekly trips are planned during the summer program. We have included expenses (TTC, chartered bus, entrance fees) as part of our budget so there are no extra costs to parents.

Daycare hats are provided for all children on outings. Each child will be supplied with a designated hat that is not shared.

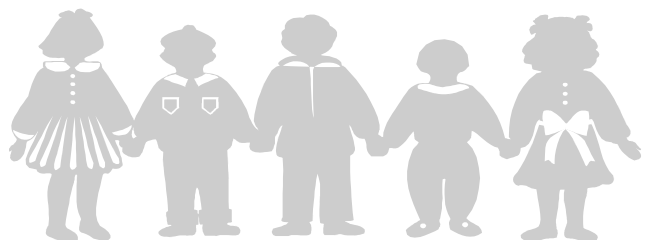
Parent volunteers are welcome to participate on all trips. A lottery may be necessary at times when the volunteer response exceeds the requested ratio.

### **CLOTHING**

Parents are required to provide an extra set of clothing for their child at daycare, particularly for the younger children. This includes socks, underwear, shirt, pants, indoor shoes, hat and mittens. Children may need these if they get wet. Please try to label all clothing with the child's name.

Long scarves and anything worn around the neck which may in any way be considered dangerous by PCDC staff will not be permitted to be worn.

Children should have hats and appropriate clothing to protect them from the sun while at daycare throughout the summer. Sunscreen is provided by the daycare and applied to each child with permission from parents/guardians. Staff will ensure that children have on sunscreen and hats before going outside.



## **BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES**

At PCDC we acknowledge the fact that children will occasionally experience difficulties in managing their behaviour. When a child is in need of behaviour management staff will take a course of action which takes into consideration the age of the child and the nature of the incident. Every problem has a solution and an immediate response is essential. Staff will maintain open communication with all adults involved with the child at all times.

Children are problem-solvers by nature. When adult intervention is necessary, strategies must reflect a problem-solving approach whose goal is to encourage the child to think out and articulate the problem rather than solving it for him/her and imposing a solution. While problem-solving can be developed in very young children, this process must be geared to the developmental level of each child.

The teacher's role in problem-solving is to establish and clearly communicate limits to behaviour in order to ensure children's physical and emotional well-being. Teachers must follow through with logical consequences when these limits are exceeded.

### **This involves asking children to**

- Identify and articulate their problems
- Think of alternative solutions
- Predict the consequences
- Make a decision

### **Additional strategies for the staff will include**

- Having reasonable expectations and communicating them clearly to the children
- Engaging in on-going staff team discussions regarding the needs and progress of individual children
- Organizing rooms to ensure appropriate use of space
- Planning daily routines with limited transition periods and including a variety of developmentally appropriate activities
- Providing ongoing opportunity for sharing information and resources with parents

Parents/Guardians can find detailed information regarding Behaviour Management, the Child Abuse Policy, Anti-racism policy and more in the PCDC policy manual in the parent resource centre located on the second floor of the daycare.

## **SIGNING IN/OUT PROCEDURES**

The parent/guardian of each child must sign the attendance sheet daily, giving the time the child arrives at PCDC. Any arrangements for the child to be picked up by someone other than the regular person(s) should be clearly noted on the attendance sheet and discussed in detail with staff. When the child leaves the daycare for the day, the attendance sheet must again be signed and the time of departure noted.

Each child's file contains a list of adults who may pick up the child, as well as a list of emergency contacts in the case that parents/guardians cannot be reached. It is important that this list be kept current. Parents/guardians will be asked to fill out an information update form annually. We remind parents of the extreme importance in notifying the daycare of any changes in information pertaining to their child as it occurs.

No child will be allowed to leave PCDC with anyone without prior consent by a parent/guardian.

**Anyone other than the parent picking up the child must be at least 16 years of age.**

Anyone picking up the child from PCDC for the first time, with parental consent, will be asked to provide identification.

### **VACATION AND SICK DAYS POLICY**

It is imperative that a parent/guardian phone the daycare when a child is absent for any reason. Parents/guardians of children attending school must also inform the school office if their child is absent. Good communication ensures that children are where they should be and safe at all times.

We ask also that the daycare is notified, in writing, as soon as possible about vacation plans. This is particularly important during the summer months, so that staffing arrangements can be made.

### **SEAT-BELT POLICY**

When trips are taken on chartered buses PCDC will use buses without seat belts. We believe and have adopted a policy that indicates chartered buses without seatbelts pose less of a risk and are therefore the safer choice.

### **ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICINE**

Parents must fill out a **Permission to Administer Medication** form before any medication may be given to a child. Only ECE staff may administer prescription medication to a child. Prescription medicines will be given according to the labelled instructions on the bottle brought to the daycare. Medication that is not doctor prescribed can only be administered when accompanied by a **Request for Administration of Non-Prescription Medication** form which must be completed and signed by a doctor. Either of these forms are available from PCDC staff.

All medicine **must** be in the original pharmacy bottle in order for it to be administered to children. All medicine is kept in a locked box. Parents should inform staff whether the medication must be refrigerated or not.

No child shall be permitted to carry medicine on their person at any time. An exception to this ruling would be in the event that a child has a life threatening allergy and is required to carry a life saving Epi-Pen.

### **FEES**

PCDC is a non-profit day care. Fees are kept in line with other community daycares. Each year fee increases are indexed based on the TCCPI (Toronto Canadian Consumer Price Index). In addition to the yearly indexing of fees the Board of Directors may need to consider an additional fee increase. A general meeting is called one month in advance and all daycare members can choose to attend. Fees include expenses for trips, food and day to day operational expenses.

Parents are required to provide a minimum of two weeks notice when they withdraw their child from daycare. Fees are to be paid by a series of post-dated cheques for six months at a time, dated the first of each month.

There is no fee reduction for vacations or sick days. In order to keep fees as low as possible and our budget unpadding, you are required to continue to pay regular fees to maintain your space when your child is absent.

Nursery program fees are prorated to reflect that on PD days, school holidays and breaks, the Nursery program does not operate.

### **REGISTRATION CRITERIA**

Each year the status of Palmerston Junior Public school is posted on the TDSB website. When the school is declared "closed" for a particular school year, Palmerston Community Daycare will only register children who are in the Palmerston Junior Public School district.

If PCDC has vacant spaces and has exhausted its in district waiting list, only then will children out of district to Palmerston Junior Public School be considered for registration.

## **HEALTH POLICY**

In order to enrol in the daycare, each child is required by the Day Nursery Act to provide a doctor's report showing evidence of immunization and a physical examination.

Staff members are required to provide evidence of a medical exam, record of immunization and TB test upon commencement of employment.

Vigilance about health matters is critical in a daycare. The health of all the children depends on the co-operation of all parents/guardians and staff based on the current health standards.

Sending a sick child to daycare jeopardizes not only that child's health, but also that of the others in the day care. It is imperative therefore, that parents/guardians plan for alternative care for their sick child/ren.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to keep us informed and up-to-date about any concerns they may have with respect to their child's health.

The following are some important health policies that will protect the child as well as the health of other members of the daycare:

- The parent/guardian is required to phone the daycare when a child is absent due to illness.
- If staff considers a child too sick to be exposed to the other children, the child will be removed to a separate, supervised area and the parent/guardian will be notified.
- The staff will use their discretion concerning the seriousness of a cold. A parent/guardian will be asked to pick up their child when he/she has a severe cold (cough, running nose) and the child should return only when they are well.

- The parent/guardian of a child with a fever will be asked to be pick up him/her immediately.
- A child with a communicable disease will not be accepted into the centre without a doctor's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and can return to daycare.
- A child who is vomiting or has diarrhea will not be accepted into the centre for 24 hours after the illness has ceased.
- A child with an open wound or a rash that can be transmitted will not be accepted into the centre until the ailment has been treated and/or the child has a doctor's note stating that they are fit to return to daycare.
- PCDC implements a daycare wide lice check on the last Friday of each month. If a PCDC staff person sees head lice on a child in the daycare, the Supervisor or Assistant Supervisor will notify the child's caregiver by letter. The caregiver (parent) is required to treat the condition and will be advised of our lice policy as outlined in PCDC's Policy Manual.



## **ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES**

- All ECE's are qualified to administer basic CPR.
- When an accident or injury occurs, staff members are required to fill out an accident report documenting the details of the accident. Parents/guardians are requested to review and sign the form. A copy is then given to the parent/guardian and a copy is kept in the child's file.
- In an emergency case staff will follow appropriate emergency procedures and the child will be taken to the hospital. The parent/guardian or their emergency contact person will be notified as soon as possible and will be asked to meet the child and staff at the hospital.
- Staff is not permitted to drive children in their own vehicles. If a child must go to the hospital, either an ambulance or a taxi will be summoned.
- In case of accident or illness, the staff will:
  1. Respond immediately and calmly.
  2. Comfort the child and stay with him/her.
  3. Designate staff to call for help.

## **EMERGENCY SHELTER**

- In the case of an emergency where alternative shelter is required, PCDC's first option is to go to St. Albans Boys and Girls Club located at 843 Palmerston Avenue. Staff will bring all the pertinent information with them such as the children's files, emergency information, attendance records, daily logbook, the administering of medicine permission forms, medicine box and a supply of equipment needed for activities.

## **EVACUATION**

- In the event that the entire school needs to evacuate due to an emergency, the daycare will follow school guidelines and procedures detailed in the Emergency Evacuation Manual. The evacuation site is Essex Public School, located at 50 Essex Street.

## **FIRE DRILL PROCEDURE**

Fire drills are conducted on a monthly basis, as required by the Ministry of Community and Social Services and Metro Children's Services.

### **During the fire drill procedures staff will:**

1. escort children to the designated safety waiting area
2. close all windows and doors
3. bring attendance records and take attendance
4. exit with the children through the south end doors
5. check attendance again
6. wait for the bell or all clear signal before returning inside

The Supervisor/Assistant Supervisor and any other adults in the daycare will assist with the fire drill procedure.

