



FIRST

STEPS

Early Learning Center

PARENT

HANDBOOK

Updated January 2023

First Steps Early Learning Center

Program Statement

First Steps Early Learning Center is committed to following the “How Does Learning Happen” document. This document is Ontario’s pedagogy for the early years, 2014. The Child Care Early Years Act 2014(CCEYA) focuses on strengthening childcare programs and ensuring high quality care and experiences for children. The CCEYA is governed by the Ministry of Education, who issue policy statements regarding programming and pedagogy for the purpose of guiding licensee’s and their staff within childcare and early year’s programs.

The “How Does Learning Happen” document is a living and breathing resource, which is reviewed annually by the licensee, staff and volunteers of First Steps ELC. It is rich in pedagogical focus, indicating that the pedagogy is not prescriptive to any specific curriculum, but offers the opportunity to challenge the status quo, and investigate how learning happens for children.

Our Staff are dedicated to supporting each child’s learning, health, development and well-being through responsive, caring, and compassionate guidance. We focus on active learning, exploration, expressional play and inquiry. We welcome, acknowledge and respect all children as individuals; rich in potential, capable, curious, active participants in all areas of our program. We understand and embrace the importance of family. When a child starts their journey with us, the whole family becomes connected, and a new relationship builds between our homes.

“I am not a teacher, but an awakener” Robert Frost.

“I do not teach anyone; I only provide the environment in which they learn” Albert Einstein.

The “How Does Learning Happen” document is centered on four foundational conditions that are imperative for children to grow, flourish, and thrive. During a child’s first years of life, the brain develops at a phenomenal rate. Scientists now know this process is not just genetic but is considerably manipulated by the early experience’s children share with people and their surroundings. Evidence from diverse fields of study tells us that children grow in environments where adults are caring and responsive. The main principle sources for supportive relationships and learning are at home with early year’s programs playing an important joint role in assisting children’s development, learning, health and well-being.

*The four foundations: **Belonging, Well-Being, Engagement, and Expression**. These foundations are a vision for all children’s future potential while with us at First Steps The foundations exist regardless of age, ability, culture, language, geography, or setting. Children naturally seek out these conditions for themselves. However, with our knowledge and understanding, we are able to provide a pathway for which each individual child can walk at their own pace and encounter their “First Steps” in our exemplary program*

Belonging

We strive to help every individual who enters our environment feel like they belong, that they have a place in our surroundings that they will feel welcomed, valued and respected. We provide the opportunity for connectedness to others and encourage children, staff, and parents to make contributions as part of a group. As each child joins us, it is not only the child who is welcomed into our little community, but the whole family. A sense of belonging is evident within our center; this can be seen through many photos, recorded accomplishments, and pedagogy documentation. This documentation is more than just a recording of events. It helps us as educators learn about how children think and learn, it is a way of listening to children, and learning through the course of their experiences. It also offers a visible learning aid to others, and encourages conversation between the educators as co-learners, alongside the children, their peers, and their families. We pride ourselves on the relationships we form with the children in our care and their families new and old. We gain relevant, background family knowledge which enables us to have a better understanding and form a platform on which for us to build upon.

Each child has their own private space within our room. Each of these cubbies has the child's photo displayed on the front, and they know that this is their spot, where they can place pictures and personal items. Photos of each child's family are displayed around the rooms and are in easy reach if required by the children. During the day-to-day experiences with us, the children are guided through play and inquiry, and they build relationships and teamwork alongside their peers. As educators we provide this environment as an open book to encourage inclusion, respect, and connectedness.

It is important for our families, and staff to feel their presence and voice is of relevance. Our staff liaises with families on a daily basis, and we work very closely in a joint partnership to provide time and opportunities to be available for any questions or concerns that they may have. Our staff maintain a positive, respectful, professional relationship with all. As a team we collaborate on a regular basis where each member feels they can make an important contribution to our team. We guide and support each other, as well as working diligently to constantly improve on our knowledge, by attending the many professional development opportunities First Steps offers its staff. After attending any professional development, the staff are invited to share their new knowledge with the rest of the team during staff meetings and general meeting times. We discuss learnt new strategies and ideas taken from professional development, any documentation and handouts are gathered, reviewed and utilized by all staff. Staff can reflect on this information by using the reference file for professional development located in the office. We also offer this knowledge to our families during a family information/gathering event, or through our daily interactions.

"What we instill in our children will be the foundation upon which they build their future" –Steve Maraboli.

Well-Being

It is our goal to support a sense of self, health, and well-being for every individual who is part of First Steps. We provide healthy meals and snacks prepared by our in-house experienced cook. Family style dining is promoted, where staff members sit with the children, encourage good food practise, and awareness. Ample opportunity and time are given to work on self-help, and self-care skills within a positive environment that is responsive to children's needs. Families are often invited to come and join us for celebration lunches and share family recipes from their own cultural backgrounds.

Our wish is to allow children thrive in programs where they can engage in vigorous physical play in natural outdoor spaces which offer manageable levels of challenge. Safety is of high importance. However, we offer the opportunity for reasonable risk by making accommodations and adaptations which will allow each child to participate, and be challenged in a meaningful, personal, capable and competent way. Children are invited to participate in daily physical activities indoors and outdoors, and explore the world around them, each child that is in our care for more than 6 hours a day, will have the opportunity to be outside for 2 hours. Our educators strive to be good role models for the children in our care by displaying good health and well-being practises. Rest and sleep time are important, we make sure each child has a safe place to rest or sleep during their day with us, ample quiet/rest activities are on hand for non-sleepers. When the children do sleep, a sleep record is noted and reported to parents on collection. To promote the importance of taking care of our bodies, we visit local businesses in our community as a center, including Dentists, Doctors, and local senior homes. We also organize for professionals to come to us and share their knowledge and guidance for self-care and health skills.

Self-care skills and self-regulation can prove to be challenging, we are proud of our mentoring techniques and strategies which have been put in place, our goal is to role model, teach and encourage these lifelong required skills. The ability to self-regulate is a very important component of a child's development. This ability plays a crucial part in a child's long-term physical, psychological, behavioural, and educational well-being. We guide children to deal effectively with the daily stresses they face and help them learn the skills to recover from them in a calm and focused manner. When children can use this approach, they become better equipped to modulate their emotions, attention spans, and ignore distractions. They learn to understand that there are consequences for their actions and become aware of how others may feel or think. Our educators contribute and aid this learning by providing an environment with limited room for these stressors to arise. We build trusted relationships and gain an understanding and knowledge of children's ability and efforts to self-regulate; we are attuned with the children and develop the skill to anticipate individual's cues, arousal states, and responses to various stressors. We offer strategies which help calm and focus, and we are compassionate to each individual. We feel it is of great importance to monitor and record each child's health and well-being daily. We work closely with the families, gathering any important, relevant information that may affect any child's physical or mental health.

Our aim is to keep everyone's health and well-being a top priority. Upon induction all staff members are requested to read and adhere to our Health and Safety binder and policies, this binder includes a self-test for staff to monitor and carry out procedures for the benefit of themselves and others who they work closely with. When each child/family starts their journey with us, they are presented with a parent package. Within this package we offer a parent handbook which provides valuable information regarding

our daycare, also there will be a collection of in-depth forms to be completed and returned to us, providing ALL relevant information about each child. Before attendance commences, every staff member will read and understand the personal information regarding our new family member and their family. We understand and are compassionate that each child may have allergies some of which may even be life threatening. Policies and procedures are put in place to ensure optimum safety. We work closely together with our families so information can be shared at any given time regarding the child's health and well-being.

Our Families, Staff and children's health and well-being is of high priority and vital for life's long journey.

"Nurturing yourself is not selfish – it's essential to your survival and well-being" Renee Peterson Trudeau.



Engagement

“Engagement” refers to a state of being genuinely involved and interested in what one is doing. Children express this through engaged play and inquiry; as well as active, creative, meaningful experiences provided in positive environments. A child’s natural curiosity allows them to explore with their bodies, minds and senses; therefore, stimulating them to ask questions, solve problems, test theories, engage in creative thinking, and make sense of their world. We strive to achieve this with the children in our care.

We as educators and co-learners demonstrate interest and involvement with the children in our care, we understand that children are more likely to participate and engage in complex, lengthy time periods of play when educators welcome and value their contributions and ideas to the classroom and group. We collaborate, offering support when investigating new ideas, questions and “bumps in the road” rather than acting as the expert. This encourages the children to become involved and engaged in creative problem solving, discovery and shared thinking. Our staff acknowledges that each child is an individual and their abilities vary. As educators, our attitudes are very important when fostering children’s engagement. We fully believe and allow each child to participate and have the right to do so by using inclusive approaches and creating the environment and experiences that are meaningful and engaging. We are also mindful when creating such environments of our children who may have individualized plans. Our educators’ model, encourage and implement positive guidance; it takes individuals many years to learn appropriate ways to express strong emotions and positive interactions with others. Knowing that children learn by repetition, our staff maintain daily routines and set clear limits, thus helping children to internalize positive strategies and promote the individual development of each child’s self-help, and self-regulation skills. Children also learn by cause and effect. From these actions, and from other reactions, staff respond by reasonably discussing the situation with the child/children and redirecting by offering alternative words or behaviours that will encourage the children to express themselves in a more positive, and calm manner. When children feel they are understood, valued and belong, they tend to develop positive self-concepts. We make every effort to build trusting, supportive relationships with each child in our care. Corporal punishments, the use of verbal or emotional threats, shaming or name-calling are never used in our program and are responses that will not be tolerated.

We strongly feel that the children’s environment is a critical component in the quality of their exploration and play. We provide nurturing, and inviting indoor and outdoor spaces, with quality furnishings, materials, and staff that spend careful time planning and preparing the programs environment. Our staff make sure the classroom flows to ensure equitable learning opportunities and participation for all. The children will have the choice to engage in rich, well equipped and interesting open-ended play, which has a no rush emphases. This creates and supports an understanding of concepts associated with literacy and numeracy, encourages engagement with others, and helps the children to collaborate, negotiate, communicate ideas, feelings and experiences. The staff are guided by the children through play, what inspires them, what their interests are, and feed from this to further their own knowledge and understanding as well as the child’s. Every child is valued; every child is heard and respected.

We aim to use the environment and its materials can be used in a variety of ways; staff will offer invitations and provocations for the children, which encourages investigation and complex play and inquiry. Our large natural outdoor space provides ample opportunities for our children to explore and investigate with their bodies and minds; physically and mentally. Our educators play a huge roll indoors

and outdoors, thinking carefully when asking and answering questions, offering exploratory questions and answers. We are passionate, interested, and engaged co-learners providing a space for each child in our care to express themselves within their encounters with their environment, other people and the natural world around them.

“Quality is never accident; it is the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skillful execution, it represents the wise choice of many alternatives” – Willa A Foster.



Expression

Our goal at First Steps is for every child to be capable communicators who can express themselves in various ways. Our educators strive to foster communication, expression, and connectedness.

As educators, we are aware of the many language's children use to communicate. We fully respect that each child has a voice regardless of ability or age. Every child's home language and culture are supported and valued through various ways; books and signs in different languages are displayed. We also invite families to come join us, such as coming in to cook with us, introducing food from their cultural background, as well as their language and traditions. We reach out into our community, thus furthering our knowledge and understanding of the world and people outside of First Steps.

When communication exchanges happen, particularly conversations with others, it builds a sense of connection which can only enhance children's social conversational skills, language skills and cognitive activity. Conversation can occur with even the youngest toddlers, we see all children as powerful communicators, recognizing them as little social partners who are competent to initiate, and partake in communication exchanges. We are attuned and respond to the subtle cues and gestures from our children, who have little or no verbal skills yet when they interact with us in "serve and return" exchanges. We recognize and understand how we are wiring the child's brain for successful learning. Through genuine, authentic conversations, we show respect for what the child is trying to communicate. We role model and encourage them to share their excitement/interests/feelings in a meaningful and positive way. This practise is also demonstrated when communicating with our families, co-workers and visitors.

Creative expression is a wonderful form of communication. We invite children to explore and manipulate materials, engage in music and movement, imaginative expression and dramatic play. While participating, design and creativity bring to life the emotional, cognitive and physical areas of development; feeling, thinking, and doing. We use a variety of materials to enhance children's learning, creative problem-solving and critical thinking skills. Educators offer opportunities for the children to explore language, and literacy through play. We support emerging literacy skills by providing open ended materials that allow for growth of imaginative and symbolic play. Signs, props, symbols, books, art tools, songs and rhyme all support print awareness, expression, and the development of strong language and cognitive abilities. As we facilitate successful communication between children and others, we document these interactions to help the children revisit their thoughts and ideas, thus extending their understanding. Staff offer coaching rather than speaking for them. We help the children find the right words and approach to interact in productive communication exchanges. Time and space are available so the children in our care can be as expressive as they so wish.

Closing Statement

At First Steps, our passion for children and their learning is tailored to each child in our care. We endeavor to create an environment that is welcoming, enriched, safe and full of possibilities which will allow each child's unique abilities and interests to flourish. Not only are we a child centered program, but also family centered. We aim to create strong, trusted partnerships with parents and caregivers. We encourage and welcome them to share their culture, language and experiences with us. We believe that families are an integral part of our team, and this connectedness is reflected in the richness of our program. We take pride in ensuring all children can attend and benefit from the high-quality childcare experiences we offer. Children and their families are offered support if required through the County of Wellington Child Care Subsidy office, Inclusion support services and agencies such as; Canadian Mental Health Association, Kids Ability, Speech and Language Pathology, Family and Children Services. If the need should arise and a child requires such a service, we offer availability for meetings and child sessions/ assessments within our program. To ensure inclusion practices are maintained, children work with the specialist whilst remaining in their familiar environment. We demonstrate an ongoing commitment to integrate an anti-bias approach into every aspect of our program. We promote the skills to identify and respect diversity by interacting with others in cultural and social diverse environments. This proactive approach is modelled and encouraged to reduce prejudice and promote inclusiveness. We commit to practise the value of diversity in a way the children can relate to and developmentally understand. At First Steps, our teaching staff are qualified Registered Early Childhood Educators or equivalent. Also, within our team are unqualified staff with a background knowledge and passion for childcare. All staff members are carefully chosen. They are knowledgeable regarding aspects of caring for young children, including child development. Each staff member has an understanding of the Child Care Early Years Act (CCEYA 2014) and the "How Does Learning Happen" document, Ontario's pedagogy for the early years. www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare Our staff are offered many opportunities to further their knowledge by attending ongoing professional development workshops, seminars and conferences. To enable us to maintain our high-quality care standards, and evaluate, monitor and assess our program we meet as a collective throughout the year. We also come together and collaborate, review and discuss our program statement annually. We are an Equal opportunity employer; all employment activities will be conducted in a safe manner to ensure equal opportunity for all regardless of; age, national origin, sexual orientation, pregnancy or disability. Being able to understand who we are and meet our expectations helps staff embody our commitment to high quality care and represent our program in a positive way. We are committed to the health and safety of all our employees and the prevention of occupational injuries and disease. It is our responsibility to be the benchmark in effectively managing and communicating our program regarding health and safety, whilst maintaining compliance with the Ontario Occupation Health and Safety Act and related regulations. Thus, all staff are expected to read, understand, and embrace our health and safety handbook, complete the health and safety training booklet and sign and acknowledge all of First Steps ELC policies and procedures. Our staff are also required to be certified Standard First Aid responders and provide First Steps with a valid original police vulnerable sector check (PVSC). Our human resource binder is readily available for all our employees to read and digest.

We believe that together in connectedness with children, parents, staff, volunteers, and our community we offer a program rich in high quality, providing the necessary tools for every individual to grow and flourish under the blanket of First Steps Early Learning Center.



Full and part time care is available.

History and Background

Our doors first opened on Hwy #24 in 2001, starting with 10-15 children. As our reputation and intake of children grew, also with the requirement of high-quality childcare being prevalent in our community, we moved our location to 205 Speedvale Avenue. After a number of very successful, happy years there, we outgrew this site, and relocated to 81 Speedvale Ave and 55 Delhi St. As time passed, we continued to grow and moved to our new purpose-built center in October 2018. We are very happy to call this home.

We are proud to have served hundreds of families within our community; our programs offer a balanced, educated, warm, nurturing environment with a beautiful natural playground, which is welcoming to all. Over the years, many of the staff have the pleasure of being able to bring their children to our program, this is a wonderful opportunity for both parent and child to embrace.

In 2011 we expanded once again offering a before and after school program, PD days, March break, Summer and Christmas camps, we serve several schools in our community, transporting the children in our own school bus

accompanied by our dedicated staff. This program has been such a huge success we found ourselves expanding once more, the space we inhabited was a shared space, when the opportunity presented itself to relocate, we took it. Our school age address is 55 Delhi.

For over 17 years we have, with great pleasure served the families in our community, we continue, and will strive to provide our high-quality programs for many years to come.

PHILOSOPHY

At First Steps ELC our philosophy is as Emergent as our curriculum; our approach to teaching is tailored to each child in our care and the staff members are highly in tune with each student's individual needs and capabilities. We endeavor to create an environment that is welcoming, warm and safe incorporating our educational philosophy that is student centered and constructivist using self-directed experiential learning in relationship driven environments. This will allow each individual child's unique abilities and interests to flourish. The warm atmosphere and loving staff at our center encourage the children to freely express their ideas and to learn at their own pace through carefully constructed hands on active learning opportunities.

Our *curriculum* develops as the children in each of our programs develops, emerging readily from their interests and ideas; in one moment we may be fully engrossed in learning about frogs and in the next we may focus on the changing of seasons. The projects that the children and teachers collaboratively explore are always diverse and exciting and encourage the development of the whole child.

At First Steps we strive not only to be a child centered program, but to be family centered as well. We aim to create strong partnerships with parents and caregivers, and encourage them to share their culture, language and experiences with our center. We believe that families are an integral part of our team and the superb relationships we build with them are reflected in the richness of the programming here at First Steps ELC.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

At First Steps ELC Main site- we have a maximum capacity of 60 children 15 months -6 yrs.

At our school age program, we can accommodate 49 children Kindergarten-12 yrs.

First Steps ELC incorporates the "How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's pedagogy for the early years, this is a professional learning resource that we are guided by.

Within this document four foundations of development are focused upon: Belonging, Well-being, Engagement and Expression. We strive to ensure optimal opportunities for each child in our care to reach their full potential. We are very proud of our program statement (attached) within this statement all our goals and approaches are clearly visible. Our program is of a very high standard and displayed in this statement and outlined is how First Steps ELC lives and breathes what is written with passion, commitment and devotion.

RATIOS

Toddlers: 15 months – 30 months require 1 adult to 5 toddlers

Preschoolers: 30 months – 6 years require 1 adult to 8 preschoolers

Kindergarten: 44 mos – 68 mos – 1 adult to 13 children

Primary/junior 68 mos – 12 yrs – 1 adult to 15 children

Junior School age: 9yrs – 12yrs – 1 adult to 20 children

* Note: We follow a 2/3 ratio at beginning and end of day as advised by the Ministry of Education

INCLUSIVE PRACTICES

Our Programs at First Steps take pride in ensuring *all* children can attend and benefit from our high-quality childcare experiences. Children and their families are offered support through the County of Wellington Child Care Subsidy office, Inclusion Support Services and agencies such as Canadian Mental Health Association, Kids Ability, Speech and Language Pathology, Family and Children Services etc. In our inclusive setting, all children learn about respect for differences, new forms of communication, empathy, friendship and solidarity across difference. We believe inclusion begins at an early age and leads to a better inclusion for all citizens later in life.

ANTI- BIAS PHILOSOPHY

At First Steps ELC we demonstrate an ongoing commitment to integrate an anti- bias approach into every aspect of our program. We live in a diverse world where interactions happen between children and adults different from each other. We promote the skills to identify and respect these differences, by interacting with others in a culturally and social diverse environment.

A proactive approach is demonstrated and encouraged to reduce prejudice and promote inclusiveness.

We commit to practice the value of diversity in a way the children can developmentally understand, we welcome and embrace cultural and structural interests of all our families.

We acknowledge that our programs, playing and learning takes place on the ancestral and traditional territory of the Mississauga's of the Credit First Nation of the Anishinaabek Peoples.

PROFESSIONAL CHILD CARE STAFF

At First Steps ELC the teaching staff are, qualified Registered Early Childhood Educators or equivalent. Also, within our team we employ unqualified staff with a background knowledge and passion for childcare. All prospective staff members are carefully chosen. They are knowledgeable regarding aspects of caring for young children, including child development. Each staff member is in understanding of the Child Care Early Years Act (CCEYA 2014) and the "How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the early years.

www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare. Our staff have many opportunities to further their knowledge by attending professional development workshops, seminars, and conference's. The staff meet as a collective throughout the year. We encourage you to communicate daily with your child's teachers to ensure consistency, awareness and building of relationships. Our onsite Licensee has the appropriate RECE qualifications and the necessary background to operate a daycare Centre. The licensee is responsible for overseeing the daily operations of the daycare and is available alongside the assistant supervisor, to assist you with matters concerning your child.

Our Food menu is planned according to Public Health requirements and Canada's food guide to provide your child with nutritious, well-balanced snacks and meals, prepared and cooked on site by our cook who has obtained the required Food Handlers Certificate.

Vulnerable Sector Police Check, references, standard first aid certificate, and Immunization records are completed prior to our staff working at the Centre, also an in-depth interview will be had and orientation.

VOLUNTEERS/STUDENTS/GUESTS

Co-op students/volunteers/guests will be an active part of our program. Students/volunteers may come from varying levels of education and will be closely supervised by the staff. Interviews, vulnerable sector police check and Immunization records are completed prior to our volunteers/students working at the Centre.

POLICY - SUPERVISION OF VOLUNTEERS AND STUDENTS

First Steps ELC has been privileged to have several students and volunteers choose to have their placement experiences within our learning environment. We have set aside the following policies and procedures to ensure the safety and adequate supervision of the children within our care.

- No child will ever be supervised by anyone under the age of 18
- Only employees of First Steps Daycare (Guelph) Inc will have direct unsupervised access to the children. ie. children will not be left in the supervision of a “student” or “volunteer” alone, there will ALWAYS be a staff member in ratio supervising the “student” or “volunteer”.
- “Students” and “volunteers” will NOT be counted in ratio, only staff members can be counted when calculating ratios.

The licensee shall ensure that all “students” and “volunteers” have read, understood and signed the policy and procedure binder also read and adhere to our program statement, prior to being in the classroom with the children and staff members. Each “student” or “volunteer” will have a staff member designated to them, that staff member is directly responsible for supervising the “student” or “volunteer” and ensuring that they are NEVER left alone with the children. The member of staff acts as a mentor, guiding and educating within the day-to-day experiences at our center. In the absence of the designated staff member the RECE with the most seniority within the classroom will be responsible for supervising the “student” or “volunteer”.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

High school students are not responsible for diapering or toileting of children. High school students can supervise washroom routine. High school students are not to transport children (up/downstairs) without being supervised or watched by their designated staff member.

College Students may be responsible for diapering or toileting children however must be supervised by their designated staff member (co-operating teacher), they may also supervise the washroom routine. College students are not to transport children (up/downstairs) without being supervised or watched by their designated staff member.

VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

Volunteers are not responsible for diapering or toileting children. Volunteers may not be used to transport children (up/downstairs) without being supervised or watched by their designated staff member.

This policy is to be reviewed prior to students or volunteers being in the classroom. Also, to be reviewed annually by all staff members.

OTHER VISITORS/TRADES ETC.

The safety of the children in our care is paramount. Our center has an electronic keypad system with a private code which is only given to clients and staff members. Only scheduled appointments with outside individuals will be granted entry into the building. We ask you to co-operate with us in maintaining a secure environment for the children in our care, by being aware of anyone who enters the building with you, and request that if a unknown person to you is requiring entry, please have them ring the bell.

Keypad codes are changed randomly, to assist safety measures.

First Steps, has an “open door” policy which invites parents of enrolled children to visit, observe or participate within our program at their convenience, we just ask you check ahead of time due to scheduling etc.

From time to time we will venture out into our community locally or a far, for this we may need some extra assistance, parents who have a police vulnerable sector check will be able to accompany us.

Often, prospective clients will attend a scheduled tour of our facility, to minimize disruption and to respect the safety and space of the existing children in our care, these visits are arranged and carried out by the licensee or the assistant supervisor.

PARENTS

The quality of our program depends largely on the dedication and professionalism of our teaching staff, but also with the relationships that are formed with our clients. Positive parent-teacher partnership is instrumental to successful childcare experiences; we promote and demonstrate respectful interactions between staff and parents. Daily contact between us is a vital component of maintaining our high-quality program. Information received between parents and staff will only be used for childcare purposes and is fully confidential.

To ensure high standards of fairness to all children, confidentiality between parents and staff, and to maintain professional ethics, staff employed in any capacity by First Steps ELC may not enter into any caretaking arrangement for any enrolled family outside of the center.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

First Steps offers many opportunities for parents to be involved in the program. ie:

- Family BBQ (an annual event every summer, where we may have a children's entertainer, face painting, Zumba dance lesson, bouncy castle, to mention a few. Good food and conversation, a great way to relax with the family, chat with other clients and meet new clients. All family/extended family members welcome)
- Fund raising events
- Bring your talent to the center (if you play an instrument, or have a specialized profession/expertise, we would love for you to come and share it with us)
- Parent assistance on field trips (with a up to date PVSC)
- Thanksgiving luncheon (an annual event where we entertain you/extended family with a delicious home cooked hearty meal for you to enjoy with your children. At this time, we make a donation to a local charity, donations from families are greatly appreciated)
- Christmas get together (sing-a-long, mince pies, cookies and maybe a special visitor)
- Every Christmas we adopt a family in our community, we are provided with items on their wish lists, the children and staff head out to purchase these items together. Cash donations are always greatly received.

LICENSING

First Steps ELC is fully licensed and inspected annually by the county of wellington (operating criteria) and the Ministry of Education and adheres to all standards detailed in the Child Care Early Years Act 2014 (CCEYA). We are licensed to care for children as follows:

- * Main site, 15 months (limited availability) 18 months – 68 Months (this includes JK program)
- *55 Delhi, Kindergarten – 12 years

We offer a fully licensed before/after school program, March break, summer/ Christmas camp and full PD Days. Along side our qualified, professional staff, First Steps contracts a bus service to a number of schools in our community that is supervised by our staff.

First Steps is regularly inspected and abides by all the regulations required by the Guelph Fire Department, as well as Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Health Unit. Public Health's annual report is widely available on their website: www.wdgpUBLICHEALTH.ca

OPERATING CRITERIA:

First Steps ELC is supported and guided by the County of Wellington Child Care Services. The Child Care Services has developed The Operating Criteria document of which is to measure quality in childcare programs that have or wish to have a Service Agreement for fee subsidy and for wage subsidy with the County of Wellington. The Operating Criteria is a program evaluation tool that helps to distribute public childcare funding in a fair way that prioritizes high quality practices. Programs are required to meet the standards of quality that are defined in the Child Care Program Operating Criteria.

POSITIVE GUIDANCE AND DIRECTION

At First Steps, we model, encourage and implement the following positive guidance and direction strategies:

- CHILDREN ARE IN THE PROCESS OF LEARNING ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

It takes individuals many years to learn appropriate ways to express strong emotions and interact appropriately with others. Young children are just beginning to learn these difficult personal and social skills. Knowing that young children learn by repetition, teaching staff maintain daily routines and set clear limits with each group, thus helping children to internalize these skills, but also providing for the safety of all children, as well as promoting the individual development of each child's self-help and self-control skills. These routines and limits are frequently discussed and defined with the children. Consistency, or knowing what to expect throughout the day, helps children develop a sense of trust and understanding of their environment.

- AN EFFECTIVE GUIDANCE APPROACH IS PREVENTIVE BECAUSE IT RESPECTS FEELINGS EVEN WHILE IT ADDRESSES BEHAVIOUR

First Steps daily scheduling, curriculum plans, classroom arrangements, developmentally appropriate activities, and staffing patterns are designed to be preventive, as they promote positive and enjoyable learning experiences that encourage respectful and trusting relationships between adults, children and peers.

- ADULTS NEED TO UNDERSTAND THE REASONS FOR CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOUR

Children learn by cause and effect, from these actions, and from others' reactions. At First Steps appropriate and positive behaviours are recognized daily.

Teachers respond by reasonably discussing the situation with the child and redirecting by offering alternate words or behaviours that will encourage the child to express her/himself in more positive ways.

- A SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AN ADULT AND A CHILD IS A CRITICAL COMPONENT OF EFFECTIVE GUIDANCE

Children who gain the understanding that they are valued and belong tend to develop positive self-concepts First Steps staff make every effort to build trusting, supportive relationships with each child enrolled in their care

- ADULTS USE FORMS OF GUIDANCE THAT HELP CHILDREN LEARN SELF-CONTROL AND RESPONSIVENESS TO THE NEEDS OF OTHERS

Clear and positive verbal communication with the child is our primary guidance practice. This form of guidance helps children develop a sense of independence, confidence, and competence in their own abilities to get along with peers and adults and to involve themselves positively within the classroom activities. Teaching staff model language and appropriate ways for the children to express their feelings and emotions. All children are encouraged to “use words” to explain what they want, what they need, and how they feel. Positive problem-solving skills include adults: narrating what is happening, suggesting optional behaviours to children before a “situation” occurs, and following through with necessary re-direction and acknowledgement of successful problem-solving situations.

Corporal punishment, the use of verbal or emotional threats, and shaming or name-calling are never used in our program and are not responses tolerated by First Steps Daycare (Guelph) Inc. Any such behaviour by any staff member is just cause for a disciplinary action.

First Steps Early Learning Center
Contravention of prohibited practices:

First Steps ELC has a Positive Guidance and Direction policy in place. Any practice based on a negative control technique will not be tolerated.

***Each staff member should implement positive guidance and direction adjacent with the program statement on a daily basis as part of their responsibilities; any inappropriate incidents MUST be reported and documented.**

*** A record of monitoring will be conducted regularly and annually.**

Contravention of prohibited practices:

1. Anyone observing or hearing a prohibited practice being used must report the incident to the licensee, supervisor or designate immediately.
2. The licensee, supervisor or designate will complete a written account of the verbal information provided. This must be signed by the person reporting the incident, to verify it as a true record.
3. If the incident is reported to the supervisor or designate, they will inform the licensee immediately, and the investigation process will commence.
4. The investigation will involve discussion with the staff member alleged to have used a prohibited practise. Observation of the staff member may be used if deemed appropriate and other staff members may be questioned. The investigation and its outcome will be recorded in writing. Should the allegation be of a serious nature it may be necessary to suspend the staff member during the investigation.
5. Depending on the outcome of the investigation action taken will be as follows:

- If the investigation proves the initial report was unfounded, no further action will be taken.
- If the investigation is inconclusive the licensee, supervisor or designate will be responsible for monitoring the situation and ensuring on-going documentation until such time as she is sure that the staff member in question is totally conforming to the Positive Guidance and Direction policies and procedures and program statement.
- If the licensee finds the report to be correct based on fact, action will be taken in accordance with the severity of the situation, and a serious occurrence will be filled.
 - In the event of the licensee being reported to be using prohibited practice, the staff member should report directly to the supervisor or designate who will investigate the report and take appropriate action.

The licensee will make all final decisions regarding suspension and payment while under suspension.

The licensee shall not permit; with respect to a child receiving childcare at First Steps ELC the following prohibited practises:

(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 childcare centre 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.

This provision forbids physical punishment and other harmful disciplinary practices to protect the emotional and physical well-being of the children within our care. These practices are never permitted at First Steps ELC

All staff, volunteers, parents, (when in the center) and students must comply with the policies expressed herein, while implementing the program statement, and with the Child Care and Early Years Act. (CCEYA)

Failure to comply may result in the following depending on the circumstances at hand:

1. A warning, verbal or written followed by suspension or immediate permanent dismissal.
2. Suspension or dismissal without warning.
3. Emergency meeting to review situation.
4. Consultation with the parent and the child involved.

Action to be taken in severe situations:

- If during the investigation, evidence is found that indicates harsh discipline or abusive practises were used, the staff member will be suspended immediately and the incident will be reported as a Serious Occurrence to the Ministry of Education, as well as to the Family and Children's Services. Should the investigation undertaken by the Family and Children's Services substantiate abuse or inappropriate conduct the employee will be dismissed.

Action in less severe situations:

- The staff member shall have an interview with the licensee (supervisor or designate in cases of licensee contravention). The Positive Guidance and Direction policies and procedures will be thoroughly reviewed and discussed in great detail. Concerns in practice will be noted at the time and recommendations on how the employee can develop positive practices will be given. The employee will be encouraged to develop positive practices through professional development and training. The employee will be issued with a letter outlining the prohibited practice used and be added to their file. There will be a follow up meeting arranged.

Note: If a second instance of the use of prohibited practice is substantiated, for any employee, the employee will be dismissed and the reason for dismissal noted in the employee's record of employment, the collage of Early Childhood Educators will be notified.

Formal monitoring and annual review:

- The Positive Guidance and Direction policy shall be reviewed with all employees, students, professionals and volunteers prior to commencing interaction with the children of First Steps Daycare (Guelph) Inc. and annually thereafter.
- The licensee shall record a written document for each employee during their annual review and discuss their performance, goals, strengths and challenges. This review can take place at any given time and may be carried out more than once.

The types of violence will be defined as:

Criminal Intent - Involves a person with no relationship to the workplace, who commits a violent act (e.g. theft, hostage taking/kidnapping, physical assault)

Customer/Client - A client with willful intent to cause harm to the employee.

Employee Related - Employee who engages in repeated and persistent negative acts towards one or more employees resulting in the creation of a toxic or unhealthy work environment.

Personal Relationship - Relationship violence that occurs at the workplace (e.g. family member that commits a violent act against a worker within the workplace)

Physical abuse or verbal abuse from a child/ren within our care - Should this kind of abuse happen, the child's parent/guardians will be informed immediately, and consequences will be put in place, if abuse persists, this could lead to exclusion/ or in serious situations higher authorities will be called upon.

If any employee/client outside personal engages in workplace violence or harassment, an investigation will take place immediately. If an employee is involved, they will face discipline which may include up to and including immediate termination. If a client /outside personal is involved the same will apply.

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Licensee of First Steps ELC to ensure that:

- All reasonable preventative measures to protect employees and others at first Steps Daycare from workplace violence and harassment;
- A workplace violence risk assessment is conducted;
- Advise the Health & Safety representative of the assessment results and provide a copy in writing;
- Establish procedures, policies and work environment arrangements to eliminate the risk to employees from violence;
- Proper maintenance and testing of all security systems in place
- Ensure all employees are trained on this policy;
- Review the policy annually with the Health & Safety representative to ensure any new violence hazards are identified;
- Reporting procedures are established with respect to workplace violence and harassment;

ADMISSION POLICY

To be considered for an available space at First Steps ELC. Prospective clients can call the center to be placed on our waiting list, in addition to an initial registration form which can be completed and returned, with this registration form this parent handbook will be attached, offering all relevant important information. We highly recommend any prospective clients to arrange a tour date prior being placed on our list. If there are no spaces available at the time of your call/ registration your child's name will be placed on a waiting list. You will be contacted by the licensee/assistant supervisor when a place becomes available. Upon acceptance, the licensee/assistant supervisor will arrange for further paperwork to be read and signed. You will then be required to pay a deposit to confirm your child's space. An orientation interview will be arranged this interview will be to familiarize you and your child with the center, answer questions and complete the necessary final forms. A set of complementary orientation visits will be scheduled prior to your child's start date.

Helping children to adjust to being separated from their normal environment and the adults who are important to them can be difficult. It may be just as difficult for the parents who may be leaving their child. The staff are empathetic to these feelings and will help the child and their parents adjust to the transition.

First Steps Early Learning Center
VIOLENCE AND HARRASSMENT

Policy Purpose

First Steps ELC has zero tolerance for workplace violence or harassment of any kind and will be proactive in the prevention of workplace violence and harassment. We are committed to:

- Investigating reported incidents of violence and harassment in an objective and timely manner, taking necessary action; and providing appropriate support for victims.

Policy

To ensure that employees at First Steps ELC have a work environment that is free of violence or harassment of any kind, whether it arises from another employee or any other person visiting the workplace, i.e. client or outside personal, which are interacting with staff. This policy will ensure that:

- Individuals are aware of, and understand that, acts of violence or harassment are considered a serious offence for which necessary action will be imposed;
- Those subjected to acts of violence or harassment are encouraged to access any assistance they may require in order to pursue a complaint; and
- Individuals are advised of available recourse if they are subjected to, or become aware of, situations involving violence or harassment.

Definitions Workplace harassment means:

- Engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a worker in a workplace that is known, or ought reasonably to be known, to be unwelcome.
- This includes unwelcome words or actions that are known or should be known to be offensive, embarrassing, humiliating or demeaning to a worker or group of workers. It includes behaviour that intimidates isolates or discriminates against the targeted individual.

Workplace violence means:

- The exercise or attempt of physical force by a person against a worker in a workplace that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker,
- A threat to exercise physical force against the worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury

First Steps ELC/School Age

Policy and procedure for Waiting list

When a prospective client contacts the daycare, they will be asked a carefully selected list of questions alongside all relative information pertaining to the daycare. The information gathered is recorded on our waiting list sheets. We have two record sheets one for Toddler enrollment and one for pre -school. Each list is placed next to the telephone for easy access to obtain information as clients call.

Determination of order of offered admission is as follows:

- *The date the prospective client returns and FSELc receives the Initial Inquiry Form and requests to be placed on our waiting list, is the date in which their time frame commences.*
- *The licensee /designate will keep track of the waiting lists and make adjustments when necessary.*
- *When a place within the daycare becomes available the waiting lists are consulted and admission will be determined primarily by the date of which commencement on the list started, along with the age of the child, and their requirements i.e. full time/ part time. Certain factors must be taken into account. For example: A mother is looking for a place for her child, and at present, by date puts her at the top of our list however, this mother requires a 15 month old place and the place we have available is for over 18 months. Due to our license we cannot offer this place to this mother at this time. In this case we consult our waiting lists again and by date and the factors mentioned above discover who is next on our list. The mother requesting the 15 month old place is still top of our list and will be offered the place when it becomes available or when her child reaches 18 months.*
- *At any time prospective clients can request to be informed where they are situated on the list. However, it is always explained that this is an everchanging market and patience is appreciated. If by chance a prospective client wishes to see the waiting list in person, we will protect the other awaiting client's details to maintain privacy and confidentiality.*
- *When a prospective client requests removal from our list, we will require that this is presented to us in the form of a letter to confirm their withdrawal.*
- *When a place is successfully offered the admission process will begin with paperwork signed and dated. The required deposit will be paid to secure the space as stated in the attendance agreement. The deposit is deducted from the final and closing invoice. (providing a full months' notice is given) Should a client decide they no longer wish to proceed/take the spot; the deposit will be refunded in full, providing there is a 4 week notice from receipt of deposit. Notice is required in writing If FSELc do not receive such documents the deposit will not be refundable.*
- *Each application is carefully reviewed and the requirements/needs of each individual will be taken into consideration, to accommodate and provide our high-quality care.*

CHILD CARE SUBSIDY

Childcare subsidy is a financial help for families to pay for licensed childcare. Subsidy is available for children 0-12 years and is provided through the County of Wellington. We welcome subsidized families to our program, please consult with the licensee for further information and/or follow the link below.

www.wellington.ca

FEES MAIN SITE 390 Speedvale Avenue

You will find our fee schedule on the back page of this parent handbook. Payments are due in full on the **first** day of the month and can be E-transferred to firststeps2000@rogers.com with Inv# noted in the MEMO section. You are required to pay fees for any day which your child is scheduled to be at the Center, whether they are in attendance or not. When your child is away from the center, payment is still required, you are required to pay full fees for all care scheduled, regardless of days missed due to illness, inclement weather, statutory holidays, school breaks or vacation time. Any discrepancies you may have regarding your invoice please contact the Licensee as soon as possible, it is not permitted to make alterations without consulting the licensee prior.

All invoices will be mailed to you electronically, prior to the 1st of each month. If you do not receive an invoice via email please contact the licensee as soon as possible, so the matter can be dealt with accordingly. * Please note that any overdue accounts will be conducted and handled very seriously, when accumulated accounts are outstanding, additional fees will be introduced and termination of agreement could be in jeopardy. It is your responsibility to keep your account balance current. If you leave the Center with an outstanding balance owing, we will use any and all measures available to us to collect the balance.

DEPOSITS Required for our Main Site

A Refundable Deposit of \$300 for full-time enrollment or \$150 for part-time enrollment is required once First Steps ELC has **confirmed** availability, and commencement date. If it is decided by you, that you no longer require the place for your child, 50% of the deposit will be refunded only when written notice is received 30 days from receipt of deposit. Once enrollment commences, the Deposit is refunded in lieu of required written notice of withdrawal. Any discrepancies you may have regarding your invoice please contact the Licensee as soon as possible, it is not permitted to make alterations without consulting the licensee prior. If you do not receive an invoice via email please contact the licensee as soon as possible, so the matter can be dealt with accordingly.

FEES SCHOOL AGE PROGRAM 55 Delhi Street

You will find our fee schedule on the back page of this parent handbook. Payments are due in full on the **first** day of the month and can be E-transferred to firststeps2000@rogers.com with Inv# noted in the MEMO section. You are required to pay fees for any day which your child is scheduled to be at the Center, whether they are in attendance or not. When your child is away from the center, payment is still required, you are required to pay full fees for all care scheduled, regardless of days missed due to illness, inclement weather, statutory holidays, school breaks or vacation time. Any discrepancies you may have regarding your invoice please contact the Licensee as soon as possible, it is not permitted to make alterations without consulting the licensee prior.

All invoices will be mailed to you electronically, prior to the 1st of each month. If you do not receive an invoice via email please contact the licensee as soon as possible, so the matter can be dealt with accordingly. * Please note that any overdue accounts will be conducted and handled very seriously, when accumulated accounts are outstanding, additional fees will be introduced and termination of agreement could be in jeopardy. It is your responsibility to keep your account balance current. If you leave the Center with an outstanding balance owing, we will use any and all measures available to us to collect the balance.

Two weeks' notice is required to make any alterations to scheduled Pd Days and camps.

DEPOSITS Required for our School Age Program

Parents, who have indicated that they wish to enroll in our school age program, will be required to fill out the registration package. A waiting list may be started if there is increased need. Once First Steps has confirmed availability, and commencement date has been established, a Refundable Deposit is required, deposit amounts will be based upon your child's schedule, deposits are fully refundable based on following our Withdrawal Notice Policy. Any discrepancies you may have regarding your invoice please contact the Licensee as soon as possible, it is not permitted to make alterations without consulting the licensee prior. If you do not receive an invoice via email please contact the licensee as soon as possible, so the matter can be dealt with accordingly.

CWELCC – Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care System:

First Steps Daycare (Guelph) Inc. is enrolled in the Canada-wide Early Learning System. Rates for fees through the CWELCC system will be determined based on direction from the Ministry of Education and any changes or updates will be communicated to our families and our website. Children are eligible for the CWELCC Program for ages 0 – 5yrs. If your child is in their sixth year, they are eligible as stated below:

- Up to June 30 for those born between January and June
- To the end of the child's birth month for those born between July and December

VACATION

We request parents to notify the licensee, in writing, of any vacation or other plans which may affect a child's attendance. It is not possible to grant financial credits for lost days due to absence, sickness or vacation.

HOURS OF OPERATION MAIN SITE

The Childcare is a year-round care facility, open Monday-Friday, with the exception of ALL statutory holidays (all are listed in this handbook).

The hours of operation are 7:00-5:30 (it is important that you arrive at the end of the day allowing plenty of time to dress/prepare your child/children and vacate the building by 5:30). It is recommended that your child should not be in our care for longer than 9 hours per day.

Upon registration, indicate on the Initial Registration form the hours of care your child will require. You will need to abide closely to the hours you requested as our staff coverage is based on the information you provide. Set window times will be assigned to you on application. These times will allow for safe arrival and departures. We must have 24 hours notice if your child requires different hours of care. Please confirm this with the licensee/Staff so the needed ratios for coverage can be in place. Sometimes we may be unable to accommodate your request due to staffing.

HOURS OF OPERATION SCHOOL AGE PROGRAM 55 Delhi Street

We offer before and after school care all year round, in addition we offer PD days, March break, summer and Christmas camps.

Before School – 6:45-9:00 (Morning program and AM bus run with staff present)

After School – 3:00-5:30 (Afternoon bus run with staff present, and PM program)

Full day program - PD days and Camps 6:45-5:30 with a 9hr limit.

LATE PICK-UP FEES

First Steps ELC. closes at 5:30pm sharp at the Main site and 5:30 at the School Age program. After 5:30(main site), 5:30(School Age) (by the Childcare clock) there is a 5-minute grace period, after this time a charge of \$5.00 will be incurred and \$5.00 for each 5 minutes there after. If you are late, the staff will require you to sign a form stating the amount payable for late charges. Late pick up fees will be given to that staff member who was on-site following the licensee approval the next day of enrollment. In exceptional circumstances this fee may be waived, these should be discussed with the licensee.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

We require officially 2 working weeks written notice to withdraw your child from a reserved space, however, to receive a full deposit, 4 weeks noticed is required. Please be advised the licensee must receive the letter 4 full working weeks prior to your termination date. The deposit you paid on commencement will be deducted from your final invoice. Any changes you would like to make with regard to your child's enrollment please see the licensee personally for discussion.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Children depend on regular routines for security; therefore, we recommend that parents establish set hours to drop off and collect their children each day. These regular hours will ensure that our staff schedules reflect safe adult: child ratios throughout the day. If your schedule changes, please notify the Centre. If your child is ill or will not be attending on a particular day, please notify the Centre before 8.00am on

519- 836-8547 for main site attendance, and 519-400-4218 for School Age program attendance. (Texts to the School Age phone are also welcome) It is recommended that no child shall be in attendance at our center longer than 9 hours per day.

The car parking areas of the Centre is a drop-off and pick-up zone only. You are asked not to leave your children unattended in parked vehicles. Upon your arrival at the Centre, the program staff member present relinquishes the care of your child from your responsibility. Staff are responsible to sign your child in attendance. Please be aware that it is not permitted to allow your child to wander alone in the Centre without your supervision, or enter/exit ANY of our programs alone, we request that an adult is present at drop off and pick up, by accommodating this it enables the staff to sign your child in and out on our attendance records, liaise, pass on paperwork, and relay any important information pertaining to your child. At the time of your child's departure, the staff member is again responsible to sign your child out for the day.

For the safety of your child and others, we would also request that vehicles not be left running during your drop off or pick up times.

AUTHORIZATION TO PICK UP YOUR CHILD

Under no circumstances will your child be released to anyone not known to staff without written or verbal authority from parents or guardians. A signed consent form listing authorized persons will be kept on file. Identification will be required of anyone who the staff does not recognize. In the case of an emergency, if none of the authorized people are available, you must contact the Centre and provide the teachers with the person's name, date of birth, and description. This person must provide picture identification.

SUSPECTED USE OF ALCOHOL/DRUGS

First Steps ELC staff have the responsibility to refuse to allow a parent to pick up a child if they feel the well-being or the safety of the child is at risk. If the person picking up the child is impaired the staff must follow these steps.

1. Verify suspicion that the individual is impaired.
2. Make a non-confrontational statement to the individual about his/her condition and their concern for the child. Discuss alternative measures for pick up of the child.
3. Contact alternate person to pick-up the child or ask the individual if they will take a taxi at their own expense.
4. If the adult tries to leave or leaves with the child, the staff will not try to stop them if the individual does not agree.
5. Police will be contacted if individual is insistent on taking the child in a vehicle.

*** If a charge or arrest is made, the staff may be required to testify. The staff dealing with the situation is to make a written report of the incident. In the case of an accident, the Centre will not be held responsible.

HEALTH

The Child Care and Early Years Act (2014) requires that prior to admission, each child must be immunized as recommended by the local Medical Officer of Health. You will be required to complete a medical form and return it with your registration package. Parents may request an exemption from immunization for their child. It is then the responsibility of the parent to complete an exemption form and abide by the exclusion regulations as defined by the local medical officer of health. The Centre has the right to refuse entry of a child if forms are not completed as required.

The health and safety of your child is of the utmost importance and concern to us. You should be aware that a daily health and general appearance check is given upon the child's arrival. As Registered Early Childhood Educators, we have a "Duty to Report" policy in place. All staff are trained upon hire regarding this policy, and it is our duty to report any suspected ill treatment towards any child in our care. (Information can be sort after at the Ministry of Community, Family and Children's Services)

The children are closely supervised at all times, and each staff member is responsible for implementing accident prevention measures, maintaining active interactions and observations, however, accidents can happen. All staff are qualified in both Standard First Aid and CPR and will be able to assist your child in case of any injury. It is imperative that staff are able to reach you during the day in the case of injury or illness. Therefore, we do request that you provide us with updated contact numbers for yourself. In all cases of injury or incident, an Accident/Incident Form will be completed by a staff member and parents are asked to review and must sign the report upon arrival at the Centre, a copy of the report will be given for your records. Our staff will often give a courtesy call to inform you of an injury they feel to be of a larger nature of importance.

Since regulations require daily outdoor play for each child in attendance, it is our policy that a child who is too ill to fully participate in all activities remains at home. In the event your child becomes ill while at the Centre, he/she will be isolated from the other children and you will be notified to come and collect your child immediately, we expect

this to take no longer than 30-60 minutes. (A fee of \$1.00 will be calculated for every five minutes after the 60 minute mark) An Illness Form will be completed by a staff member and reviewed with you upon arrival. We strongly recommend that parents prepare and arrange for emergency back-up childcare arrangements in anticipation of these situations. A doctor's note must be provided for readmission if a child has been absent two weeks due to illness or due to hospitalization for a period of one week or longer. The Centre also reserves the discretionary right to require a doctor's note in any other situation whereby there is a concern for the health of the other children and/or staff.

YOUR CHILD SHOULD BE KEPT HOME IF:

1. Diarrhea
2. Vomiting
3. Eye infections – including any form of Conjunctivitis (eyes – redness, yellowish reoccurring discharge, watering, etc)
4. Fever of 101°F or higher
5. Unexplained rash or sores (physician's note required)
6. An illness that prevents the child from participating in the full program.
7. The child requires more individual care than the staff can provide without compromising the needs of the other children.
8. Child risks infecting other child or caregivers with a particular illness.
9. Head lice until after treatment and all lice are removed.
10. If any pain relief medication is given to a child within 24hrs of arriving at the center the child must remain at home until 24 hours has passed since administration. Often children will need some pain relief for teething or a slight fever, please note that once a pain medication has been given and should a child be brought to the center, medicated this could be mask something of a more serious nature and others present at the daycare could be put a risk. It is deemed that if a child requires such pain relief, they really are not 100% and able to participate in the daily aspects within the program, therefore must stay at home.
11. Should pain relief be required to assist antibiotics and been verified in writing by a doctor, the child may attend daycare 24 hours after the first onset of the pain medication and antibiotics.

Children are to be excluded until they have been free of symptoms for 24 hours. If a child returns with any of these symptoms, parents will be contacted immediately, and the child will be excluded. In the case of an outbreak of infectious disease, children need to be excluded until 48 hours after their last symptom. Children will be picked up within 1 hour of an initial phone call, otherwise late fees will apply. Late fees will be \$1.00 for every five minutes therein after.

Please see attached exclusion guidelines from Wellington-Dufferin Public Health Unit.

MEDICATION

First Steps ELC follows the established policies on the dispensing of medication as established by the Childcare and Early Years Act (2014) CCYEA. These rules and regulations are written to protect the staff as well as the children. All staff and parents must adhere to these requirements.

- A Medication Form must be completed by the parent to give consent prior to the medication being administered.
- A Designated staff member will be in control of administering drugs and medication, and the administration will be witnessed by a colleague, as to ensure dosage etc.
- Medication must be handed directly to the staff member. Staff on duty is responsible for the proper storage of the medication.
- All medication must be in its original container.
- All medicine must be prescribed by a doctor. This means a pharmacist's label must be attached to such drugs as cough medicines and decongestants, showing that your doctor has prescribed the, or a doctor's note must accompany the medication.

The label or doctor's note must clearly state the following information:

1. Child's name
 2. Date purchased
 3. Dosage of medication
 4. Name of medication
 5. Time of administration
 6. Storage of medication
 7. Any side effects
- No medicine will be given if it has been prescribed to another family member. It must have your child's name on it.
 - No out-of-date medicine will be given. Medicine will be stored in a locked container and refrigerated if required.

We are aware that parents are often in a hurry in the morning and we have tried to make the form as simple as possible. Since the Childcare is bound by these regulations, medication will be given only if all the above instructions are followed. Records will be kept for parent review, indicating time and dosage administered.

LIFE-THREATENING ALLERGIES/MEDICAL CONDITIONS

We often have children in our care with allergies, some of them life-threatening. The best cure is prevention.

It is the parent's responsibility to inform us of their child's condition. An emergency plan form will be required to be completed before admission to the daycare

One of the most common serious allergies over which we can exercise some control is to certain foods, especially nuts. Children and adults who are allergic to nuts are at risk from even the slightest contact and the consequences can be life threatening.

1. **NO PEANUTS OR NUT PRODUCTS OF ANY KIND**
2. Parents with anaphylactic children must:
 - a. complete an Individual Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan
 - b. meet with staff to discuss details of their child's allergy
 - c. provides a dedicated EpiPen for their child in Ziploc bag which is clearly labelled with the child's name and the date of the medication's expiry. This pen will remain on the childcare staff for both the main building program and the school-age program. If the child carries his/her own medication and does not have it on his/her person, the child will not be permitted to enter the program. (ex. The transition period between school and after-school program.) This measure is for the child's benefit, as we would not be in a position to administer the lifesaving medication should the need arise.
3. Anaphylactic children should (if have one) wear a Medic Alert bracelet at all times identifying their condition
4. All staff will receive annual training on emergency procedures and how to administer an Epi pen. All staff will read and sign the Allergy list and emergency plan.
5. An Allergy List will be posted inside the classroom detailing each child's medical instruction in addition to the emergency plan.

First Steps Early Learning Center
Health and Medical Information policy

The Child Care and Early Years Act-2014 require that children enrolling in licensed childcare programs must meet a number of requirements prior to admission. First Steps follows the requirements of WGD Public Health

Each child is required to have:

1. Immunization Data Form for Child Care Settings completed
2. A copy of your child's immunization records

If you have chosen not to have your child immunized, you must meet the following requirements.

3. Immunization Data Form for Child Care Settings completed
4. Provide a Statement of Medical Exemption Form. (Available from WDG Public Health) It must be completed and signed by a qualified physician. Or
5. Provide a Religious or Conscientious Exemption Affidavit- that is sworn or affirmed before a commissioner of oaths for taking affidavits and have a signed Immunization Waiver.

If there is an Outbreak that could be prevented by a vaccine affected by legislation (tetanus, diphtheria, polio, measles, mumps or rubella), children who are exempt from immunization requirements or who have incomplete records will be excluded from attending the childcare during the outbreak.

Exclusion Guidelines:

Children may not come to the center if they display any of the following symptoms:

- Fever (armpit) temperature of 38.6 degrees C or 101.5 degrees F or higher. A fever may be accompanied by symptoms such as listlessness or excessive sleepiness, respiratory symptoms such as a sore throat or trouble swallowing, coughing, runny nose and eyes and earache
- Difficulty breathing- wheezing or a persistent cough
- Infected skin or eyes, or an undiagnosed rash
- Severe itching and / or dry skin on either body or scalp if caused by head lice, body lice or scabies
- Unexplained diarrhea or loose stools (may or may not be combined with nausea, vomiting or stomach cramps)
- Nausea and vomiting
- Children and staff with known or suspected reportable or communicable diseases. A list of exclusion guidelines for identifying and handling communicable diseases is provided to parents
- Children must be free from fever, diarrhea and vomiting for 24 hours before returning to the center. During an Outbreak the exclusion period is 48 hours

Please report the nature of any illness to the daycare. Please inform the center of a diagnosis of a serious illness or communicable disease in your child. We are responsible to notify public health immediately when we know that a child is enrolled at First Steps has a reportable communicable disease.

First Steps ELC will follow the exclusion guidelines listed below as provided by the Wellington-Dufferin- Guelph Health Unit. These guidelines are followed unless there is an Outbreak and then the Outbreak exclusion guidelines will be followed.

We will exclude any child with any of the following conditions:

Chicken Pox	Until all of the blisters have dried into scabs, and child is well enough to participate in program
Conjunctivitis (Pinkeye) Or suspected pinkeye	Bacterial (with pus) until 24 hours after treatment begins (Doctor must confirm in writing if a suspected case is not conjunctivitis, only then can a child return to daycare)
Diarrhea (Parent will be called after two incidents of diarrhea unless there are extenuating circumstances, or the center is in an Outbreak situation)	Must be 24 hours free of diarrhea (longer if center is in Outbreak situation). For some infections, the person must also be treated with antibiotics before returning to daycare
Fever	Axillary temperature: 101.5 F or higher Child must be fever free for 24 hours without medication
Impetigo	Until child has been treated with antibiotics for 24 hours
Head Lice	Until after the first treatment and no live lice seen and all nits removed
Rash with or without fever or behavioral change	Until a medical exam indicates these symptoms are not that of a communicable disease
Respiratory infections (viral)	Until child is without fever for 24 hours without medication and is well enough to participate in normal activities
Ringworm	Until 24 hours after treatment has been started
Scabies	Until 24 hours after treatment has been started
Signs/ Symptoms of possible severe illness	Until a medical exam indicates the child may return (unusually tired, uncontrolled coughing, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, wheezing)
Streptococcal sore throat	Until at least 24 hours after treatment begins and the child and the child is without fever for 24 hours without medication
Vomiting (parent will be called after one incident of vomiting unless there are extenuating circumstances or the center in in an Outbreak situation)	Until vomiting stops for at least 24 hours (longer if center is in outbreak situation)

First Steps ELC will treat every child with respect and dignity and will do their best to meet the needs of each child regardless of their dietary, medical or developmental needs. Staff will meet with the parents and any other required resource personnel to determine how to best accommodate the needs of the child.

SANITARY PROCEDURES

To ensure a healthy environment, we adhere to the following basics of infection control:

- Keeping premises, equipment and materials as clean as possible utilizing a strict disinfecting/sanitizing schedule.
- Ensuring that staff and children are appropriately immunized.
- Practicing consistent hand washing techniques for children and staff.
- Separating ill children from their peers and re-admitting only when recovery from infection is complete.
- Encouraging and implementing good hygiene practices.

NUTRITION

Nutrition plays a major part in a child's development; we educate the children in our care by establishing nutritionally sound eating habits as well as helping them understand the relationship between food, health and growth. We offer menu items from different cultural backgrounds, as well as firm favorites, and encourage a family style table, where our staff sit and eat with the children, this allows for good role modeling and an excellent opportunity for social conversation.

Our menus are carefully planned, and a great deal of consideration is taken on board during this process. The menu is available for your perusal; it is conveniently located outside the office. If your child has any food allergies or intolerances, please inform us and we will strive to accommodate their needs.

At First Steps ELC, we provide nutritious homemade meals and snacks that follow Canada's Food Guide and is approved by the Wellington-Dufferin Public Health Unit. Snacks are offered morning and afternoon to complement the daily lunch at the main site, only afternoon snack is provided at the church building for our school age children. Water is available throughout the day for each child and served with every meal alongside milk.

SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN ONLY: (55 DELHI and 390 Kindergarten)

On PD days and camp days, children attending the school age program will be required to bring a lunch for the days they are in attendance, please take note of the following when considering your child's lunch.

We believe it is important to teach children right from the start about the value of making good food choices. If everything in their lunch bag is nutritious then every choice is a good choice! Your child will probably express preferences for particular foods but please bear in mind that your firmness now on the matter of nutrition is laying the groundwork for a lifetime of healthy eating.

SUGGESTED LUNCH OPTIONS AND PRODUCTS TO EXCLUDE

To protect children with severe allergies please refrain from including eggs, soy or shellfish in your child's lunch.

All lunch bags must have your child's first name and last name on their lunch bags and containers. If this is not carried out during the first week of school, then our staff will add your child's name to their lunch bag in indelible ink. This is a licensing requirement and to protect children with severe allergies.

Here are some suggestions.

Recommended	Please refrain from sending
SANDWICHES	NUTS OF ANY KIND!
FRUIT (in ready-to-eat form)	PEANUT BUTTER!
VEGETABLES	EGGS!
YOGURT	CANDY
COTTAGE CHEESE	CHIPS
CHEESE	POP, FRUIT DRINKS OR SUGARY BEVERAGES
PIZZA	SOY PRODUCTS
VEGETABLE SALAD	SHELLFISH
POTATO SALAD	
BAGELS	
CRACKERS	
COOKIES	
MUFFINS	
Rice Cakes	

CLOTHING

Upon registration, your child will be assigned a cubby area for storage purposes. We would ask that it is the parent's responsibility to maintain and encourage the tidiness and cleanliness of this area with your child.

Children should be dressed for active play. Your child will be exposed to art material, paint, crayons etc. Please provide simple play clothes that are washable and free of complicated fasteners. As the children are encouraged to dress and undress themselves, clothing that is easy to remove is appreciated. Each child should have a complete change or several changes of clothes, which can be stored in the classroom. These clothes are required to be placed in a labeled bag. **Footwear must be worn at all times.** We ask that you provide a pair of indoor shoes or non-slip slippers as well as outdoor shoes/boots.

NOTE: that flip-flops and flimsy shoes are unsafe and should not be worn, if worn parents will be contacted to bring a replacement.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

All staff members are trained in emergency procedures. Children and staff participate in regular emergency drills. In the event of a fire or other emergency evacuations the children will be removed to our evacuation site, situated at The Resurrection Christian Academy, 400 **Speedvale Ave E** for our main site. (390 Speedvale Ave) For our school age program (55 Delhi Street) the evacuation site is situated at **The Guelph General Hospital, Delhi Street.**

In the event of an evacuation, you and/or your designate will be contacted by telephone to make arrangements to collect your child immediately.

Please note every effort will be made to make contact, if staff cannot successfully reach you or your designate, it will be deemed as an emergency situation, and our staff will then contact Family and Children's Services, for direction

During a fire drill or similar practice evacuation procedure, parents are asked not to interfere in any way with the evacuation. center staffs are trained and responsible to evacuate and account for all of the children present during these situations. Any attempts by a parent to remove their child without staff knowledge may endanger the safety of their child and /or other children in the program.

First Steps Early Learning Center - Emergency Management Policies.

First Steps Daycare is committed to making sure the health, safety and well-being of ALL Children, staff and families is paramount.

Therefore, we have developed a policy and procedure which will enable us to carry this commitment forward.

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear direction for staff and licensees to follow to deal with emergency situations. The procedures set out steps for staff to follow to support the safety and well-being of everyone involved.

Clear policies and procedures will support all individuals to manage responses and responsibilities during an emergency, resulting in the safest outcomes possible.

During any type of emergency, safety is our top priority. The children in our care will always be supervised and guided appropriately by staff. Emergency services will be called upon if they are required, and families will be informed immediately/ASAP, and given all relevant information via telephone communication.

We have an evacuation kit which comprises of food, blankets, diapers, wipes, books and first aid kit. This kit will be taken with us in the need of evacuation

Along with each classroom attendance there is a contact list for every child and a list of important emergency numbers, this is carried within the attendance binder at all times. In the event of any emergency the children, staff and family's well-being will be highly considered, and should the need for extra support after such an experience is required, necessary solutions/guidance and support will be offered in house or externally.

First Steps Early Learning Center

Emergency Management Policy and Procedures

Date Policy and Procedures Established: Sept 2017

Date Policy and Procedures Updated: April 2020

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear direction for staff and licensees to follow to deal with emergency situations. The procedures set out steps for staff to follow to support the safety and well-being of everyone involved.

Clear policies and procedures will support all individuals to manage responses and responsibilities during an emergency, resulting in the safest outcomes possible.

Definitions

All-Clear: A notification from an authority that a threat and/or disaster no longer pose a danger and it is deemed safe to return to the child care premises and/or resume normal operations.

Authority: A person or entity responsible for providing direction during an emergency situation (e.g. emergency services personnel, the licensee).

Emergency: An urgent or pressing situation where immediate action is required to ensure the safety of children and adults in attendance. These include situations that may not affect the whole child care centre (e.g. child-specific incidents) and where 911 is called.

Emergency Services Personnel: persons responsible for ensuring public safety and mitigating activities in an emergency (e.g. law enforcement, fire departments, emergency medical services, rescue services).

Evacuation Site: the designated off-site location where shelter is obtained during an emergency. The evacuation site is used when it is deemed unsafe to be at or return to the child care centre.

Licensee: The individual or agency licensed by the Ministry of Education responsible for the operation and management of each child care centre it operates (i.e. the operator).

Meeting Place: the designated safe place near the child care centre where everyone is to initially gather before proceeding to the evacuation site, or returning to the child care centre if evacuation is not necessary.

Staff: Individual employed by the licensee (e.g. program staff, supervisor).

Unsafe to Return: A notification from an authority that a threat and/or disaster continue to pose a danger and it is unsafe to return to the child care premises.

Policy

Staff will follow the emergency response procedures outlined in this document by following these three phases:

1. Immediate Emergency Response;
2. Next Steps during an Emergency; and
3. Recovery.

Staff will ensure that children are kept safe, are accounted for and are supervised at all times during an emergency situation.

For situations that require evacuation of the child care centre, the **meeting place** to gather immediately will be located at: **left side of our building on Knightswood - Main site (390 Speedvale)**

55 Delhi - School Age Program our meeting place will be to gather at the treed area opposite our main entrance.

If it is deemed 'unsafe to return' to the child care centre, the **evacuation site** to proceed to is located at: **The Resurrection Christian Academy 400, Speedvale Avenue East - 390 Speedvale Ave, Main site. 55 Delh - School Age Program, the Evacuation site to proceed to is located at Guelph General Hospital, 155 Delhi St, N1E 4J4**

Note: all directions given by emergency services personnel will be followed under all circumstances, including directions to evacuate to locations different than those listed above.

For any emergency situations involving a child with an individualized plan in place, the procedures in the child's individualized plan will be followed.

If any emergency situations happen that are not described in this document, the licensee or designate will provide direction to staff for the immediate response and next steps. Staff will follow the direction given.

If any emergency situations result in a serious occurrence, the serious occurrence policy and procedures will also be followed.

All emergency situations will be documented in detail by the licensee or designate in the daily written record.

Additional Policy Statements

Fire drills are carried out every month.

Procedures

Phase 1: Immediate Emergency Response

Emergency Situation	Roles and Responsibilities
<p>Lockdown When a threat is on, very near, or inside the child care centre. Eg. a suspicious individual in the building who is posing a threat.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) The staff member who becomes aware of the threat must inform all other staff of the threat as quickly and safely as possible.2) Staff members who are outdoors must ensure everyone who is outdoors proceeds to a safe location.3) Staff inside the child care centre must:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• remain calm;• gather all children and move them away from doors and windows;• take children's attendance to confirm all children are accounted for;• take shelter in closets and/or under furniture with the children, if appropriate;• keep children calm;• ensure children remain in the sheltered space;• turn off/mute all cellular phones; and• wait for further instructions.4) If possible, staff inside the program room(s) should also:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• close all window coverings and doors;• barricade the room door;• gather emergency medication; and• join the rest of the group for shelter.5) Licensee or designate will immediately:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• close and lock all child care centre entrance/exit doors, if possible; and• take shelter. <p>Note: only emergency service personnel are allowed to enter or exit the child care centre during a lockdown.</p>

<p>Hold & Secure When a threat is in the general vicinity of the child care centre, but not on or inside the child care premises. E.g. a shooting at a nearby building.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The staff member who becomes aware of the external threat must inform all other staff of the threat as quickly and safely as possible. 2) Staff members who are outdoors must ensure everyone returns to their program room(s) immediately. 3) Staff in the program room must immediately: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remain calm; • take children’s attendance to confirm all children are accounted for; • close all window coverings and windows in the program room; • continue normal operations of the program; and • wait for further instructions. 4) licensee or designate must immediately: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • close and lock all entrances/exits of the child care centre; • close all blinds and windows outside of the program rooms; and • place a note on the external doors with instructions that no one may enter or exit the child care centre. <p>Note: only emergency services personnel are allowed to enter or exit the centre during a hold and secure.</p>
<p>Bomb Threat A threat to detonate an explosive device to cause property damage, death, or injuries E.g. phone call bomb threat, receipt of a suspicious package.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The staff member who becomes aware of the threat or suspicious package must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remain calm; • call 911 if emergency services are not yet aware of the situation; • follow the directions of emergency services personnel; and • take children’s attendance to confirm all children are accounted for. <p>A. Where the threat is received by telephone, the person on the phone should try to keep the suspect on the line as long as possible while another individual calls 911 and communicates with emergency services personnel.</p> <p>B. Where the threat is received in the form of a suspicious package, staff must ensure that no one approaches or touches the package at any time.</p>

Disaster Requiring Evacuation

A serious incident that affects the physical building and requires everyone to leave the premises. E.g. fire, flood, power failure.

1) The staff member who becomes aware of the disaster must inform all other staff of the incident and that the centre must be evacuated, as quickly and safely as possible. If the disaster is a fire, the fire alarm pull station must be used and staff must follow the centre's fire evacuation procedures.

2) Staff must immediately:

- remain calm;
- gather all children, the attendance record, children's emergency contact information any emergency medication;
- exit the building with the children using the nearest safe exit, bringing children's outdoor clothing (if possible) according to weather conditions;
- escort children to the meeting place; and
- take children's attendance to confirm all children are accounted for;
- keep children calm; and
- wait for further instructions.

3) If possible, staff should also:

- take a first aid kit; and
- gather all non-emergency medications.

4) Designated staff will:

- help any individuals with medical and/or special needs who need assistance to go to the meeting place (in accordance with the procedure in a child's individualized plan, if the individual is a child); and
- in doing so, follow the instructions posted on special needs equipment or assistive devices during the evacuation.
- If individuals cannot be safely assisted to exit the building, the designated staff will assist them to safety and ensure their required medication is accessible, if applicable; and
- wait for further instructions.

5) If possible, the site designate must conduct a walk-through of the child care centre to verify that everyone has exited the building and secure any windows or doors, unless otherwise directed by emergency services personnel.

<p>Disaster – External Environmental Threat</p> <p>An incident outside of the building that may have adverse effects on persons in the child care centre. E.g. gas leak, oil spill, chemical release, forest fire, nuclear emergency.</p>	<p>1) The staff member who becomes aware of the external environmental threat must inform all other staff of the threat as quickly and safely as possible and, according to directions from emergency services personnel, advise whether to remain on site or evacuate the premises.</p> <p>If remaining on site:</p> <p>1) Staff members who are outdoors with children must ensure everyone who is outdoors returns to their program room immediately.</p> <p>2) Staff must immediately:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remain calm; • take children’s attendance to confirm all children are accounted for; • close all program room windows and all doors that lead outside (where applicable); • seal off external air entryways located in the program rooms (where applicable); • continue with normal operations of the program; and • wait for further instructions. <p>3) Licensee or designate must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seal off external air entryways not located in program rooms (where applicable); • place a note on all external doors with instructions that no one may enter or exit the child care centre until further notice; and • turn off all air handling equipment (i.e. heating, ventilation and/or air conditioning, where applicable). <p>If emergency services personnel otherwise direct the child care centre to evacuate, follow the procedures outlined in the “Disaster Requiring Evacuation” section of this policy.</p>
<p>Natural Disaster: Tornado / Tornado Warning</p>	<p>1) The staff member who becomes aware of the tornado or tornado warning must inform all other staff as quickly and safely as possible.</p> <p>2) Staff members who are outdoors with children must ensure everyone who is outdoors returns to their program room(s) immediately.</p> <p>3) Staff must immediately:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remain calm; • gather all children; • go to the basement or take shelter in small interior ground floor rooms such as washrooms, closets or hallways; • take children’s attendance to confirm all children are accounted for; • remain and keep children away from windows, doors and exterior walls; • keep children calm; • conduct ongoing visual checks of the children; and • wait for further instructions.

Natural Disaster: Major Earthquake	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Staff in the program room must immediately:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• remain calm;• instruct children to find shelter under a sturdy desk or table and away from unstable structures;• ensure that everyone is away from windows and outer walls;• help children who require assistance to find shelter;• for individuals in wheelchairs, lock the wheels and instruct the individual to duck as low as possible, and use a strong article (e.g. shelf, hard book, etc.) to protect their head and neck;• find safe shelter for themselves;• visually assess the safety of all children.; and• wait for the shaking to stop.2) Staff members who are outdoors with children must immediately ensure that everyone outdoors stays away from buildings, power lines, trees, and other tall structures that may collapse, and wait for the shaking to stop.3) Once the shaking stops, staff must:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• gather the children, their emergency cards and emergency medication; and• exit the building through the nearest safe exit, where possible, in case of aftershock or damage to the building.4) If possible, prior to exiting the building, staff should also:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• take a first aid kit; and• gather all non-emergency medications.5) Individuals who have exited the building must gather at the meeting place and wait for further instructions.6) Designated staff will:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• help any individuals with medical and/or special needs who need assistance to go to the meeting place (in accordance with the procedure in a child's individualized plan, if the individual is a child); and• in doing so, follow the instructions posted on special needs equipment or assistive devices during the evacuation.• If individuals cannot be safely assisted to exit the building, the designated staff will assist them to safety and ensure their required medication is accessible, if applicable; and• wait for further instructions.7) The site designate must conduct a walkthrough of the child care centre to ensure all individuals have evacuated, where possible.
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<p>Health and safety issue Requiring Unexpected Temporally, short term/long term closure, due to outbreak of serious infection.</p>	<p>1) The staff member who becomes aware of the situation must inform all other staff of the incident and that the centre must be evacuated, as quickly and safely as possible.</p> <p>2) Staff must immediately:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remain calm; • take children’s attendance to confirm all children are accounted for; • keep children calm; and • wait for further instructions. • <p>3) Licensee/Designate will: Be guided by the correct authorities, ie: Public health, Government etc. Upon instructions, measures will be followed. If the center is instructed to be closed immediately, families will be called personally by the licensee/Designate and informed accordingly, they must collect their child as so as they can. If a time frame is allocated this will be information shared with the families at time of call.</p> <p>Follow up information will be shared as and when developments happen and are brought to our attention from the correct authorities.</p>
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Phase 2: Next Steps During the Emergency

- 1) Where emergency services personnel are not already aware of the situation, the licensee or designate must notify emergency services personnel (911) of the emergency as soon as possible.
- 2) Where the child care centre has been evacuated, emergency services must be notified of individuals remaining inside the building, where applicable.
- 3) If the licensee is not already on site, the site designate must contact the licensee to inform them of the emergency situation and the current status, once it is possible and safe to do so.

List of Emergency Contact Persons:

Local Police Department: 519-824-1212

Ambulance: 911

Local Fire Services: 519-824-3232

Guelph General Hospital: 519-822-5350

Poison Control: 1800-268-9017

Licensee Contact(s): Tammy Hayes 519-829-6277

Child Care Centre Site Designate: Denise Mercer 519-546-6273

School Age Supervisor: Rebecca Pollington – 519-830-1239

- 4) Where any staff, students and/or volunteers are not on site, the Licensee or designate must notify these individuals of the situation, and instruct them to proceed directly to the evacuation site if it is not safe or practical for them return to the child care centre.
- 5) The Licensee or designate must wait for further instructions from emergency services personnel. Once instructions are received, they must communicate the instructions to staff and ensure they are followed.
- 6) Throughout the emergency, staff will:
 - help keep children calm;
 - take attendance to ensure that all children are accounted for;
 - conduct ongoing visual checks and head counts of children;
 - maintain constant supervision of the children; and
 - engage children in activities, where possible.
- 7) In situations where injuries have been sustained, staff with first aid training will assist with administering first aid. Staff must inform emergency personnel of severe injuries requiring immediate attention and assistance.

8a) Procedures to Follow When “All-Clear” Notification is Given	
Procedures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The individual who receives the ‘all-clear’ from an authority must inform all staff that the ‘all-clear’ has been given and that it is safe to return to the child care centre. 2) Designated staff who have assisted individuals with medical and/or special needs with exiting the building will assist and accompany these individuals with returning to the child care centre. 3) Staff must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • take attendance to ensure all children are accounted for; • escort children back to their program room(s), where applicable; • take attendance upon returning to the program room(s) to ensure that all children are accounted for; where applicable; and • re-open closed/sealed blinds, windows and doors. 4) The Licensee or designate will determine if operations will resume and communicate this decision to staff.
Communication with parents/guardians	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) As soon as possible, Front line staff (under the guidance of the licensee or designate) must notify parents/guardians of the emergency situation and that the all-clear has been given. 2) Where disasters have occurred that did not require evacuation of the child care centre, the licensee or designate must provide a notice of the incident to parents/guardians by written notice on the parents notice board, staff will be required to orally inform parents, guardians at collection. 3) If normal operations do not resume the same day that an emergency situation has taken place, the licensee or designate must provide parents/guardians with information as to when and how normal operations will resume as soon as this is determined.

8b) Procedures to Follow When “Unsafe to Return” Notification is Given	
Procedures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The individual who receives the ‘unsafe to return’ notification from an authority must inform all staff of this direction and instruct them to proceed from the meeting place to the evacuation site, or the site determined by emergency services personnel. 2) Staff must take attendance to confirm that all children are accounted for, and escort children to the evacuation site. 3) Designated staff who have assisted individuals with medical and/or special needs with exiting the building will assist and accompany these individuals to the evacuation site. 4) The licensee or designate will post a note for parents/guardians on the child care centre entrance with information on the evacuation site, where it is possible and safe to do so. 5) Upon arrival at the evacuation site, staff must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remain calm; • take attendance to ensure all children are accounted for; • help keep children calm; • engage children in activities, where possible; • conduct ongoing visual checks and head counts of children; • maintain constant supervision of the children; • keep attendance as children are picked up by their parents, guardians or authorized pick-up persons; and • remain at the evacuation site until all children have been picked up.
Communication with parents/guardians	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Upon arrival at the emergency evacuation site, the licensee, designate or staff will notify parents/guardians of the emergency situation, evacuation and the location to pick up their children. 2) Where possible, the licensee / designate will update the child care centre’s voicemail box as soon as possible to inform parents/guardians that the child care centre has been evacuated, and include the details of the evacuation site location and contact information in the message.

Additional Procedures for Next Steps During an Emergency

During any emergency, notes will be taken and documented, children’s well-being will be monitored and noted. Provisions will be distributed from the evacuation bins.

Phase 3: Recovery (After an Emergency Situation has Ended)

Procedures for Resuming Normal Operations	The licensee or designate will take all the necessary measures to allow the daycare to resume normal day to day running. For example: Contacting the ministry of education program advisor, and any other personal required.
Procedures for Providing Support to Children and Staff who Experience Distress	The licensee or designate will provide the necessary solutions/ guidance and support for any person experiencing distress from an emergency situation. Support will be offered in house or externally as required.
Procedures for Debriefing Staff, Children and Parents/ Guardians	<p>The licensee or designate must debrief staff, children and parents/guardians after the emergency.</p> <p>This will take place at the daycare center as soon as possible.</p>

EXCURSIONS

At First Steps, we offer many opportunities to venture out from the daycare, whether it is a walk in the neighbourhood, a visit to the local dentist, fire station, seniors home, CJOY radio station, the library, or a field trip to the farm, Toronto aquarium, butterfly conservatory, the Guelph Museum, to name a few. The children enjoy these experiences and the opportunity to explore, learn and gain knowledge and understanding about the world around us. Wherever we travel, this includes outside time in our garden, the children's safety is of the utmost importance, staff always have an accurate attendance, emergency information and a cell phone.

Permission forms for field trips which require transportation will be handed out to you prior to the upcoming trip. On admission you will be asked to sign a local excursion form, this will allow First Steps staff to accompany the children on local walks etc. Parent helpers are more than welcome to join us on any of our excursions. We always carry a first aid kit, and any life-threatening medication that is required.

OUTSIDE CLASSROOM

Each child will have the opportunity to enjoy outside activities, when weather permits. Our outside experiences are just as important as our inside experiences, we like to have areas within our outside play space that offers the children guided activities as well as the freedom to learn and develop independently, with guidance and direction when required.

During the winter months we are mindful of the changing weather conditions. We carefully monitor the weather network and are guided by the warnings posted in the winter months and summer. We will follow cut off temperatures = Toddler -10 / preschool – 15.

OUTDOOR PLAY

As part of our program statement, First Steps ELC., are strong believers in the outdoor classroom.

We believe in the importance of bringing the inside classroom outside. "Being outside and connecting with nature is not only beneficial to a child's overall development, but it is a necessary part of their growth," this applies to all seasons! Although in Ontario the summer gets too hot and the winter gets too cold, this in no way should stop us from enjoying our outdoor environment.

When weather prohibits children from participating in outdoor play, alternative gross motor activities will be offered in the classroom or other available play space. In addition, children of all ages will not participate in outdoor play if they are not dressed appropriately for the weather or if a formal letter from the physician states the child is unable to participate in such activity and thus care may not be available if ratios do not permit.

STARTING WITH US

Helping children to adjust to being separated from their normal environment and the adults that are important to them can be difficult. It may be just as difficult for the parents who may feel a sense apprehension at leaving their child. The staffs empathize with these feelings and will work with you to develop an approach to starting daycare that will meet the needs of all involved.

Prior to the commencement date you will be offered to schedule visit times with your child, these visits are complimentary, and are normally a 1 hour visit with you present and your child, this gives you and us the opportunity to discuss important information pertaining to your child. The second visit is when you leave your child with us for 2-3 hours. We liaise with you and are guided by the child as to if further visits are required. Visits normally take place the week before the start date.

As each child grows with us they will follow the natural flow through the daycare rooms, the decision to progress to the next program will be determined on where each child lays developmentally, chronological age, space matching, dynamics of the program.

Each parent will be notified in advance of when the graduation will occur.

TOILET TRAINING – Gaining Independence

We're so pleased to see children beginning to gain independence and self-help skills. These skills such as dressing themselves, feeding etc. set the foundation for confidence in their ability to try new things, and build their self-esteem and pride.

Prior to transitioning to toilet training at daycare we please ask that your child is able to successfully toilet at home for at least two weeks. Ideally, your child is able to dress/undress themselves independently. Please be aware that this success may quiver as the child adapts to toileting within our fun, distraction filled, busy routine at daycare. You're encouraged to send spare clothes; we have found that cloth reusable bags are very handy in transporting clean/soiled clothes home and/or plastic bags for soiled clothing.

REST TIME

The reason for a rest period is to lie quietly and gain rest, not necessarily to go to sleep. However, it is evident that if a child lies quietly in an atmosphere conducive to sleep and they are in need of it, he/she may fall asleep. The Child Care Early Years Act stipulates the following:

- Each child over 18 months of age to 5 years of age that is in attendance for 6 hours or more in a day has a rest period not exceeding two hours in length following the mid-day meal.
- Children (over 44 months) who are unable to sleep have the option to engage in quiet activities for the majority of the rest period.
- If your child requires extra supports for rest time - IE a weighted blanket, a permission form will be required. Details will be discussed during your orientation.

We acknowledge the individuality of each child in relation to this, so, if you have any questions or concerns, please speak to the staff.

Food from home:

Our cook is trained in food handling and holds a current Food Handling Certificate. A comprehensive list of allergens will be maintained in the food preparation area. All meals will be prepared on site using nut-free ingredients purchased by the center.

All nut-free ready to eat items (like granola bars, bread, crackers) will be purchased by the center with the exception of ready to eat items for children with allergies/food restrictions (please note that the food must be peanut free) such as, soy/rice milk, dairy or egg-free breads and "cheeses". Parents must provide these items for their child/children and must provide the center cook or program staff with an ingredient list of the foods that they bring into the center. Our Center cook will review the ingredient list of all foods each time a product is purchased and/or delivered by our wholesaler.

Please note that our center is peanut free, therefore we must be aware of treats that parents or other staff bring in. Any items with the statement "may contain peanuts or tree nuts" can be eaten during lunches and breaks outside of the program rooms. Staff are to wash their hands before returning to the program.

First Steps Early Learning Center
Sleep/Rest Policy

The Child Care Early Years Act stipulates the following:

- Children in toddler and pre- school groups who are in attendance for 6 hours or more in a day must have a rest period not exceeding two hours in length.
- Toddler and pre-school groups are permitted to sleep, rest, or engage in quiet activities.

We acknowledge the individuality of each child in relation to this, so, if you have any questions or concerns at any given time while your child is in our care please speak to a staff member who will be happy to assist you. Upon orientation a member of staff will discuss/review our rest policy which can be found in our parent handbook, and your child's sleep/resting arrangements answering your questions/concerns, should any adjustments/requirements need attention they will be discussed and implemented as needed. As your child flows through our programs their rest care will be discussed and reviewed with you prior to program change.

- Each child at First Steps is assigned to his/her own sleeping cot. The cot will be marked by name or number. A cot plan is displayed within the sleep area.
- Weekly laundering and sanitization of the cots will be carried out by staff members.
- If in cold season or the children have been unwell, more frequent sanitization routines will be carried out.
- Before each child is offered their cot, bathroom routines will be followed.
- Each child will have their own blanket and sheet, which is placed in a bed bag when not in use. (a child can be accompanied by a pacifier, favourite soft toy, blankie etc)
- Every employee supervising a sleep/rest area will perform periodic direct visual checks by being physically present beside the child ensuring the well-being of each child. Monitoring and looking for any indications of stress or unusual behaviours. These checks will be carried out in 15-minute intervals.
- The staff members will maintain sufficient light is available in order to carry out such checks, any findings at any given time during the rest period will be recorded with time and details, as will the length of time each child has slept/rested.
- During the periodic checks, staff will record time of check and any observations noticed.
- Any information regarding significant changes in a child's sleep pattern or behaviour will be discussed with the parents at the child's pick-up time.
- Upon wake up each child will be assessed, details recorded, and assisted with routine bathroom activities to prepare for the afternoon.
- Cots will be cleared away promptly and blankets etc. stored in each child's personal bed bag.

First Steps Early Learning Center

Conflict Resolution Policy/Parent Concerns and Issues

Should any of First Steps ELC families/parents have a concern or/ and grievance, it is important that the matter be given the upmost attention, and dealt with in a professional, calm, respectful manner.

Parents are requested to raise any minor concerns they may have regarding their child's care initially with their child's teacher, this should then be followed up by speaking to the supervisor if the concern has not been satisfactorily resolved.

Should any client have a concern or grievance regarding a member of staff, they are requested to contact the supervisor as soon as possible. The supervisor will always be contactable via phone or email should the supervisor be out of the office.

Should a grievance/ concern be with the licensee, the assistant supervisor should be informed

All concerns or/and grievances will be dealt with in the following manner:

- *With confidentiality.*
- *An investigation will be implemented.*
- *Meetings with the staff member or members as a group if required to discuss the matter at hand. Discuss possible strategies to resolve the matter.*
- *Should the matter involve a discrepancy with a staff member, the supervisor will initiate an immediate conversation with the parent via phone or in person, to obtain the full details of the concern. A written report will be taken during the conversation and both parent and supervisor will sign and date the report.*
- *The supervisor will investigate the situation, a meeting with the staff member in question will be conducted, and written details will be documented. The supervisor will disclose findings with the parent in question.*
- *If the concern or/and grievance can be successfully resolved, all documents collected will be placed in the employees file and reviewed in 3 months from date on paperwork. A follow up conversation will take place between the parent and the supervisor within 24-48 hrs of the issue at hand.*
- *Strategies and professional development will be offered to assist the staff member with the particular matter.*
- *Should the matter not be resolved and possibly requires temporally dismissal or termination of contract the supervisor will sort professional advice from The County of Wellington Child Care Services or The Ministry of Education and make the final judgement call.*
- *Any such situation will be given careful consideration as to maintain the smooth operation within the daycare, and to allow a fair, precise and accurate outcome.*
- *Strategies and professional development will be offered to assist the staff member with the particular matter.*
- *Should the matter not be resolved and possibly requires temporally dismissal or termination of contract the supervisor will sort professional advice from The County of Wellington Child Care Services or The Ministry of Education and make the final judgement call.*
- *Any such situation will be given careful consideration as to maintain the smooth operation within the daycare, and to allow a fair, precise and accurate outcome.*

LICENCED CHILD CARE-GENERAL INQUIRIES, PROGRAM CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS. You can contact the county of wellington children's Early Years Division if you have an inquiry, concern or complaint regarding a licensed childcare program. Calls/emails can be made in confidence.

Childcare information line-519-837-3620 ext 3095

Or-1 800-265-7294 ext 3095

Email childcareinquiries@wellington.ca

Conduct

Our centre 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 licensee.

Concerns about the Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a child

Everyone, including members of the public and professionals who work closely with children, is required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.

If a parent/guardian expresses concerns that a child is being abused or neglected, the parent will be advised to contact the [local Children's Aid Society](#) (CAS) directly.

Persons who become aware of such concerns are also responsible for reporting this information to CAS as per the "Duty to Report" requirement under the *Child and Family Services Act*.

For more information, visit

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

Procedures to follow regarding Issue/concern

Nature of Issue or Concern	Steps for Parent and/or Guardian to Report Issue/Concern:	Steps for Staff and/or Licensee in responding to issue/concern:
<p>Program Room-Related</p> <p>E.g: schedule, sleep arrangements, toilet training, indoor/outdoor program activities, feeding arrangements, etc.</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the classroom staff directly <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the supervisor or licensee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Address the issue/concern at the time it is raised or - arrange for a meeting with the parent/guardian within 2. Business days. <p>Document the issues/concerns in detail. Documentation should include:</p> <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 information given to the parent/guardian regarding next steps or referral.
<p>General, Centre- or Operations-Related</p> <p>E.g: child care fees, hours of operation, staffing, waiting lists, menus, etc.</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the supervisor or licensee. 	<p>Provide contact information for the appropriate person if the person being notified is unable to address the matter.</p>
<p>Staff-, Duty parent-, Supervisor-, and/or Licensee-Related</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the individual directly <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the supervisor or licensee. <p>All issues or concerns about the conduct of staff, duty parents, etc. that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the supervisor as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.</p>	<p>Ensure the investigation of the issue/concern is initiated by the appropriate party within [1] business days or as soon as reasonably possible thereafter. Document reasons for delays in writing.</p> <p>Provide a resolution or outcome to the parent(s)/guardian(s) who raised the issue/concern.</p>
<p>Student- / Volunteer-Related</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the staff responsible for supervising the volunteer or student <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the supervisor and/or licensee. <p>All issues or concerns about the conduct of students and/or volunteers that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the supervisor as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.</p>	

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 Licensee/designate.

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.

Contacts: Tammy Hayes- Licensee- 519-829-6277 Denise Mercer- Assistant Supervisor – 519-546-7263

Rebecca Pollington - Supervisor School Age (55 Delhi) – 519-830-1239

Ministry of Education, Licensed Child Care Help Desk: 1-877-510-5333 or childcare_ontario@ontario.ca

SMOKING/VAPE/DRUGS

First Steps ELC is a smoke/vape/drug-free environment. We do not permit smoking/vaping/drug use within the Childcare center or within 20 meters of its buildings. The health and well-being of the children is our utmost concern; therefore, we ask that you comply with this policy.

INCLEMENT WEATHER/OTHER CLOSURES

Please listen to CJOY 1460 AM. for any possible closures due to inclement weather. The Centre will be closed if the City of Guelph has declared a “shut down” of the city. However, the safety and well-being of our clients and staff is of utmost importance. Please use your own discretion

DATES OF CLOSURE

LABOUR DAY

THANKSGIVING DAY

CHRISTMAS DAY

BOXING DAY (should this fall on a weekend the next working day will be taken as the stat)

NEW YEARS DAY

AUGUST CIVIC HOLIDAY

GOOD FRIDAY

FAMILY DAY

VICTORIA DAY

CANADA DAY

*****Please feel free to contact us with any further questions/concerns*****

***** Visit us at www.firststepsguelph.ca*****

“With Every Step Your Child Will Grow with Us!”

THANK –YOU FOR CHOSING FIRST STEPS EARLY LEARNING CENTER ☺