

**St. Martin's Manor  
Young Parent, Infant & Children's Centre**

500 Mohawk Road West  
Hamilton ON L9C 1X4  
Tel: 905-575-7500 Fax: 905-575-8499

A program of Catholic Family Services of Hamilton

**Early Learning  
Centre**



**Early Learning and Care  
Programs  
PARENT HANDBOOK**



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# Early Learning Centre

St. Martin’s Manor Early Learning Centre is a program of Catholic Family Services of Hamilton

## Vision

People in our community are healthy, happy, and safe.

## Mission

Catholic Family Services, guided by Catholic values and principles, provides counselling, community connection and education programs so that the quality of life of all people in our diverse community may be improved and strengthened.

## Values

### *CARES*

- Compassion** We treat one another with sensitivity, empathy and kindness and provide non-judgemental support without prejudice.
- Accountability** We fulfill our commitments and take responsibility for our actions.
- Respect** We treat one another with dignity, honesty, understanding, support equality, inclusion, and self-determination.
- Excellence** We provide exemplary services through innovation, teamwork, best practice and quality improvement.
- Service** Our service is timely, relevant and meaningful to the person served.



## PROGRAM STATEMENT

**St. Martin's Manor Early Learning Centre** uses a play-based learning model incorporating the principles of "*How Does Learning Happen? – Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years*" and focuses on its four foundations - Engagement, Expression, Belonging and Well-Being as the key components to support future success and to help children to successfully overcome barriers that may be present in their lives. Team members work in collaboration with parents, extended family supports and community supports to foster a view of children as competent, capable, curious and rich in potential.

Utilizing the *St. Martin's Manor Children and Family Charter of Rights*, St. Martin's Manor Early Learning Centre works directly with children and families to foster healthy attachment with caregivers, support children to engage in interactive play and establish a fun learning environment for the entire family by building connections and supporting inquiry and exploration.

The foundation for the program is built upon solid, supportive relationships with parents regardless of their age, backgrounds or life experiences. Active involvement of children and their families in our programs supports the cultivation of authentic, caring relationships, nurtures children's healthy development, fosters strong communication and contributes toward the development of a high quality and inclusive environment where children thrive.

This program statement will be reviewed annually and updated as required.



## CHILDREN & FAMILY CHARTER OF RIGHTS

St. Martin's Manor Early Learning Centre believes that children are "competent, capable of complex thinking, curious and rich in potential". To this end, children and families participating in the program have the right to the following:

- 1. The promotion of health, safety, nutrition and well-being of the children**
  - Nutritious meals and snacks, in accordance with Canadian Food Guide recommendations, are served daily
  - Program areas, furnishings, toys and equipment are maintained in a clean and safe manner
  - Outdoor experiences and active play activities are provided daily
  - Physical, emotional and developmental well-being are monitored on an ongoing basis, recommendations and referrals are made as needed
  
- 2. The provision for positive and responsive interactions among children, parents, child care providers and staff**
  - Opportunities for ongoing communication between parents, caregivers and child care providers (at drop-off/pick-up, scheduled meetings or via telephone or email communication)
  - Child care providers engage in authentic communication with children throughout the day
  - Child care providers encourage language and social skill development through role modeling and during daily interactions
  
- 3. The expectation that children will be encouraged to interact and communicate in a positive way and will be supported in their ability to self-regulate**
  - Child care providers will maintain a calm, nurturing approach when interacting with children, especially during times when children are upset or frustrated
  - Child care providers will model positive interaction and communication throughout the day
  - The positive interaction policy guides the manner in which children are supported during times of conflict
  - Social skill competency and language development are the primary focus of activities and interactions
  - Children are supported to communicate in the manner that best suits their ability (spoken language, sign language, augmentative communication and other forms of language expression are encouraged and supported throughout the day)
  
- 4. The expectation that children's exploration, play and inquiry will be fostered**
  - Emergent curriculum approaches are utilized when planning activities for children
  - Children's exploration and learning are documented and posted throughout the childcare centre for families, educators and children to revisit

- 5. The provision of child-initiated and adult-supported experiences**
  - Daily activities are planned using an emergent curriculum approach and are based on observations of the children's emerging skills and interests
  - Daily schedules are flexible and adaptable to meet the children's needs in terms of rest, nutrition, active play and exploration
- 6. The purposeful planning and creation of positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development will be supported**
  - Ongoing observation of children's development is monitored using Ages and Stages Questionnaire
  - Daily activities are planned using an emergent curriculum approach and are based on observations of the children's emerging skills and interests
- 7. The incorporation of indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play, rest and quiet time, into the day and consideration is given to the individual needs of the children receiving care**
  - Outdoor play is scheduled in to the day (weather permitting) one hour in the morning and one hour in the afternoon
  - Outdoor play periods can be extended based on the children's interests, needs and weather conditions
  - A variety of play experiences are available throughout the day for children to choose from which incorporate active and quiet play opportunities
  - Rest time is scheduled at times that meet the needs of the children
- 8. The provision for fostering engagement and ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children**
  - Parents are invited to participate in the program in ways that best suit their schedules. This may include, but is not limited to: special events, active participation in the program to support parenting skill development, a space to breastfeed and spend quiet or active play time with their children and participation in parenting groups
  - Families are invited to participate in annual stakeholder surveys
- 9. Provisions for the involvement of local community partners and allowances for those partners to support the children, their families and staff**
  - Community partnerships are maintained with several agencies including, but not limited to: Early Words, Ron Joyce Children's Centre, McMaster Children's Hospital – Infant Parent Program, Affiliated Services for Children and Youth, Children's Aid Society of Hamilton and Catholic Children's Aid Society
  - Community partners are welcomed into the program to support children, families and staff as needed
- 10. The expectation that those who interact with children are supported to engage in continuous professional learning.**
  - Child care providers will participate in regular meetings to set professional learning goals and plan for training opportunities

- Time and appropriate compensation will be permitted to attend training and professional learning events both during the day, evenings or weekends as appropriate
- Professional learning will be shared with the full team at monthly team meetings in order to support continuous professional learning of the whole team.

**11. The expectation that the impact of the strategies set out in the program statement will be documented and reviewed.**

- Document will be reviewed and discussed annually and any necessary changes will be completed and communicated to families and stakeholders.

## **AGES OF CHILDREN**

CFS – St. Martin's Manor Early Learning Centre has facilities to accommodate the following children:

10 infants – 8 weeks to 18 months

14 toddlers – 18 months to 30 months

16 preschoolers – 2.5 years until eligible for school entry

## **DAYS AND HOURS OF OPERATION**

Both full and part-time care is provided in our programs.

Hours of operation are: 7:30am – 5:30pm

## **CLOSING OF THE PROGRAM**

The program may close for inclement weather or any other such emergencies as deemed necessary for the health and safety of children, families and staff.

The program is closed on the following statutory holidays:

New Year's Day	Family Day
Good Friday	Easter Monday
Victoria Day	Canada Day
Civic Holiday	Labour Day
Thanksgiving	Christmas Day
Boxing Day	

The program is also closed during Catholic Family Services shut down period (the week between Christmas and New Years). Specific dates will be provided as they become known each year.

In addition, the program may be closed for Professional Development Days throughout the year. Advanced notice will be given to parents when these days will occur.

## **FEES**

The Early Learning Centre accepts Child Care Subsidy for those families who qualify. The Team Leader will provide contact information for those families who are interested.

Fees for families who do not qualify for Child Care Subsidy are payable on a monthly basis at a rate of \$65.00 per day for infants, \$55.00 per day for toddlers and \$45 per day for preschoolers. Fees will be payable on the first of the month and post-dated cheques will be required at the time of registration into the program.

The fees set out are for care provided between the hours of 7:30am and 5:30pm. Parents who arrive to pick up after 5:30pm will be charged a late fee of \$10.00 for every 15 minutes (or part of) that they are late.

## **WAITLIST POLICY**

The Early Learning Centre maintains a waitlist of families interested in enrolling their children in the program utilizing the City of Hamilton's Online Waitlist [www.onehsn.com/hamilton](http://www.onehsn.com/hamilton)

Families are prioritized for childcare spots according to the following criteria:

1. Young Parents (under 25 years of age) currently enrolled in Catholic Family Services programming
2. Former clients of Catholic Family Services
3. Other families in the community

No fees are charged to place a child on the waitlist. Families may contact the Team Leader at any time to request an update on their waitlist status.

## **ADMISSION AND DISCHARGE POLICIES**

Prior to enrolment, the Team Leader will meet with the family to help familiarize parents and children to the program, answer questions and complete admission forms. At this time, dates will be established for a minimum of two play visits for the child to come and interact in the program with the comfort of having his/her parent(s) close by.

Written notice of withdrawal or change in schedule must be given two weeks in advance. A permanent space cannot be guaranteed if a child is temporarily withdrawn from the program. In this incidence the child will be placed on a waitlist and will be accommodated on a first come, first served basis when the parent is ready to re-enrol.

CFS – St. Martin's Manor reserves the right to terminate services if policies are not followed, fees are not paid as agreed upon at enrolment or if the program is unsuitable for the child.

## **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE**

Young children depend on predictable routines for their own comfort and security. Parents are encouraged to establish fixed arrival and departure times for their child. Upon arrival, parents are expected to notify staff that they have arrived. The Early Learning Centre employees cannot be responsible for children they do not know have arrived to the program.

Arrival is an opportunity to share information about the child with his/her teachers. Parents in the infant program must fill out the communication board to indicate wake up time and recent diaper changes and feedings as well as any other relevant information. Parents in the toddler program are asked speak directly with their child's teacher.

Upon enrolment, parents will be requested to provide the names of individuals who will be permitted to pick up the child. Unless previously arranged, children will not be released to any person other than those listed on the admission forms. Photo identification will be requested of anyone the employees do not recognize.

Every effort will be made to reach the parent or the emergency contact if there is a late pick-up. Parents who are repeatedly late picking up their children, may require the approval of the Associate Director at St. Martin's Manor if they wish their child to continue in the program.

If there is evidence of substance abuse (i.e. alcohol or drugs) or if employees feel there is any risk to the child by a parent at the time of pick-up, St. Martin's Manor On-Call staff will be called and C/CAS may need to be notified.

### **ACTIVITIES OF PREMISES**

Each day activities are planned for the children based on their interests and skill development. These activities may include indoor and outdoor play experiences, neighbourhood walks and interactions with employees, community partners, ECE students and volunteers. From time to time, activities are planned at a location outside of St. Martin's Manor and its immediate neighbourhood. Parents will be notified in writing as soon as possible and most give written consent prior to the children being involved in these experiences. Parents who choose not to allow their children to participate or who arrive after the agreed upon departure time, will be responsible for arranging alternate child care for the day.

### **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

In the event of an emergency which requires evacuation of the childcare, the Early Learning Centre employees will follow evacuation procedures as laid out in our Emergency Management Policy. Parents will be notified by the Team Leader (or a designate) and will be instructed to pick up their children at the evacuation site which is located at People's Church - 510 Mohawk Road West.

### **NUTRITION**

A nutritious mid-day meal and morning and afternoon snack will be provided. Menus will be made available to families on a monthly basis to help assist with meal planning at home. These menus are designed to follow the current Canada Food Guide.

Parents in the infant program are asked to supply formula.

Children's special dietary needs and allergies will be posted in the kitchen and in the classrooms and appropriate dietary accommodations will be made to meet these needs.

In accordance to Public Health best practice recommendations, the Infant Program staff will not be permitted to feed solid food to an infant who is under 6 months of age without written permission from the child's physician. In addition, parents of infants will be asked to provide ongoing updates regarding the food their child has been introduced to. All new foods must be introduced at home first.

## **STUDENTS AND VOLUNTEERS**

Students and volunteers are an important part of our program. Students and volunteers participate in all parts of the day including eating, toileting and rest time routines. Students and volunteers who are interacting with children will always do so under direct supervision of a paid employee of the Early Learning Centre.

## **POSITIVE INTERACTIONS**

All employees, students and volunteers are expected to follow Catholic Family Services' positive interaction policy.

Positive, responsive interactions will be modeled by all Employees, Students and Volunteers at all times. This modeling includes, but is not limited to:

- Speaking to children using positive language that is appropriate to their age and developmental level
- Modeling expected behaviours
- Focusing on what the children are expected to do rather than on what they are not to do
- Setting clear and consistent limits and expectations
- Providing comfort and support during times of distress or frustration

### **At no time will the following practices be permissible:**

- Corporal punishment of the child
- 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
- Locking the exits of the child care 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
- 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
- Depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding
- Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against the will

## **CLOTHING AND POSSESSIONS**

Children should be dressed in clothing that is appropriate for physical activity and the weather. Program employees will provide a list of appropriate clothing for each new season to assist families in providing the appropriate items.

**CLOTHING:** Please supply **two changes of clothing, including socks** for your child.

**FOOD:** Please provide **enough formula to meet your child's nutritional requirements for the day.** Each bottle must contain prepared formula and be labelled with your child's name.

**DIAPERS:** Please provide all **wipes, diapers and cream** for your child.

Children in the toddler room are encouraged to bring a stuffed toy or blanket to be used during sleep time.

All items should be clearly labelled with your child's name.

Children will be outdoors each day for outdoor play, neighbourhood walks or both so please ensure they are dressed appropriately for the weather. Children will not be taken outside of the immediate neighbour (i.e. will not cross a major intersection) without your written approval.

### **IMPORTANT NOTE:**

Any belongings that are left in the Early Learning Centre after discharge from the program will be disposed of or donated after 30 days.

## **HEALTH INFORMATION**

Communicable diseases are easily spread in a child care setting, particularly in infant and toddler programs where children are unaware of appropriate hygiene practices and mouth toys frequently.

Parent/caregiver(s) are responsible for having alternate arrangement for their ill child.

Catholic Family Services of Hamilton/St. Martin's Manor employees may care for moderately ill children, but the care of seriously ill children is the parent/caregiver's responsibility.

A moderately ill child must be able to actively participate in the program and show no signs of lethargy. Children will not be kept indoors because they are ill. If your child is unable to go outdoors due to illness he/she should be kept at home.

Children who exhibit the following signs are considered seriously ill and are to be excluded from the program:

- Fever (**100F/37.8C or higher**)
- Diarrhea – two or more liquid stools or a change in the normal pattern of bowel movement with no other explanation
- Vomiting – two or more times in 24 hours
- Eye discharge – yellow or white (not treated)
- Severe cough
- Yellowish skin or eye or “jaundice”
- Unexplained rash

In addition to the above symptoms, employees will maintain a list of illnesses and conditions which are required by Public Health to follow predetermined exclusion periods and will follow up with parents as appropriate to the situation.

A child who has been seriously ill or is known to have had a contagious disease, may be requested to provide a physician’s note attesting to the child’s wellness prior to returning to the program.

If the child becomes ill during the day, the parent(s) will be contacted to arrange for the child to be picked up.

Upon enrolment parents will be required to provide confirmation of immunizations or, in the event the child is not immunized for medical or reasons of conscience, sign the appropriate forms as required by the City of Hamilton, Public Health Office.

### **ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION**

The Early Learning Centre employees are only permitted to administer medication under the following conditions:

- The parent of the child gives written authorization for the administration of the drug or medication and that included with the authorization is a schedule that sets out the times the drug or medication is to be given and the amounts to be administered
- A drug or medication is administered to a child only from the original container as supplied by a pharmacist or the original package and that the container or package is clearly labelled with the child’s name, the name of the drug or medication, the dosage of the drug or medication, the date of purchase and expiration, if applicable and the instructions for storage and administration

Written instructions for administering medication must be provided by the parent/guardian. The instructions will include:

- Drug or medication name and prescription number
- Method of administration and time to be administered
- A list of known side effects to the medication
- Storage instructions

All Early Learning Centre employees have been trained in the use of an epi-pen. Parents are asked to speak to the Team Leader if their child has anaphylactic allergies or other serious medical conditions so that appropriate documentation and training can be completed.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Anything discussed between employees and parents is private and confidential.

St. Martin's Manor employees work within a team approach and portions of some discussions may be shared with members of the team, only as a means of providing support to the family. This practice provides for consultation and ongoing review for the benefit of the child and the family.

In order for us to release information outside of Catholic Family Services – St. Martin's Manor, parents will first be requested to sign consent to do so. All information provided strictly confidential and is protected in accordance with Canada's **Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act** (PIPEDA).

**However, there are exceptions, some required by law, where information may be given without consent. These include:**

1. Cases of suspected child abuse/neglect that will be reported to C/CAS.
2. Reasonable belief that informing is necessary to prevent a risk of death or serious injury.
3. A subpoena or summons that is served by the court.
4. A medical emergency.

## COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Catholic Family Services of Hamilton (CFS) is committed to offering the best service possible to the community. Therefore, we understand the importance of an effective process for the solving of service issues. We encourage our stakeholders and employees to work together to come to a mutually satisfactory resolution to any concerns. If you are not happy with the service you are receiving, we are interested in hearing your comments (Stakeholder is anyone in the community). Below are the steps to have a service issue resolved.

**Step 1 – Discussion with Employee** We request that you discuss your concern with the employee who is responsible for providing services to you. This will give you a chance to resolve your concerns directly. If it helps you, write out your concerns so that you can present them clearly when you meet with the employee. It may also help to have a friend join you at this meeting. We ask that you make an appointment to discuss these concerns.

**Step 2 – Discussion with Team Leader** If your concerns were not resolved in the meeting with the employee, then contact the Team Leader of the program. The Team Leader will arrange to meet with you within 10 working days after being contacted and will speak to the employee to find out what has been done to resolve the issue. The Team Leader may invite the employee to the meeting. Within two weeks after your meeting with the Team Leader, you will receive a letter setting out any agreement(s) you have reached. If no agreement is reached, the letter will indicate the Team Leader's decision regarding the issue(s) discussed.

**Step 3 – Discussion with Executive Director** In the event that you are not happy with the Team Leader's decision, you may request a meeting with the Executive Director. Please contact the Executive Director's Executive Assistant to arrange a meeting. A meeting will be held within 10 working days of being contacted. Within 2 weeks after this meeting, you will receive a letter from the Executive Director setting out any agreement reached or a decision regarding your concerns.

**Step 4 – Discussion with the Dispute Resolution Review Committee** The Dispute Resolution Review Committee is a group of community volunteers who provide an objective review of serious concerns and/or complaints. When all efforts to resolve the issue have not been met to your satisfaction, the matter will be referred to the Dispute Resolution Review Committee. No member of this Committee will have had any direct involvement with the concern/issue being reviewed and will include members of the Board of Directors.

If you wish to have your concern reviewed by the Dispute Resolution Review Committee you must contact the Executive Director in writing stating why you are not satisfied with efforts made to resolve your concerns. You will be notified within 7 working days of receiving the complaint by the Executive Director, whether the complaint is eligible for review. See Matters Beyond the Scope of this Committee below. A meeting will be held within 14 working days from the date of the Executive Director's letter.

In attendance at the meeting will be members of the Committee, the Executive Director and any staff involved in the issue and yourself. You may bring a friend, family member or advocate with you. A written summary of all the steps that have already been taken to resolve your concern will be prepared, a copy of which will be provided to you. In the meeting, you and the Committee members can review what has already been attempted to address the matter and discuss what other suggestions are available to resolve your concerns.

The Executive Director will prepare CFS policy and procedures pertaining to the matter as well as other relevant information.

If your complaint is eligible for review, you will receive a written response indicating:

- The date, time and location of the meeting with the Committee.
- The name of a contact person at CFS who would be available to answer any questions about the process.

The Chairperson of the Committee will provide you with a report outlining the decision reached by the Committee regarding your concerns, within 2 weeks of the meeting. The report may provide recommendations and policy/procedure/process to the Executive Director as well as steps to come to a final resolution.

#### **Matters Beyond the Scope of this Committee**

- Matters in process before the Criminal Courts or Family Court through the Child and Family Services Act (2000) such as wardship orders or child protection decisions.
- Children's Law Reform Act Matters such as custody and access decision.
- Any policy or procedure of Catholic Family Services.
- Any policy or procedure of another organization.

# NOTES