



PARENT HANDBOOK 2023-24

HURON PLAYSCHOOL CO-OPERATIVE INC.

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See Section on Communication at the Back of the Handbook
March 2023

Note about the 2023-24 Parent Handbook:

The Parent Handbook has not been edited to reflect all the things that are changed by COVID-19, but notes are made in sections of the handbook that are affected. Please see the [COVID-19 Policy](#) for more information.

THE SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

Welcome to Huron Playschool Co-operative. Our philosophy is that a co-operative playschool offers a gentle start to a child's school years. We as parents help to guide our children through the transitions to education in a group setting, using play as the medium.

In a co-operative playschool, the teacher and parents work together closely. The aim of the program is to help build each child's self-esteem and to develop his or her individual social, intellectual and physical skills. Parents may find it to be a learning experience as well. The co-operative playschool exposes parents to a variety of new ways of problem solving and dealing with their children. It is also a ready-made parents' support network.

Parents are involved in the running of our school and, as a group, oversee anything from budget to maintenance. In the nursery school program parents help on a rotating basis and all parents share a wide variety of tasks necessary to the smooth operation of the school. These jobs are assigned at the September meeting, or after a family joins the Playschool. Regular meetings are held to discuss new ideas, future program plans and problems that may arise. Parent education resources are fostered.

The co-operative approach demands time and energy from each family enrolled in the school, but it is time and energy well spent as both children and parents benefit from the experience.

PROGRAM STATEMENT (updated March 2023)

Huron Playschool Cooperative, through staff and the active involvement of parents, provides a safe and nurturing environment where children are encouraged to develop their cognitive, social, emotional and creative capacities through play. The foundation of our program statement and strategies for implementing the program statement is the Ministry of Education's document [How Does Learning Happen](#).

How do we view children? Children are competent, capable of complex thinking, curious and rich in potential. Each child should feel that he or she belongs and is a valuable contributor to his or her surroundings, and each child deserves the opportunity to succeed.

The foundations for our program are:

BELONGING: Encourages relationships with other people, providing them with a sense of being valued and making contributions as part of the group, the community, and the natural world.

WELL-BEING: Addresses the importance of physical and mental health and wellness, incorporating capacities such as self-care, sense of self, and self-regulation skills.

ENGAGEMENT: Encourage active involvement and focus. When children are able to explore the world around them, with their natural curiosity and exuberance, they are fully engaged. This promotes the development of problem solving, creative thinking abilities, and innovative skills, which are essential for learning and success in school and beyond.

EXPRESSION: Recognizes that expression and communication takes on many forms. Through their bodies, words, and use of materials, children develop capacities for increasingly complex communication. Opportunities to explore a variety of materials support creativity, problem solving and mathematical behaviours. Language-rich environments support growing communication skills, which are the foundations of literacy.

HOW DO WE IMPLEMENT OUR PROGRAM STATEMENT?

How do we promote the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of the children in our care?

Regular outdoor play in all seasons and weather gives children space in which to be exuberant, to move around, and to challenge themselves physically. We have access to the playground across the road. We will also play outside in local green spaces on campus and in the community. We promote health and safety by teaching good habits of personal hygiene, observing common safety rules both indoors and out, and providing hazard-free spaces where children are free to explore and engage in various kinds of play.

Our snacks and meals are provided by playschool families and directly by Playschool. The Ontario Dietitians in Public Health have prepared great resources that teachers will use for menu planning. Families providing snacks and lunches might find [Paint Your Plate](#) helpful.

All Centre staff, students, and co-op duty parents must have a valid first aid certification, including infant and child CPR. All Centre staff, students and volunteers are required to obtain a criminal reference check that includes a vulnerable sector screening. The vulnerable sector check must be updated every five (5) years.

In the unfortunate event of an accident, the parents of the child involved will be notified immediately and first aid will be administered as required or the child will be transported to a local hospital for care.

How do we support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents, and staff? As stated in *How Does Learning Happen*, “[f]ostering good relationships with children and their families is the single most important priority for educators in early years programs.” (p. 18)

Excellent communication, positive and supportive relationships and mutual support between families and staff is essential to our program’s success. We encourage communication at pick up and drop-off times and teachers can also be reached by email (teacher’s first name @huronplayschool.com, e.g. cherise@huronplayschool.com). Families also receive communication through HiMama, including photo updates, weekly plans and stories about

activities at Playschool. Families are kept up to date on the bigger picture by attending our general meetings throughout the year.

The Playschool environment reflects the people who are here, e.g. by displaying children's art work, photos of children and their families, and including pictures that reflect children's communities and experiences and the wider world;

Teachers use observations to reflect on children's learning and to guide planning. Observations, documentation and planning are done using the on-line program HiMama. All families are invited to look at stories and plans which include their children. Teachers will post notes for nursery school children weekly. Parents will always have access to stories and plans that include their children, even when they are not at Playschool. Families can also post stories and updates in HiMama. We invite families to share resources and skills, e.g. books, pictures, music, that are relevant to programs.

Playschool's strength is that our cooperative nature involves families in every aspect of our programs.

How do we encourage the children to interact and communicate in a positive way and support their ability to self-regulate?

The Playschool's mission is to provide a safe and nurturing environment for children, and foster communication and expression in all forms. Our approach emphasizes not directing a child's behaviour, but instead listening, responding to, and building on child-initiated communication and conversation, and asking for and considering children's ideas in joint dialogue. Our staff play an important role in supporting children's self-regulation by providing an environment that reduces stressors, and by being responsive and attuned to each individual's needs, as well as by helping children learn strategies to recognize and modulate their emotional states and impulses and become more aware of the effects of their actions on others.

Adults help children notice when there is a problem and adults and children work together to solve problems (e.g. we notice together when someone is sad. We strategize about how we can all help them).

Spending time outdoors in unstructured free play with natural materials supports children's development of self-regulation as they are given freedom to explore, express themselves and interact and space and time to be alone.

How do our programs foster children's exploration, play and inquiry, providing child-initiated and adult-supported experiences?

Play is the cornerstone of our curriculum and is understood to be essential to the healthy social and cognitive development of children. Our curriculum takes a child initiated, adult-supported approach that focuses on play-based learning, allowing the child to take the lead and then focusing on his or her interests through intentional observation, interaction and engaged communication. When this approach to learning takes place along with staff's understanding of

child development, each child's learning and individual development is supported and as a result, the child's competence, capacity and potential are maximized.

How do we create positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development will be supported?

Every program features a group activity ("circle time"), to which all children are invited to participate. Group time introduces skills and activities that children can explore more fully during free play, and actively engages children through conversation, music and movement. For free play, our classroom features a variety of spaces that encourage different kinds of play, including imaginative play, building and construction, arts and crafts, more active play with balls and movement, and a quiet space with cushions and books for reading. Children choose their own activities during free-play periods and develop their own interests. Children's learning and development is documented throughout the year on HiMama.

How do we incorporate indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play, rest and quiet time, into the day, and consider the individual needs of the children?

We are fortunate to have use of the Huron Washington Playground, just a short walk away from Playschool. We have a collection of outdoor toys that we take with us, and there are always a variety of activities available for children to choose from. All programs have at least 30 minutes for outdoor play (longer when the weather is good), with opportunities for active and quiet play. In our full day nursery school program (5h, 45min), there is a quiet time after lunch, and children are encouraged to rest should they need to do so.

How do we involve local community partners and allow those partners to support the children, their families and staff?

Playschool is open to all support services and aids in the community to train our staff, contribute to individual program plans or work in the program as additional support in the classroom. Our teachers will work cooperatively in a professional partnership with all services in place for the well-being of the child. Service coordination meetings are required to successfully set up goals and discuss what the best interest of the child and their family is. Staff organize outings and activities in the community, e.g. visiting the garden store to buy a pumpkin, and bring community experts to Playschool to teach, e.g. yoga and ju jitsu. Teachers liaise with the local library to plan visits and have membership to the ROM to facilitate frequent visits there.

How do we support staff and others who interact with the children in relation to continuous professional learning?

We support our teachers in continuous professional learning opportunities to develop their knowledge and to stay current in the profession through regular workshops, seminars/webinars and conferences. Regular verbal feedback is given to volunteers and co-op duty parents. At parent meetings the Director/Teacher reports on what is happening in the programs, discusses stressors and suggests strategies co-op duty parents can use to support children.

How do we document and review the impact of the strategies set out in its program statement on the children and their families?

Playschool ensures that all new staff, students and volunteers review this program statement prior to interacting with the children; and that all staff, students and volunteers review this program statement at any time that it is modified or at least annually.

Our playschool programs have developed in response to the Ontario Ministry of Education's policy statements on programming and pedagogy, in particular the document "How Does Learning Happen: A Pedagogy for the Early Years" (Ministry of Education, 2014). This document is available online to interested families, and a printed copy is available in the office.

PROHIBITED PRACTICES

The Teacher/Director or designate will observe staff, student teacher, duty parent and volunteer interactions with children ensuring that they align with our program statement and beliefs in adult-child interactions. The following practices are not supported by Playschool:

- (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 child care centre or home child care premises 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.

Huron Play School commits to ensure the safety and well-being of all of the children in our care.

REVIEW AND MONITORING

All employees, students and volunteers will review and sign the program statement implementation policy prior to employment and going forward on an annual basis. A record of

signatures of the employees, students and volunteers who have reviewed the program implementation policy will be retained on file by the Play School Director.

The Director of the Playschool will regularly work with staff and volunteers to reflect on their child caring practices. Efforts will be made to ensure that training and development in child-related topics are taken by staff to provide the appropriate tools and techniques required in their daily work. Discussion about the programs during staff and parent meetings will help ensure that the approaches specified in the program statement are implemented.

Negative Behaviours:

Any staff member, student or volunteer that demonstrates any of the negative behaviour in the above section will be immediately removed from duty at the Playschool until resolution by the Executive Committee. A report documenting the incident will be created and reviewed by the Program Director. Any actions will be reported to the Board and the Executive Committee will decide the appropriate next steps to deal with the individual and their actions. If the offending adult is re-instated at the Play School steps will be taken to ensure that this person is not left alone with any child at the Play School.

Huron Playschool recognizes and conforms with all the guidelines for reporting to the Ministry of Education, municipal children's services, child protection agencies, and professional colleagues.

Additionally, all Early Childhood Educators have made a commitment to abide by the standards of their profession as set out in the College of Early Childhood Educators Code of Ethics and Standards of practice. All Early Childhood Educators hold themselves accountable, and will use the Code of Ethics, the Standards of practice and the CCEYA to guide their decisions and practice.

We keep records pertaining to monitoring of our Program Statement for 3 years.

MISSION STATEMENT

Huron Playschool Co-operative, through staff and the active involvement of parents, provides a safe and nurturing environment where children are encouraged to develop their cognitive, social, emotional and creative capacities through play.

BRIEF HISTORY

In 1968, Huron Playschool was called the Rochdale Playschool and had an enrollment of 7 or 8 children. It was started by a group of people who were politically compatible, basically from the New Left. The aim of the Rochdale Project/Playschool was to look for an alternative to the academic structure in education and to explore other models of learning. In 1968 the idea of a parent co-operative playschool was very radical. The school had its beginnings in an apartment on the seventh floor of Rochdale Residence. After one year, the Ontario Government suggested that the school should move to comply with health and safety regulations. In 1969 the Rochdale Playschool, which then had about 15 member families, moved to St Thomas's Church and

became the Huron Playschool. The Playschool is now open to about 30 member families and is no longer associated with any political group or philosophy.

BASE FEES

Huron Playschool is glad to announce that we've opted in the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) program. Fees are subject to change due to the CWELCC program. Parents will be informed of all future fee changes in advance.

- **Morning Fees (9-11:45)**

\$281.14 (5 days a week) / \$210.27 (3 days a week) / \$160.65 (2 days a week)

- **Afternoon Fees (11:45-2:45)**

\$255.15 (5 days a week) / \$184.28 (3 days a week) / \$134.67 (2 days a week)

- **Full day Fees (9-2:45)**

\$510.30 (5 days a week) / \$385.09 (3 days a week) / \$285.87 (2 days a week)

- **Summer Camp Weekly Fees (9-3)**

\$118.13 (5 day week) / \$97.25 (4 day week)

- **After School Fees (3:30-6:00)**

\$177.19 for children 4-5. Children 6-8 \$375

FINAL MONTH DEPOSIT

Deposits of one month's fees are non-refundable and are applied to your child's final month at Playschool. The full deposit is due upon registration.

- **Withdrawal:** Families withdrawing must give a **minimum** of 30 days written notice. The Final Month Deposit covers their final month. Less than 30 days notice will result in the loss of the deposit.

LATE PICKUP FEES (NON BASE FEES)

Please be on time to meet your child. Families who are late to pick up their child after 15 minutes will be charged a late pick-up fee of \$20 dollars and an additional \$10 every 10 minutes after the 15 minute mark.

LATE PAYMENT/NSF FEE (NON BASE FEES)

Full payment is required even if the child is ill or away from the school for any other reasons. An automatic late fee of \$40 will be applied to your HiMama account if payments are received after

the 1st of every month. An automatic \$40 fee will also be given if the payment is returned due to NSF.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Huron Playschool's programs are from 9-3 (full day program), 9-11:45 (morning program) and 11:45-2:45 (afternoon program). Pickup and drop off will be at Huron Washington Parkette which is located right in front of St. Thomas church daily.

CENTRE CLOSURES

Huron playschool will be closed during TDSB's winter holiday break (2 weeks), August 21-28 and all statutory holidays.

- Labour Day
- Thanksgiving
- Christmas
- Boxing Day
- New Years Day
- Family Day
- Good Friday & Easter Monday
- Victoria Day
- Canada Day
- Civic Holiday

STORM POLICY

At Huron Playschool we understand that closing the centre may be an inconvenience. If there's any forms of storms that will make it difficult for staff and children to attend, the centre will be closed. Parent's will be informed immediately via HiMama.

FACILITIES

The school area consists of a large "L" shaped room, an office/kitchen and a children's washroom. Activity areas within the space include:

- An arts and crafts area
- A play dough/ sensory area
- A dramatic centre
- A block area

- A reading area
- A puzzle and fine motor toy area
- A science area
- A water table
- A sand table
- Gross motor area

The office/kitchen has space for snack preparation, fridge and sinks, cleaning supplies and storage as well as the teacher's desk and school files.

There are nearby green spaces (Robarts Library, Woodsworth College, New College, other University courtyards). An enclosed park opposite the school (corner of Huron and Washington) has age appropriate equipment we can use.

ACCESSIBILITY

The Playschool is committed to providing an accessible environment in which all individuals have access to the Playschool's services in a manner that positively reinforces customer service.

The Playschool strives at all times to provide its services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities (which includes children with disabilities).

The Playschool is not accessible for people requiring assistance with stairs or requiring ramp systems as our physical environment is in the basement (and down 2 flights of stairs) of St. Thomas Church.

The Playschool is also committed to and will make reasonable efforts to giving people with disabilities equal opportunity to access and use its services, and is committed to allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in the same or similar manner as other customers.

For more information and details on the Playschool's Accessibility Policy - please speak to a member of the Playschool staff.

[Playschool Calendar](#)

[Daily Schedule](#)

After School Program

The After School program runs for the months of September - June from 3:30pm-6:00pm. Two RECE's will pick up the children from Huron Public School and walk back (approximately 10 minutes) to the centre. The children will do a variety of activities, get homework support if needed and will be provided a delicious, healthy snack.

Summer Camp Program

The Summer Camp program runs for the month of July- mid August from 9-3 and follows the Nursery School Program Daily Schedule. Registration for this program usually begins in January.

Introduction to [HiMama](#) - Observation & Documentation This year we will be using the program HiMama for our observation and documentation of children's learning. Program plans will be posted there. Program plans link to notes about children (observations), and plans are based on children's and adults' interests with a focus on developing specific skills from the Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT). The Child Care and Early Years Act and the City of Toronto Quality Assessment Tool both outline specific criteria for program plans. Teachers will normally follow program plans and the daily schedule, but some days unexpected things happen!

Please help us out with HiMama by giving us feedback - letting us know what you'd like to see more of.

Cubbies

Your child's cubby has a basket for a change of clothes (remember to update this seasonally) and to store indoor shoes or soled slippers. Outdoor shoes should be placed in the bottom area of the cubby. Hats, jackets and backpacks should be in the middle section. Labels are helpful for everything, and Playschool gets fundraising dollars from [Mabel's Labels](#). Dress your child in comfortable, loose clothing that can stand up to paint, glue, dirt and anything else we use at Playschool.

Celebrations & Birthdays

We'll celebrate on all sorts of occasions this year. If your family is celebrating a holiday, please let the teachers know so that we can extend the celebration at Playschool.

We celebrate children's birthdays at Circle time by singing Happy Birthday and providing mini vanilla cupcakes.

Field Trips

We may go on outings to different nearby green spaces, parks and centres. We will normally have an extra volunteer when we do something that is different from our normal routine. Parents will be informed about all future field trips.

[Waiting List Policy](#)

Medical records and other forms

Huron Playschool is required by law, to have all registrations and medical records completed and on file, for each family at the start of the school year. These records include:

- Children's confidential information form
- Other forms related to registration, including children's medical consent form, authorization to share information, release and indemnity

- ❑ Co-op duty parent(s) and volunteers must provide police reference check forms, a valid Standard First Aid certificate and a completed [health form](#)
- ❑ Membership agreement form
- ❑ Co-op duty parent(s) signed agreement to Playschool policies and procedures

These forms are provided to parents by the school with registration materials and at the Co-op Duty Parent Orientation. It is the responsibility of each family to ensure that they are completed and returned. Children's files are checked at our Licensing inspection to confirm that the Playschool has these documents.

[Police Reference Check Policy](#)

Parent Jobs/Co-op and Volunteers

Each family must select one of a number of specific jobs for the duration of the school year. Jobs are expected to take about two hours each month. Families with two children may, under exceptional circumstances, be required to take on two jobs. There is a wide range of jobs available to suit various interests and abilities. Brief descriptions of jobs are available on the Playschool's website (member section). Jobs are subject to change depending on enrolment and the needs of the school.

By its very nature a co-operative thrives or flounders on the quality of contributing members' work. Failure to fulfil designated responsibilities jeopardizes the quality of our children's experience and the very existence of our school, and it is considered grounds for membership revocation.

Parents are encouraged to change jobs each year that they are members of the cooperative.

Parents will be able to start co-op shifts from November 2023- June 2024. Parents and volunteers are required to provide a valid first aid/cpr certificate, police check clearance (we provide the form), proof of covid vaccine and negative tb test (step 1). The Director will explain all steps in September and have the process started and completed before November 2023.

Parents and volunteers will be supervised by a staff member at all times. Parents and volunteers shall not be left alone with any child at any time.

MEETING ATTENDANCE

Meetings are scheduled regularly. The Executive Committee meets monthly, and the full membership meets 5 times each year (normally September, November, February, April and June) in order to conduct school business and participate in special events and lectures. The group at these meetings oversees everything from budget to maintenance. Families are expected to attend the mandatory meetings, which occur three to four times per year. All are welcome and encouraged to attend all other meetings.

BIG CLEANS

Updated March 2023: Now that families are allowed in Playschool, we will welcome families to participate in a Big Clean. Families will volunteer to clean one weekend by signing up on

sign-up.com. When they have done their big clean, their participation deposit will be applied as a credit towards their fees.

In non-COVID years, five major clean-ups will be carried out at the school each year: November, December, in late March and at the end of the year. Each family is required to participate in one of the clean-ups. This involves a minimum 2.5 hours of work per family.

THE EXECUTIVE

The Executive of the Playschool normally includes:

- ❖ Nursery School Chairperson
- ❖ Secretary
- ❖ Treasurer
- ❖ Parent Job Coordinator
- ❖ Registrar
- ❖ Communications
- ❖ Teacher/Director (ex officio)

The Directors are accountable to the membership of the co-op in much the same way that the executives of a corporation are accountable to its board of trustees. For further information please refer to specific job descriptions of the Executive positions.

Major decisions involving staff, expenditures and administrative matters will be referred to the members at the monthly meetings for discussion and vote.

The directors are elected in June for the following year. Vacant positions are filled as needed.

If you have any questions or complaints please feel free to approach any member of the Executive or the Teacher/Director.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

General

In the interest of the children's health and safety, parents are asked to:

- Notify the teacher of any illness that keeps your child away from school. It can be helpful for other parents to know of illness and in some cases there is a requirement to inform other families and public health of contagious illness.
- Avoid sending your child to school ill or overtired.
- Alert the school to any allergies your child may have.

- Inform the teacher when your child or a sibling has received a live (oral) polio vaccine.
- Leave a complete set of extra clothing in your child's cubby. Labels are helpful.
- Dress your child in comfortable, loose clothing. The school can be quite hot, even during winter months.
- Soiled diapers are to be disposed of in the diaper pail in the washroom on the shelf.
- Wipe and disinfect the change table after each use.
- Notify the teacher immediately regarding any strangers in the Playschool – exercise caution and discretion.
- Be sure that the front door is closed and locked at all times.
- There is no smoking during Playschool programs whether we are on a trip, inside or outside at the park.
- Co-op duty parents are responsible with the teacher for supervising and supporting children. Please do not use your cell phones in the Playroom.
- Do not send in any food that contains items that children at Playschool are allergic to. The list of allergens will be circulated in September and each time it is updated.

Fire Evacuation Policy

Accidents

If you see a child get injured, provide immediate comfort, and give the teacher as much information as you can about the accident so that she can provide first aid and give information to parents. The teacher might ask the duty parent to provide first aid if the injury isn't serious. If the teacher needs to provide first aid or call for emergency services, please remember that you will need to supervise other children. It is easy for all the adults (and children) to get caught up in a situation, and then leave children unsupervised.

Coming and Going

When dropping off or picking up your child at school, please be careful to observe the following rules:

- Please make sure no other children are following you out the door or out of the park when you leave with your child. Parents should notify the teacher when they arrive and when they leave with a child, especially in the park.
- Notify the teacher either by note or telephone if someone other than a parent or a regular caregiver will be picking up the child.
- Always say goodbye to your child, even when he or she seems engrossed in an activity.

Insurance

The school holds insurance coverage for fire, theft and accidental bodily injury to staff, parents and children.

Parent Issues and Concerns

CHURCH RELATIONS

St. Thomas's Church rents us space for the Playschool. We rely on the Church to function. It is important to maintain good relations with the church. Therefore, parents are asked to respect the following rules:

- Always be quiet when passing through the church building.
- Never use or block the church driveway when picking up or dropping off your child even for a few minutes. These spots are reserved for the ministers who may be called into the Church at any time. **There is no parking at the Church for co-op duty parents.**
- There is a "drop off" zone just south of the church on Huron St. If you notice that the drop off zone is not being observed, you can call the Toronto Police and ask them to come and ticket cars.
- Keep the stairway clean.
- Channel all communication with the church staff through the teacher. Do not approach church members or staff directly except in case of an emergency.

ANAPHYLACTIC POLICY

Please also read carefully the Food and Nutrition Policy, which follows this policy.

Definition of Anaphylaxis

Anaphylaxis is a severe allergic reaction that can be fatal, resulting in circulatory collapse or shock. The allergy may be related to food, insect stings, medicine, latex, etc.

Purpose of the Policy and Procedures

Huron Playschool Co-operative is committed to taking a pro-active position regarding the prevention of anaphylaxis. The purpose of the policy is to provide a process for dealing with anaphylaxis in the Playschool.

Huron Playschool may administer the Epi-Pen as prescribed by a physician in cases of emergencies **only**. The Epi-Pen is a disposable, prefilled automatic injection devices designed to deliver a single (or double) dose of epinephrine for allergic emergencies. They should only be used by, and/or administered to, a hypersensitive (allergic) child in the event of an allergic emergency as

prescribed by a physician. **Such emergencies may occur from insect stings or bites, foods, drugs or other allergens, as well as from idiopathic or exercise-induced anaphylaxis.**

The use of both the Epi-Pen Jr. and the Epi-Pen is being permitted because of its demonstrated potential to save lives when there may be only minutes to spare; and because it is premeasured and contained in an automatic injection device. However, even if the Epi-Pen Jr. or the Epi-Pen is used, Huron Playschool must still obtain emergency medical care. **The use of the Epi-Pen Jr. or the Epi-Pen is emergency supportive therapy only and is not a replacement or substitute for immediate medical or hospital care.**

Strategy to Reduce Risk of Exposure

- Children with extreme allergies that the Playschool cannot accommodate will be asked to bring their own food from home.
- Foods with “May Contain” warnings for a food that a child has an anaphylactic allergy will not be served.
- All labels will be read by a staff member before serving.
- Anyone purchasing foods on behalf of the centre must read food ingredient labels every time they purchase a product.
- Parents providing food for their child at Playschool must ensure that the food does not contain any of the allergens that must be avoided each year. Parents will be advised of any anaphylactic allergies in September and each time there is an update.
- Any persons supplying food to the Playschool will be notified of all life threatening allergies in the Playschool. The list of allergies will be revised as necessary.
- All children and adults will wash hands before and after handling food.
- Children/staff/volunteers will be instructed not to share food.
- All surfaces will be cleaned with a cleaning solution (water and germ destroyer approved by Public Health) prior to and after preparing and serving food.
- All cleaning supplies, medicines and other products that may be of danger and/or commonly produce allergic reactions will be stored away.
- Extra supervision of anaphylactic children during eating (e.g. sitting next to or opposite staff).
- On the bus during field trips, children with anaphylaxis will sit within view of staff.
- Playground areas will be checked and monitored for insects such as wasps.
- Staff will take cell phone on all excursions.

Communication Plan for the Dissemination of Information

1. Parents will be informed of all allergies in the centre.
2. A list of allergies will be posted in each room.

3. Parents with children with anaphylaxis will provide an individual plan for their child prior to enrolment.

Individual Plan and Emergency Procedures

Prior to enrolment, the parent/guardian(s) will meet with the Teacher/Director to provide input for the child's individual plan and emergency procedures. This plan will include but is not limited to:

1. Description of the child's allergy
2. Monitoring and avoidance strategies
3. Signs and symptoms of an anaphylactic reaction
4. Child care staff roles and responsibilities
5. Parent/guardian(s) consent for administering allergy medication, sharing information and posting Emergency Plan
6. Emergency contact information
7. Parent and physician signature

Epi-pens should always be stored in front pouch of the emergency backpack which is always with the group.

Parents are requested to advise the Teacher/Director if their child develops an allergy, requires medication and/or any change to the child's plan. Individual plans will be revised yearly and as directed by the child's physician.

Copies of individual plans are in each child's file, emergency bags and are posted in every room at the Playschool.

Training

Prior to enrolment and each September (or when a child with anaphylaxis joins the Playschool) all staff will be trained by the parent/guardian(s) or physician of each child with anaphylaxis enrolled in the Playschool.

Volunteers, parents and student teachers will be given information and training by the parent of the child with anaphylaxis or the Teacher/Director. Training will include procedures to be followed in the event of a child having an anaphylactic reaction, recognizing signs and symptoms and administering medication.

Volunteers, parents and student teachers are not permitted to administer medication unless under extreme circumstances (i.e. staff member is unconscious).

Staff, volunteers, parents and student teachers will be required to sign and date that they have received training. The Playschool will keep a log on file of all training dates, trainers and staff signatures.

Emergency Protocol

1. One person stays with the child at all times.
2. One person calls for help or goes for help.
3. Follow emergency procedures as outlined in the child's individual plan (i.e. administer Epi-Pen at the first sign of reaction).
4. Call 911. Have the child transported to hospital even if symptoms have subsided. Symptoms may occur hours after exposure to allergen.
5. Administered Epi-pen is to accompany child to hospital, and given to child's parent or hospital staff for disposal.
6. One person must stay with the child until the parent or guardian arrives.

Food and Nutrition Policy

Revised: March 5, 2022

At Huron Playschool we believe that meal and snack times are the perfect time for children to build healthy eating habits through positive eating experiences. We encourage this by making healthy food fun and tasty.

We empower children to make healthy eating choices by providing a variety of healthy foods and letting them choose which they will eat, if an, and how much they will eat.

We provide both morning and afternoon snacks, as well as lunch every day. Proper hydration is important for children, particularly during hot summer months, and water suitable for drinking is available at all times, including between snacks and mealtimes.

Huron Playschool ensures that all meals and snacks take into account health issues and respect family requests and preferences. The preparation and serving of all meals and snacks will meet regulatory requirements and be guided by [Paint Your Plate with Vegetables and Fruit: A Toolkit for Ontario Childcare Providers prepared by Ontario Dietitians in Public Health](#). Each meal contains all four (4) food groups, and snacks contain at least two (2) food groups.

Food Storage and Preparation

Huron Playschool provides all snacks/meals and follows correct procedures for food storage, preparation and service, which contribute to the retention of maximum nutritional value and the prevention of illness.

If a family chooses to supply food and/or drink for their child, all food and drink must be labelled with the child's name to ensure that the child receives the correct milk/drink, meals and snacks.

Menus

Huron Playschool carefully plans the menu because it is essential to meet children's nutritional needs and to offer a wide variety of foods.

All menus (including substitutions, when necessary) for the current and following week are posted on HiMama and allow parents to take into account what the child has been served during the day when planning meals at home.

Accurate records are kept for each child to track their food intake because it is particularly important during the early years when children may show the first signs of a food allergy.

Menus are retained for thirty (30) days after the last day for which it was applicable.

Food Allergy and Restriction Posting

Huron Playschool posts a list of children with known food restrictions and allergies in all areas of food preparation and consumption and in the playroom to minimize risk of reaction. The food restrictions and allergy list is also included in the Emergency Binder.

Restrictions may be due to food intolerances, family dietary choices (e.g. vegetarian) or religious observance (e.g. requirement for kosher or halal food). This information must also be posted in areas of food preparation and consumption to ensure that children receive the correct meals and snacks. Note: No meat, fish or seafood is served at Playschool.

Huron Playschool keeps the posted lists of children's food allergies and restrictions up-to-date and the lists reflect the most current information available. The information posted in areas of food preparation and consumption match the information contained in the individual plan for children with an anaphylactic allergy.

Special Dietary and Feeding Arrangements

Huron Playschool will follow written instructions from families with regards to special dietary and feeding arrangements. These instructions will be kept in the child's records and parents will provide, in writing, any changes, when necessary.

Huron Playschool follows these four steps for food safety:

Clean, Separate, Cook and Chill...

Clean

Cleanliness is very important to Huron Playschool. An excellent start to safe food preparation is cleaning the hands. The 'best practice' is to wash the hands with warm running water and soap for at least fifteen to twenty (15-20) seconds and dry with a disposable paper towel. Faucet handles are always turned off with a paper towel.

A clean kitchen is also important for preventing food borne illnesses. Tables are sanitized before and after eating. Food and drink spills are removed with soap and water before spraying sanitizing solution or using a clean, sanitized wiping cloth on the area, sponges are never used.

Germs can grow and viruses may survive on unclean counters, unclean walls and floors, cutting boards, refrigerators, food equipment, and tableware—these areas are regularly cleaned and sanitized.

Vegetables and fruits are always cleaned by washing them with cool running water before slicing, eating or cooking.

Washing and sanitizing...

Washing and sanitizing kitchenware, dishes, and utensils are important steps in preventing illnesses. A 3-compartment sink to clean and sanitize kitchen and tableware is required in our Playschool. The following method of cleaning, rinsing and sanitizing must be used at Playschool:

- Scrape food particles
- Wash and clean all food contact items using hot water and detergent
- Rinse with warm water
- Sanitize the items in a clean sink or clean dishpan by immersing for at least thirty (30) seconds in a cool, chemical sanitizing solution
- Air dry all sanitized items

Separate

By having a separate area for food preparation, handling, and storage, cross-contamination can be effectively avoided. Cross-contamination results when a clean area is subject to germ transfer from unclean articles, unwashed foods, raw meats, poultry or seafood, or other practices that contribute to unsafe food handling.

- Discard any food left at the serving table and do not place leftover food from serving plates into the original container
- Separate toxic cleaners and chemicals from food preparation and storage areas
- Latex gloves should not be used in food preparation because of possible allergic reactions; disposable gloves made of vinyl or polyvinyl materials intended for food service can be used

Safe and secure storage of cleaners and disinfectants/sanitizers...

Cleaning products and disinfectants/sanitizers are always used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. When transferring to non-original containers, the new containers are always labelled with the product name and stored in a location so that accidental contamination of food, counters and equipment does not occur. These products are always stored out of the reach of children.

- Cleaning solutions are stored away from food and preparation areas
- Disinfectants are generally used on floors and walls, equipment exteriors, door handles, trash receptacles, etc.—these products are stored away from food preparation and adjacent food items
- Sanitizers are stored safely in the kitchen to be used on tables, counters, cutting boards, etc.

Cook

Food is prepared safely by cooking at proper temperatures to kills germs that cause illness. All eggs are completely cooked before serving. Eggs requires a minimum temperature of 145°F (63°C)

Leftovers that are stored in the refrigerator are dated and labelled, and used within 24 hours.* During reheating, liquids (soups, gravy or sauces) are brought to a boil

- Other reheated foods require a minimum temperature of 165°F (74°C)

Frozen foods are NOT thawed on the kitchen counter. One of the following methods is used to defrost frozen food:

- Frozen foods are thawed in the refrigerator
- Frozen foods are thawed under cold running water
- Frozen foods are thawed using the defrost setting of a microwave over

After foods have thawed, they are cooked immediately, and checked with an internal thermometer.

Chill

Refrigerating (chilling) perishable foods rapidly minimizes the growth cycle of harmful germs. Food is placed immediately in the refrigerator or freezer after it is brought from the store or is delivered by the vendor.

- Refrigerator temperatures should be 41°F (5°C) or colder
- Freezer temperatures are recommended to be 0°F (-18°C) or colder
- Refrigerator and freezer thermometers are used to measure air temperatures. Temperatures are to be checked and recorded weekly.

By cooling foods rapidly, the growth of harmful germs is slowed. Leftovers are rapidly chilled by placing small portions into shallow containers (no more than three (3) inches in depth) and placed in the refrigerator. Once the food has cooled to 41°F (5°C), it is covered, dated and labelled.

POLICY BINDER

A binder containing the official statement of Huron Playschool Cooperative policies is kept for reference in the office of the Playschool, and it is not to be removed from the premises.

Our policies are available below. The Ministry of Education requires that all staff, board members, volunteers and co-op duty parents are familiar with the policies and procedures. Policies are reviewed at the Parent Orientation sessions, and at parent meetings. Notice of updates to policies and procedures will be included in the weekly newsletter or in meeting minutes. Links to policies not mentioned elsewhere are here. Please see the Procedure for the Review of Policies and Procedures, for Monitoring Compliance and for Addressing Contraventions.

[Bylaws](#)

[Accident and Reporting Policy and Procedure](#)

[Anaphylactic Policy](#)

[Behaviour Management](#)

[Child Abuse Policy](#)

[COVID-19 Policy](#)

[Emergency Management Policy](#)

[Fire Evacuation Policy](#)

[Food & Nutrition Policy](#)

[Health Policies](#)

[Illness Policy](#)

[Positive Environment](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Serious Occurrence Policy](#)

[Social Media Policy](#)

[Sleep Room Supervision](#)

[Smoke Free Policy](#)

[Training Policy](#)

[Volunteer Policy](#)

[Water Safety](#)

[Weather Policy](#)

Parent Handbook and other parent resources.

The Parent Handbook is [here](#). Links to other documents about the Playschool (e.g. minutes, parent job descriptions, etc.) will be shared as we get google drive set up.