



Abiona Centre
For Infant & Early Mental Health



Abiona Centre Early Learning Centre
Family Handbook

Thank you for your interest in attending Abiona Early Learning Centre!

Our Mission

The Abiona Centre's Early Learning Centre (ELC) is a child and family centered childcare facility, operated by Abiona Centre for Infant and Early Mental Health, a client-centered infant and early childhood mental health organization which supports pregnant and parenting adolescents, aged 13-25 and their babies who reside at the Centre or in the community. Abiona Centre's infant and early childhood mental health programs give our clients the tools they need to build secure relationships with their babies, cope with life's adversities, find help when needed and succeed in life.

The Abiona Centre's Early Learning Centres (ELC) provide childcare services to the parenting young people and their children who reside at the Centre and to families and their children from the local community. Our goals are to actively engage the individuals in our program by offering an integrated, evidence-informed practice, play-based experience approach throughout all program areas.

Our Vision

Abiona Centre ELC envisions a world where families led by young women will have the emotional and physical supports to realize their full potential.

Our Philosophy

Abiona Centre's ELC believes that children learn through play. We provide an inclusive nurturing environment where our programming and pedagogy follow the "Early Learning for Every Child Today" (ELECT) and "How Does Learning Happen?" frameworks for children from birth to 5 years of age. By incorporating these principles, we can provide an enriched learning experience that encompasses the four Foundations of Learning: Belonging, Well-Being, Engagement and Expression.

Through daily observations and partnerships with families and the community, the Abiona Centre's ELC staff can plan individual and group activities based on the interests of the children. Learning opportunities are provided to develop self-esteem, independence, decision-making, environmental awareness, early literacy skills, a sense of self, health and well-being.

These are considered the basic building blocks that support the optimal development of the whole child.

About Abiona Centre's Early Learning Centres

We have two locations. At Humewood Campus, we offer early learning and childcare services to infants (birth - 18 months), toddlers (18 months - 30 months) and at our Broadview Centre in addition to infant and toddler programs we also have preschool programs - children (30 months - 3.8 years).

We work in partnership with our families, communities, and other service sectors to provide high quality early learning and childcare programs that support well-being and promote healthy outcomes.

We encourage children to participate actively within their individual environments, exploring and solving problems to become competent, active, curious and capable learners, and rich in potential. We support play-based learning in which children have the opportunity to explore and interact with the indoor and outdoor environments. Programming is based on the knowledge that children's growth follows a development sequence that is universal, but that within that sequence, each child proceeds at different rates and in unique ways.

Our Program Statement is a guideline designed to support staff in relation to programming and how children in our care learn. Our programming strengthens the quality of our programs and supports positive outcomes for the children regarding their learning, development, and overall wellbeing. We believe the information highlighted in this document can positively affect how we engage with children, their families, and our colleagues to foster respectful and inclusive interactions.

Abiona Centre's ELC Program Statement is posted on each centres Information Board. There is also a copy available when you log onto our online platform Lillio (formerly "Hi Mama"). If you require a hard copy, please ask.

Program Statement

At the Abiona Centre's ELC, we recognize that each child is an individual with a unique pattern of interests, capabilities and aspirations. By providing a positive, stimulating, healthy and safe environment, we ensure that each child can develop physically, socially, emotionally and intellectually and can realize their full potential.

We encourage all children to actively explore and investigate what they are curious about so that they can test their limits and take manageable risk appropriate for their age and abilities. We believe that children are strong, capable, curious and competent learners and they learn about the world around them through play. We also understand that children learn in many different ways and by providing a stimulating environment, encouraging and fostering children's play and inquiry and by forming trusting relationships with children and their families, we ensure that each child learns, becomes independent and builds self-esteem and self-discipline in our warm and caring environment.

We see families as experts and recognize that partnership between our Centre/staff and Parents/Guardians is essential for the optimal growth and development of young children. We strive to create a supportive family atmosphere in which the program is an extension of the home, community and school. Using "How does learning Happen?" to guide our programming and pedagogy, we provide a positive framework to support our children and families in an environment that promotes belonging, engagement, expression and well-being.

Our staff focus on the children's interests and that is the basis of their programming as well as the environmental set-up. We strive to be good role models for the children and at the same time encourage children to observe, explore, investigate, experiment, discover, compare and share.

We believe that the learning environment consists of everyone (children, teachers, families as well as the community) working together for the complete development of the child.

Our program statement will be reviewed annually to ensure that it is aligned with Minister's policy statement. All new staff, students, and volunteers will review the program statement prior to interacting with children and at any time when the program statement is modified.

We understand that the relationships among children, families, educators, and their environments are crucial to children's learning and development and that for children to grow and flourish, the following four conditions need to exist:

- Every child has a sense of "belonging"
- Every child is developing a sense self, health and of "well-being"

- Every child is given opportunities to be an active and “engaged” learner and encouraged to explore
- Every child is given opportunities and support for “Expression” (is able to express himself/herself in many ways).

Prohibited practices:

- (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.

Our strategies to achieve our program statement and the four goals stated above are guided by the work done on Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Year’s (“How Does Learning Happen”). In order to create the above four conditions, we will adopt the following 11 strategies:

1. Promote the health, nutrition and well-being of the children.

“There is clear evidence that early experiences have a significant impact on the biology of the body and on brain development, with implications for lifelong physical and mental health and well-being” (HDLH, pg. 29). Health, safety and nutrition contribute to the healthy development and growth of children. In our Centre we promote the health, safety,

nutrition and well-being of each child by providing a clean and safe environment, nutritional meals based on Canada's Food Guide, access to clean filtered drinking water throughout the day, limited transitions and eliminating any issues that may cause stress to the child. Staff will use their observations, knowledge of child development and children's cues to promote continuous learning opportunities and will share with, and encourage families to be active participants in, their child's care environment.

- To ensure all children, families and staff are safe, we have policies in place around health and safety practices that support and promote a sense of well-being and belonging. We ensure all staff, students and volunteers adhere to, and comply with, these policies and procedures through regular health and safety checks and monitoring procedures.
- Staff ensures awareness at all times of the number and names of children that are in care. Staff will ensure that children are signed in and out and that documentation on the attendance sheet accurately reflects the location of all children in care throughout the day. All arrival and departure times are accurately documented. There is complete written verification after all staff and child transitions (e.g., when children are taken outside for outdoor gross motor activities or when staff enter or leave the room).
- Staff scan the indoor/outdoor environment to ensure safety before it is used by children, make safety and supervision of children their first priority and role model and educate children about safe practices. Through daily playground and room checks, staff make sure that play equipment, furnishings and toys are developmentally appropriate and safe. Any item not found to be in good condition is removed and replaced.
- We provide hot lunches and three nutritious snacks a day that are prepared by staff who have their food handler certificate from Toronto Public Health to promote and contribute their nutritional needs. Meals and snacks are rich in nutrients and fibre, low in saturated fats, sodium and added sugars and the food does not contain trans-fat or artificial colours or flavours. Staff encourage children to try these healthy meals and snacks and make food and eating time a positive learning experience that promote social interactions and self-help skills. Staff have meals and snacks with the children and provide a family style environment and use this opportunity to role model positive

attitudes to healthy eating, have conversations, socialize and develop relations with all children.

- Throughout the day through daily routine and activities, our older infants going into toddler stage are offered opportunities to practice self-help skills (e.g. putting on socks, putting on hats etc.)
- Menu plans are posted on the main bulletin board for Parents/Guardians to view. Our menus reflect cultural diversity and any changes to the menu are posted to provide Parents/Guardians with up to date information and alternative meals are provided for children with allergies and dietary restrictions. Staff also accommodate families who wish to bring in their own home cooked foods.
- Allergies and dietary restrictions are posted and staff will familiarize themselves with and follow all information concerning any medical conditions, allergies, dietary restrictions, medical requirements and parental preferences in respect to diet, exercise, rest time, etc.
- For every child who is anaphylactic (has life-threatening allergies), we will develop an individual anaphylaxis prevention and management plan in consultation with the child's family and physician. This plan will include a description of the child's allergy, monitoring and avoidance strategies, signs and symptoms and any action that needs to be taken in the event the child has an anaphylactic reaction. This plan will be shared with our staff and each staff will be trained on the procedures to be followed in the event of a child having an anaphylactic reaction, how to recognize the signs and symptoms and how to administer medication. Parents/Guardians will be required to provide written consent to administer medication as well as training in the administration of an epi-pen. Staff check to ensure that epi-pens (and inhalers) are kept up to date.
- All Public Health procedures regarding hand washing, handling of food, toileting and diapering are followed strictly by all staff.
- All cribs, cots and bedding are maintained hygienically. Staff show flexibility with regards to the routine of the room and the cues of the children. Parents/Guardians of infants and toddlers are asked to complete daily routine charts and sleep routine forms so staff can make the child as comfortable as possible.
- Health checks are conducted upon children's arrival.

- All employees, students and volunteers are subject to reference and criminal background checks before they are permitted to work at our Centre and these are renewed every five years for the permanent staff. They have also received current and up to date training in CPR and First Aid.
- All staff are trained to recognize even the subtle signs of abuse in the children with whom they work. The Supervisor/ staff members have the "Duty to report" observed or suspected abuse to the Children's Aid Society without first advising Parents/Guardians/staff.
- As providers of child care and early learning, we have a legal and moral responsibility to ensure the safety and well-being of the children entrusted to us, and by extension their families and care-givers. Our managers and staff are equipped to defuse tension and manage disruptive behavior and are trained in Crisis Intervention training. Operating procedures aim to stop threatening situations before they escalate, and find constructive resolutions to misunderstandings or disputes.
- The physical environment, furnishings and equipment of our Centre have been designed, built and maintained to conform to the Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA) legislation, Ministry of Education and the City of Toronto's *Child Care Operating Criteria*. This provides a high degree of protection against common health and safety hazards, for both our staff and the children in our care.
- The Centre is inspected at random intervals but not less than once a year, by representatives of both Quality Assurance through the Ministry of Social Services, Toronto Public Health as well as our Licensing Inspector for the Ministry of Education. These rigorous and detailed inspections ensure that our policies, premises and procedures always comply with regulatory standards.
- Staff regularly conduct developmental screening using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire to ensure the child's healthy development.

2. Support positive and responsive interactions among the children, Parents/Guardians, child care providers and staff.

"When educators believe that all children have the right to participate and when they use inclusive approaches, they are more likely to find ways to reduce barriers, understand how each child learns, and create environments and

experiences that are meaningful and engaging.” (HDLH, pg. 36).

Abiona Centre ELC provides an inclusive, enriched child care environment which honours and respects all children’s beliefs, language, and experiences acquired from their family and community.

We recognize the importance of all community members for a child’s development and the contribution of positive interactions for the child’s interactions among children, families and staff give children a sense of security and they feel that they belong. We foster collaborative and cooperative relationship between children and adults by working with families and children as a team. We believe that Parents/Guardians and educators need to work together in order for the children to meet their maximum potential.

- We promote a sense of belonging for children and their families in our programs. We do this by modeling positive communication and joint partnership with families. We believe in having open communication with Parents/Guardians and families, exchange ideas with them and work as a team knowing that they are the child’s first teachers.
Parents/Guardians are invited to actively participate in our programs through activities and sharing ideas that can contribute to their children’s development.
- We ensure that all adults promote a positive and supportive approach to all interactions with the children, peers and other adults in the room. The Supervisor and Program Director will support this through the hiring of qualified, responsive, and well-trained staff who support families in their role as primary caregivers and understand the needs of each child as an individual.

- Staff will role-model appropriate social skills throughout the day to support learning and growth. Greeting and welcoming children and families into the room, sharing daily planning and observations with Parents/Guardians, or making suggestions and inviting Parents/Guardians and families to be involved in the running of the program are just some examples of positive interactions. Whether it is group time or a one-on-one interaction, staff will always get down to the child's level, use a calm pleasant and assuring tone of voice, use positive and appropriate words, follow the child's lead, give choices and show patience and flexibility because they understand that every child is different, has different interests, strength and needs and does things at his or her own pace.
- Staff will provide consistent care in a way that provides safety and maximizes the potential for learning so that a strong secure bond or attachment develops between the child and the staff. When a staff consistently responds to a child's distress in a sensitive and supportive manner, a secure attachment is formed and a genuine and respectful relationship is formed between the staff and that child.
- Staff will promote respectful interactions among children and their peers and among children and adults by using strategies like giving choices and sharing control with children, focusing on children's strengths, supporting children's play and using them as teaching opportunities, praising good conduct and adopting a problem solving approach to social conflicts. This helps children to freely express their feelings and emotions, resolve conflicts in an appropriate manner, have positive interactions and true partnerships with other children and adults. Staff do this by encouraging children to problem solve either themselves or with the assistance of a staff who guides them through techniques such as using "I" messages, listening to each other's point of views and teaching self-regulation strategies.
- Staff support each other by sharing responsibilities, working together as a team where each staff's strengths are utilized, having room meetings and discussing program plans and their outcomes. Respect

is promoted and there is no tolerance for bullying, violence or harassment at our Centre.

- The daily program and daily documentation form is posted on the inside wall of each room so Parents/Guardians can see what their children are doing/learning. Daily information sheets are provided to Parents/Guardians in our programs to

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keep communication ongoing as to their child's day. Communication is a key factor between staff and Parents/Guardians in all rooms to build a positive relationship that will contribute to involving all parties in the child's respective day of events.

- All matters relating to the children in our care and their families are confidential. This allows Parents/Guardians to feel secure approaching staff with questions knowing that their concerns will be dealt with professionally.
- The Abiona Centre ELC holds an open door visiting policy where the child Parents/Guardians and extended family members can visit and be involve in the child care at any time. Parents/Guardians are welcome to visit, breastfeed and interact with their child at any given time.
- Staff hold daily circle time activities where the children are encouraged to sing, play and move in an interactive way with their peers.
- Staff provide one-on-one guidance and resources to young Parents/Guardians to support them with their first steps as caregivers.

3. Encourage the children to interact and communicate in a positive way and support their ability to self-regulate.

"A safe environment that offers consistency and continuity as well as graduated support for children's growing independence and capacity for self-care enables children to tackle challenges, learn to persevere, and explore ways to cope with manageable levels of positive stress"

(HDLH, pg. 30).

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"Studies show that when educators modeled and helped children express feelings, recognize other's feelings, and help others, children developed positive social skills such as perspective taking, empathy, and emotion regulation and were less likely to engage in problematic behaviours" (HDLH pg. 24-25).

Being aware of how the day is planned allows for consistency, self-regulation, minimizes negative behaviors and promotes a general well-being. Staff support children's ability to self-regulate, with the goal being children feel comfortable and confident within the learning environment. Staff support children in learning concrete strategies to deal with emotions as a teaching tool for self-regulation.

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- Staff will promote interactions with children in a way that fosters self-esteem and support and praise the children as they learn to self-regulate their emotions and to recognize empathy.
- We post a daily written and visual schedule which clearly shows the daily routine and make sure that it is followed consistently by all staff. Consistency helps children feel safe and regulates behaviour.
- Our program is designed to encourage children to interact and communicate in a positive way, encourage them to enhance social skills while working or playing together and support their ability to self-regulate.
- Children can learn and develop many things through artistic expression. All rooms will be setup to provide a variety of experiences and a variety of materials will be available to children on an ongoing basis. Through play, children will learn to express their emotions, enhance language skills and social skills. Reading books, singing songs, role playing or building structures together are just some of the ways in which children will learn to listen to each other, help, share, take turns, cooperate but also learn to express their emotions in an appropriate manner and to self-regulate while playing together.
- We will provide a consistent daily routine, choices, visually calming spaces, cozy corners with comfortable

seating to help children relax, private spaces and shared control between child and staff to reduce stressors.

- Our program will also support children's ability to deal with stress, and remain calm, alert and ready to learn. Transitions can be a challenge as well as an opportunity for children. Staff will support transitions by giving children cues and preparing them ahead of time, using visual pictures and will use transitional toys or songs etc. to make the transitions smoother. This way, children know what to expect and they feel safe and secure.

4. Foster the children's exploration, play and inquiry

"Through play and inquiry, young children practice ways of learning and interacting with the world around them that they will apply throughout their lives. Problem solving and critical thinking, communication and collaboration, creativity and imagination, initiative and citizenship are all capacities vital for success throughout school and beyond." (HDLH pg. 15)

Children learn best through play. We foster children's play, exploration and inquiry by following the "emergent curriculum" i.e. all activities as well as the environmental set up is based on children's interest. Our programs focus on active play based learning as we believe that is how children learn best. It is their natural response to the environment around them. When children are manipulating objects, acting out roles, or experimenting with different materials they are engaged in learning through play. This allows them to make connections, expand their knowledge and learn new things. Staff sees fostering the children's exploration of play and inquiry as a key goal in health development and well-being.

- Staff will observe children and document their interests, strengths and skills that need to be developed and enhanced and then prepare programs and plan activities based on these observations.
- Staff will set up interesting and stimulating indoor/outdoor environments and plan activities that enhance cognitive development, are rich in content, spark curiosity, invite investigation and provide challenges (e.g., learning about cause and effect). Children are always given opportunities to extend play ideas -staff will follow their lead and allow the children to assume leadership roles while engaged in play.
- All staff will foster the children's exploration, play and inquiry by providing a variety of activities that encourage exploration, provide choices, promote self-expression and individuality, offer pretend play opportunities and teach them how to solve problems. Staff are always at hand to guide them.
- Staff will offer the children a variety of sensory toys and activities to explore textures and sounds while engaged in play.
- Encourage and enact role-plays with the infants as well as offer hands on art and crafts experiences. This will be supported by qualified, attentive and interactive staff who understand that they are co-players and use strategies like open-ended questions to get the children to look for answers, solve problems and engage in critical thinking.
- We will monitor each child's individual progress with exploration and developed curiosity. We also ensure to

offer individually designed level toys and play for each child.

5. Provide child-initiated and adult-supported experiences

"When children initiate experiences, generate ideas, plan, and problem solve, make meaningful choices, and act spontaneously through play, they are more likely to be happy and get along well with others, to have lower levels of stress, and to be attentive and motivated to learn"
(HDLH pg. 35).

Play is children's work and is essential to healthy development. We understand that not all play is equal and child directed play provides the best learning opportunities.

- We all learn best when we are engaged and interested in an experience. Staff listen and observe children and they develop a deeper understanding of children's interests and perspectives. Staff understand that the role of adults in children's play is to enhance the children's experiences, not to take over or determine the direction of the play. Staff will always follow children's lead.
- Our programs offer children lots of opportunities to direct their play and explore new ideas and expand old ones. Staff will also offer a variety of playing options for the child to choose from.
- Staff will observe the children and use that information to plan and create a positive learning environment that is based on the interests of the child, and supported by all adults in the child care environment. Staff support ideas, provide resources and materials, help children reflect on what they know and think and provide emotional support and encouragement.
- All staff will provide child initiated and adult supported experiences. Both staff and children will be responsible for introducing new ideas, interests, facts, concepts, skills and experiences to widen the child's knowledge and life experiences. Staff will allow children to engage in activities that may not be planned for that day.
- Open ended materials are available and allow for exploration and discovery e.g. block play offers opportunities to work together, imagine, learn about cause

and effect, patterning and sequencing that is child initiated

- Group times and individual interactions are planned to allow for discovery of areas of child's interests which leads into further opportunities of discovery e.g. pretend play is an opportunity to provide children an environment and accessories which promotes imaginative play either alone or with a group of children.

Both structured and planned activities and unstructured activities offered throughout the day so children learn how to follow directions, yet have access to materials to create their very own masterpieces. Children also have the opportunity to create for the pure joy of creating without needing to achieve a final product.

- We will follow up on the children's communication to see what their expressed needs are.
- Staff will follow the child's lead on bedtime and other needs

6. Plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development will be supported.

"Gaining knowledge about children from multiple perspectives helps educators ensure that programs also value the unique and diverse characteristics of the children's families and the communities in which they live. It's not a "one-size-fits-all" approach." (HDLH, pg. 18)

"The environment has been referred to as the teacher and a well set up environment has the power to promote relationships and promote learning. Children thrive in indoor and outdoor spaces that invite them to investigate, imagine, think, create, solve problems and make meaning from their experiences - especially when the spaces contain interesting and complex open-ended materials that children can use in many ways." (HDLH, pg. 20)

Following the individual cues of the children and developing an awareness of what each child brings and how they adapt to situations and environments allow us to provide the care and learning that best suits their needs.

- A visual environment is created through displays that are inclusive and are changed regularly to reflect recent interests as well as artwork created by children.
- Staff use their knowledge of child development to design a positive and stimulating learning environment that is intentionally and clearly divided into interest areas which support different types of play.
- Materials are carefully chosen so they are varied, open-ended, plentiful and reflect children's families, lives and communities.
- Staff observe children and note their interests on a form (posted inside the rooms). Based on these observations, they set up the environment and develop a program plan which incorporates all the various learning areas to address the total child. Each child's social, emotional, intellectual and physical needs are met through stimulating, challenging and fun play activities.
- The daily program is posted on the outside wall of each room for access for Parents/Guardians and families and includes the following:
 - **Creative arts and crafts:** Children can learn and develop many things through artistic expression. A variety of materials is available to children on an ongoing basis. Through play, children can express their emotions; develop fine motor skills, language skills and social skills by sharing materials. Learning about placing pieces into a puzzle building blocks or stacking rings can build on their cognitive skills. Structured and unstructured activities are scheduled so children learn how to follow directions, yet have access to materials to create their very own masterpieces. Children also have the opportunity to create for the pure joy of creating without needing to achieve a final product.
 - **Dramatic Play:** Fantasy, imagination, role-playing and language skills flourish in this part of the program. Co-operation, sharing and communication skills are encouraged as the children engage in their unique dramas and play. Staff engages with their dramatic play to explore their world and enhance their learning opportunity.

- **Table Toys and Manipulative Play:** Table toys such as puzzles and games are available to the children during free play. From relatively simple puzzles to more complex ones, the children are challenged to gain confidence by achieving success. Manipulative toys such as Lego, blocks and other toys enable children to build and experiment with shapes.
- **Science:** Children can experiment with and experience many scientific concepts on an ongoing basis. Staff guides the learning process in scientific areas by providing varied experiences. Nature walks, discovering seasonal changes, cooking experiences, and observing snow melting into a liquid in a water table enable children to learn through play.
- **Music:** Singing, dancing, listening and playing instruments are all part of the musical experience. Music is often playing during free play and sleep time. Singing is encouraged during circles and all through the day. Instruments are available at specific music circles.
- **Sensory Activities:** Children learn through their senses. Language, co-operation and pure fun are promoted within the sensory activities offered daily. Play dough, water and sand play along with other "messy" activities enable children to feel materials, volume/mass, density and buoyancy.
- **Learning Circle:** Songs, stories and finger plays enhance development in a group atmosphere. Concepts are taught during this time.
- **Enrichment programs** are offered on a regular basis including our Mother Goose Program as well as Me My Baby Our World and the Librarian.

7. Incorporate indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play, rest and quiet time into the day and give consideration to the individual needs of the children receiving child care.

"A growing body of research suggests that connecting to the natural world contributes to children's mental, physical, emotional and spiritual health and well-being. Providing daily opportunities to explore, care for and interact with the natural world helps to strengthen these connections." (HDLH, pg. 21).

□ **Active Play:** Physical activity is central to helping our children become healthy, happy, well-rounded individuals. Children go outdoors for an hour twice a day, except in bad weather. Staff bring the playroom outside by providing materials, props, toys and books that allow them to do all sorts of sensory, creative, cognitive, dramatic, literacy and science activities outside. In our secure playground, children can use our crawl tube, walking and riding toys, sand toys and balls. The playroom is equipped with indoor gross motor activities and games so that in case of bad weather children still get to do physical activities indoors. Outside time presents many opportunities for learning, not only in the areas of physical growth but also in all other areas of development. The outdoor environment is viewed as an extension of the indoor environment. Staff plan outdoor activities based on children's interests and ensure that they provide a choice so that each child gets to do something that they enjoy doing. Staff and children explore nature and the outdoor environment together. They play, learn, dig, plant, observe nature and make discoveries together. The results include:

- Learning about nature and making discoveries
- Releasing pent-up energy and creating a feeling of physical well-being;
- Increasing physical strength, endurance and motor skills;
- Forming social relationships, and practicing desirable social behavior

• **Quiet Time/Sleep Time:** The Infant program nap schedule is adjusted and flexible to meet the needs of the infants as sleeping patterns vary. Our Toddler program will ensure that the toddlers and preschoolers will get a maximum of two hours sleep a day however, accommodation will be made if they fall asleep outside of their regular schedule.

• **Quiet Corner:** The staff respects each child's need and desire for quiet time during play. A comfortable area with a selection of books is always available for children to read or simply relax.

We are always mindful of each child's needs and parental directions. This is why infant, toddler and preschool Parents/Guardians are asked to complete a daily routine chart

and a sleep routine chart (infants only) so staff can follow the child's routine and make them as comfortable as possible.

8. Foster the engagement of and ongoing communications with Parents/Guardians about the program and their children

"Educators are reflective practitioners who learn about children using various strategies. They listen, observe, document, and discuss with others, families in particular, to understand children as unique individuals. They observe and listen to learn how children make meaning through their experience in the world around them. Educators consider their own practices and approaches and the impacts they have on children, families and others. Educators use this knowledge, gained through observing and discussing with others, and their professional judgement to create contexts to support children's learning, development, health, and well-being." (HDLH, pg. 19)

Staff will share with and encourage families to be active participants in their child's care environment.

We believe that Parents/Guardians and educators need to work together in order for the children to meet their maximum potential. We encourage and practice open communication with Parents/Guardians and families. We believe that families are valuable contributors to their children's learning and are their children's first teachers. We welcome and encourage Parents/Guardians and families to share their skills, talents, traditions and experiences by inviting them to be a part of our program (e.g. story-telling, creative activities, trips, cultural day).

- Regular and ongoing communication with Parents/Guardians is an important component of the day. Daily communication is encouraged. Staff communicate with Parents/Guardians in person when child is dropped off or picked up, by phone call or through the platform (Lillio) or through verbal conversations.
- Parents/Guardians are encouraged to fill up forms that describe the child's daily routine, sleep patterns, eating habits and timings so staff can follow those routines and make the child as comfortable as possible. Daily written logs are recorded and shared with Parents/Guardians.

- Our staff is always available to answer Parents/Guardians questions and discuss any concerns, though long discussions are best held before or after program hours. If Parents/Guardians have a concern that can't be resolved directly with the staff, the Supervisor will be happy to help.
- In addition to the daily interaction and communication with program staff, we offer many opportunities for parent involvement and feedback such as surveys, newsletters.
- Parents/Guardians are welcome to visit the Centre and observe their child during the day. We encourage our clients to visit on their breaks and lunches especially those breastfeeding/chestfeeding that will include our attachment focus.
- Staff are a part of the monthly review meeting of our clients to discuss the development and successes of their child.
- Staff support Parents/Guardians with one-on-one parenting skills and care including attachment, safety, basic care and guidance.
- Staff support Parents/Guardians with children with special needs by communicating with our resource consultant as well as support Parents/Guardians with their own needs by referring them to different resources and support agencies.
- We encourage and support the involvement with other close family members.
- We incorporate the parent's cultural backgrounds into everyday activities and their annual cultural celebrations.

9. Involve local community partners and allow those partners to support the children, their families and staff.

"Opportunities to engage with people, places, and the natural world in the local environment help children, families, educators, and communities build connections, learn and discover, and make contributions to the world around them. It fosters a sense of belonging to the local community, the natural environment, and the larger universe of living things." (HDLH pg. 19)

At Abiona Centre, we ensure collaboration with local community partners. Involving community partners is an instrumental part of creating a positive and supportive environment.

- We welcome volunteers from the community.
- Parents/Guardians are encouraged to drop in and take part in the program by doing different activities with them (e.g., storytelling, singing songs, introducing new games, bringing in cultural food for potluck, exhibiting cultural clothes etc.) while talking about their culture, country or celebrations.
- We engage in constructive relationships with community agencies. In case of special needs children or children with behavior issues, if the staff need some extra support, we have Resource Educators from Children's Services who visit and observe the child, have meetings with Parents/Guardians and staff and provide assistance in the form of strategies, information, guidelines, resources and class room support to better meet the needs of our children, families and staff.
- We work collaboratively with our local universities and community colleges to offer opportunities for student training and experiences. The Centre provides coaching and mentoring and the students gain valuable and practical experience working with children and families through a sharing of knowledge. Partnering with these institutions provides us with additional knowledge and resources to further support our program.
- We provide an information bulletin board about health, and community resources and special events for our Parents/Guardians to access.
- When applicable, staff attend plans of care and case conferences involving Public Health nurses, Toronto Children's Aid Society, Housing workers and Home Visitors to discuss client's needs.
- Staff support our Parents/Guardians with subsidy and other government agencies.

10. Support staff, or others who interact with the children at a childcare Centre in relation to continuous professional learning.

"Research, theory and practice suggests that one of the things important to achieve a high quality program is "providing ongoing opportunities for educators to engage in critical

reflection and discussion with others about pedagogy and practice to support continuous professional learning and growth”

“Educators are competent and capable, curious and rich in experience. They are knowledgeable, caring, reflective and resourceful professionals. Educators are life-long learners. They take responsibility for their own learning and make decisions about ways to integrate knowledge from theory, research, their own experience and their understanding of the individual children and families they work with.” (HDLH)

- Abiona Centre will support staff in continuous growth and professional learning. We believe that learning is a life-long process. As we work to develop the love of learning in our children through play, we encourage and model it in our staff. The Centre provides an annual training allowance for every employee, so that they are able to attend workshops on various topics throughout the year and expand their knowledge and improving their ability to meet the individual needs of children in the Centre.
- Resource educators visit the Centre on an ongoing basis and provide staff with strategies and resources and impart knowledge as to how to provide the best possible care for children with special needs and help them learn, develop and flourish.
- All staff are involved with our internal infant and early mental health programs Community, Housing worker, School Counsellor and Clinical Director.
- Our Parents/Guardians have access to our Food Bank and Donation Room onsite.
- Our agency has connections with the Chum Christmas Wish Foundation for Parents/Guardians to receive gifts during the holiday season.
- All staff with an Early Childhood Education (RECE) diploma or degree have current, clear memberships with the College of Early Childhood Educators which is renewed annually. The College is the professional self-regulatory body for Early Childhood Educators, (RECE), in Ontario and is mandated to protect the public interest and ensure quality and standards of practice in Early Childhood Education. Staff adhere to the “Code of Ethics” and “Standards of Practice” and also review documents and complete workshops offered by

the College for professional development as well as to keep themselves up to date.

- All staff have completed trainings on Infant Mental Health and have access to our Clinical Director for supervision.
- All staff have completed a Criminal Reference Check including the Vulnerable Sector Screen and are required to have a valid Certificate in Standard First Aid and CPR.

11. Document and review the impact of the strategies set out in number 1-10 on the children and their families.

Both of Abiona Centre's childcare locations offer play-based learning opportunities. Play-based opportunities directly reflect strategies outlined in the "Early Learning Framework" (ELF) and "How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years".

Program Staff

The Early Learning Centres at Abiona Centre utilize a team approach that includes a combination of Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs), Early Childhood Assistants (ECAs) and Supervisors. This team works collectively within a network of other organizational services that includes a Senior Management Team, Financial Team and Maintenance Team.

Our children are active, curious and capable learners that learn best when they are interested and engaged in experiences that support the exploration and manipulation of accessible materials. These experiences are supported by the staff and support each child at their own stage of development. Staff create learning experiences based on written observations. Observations are made throughout the day and at various times to ensure a wide variety of learning is documented. The staff are responsive in meeting the individual needs of each child and aim to provide high quality early learning experiences to support growth and development. The Centre Supervisor's are responsible for overseeing the daily operation and leading the staff team. Supervisors are also RECE's who must be approved by the Ministry of Education.

Our RECE's are responsible for creating, facilitating, and adapting the program plans. The staff support the learning and development of our children through positive interactions. The

staff also ensure the safety and well-being of the children in partnership with their Parents/Guardians.

If you are interested in finding out more information regarding the roles and responsibilities of a RECE, please go to <https://www.college-ece.ca/>. Our ECA's work alongside of our RECE's and support your child's well-being throughout the day.

Abiona Centre's ELC provides a positive learning environment for the children that enhances their personal level of development. Play-based experiences are guided by staff so that the children can experience:

Staff working at Abiona Centre ELC Early Learning Centre, are required to complete a Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC) prior to employment. All staff are fully trained in Infant/Child CPR level C, Crisis Prevention and Intervention (CPI). Staff are recertified as outlined on their certification. In order to attain us being the center of excellence under the Infant mental health, all are RECEs are trained in the development screening tool called Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) to support the children's overall development.

Locations

Abiona Centre ELC Broadview Campus (1102 Broadview Ave)

Accommodates children from birth to age 4½ with a capacity for 10 infants, 20 toddlers and 32 preschoolers.

Humewood Campus (40 Humewood Drive)

Accommodates children from birth to age 2 ½ with a capacity for 10 Infants and 15 Toddlers.

Young mothers living at Abiona Centre ELC and/or attending the onsite secondary school receive priority for childcare spaces. Spaces not used by these young moms are offered to families in the community. Abiona Centre ELC accepts both subsidized and full-fee-paying Parents/Guardians.

Fees and Payment (effective January 2025)

This childcare program is participating in the Canada Wide Early Learning & Child Care (CWELCC) System. Effective January 1, 2025, along with implementation of the new, cost-based funding approach, base fees for childcare in CWELCC-enrolled programs will be capped at a maximum of \$22 per day for eligible children

Broadview Campus

Infant Parent base fee: \$ 22.00 (Newborn to 18 months)

Toddler Parent base fee: \$ 22.00 (18 months to 2.5 years)

Preschool Parent Base Fee: \$22.00 (2.5 years to 3.5 years)

Humewood Campus

Infant Parent base fee: \$ 22.00 (Newborn to 18 months)

Toddler Parent base fee: \$ 22.00 (18 months to 2.5 years)

The fees are due on or before the first of every month. Fees can be paid by cash, cheque or e-transfer or to Finance@abionacentre.ca.

Statutory Holidays

Abiona Centre ELC Early Learning Centres is closed for the following statutory holidays:

- Christmas Day (December 25)
- Boxing Day (December 26)
- New Year's Day (January 1)
- Family Day (February 17)
- Good Friday (April date varies)
- Victoria Day (May date varies)
- Canada Day (July 1)
- Civic holiday (First Monday in August)
- Labor Day (First Monday in September)
- Thanksgiving Day (October date varies)

Early Learning Centre will be closed on Friday, February 13, 2026 for a Professional Development Day. This day will be dedicated to staff learning and training to strengthen the quality of care, programming, and support provided to children and families.

The daily full fees are subject to change based on Abiona Centre ELC acceptance into Canada Wide Early Learning Child Care System (CWELCC). CWELCC is a 5-year plan that will be implemented in stages to make childcare more accessible and affordable for all Ontario residents. CWELCC also supports quality and inclusivity in childcare. The plan will reduce childcare to \$10 per day by 2026.

Deposit

Once your child is accepted into the program, a non-base fee deposit payment is required prior to your first day on site. This non-base payment will be adjusted accordingly if fees change while you are enrolled. The deposit is determined on your enrollment status (Full fee, Partial fee or fully subsidized). This deposit amount will also be applied to your child's last two weeks of care when you opt to withdraw from the ELC.

All **base fees** (identified above) must be paid 52 weeks per year and include the Statutory Holidays previously mentioned. Fees are required to maintain the cost of keeping a spot in the childcare in the event the child is absent or on holidays.

It is the responsibility of families to pay their fees. **Abiona Centre ELC may withdraw service if fees are not paid.** Abiona Centre ELC will pursue all outstanding balances owed.

Non-Sufficient Funds (NSF): A **non-base fee** of \$25.00 fee will be charged for each NSF cheque. If the client has 3 NSF's subsequent fees must be paid by cash or certified cheque only.

Reimbursement

If an overpayment or credit of childcare fees occurs, Abiona Centre will reimburse the overpaid amount by cheque. Reimbursements will be processed once the overpayment has been verified by our administrative team. Families will be notified of the amount and expected timeline for the reimbursement. Please ensure that your contact and mailing information is up to date to avoid any delays.

Child Care Update: Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) System

We are happy to confirm that Abiona ELC, is a part of the City of Toronto Canada Wide Early Learning Child Care (CWELCC) system agreement between the Province of Ontario and the Government of Canada.

Abiona ELC will notify the Parents/Guardians about the next fees reduction from the city of Toronto under the CWELCC system. If you have any questions about how the CWELCC program or how it may affect you and your fees, please contact your Centre's Supervisor.

Subsidies

The Early Learning Centre, Abiona Centre, has a "Purchase of Service" agreement with the City of Toronto. This service agreement allows qualified families to apply and then enroll their child(ren) into a partial or fully subsidized childcare space. If you are interested in finding out more about subsidized care; you should contact the City of Toronto, Children's Services, Kidsline at 416 392 KIDS (5437)

Arrival and Departure at the Centre

Abiona Centre ELC will only dismiss children into the care of their parent/guardian or another authorized individual. The centre will not release any children from care without supervision.

A parent/guardian may request that a child who is 16 years old or older be released from child care without supervision. Parents/Guardians must provide written and signed authorization and instructions for the release of the child including the time of dismissal.

Where a parent/guardian provides written instructions for the release of their child from care without supervision, the parent/guardian is aware that the child care is no longer responsible for that child upon their dismissal.

Where a child does not arrive in care as expected or is not picked up as expected, staff must follow the safe arrival and dismissal procedures set out below.

Procedures

Accepting a child into care

When accepting a child into care at the time of drop-off, program staff in the room must:

- greet the parent/guardian and child.
- ask the parent/guardian how the child's evening/morning has been and if there are any changes to the child's pick-up procedure (i.e., someone other than the parent/guardian picking up).

- Where the parent/guardian has indicated that someone other than the child's parent/guardians will be picking up, the staff must confirm that the person is listed on authorized pick up list in each room or where the individual is not listed, ask the parent/guardian to provide authorization for pick-up in writing (e.g., note or email).
- Document the change in pick-up procedure in the daily written record.
- Sign the child in on the classroom attendance record.

Where a child has not arrived in care as expected and the parent/guardian has not communicated a change in drop-off (e.g., left a voice message or advised the closing staff at pick-up), the staff in the classroom must:

Inform the Supervisor or designate and they must commence contacting the child's parent/guardian no later than 12 pm Staff shall contact the child's parent/guardian. Call parent/guardian, send text message or email via Lillio. Staff can contact at least once and leave the message, wait an hour and then attempt to contact again. Staff to check with Supervisor or designate to see if they received a message about the absence

Staff can also reach out to the child's designated emergency contacts to assist with making contact and verification of absence.

Once the child's absence has been confirmed, program staff shall document the child's absence on the attendance record and any additional information about the child's absence in the daily written record.

Releasing a child from care

The staff who is supervising the child at the time of pick-up shall only release the child to the child's parent/guardian or individual that the parent/guardian has provided written authorization that the child care may release the child to. Where the staff does not know the individual picking up the child (i.e., parent/guardian or authorized individual),

Confirm with another staff member that the individual picking up is the child's parent/guardian/authorized individual.

Where the above is not possible, ask the parent/guardian/authorized individual for photo identification and confirm the individual's information against the parent/guardian/authorized individual's name on the child's file or written authorization.

Where a child has not been picked up as expected (before centre closes)

Where a parent/guardian has previously communicated with the staff a specific time or timeframe that their child is to be picked up from care and the child has not been picked up by 5:55pm, the Supervisor or Designate or program staff shall contact the parent/guardian by phone call, text message, or Lillio app and advise that the child is still in care and has not been picked up.

Where the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian, staff must call again and leave the message for the parent/guardian. Where the individual picking up the child is an authorized individual and their contact information is available, the staff shall proceed with contacting the individual to confirm pick-up as per the parent/guardian's instructions or leave a voice message to contact the centre.

Where the staff has not heard back from the parent/guardian or authorized individual who was to pick up the child the staff shall contact the child's emergency contact person, wait until the program closes and then refer to late pick up procedures; when a child has not been picked up and the program is closed.

Where a child has not been picked up and the centre is closed

Where a parent/guardian or authorized individual who was supposed to pick up a child from care and has not arrived by 6pm, staff shall ensure that the child is given a snack and activity, while they await their pick-up.

One staff shall stay with the child, while a second staff proceeds with calling the parent/guardian to advise that the child is still in care and inquire their pick-up time. In the case where the person picking up the child is an authorized individual, the staff shall contact the parent/guardian first and then proceed to contact the authorized individual responsible for pick-up if unable to reach the parent/guardian

If the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian or authorized individual who was responsible for picking up the child, the staff shall contact the authorized individuals listed on the child's file.

Where the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian or any other authorized individual listed on the child's file (e.g., the emergency contacts) by 7pm, the staff shall proceed with contacting the local Children's Aid Society (CAS) (416)924-464. Staff shall follow the CAS's direction with respect to next steps.

Dismissing a child from care without supervision procedures

Staff will only release children from care to the parent/guardian or other authorized adult. Under no circumstances will children be released from care to walk home alone.

Late Pick Up Fee

Any child picked up after 6:00 p.m. will be subject to late fees.

The **non-base late fee** charges are identified below:

- Parents/Guardians will be required to sign the late book each time they are late picking up their child(ren).
- As of 6:01 p.m., there will be a late charge of \$1.00 per minute per child.
- Payments must be made in cash to the Supervisor of the Centre within 5 working days. If payments are not made within the designated timeline, the Supervisor will meet with the family to discuss payment arrangements.
- If a family has been late 3 times in one calendar year, on the 4th occasion the child is late; the family will be charged a **non-base flat fee** of \$20.00 and \$1.00 per minute per child for every additional late minute.

- The 5th time the family is late in one calendar year late charges will include a non-base flat fee of \$40.00 plus \$1.00 per minute per child for every late minute.
- In addition, the family shall meet with the Supervisor of Early Learning Centre to discuss the situation. The family may be given a withdrawal letter if they are picked up late after the 5th time in a calendar year.

Programming

Ages: Newborn up to 4.5 years

Curriculum: Play based programming opportunities are planned and implemented based on the observations of individual, group needs and the interests of the children. Staff will identify the skill(s) to which each child is learning in relation to the programmed learning opportunity. The skills are related to the following five domains:

- Sensory
- Communication, language and literacy
- Cognitive
- Social/emotional
- Physical

Programs are posted weekly and are located outside each playroom.

Abiona Centre ELC programming is reflective of the need to provide stimulating and developmentally appropriate challenges for the individual child in a warm, secure environment. The role of the teacher is that of facilitator; to provide the kinds of experiences that promote active learning on the part of the child through the combination of planned programming, staff commitment and continued training.

Every child is provided the opportunity to learn and play at their own developmental level. This is promoted with ageappropriate materials and experiences that encourage exploring, experiencing, questioning, and problem solving. The children are encouraged to share these experiences with each other. The staff will develop their programmed learning opportunities based on the interests and observations of the children in conjunction with experience of the educators.

Developmental Screening – Ages and Stages Questionnaire

The Ages and stages tool is a developmental tool to support children between the ages of 0 to 6 years old. allows educators to understand your child and their development and implement strategies in their everyday routines. Both educator and the child's parent will use this developmental screen to pinpoint any areas of development that your child may benefit from additional supports in the program.

Abiona Centre is a proud community partner with SickKids (Infant and Early Mental Health Promotion) and Queen's University on the Canadian Database of Development (CanDDIS) – the first Canadian database of child development for children under the age of 6. The CanDDIS houses **anonymous** data from the Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ).

All parents are invited to participate in this important database by permitting anonymous data from your child's ASQ to be shared with SickKids. By creating a complete national database, policies and programs can be improved to better meet the needs of young children in society.

For more information about the database and Abiona Centre's involvement, please talk to your childcare Supervisor or visit: <https://imbpromotion.ca/CanDDIS>

Waitlist Information

It is recommended that a parent/care provider interested in enrolling their child into care schedule a guided tour before completing a waitlist application, although this is not mandatory. Tours are facilitated by the Supervisor who is well equipped to answer questions about childcare and subsidy.

To register for the waitlist; register online at www.abionacentre.ca.

Things to know about our waitlist:

- Priority is given to clients residing at Abiona Centre ELC or enrolled in Abiona Centre's TDSB, Education Community Partnership or the Section 23 program.

- The Centre will give priority to a family who has a child currently enrolled in our care.
- Our waitlist is updated monthly. Children are automatically transferred to a new age group when they meet the appropriate age.
- It is the family's responsibility to update the information they have provided on their application form. If you require assistance or have questions, families can call and speak with someone on site.
- Families on the waiting list are encouraged to inquire as to their status 1 month to 2 months prior to the date they require care.

When a space becomes available:

Three attempts will be made to contact a family; if we are unable to contact the family or do not hear back in 48 hours of our call or after three attempts, they will be removed from the waiting list.

Families have the option of accepting or declining a space. If a family declines a space at the time of offer, they may request to remain on the waiting list and provide a new date care is needed or they may request removal.

Orientation/Gradual Admission

Once your child has been accepted, Parents/Guardians will meet with the Supervisor to review all policies, procedures and admission forms. It is recommended that a child become acquainted with Abiona's Early Learning Centre in a gradual way.

Over the course of the child's first week, each day the child usually stays a little longer. This process helps to make the transition a positive experience for both the parent and child. The staff will discuss with the parent a transition schedule that works best for them.

Child Information Records

It is the parent's responsibility to provide the Centre with current information pertaining to their child. This includes names, home and business telephone numbers, addresses, immunization records and emergency contacts. Please ensure that

the Supervisor is notified of any changes to the child's records. This information is imperative in emergency situations.

Parent - Staff Communication

You can reach the staff member in your child's room or leave a message for them by calling: 416-425-3636 at any time throughout the day

Broadview Early Learning Centre

Infant room (647) 490-4985
Toddler room 1 (647) 490-5748
Toddler room 2 (647) 492-2876
Preschool room 1 (647) 374-4074
Preschool room 2 (647) 492-9180
Supervisor (437) 328-2816

Humewood Early Learning Centre

Infant room (647) 956- 6579
Toddler room (647) 493-3252
Supervisor (437) 328-2583

Abiona Centre ELC encourages parent involvement at the Centre. Parents/Guardians may visit their child and their child's program during the day and are supported in sharing stories, creative skills or language opportunities. There is also a Parent Advisory Committee which fosters opportunities for Parents/Guardians to share their thoughts, ideas and build relationships with others.

Staffing

Both Abiona Centre ELC Early Learning Centres are overseen by a Program Director and Child Care Supervisors and a team of staff at our Broadview and Humewood ELCs.

Broadview Early Learning Centre Infant Room

- Two Full-time Early Childhood Educators
- Two Full-time Early Childhood Assistants

Toddler Rooms

- Two Full-time Early Childhood Educator

- One Full-time Early Childhood Assistants
- One Part-time Early Childhood Assistant

Preschool Room

- Four Full-time Early Childhood Educators
- One Full-time Early Childhood Assistants

One Full Time Asst. Supervisor

Humewood Early Learning Centre

Infant Room

- Three Full-time Early Childhood Educators
- One Full-time Early Childhood Assistants

Toddler Room

- Three Full-time Early Childhood Educators
- One Full time Assistant Supervisor

1 Cook (Broadview ELC)

Catering (Wholesome Foods, Humewood ELC)

Agency Supply Staff

Volunteers and Student Placement Supervision

Volunteers/Students contribute in the success of Abiona Centre ELCEarly Learning Centres and its programs in meeting its mission, vision, strategic directions and objectives. Volunteers/students enhance the work of paid staff in our programs and services. Volunteers/Students offer:

- Additional expertise in a variety of areas
- Enhanced one-to-one support to our clients
- Assistance to staff in the implementation of their duties
- Opportunities for capable and committed individuals to provide services while enhancing their skills.

All volunteers/students must complete a Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC) prior to commencing their placement and are required to submit their medical information. All volunteers/students are required to sign a "Statement of Confidentiality, Behavior Management Policy, Code of Ethics, and the Child Abuse/ Serious Occurrence Policy."

Volunteers/students will not be left unsupervised while with the children in the centre, at any time during their placement. They will not be counted as part of ratio in any age group.

Child Guidance

To ensure a child's safety and well-being, and to foster social and emotional development, it is necessary at times to impose limits or set standards of acceptable behavior. Staff are guided by Abiona Centre ELCB behavior Management Policy. Staff are required to review and sign this policy each year. A copy of the Behavior Management Guideline is available upon request.

Incident Procedure

If your child becomes injured at the centre, the staff will provide immediate first aid. If the situation is serious we will contact you or the emergency contact person(s) on file. If required, we will transport your child to the nearest hospital or medical facility in a cab or by ambulance. In the event that your child receives an injury while attending the Early Learning Centre, Abiona Centre, the staff will prepare an incident report for your signature. If your child has an accident or injury at home, please inform staff when the child comes into care the following day.

Serious Occurrences

There is a designated list issued by the Ministry of Education that identifies what a serious occurrence is. In the unfortunate event a serious occurrence happens a report will be filed and submitted to the Ministry of Education and reported to our assigned District Consultant at the City of Toronto.

Non-Smoking / No vaping facility

The Abiona Centre ELC is designated as a non-smoking facility. There is NO smoking or vaping permitted on the premises.

Infant Sleep Supervision Policy

Proper sleep is an important part of every child's growth and development. Our Centre will ensure that all children will have a scheduled nap/quiet time normally scheduled after lunch, for a maximum of two hours per day. Infants will have their own

scheduled sleep time. Their sleep pattern will vary as they grow and is very important to their well-being. It is imperative that babies get their rest. While sleeping your infant will be restoring energy and building brain connections.

Each child will be assigned their own crib/cot labelled with their name on it. For infants, a brief description of how they sleep will be attached to their crib. The safety of infants while they are asleep is very important to the staff. There are procedures put in place to monitor the infants while they are asleep. Both Early Learning Centres follow the recommendations set out in the ***Joint Statement of Safe Sleep: Preventing Sudden Infant Deaths in Canada*** (Health Canada, 2011) in order to comply with the **Childcare and Early Years Act 2014**

Procedure

1. When there are three or more infants in the sleep room, a staff member will be in the room at all times with the infants while they are asleep. The staff member will monitor the infants breathing and temperature at intervals of 15 minutes. The sleep assessment checks will consist of observing the infant's chest rising as they breath, using the index finger under the child's nose and placing hand on child's forehead to feel warm body temperature.
2. Staff member will record/chart the infants breathing and temperature while asleep (recording time that breathing and temperature check is taken).
3. When there are less than three infants in the sleep room, there will be a designated staff to check on the infants every 15 minutes and will record and initial their breathing and temperatures.
4. When the designated sleep room staff goes on break or lunch, an alternative staff to be assigned to do sleep checks and monitor breathing and temperatures.
5. When staff are rotated, both staff are to sign off on the time of rotation before the next sleep check.

Toddler/ Preschool sleep supervision policy

1. Each child will have their sleep preference form information available on the room sleep chart, so that all staff are aware of each child's preferences.
2. Children's cots are placed in the classroom. Staff will be present in the classroom at all times. Students and

volunteers will not be left alone or unsupervised in the sleep room.

3. Children have a regular naptime after lunch, however, children will be accommodated if they fall asleep outside of their regular naptime.
4. A thin, lightweight and breathable blanket maybe provided from home and left at the Centre.
5. Staff are to remain in the toddler room during sleep time.
6. The ratio of adults to toddlers is 1:5 with a maximum group size of 15 and ratio of adults to preschoolers is 1:8 with a maximum group size of 24. During naptime, the toddler ratio can be increase to 1:8 and preschool ratio can be increased to 1:12.
7. Staff review each child's sleep preference form before working in the sleep room and when Parents/Guardians make any changes to the form.
8. Staff working with the children are aware of each child's sleep habits and preferences, and remain aware of all the children resting or sleeping in the room responding to distress.
9. Staff in the room monitor the children and record their findings every 30 minutes during sleep time, and when a child is sleeping outside of the usual sleep time. Children's sleep time are recorded on daily charts as well
10. Staff will communicate to a child's parent or guardian any significant change in their child's sleeping pattern or behaviors, resulting in adjustments to the manner in which their child is supervised during sleep and include details regarding the performance of direct visual checks such as how frequently direct visual checks are performed and how direct visual checks will be documented.

Food and Menu Information

Abiona Centre, BC campus has their own cook and HC campus uses Wholesome Kids Catering to cater lunches and snacks. These are well-balanced and nutritious meals and snacks each day from a designated menu. The special nutritional needs of the infants and children are of the utmost importance. Foods are selected to promote good health and give each child the opportunity to try new foods as good eating habits are established. Our menus incorporate the foundations of healthy eating and are reviewed by a licensed nutritionist and follow the Canada Food Guide.

Weekly menus are posted for your information. The menu changes twice a year Spring/Summer and Fall/Winter to incorporate fresh, seasonally available and local foods.

Infants are fed according to their individual needs.

Due to children with food allergies, (refer to Anaphylactic policy) you are not permitted to bring any additional food into the Centre. In a case where a specific food is not served at the Centre; documentation will be requested and a plan put in place to ensure appropriate handling and distribution of food is followed.

Copies of the menu are available when requested.

Clothing Requirements

Your child's clothing, both for indoor and outdoor play, should be labelled with their name. Occasionally your child may require a complete change of clothing (e.g. toileting accident or spill), so please ensure that you place a full change of clothing in your child's cupboard.

Lost or Stolen Items

It is strongly recommended that your child not arrive at the Centre with valuable items such as jewelry. We suggest that strollers be secured by lock and not left unsecured in front of the Early Learning Centre. Abiona Centre ELC does not accept any responsibility for lost or stolen items.

Guidelines for Outdoor Play

The Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA) states that children who are in full day care are required to have two hours of outdoor play, weather permitting. Please ensure that adequate clothing for changing weather conditions is available, so that your child can comfortably participate in outdoor activities. If your child is not well enough to go outside, please keep them at home until they can participate fully in the day.

Smog/Humidex Alert

The children will remain indoors during the identified peak times from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. for each day of an issued alert. Outdoor times will be adjusted accordingly when need be.

Extreme Cold Alert

During the winter, children will stay indoors when the temperature falls to -15 degrees or lower. Wind chill factors are taken into consideration.

Duty to Report

Every person in Ontario is required under the Child and Family Services Act to report if they believe that a child may be in need of protection: "A person who believes, on reasonable grounds, that a child is, or may be in need of protection shall forthwith report the believe and information, upon which it is based, to a society."

The legislation specifically requires individuals who perform professional or official duties with respect to children such as the "operator or employee of a day nursery" to report suspicions of child abuse.

If in the course of their professional duties, the supervisor and/or staff of the Early Learning Centre have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child may have been abused, the suspicion and the information upon which the suspicion is based must be reported immediately to a Children's Aid Society.

Parent Issues and Concerns Policy

Parents and guardians are encouraged to take an active role in our child care centre and regularly discuss what their children are experiencing with our program. As supported by our program statement, we support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents and guardians, child care providers and Educators, and foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents/guardians about the program and their children. Our Educators are available to engage parents/guardians in conversations and support a positive experience during every interaction.

All issues and concerns raised by parents/guardians are taken seriously by Educators, Supervisors and Management and will be addressed. Every effort will be made to address and resolve issues and concerns to the satisfaction of all parties and as quickly as possible.

Issues and concerns may be brought forward verbally or in writing. These will be documented on the Parent Issue and Concern Form/book. Responses and outcomes will be provided verbally, or in writing upon request. The level of detail

provided to the parent or guardian will respect and maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved.

An initial response or acknowledgement to an issue or concern will be provided to parents or guardians within one business day. The person who raised the issue or concern will be kept informed throughout the resolution process.

Investigations of issues and concerns will be fair, impartial and respectful to parties involved.

Confidentiality

Every issue and concern will be treated confidentially and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of parents and guardians, children, Educators, students and volunteers, except when information must be disclosed for legal reasons (e.g. to the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities or a Children's Aid Society).

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 or guardian, provider or Educators 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.

Procedures

Parents and guardians should raise concerns with their appropriate parties as per the chart below. These concerns will be documented on The Parent Issue and Concern Form as well as the Centre daily log. These will be kept in a designated binder to be reviewed by the Supervisor or CEO and tracked for ongoing issues or patterns of concerns.

Nature of Issue or Concern	Steps for Parent and/or Guardian to Report Issue/Concern:	Steps for Educators and/or Licensee in responding to issue/concern:
<p>Program Room-Related E.g: schedule, sleep arrangements, toilet training, indoor or outdoor program activities, feeding arrangements, etc.</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the classroom Educators directly or • the Supervisor, Assistant Supervisor or Designate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address the issue or concern at the time it is raised or • Arrange for a meeting with the parent or guardian within five business days. <p>Document the issues or concerns in detail. Documentation should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the date and time the issue or concern was received; • the name of the person who received the issue or concern;
<p>General, Centre-or OperationsRelated Eg: child care fees, hours of operation, Educators, waiting lists, menus, etc.</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Supervisor, Assistant Supervisor or Designate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the name of the person reporting the issue or concern; • the details of the issue or concern; and

<p>Educators-, 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 or • to the Supervisor, Assistant Supervisor Designate <p>All issues or concerns about the conduct of Educators, duty parents, etc. that puts a child's health, safety and wellbeing at risk should be reported to the Supervisor, Assistant Supervisor or Designate as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any steps taken to resolve the issue or concern and/or information given to the parent or guardian regarding next steps or referral. <p>Provide contact information for the appropriate person if the person being notified is unable to address the matter.</p> <p>Ensure the investigation of the issue or concern is initiated by the appropriate party within one business day or as soon as reasonably possible thereafter. Document reasons for delays in writing.</p>
<p>Student- / Volunteer- Related</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Educators responsible for supervising the volunteer or student or • the Supervisor, Assistant Supervisor or Designate. <p>-</p> <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, Assistant Supervisor or Designate as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.</p>	<p>Provide a resolution or outcome to the parent(s)/guardian(s) who raised the issue or concern.</p> <p>As Above</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 Director.

Issues and 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 and 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.

Withdrawal Policy

We require two weeks written notice if you plan to withdraw your child from the Centre permanently. The **non-base deposit fee** that was paid when the child first enrolled at the Centre will be used toward the notice period. The deposit applies to both full fee and partial fee families. All outstanding fees must be paid in full at the time of withdrawal.

We cannot guarantee a space will be available at the Centre if a parent/guardian wishes to temporarily withdraw their child. Parents/Guardians will be required to re-enroll their child and pay the two-week deposit again if there is space.

Withdrawal of Services

Abiona Centre ELC strives to meet the needs of all children and families enrolled in our childcare program. However, situations may arise where it may be necessary to withdraw childcare services for a child and/or their family. Examples leading to withdrawal of services may include:

- Non-payment of program fees
- Frequent late pick up
- Parents/Guardians/guardians or children who exhibit violent or harassing behaviour towards staff, students, other children or families
- not following policy procedures

We will adhere to these steps if a child must be withdrawn:

1. The Supervisor will arrange a meeting with the parent(s) and review circumstances
2. An action plan will be created between the centre and the family outlining the goals and expectations.

3. If goals outlined in the action plan are not met by the family, the Supervisor will meet with Program Director to discuss the pending withdrawal.
4. The Program Director will meet with the family to discuss the situation and pending withdrawal.
5. Written withdrawal notice will be issued and Children's Services Consultant and Ministry of Education Program Advisor will be notified.

Parent Advisory Committee

The purpose of the committee is to enable Parents/Guardians to meet and share information regarding the operation of the childcare Centre. Parents/Guardians are invited to become active participants of this group that meets regularly throughout the year. Discussions may include program planning, topics for guest speakers, issues identified by Parents/Guardians, social events for children and Parents/Guardians, and planning for community events. If you are interested in participating, please contact your ELC Supervisor.

Emergency Management Procedure

The childcare Centre has an Emergency Management Policy and procedure in place. Parents/Guardians will be notified in the event of an emergency by telephone. Copies of the policy are available if requested.

Health Policy

In the best interest of your child, and to protect all children and staff at Abiona Centre ELC from unnecessary exposure to illness, your child should be well enough to participate in all aspects of the program, including outdoor play.

Based on Toronto Public Health guideline, we advise that all children in the same household are to stay home and be symptom free before returning to the Abiona Centre childcare.

As a reference, signs of illness may include:

- Severe runny nose or cough, wheezing or difficulty breathing, excessive lethargy
- A fever is a temperature of 38.5 C (100.4 F) or higher. Contact your physician immediately if the fever is 39 C

(102 F). Your child must remain fever free for 24 hours without the aid of an over the counter fever medication prior to returning to care

- An undetermined rash. Your child must be seen by a physician to determine the nature of the rash before returning. A note from the physician is required
- Vomiting, diarrhea or fever within the last 12 hours

If your child becomes sick while in care

You will be contacted and asked to pick up your child as soon as possible. There may be an exclusion period for some illnesses, such as conjunctivitis (pink eye) as required by the City of Toronto, Public Health Department. You may be asked to provide a doctor's note for re-admittance into Abiona Centre.

Vomiting and/or Diarrhea

If your child has experienced two or more incidents of vomiting or diarrhea while attending Abiona Centre ELC, you will be called to pick-up your child. If this occurs at home, we request that you do not bring your child into Abiona Centre ELC. Your child may return when they have not vomited or had diarrhea for 24 hours (not just overnight) to ensure that your child is well enough to participate in the program.

Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis)

If your child exhibits discharge from the eyes or ears, it is requested that they not attend Abiona Centre ELC unless a doctor's note is obtained stating that the child is not infectious or contagious. A child cannot attend Abiona Centre ELC if he/she has conjunctivitis or pink eye, as this is very contagious. Public health regulations require that the child be isolated and not attend childcare until there is no discharge from the eye(s) and the pink discoloration in the eye has returned to white. A child may return to care after 24 hours of administration of prescribed medication (accompanied by a doctor's note).

Antibiotics

If your child has been sent home with high fever, and is diagnosed with an infection that requires antibiotics, your child must stay home for 24 hours after starting medication to allow your child to build up his/her energy and to allow the medication to take effect before they return to care.

Biting Incident

If your child is involved in a biting incident where the skin was broken or they have been bitten, the parent will be notified of the incident and encouraged to seek medical advice.

Medication

In accordance with the CCEYA, all medicine that is to be administered to a child while attending the Centre must be given to the child's teacher:

- in its original pharmacy packaging
- clearly labeled with the child's name, dosage amount, and the number of days it should be administered

Inhalers will be kept in the emergency knapsack in the room, and an Epi-pen will be kept in a pouch on the physical body of a staff at all times. On daily excursions and trips, the inhalers/Epi-pen must accompany the child in the emergency/first aid bags. Medications should not be left with your child's belongings.

A medication form must be filled out for all medication to be administered stating your child's name, type of medicine, amount and time of dosage(s), and a parent's signature.

Non-prescription medicine may be given only if accompanied by a note from a licensed medical practitioner stating the child's name, medication type, amount, and time of dosage(s). Please inform staff and initial the form daily when medicine is to be administered.

Anaphylactic Allergies

Upon a child's admission to Abiona Centre ELC Early Learning Centre, the parent/guardian must supply a doctor's note stating the specifics of an allergy, and provide an auto-injector (Epi-pen). In conjunction with the parent and physician, the supervisor will develop an individual plan and emergency procedure, which will include a description of the child's allergy, and action to be taken by the staff in the event that a child has an anaphylactic reaction. This information, along with the child's photograph, will be posted for staff. To ensure the well-being of children who have anaphylactic reactions it is imperative that an Epi-pen is available at the child care centre at all times. If a parent/guardian does not provide an Epi-pen, or fails to replace an expired Epi-pen, admission to the program

will be denied. If a parent/guardian believes the child no longer requires an Epi-pen, a doctor's note confirming this information will be required.

Infection Control Practices

Abiona Centre, has routines and practices in place to ensure a healthy environment for all to enjoy. The first step is to make sure that ill children remain home until they are well enough to participate.

The single most important method of reducing the spread of infectious disease and/or viruses is frequent and thorough handwashing using soap and water. This reduces the spread of bacteria/virus to and from others and ourselves in our care. Disposable gloves are used followed by thorough hand washing. The children develop good hygiene habits through frequent and thorough handwashing before and after meal times and washroom visits.

Children with runny noses and/or coughs are encouraged to wash their hands after cleaning their noses or covering their mouths. Children develop good hygiene habits through frequent and thorough hand washing before and after meal times and bathroom visits.

In each room, there is a disinfection schedule for toys, equipment, and laundry, which the staff follows on a daily, weekly and monthly basis.

A bleach solution of 1:10 (1-part bleach to 9-parts water) is used for daily disinfections. This solution is made fresh every day for effectiveness.

Policies are available upon request.

Parents/Guardians/guardians are encouraged to take an active role in our Early Learning Centres and regularly discuss what their child(ren) are experiencing with our program. As supported by our program statement, we support positive and responsive interactions among the children, Parents/Guardians/guardians, childcare providers and staff, and foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with Parents/Guardians/guardians about the program and their children. Our staff are available to engage Parents/Guardians/guardians in conversations and support a positive experience during every interaction.

All issues and concerns raised by Parents/Guardians/guardians are taken seriously by Abiona Centre. We aim to resolve issues and concerns to the satisfaction of all parties and as quickly as possible.

Issues/concerns may be brought forward verbally or in writing. Responses and outcomes will be provided verbally, or in writing upon request. The level of detail provided to the parent/guardian will respect and maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved.

An initial response to an issue or concern will be provided to Parents/Guardians/guardians within seven business day(s). The person who raised the issue/concern will be kept informed throughout the resolution process.

Investigations of issues and concerns will be fair, impartial and respectful to parties involved.

Confidentiality

Every issue and concern will be treated confidentially and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of Parents/Guardians/guardians, children, staff, students and volunteers, except when information must be disclosed for legal reasons (e.g., to the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities or a Children's Aid Society).

Conduct

Our Centre maintains high standards for positive interaction, communication, and role-modeling for children. Harassment and discrimination will therefore not be tolerated by 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*.

Child Abuse Reporting Policy

Every person in Ontario, including a person who performs professional or official duties with respect to children is required under the Child and Family Services Act to report his/her suspicion that a child may have been abused or is at risk for abuse (i.e., in need of protection). The suspicion and the information upon which that suspicion is based, must be reported to a Children's Aid Society organization. Professionals who fail to call CAS with potential abuse information will be disciplined appropriately.

Examples of Common Reportable Concerns are:

- Parent or caregiver arrives to drop off or pick up the child and presents themselves to be under the influence
- Child who arrives to the Centre not dressed for the weather
- Disclosure from a child on an incident that happened
- Parent or caregiver takes their child home without appropriate child restraints in their vehicle
- Children arrive or are left outside the Centre without adult supervision □ Unexplained marks
- Failure to arrive or contact the Centre after 6:00 p.m.
- Inappropriate child discipline techniques that harm or degrade the child

Anti-Racism Policy

Abiona Centre ELC is committed to maintaining a community that respects the diversity of Canada's multi-racial and multicultural society while encouraging its members to live, work and learn together in a spirit of fellowship and mutual support.

It is the policy of our organization to comply with both the provisions and intent of the Canadian Human Rights Act and the related Ontario Human Rights legislation in all aspects of personnel policies and procedures. Accordingly, it is the practice of Abiona Centre ELC to recruit, select, employ, compensate and promote individuals of the highest quality solely on the basis of their abilities, experience, training, intelligence, integrity, and demonstrated performance, and

without regard to: age, colour, ethnic or national origin, marital or family status, language, sex or sexual orientation, political beliefs, physical characteristics, physical disabilities which are unrelated to the work to be performed, race, religion.

Discrimination, intimidation, interference, harassment, restriction, or coercion exercised or practiced with respect to any employee by reason of age, race, creed national origin, political or religious affiliation, sexual orientation, marital status, ethnic origin is not tolerated.

Inclusion Policy

Abiona Centre ELC supports the belief that a child with special needs benefit from an inclusive setting, as do typical children. Children need to get along comfortably with a wide variety of people, and an inclusive setting encourages tolerance, understanding and cooperation for these children. It also helps provide experiences for these children to reach their full potential.

Segregation on the grounds of disability conditions unfairly excludes one group from another group (considered to be the 'normal' group) Segregation will not be tolerated by the organization, and no child will ever be excluded for reasons of level or type of disability.

In order for a child who may have special needs to be successful in our program, we must be able to provide the support and services they require. The following steps will be followed when a parent is interested in enrolling their child (with special needs) at the Centre:

- An orientation meeting with the Supervisor will be set up to determine what services, support, and/or funding will be needed.
- Supervisor will contact the City of Toronto Resource Consultant department to determine if the needed services are available.
- If our Early Learning Centre is unable to meet the child's needs (unable to access support services), the supervisor will try to find the family another Centre that can meet their needs.

- If Abiona Centre ELC is able to provide the services, a partnership meeting will be held. Attending the meeting will be the Supervisor, Child's teacher(s), Parents/Guardians/Guardians, and the Support service agency. The goal of the meeting will be to help the family integrate into the Centre and to develop and Individual Program Plan (I.P.P.) for the child.
- The Supervisor will arrange monthly meetings with the child's teacher(s) to evaluate how the program is meeting the child's needs. The Supervisor will also arrange meetings with all parties mentioned above to evaluate the child's progress.
- All information regarding the child and his/her needs will be discussed in confidentiality with parent's permission.

Anti-Bias Policy

Abiona Centre ELC embraces the following anti-bias philosophy:

- The Centre has a responsibility for the development of positive attitude with all people involved directly or indirectly with our program.
- The people influenced by our mandate and operations come from many cultures and many different racial and ethnic backgrounds, gender, age, sexual orientations, religious, and have different developmental needs.
- The educational process must begin with and be supported by a belief in the fundamental freedoms of the individual and the equal rights of the people.

With these realizations, Abiona Centre ELC commits itself to:

- Develop, promote, and support positive race, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, religious and developmental orientations in relations to staff, children, and Parents/Guardians.
- Ensure that steps are taken to communicate the commitment to this principle to staff, children, and Parents/Guardians. □ Follow appropriate action when this principle is challenged or undermined in any way.
- The Centre condemns and refuses to tolerate the expression of racial, ethnic, religious, gender, developmental, or sexual orientation prejudice in any form by a person, or persons within its jurisdiction.

- The Centre will program activities that show respect for different cultures, racial, and language diversity.
- The Centre will not condone any incident involving verbal or non-verbal expression of a negative attitude or malice, towards any person and/or group's race, colour, heritage, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability, or physical attributes.

Should there be a contravention of the Anti-Bias policy by a child, parent/guardians, or staff the Supervisor will be notified, and Abiona Centre's Anti-Racism Grievance policy will be followed.

Code of Conduct

Declaration:

All Parents/Guardians/Guardian, caregivers, and visitors of Abiona Centre ELC collectively agree to act in a manner that emphasizes mutual respect, fairness, and equality. Individual needs and differences are recognized as being part of this collective process and all individuals are required to work out all concerns and differences in a clear and reasonable manner. The Abiona Centre ELC will not tolerate incidents of expressed bias, discrimination, prejudice or harassment. The Centre will act to eliminate all forms of discrimination and bias witnessed on the part of staff, children, Parents/Guardians/guardian, caregivers, and visitors. All Parents/Guardians/guardians, caregivers, and visitors are expected to abide by the Code of Conduct.

Definitions:

Safe behaviour: Any behaviour or series of behaviours that is conducive to the safety of all children and adults in the Centre.

Verbal aggression: Highly inappropriate language (name calling, profane language) and or methods of communication that makes another person feel threatened or not in control of the situation.

Physical aggression: Any act taken to deliberately inflict physical harm or injury upon another person or him/herself.

Gestural aggression: Inappropriate gestures, body language or invasion of another person's personal space causing the other person to feel threatened.

Expression of bias or discrimination: Intentional incidents of bias and discrimination can be expressed verbally, in writing or physically. Rude behaviour, stereotyping, name-calling, jokes and slurs, insults, intimidation are typical expressions of bias and discrimination.

Procedures

Steps to address concerns:

1. Contact the Early Learning Centre Supervisor
2. Contact the Program Director
3. Contact the CEO of Abiona Centre ELC

Terms

Parents/Guardians/Guardians, Caregivers, and Visitors agree to:

- Support a friendly and nurturing environment
- Ensure positive communication during interactions
- Follow the recommended procedures of addressing concerns
- Participate in meeting regarding a potential code of conduct violation
- Abide by the final decision of the Centre

If any parent/guardian, caregiver, and visitor fail to abide by the Code of Conduct the following procedure will be followed:

1. The concern and any inappropriate behaviour will be documented and communicated to the Supervisor.
2. Supervisor will set up a meeting with all parties involved to gather more information and determine if the Code of Conduct was violated.
3. The information will be used to reach a decision and should it be determined that there was a violation of the Code of Conduct the Supervisor will consult with the CEO of Abiona Centre.
4. The Supervisor and the CEO has the right to:
 - i. issue a written warning
 - ii. institute a probationary period or
 - iii. issue a withdrawal notice to the family

Behaviour Management Policy

The guidance techniques utilized by the staff are positive reinforcement for appropriate behaviour and redirection, and discussion with children regarding inappropriate behaviour. Children are encouraged to verbalize their feelings, wants and needs.

DISCIPLINE IS NOT A PUNISHMENT, BUT A LEARNING EXPERIENCE FOR THE CHILD.

The guidance of young children is:

1. Related to the nature of the troublesome behaviour;
2. Appropriate to the developmental level of the child;
3. Designed to assist the child to learn appropriate behaviour;
4. Implemented as soon as possible after the troublesome behaviour;
5. Discussed with a parent(s) if a difficult situation persists with the child.

Children learn within a safe environment. In order to create the necessary safety within the playroom, there are guidelines and limits set. Staff are consistent, fair and positive in their enforcement of the limits. Our aim, through guidance, is to teach children about safety, care and respect for property, positive health habits and consideration of others.

Abiona Centre ELC, shall not permit:

1. Corporal punishment of a child by an employee, parent/guardian, student/volunteer or by a child or group of children e.g., physical punishment such as: hitting, restraining, spanking, kicking, pushing shoving, grabbing, pinching, or squeezing.
2. Deliberate harsh or degrading measures to be used on a child that would humiliate or undermine a child's self-esteem and self-respect.
3. Deprivation of a child of basic needs including food, shelter, clothing, or bedding.
4. Abusive language such as swearing, yelling, or screaming.
5. Children must NOT be confined or locked in any room or dark area for any reason. If a child must be removed, a staff member must stay with him/her.

All staff, parent, student/volunteers in the Centre are required to review the behaviour management practices and sign a behaviour management form. Staff behaviour management practices are monitored quarterly by the supervisor.

Client Service and Complaint Policy

1. Purpose and Scope of Policy

Purpose

The Centre is committed to excellence in the delivery of high quality, efficient, timely and responsive services. The Centre is also committed to ensuring efficient resolution of service queries and complaints.

Scope

This Policy will assist the Centre in the provision of the highest quality service to our clients. It will also increase the level of client satisfaction with the delivery of the Centre's programs and services. The Policy will also enhance our relationship with our clients.

2. Definition of Terms What is a complaint?

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction received by an individual relating to a program or Service provided by the Centre.

3. Procedures

How to make a complaint

You may raise a service or program query. You can make a verbal, written or electronic media complaint, and whoever you complain to will put it in writing and read it back to you. To make a written complaint, request a Client Complaint Form (see Appendix I). You may be contacted for clarifications and you will be asked what action/response you required from the Centre. You will be given a copy of the complaint.

Who to contact

Parents/Guardians/guardians or any individual may make a complaint in written, electronically or verbal format to:

- The classroom staff
- Centre Supervisor
- Program Director
- CEO

- Relevant outside body - i.e., College of Early Childhood Educators, etc.

How the Centre deals with complaints

If your complaint is not resolved with the individual(s) concerned or the Supervisor or the Program Director, the CEO shall be notified at this stage. The CEO shall set up and appointment with the complainant and the employee within 7 business days. The complainant and the employee (if applicable) will be informed of next steps and the complainant may be asked for more information. The complainant can have an advocate or supporter present at all stages and will be provided with assistance required (i.e., cultural interpreters).

4. Guidelines

The Centre promotes the existence of the Program Statement to all Parents/Guardians/guardians, through reference to our policy on the Centre's website, on program calendars or at intake or orientation of new families.

The Centre recognizes the need to be fair and equitable to the complaint and the employee against whom the complaint is made.

The Centre will collect and record data on complaints lodged and outcome to assist in the identification of systemic and recurring problems and/or potential improvements to the program and

I have read Abiona Centre' Code of Conduct and hereby agree to respect other people's rights and will do my part to ensure a fairness and equality.