

Open Minds Early Childhood Program Inc.

Parent Handbook

January 2024

Welcome / Philosophy

Welcome to Open Minds Early Childhood Program Inc. This handbook has been created so that there are no misunderstandings, and so that everyone is aware of the requirements of Open Minds Early Childhood Program Inc. as well as the requirements of you, the parents/guardians. This handbook covers our childcare philosophies, business policies and expectations. Please read this handbook carefully, and feel free to discuss with myself or a staff member any questions that you may have.

Open Minds Early Childhood Program Inc. is committed to creating a safe, warm, loving environment for children where they can learn and grow physically, emotionally, creatively, intellectually, and socially at their own pace. We want to help your child increase their confidence, and self esteem by treating them as unique individuals, and allowing them to express themselves in a variety of facets. We strive to make your child's time at daycare the best experience it can be for them as well as you, the parents.

We are committed to supporting families by maintaining open communication and encourage parental involvement in our programming and care activities. Our objective is to care for your child the same way you would.

In programming activities for the children we follow the Let's Play Education Curriculum Framework, which follows a play-based learning philosophy. We develop activities centered on stories, songs, math, fine and gross motor skills, circle time, science, music, theatre and arts/crafts. We strive to prepare your children for their early school years by exposing them regularly to letters, numbers, colours, shapes, name recognition, and new vocabulary. Please see any staff member if you'd like more information on the Curriculum Framework, or you can access it online at: <https://www.schools.nyc.gov>

Hours of Operation

Hours of operation are:

7:00 am – 6:00 PM.....Monday – Friday

We will be closed on January 1st, Good Friday, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Remembrance Day and from December 25th and 26th. Other days will be provided to parents with monthly calender.

Late pick-up policy: If you are late picking up (after closing time) your child you will be charged a late fee of \$15 per 15 min late or any part thereof, except in emergency situations. This late fee must be paid in cash to the staff on duty upon pick-up of your child.

Enrolment Requirements

Before your child can be officially enrolled in Open Minds Early Childhood Program Inc. you must complete and provide the following documents:

- Signed Parent Contract and Rate Agreement
- Completed Child Profile & Copy of Immunization Record (or Signed Waiver)
- Signed Consent Forms (those that are applicable)
- Registration Fee must be paid (\$25)*
- Deposit of \$25 into each child's Supply Account (see below for description of this account)*

*spaces will not be held by verbal contract, registration fee and deposit must be paid in order for a spot to be held for you and your child.

We do require that the parent/guardian and their child(ren) visit our daycare prior to enrolment. This process allows your child(ren) to become more familiar with our daycare and staff. If you feel it necessary, we can arrange for your child(ren) to be left in our care for 2 hours free of charge as a trial basis, before leaving them for a full day.

Evacuation Procedures

In case of emergency (fire/flood/otherwise), children and staff will be evacuated to McDonalds 300 E 204th St, Bronx, NY 10467. This is just short walk from the day care, and that will be how the children will be transported there. Emergency contact information will be transported along with us, so you will be contacted to pick up your child at the alternate location.

Transportation/Outings

For any field trips or outings that require transportation, parents will be asked if they would like to volunteer to drive their own children, stay for the outing, and then return their children back home with them, or back to the center, whichever case may apply. If we arrange transportation for the children, or if parents are unable to attend and we need transportation to and from a location we will be using a local transportation yellow bus company, which is always inspected up to date, and covered with the proper insurance, and outfitted with proper car seats, The Transportation Services, or public transportation (city bus). Transportation Services that provides transportation services to various organizations under the Social Development Department. Drivers have the following documents, as well as required insurance and car seats to transport children:

- Criminal Record checks
- Social Development Checks
- Clean Drivers Abstracts

If any parent is uncomfortable with this transportation method they have the option of transporting their child themselves, or choosing to keep their child at the daycare with another classroom. Outings are a part of the Learn and Play Education Curriculum Framework, and participation is encouraged by all families. If there is anything we can do to help anyone feel more comfortable with their children participating please feel free to talk to staff or myself about this.

No child will be permitted to go on an outing without written parental consent.

Payment Procedures

Forms of payment currently accepted are cash, post dated cheques, email money transfer, Debit or Credit. Please let me know if you plan on doing your payments electronically, a reminder email can be sent to you if you'd like.

All fees must be paid by Monday (or the first day of care) at drop off time for the current week of services. If payment is not received by Monday at pick-up time a late payment fee will be applied to your account at the rate of \$5 per day. In order to ensure accurate supplies to keep the daycare running, fees need to be on time. After 3 days of late fees added to your account your care will be suspended until fees are paid. After 3 late payments, or 2 NSF cheques, fees maybe required 2 weeks in advance, or service may be suspended. Each situation is dealt with on an individual basis. An NSF or returned cheque is subject to a \$30 administration fee.

Registration Fee

An annual registration fee of \$25/child is required upon enrolment, and will be collected by January 31st of subsequent years. This registration fee goes towards supplies for children's artwork, as well as other supplies that we use to teach your child, as well as document that learning.

Supply Account

The supply account is a \$25 account that we will hold in your child's name at the daycare. Each child must have a supply account of \$25, and as it runs out we will ask that you replenish it. This supply account will ensure that your child will always have adequate supplies at the daycare. We will use the money in this account when your child runs out of something and it is not supplied. If you are having a busy week and forget to bring in new diapers for your child when they have run out, we will use the money in this account to purchase (from a supply at the daycare at a rate of \$1.00/diaper) them for your child to tide them over until you can replenish their supply. Or, if your child comes to daycare with sandals one day and you forget to provide socks, \$1/pair of socks will be deducted from your supply account (as coverings are REQUIRED for feet by public health when indoors at ALL times). The balance of this account will be applied to your last week/month's bill should any remain upon termination of services.

Signing in and out/Attendance Records Policy

Children are signed in and out by staff members upon their arrival and departure. We ask that if your child is not going to attend care as per usual that you inform the daycare by 10am. This will help us plan activities for the day. When your child does not attend daycare you must call to let us know the reason – if it is a communicable illness we are required to record this in case of other cases breaking out. If no one answers the phone please leave a brief message. Also, upon arrival and preparing your child for the day please help them or direct them to wash their hands before beginning to play with toys, in order to prevent the spread of germs.

If someone else will be picking up your child please let staff know upon arrival. Photo ID will be required by the person picking up your child as well if the staff member is not familiar with that person. Please let any individuals other than parents who may pick up the children that they will be asked for picture ID in order to ensure the safety of all children.

Children will not be released to unauthorized individuals. If someone shows up to pick up your child and staff was not made aware of it, we will have to track you down to confirm that this is in fact permitted, as well as see a picture ID of that individual to confirm their identity.

Absences/Exclusion from Daycare

If a child is too sick to attend daycare, please keep him/her home. There is no "sick room" at the daycare, and the best place for a child to be recuperating from an illness is at home. There are also many symptoms that a child may have that may prevent them from being able to partake in everyday activities. If your child experiences any of the following please keep them home until they are gone, or are well enough to participate in normal everyday activities:

Fever greater than or equal to 100.5 degrees F.

Excessive drainage (clear or discoloured) from the mouth, nose, eyes, or ears.

Red discoloration to the whites of the eye(s).

Skin rashes as they are difficult to diagnose unless seen by a physician.

Severe abdominal pain, vomiting or diarrhoea.

A deep, hacking cough

Difficulty breathing or untreated wheezing

Yellow discharge from the eyes

An unusual yellow coloring of the skin or eyes

Cuts or openings on the skin that are pus-filled or oozing

Lice or nits

If your child(ren) are sent to daycare with any of the above listed symptoms, or develop during the day they will be sent home. Children should NEVER be medicated and then sent to daycare (i.e. given Tylenol to break fever). You should arrange for back-up care when your child is sick, and unfortunately there are no refunds or discounts for days that your child does not attend daycare. There are still costs associated with each childcare spot each day that unfortunately cannot be avoided if your child is not in attendance.

If your child will not be attending daycare due to illness or any other reason, please let someone at the centre know as soon as possible, as well as the reason they will not be attending. This will prevent activities from being delayed.

Child Abuse/Neglect

If there is any abuse or neglect suspected of any children in our care, we are required to report it to Social Development according to the Child's Victim's of Abuse and Neglect Protocols (issued by the province of NB). Please be aware also that children will NOT be released under any circumstances to impaired individuals. If we have reason to believe that any persons picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, an emergency contact will be called to pick up the child. The incident will also have to be reported to Social Development according to the Child's Victim's of Abuse and Neglect Protocols.

Clothing Code

Children should come dressed in comfortable, season appropriate clothing that can get dirty, since some activities we do on a daily basis are messy. A spare change of clothes is required for all children in case of soiling of clothes. Children under the age of 3, and those who are potty-training require at least two changes of clothing (including socks). We want to keep your children happy and comfortable.

A separate set of indoor shoes is required at the daycare for each child at all times. Feet are required to remain covered by public health at ALL times when indoors. These "indoor shoes" can be simply a pair of crocs from the dollar store, or a pair of slippers that they don't use at home, or even a separate set of sneakers if you wish. Indoor shoes also protect your child's feet in the event of a fire drill in the winter months/rainy days.

Please also remember whenever weather permits the children are taken outside for 1-2 hours per day. Please ensure that you have proper outerwear provided for your child so that they are comfortable and don't miss out on outdoor play. If a child does not have proper outdoor apparel they will have to remain indoors with another teacher/classroom. This happens all too often in the winter time because of a lack of snow pants and hats and mitts, please leave an extra pair of these items with us if you can, or be sure to bring them everyday.

Potty Training Policies

We strive to support your efforts of potty training at home right through the day here at daycare. However, there are some key signs to look for before we are able to help you train your child at the daycare. The key signs of readiness for potty training include:

- The child is able to pull down and up their pants and underwear/pull-ups on their own with little or no assistance
- The child is able to communicate to you when they need to go to the bathroom
- The child's diaper is dry after nap times and for long periods during the day
- The child is able to hold their bowels and bladder until they get to the potty once they realize that they need to go

If these signs are not present, your child is not ready to potty train at daycare, as we cannot have a potty in each room for them to use – it is against public health sanitation policies. Children are not able to move up to the preschool room (from the toddler room) until they are completely potty-trained (having no more than 2 accidents per week for at least a 2-3 week period). We will always encourage children to use the potty regularly and we begin to introduce sitting on the potty as soon as the children move into the Monkey (toddler) room at the age of about 2 years old.

When your child does potty train, we ask that you provide extra clothing and remove soiled clothing daily. If we run out of clean clothes and underwear then you will have to be contacted during the day in order for you to provide them, as we do not have daycare "loaner" clothes.

Discipline Policy

Here at Open Minds Early Childhood Program Inc., discipline and guidance daycares around respect and responsibility. Each child is expected to be a respectful, responsible member of our group. This ranges from children cleaning up their own "messes" to using manners and politeness when speaking with teacher, parents, and each other.

All "rules" center on these respect/responsibility/safety guidelines. The only rules are those that are required to maintain a safe and respectful environment for all the children in our centre.

We follow the 1-2-3 time out procedure. The child will get two warnings upon the first and second instances of the child not acting safely, or be irresponsible or disrespectful. If the child continues the action that is not acceptable, the child will receive a third strike and a time-out. It is explained to the child as "when you cannot be safe with yourself and your friends/when you cannot play nicely, you must step away". The child will be removed from the group and asked to go sit a chair by themselves, but still within the same vicinity. They will be asked to sit for a few short minutes to calm down, think about what behaviours are OK. The time-outs will last the amount of time that corresponds with the child's age (for example, if the child is 3, they will get a 3 minute time-out). Before rejoining the group we will briefly discuss what appropriate behaviours will need to be used to be a part of the group again.

Daily Routine

7:00am Daycare Opens - Free Play (Table toys, puzzles, colouring, etc.)

***Breakfast will be served by the daycare, but if you would like to send breakfast with your child(ren), they may eat it upon arrival.

9:00 am Clean-up and Circle Time/Other Educational Activity (our learning time)

9:30 am Nutritious Snack

10:00 am Educational Activities and Programming, examples include - Art, Science Experiment, Weather Chart and Story Time

11:00 am Outside Play (weather permitting) - activities include visiting local parks, going on walks, or remaining at the daycare outdoor play area

12 noon Lunch

12:30 pm Clean-up from lunch

12:45 pm Naptime - Children remaining awake may read books, do puzzles, other quiet activities while others sleep

2:45/3:00 pm Quiet time is over for napping children, After School care children arrive

3:00 pm Nutritious Snack

4:00 pm Educational Activities and Programming, examples include – Art, Science, Music, or Literacy Activities that relate to current theme/web, Homework time for school aged children

4:30 pm Outside Play (weather permitting) in yard until centre closes if weather permits

6:00 pm* Day Care Closes – Children must be picked up by 6pm or late charges will apply. If you need to speak to staff about any concerns you have please come in ample time to do so.

This schedule is very flexible and is adjusted according to the children's needs and interests (i.e. If a child is engaged in art or another activity when snack is served they may finish their activity and will then be served their snack. Or, if we are engaged during scheduled "learning/circle time" the learning/circle time will just be pushed back to a later time so that we may fully engage in the current activity unit it is completed. The number one goal is learning.

Items Needed From Home

Nap Bedding – We provide the crib sheet/blanket that they sleep on, but you must provide a blanket for them to cover up with, as well as any comfort items that they may need to sleep (blanket, sookie, etc.)

Diapers/Rash Ointment (Training pants or pull-ups for those who are potty training)

Spare Clothing – including underwear and socks, at least 3 complete sets for those potty training age and under

Sunscreen/Sun Block, and a wide-brimmed hat

Weather appropriate clothing - jacket/splash/snow pants/hats/mitts, boots etc. –lack of weather appropriate clothing will prevent your child from enjoying our outdoor play time, please ensure you dress your child for outdoor play everyday.

Please ensure that children come dressed in “play” clothes. Although we are careful while doing art and playing outside; there are instances where clothes could become dirty and stained. We appreciate your understanding and so do the children. Extra supplies can be left at the daycare and replenished when necessary space permitting.

Children are welcome to bring toys from home to the daycare but we ask that it be limited to one toy a day, and it must fit in their allotted cubby space. Children will be asked to share these toys from home with the other children. If a child does not wish to share his/her it will be put away for them until they feel like sharing. The only toys we ask that the children do not bring to the daycare are play guns and weapons. Thank you for your understanding.

Snack and Meal Times

In an attempt to be as environmentally friendly as possible we would like to encourage parents/guardians to pack their children’s lunches in reusable containers, and use reusable drink containers. Throughout the day water drinks are available for the children as needed. At all times during drinking and eating, children are required to be seated and not engaged in any play activity. This is to ensure safety (to avoid choking) and to promote healthy eating/drinking habits. Under no circumstances will young children be allowed to walk around or play with bottles in their mouths. Pacifiers are encouraged for use at nap time only and if your child requires a bottle at nap it will be given to him or her before they get into bed. Under no circumstances will children be allowed to go to sleep with bottles in bed. This is also to ensure safety (prevent choking) and to prevent dental problems.

Medications

All medications are stored in a closet that is inaccessible to children. Children are not given any medication without the parents’ written consent. Written consent may only be on a “Permission to Administer Medications” form and all medications must be in their original bottles with original labels. Staff must also indicate on the administering form the date, time and dosage of medicine given at each administration, and then initial this information.

For prescription medication, only the directions on the bottle will be accepted for administering the medication. And in all instances staff need to know when the child received his/her last dosage of the medication, to ensure medication is given at appropriate times consistently.

With any prescription antibiotics children may not return to care until they’ve had a full 24 hours of dosage, are no longer contagious and ready to participate in the full child care day, to ensure they are well on the road to recovery.

Allergies

All allergies (and dietary concerns) will be clearly posted in each room, on the refrigerator and written on the child’s emergency info/consent cards. Please note that we are a PEANUT FREE facility. If you send any food with your child, or donate any food to any functions held at the daycare please ensure that these foods are PEANUT FREE. If they do not have the appropriate symbols or ingredients list then they will not be served to anyone for safety reasons, and will have to be returned home, or discarded.

Developing Illness Policy

In the event a child becomes ill during the course of the day, to the point where they are not capable of participating in regular activities, the parents/guardians will be contacted immediately and be required to come pick the child up. If the parents/guardians can't be reached the alternate emergency contact person will be called to come pick up the child. Allergy related and common cold symptoms as well as non-communicable diseases/illnesses do not require that the child be excluded from care.

If any of the following conditions are present, it is required that children be excluded from care: Children may return to care when they are free of symptoms or are approved to return by the facility operator or in some extreme cases, by a medical doctor.

- Pain - any unexplained or undiagnosed pain

- Difficulty in breathing - wheezing or persistent cough

- Fever (100.5* F/ 38.3*C or higher) – child must be free from fever (without being medicated) for 24 hours before returning to care at the facility

- Sore Throat or trouble swallowing

- Infected skin or eyes (mucus/pus draining) or an undiagnosed rash

- Severe body or scalp itching

- Children with a known or suspected communicable disease/illness

- Vomiting - 2 or more times in 24 hours - may return to care after 24 hours without vomiting

- Diarrhea (as defined by an increase in frequency and loosening of stool) - 2 or more times in 24 hours - may return to care after 24 hours without loose stool/diarrhoea

- Just not feeling good - a child must be well enough to participate in the entire child care day to be at daycare

***Parents are required to inform staff of any serious illness or communicable /contagious disease (with their child or within their family) within 24 hours to allow other families within the child care centre to be alerted.

Fees

Full-Time Weekly Fees: (effective January 2024)

Full-time is defined as having access to our services on all days that we are open, Monday thru Friday from 7:00AM – 6:00PM.

Child's Age	Weekly Rate
Under 2 years old.....	\$400/ week
24 months – 35 months.....	\$350/ week
3 years old	\$325 / week
4 years old	\$325 / week
Afterschool (2 or 3pm arrival).....	\$145 / week
Before & Afterschool	\$145 / week
Afterschool (full days during holidays).....	\$290/week

Part-Time Weekly Fees: (effective January 2024)

Part-time is defined as having access to our services with a maximum of three days per week, Monday thru Friday from 7:00AM – 6:00PM. These days will be selected by the parents at time of registration, and can be changed with a two weeks notice. Note - Part-time Childcare is not available for children under the age of 2. Part-time spaces are limited to 5 in each room, except for the infant room.

Child's Age	Weekly Rate
24 months – 4 years old	\$175 / week
Afterschool Aged (during school).....	\$145/week
Afterschool Aged (during summer/school holidays).....	\$290 / week

Fees are due by the first day of care of each week. Fees may be paid in cash, cheque, email money transfer, Debit or Credit. Any fees received later than the first day of the service week are subject to the \$5 a day late charge and any returned cheques are subject to a \$30 service charge. If fee payment is more than 3 days late, all service will be suspended until fees are paid in full. Returned cheques may result in cash only payment policy for future services. Full fees are due regardless of a child's illness, statutory holidays or holiday days off. A receipt for fees paid throughout the year will be provided at the end of each year for tax purposes – monthly receipts are available upon request. Fees are subject to increase with a minimum of two weeks notice.

The daycare will be closed on all statutory holidays and if any other closures are expected, for instance on non-statutory holiday days, notice will go out to parents at least 1 week in advance.

Parents/guardians that use government subsidy to help pay for fees are responsible for renewing their authorization before it expires. If parents/guardians do not renew their subsidy claim before their

previous claim expires the parents/guardians will be responsible for full fees until I receive authorization to bill the government and have received payment. If/when I receive back payment from the ministry (for fees already paid for by the parents), I will reimburse the parents/guardians the subsidy amount.

We do offer a family discount of 5% off your bill (excluding infant care, and all part-time rates) for families with multiple children. This discount does not apply to part-time rates (effective 2023).

Vacation

After 6 months of full-time, continuous care, we offer 2 weeks of vacation time where fees do not need to be paid. We ask that a minimum of 2 weeks notice is given before vacation days are given. Weeks do not need to be taken back to back but must be used as a whole week (not one day here, one day there, ETC). Vacation weeks do not carry over from year to year, and reset December 31st, each year.

Telephone Communication

If you need to contact the daycare for any reason, please feel free to phone 718-341-0984. If you get our voice mail please do leave a message, as often we are out or busy with the children and unable to get to the phone at that moment. We do check messages regularly and return phone calls as soon as we get the chance. We do not mind calls to check to see how your children are doing during the day. We do please ask to limit them to 2 per day, as they do disrupt the classroom to pull a teacher out to speak on the phone. Thank you for your understanding.

If you call outside of daycare hours please leave a detailed message. Someone will return your call at our next earliest convenience.

Parent's Grievances and Suggestions

We at Open Minds Early Childhood Program Inc. are committed to being very open and honest, and if any parent should have any grievances, or any suggestions, please don't hesitate to contact us. If you wish to contact our network director to be announced soon, you may do so as well (her information is posted on the Parent Information Board, as well as below), however, we hope that you will come to us first so that we can work any problems out before it comes to that.

Parent Involvement

Our doors are always open to parents who would like to be involved in their child's care and education. We welcome any comments or suggestions from parents about programming or the care of their children. If any parents wish to volunteer at the center, or on outings please contact any staff member so we can make necessary arrangements.

Photographs/Video Cameras

We like to take lots of pictures at the daycare to share with the children, and the parents how much fun we have at daycare. We do have a few daycare photo albums that we place these pictures into (that do not leave the daycare), and we also have a private Facebook photosharing group just for parents and staff. If you wish to be added to the group please email us at with your email address that you would prefer we send the invitation to join to. As soon as parents leave the daycare they are removed from the

group. Please feel free to save the pictures of your child from this website, however, keep in mind you cannot share any pictures of children in a public forum unless you have written consent of that child's parents. So if you do save pictures or wish to share them with friends on facebook please ensure there are no other children's faces in the pictures.

We do have a video monitoring system in place at the daycare. This is to ensure everyone's safety.

Withdrawal Of Services Policy

A MINIMUM 2 WEEKS WRITTEN NOTICE is required for termination of childcare services. Even if your child does not attend during that two week period, payment is still required. Any fees not paid on time with regards to termination of child care services will also be subject to daily late fees, until full payment is received. If fees are not paid, the unpaid bill will be placed into collections.

In the event of any concerns (raised by staff, parents/guardians or even children) a meeting can be scheduled to address the issues. The meeting will involve owner/operator, and involved staff member and the parents/guardians involved. The concerns will be clearly stated (ex. late payment, failure to adhere to centre policies, behavioural problems etc.) and discussed. Meeting minutes will be taken, and solutions will be sought in a non-judgmental manner. A plan will be designed to resolve the issue. A second meeting will be scheduled to review the situation within a reasonable time frame. In the event the issue cannot be resolved to everyone's satisfaction, a 2 week written notice of termination of services will be given.

Child(ren)'s Name(s): _____

Days Desired (for part-time):
Monday/Wednesday/Friday
Tuesday/Thursday

By signing this agreement we also consent to pictures being taken of our child(ren) for the centre photo album(s) and to be shared in the online private Facebook page. (If you'd like your child's pictures removed after you leave the center please inform me and that can be arranged) We also consent to our children being recorded by the video monitoring system, and understand that the footage will not be shared with any third parties (other than possibly on the private parent Facebook group).

Owner/Operator's Signature

Date

Parent/Family Handbook and Fee Agreement - Daycare Copy
(please detach and return completed)

Child(ren)'s Name(s):

Type of Care (please circle one) : **Full-Time Care** **After School**
Preschool Only **Part-Time Care**

Days Desired (for part-time):

Monday/Wednesday/Friday

Tuesday/Thursday

Weekly/Daily Child Care Fees: _____

I/We (the undersigned) have read the parent handbook for Open Minds Early Childhood Program Inc. and understand all the information, policies and procedures outlined in the handbook. We (the undersigned) have also received a copy of these policies and procedures for our own records and reference.

By signing this agreement we consent to all the handbook policies and procedures and agree to them, including payment policies and late fee procedures. By signing this agreement we acknowledge that the information supplied in the registration form regarding our child(ren) and the information supplied below is true and accurate to the best of our knowledge.

By signing this agreement we also consent to pictures being taken of our child(ren) for the centre photo album(s) and to be shared in the online private Facebook page. (If you'd like your child's pictures removed after you leave the center please inform me and that can be arranged) We also consent to our children being recorded by the video monitoring system, and understand that the footage will not be shared with any third parties (other than possibly on the private parent Facebook group).

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Owner/Operator's Signature

Date

