

**OUR SCHOOL**

**Handbook of the  
WATERFRONT MONTESSORI  
CHILDREN'S CENTRE**

**2007-2008**



**Established 1974**

**A Co-operative School owned and operated  
by Parents and Teachers  
for the good of the Children**

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***Acknowledgements***

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## **PART 1: WELCOME TO WMCC**

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### **Introduction**

Waterfront Montessori Children's Centre provides an educational program for pre-school children ages 2-1/2 to 5.

The Island location, with its views of the Toronto skyline, offers the best of both worlds: a peaceful country setting just minutes from downtown. It is located ten minutes by ferry from the Harbour Castle Hotel at the foot of Bay Street.

This little manual provides parents with a brief description of the Centre, and summarizes our policies, procedures and expectations.

### **Aims and Character of the Centre**

The primary purpose of Waterfront Montessori Children's Centre is educational: the emotional, social, and academic development of children. Our core academic curriculum is enhanced by many additional cultural, artistic, social and health related activities, but it is the importance of a child's emotional development that forms our strongest foundation.

WMCC is a parent/teacher co-operative in which each family and regular teacher has a vote. The co-operative hires the teachers and is the decision making body.

The Centre is a non-profit day care centre licensed by the Province of Ontario, and is federally registered with Revenue Canada as a charitable organization. In addition, it meets the criteria for day care subsidy by the City of Toronto.

As stated in our bylaws, overall responsibility for our legal and financial operation rests with the Board of Directors, elected by the parent body at the Annual General Meeting.

At WMCC the day-to-day running of the school is a joint venture between the home and the school, the parents, the children and the teachers. The Centre expects and indeed relies on you to become involved in your child's school. As with all non-profit co-operative centers, our parents donate time in a variety of ways in order to keep costs down.

We are fortunate to be housed in such a beautiful building. Our contract with the Algonquin Island Association affords us this opportunity, and our maintenance of the building in lieu of paying rent helps to keep our costs down significantly. We have a tradition at the Centre of parents, staff and children alike celebrating our skills, talents, and abilities. We invite you to enrich our community!

## **History**

The Algonquin Island Association (AIA) has a long history (50 years plus) of providing space for the children of Toronto Island and the City. Nursery programs, Camps, Girl Guides, Boy Scouts, many Birthday Parties, Hockey, Baseball, and Sailing Clubs have all found a home over the years.

Waterfront Montessori Children Centre (WMCC) was started by Island Parents in the mid seventies as Toronto Island Daycare. In the seventies and early eighties the school grew to house a Montessori program that included pre-school to grade three with satellite programs in the city. The vision was big and quite ahead of its time. Today there are many Montessori schools in downtown Toronto and some of them were inspired by that vision.

In the summer of 1989 the AIA and WMCC received a serious blow when the building burned down while it was being re-roofed. It happened the very night the AIA the WMCC Executives were having a meeting. Little did they know that they would be standing on the ashes vowing to re-build. The AIA, WMCC and the Island community, all known for their "spunk" got busy. The AIA and WMCC (both island and city parents) organized, raised funds, and re-built. The building currently is the result of a lot of sweat equity. Years of work parties, creative fundraising nights, summer rentals and volunteer projects have combined to support the continued presence of the AIA as a community building and the home for WMCC.

The founding parents have a lot to be proud of 33 years later as the school continues to provide quality care for children and enters its fourth decade. In 2004 we celebrated our 30<sup>th</sup> year, and in honour of that achievement an ornamental pear tree was donated by the City and planted beside the playground.

## **Philosophy**

*"The big difference between this school and others I've seen is that the children here want to come to school." ~ a visiting parent*

Why do these children want to come to school? We think there are two reasons. The first lies in our attitude towards how children learn. The second lies in our attitude towards the nature of the children themselves.

Children are not an empty blackboard to be written on by a teacher. Healthy children exhibit a natural and intense desire to learn. They learn to walk and to talk, and so they continue to learn in school, i.e. out of their own inner urges. In our environment, the children are free to follow these drives and work with the learning materials of their choice. These materials are concrete and allow the children to see, touch and understand what they are learning, not just to

memorize. The teachers observe the choices and progress of each child and provide guidance when appropriate. Children work at their own pace, not under the pressure and fear of failure or the arrogance of superiority. Children are not passive: they are not being taught by the teachers who know all. They are active; they are doing the learning. Their education is their responsibility; they are the driving force, not their parents, not their teachers, but the children themselves. They are in communication with the teachers as their resources, regarding their questions, their progress and the standards of their work.

This attitude is very important in later learning, as well as life. Children must feel their right to determine and shape their own destiny.

In this atmosphere children want to come to school. It is a force from within that they are satisfying, which gives them a sense of well-being and accomplishment, not an external force which breeds resentment.

Children are not motivated towards growth by the single dynamic force of the intellect. A strong academic curriculum alone is not sufficient to challenge a child embarked on the journey to maturity. There is a much more delicate and complex process at work. What about the heart of the child? Feelings, friends, and relationships to teachers are equally as strong concerns as the urge to discover the world. These concerns of children must be addressed by the school with the same intensity as academics. "What the heart knows today the head will understand tomorrow." The heart of the child is growing and developing simultaneously with intellect. The conscience is forming. They are laying the foundations for their social relationships.

Our school functions in the spirit of a large family. The children are encouraged to discuss their feelings and concerns openly and everyone helps resolve these issues. Directness and honesty are fostered in the children through communication. The children learn to handle their own feelings of joy, sadness or anger and those of others without fear of embarrassment but with a matter-of-fact concern. They approach the emotional give and take of life with ease and self-confidence. The older children take part in the care of the younger children. This broadens their awareness and develops their ability to handle responsibility. The younger children love and admire the older ones and are very happy with the care and attention shown to them.

What we hope to accomplish through our curriculum is to deliver children to themselves: to give them Montessori's "keys to the universe" and the social and emotional confidence to go out into the world and use them.

### Reasons for being a Co-op

- ❖ Provides unique opportunities for parents to become equal partners in their child's first experience with school
- ❖ Is a unique educational situation not likely to be repeated in the future. A co-op is education in partnership between parent, school and child
- ❖ The parent's commitment is for the benefit of all
- ❖ Provides access to community resources
- ❖ Brings together parents and teachers who share common goals
- ❖ Education in Partnership: the combination of quality care, a good environment, parental involvement and children who have all their needs met is the combination that is possible in Partnership. It is an important premise that all experiences have the potential for learning by all people in an educational partnership
- ❖ Children's needs are of the up-most importance
- ❖ Parents are able to receive support and counselling, observe and be involved in their child's development
- ❖ Teachers are the facilitators of education for both parents and child

### **How a Co-op Works**

- ❖ Problem solving and decisions are made by consensus and compromise
- ❖ Combines people with a variety of experience, expectation, values, abilities and attitudes towards children and childcare
- ❖ The differences and conflicts arising from the combination of elements is necessary for the growth of the co-op

### **Organization**

- ❖ The Board of Directors provides leadership and also takes direction from parents, staff and governing bodies
- ❖ Revenue is from parent fees, provincial and municipal grants and fundraising
- ❖ Budget includes capital and operating costs. Accountability through general meetings, newsletters and email. Capital includes: office furniture and supplies, playground equipment school equipment and supplies, rental, lease or purchase costs
- ❖ Operating: teaching, administration, cooking and cleaning, salaries, employer and benefit costs, food costs, telephone, email, insurance, legal costs, bank charges, licensing costs, memberships, utilities, and maintenance

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## **PART 2: BOARD ADMINISTRATION**

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### **Role of the Board of Directors**

- ❖ Plan and make policies: ensure and observe the philosophy, safety, and financial viability of the school
- ❖ Manage: legal, budgeting, and licensing matters and yearly audit
- ❖ Represent parents to government, childcare agencies and staff
- ❖ Leadership: Support and encourage parents participation in their child's school experience by providing opportunities to do so
- ❖ Provide good working environment for staff
- ❖ Raise funds
- ❖ Conduct meetings
- ❖ Recruit and train volunteers

### **How to Participate**

- ❖ Observe program
- ❖ Know duties and responsibilities
- ❖ Know legal liabilities
- ❖ Participate in meetings, committees and work parties

### **Job Descriptions**

- ❖ **President**
  - Presides at all meetings of the corporation including Executive Committee, Board of Directors and general meetings
  - Does not vote except in the case of a tie
  - Represent the corporation for the general management and supervision of the affairs for the centre

- Shall be a signing officer of the corporation
- Shall supervise the Executive Director as per her job description
- Take a leadership role with the Board of Directors
- Shall be present at all social and business events of the corporation

#### ❖ **Vice President**

- Shall perform the function of President detailed above, in the president's absence
- Assist the president in the performance of duties
- Heads the staffing committee
- Support and evaluate staff
- Support and evaluate Executive Director  
(hiring, contracts, reviewing job descriptions, handbook planning, staff evaluation process, professional development and hearing grievances)

#### ❖ **Secretary**

- Establish agenda with President and Executive Director
- Notifies appropriate members for all meetings
- Attends all meetings and takes the official record of minutes
- Distributes copies of the appropriate minutes in advance of the meeting with the notice of meeting and agenda

#### ❖ **Treasurer**

- Shall be responsible and oversee the financial records and accounting procedures of the corporation
- Can be a signing officer
- Prepares a financial statement and reports for each Executive meeting

- Prepares annual budget with the assistance of the Executive Director and the Administrator
- Reviews and verifies the auditor's statement
- Presents the auditor's report to the membership at the Annual General Meeting

#### ❖ **Fundraising and Marketing**

- Organize and run fundraising committee
- Develop a yearly plan of fundraising events
- Develop marketing and advertising plan (with Administrator) to ensure optimal enrollment
- Develop brochure, letterhead and promotional awareness
- Produce budget for fundraising and marketing for approval of the Treasurer and Executive

#### ❖ **Building and Maintenance**

- Responsible for running of parent work parties and the volunteer help that is required for the maintenance of the classroom and areas of the AIA which are used by the school
- Develop a yearly plan for the maintenance of the AIA and the playground
- Represent WMCC to the AIA with regard to the responsibilities of WMCC's use of the building

#### ❖ **Community Member at Large**

- To promote childcare advocacy
- To promote community involvement of WMCC and the Island community
- To be an observer of the program and its relationship to Island community

**Calling All Parents:  
Come and get involved!**

- ❖ Serve on the Board
- ❖ Help with housekeeping: painting, cleaning, disinfecting toys, repairing books
- ❖ Gardening: landscaping, planting, watering, pruning
- ❖ Choose something from the Job Binder
- ❖ Lunch and snack supervision
- ❖ Read or tell stories
- ❖ Play music, sing songs
- ❖ Lead or help with craft activities
- ❖ Share your family's festival celebrations
- ❖ Special events: set up, organize, attend, participate, perform, clean up
- ❖ Fundraising: special events, sales i.e. Boutique, silent auction, poker night, entertainment night

## **Volunteering Guidelines**

We encourage parents to come and volunteer at the Centre and be a part of the program. To make your visit a rewarding one, please read through the following guidelines.

Remember that your child will not act as they normally do when you are visiting. Observe a child approximately the same age as your own to see what really happens at school.

### **In the Classroom**

- ❖ Invite a child to teach you an activity s/he knows
- ❖ Listen to a child read or tell a story
- ❖ Check the job binder for housekeeping tasks
- ❖ Prepare any needed art and craft materials
- ❖ Sit beside a child at the table or on the floor
- ❖ Speak with a calm and quiet voice
- ❖ Spend time observing the children at work
- ❖ Allow a child to come to you
- ❖ Respect the work being done in the classroom
- ❖ Speak to a child at eye-level
- ❖ Walk around the mats on the floor
- ❖ Encourage concentration, focus, and completion of work
- ❖ Model appropriate behaviour
- ❖ Allow a child to be generous with her/his knowledge, experience and understanding

### **At Transition Times**

- ❖ Sing a song
- ❖ Read or tell a story
- ❖ Ask a child about her/himself
- ❖ Sit next to a child and introduce yourself
- ❖ Encourage good hand-washing skills
- ❖ Ask if a child needs help

### **In the Playground**

- ❖ Suggest or join a game
- ❖ Lead, help with, or encourage an art activity
- ❖ Create a game with the children
- ❖ Water or explore the gardens with a child
- ❖ Help with housekeeping: sweep, wash, mend, tidy

### **On the Ferry**

- ❖ Sit with the children
- ❖ Engage a child in conversation
- ❖ Speak with a calm and quiet voice

### **At Lunch and Snack Times**

- ❖ Follow the guidelines of our food policy
- ❖ Let the Supervising teacher guide your involvement in the interests of consistency

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## PART 3: OUR PROGRAM

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*"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that frightens us. We ask ourselves, 'Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous?' Actually, who are you not to be?" ~ from Nelson Mandela's 1994 inaugural speech*

### Curriculum

Beginning at approximately 2-1/2 years of age the children are introduced to the exercises of practical life. These are every day tasks such as hand washing, washing a table or polishing a mirror. These exercises utilize the child's inner urge for synthetic movement, and teach the logical sequence of actions to reach a goal. A child's movement is thus penetrated by understanding. This begins to develop independence and an inner discipline.

Simultaneously, the child works with the sensorial materials. These help to order the myriad of sense impressions the child has absorbed from the environment, for example shapes, sounds, concepts of size. When interested, the children learn the sounds of the sandpaper letters and simple number quantities. This provides the basis for work in reading and mathematics.

The children also work in the area of cultural studies, which includes a basic introduction to history, natural science and geography. Situated as we are in a natural environment, we make ready use of the surrounding landscape through exploration, observation and imagination.

The arts have an important place in our curriculum. The children have the opportunity to pursue a wide variety of crafts and handiwork, including painting, sculpture, and embroidery. The children explore music by singing and playing instruments, listening to music from all over the world and creating their own. Dramatic and imaginative play are strongly encouraged and facilitated on the playground and in the classroom.

### **Toys from Home**

With all that our curriculum has to offer it is quite unnecessary to send toys to school. Toys and jewellery can be distracting, get lost or create safety issues at school. Show and tell is sometimes a part of the program and the teachers will provide you with separate guidelines for participation.

### **Outdoor Play**

Outdoor play and exercise make up a strong component of our program. Our playground provides children with challenging yet safe activities. A variety of resources are available: monkey bars, balls, shovels, pails, push toys, trikes, wagons and slides. Old tires, boxes, things that from an adult's viewpoint might be labeled junk, can be used to make the most wonderful things! From time to time structured games can be a resource but most of the activity is unstructured so children can explore their expanding physical abilities and enjoy social activity while having fun in the great outdoors.

This unstructured time provides teachers with a good chance to play along with the children, or simply to stand back and watch. This way the teachers learn a lot about what their interests are and how the children are doing in their social development.

## **Nutrition**

Playing outdoors in all weathers and seasons, breathing in the fresh Island air, keeps us all engaged and invigorated. Eating nutritious, home-cooked snacks and meals every day help to keep us healthy and energetic. The food at the Centre is prepared daily on-site, and follows a diverse, creative vegetarian meal-plan. We adhere to the Canada Food Guide.

## **Bird Houses**

We establish smaller cells of community within the larger community of the Centre by grouping the children into bird houses. Each year the children graduate to the next group.

Hummingbirds	2.5 year olds
Chickadees	3 year olds
Blue Jays	4 year olds
Robins	5 year olds

This program is designed as a 4 year cycle. The original idea was borrowed from another Montessori school and implemented several years ago. This is a tradition in the making! Moving from one bird family to the next inspires the children with a mounting sense of responsibility, as they work to create their own personal legacies.

## **Field Trips**

The Island is a rich resource for discovery and exploration. There is a bird sanctuary, swamps, tadpole ponds, beaches, woods and environmental protected areas, as well as Far-Away Farm, Franklin's Garden, Saturn Park, and the Splash Pad. All classes make good use of these resources when appropriate. Parents are asked to sign a permission form as part of their registration package to cover these outings.

Occasionally, we take trips off Island. In these situations, a separate permission form and arrangements are made.

## **Calendar of Events**

The school year runs from just after Labour Day in September until the end of June. The Centre is closed on all Statutory Holidays and over the Christmas/New Year's Break. We are open for March Break and Summer Camp in July and August, although camp fees are not included in the regular tuition.

Social gatherings and celebrations are held throughout the year. These events give you a chance to meet other parents, meet the children your child is talking about, become familiar with the Centre and its wide variety of equipment and get to know the staff when they are not teaching or supervising children. You will receive notification of upcoming events in newsletters and e-mail messages.

Your attendance and participation is always appreciated at these events, which are a necessary part of parent involvement. Without it we would not enjoy the beautiful facilities of the Algonquin Island Association. Volunteer painting, grounds-keeping, toy-washing, sewing, cleaning and many more tasks bring parents together and help WMCC build community among our families.

- ❖ Thanksgiving Tea
- ❖ Curriculum Night
- ❖ Stay Late Night
- ❖ Work Parties (Fall and Spring)
- ❖ Spring Concert
- ❖ Graduation Party

## **Birthdays**

Birthdays should be inclusive of all children at school. When programming permits, parents may bring or send a special nutritious snack to celebrate the day. Call or discuss with staff in advance to ensure it will fit with what is already planned as a part of the program. Please do not send invitations to school. To avoid hurt feelings of children not being included in your child's celebration, we ask that you arrange invites outside of school hours.

Each year we celebrate birthdays by the month. We set aside one day to celebrate all the birthdays that fall in that month. Our cook will prepare a healthy snack for all to share and we will have a birthday circle for the month's birthday children.

## **Communication with the Centre**

Active communication between home and school is necessary in a child's education, regardless of the age of the child or the level of development.

Because parents do not come to the Centre regularly, the way they do at a city-side centre, we have developed our own ways of making sure we stay in touch with parents.

There are events during the year that help teachers and parents keep in touch. These include Curriculum Night, Parent-Teacher Conferences and a year-end written report on each child. We also have a newsletter with information about daily activities, decisions of the Executive committee, future events, notes from the Director and other items concerning the school community.

There are three ways to communicate with the school; write a note to give to one of the teachers, send an e-mail, or give us a phone call.

E-mail has primarily replaced the Phone Tree as a means of communication between parents and WMCC, and it is therefore doubly important to read everything that is sent to you from the Centre.

Please ensure that your contact information, particularly your home work and cell phone numbers are up-to-date. In case of an emergency, lateness, or another special circumstance, we need to be able to contact our families.

The Executive Director is responsible for the day to day operations of the school, is available to discuss matters with you and should be contacted first. Your parent Board of Directors meets monthly to discuss school matters and issues. You may offer your input at that time by sending a letter to the President before the Executive meetings. The dates for those meetings are published in our newsletters.

### **Attendance Options**

Children may attend 3, 4, or 5 days per week, and extra days are available when child/teacher ratios allow. We are often asked why we do not offer extended hours. The day is approximately 8 hours long and the timing is dictated by the ferry schedule and a commitment to a day long enough for working parents and short enough to honour the child's natural rhythms.

## What your child needs at school

- ❖ **Label, Label, Label** The Centre tries to help your child keep her/his belongings organized but it is an impossible task if clothing is not labeled
- ❖ **Attach mittens** and scarves to the coat or jacket
- ❖ **Dress your child** in clothes that are washable and easy to get in and out of. This is especially important for little people who are learning to use the toilet. We recommend elasticized, pull-down pants
- ❖ **Rain boots** and a warm, dry pair of winter boots help to keep your child comfortable
- ❖ **Sturdy backpack** that your child can carry and that fits him/her well. Make sure s/he wears it every day. Check its contents daily when your child returns home from school
- ❖ **Extra change of clothing** including underpants/socks that remain at school. Each item labeled
- ❖ **Rubber-soled indoor shoes** that the child can put on her/himself. These remain at school throughout the year
- ❖ **Seasonal equipment** such as sun screen (labeled), sun hats, rain suits, snow pants, etc.
- ❖ **Diapers, wipes** and creams, etc. with written instructions
- ❖ **Recent photo** of your child for her/his coat hook

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## **PART 4: TRANSPORTATION**

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### **Ferry Schedule**

Pick up and drop off time for City and Island children differs according to seasonal ferry schedules. Parents are given notice of these changes in ferry schedules and how they affect drop off and pick up times.

Ferry Service (Recording)	416 392 8193
Ferry Service (Traffic Office)	416 392 8194

Parents receive details of pick up and drop off times upon registration. The Fall schedule begins after Labour Day. Winter schedule usually begins after Thanksgiving and the Summer schedule begins after Victoria Day. Instructions are printed here for reference only.

If you have reason to think that there may be a change in the service due to weather conditions, please call the school at 416 203 1017 and listen to the voice mail message and/or check your e-mail messages.

### **Meeting Place**

For families coming from the City, staff will meet your children outside the ferry ticket booth at the foot of Bay Street. City residents can leave their car at the visitors parking of the Harbour Square condominiums while dropping off or picking up their children. Please tell the security staff that you are with Waterfront Montessori. Staff cannot afford to linger - the ferry boat waits for no one!

For families coming from the Island, staff will meet your children at the Ward's Island ferry dock to board the bus or walk to school.

If you miss the morning drop off time it is your responsibility to deliver your child to the Centre.

### **Conveying Messages**

The teachers are very busy in the morning and afternoons making sure the children get on and off the boats properly. That is their main focus. As a reminder, any changes to routines or any questions you have **MUST** be in writing and given to the teacher to avoid confusion. The Centre cannot take responsibility for any messages that are not conveyed in writing.

### **Ferry Dock Rules**

Please respect the rules and the dock staff who enforce them. Port Authority requests that parents/caregivers do not board the boat unless you have purchased a ticket.

Teachers accompany the children on the short ride to Ward's Island. The children are carefully supervised and are expected to remain seated with the teacher until the boat docks. Children can take the school bus or they can walk to school.

At the end of the day children are accompanied to the City by the teachers. Parents/caregivers must be at the docking area on time and in person before a child is allowed to leave the teachers' care.

Children board the boat with the teachers five minutes before the boat leaves the dock. Under no circumstances can a teacher leave children on the boat in order to assist other students.

## Lateness

Pick up time at the end of the day is 4:45 PM City-side. Parents are expected to be on time.

**If the parent/caregiver is late for the pick up a fee of \$1.00 per minute is charged. Immediate payment to the teacher is required.** A record of chronic lateness will be kept on the attendance and be reported to the Executive Director.

In the event that a City parent is unavoidably delayed for the pick up, the escorting teacher will remain at the City dock for fifteen minutes after the pick up time. At the end of the day, if you are going to be more than 15 minutes late, please call the school and leave a message which can be picked up by the escorting teacher. The teacher will attempt to reach you on your cell, at home or work before leaving the ferry docks. It will be your responsibility to pick up your child at whatever location is convenient for the teacher who is caring for your child.

Making arrangements with fellow parents to pick up your child in the event that you are late has worked well for parents in the past. So as with all alternate pick up arrangements inform the teachers in writing who has the authority to pick up your child at the end of the day.

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## **PART 5: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

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The Centre is licensed under the Ontario Day Nurseries Act and many of our policies and procedures are required by the Act.

### **Conflict Resolution**

The Centre is committed to helping children learn how to resolve problems as they arise. We help children learn to take an active, responsible role in their behaviour by helping them to see the consequences of their actions and also learn to listen while problems are being solved. Problem-solving is supported not dictated. Children learn to communicate and try different methods to solve their issues.

Each child is encouraged to verbalize his or her feelings, rather than resort to physical action. When disagreements arise the teachers will facilitate resolution and redirection. When a child has resorted to physical action, the first step is to talk it over with the teacher and other child, if appropriate. The teachers try to help the children involved reach a resolution. If feelings have become so strong that the child can no longer control his/her behaviour, he or she will be quietly removed from the situation until it can be dealt with more calmly.

There is a no tolerance policy for harmful behaviours. Each situation is looked at on an individual basis. Also, the child's age, stage of development and life experience is taken into consideration.

Long term issues are observed and brought to parent/teacher meetings, if needed. Please note that generally, most issues work themselves out naturally.

At WMCC we avoid applying labels to children. We learn as much from our mistakes as our successes, and we support the child's process of self-exploration and growing understanding of interpersonal relationships.

## **Health Policy**

If your child has a fever in the morning they are better off at home as we cannot legally administer non-prescription medication at school.

The Health policies of the Centre are designed to ensure the ongoing good health of ALL the children and staff. The staff works hard with the children to encourage good personal hygiene through frequent hand washing and education about illnesses and how they can move from person to person. Once a case of flu, chicken pox or other illness is found at the Centre it is tricky to catch it and stop it from spreading quickly. For working parents it is often difficult to be home when your child is ill or to arrange alternate child care. We urge you to make arrangements in advance so that you can keep your child at home and prevent her/him from passing it along to others.

It is important that all children be able to participate comfortably in all aspects of the program. The Day Nurseries Act requires that all children spend two hours outdoors each day, weather permitting. Your child will not be allowed to remain indoors during outdoor time unless s/he becomes ill during school time.

You will be notified if your child becomes ill at the Centre with any of the illnesses mentioned below, and you will be asked to pick up your child as soon as possible. Please understand that the decision to ask you to pick up your child is not taken lightly.

If your child has been ill with any of the illnesses outlined below or any other illness, a doctor's note may be required before your child can return to the Centre.

### **Symptoms or Illnesses**

Please keep your child at home if s/he has any of the following symptoms or illnesses:

- ❖ **Fever**, persistent crying, irritability, unusual lethargy, difficult or irregular breathing or other signs of possible illness
- ❖ **Diarrhea** that is not contained by diaper or toilet use. Diarrhea is defined as an increased number of stools compared with the child's normal pattern, increased stool water or decreased stool form
- ❖ **Vomiting** twice or more in the previous 24 hours, unless it can be determined that the vomiting is due to a non-communicable condition and the child is not in danger of dehydration
- ❖ **Mouth sores** associated with the child's inability to control her/his saliva, unless the doctor states in writing that the child is non-infectious
- ❖ Rash with fever such as **measles** or **rosella** or a behavior change associated with such rashes until a doctor has determined that the illness is not a communicable disease
- ❖ **Chicken pox** until the sixth day after the outbreak of the rash, or sooner if all pox have dried
- ❖ **Impetigo** until 24 hours after treatment has been started
- ❖ **Conjunctivitis or pink eye** with yellow or white discharge. The child is admissible only after the doctor has examined her/him and approved readmission
- ❖ **Streptococcal throat** until 24 hours after treatment has been started and until the child's temperature has been normal for 24 hours
- ❖ **Head lice** until the morning after the first treatment

- ❖ **Scabies** until after the treatment has been complete
- ❖ **Whooping cough** until five days of approximate antibiotic therapy has been completed
- ❖ **Mumps** until nine days after the start of gland swelling
- ❖ **Hepatitis A virus infection** until one week after onset and jaundice, if present, has disappeared

If your child has nasal discharge that is green or yellow this may be a sign of infection. We advise you to keep your child at home until symptoms clear, both for her/his own health and for that of the other children. At home your child can get the rest s/he needs to get better quickly. If your child's symptoms do not improve please see your family doctor.

### **Medication Policy**

When a child requires medication during the day at school, parents or guardians must send a complete Medication Authorization Letter to the school. It is kept in the child's file. The letter must include the following information:

- ❖ Child's full name
- ❖ Starting and ending dates of medication given
- ❖ Name of medication
- ❖ Times medication is to be given
- ❖ Dosage to be given
- ❖ Storage instructions
- ❖ Parents' signature with date

Parents must give the medicine in its ORIGINAL BOTTLE along with the Medication Authorization Letter to the escorting teacher. We recommend that only the amount of medication needed for the duration of the treatment be left in the original bottle and sent to school.

**UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES MUST MEDICATION TRAVEL IN A CHILD'S BACKPACK. THE CENTRE TAKES NO RESPONSIBILITIES FOR MEDICATION THAT IS PUT IN THE BACKPACK OR FOR ANY ACCIDENTS THAT MIGHT HAPPEN AS A RESULT OF MEDICATION BEING PLACED IN A BACKPACK.**

The medication is stored away from the children at the Centre. When it is administered the date, time, dosage and names of the administrator and the child are recorded in the Medication Administration Book.

Non-prescription medication will not be administered unless a signed doctor's note accompanies the Medication Authorization letter.

### **Children's Aid Society Reporting Policy for Child Abuse**

The term child abuse covers four conditions: physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect and emotional abuse.

- ❖ **Physical abuse** includes all acts by a caregiver which result in harm to a child
- ❖ **Sexual abuse** refers to the use of a child for the sexual gratification of an adult or young person
- ❖ **Child neglect** is the omission or chronic inattention on the part of the parent/caregiver to provide for the basic emotional and/or physical needs of the child, including food, clothing, shelter, health, hygiene, safety, adequate supervision and medical attention
- ❖ **Emotional abuse** is often the most difficult type of abuse to define and identify other than extreme cases, such as locking a child in the dark to frighten her/him. Emotional abuse is a pattern of overt rejection, belittling, blaming, accusing, finding fault or shouting at a child

If child abuse is suspected, staff, parents and volunteers have a duty to report, support the report in writing, and to notify the Children's Aid Society and the City of Toronto. The Centre has a policy for dealing with suspected cases or allegation of child abuse. A copy of the policy is available in the Policy Manual and posted at the Centre.

### **Anti-Racist and Equity For All Policy**

WMCC is committed to anti-racist education and equity for all disadvantaged groups protected under the Ontario Human Rights Code. WMCC acknowledges that individual discriminatory attitudes and behaviors as well as systemic racism, sexism, homophobia, class bias and ethno-cultural inequities exist and affect the climate of schools and workplaces. To address these inequities WMCC has developed and adopted the Anti-Racist and Equity For All Policy.

WMCC supports an anti-discriminatory policy for all employees children, parents and volunteers. There shall be no discrimination by reason of age, marital status, number of dependents, membership in political parties, sexual orientation, race, colour, ethnic origin citizenship, physical handicap, educational background or religion. WMCC supports anti-racism education for staff, children and parents. A copy of the complete Policy is available in the Policy Manual at the Centre.

### **Inclusion Policy**

The term inclusion comes from the meaning of "to include" which means "to hold, to embrace, to involve, to count among." For children it means to be meaningfully involved with families, friends and neighbours and to have opportunities to learn, play and recreate with other children and community members.

It means that all children must be recognized for their abilities and talents; given the same opportunities to learn and play; and encouraged to develop and grow alongside their peers. The fact that, at times, some children may need extra support must never be used as an excuse to exclude a child from participating and contributing. The truth is that all children, youth and adults need "special supports" from time to time.

How we interact and help children every day should be based on our understanding of children's development (the stages that children move through at their own pace). It should be founded on the belief that each child is unique with an individual pattern and timing of growth, as well as individual personality, learning style, and family background. In practical terms child care programs must create opportunities for all children to:

- ❖ be close to each other and form a common bond
- ❖ build relationships
- ❖ celebrate and be the cause for celebration

Inclusive child care believes that all children belong together, as a whole group, with the appropriate supports required for success. It also:

- ❖ provides children with active experiences and challenges that respond to individual differences
- ❖ supports children's productive play
- ❖ helps children learn to get along with peers and make choices
- ❖ assists children to try and then master activities that promote new skills
- ❖ offers help to children at the right time but does not do it for them
- ❖ supervises children carefully
- ❖ observes and supports individual children's growth and development

## **Tuition and Fee Policy**

A complete and updated fee schedule and payment policy for the current year is available from the school office. Parents are responsible for making payments promptly when they are due.

At WMCC we are committed to keeping the costs of tuition as reasonable as possible. However, in order to attract and keep our excellent staff, maintain the property and pay our running costs increases in the annual tuition are unavoidable.

Parents are required to sign a contract outlining the terms of our fee policy upon registration.

There are no make up days for days missed due to holidays or illness. If your child attends extra days, you will be billed a daily rate of \$55.

There is a one-time, non-refundable registration fee of \$100 per child.

Families who are in arrears are not permitted to register for the next session.

## **Withdrawal Policy**

Withdrawal procedure is followed for all families.

WMCC encourages families to commit to the Centre for the school year for reasons of continuity in our programming and care of the children, and for the financial health of the school. However, there are circumstances that require families to withdraw their children. The current policy is that a minimum of 2 months written notice is

required from the first of the month in which the withdrawal is effective i.e. notice is due on November 1 for January 1 withdrawal.

If children are asked to leave or denied admission due to the Centre's inability to accommodate a child's needs or family circumstances, the procedure includes documentation of a meeting with the parent and the use of support services if needed. Notification is given to the Centre's Children's Services Consultant and the Board of Directors.

### **Serious Illness or Accident Procedure**

If a child has a serious accident or becomes very ill suddenly the Centre will call the Police Marine Unit immediately to arrange that s/he be taken to the City without delay. The school will contact the parent/guardian or emergency contact person and arrange to meet them at the dock or hospital. A staff member will remain with the child until a parent/guardian or emergency contact person arrives.

**IT IS VITAL THAT THE CENTRE HAS UP-TO-DATE WORK AND CELL PHONE NUMBERS FOR YOU AND YOUR TWO EMERGENCY CONTACTS.**

### **Evacuation of the Centre**

In an event of emergency or crisis at the Centre, such as lack of heat or a fire, the children will be transported to a safe location on the Island. Parents will be notified if the situation requires special arrangements.

If the Centre must be closed on short notice due to unforeseen circumstances such as a severe storm, the Director will communicate via email or telephone and leave a message on the school answering machine to arrange for early pick up of the children.

### **Acknowledgements**

This manual has been compiled by many hands over the years, and gratefully acknowledges the legacy of the parents, teachers and children that have lovingly created, supported, and envisioned Waterfront Montessori Children's Centre.