

H.S. McLellan Preschool

Parent Handbook



**The H. S. McLellan Preschool is licensed by the
Ministry of Education under THRIVE Child Development Centre
to provide an educational preschool program in an inclusive setting.**

Welcome to the H.S.McLellan Preschool!

We are pleased to welcome you and your child to our preschool program! Our program is licensed annually under the Ministry of Education and our operation is guided by the Child Care and Early Years Act. A summary of our licensing visit can be found in the hallway on the wall beside the first set of lockers.

H.S. McLellan is an environment for children and families to learn, grow, explore and create. We believe in team work and as part of our program, we want you to feel like part of our team. Our goal is to nurture each individual child in a safe, warm, caring and education focused environment. Your suggestions, support and ideas are valued and always welcome.

Our handbook will provide information that relates to our preschool program. If you should require any further information about our program, please feel free to speak to the supervisor or any one of the program staff.



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Program Statement

H. S. McLellan Preschool promotes high quality child care with a philosophy of inclusive programming, recognizing children's varied abilities, interests, needs, learning styles and cultural backgrounds and is committed to using "How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years" as a guiding document in our program. Children are seen as competent, capable, curious and rich in potential. We recognize that each child is a unique individual who brings his or her own abilities to the program and deserves the encouragement and space to try new things, explore new ideas and develop their own unique creativity within an environment that fosters curiosity.

H. S. McLellan Preschool's pedagogy and programming involves the curriculum taking a child initiated, adult-supported lead. It focuses on play based learning, allowing the child to take the lead and focus on his or her interests. The educators facilitate this learning through intentional observation, interaction and engaged communication with the children and families. This supports experiences that lead to positive outcomes in relation to children's learning, development, health and over all well-being. We understand that pedagogical documentation is a way for our educators to learn about how children think and learn. Our educators make daily observations of children in the program and use this information to inform their future planning. This provides us with a way to value children's experiences and make their learning and understanding of the world visible to themselves, to other children, and to their parents and other families. It provides a way to also reflect on developmental growth over time.

We provide stimulating learning experiences in a safe environment that enhances children's social, intellectual, physical, and emotional development. This development occurs through our daily routine that encompasses a balance of indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play, rest and quiet time that is responsive to the individual needs of the children receiving care. Play materials and equipment are carefully selected so that they inspire the children to make choices and encourage active exploration, play and inquiry including healthy risk taking while also remaining developmentally appropriate.

In our inclusive learning environment we welcome children of all abilities. Respect for diversity, equity and inclusion is vital for optimum development and learning. We recognize each child as having equal rights to participate in the program and respect the unique qualities of each child and family. We establish programming strategies to foster an inclusive learning environment in which every child can participate. We view the diversity of children and families as an asset and plan our program to reflect differences and further enrich the environment.

We encourage children to interact and communicate in a positive way with their peers, their family and with the educators. We are aware of, foster, support, encourage, respond to and document the many ways in which children express themselves, the many "voices" with which they articulate their ideas, the variety of "languages" they use to communicate. We use a warm and positive approach to support children's developing ability to express emotions and take other perspectives.

A high scope philosophy is used to support children in resolving conflict. The educators stop any harmful behavior that is occurring and then acknowledge the feelings of the children involved, gather information from the children about what happened and then assist the children to come up with their own solution to the problem. The skills of conflict resolution are important to lifelong learning. As competent individuals, children are active participants in resolving conflicts.

We support children's ability to self-regulate by providing a home like environment & implementing small group experiences which support children to self-regulate in a calm environment with fewer distractions. We also further support self-regulation by following the child's lead and observing their interests and taking note of how they interact with others in the physical environment. Through continual observation and attention our educators support children in developing strategies to deal with stress and remain calm and to regulate their emotions while recognizing the effects of their actions on others. When children are calmly focused and alert they are best able to modulate their emotions, pay attention, ignore distractions, inhibit their impulses and understand the consequences of their actions. We are continually learning about how to create learning environments and programming that helps support the development of children's self-regulation by accessing information from community partners and conducting our own research.

H. S. McLellan Preschool recognizes the central and critical role of families in their children's development and works in partnership with families as well as community services to enable children to develop the skills for success. We aim to foster outreach, engagement and communication with families about our program and their children's learning experiences. We believe that families are experts on their children. Sharing knowledge is integral to the success of the child. This is achieved through the development of non-judgmental, respectful and trusting relationships in which there is continuity between home and preschool. We know that our partnership with our families helps our program to best meet the needs of the children. Through reflective teaching practices, children are supported as they move through their preschool years and into elementary school and the community with knowledge and respect for themselves and others. H. S. McLellan works closely with local community agencies and partners in order to support children and families in our program and in their everyday life. We view the community as a valuable resource and our educators plan learning opportunities to engage the community in our programs. We seek out opportunity to share our knowledge and to learn from others in the community.

Our menus are both nutritious and appealing to the children, follow Canada's Food Guide and are culturally sensitive. Parents are invited to share recipes that their children enjoy at home with us so they can be included on our menu. We accommodate dietary or religious food requirements for children in our program in order to promote the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of all of the children.

THRIVE Child Development Centre supports and encourages continuous professional learning among the H. S. McLellan Preschool staff as well as the identification, collection and analysis of appropriate outcome measures, from time to time. Formal professional learning is vital, but we also know that the most central professional growth happens day-to-day, as our staff co-learns with children and each other as self-reflective professionals. Educators reflect and assess their program and environment daily to ensure that the program is meeting the individual needs of the children and the group and that their environment is set up according to the interest of the group. The supervisor reviews the programming and pedagogical documentation to ensure that they meet our requirements. The supervisor demonstrates pedagogical leadership by observing each playroom daily and engaging in conversation with the educators and children regarding how the children are learning, what they need to learn and what is the best means for that learning to happen.

H.S.McLellan encompasses the research and legislation in Ontario's three major early learning documents: How Does Learning Happen?, The Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT) and Think, Feel, Act Lessons from Research about Young Children.



INCLUSION

The preschool has a Resource Consultant from the Early Learning Resources program that provides support to the child, family and preschool educators. Individual support plans (RSPCB's ISP's) for the child with special needs are incorporated into the total curriculum. Program evaluation is carried out on an ongoing basis and ISP's are reviewed and revised at a Family Service Plan meeting every six months to one year. The evaluation is carried out by the educators, the family and therapy team. Many of the therapists spend time in our preschool assisting with the implementation of the goals.



CURRICULUM

Our curriculum is emergent. Emergent curriculum is based on the premise that children are most successful at learning when curriculum experiences account for their interests, strengths, needs, and lived realities. In emergent curriculum, both adults and children have initiative and make decisions. Emergent curriculum is never built on children's interests alone; teachers and parents also have interests worth bringing into the curriculum. We pair our emergent curriculum with the information that is in the Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT) document to ensure that developmentally appropriate activities and experiences are being offered. The learning that is happening in our program can be seen through documentation throughout the program.

STAFF

We hire registered Early Childhood Educators with additional training in working with children with special needs including Hanen Learning Language and Loving It. All of our staff is current with First Aid and CPR training.

STUDENTS

Student placements such as Early Childhood Education and high school co-op are provided as educational opportunities. Our policy states that volunteers and students will not have unsupervised access to the children at any time, and are always being supervised by preschool staff.

ENROLMENT

Enrolment is open to all children in the community including employees of the THRIVE Child Development Centre.

Children can attend 2 to 5 days per week twelve months per year.

The preschool is open from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday, through Friday.

Hours of child care for each child is determined by parental work/school schedule.

Those children attending for school readiness/socialization are enrolled from 9 am to 3 pm.

Age groups:

- 16 space preschool program for children 2 ½ to 4 years old
- 10 space toddler program for children 18 to 36 months old

ADMISSIONS

The following process is followed:

1. The child is offered a space from the centralized waitlist
2. The parent comes in to see the preschool and make a decision if they would like the space for their child. During this visit policies and procedures as well as the program statement are discussed.
3. The child has a visit in the appropriate room.
4. Admission forms are completed and a start date is chosen.

Children will be enrolled on a yearly basis September to August. Children may enter the program part way through the year if space is available. Applications can be made through the childcare application site, www.saultdaycare.ca.

WAITLIST

H.S. McLellan Preschool is committed to managing a waitlist and placing children in a transparent, fair and consistent manner.

- To gain access to childcare space families must register on www.saultdaycare.ca
- No fee is charged to have a child added to register.
- Children will only be placed into H.S. McLellan from that register.
- Priority will be granted for:
 - Children of THRIVE employees
 - Siblings of current children enrolled
 - Children that are clients of THRIVE provided appropriate ratios are maintained
 - Returning families
- When attempting to contact a family to offer a childcare space 3 attempts will be made and on the final attempt 24 hours will be given to the family to respond to the message that is left. Email addresses will be used when available and the listed phone number is not in service. After this timeframe has passed the child will be removed from the waitlist and the next family will be contacted.
- Once a family is offered a space arrangements will be made for orientation for the parent and a visit for the child. A start date will also be determined at that time.

FEES

Registration Fee: \$15.00 non-refundable (**due upon acceptance of the child into the program.**)
 \$39.00/day - Full Day Preschool Room
 \$41.00/day - Full Day Toddler Room
 Family Plan: \$3.00/day reduction for second child (applies to full fee only).

SUBSIDY

Applications can be provided by the Preschool Manager if you wish to apply for a subsidized space through Social Services Child Care Services.

WITHDRAWAL

Written notice of permanent withdrawal must be given two weeks in advance. If notice is not received fees will continue. Children leaving for school in the fall will be discharged by the last day before the Labour Day weekend.

PAYMENT

You will be billed monthly. Fees are **due on the first day of the month** or upon receiving your invoice. These are non-refundable except in the case of withdrawal from the program. If fees are in arrears the child will be discharged from the program.

Please note: We have moved to a **no cash system** for preschool payments.

Please make payments at reception, the program staff cannot be held responsible to deliver fees to the office.

We offer the following payment options:

1. **cheque** – no charge
 Please make cheque out to:
THRIVE Child Development Centre, 74 Johnson Avenue, P6C 2V5
2. **debit card** in person at front desk or by phone with interact visa card- no charge
3. **electronic transfer** (e-trf) – no charge (your financial institution may charge you a fee)
 Interac E-transfer to accounting@kidsthive.ca.
 Please provide your password in a separate email to accounting@kidsthive.ca.
4. **credit card** (Visa and Mastercard only) – in person at reception or you can make payment over the phone by calling reception and giving them your visa information.
NOTE: While we want to offer this option, there is a cost to us for credit card payments which THRIVE, as a non-profit organization, cannot cover. Should you choose to pay by credit, you agree to pay an **additional 2%** of the amount paid by credit as an expense recovery fee.

If there is a problem (financial or otherwise) in paying the fees on time please contact the Preschool Manager.

VACATION/SICK TIME

Children will be allowed a limited number of days off for vacation and sick time at no charge. If vacation/sick time is beyond a total of 2 weeks per years (based on the number of days per week enrolled), we reserve the right to charge the full fees payable. This is necessary because of the cost of operating the program. In order for the fees to be waived for vacation/sick time, the request must be made in writing. Adjustments to fees for requested days off will be made the next billing period. These days run on a school year from September to August.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Please make sure that the teacher in attendance is aware of your child's arrival and departure. We cannot accept responsibility for children who are not inside the classroom or playground. If possible, spend a few minutes sharing information as this helps make the transition easier. Your child can only be released to the person(s) you have listed on your Emergency Information Form. Due to our staff schedules and the number of children enrolled in our program, it is difficult for every staff member to meet and know the face of every authorized person listed in your child's file. Therefore, staff will request photo identification be provided before releasing the child to a person's care upon pick-up if they are not sure who the person is. Arrangements with parents will be made for fixed arrival and departure times for their child. This is necessary because of the staff/child ratio required by law. It is also important for us to provide a sense of security for the child in following a regular routine. Do not drop your child off before his/her designated arrival time and do not pick him/her up after the designated departure time. If you need to make arrangements to have your child picked up or dropped off at a different time for some reason please check with the preschool staff and we will be happy to accommodate you if we can.

Parents that arrive later than their scheduled pick up time may be charged an additional fee (\$5.00 for each 10 minutes). If the preschool staff have not been notified of a late pick up ahead of time they will attempt to contact the parents or emergency contact number provided. In the event that we are unable to make contact with the family, after one hour from the child's scheduled departure time, the child will be considered abandoned by the parents and the Children's Aid Society will be called without further notification to the parent.

CLOSURES

The preschool operates 12 months per year. The preschool will be closed for the following statutory holidays;

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

The preschool will be closed over the Christmas and New Year period and for 2 or 3 staff professional development days per year.

Advance notice is given for these dates. No fees are charged when we are closed.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Algoma Public Health requires that an up-to-date immunization record be completed prior to enrolment. Your child CAN NOT attend preschool until we have a copy of his/her immunization record.

There are up to 26 children attending at any one time. Although policy states that children with communicable diseases must be kept at home, there is increased risk of catching colds, flu, and childhood illnesses within the group setting. If your child has vomiting or diarrhea she/he must be kept home for 24 hours after the last occurrence according to Algoma Public Health recommendations. The staff appreciates a phone call whenever your child will not be attending.

Our voice mail operates twenty four hours a day, so a message may be left at any time.
(759-1131, ext. 218)



Each child's medical condition must be stable in order to attend the program. Children with exceptional health care needs must have a medical form completed by the child's most responsible physician as well as instructions for individual care and required support in place prior to their enrolment. Admission of children with exceptional health care needs will be based on the adequacy of the facilities for care, group dynamics of the children, and availability of required support.

ADMINISTRATION OF DRUGS

1. The preschool will administer medication when it is required during program hours.
2. A physician must prescribe all medication. (Exceptions may be made for emergency medication)
3. Medication will be administered to a child only from the original container. The container must be clearly labelled with the child's name, name of medication, the dosage, the date of purchase and instructions for storage and administration.
4. Parents must complete and sign a medication authorization form indicating the times the medication is to be given, as well as the dosage.

If you plan to leave your child in the care of another adult (e.g. while out of town) please provide written notification identifying the substitute guardian in your absence.

INCIDENT REPORTS

If your child gets a minor injury at the preschool, you will be notified in a written incident report. Incident reports are written when children receive scrapes, bumps, bruises etc. A note will be on your child's locker at the end of the day indicating that the preschool staff have a report for you to sign. Once you sign the report a copy will be provided to you. If the preschool staff are concerned about the injury or if it is of a more serious nature they will contact you to let you know what has happened.

POSTING OF SERIOUS OCCURRENCES

The safety and well-being of our children in licensed child care programs is the highest priority. In spite of all the best precautions, serious occurrences can sometimes take place.

A serious occurrence could include:

- ✓ Serious injury to a child
- ✓ Fire or other disaster on site
- ✓ Complaint about service standard

A "Serious Occurrence Notification Form" will be posted at the inside entrance to the preschool (double glass doors) for 10 days following any serious occurrence.

This posting will give you, as parents', information about the incident and outline follow-up actions taken and the outcomes, while respecting the privacy of the individuals involved. Longer-term actions taken by the H. S. McLellan Preschool will also be included to help prevent similar incidents in the future, where applicable.

Many factors may lead to a serious occurrence report. A serious occurrence does not necessarily mean that we are out of compliance with licensing requirements or that children are at risk in the child care program. Serious Occurrence reporting has always been a licensing requirement for the preschool but the posting of serious occurrences in this manner will support increased transparency and access to information for families.

EMERGENCY CLOSURE

The following is our policy around closure for emergencies (e.g. winter storms). We will close only if municipal operations close, such as public transit and municipal offices. In the event of closure for any reason, announcements will be put on the local radio station and if possible a message will be left on our answering machine in the building. There will be no fee charged for days closed.

You will not be contacted personally, so please listen to the radio for closures.

If the children are to be dismissed early for any reason, the preschool will contact families (or your emergency number) to request that children be taken home. If a family cannot be contacted, we will keep the child at the centre until we have reached you. We have emergency management policies and procedures in place.

If we need to vacate the building due to fire our emergency shelter is our portable in the parking lot. If the fire department informs us that we will not be able to return to the building they will transport us by bus to Lifespring Church at 891 People's Road. We will contact each family individually in this situation and ask that you pick your child up as soon as possible. If parent (s) are unable to be reached the listed emergency contact will be called. Staff will remain with the children until they are picked up.

NUTRITION

Your child will be served a nutritious morning and afternoon snack as well as a nutritious lunch. Menus are posted on our parent information board. Parents are discouraged from bringing in foods from home. Children's special dietary needs and allergies are noted in the program for the staff. You may be permitted to provide food from home if your child has dietary restrictions or feeding issues and cannot eat the items on our menu. An individual support plan will be written to reflect any modifications/substitutions that need to be made at mealtimes.



SUNSCREEN

All parents must put sunscreen on their children before they come to preschool. If you would like sunscreen reapplied after sleep time, you will need to provide the preschool with a bottle of sunscreen to use for your child. We do not have sufficient time in the morning to apply sunscreen on all children. If you wish to provide your child with sunglasses, please make sure they are labelled with your child's name.

BIRTHDAYS

Each child's birthday will be celebrated by singing Happy Birthday at snack time and presenting the child with a birthday hat to take home. We will respect spiritual and cultural beliefs as requested.

We ask that you do not send special treats from home due to food allergies.



CLOTHING AND POSSESSIONS

Children should be dressed in clothing that is appropriate for physical activity, the weather and the season. A second set of clothing should be left at the preschool in case of accidents. We would ask that your child only brings one comfort toy from home if they need it. Children are encouraged to leave toys and other personal belongings in their lockers. Parents are asked to send a supply of diapers and wipes if required. Clothing that has become wet or soiled will be placed in a plastic bag in the child's locker for pick-up. (Because of health regulations we are not allowed to rinse soiled under garments before sending home). All clothing and belongings should be labelled with the child's name.

LOCKERS

Your child will be given a locker to store their belongings in while they are here. Notes and artwork will be placed in their can for you to take home. Part time children who share lockers must empty their lockers completely each day so there is ample space for the next child to use the following day.

FIELD TRIPS

The children may be taken on short walks within the neighbourhood in nice weather. Parents will be notified in advance and permission notes will be sent home for any major outings. Parents are always invited to attend any of our major outings.

DISCIPLINE

Our behaviour management policy is posted on our parent information board. The children will be taught in a nurturing, supportive environment which naturally rewards and encourages positive behaviour. Children will be disciplined in a positive manner and in a way that is appropriate to their age level and their actions. The goal of discipline is to promote self-control and an attitude of respect for others. In order to ensure all children's health and safety, it may be necessary for an adult to intervene with unpredicted behaviours. This will be carried out calmly and firmly but gently, making it clear to the child why the behaviour is inappropriate.

The following are not permitted in the preschool:

- corporal punishment of the child;
- physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a high chair, car seat, stroller or other device for the purposes of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting himself, herself or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent;
- locking the exits of the child care centre 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;
- use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child or undermine his or her self-respect, dignity or self-worth;
- depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding; or
- inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

DISCHARGE

If it becomes necessary to consider the discharge of a child (for example, fees not paid, safety risk related to the child's health or behaviour) parents will be contacted.

If a child is absent excessively (more than 50% of the time) over a two month period we may discharge the child or reduce the days of enrolment to enable other children from the waitlist to attend.

The Preschool Manager will make every effort to direct families to any available source of assistance (financial or otherwise).

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Frequent contact between the educators and the parents of the children is encouraged in order to discuss the child's progress in the program and to exchange ideas on child development. Parents are encouraged to call or visit the preschool at any time.

ALLERGIES

Because of allergies, this Centre is also a **PEANUT FREE BUILDING**.
DO NOT SEND ANY peanuts, peanut butter, or nuts of any kind with your child.



SMOKING

In compliance with Ontario law, no smoking is allowed in the building or on the playground. Smoking or handling a cigarette in the child care centre and playground, whether or not the children are present, is prohibited.

PLAYGROUND

Daily outdoor play is an important part of our program. We spend at least 2 hours outside daily, weather permitting, so please provide suitable outdoor play clothes (hats, boots, rain or snow suits). We encourage children to learn through taking risks in a safe environment. Our playground is designed for creative & active play. We also take nature walks in the large back yard with the children.

Please observe the following safety tips.

HELMETS

If your child has a helmet, please put their name on it and send it daily for use on the playground. All children must wear a helmet on riding toys. (We only have a few extra helmets here.)

RUNNING SHOES

Sandals are not recommended on the playground. Children may trip more easily on climbing equipment or scrape their toes while on riding toys. Sand and wood chips may get into the open areas of sandals. Regular running shoes are suggested for outdoor play.



DRAWSTRINGS/CORDS/SCARVES

Please avoid or remove these from any clothing a child wears. These are all choking hazards.

HATS

It is a good practice for children to wear a hat every day during outdoor play to protect them from the elements of weather. Please be sure your child has an appropriate hat for the season and day. (When children bring their own helmets we will encourage them to wear them for the entire outdoor play period rather than changing hats continually as they get on and off the riding toys.)

COMPLAINT RESOLUTION POLICY

Do you have a comment, question, compliment or complaint?

At THRIVE Child Development Centre, we believe that the children and families that we work with deserve the best possible services. We work hard to make sure that the help we give is professional, and is offered in a way that respects the rights and individual needs of each child and family we see. We know that there are times when you may not be fully satisfied with our services. When this happens, we encourage you to let us know.

We have a complaint procedure that you can use to let us know when there is a problem. You can follow the steps below or use our Feedback Form to submit your concern to us in writing. This form is also available at reception. Either way, we will work with you to find a solution. Please know that sharing your concern with us will not affect the services you receive.

We also welcome your comments, questions and your feedback if you are especially happy with our service.

Step I

We ask that you first address your concern directly with the staff member involved. She/he will listen, discuss the issue with you and suggest ways to solve the difficulty. If this does not help, or you do not feel comfortable addressing your concern with the staff member, you can ask to speak with his/her Manager. Our receptionist can connect you with this individual.

Step II

A Manager will call you within five (5) working days. She/he will speak with you about your point of view. She/he will offer ideas on how your issue can be resolved. If this effort is not sufficient, you can ask to speak with the Executive Director.

Step III

The Executive Director will call you within three (3) working days. Again, there will be a discussion and suggestions for resolution. If this still does not help, the Executive Director will set up a meeting, in another attempt to reach a satisfactory resolution. She/he will listen to your concerns and, with others, try to settle the outstanding disagreements.

We want to work with you to find solutions. However, if you feel that this process has been unsuccessful or you do not feel secure discussing your concern directly with us, there are other choices you can make. You can contact one of the following:

1. Program Supervisor, Office Ministry of Children and Youth Services:
705-541- 2139
2. The Office of Child and Family Services Advocacy: 416.325.5581
3. For concerns regarding H. S. McLellan Preschool: 1-877-510-5333
or email childcare_ontario@ontario.ca

CONTACT US

If you need to get ahold of the preschool for any reason you can reach us at **(705) 759-1131 ext. 218**. If we are unable to answer the phone please leave us a message and we will return your call, if needed, as soon as possible. Our voicemail operates 24 hours a day so you can leave us a message at any time of the day or night if necessary. If you need to reach the supervisor you can call her at **(705) 759-1131 ext. 209**.

We look forward to learning and growing together with you and your child.



THRIVE Child Development Centre gratefully accepts your donations to support our programs and services. Cheques may be made payable to "THRIVE" Foundation" or you may donate online by visiting our website at www.kidsthive.ca and clicking the 'donate now' button.