



Gathering Wild
Preschool Family
Updated
Handbook

2022 – 2023 School Year

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MISSION STATEMENT

Our program is play-based, child led and informed by the ELECT document, How Does Learning Happen, and the Ontario Kindergarten Curriculum. We view children as capable, competent, curious, and rich in potential. Children will be active collaborators in their own learning.

Gathering Wild is an inclusive environment that welcomes all children.

As educators our role will be to facilitate play, support each child's interests, and provoke further inquiry in order to expand their learning experiences. Learning will be made visible through ongoing pedagogical documentation and observations communicated to families through the StoryPark app. We want to foster a love of learning that children carry with them throughout their lives!

Well-being, belonging, and self-regulation are at the heart of our programs.

We're playful.

We explore.

We take risks.

We get messy.

We're curious.

We meet each child where they are.

NOTIFICATION OF UNLICENCED PROGRAM

Gathering Wild Inc is not licensed by the Government of Ontario. We provide recreational arts-based programs for children and families.

HOURS OF OPERATION

YEAR ROUND

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 9:00 - 11:00

ACADEMIC CALENDAR & STATUTORY HOLIDAYS

Our program is semester based, and now offered year-round.

Fall: September 6th, 2022– December 23rd, 2022

Winter: January 9th, 2023– March 31st, 2023

Spring: April 3rd, 2023– June 23rd, 2023

Summer: July 3rd, 2023 – September 1st, 2023

HOLIDAYS

Summer Break: June 26th, 2023 - June 30th, 2023

We will be closed for the following Statutory Holidays:

- Thanksgiving Day (Monday, October 10th, 2022)
- Family Day (Monday, February 20th, 2023)
- Good Friday (Friday, April 7th, 2023)
- Victoria Day (Monday, May 22nd, 2023)
- Labour Day (Monday, September 4th, 2023)

RATIOS

Preschool Ratio is 1:5, with a maximum of 10 children per session.

ALLERGIES & FOOD POLICIES

We are a peanut, tree nut, and sesame seed free facility. We may be able to accommodate other food allergies, sensitivities, and/or dietary restrictions as needed.

SNACK

We offer one plant-based and nut-free snack that follows Canada's Food Guide recommendations.

CLOTHING & OUTERWEAR

At *Gathering Wild*, children spend extended amounts of time outside. Whether there is rain, snow, wind or muck you will find us exploring outdoors! In order for this to be a successful learning opportunity, each child must have outdoor gear that is appropriate for the weather conditions. Learning can only happen when we are comfortable, so please ensure your child is set up for success.

For more information, see Outdoor Play Canada's Position on Outdoor Play:
<https://www.outdoorplaycanada.ca/position-statement-on-active-outdoor-play/>

YEAR-ROUND PACKING LIST

- Backpack
- Water bottle (labeled)
- 1- 2 changes of clothes (especially socks) in a labelled bag
- Hat (appropriate for the season)

SUMMER PACKING LIST

- Rain gear (waterproof boots, pants, jacket or rain suit)
- Running shoes
- Sun hat

- Lightweight clothing
- Water shoes (sandals, crocs etc)
- Bathing suit & Towel
- Sunscreen

WINTER PACKING LIST

- Waterproof snow pants
- Waterproof, warm jacket
- Underlayer (pants and shirt)
- Waterproof boots rated for **at least** -30 degrees
- Waterproof mittens and several pairs of lightweight stretchy mittens/gloves
- Warm hat
- Neck warmer or scarf
- Wool/warm socks

SPRING & FALL PACKING LIST

- Rain gear (waterproof boots, pants, and jacket, or rain suit)
- Sun hat or toque, depending on the weather
- Jacket appropriate for weather
- Lightweight mittens (multiple pairs)

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES & TUITION

All tuition fees are calculated as a flat monthly rate. A one (1) month deposit is required in order to secure your space. This deposit will be put towards your child's final month of tuition. Tuition is the same regardless of holidays, school closures, or number of days in the month.

We accept e-transfer or credit card. You will be invoiced monthly.

Preschool Tuition

1 day/week: \$180 + HST (\$203.40)

2 days/week: \$360 + HST (\$406.80)

3 days/week: \$540 + HST (\$610.20)

ADMISSIONS & WAITLIST

Spots are filled on a first come first served basis. If you would like to be placed on a waitlist for

a specific session, please reach out to us at hello@gatheringwild.ca

LATE PICK-UP

We understand that unforeseen circumstances do occur, however we are firm on the end times for our programs for safety reasons. If you are unable to pick up your child before the end of the program, please contact us as soon as possible in order to avoid accruing late fees. The first time you are late we will waive the fee (up to 15 minutes). If families are consistently late for pick-up additional fees (\$10 for each 10-minute interval, rounded up) will occur.

ATTENDANCE KEEPING

Attendance is taken at the beginning of each day and recorded on the attendance sheet. Please let us know immediately if your child will be absent from the program for any reason.

CANCELLATION & WITHDRAWAL FROM PROGRAM

Each family provides *Gathering Wild* with a deposit which goes towards the last month of tuition. We require 4 weeks written notice through email to use this deposit for the last month of care. (Example: If you are withdrawing your child in March, please let us know at the beginning of February. We will use your deposit for March tuition). We kindly request that families sign up for at least one semester. This policy also applies to changes made to the number of days your child will be attending our program (example: If you are currently enrolled for 3 days/week, but would like to go down to 2 days/week, please provide us with 4 weeks written notice).

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICIES

PHOTOGRAPHY

Pictures taken at *Gathering Wild* will be for the enjoyment of the program participants, for use in pedagogical documentation through the StoryPark app, and for promotional use as needed (Instagram, Facebook, and our website). Written requests to opt out or withdraw consent will be honoured immediately.

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

It is our intention to respect the privacy of children and their parents and caregivers, while ensuring that they access high quality early years care and education in our setting. We aim to ensure that all parents/caregivers can share their information in the confidence that it will only be used to enhance the welfare of their children.

RECORD KEEPING

We keep two kinds of records on children attending our setting:

1. Developmental Records and Pedagogical Documentation

- We will be using the StoryPark app to document children's learning. These learning

stories will be shared with families regularly. These documentations help visualize the journey for each child allow families to play an active part in our community.

2. Personal records

- These include registration and admission forms, signed consent forms, correspondence concerning the child or family, reports or minutes from meetings concerning the child from other agencies, an ongoing record of relevant contact with parents, and observations by staff on any confidential matter involving the child, such as developmental concerns or child protection matters.
- These confidential records are stored in a lockable file cabinet
- Parents have access, in accordance with the access to records procedure, to the files and records of their own children but do not have access to information about any other child.

INTERACTIONS BETWEEN EDUCATORS AND CHILDREN

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

At *Gathering Wild*, we are proactive in our behaviour management approach. Children are viewed as capable and competent individuals, whose needs and feelings are respected. We set reasonable and developmentally appropriate limits. We provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are encouraged to make positive choices for themselves and those around them. In doing so, children can feel confident in their abilities. Our warm, responsive behaviour management efforts are imbedded throughout the program. Responsive relationships play a key role in the success of our students. Through observation and an understanding of each child's needs educators can help children develop age-appropriate self-regulation skills.

PROHIBITED BEHAVIOUR

At *Gathering Wild*, we take the safety and well-being of children very seriously and aim to support children but recognize that challenging behaviours will occur and are to be expected. Children are developing self-regulation skills, and this takes time and practice. Although we are here to support children and understand that there may be challenging behaviours, we do also need to consider the safety and well-being of the other students.

Although all efforts are made to allow children to work through big feelings within our program, there may be times when children need to be sent home if they are endangering themselves or others. This is at the discretion of the educators.

If this occurs, the child's parents/guardians or emergency contacts will be contacted immediately, and the child will need to be picked up as soon as possible. There will not be a refund for that day's programming. These only happen when all other avenues have been exhausted.

REMOVAL OF A CHILD FROM THE CENTRE

Behaviours that may result in being sent home include but are not limited to:

1. Any of the above prohibited behaviours.
2. Significantly impeding on other children's experience or the ability for the program to be successful.
3. Disregarding personal safety or putting others in danger; threatening others.
4. Continued disrespect and failure to follow set limits.
5. Running away frequently or needing constant 1:1 supervision in a manner that may endanger other children.

INCIDENT REPORTING

If a child is injured, the staff will ensure that the child receives appropriate first aid and medical attention. Staff will contact parents/guardians (or emergency contact if a parent/guardian is not available). An accident form will be completed and filed in the program's records.

MANDATORY REPORTING OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

In compliance with the *Child and Family Services Act*, any staff member who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has suffered from, is suffering from, or is at risk for suffering from child maltreatment (sexual or physical abuse, physical or emotional neglect, etc.), must report the suspected maltreatment to the Children's Aid Society of Toronto.

CRIMINAL REFERENCE CHECK

All staff and volunteers must have a clear, current Vulnerable Sector Screening background check. This information will be kept on file at the centre.

ROLE OF THE PARENT/GUARDIAN

DROP OFF & PICK UP

Gathering Wild requires a written or verbal authorization for the people who may pick up their child or be contacted in case of an emergency (must be over 16 years old). Parents/Guardians must notify *Gathering Wild* before changing the usual pick-up routine. Should an unauthorized person come to pick up a student, that child will not be released into the care of the adult until a verbal consent has been given via telephone. *Gathering Wild* recognizes all parents' rights to access their child regardless of marital status. Please know that access/information will only be denied when there is a written separation agreement, or a legal court order provided to *Gathering Wild* directing us to do so.

Children should be dropped off within the first 15 minutes of their program and picked up by the specified end time. Should you be running late for pick up, please notify us immediately in order to avoid accruing late fees.

COVID-19 DROP OFF & PICK UP PROCEDURES

We ask that all adults wear a mask during the drop off and pick up process, as social distancing can be difficult in our small entryway. Parents are welcome to come inside when necessary. Adults must wear a mask when indoors. If there is another family arriving/leaving at the same

time as you, please wait until they have left before entering.

We will advise of current pick up and drop off procedures before your program start date. These may change as the COVID-19 guidelines are updated.

UPDATING YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION

All updates to your contact information should be made in writing and sent to our email address hello@gatheringwild.ca

GUARDIANSHIP/CUSTODY RIGHTS

All changes in Guardianship and/or Custody Rights must be immediately submitted in written form accompanied by the appropriate legal documentation.

COMMUNICATION

We are here to support children and families. We encourage positive daily communication with staff at pick-up and drop-off times. However, should you like a more in-depth conversation we encourage you to email us at hello@gatheringwild.ca and time can be set aside to speak with your child's teacher in person or on the phone. We do not discuss behaviour concerns at drop off & pick up, or in front the child.

We will use the StoryPark app to send regular photos and documentation.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Gathering Wild has established practices that prevent accidental injuries, protect children from harm, and remove children from danger in the event of a fire or other emergency situation.

EVACUATION

In the case of an emergency situation that makes the centre's premises unsafe, the children will be evacuated from the building. Parents/guardians will be notified immediately. The children will be brought to Bill Bolton Arena (40 Rossmore Rd.) until the premises are safe for their return or until the children can be picked up by their parents/guardians.

FIRE DRILL PROCEDURE

The centre has a written procedure for fire drills that has been approved by the local fire department. Each staff member is familiar with this procedure and each program room has specific instructions for moving children safely out of the building.

HEALTH POLICIES & PROCEDURES

IMMUNIZATIONS

We require all children attending programming at *Gathering Wild* to be up to date on all immunizations required by the Government of Ontario.

MEDICATIONS

Medication will be administered to children with written permission from parents/guardians and a medical physician. Staff will document the administration of the medication.

Parents/guardians are required to complete the Medication section of our Registration form prior to attendance.

We do not administer non-prescription medication and/or medication without proper labeling/documentation.

ANAPHYLAXIS & ASTHMA POLICY

All children require a completed medical form before the first day of their session. If your child requires a puffer, please fill out the medical section on our registration form. If your child requires an auto injector an *Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan* form must be completed.

Please note that a large portion of our programming occurs outdoors, where children may be exposed to potential allergens.

ILLNESS POLICY

Children cannot attend the centre if illness prevents their ability to participate in regular daily routines, or if attendance could be harmful to themselves or others. Please let us know as soon as possible if your child will be absent due to an illness. Families will be advised to make alternative care arrangements and seek medical attention for the following conditions:

- Any symptoms of COVID-19 (a recent screening sheet will be provided to all families before the program start date)
- Unexplained or undiagnosed pain
- Acute cold with fever, runny nose and/or eyes, coughing and sore throat.
- Difficulty breathing
- Fever over 38 degrees centigrade accompanied by general symptoms such as listlessness.
- Sore throat and difficulty swallowing
- Undiagnosed skin or eye rash
- Headache and stiff neck
- Unexplained diarrhea or loose stool combined with vomiting and abdominal cramps.
- Severe itching of body and scalp
- Known or suspected communicable diseases

COVID-19

Symptoms of COVID-19:

- Fever
- Cough

- Difficulty breathing
- Sore throat or trouble swallowing
- Runny nose or red eyes
- Loss of taste or smell
- Not feeling well, tired, or sore muscles
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea

COVID-19 guidance and regulations for children's programs are constantly updating and shifting. All registered families will be emailed prior to the start date with the most up to date guidance.

General Guidance:

If your child or anyone in your home begins displaying any of the above symptoms, please let us know. Please call Telehealth or your health care provider to find out if you need a COVID-19 test. Please communicate this information to us as quickly as possible so that we can take the appropriate steps regarding infection control and outbreak management.

If your child does require a COVID-19 test, please send us confirmation of their results once you have received them and follow the self-isolation requirements specified by your health care provider.

If they receive a positive test, please let us know immediately so that we can contact Toronto Public Health and take the appropriate next steps. You must self-isolate and be cleared by Toronto Public Health before returning to school.

This information may be updated as we receive new information from the Ministry of Education and Toronto Public Health. We will update all families through email of any changes.

OUTBREAK MANAGEMENT

An outbreak is when a greater than expected number of children and childcare centre staff have similar symptoms of illness in a given period of time. *Gathering Wild* will report COVID-19 and gastroenteritis outbreaks to Toronto Public Health. Outbreaks of gastrointestinal illness in childcare centres are most frequently caused by viruses such as noroviruses and rotaviruses; however, bacteria and other pathogens can also cause outbreaks.

We are keeping ourselves aware of the most current advice from Toronto Public Health regarding outbreaks of COVID-19 and will update our procedures as needed. All families who attend our programming will be notified immediately in the event of an outbreak.

Gastrointestinal illness may include vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramps, and fever. A case (child or staff) of gastrointestinal illness can be defined as:

- Two or more episodes of diarrhea within a 24-hour period
- Two or more episodes of vomiting with a 24-hour period

- One or more episodes of diarrhea AND one or more episodes of vomiting within a 24-hour period.

EXCLUSION OF SICK CHILDREN

Sick children and staff must stay at home until they have been symptom-free for 24-48 hours, depending on their illness. Children who become ill while attending a program will be isolated from other children and a staff member will remain with them until a parent or guardian can take them home.

The following communicable diseases require children to be excluded from attendance:

- Gastroenteritis (24 hours in individual cases, 48 hours in an outbreak)
- Measles (until 4 days after the onset of the rash)
- Mumps (until 5 days after gland swelling begins)
- Pertussis/Whooping Cough (until 5 days of antibiotics have been completed, or 21 days after onset of cough)
- Rubella (until 4 days after onset of rash)
- Hepatitis A (2 weeks after onset of symptoms, 1 week after onset of jaundice)
- Scabies (until 24 hours after first treatment is given)
- Impetigo (until 24 hours after treatment with antibiotics has been initiated. Lesions should be covered)
- Conjunctivitis (until assessed by your health care provider)
- Ringworm (until appropriate treatment has been started)
- Scarlet Fever (24 hours after treatment has started)
- COVID-19 (follow local Public Health guidance)

INFECTION PREVENTION & CONTROL POLICIES

HAND HYGIENE

Proper hand hygiene is the most effective way to prevent the spread of infections. All children will be supervised when performing hand hygiene to ensure it is done properly. Hand hygiene routines will be performed more often during an outbreak, such as during the current COVID-19 pandemic.

Children and staff are prompted to wash their hands using soap and water (for at least 20 seconds) upon arrival, before/after eating, when entering/exiting the classroom, after coughing/sneezing/touching their face, and when their hands are visibly dirty.

CLEANING & DISINFECTION

Routine cleaning and disinfection are important to prevent the spread of infections.

Our current COVID-19 cleaning and disinfection measures include, but are not limited to:

- Cleaning and disinfecting common areas, high touch surfaces at least twice daily or when visibly dirty.
- Ensuring that the disinfectant used during an outbreak is effective to kill norovirus,

rotavirus, and coronavirus, and has a Drug Identification Number.

- Mouthed toys will be separated, cleaned, and disinfected immediately.
- Implement universal precaution guidelines with respect to bodily fluids.
- We use bleach for the purposes and in the concentrations recommended by our local public health authority.
- All cleaning products are inaccessible to children.
- We avoid using disinfectants, sanitizers, and other cleaning products in close proximity to children.
- Toys and sensory materials are cleaned regularly.
- Toy storage areas are regularly monitored for pest activity.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

FIRST AID KIT

We carry a well-stocked first aid kit with us at times. All staff have current First Aid and CPR-C certification.

INDOOR AIR QUALITY

As a precautionary measure, we will open all windows to the centre when children will be inside for long periods of time, weather permitting. We will make use of several air purifiers and fans throughout our indoor space to help with air circulation, especially during the colder months.

HEALTHY RISK-TAKING POLICY

At *Gathering Wild*, healthy risk taking is an integral part of our program. Research indicates that healthy risk-taking supports the development of independence, confidence and can lead to less major injuries in the future (Brussoni, 2020).

What does risky play look like?

- Rough & tumble play.
- Play at speed & height.
- Use of tools such as hot glue guns, hammers, scissors and more.

More information can be found at www.brussonilab.ca or www.outdoorplaycanada.ca

Children will come home with bumps, scrapes, and bruises but this type of play is necessary for healthy development.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

At *Gathering Wild*, the majority of the day is spent outside exploring and investigating the world around us! However, in the event that outdoor play is not possible, gross motor activities will be planned for indoors.

SUN & AIR SAFETY

We ensure children avoid long, uninterrupted periods of direct sun exposure during sun peak hours, typically between 10 am and 2 pm. Our backyard play space offers adequate amounts of shade. If signs of dehydration, heat exhaustion, or heat stroke appear, staff will follow first aid

guidelines and contact parents/guardians immediately.

STAFF PHONE NUMBERS & CONTACT INFORMATION

Tennyson Miller (Main Preschool contact): 647 230 8841, tennyson@gatheringwild.ca

Kylie Precepa (All other inquiries): 647 216 5697, kylie@gatheringwild.ca

General emails and inquiries: hello@gatheringwild.ca

We will update the Staff Phone Number list as new staff and volunteers come aboard.