

Welcome

Welcome to **Mill Valley Child Care Centre**. We are delighted to have you and your child as part of our Child Care family.

We are confident that you will find our Child Care Centre a fun and enjoyable place for your child. Our many years of operating experience have led to a well-balanced program serving many diverse areas and cultures within our community. Our programs are designed to provide a variety of stimulating activities to meet the special interests of each age group as well as the unique and individual needs of each child.

This Parent Handbook will provide you with further information and important details about Mill Valley Child Care Centre. Please keep it and use it for reference in the years to come. Complete the enclosed Registration Package and return it to the Centre prior to your child's starting date.

Thank you for choosing Mill Valley Child Care Centre. We hope that by working together, we can provide your child with the best possible start in life.

Mill Valley Child Care Centre

Community Child Care since 1984

Our History

Mill Valley Child Care Centre has been providing Child Care in the community since 1984. The concept of a child care centre located in a Public School was relatively uncommon. During the mid eighties, enrollment pressures in Public Schools were being felt and as a result of declining enrollment, the Etobicoke Board of Education approached our founders and asked if they would be interested in setting up a Day Care facility at Mill Valley Junior School in hopes of boosting their enrollment.

To our surprise, the initial enrollment at Mill Valley Child Care Centre was more than we had anticipated. This clearly affirmed that the Child Care Centre was much needed in the community.

Wayne Dickson who was Principal at the time, was amazing and supportive, he embraced the idea and concept of having a Day Care inside the school. Right from day one, both school personnel and administration made the centre and staff feel as though they were an integral part of the school. Through word of mouth, the Centre grew at a rapid pace, increasing its classroom occupancy from two to four.

In 1986, Mill Valley Child Care Centre was successfully operating at its full capacity of 82 and a purchase of service agreement with the City of Toronto was obtained.

Our Philosophy

Mill Valley Child Care Centre believes that children are competent, capable and curious and have great potential. The goal of Mill Valley Child Care Centre is to support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents and staff. Partnership between families and Mill Valley Child Care Centre is essential for the optimal growth and development of young children.

We believe that the learning environment consists of everyone, (children, educators, and families) working together with a sense of belonging. The role of our educators is to guide children in an inclusive and supportive environment in which children learn through exploration, play and inquiry. It is through children's ideas, interests, and observations that help create a holistic picture of children's experiences, development and learning which supports planning and curriculum that is meaningful to children. The Ministry of Education's Elect (Early Learning for Every Child Today) early learning framework is the continuum which supports our play based learning environment.

SERVICES AND POLICIES:

- **SERVICES – DAY AND HOURS OF OPERATION:**

The Centre is open Monday to Friday from 7:30AM to 6:00PM

- **PROGRAMS OFFERED:**

Pre-School – 30 months to 44 months

School Age Before & After School – 68 months to 12 years

FDK – Kindergarten Before & After Care – 44 months to 68 months. This program is only available to children attending Full Day Kindergarten at Mill Valley Junior School.

Full Day Summer Camp is available for School Age and FDK children

Subsidy is available to parents who qualify.

- **REGISTRATION:**

A non-refundable Registration Fee of \$25.00 prior to enrollment is required.

All Registration and Immunization Forms must be completed and submitted to the Centre Supervisor **ONE WEEK** prior to enrollment. A child cannot start at the Child Care Centre if information is missing from the enrollment forms.

- **ADMISSION PROCEDURES:**

Once enrollment is confirmed, the Centre Supervisor will arrange an orientation meeting for new parent(s) and their child. Parent(s)/Guardian will be given a tour of the centre, meet our Educators and get acquainted with our facility.

The Centre Supervisor will review and discuss the registration package as well as the Centre's policy & procedures. In addition to the registration package, parent(s)/guardians will be given a Handbook. The orientation meeting is also an opportunity for parents to share information such as allergies, or health related information about their child and to ask questions.

- **GRADUAL ADMISSION (Preschool):**

It is recommended that a child become acquainted with the Child Care setting in a gradual way. Parents/Guardians of Preschool children are encouraged to allow their child(ren) gradual admission. This is to provide some time for adjustment before the child(ren) experiences a full day without his or her parents/guardians.

- **FEE SCHEDULE:**

A current list of the Fee Schedule for Mill Valley Child Care Centre is included with this handbook and is also posted on the Parent Board.

- **FEE PAYMENT:**

Fees are set according to the ongoing operational costs of the Child Care Centre and are reviewed yearly.

Fees are due and dated on the Monday of each week, payable to Mill Valley Child Care Centre. Post-dated cheques are accepted.

Cash fee payments must be made in person to the Centre's Supervisor **ONLY**. A receipt will be issued.

Cheques returned from the Bank for any reason are subject to a \$15.00 Administration Fee.

Outstanding accounts over two (2) weeks will be issued an invoice due and payable immediately after receipt. Accounts that remain outstanding after three (3) weeks will be issued a "Withdrawal Notice" and child care services will terminate within 48 hours after the notice is issued and delivered to parents.

The Centre will pursue all outstanding monies owed.

- **CLOSURES:**

The Child Care Centre will be closed on the following days:

New Year's Day	Civic Day
Family Day	Labour Day
Good Friday	Christmas Day
Victoria Day	Boxing Day
Canada Day	Early closures on Christmas & New Years Eve
Thanksgiving	

Fee payment is required for all holidays listed above.

- **WAIT LIST:**

Parents wishing to put their child(ren) on our wait list, may do so in person or by phone. Admissions are offered when there is a vacancy available. The Child Care Centre maintains a separate wait list for each type of age group requested. When a space becomes available, parents are contacted in order of the placement on the wait list. Should a parent decline the placement offer, the next parent on the list is contacted until the vacancy is considered filled.

- **HOLIDAYS / SICK DAYS:**

Children taking vacation during the year will be required to pay regular fees regardless of the amount of time taken if they wish to retain their spot.

Children absent due to illness or leave of absence are required to pay regular fees regardless of the amount of time taken if they wish to retain their spot.

- **REFUNDS:**

Refunds will NOT be issued for Registration Fees, deposits, days off due to illness, withdrawal without notice, vacation taken, nor any days due to unexpected school closures.

- **SECURITY INTERCOM SYSTEM:**

For Safety and security, an intercom and security camera system is located at the north front entrance of the Child Care Centre. Parents must press the intercom button located on the outside wall by the door. Parents/Guardians will be asked to identify themselves before the door lock is released.

- **STAFF:**

The Centre Supervisor is a Registered Early Childhood Educator who is responsible for the overall operation of the Centre, in addition our staff include Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECE'S) as well as experienced Assistant Teachers. All Centre staff have current Standard First Aid and level C CPR certification. All Centre Staff and placement students are required to complete a Vulnerable Sector Check prior to working and before placement.

- **PROGRAMMING:**

Mill Valley Child Care Centre uses a play based learning emergent curriculum that capitalizes on children's natural curiosity and interest.

Our Educators make daily observations of the children for insight into their interests and plan meaningful and purposeful activities.

Program Plans indicating the learning experiences are posted in each classroom and reflects the Early Learning framework and How Does Learning Happen documentation, Ontario's Pedagogy For The Early Years.

- **BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE:**

The Child Care Centre's Behaviour Guidance Policy guides all staff, students and volunteers. Prohibited practices such as those listed below are part of the Centre's Behaviour Guidance Policy.

As stated in the Child Care and Early Years Act, the following practices are NOT permitted:

- a) Corporal punishment of the child
- b) Physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a high chair, car seat, stroller or other device for the purposes of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting himself, herself or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent
- c) Locking the exits of the Child Care Centre for the purpose of confining the child, or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during

an emergency and is required as part of the licensee's emergency management policies and procedures

- d) Use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child or undermine his or her self-respect, dignity or self-worth
- e) Depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding
- f) Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will

CHILDREN'S IMMUNIZATION:

Prior to admission, parents are required to complete a Toronto Public Health Immunization Form. A copy of your child's up to date immunization record must be attached and returned to the centre. Parents of children that are not immunized must provide a medical exemption letter completed by a qualified medical practitioner, which clearly states the medical reason why the child cannot be immunized or a completed immunization form objecting to the immunization on the grounds that the immunization conflicts with a parents conscience or religious beliefs.

If in the event of an outbreak of a communicable disease occurs, any child who is not adequately immunized, will not be able to attend unless the child receives the required vaccine or until the outbreak is over.

Parents are responsible for notifying the centre of any updates with respect to their child's immunization.

- **CHILDREN'S RECORDS:**

Parents are responsible for notifying the Centre each time personal information pertaining to the Child changes; ie. home, business, and cell phone numbers, addresses, e-mail, emergency contacts and authorized pick up people. It is vital that the Centre be able to reach someone in case of any emergency.

Please ensure that the Supervisor is notified of any and all changes to your child's records or information.

- **CLOTHING / POSSESSIONS:**

All children's clothing, indoors and out, should be labeled with the child's name to prevent loss of clothing. A complete change of clothing (labeled) is required to be kept at the Centre for all children. School Age children are also encouraged to keep a spare set of clothing in their cubby.

For children who are not toilet trained, parents must provide diapers/pull-ups and wet ones. A blanket for rest time is also required.

Although staff try their best to keep a close watch on personal belongings, sometimes clothing does get misplaced. If this happens, the staff will offer assistance to parents in the search for missing items. However, the Centre will not be held responsible for any lost clothing and/or personal property.

- **FOOD AND NUTRITION:**

An important part to healthy eating is having educators interact with children to provide children with the opportunity to build meaningful relationships, develop a variety of skills and abilities and support children in the importance of healthy food options.

Children in care for a full day will be offered a mid-day meal and two snacks that include servings from all four food groupings from the Canada Food Guide. Children's Dietary Restrictions and Allergies are posted in the kitchen, office and in all classrooms.

Weekly menus are posted on the parent board for the current and following weeks. We employ a cook on site that is trained in food handling. We accommodate dietary or religious requirements for children in our program.

If your child has a special diet or any food related allergies, please let the centre know immediately.

- **SLEEP/REST TIME:**

Children in attendance for 6 hours or more in a day will have a scheduled sleep/rest time of no more than two hours. Each child is assigned his/her individual cot. Children's sleep is monitored and direct visual check of each child is conducted by staff to ensure their health and safety.

- **OUTDOOR PLAY:**

The Child Care & Early Years Act states that children who attend full day child care are required to have two (2) hours of outdoor time each day and after school programs 30 minutes, weather permitting. In the event of inclement weather, alternate physical activities will be provided indoors for children. Please ensure that adequate clothing for changing weather conditions is available to ensure that your child/ren can comfortably participate in outdoor activities.

After one hour of resting, children who do not sleep are provided with quiet activities.

- **ILLNESS:**

Upon arrival at the Centre, staff are required to do a daily observation check to ensure that your child is able to participate in the program for the day. Should your child show signs of ill health prior to being dropped off in the centre, we encourage you to keep them at home and/or seek medical attention if necessary.

The Child Care & Early Years Act requires that all children attending full day child care programs play outdoors for two (2) hours a day. If a child is too ill to participate fully in the program, he/she should remain at home.

If a child becomes ill during the day, parent(s) will be contacted and asked to pick-up the child as soon as possible. This is for the child's well being as well as protection of the other children. It is therefore essential that staff be able to locate parent(s) or their designate, should an illness or emergency arise.

At the time of registration, a written consent form is to be completed by the parent authorizing the Centre to send a child to hospital in the event of an emergency.

Should a child be absent for five (5) or more days, due to a serious illness or communicable disease, a Doctor's note is required before the child can be re-admitted into the program. This practice supports a health and safe environment for all in the Centre.

A sick child does not function well at Child Care and his/her presence may infect others. Please be prepared for emergency care at home when necessary.

- **ACCIDENTS/INCIDENT:**

If your child has an accident/incident at the Centre, staff will provide immediate first aid. The Supervisor will contact the parent(s) or the emergency contact on file. If required, we will transport the child (by ambulance) to the nearest hospital for attention.

In the event that the child receives a minor injury while at the Child Care Centre, staff will provide first aid and complete an Accident/Incident Report for the parent to review and sign upon arrival. A copy of the report will be provided to parents.

- **MEDICATION:**

If your child requires medication, Centre staff will only administer medication prescribed by a doctor.

Only medication in the original container, clearly labeled with the child's name, name of medication, dose, the date of purchase, expiration (if applicable) and instructions for storage and administration of the drug will be administered.

All medication must be given directly to a program staff. Never leave any medication in your child's bag/cubby. All medication will be kept in a locked container in a secure place.

Parents must complete and sign the Medication Authorization Form for the administration of medication to begin. Parents must provide written instructions including name, date, dose and times medication is to be administered.

- **ALLERGIES:**

We are an allergy sensitive Child Care Centre. Due to food allergies (such as nuts & peanuts), parents are not permitted to bring any food or snacks into the centre. The centre will provide all snacks and meals while the child is in our care.

- **ANAPHYLACTIC ALLERGIES (EPIPEN):**

Should your child have an allergy that requires the administration of an EpiPen, please inform the Supervisor immediately to ensure that the necessary required forms are completed in order to best meet the needs and safety of your child.

Children's individual action plans must be reviewed, completed and signed by the parent prior to the expiration date of the EpiPen.

An EpiPen must be available at the centre for the child at all times. A child who requires an EpiPen, will not be accepted into the Centre without their prescribed and current EpiPen.

If a child no longer needs an EpiPen, parents must provide the Centre with a Doctor's note stating it is no longer required.

- **NEIGHBOURHOOD WALKS/TRIPS:**

Neighbourhood walks is an important part of our program. Children learn about their community and build connections as they discover and make sense of the world around them. A consent form for neighbourhood walks is provided to parents to sign upon enrollment. Routes are posted on the Parent Board.

When a field trip is planned, parents will be informed in advance and asked to sign a field trip consent form giving their child permission to participate.

- **DUTY TO REPORT:**

Every person in Ontario is required under the Child and Family Services Act to report his/her belief that a child may be in need of protection.

Sec 72. (2) "A person who believes, on reasonable grounds, that a child is, or may be in need of protection shall forthwith report the belief and the information, upon which it is based, to a children's aid society."

The legislation places additional responsibility on individuals who perform professional or official duties with respect to children, to report suspicions of child abuse. Included and defined specifically is the operator or employee or a day nursery (CFSA 72. (4) (b). This definition includes all Child Care staff.

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

- **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE:**

In order to ensure security, Parent(s)/Guardian, must escort the child directly into the centre. Upon arrival, always notify a staff member as to your child's presence. Similarly, when picking up your child, ensure that a staff member is aware of the child's departure and that the child is signed out. If you make arrangements during the day for someone to pick-up your child, please call the centre and provide the name of the pick-up person and tell the person coming that he/she will be required to show identification to the staff when they arrive. If we do not receive prior notification, we will be unable to release your child to any unauthorized person. We have your child's safety and welfare in mind and stress the importance of contacting us and communicating these arrangements to us.

The Centre will not release any child to any person suspected of being intoxicated or otherwise unable to safely care for the child at that time. The Centre is obligated By-Law to ensure that no child enter a motor vehicle with a person suspected of intoxication and reserves the right to insist that a taxi or another authorized person be called to accompany the child home. Should this person attempt to leave the Centre with the child who is thought to be in danger, the staff reserves the right to call Police.

If a parent is involved in a custody dispute or has a current custody agreement that involves a child currently attending the Centre, they must report this information to the Child Care Centre's Supervisor. If there is a custody agreement on file, the Centre is better able to ensure that the child is released only to the proper persons.

- **UNDER AGE YOUTH ESCORT:**

The Centre will not allow any child to be released to youth escorts under the age of 13. Often parents will make arrangements for older brothers and sisters to pick up the child from the Child Care Centre. Parents must ensure that all youth escorts must be mature to ensure the safety of the younger child and be at least 13 years old.

Parents must complete & sign the Youth Escort Form in Section 2 of the Registration Package.

- **LATE PICK UP'S:**

The Child Care Centre closes at 6:00PM. Parents are encouraged to leave enough time to pick up their child/ren at the end of the day. When situations arise whereby parent(s) anticipate on being late, the centre must be notified as soon as possible. Parents are encouraged to make alternate pick up arrangements and notify centre staff on who will be picking up their child/ren.

Late pick-ups will be charged \$1.00 per minute, per family after 6:00PM paid directly to the staff member on duty. Even if parents contact the Centre to inform us that they are going to be late, parents are responsible for the late fee.

If continued lateness becomes a pattern, the Centre reserves the right to withdraw the family. If after one (1) hour passed closing time, the child has not been picked up and no contact has been made with the parent or emergency contact, the centre as a last resort will contact the appropriate child protection agency.

- **CHILD CARE ABSENCE:**

Parents are required to inform the Child Care Centre if their child is absent. In the event that parents pick-up their child from Kindergarten or school, it is very important that you inform the Child Care Centre.

If you fail to do so, the Centre considers the child to be missing and will implement its lost child procedure which includes contacting Parents, Emergency Contacts, and if needed, Police.

- **CITY OF TORONTO – ATTENDANCE POLICY: (Subsidized Parents)**

- Each child with a fee subsidy is allowed up to 35 absent days per calendar year (January – December). Absences are not to exceed 20 consecutive days.
- The parent/guardian is responsible for the assessed fees when a child is absent.
- If a child exceeds the allowable number of absent days, the parent/guardian is responsible for paying the full fee.
- Statutory holidays and days that a program does not offer service will be excluded.
- Requests for additional days of absence, beyond the 35 allowable days may be approved through an appeal process.

- **WITHDRAWAL:**

Parents must give the Centre a minimum of two (2) weeks written notice of withdrawal. Parents are responsible for payment of fees until the stated date of withdrawal regardless of whether or not the child is in attendance during this period.

The Centre reserves the right to withdraw a child from the program for the following reasons:

1. Non-payment of fees
2. There is insufficient vacancy for continuity into the next group (form will be provided for your signature to acknowledge your understanding of the information)
3. Parent conduct towards staff, children and/or other parents
4. Continued lateness and non-payment of late fees (late fees are due within 5 business days)

When children are withdrawn due to the Centre's inability to accommodate the child's needs, the withdrawal procedure will include:

- a) Documentation of meeting with parent
- b) Discuss with parent the use and consent to support services
- c) Children's Services consultant notified

- **SUSPENDED CHILDREN:**

Any child that is suspended by the Toronto District School Board (Mill Valley Junior School) may not attend the Child Care Centre. This is in keeping with the TDSB policy that any suspended child may not be on school property during the duration of the suspension.

- **EMERGENCY EVACUATION SITE:**

In the event of an emergency evacuation, the Child Care Centre will evacuate the children to one of our two evacuation sites:

Silverthorne Collegiate Institute (Primary site) – 291 Mill Road
The Etobicoke Olympium (Secondary site) – 590 Rathburn Rd. E.

If possible, parents will be notified by telephone that we have evacuated and parents will be asked to pick up their child.

In the event that the Toronto District School Board determines that the school cannot open due to weather or operational deficiencies, the Child Care Centre will be closed.

Refunds will not be issued on unexpected closures.

To obtain more information, the Centre's voicemail will be updated with a message. Should this occur, parents are asked to check the Centre's Web-Site for additional information at www.millvalleyccc.ca.

- **SCHOOL CLOSURES:**

Every attempt will be made to keep our Programs running on all scheduled days. In the event of unforeseen circumstances, the Centre may be forced to close for a limited time. Some unforeseen circumstance may include, but not limited to:

1. Lack of essential utilities, ie; Hydro, Water, Heat
2. Severe weather conditions
3. School Board closures
4. Public Health issues
5. Licensing restrictions
6. An Emergency event

In the event of a possible closure, the Centre will do their best to inform parents in advance. Please ensure the Centre has your contact information up-to-date, ie; phone numbers, e-mail.

- **SERIOUS OCCURRENCE NOTIFICATION FORM:**

The safety and well being of our children is paramount.

In spite of all the best precautions, serious occurrences can occur at times in licensed child care.

Any reportable serious occurrences that occur at the Child Care Centre will be posted on the parent board for 10 days from the date of the occurrence.

- **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT:**

At Mill Valley Child Care Centre, we believe and recognize that working in partnership with parents is a positive thing for both child and centre. Communication between the Child Care Centre and the family is an important part of parent involvement.

We believe and support an open door policy where families feel valued and welcomed. We encourage parents to share their traditions and cultural artifacts so that we may enrich our early learning program.

Partnerships with families and communities strengthen the ability of early childhood settings to meet the needs of young children (Elect 2007).

- **ACCESS AND EQUITY:**

Mill Valley Child Care Centre is committed in providing equitable access to services and programs for children and families. All program communications are sensitive, inclusive and non-discriminatory. We are committed to an environment that is welcoming and respectful for all.

- **PARENT CONCERNS:**

Should parents have any concerns pertaining to the care and general operation of the Centre, the following steps should be taken:

1. Issues that concern activities within the classroom, should first be discussed with the classroom ECE Teachers. If a resolution cannot be obtained, parents should direct their concern to the Program Supervisor.
2. Issues with administration of the Centre, should be discussed with the Program Supervisor.
3. If a concern cannot be satisfactorily resolved through discussion with the parties involved, parent(s) must submit a formal written complaint to the Centre Program Manager/Licensee
4. The Program Supervisor and Licensee will investigate the complaint and discuss with the individual involved. Every attempt will be made to reach a solution that is mutually agreeable.

- **PLACEMENT STUDENTS:**

Mill Valley Child Care Centre from time to time will have students from education institutions doing their field placements.

Students and field placements are not included in the staffing ratio; therefore direct unsupervised access without an employee of the centre is not permitted.

Parents will be informed of any students in the centre via a notice on the parent board or posted by the entrance door to each classroom.

All students are required to provide confirmation of a clear Medical Assessment and Vulnerable Sector Check prior to working directly with children.

- **SMOKE FREE:**

In accordance with the Smoke-Free Ontario Act 2007, smoking is prohibited on school grounds, inside the Child Care Centre and playground areas.

- **PARKING:**

We encourage parents to park in the designated parking lot belonging to the school. Parents should refrain from parking on Mill Road, designated Fire Routes, no standing zones and private property. The centre will not be responsible for any parking infraction costs or damage done to your vehicle.