

A Guide to Halton Regional Child Care Centres





**Your children's health and safety
is important to us.**

Please do not leave your children unattended in your car.

Your child's safety is very important to us.

We are a smoke-free environment.

Please do not smoke on the premises of the child care centre.

(Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2005)

We promote idle-free parking

Please turn off your car.

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About our child care centres

Halton Region operates three child care centres that offer care for:

- toddlers 18 months to 2.5 years of age
- preschoolers 2.5 years of age to school age
- children 18 months to school age with special needs in our inclusive programs

Locations

Maple Avenue Regional Child Care Centre

65 Maple Avenue, Georgetown

Margaret Drive Regional Child Care Centre

344 Margaret Drive, Oakville

Sedgewick Crescent Regional Child Care Centre

1256 Sedgewick Crescent, Oakville

For more information or to arrange a tour, contact Halton Region and ask for the Halton Regional child care centre closest to you.

All centres are licensed by the Ontario Ministry of Education.

Waiting list

Halton Region maintains a waiting list for the three child care centres. Please note there is no fee charged to be placed on our waiting list. When a child care space becomes available the centre supervisor reviews the waiting list, looking first for families who have been placed on a priority list, then using chronological order to offer a space. An example of a priority space may be a sibling of a child who is already receiving care at the centre. Please speak to the centre supervisor about placing your child on the waiting list or to check your status on the list.

Hours of operation

We are open Monday to Friday from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. and closed on the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Family Day
- Good Friday
- Victoria Day
- Canada Day
- Civic Holiday
- Labour Day
- Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day
- Boxing Day

There is no reduction in fees for these days.

Staff, volunteer and student information

All early childhood educators are Registered Early Childhood Educators with the College of Early Childhood Educators (CECE). The CECE mandate is to protect the public's interest and ensure the quality and standards of practice of early childhood educators. Educators must hold a current membership with the College and it must be renewed annually.

Staff are trained and certified:

- every three years in standard first aid;
- annually for child CPR; and
- to use an auto-injector in the event of severe allergic reactions.

Local community college and high school students are placed in the centres for practical work experience. The centres also welcome volunteers. Prior to placement with us, all students and volunteers (19 years old and older), must have a current police records check, including a Police Vulnerable Sector Check.

- Staff supervises children according to the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* (CCEYA) standards which includes meeting staff/child ratios at all times.
- Placement students, volunteers, and resource consultants are not counted in staffing ratios in the child care centres.
- No child is supervised by a person less than 18 years of age.
- Upon approval from classroom educators students and volunteers may bring in additional activities for the program that enhance the children's learning and interests.

To learn more about CCEYA standards and staff/student ratios, visit earlyyears.edu.gov.on.ca.

Quality First

Our centres participate in Halton Region's Quality First initiative as we are committed to increasing the quality of care that we are able to offer to you and your family. This initiative supports Halton's early childhood programs to further develop the level of quality care and education provided to residents. To learn more, visit the Halton Resource Connection at thrc.ca.



Welcome

The goal of the Regional child care centres is to provide an enriched child care environment which will nurture and foster each child's development by providing the highest quality programs in an inclusive setting. Halton Region's child care centres honour and respect children's beliefs, culture, language and experiences acquired from their family and community.

We strive to provide the best environment to nurture and foster your child's development by working together—children, parents and staff.

Halton Region provides quality, licensed child care in accordance with Regional policies and the *Child Care Early Years Act, 2014*.

This handbook provides a summary of key information about Halton Region's child care centres. If you need more information or have questions or concerns, please speak to a child care centre supervisor or staff member.

Vision

To support the development of healthy children and provide a safe, healthy and caring community in which they can grow, learn and meet their full potential.

Our values

We value the involvement of parents in all aspects of our program. As parents, you know your child's strength and abilities better than anyone. Working together, we can build an environment that will help your child grow and learn. This "family-centred" approach is followed in all Regional child care centres.

Your child's health and well-being

Children's health and well-being are fostered both inside the child care centre and outdoors. Regional educators create areas where children can be both exuberant in play and quiet or reflective. Children's individual needs for rest and play are considered and respected throughout the course of the day.

Children are offered freshly prepared meals and snacks that exceed the recommendations in Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide, while

preferences and food allergies are carefully considered during food preparation. Educators continually monitor and document the health and well-being of children attending our centres and immediately communicate any concerns with families.

Building positive relationships

Building positive relationships with caring and trusting adults is an important step in a child's social and emotional development. Through positive relationships with adults, children develop social and emotional skills. These skills develop over time and children eventually learn to:

- make friends;
- show anger in a healthy way;
- listen to others;
- understand others' feelings;
- express their opinions;
- resolve conflicts in a positive way;
- follow rules; and
- wait patiently.

Inclusion Services

Programming at our Regional child care centres is open to all children in our community. We offer Inclusion Services to children with special needs from 18 months old to school age.

Children are included in all activities to provide an opportunity for them to have social interactions and develop new skills and abilities.

We believe all children and families have the right to receive services that are inclusive and that they also have the right to be cared for in environments within their own community.

Resource consultants work with parents, children, classroom educators and other professionals to support goals which include:

- increasing awareness of community resources;
- increasing social, emotional and physical skills;
- successful transition to junior kindergarten;
- increased community acceptance of all children; and
- partnerships with community agencies and child care settings.



Play-based emergent curriculum

Play-based emergent curriculum is used in all of our centres. Emergent curriculum is a way of planning activities based on children's interests and passions. A growing body of research proves that every skill important to school success is enhanced by play.

Learning occurs both indoors and outdoors where children can explore, play and learn. Educators promote children's overall health and well-being by ensuring they have opportunities each day to connect with the natural world in our playgrounds and in our community.

To support the development of children in our centres, our educators use:

- the Ontario Ministry of Education's *How Does Learning Happen?* – a professional learning resource that guides licensed child care programs; and
- curriculum and program development that support Ontario's *Child Care Early Years Act, 2014*.



Planning curriculum based on your child's experiences at the centre

Educators capture children's interests, learning and development through visible records known as curriculum documentation (for example, written notes, photographs, videos and children's work). Documentation displayed in classrooms and throughout the child care centre captures or shows the learning process and makes it visible for educators, families and children.



These visual cues allow educators, parents and children to discuss, reflect and think about what is happening from many points of view, and to make choices about the best strategies to adopt for a child. Through observation, discussion, thinking and reflection with children and families, child care centres can effectively plan curriculum.

Key concepts learned through play

Children learn best when their interests and curiosity are captured.

- Children develop the **ability to use their imaginations to represent objects, people and ideas**. Pretend play and make-believe situations helps to develop **language skills**.
- Through play with blocks, clay, sand, water and other materials, children develop **cognitive or thinking skills**. They begin to learn scientific concepts such as **cause and effect**, and **early math skills** such as quantity, sorting and ordering items, and practice ideas for **solving problems**.
- As children interact with each other, negotiating the sharing of materials or planning pretend play, they learn important concepts and skills, like **cooperation, supporting one's own ideas, listening to others, handling frustration, and understanding the emotions of others**.

Outdoor play

Outdoor play is an important part of our program. Children are born to move and learn from being physically active in outdoor play where they can shout, jump, roll and stretch.

Young children also learn and develop their senses by having many different outdoor experiences, including:

- seeing (animals, birds, butterflies and other insects);
- hearing (birds singing, dogs barking);



- smelling (e.g., flowers and even the rain-soaked ground);
- touching (perhaps a fuzzy caterpillar or the bark of a tree); and
- tasting (e.g., strawberries or herbs from their edible gardens).

Dress for the weather

At Halton Regional child care centres, children play outside for two hours each day during all seasons, so please dress your child properly for that day's weather conditions. During extreme weather alerts, including heat, air quality and cold alerts, children will not participate in outdoor activities and an alternate indoor program will be arranged.



Learning about our community

Our early childhood educators take groups of children on exciting field trips, either by walking or taking a bus into the community. The term “field trip” includes a variety of opportunities for your child to build upon their learning. Each centre organizes special activities and field trips throughout the year. Special activities or field trips might include:

- interesting visitors who come to share their knowledge (for example, parents, firefighters, police officers);
- trips to the Butterfly Conservatory, the zoo or a museum; and
- visits to local stores, the bakery, the pet store, library or the humane society.

Parents will be informed ahead of time and are welcome to participate.

Community walks are particularly encouraged where children can learn a lot about nature and their community – everything from flowers, textures and animals to the change of seasons, buildings, people and road safety.

If you do not want your child to participate in a field trip, and there is no staff member remaining behind to watch your child, it is your responsibility to arrange for child care during the field trip. If only one class is involved in the field trip and your child can be accommodated in the other classroom, we will be happy to assist, but this is only possible if we are able to maintain the appropriate staff to child ratios.

Helping children and their families achieve goals

Educators recognize that child development and behaviours change and they accept and respect those differences. Specialists and consultants who support children, families and staff are invited into the child care centres in order to support and change the classroom and playground to fit each child. Staff members connect with professionals from community programs to ensure services are offered to families to assist them in reaching their goals.

Halton's Regional educators are expected to develop a continuous professional learning plan. Our employees have access to the training opportunities necessary to provide inclusive, high quality play-based emergent curriculum. Educators are encouraged to pause, be reflective and document a child's ongoing learning and development. Regional staff members are given time to have group discussions using the Ontario Ministry of Education's "How Does Learning Happen?" learning resource. Staff exchange stories with other teachers and engage in meaningful conversations while reviewing the success of program plans.



Licensing

Our programs are licensed by the Ontario Ministry of Education under the *Child Care Early Years Act* (CCEYA) and are inspected every year to ensure that the requirements in the Act are met.

Staff to child ratios	
Toddlers (18 months to 2.5 years)	1 Early Childhood Educator for each group of 5 children
Preschoolers (2.5 to 3.8 years)	1 Early Childhood Educator for each group of 8

Serious occurrence reporting

As a licensed child care provider, Children's Services employees have the responsibility to report "serious occurrence" incidents to the Ontario Ministry of Education, Quality Assurance and Licensing within 24 hours of the incident.

Many factors contribute to a serious occurrence report, but it does not necessarily mean that an operator is not meeting licensing requirements, or that children are at risk. An example of a serious occurrence could be the unplanned disruption of water at the centre which could pose a risk to the health, safety or well-being of the children.

To support transparency (or openness) and access to information, a "Serious Occurrence Notification" form will be posted beside the license for 10 days following an incident. The posting provides families with a brief overview of what happened and what kind of follow-up will occur, while protecting the privacy of everyone involved.

The policy supports the government's commitment to increased transparency and access to information about licensed child care programs in Ontario.

Guiding child behaviour

Our goal is to promote positive self-esteem and decision-making in children by giving them choices and by setting appropriate limits. “Child guidance” is defined as methods for teaching and supporting children, as well as strategies for promoting appropriate behaviours and preventing/addressing inappropriate behaviours. A copy of the Child Guidance Procedures and Strategies policy is available upon request from the centre supervisor.

According to the Ontario Ministry of Education under the CCEYA, the following practices are prohibited:

- corporal punishment of a child (physical punishment);
- physical restraint of a child (confining a child to a high chair, care seat, stroller or other device) for the purpose of discipline or instead of supervision, unless the restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting themselves, or others, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk is over;
- deliberate use of harsh or degrading measures on the child that would humiliate the child or undermine his or her self-respect;
- depriving a child of basic needs including food, shelter, clothing or bedding;
- inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will;
- locking the exits of the child care centre premises for the purpose of confining the child; or
- using a locked or lockable room or structure to confine the child if he or she has been separated from other children.



Duty to report

Our staff is committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children. Staff has a legal responsibility and “duty to report” suspected cases of child abuse (including neglect and exploitation) as outlined in the *Child and Family Services Act*. Employees are trained to identify and promptly report suspected cases to the Children’s Aid Society.

Starting your child in our program

Prior to admission, each child admitted into our child care program requires

- a fully completed Application for Admission form;
- a record of immunization/vaccinations;
- complete individual health plans for medical conditions (for example, allergies);
- complete emergency contact cards so we can contact parents or an alternate in emergency situations; and
- additional permission forms (when necessary), for example, permission to apply sunscreen.

It is important that children are supervised by an adult at all times. When arriving at the centre, children must be brought into the room where staff will greet you and your child and their attendance will be taken.

Drop-off and pick-up procedure

Children are to be accompanied to and from the centre by a parent or guardian. If this is not possible, the centre must be notified before the child will be allowed to leave with another person. Picture identification will be checked by a staff member to make sure the person picking up your child is the person that you have identified.

The Halton Regional Child Care Centres do not have the legal right to deny a parent or authorized pick-up person access to his or her child if we have proper notification and written notice of release.

If parents have legal joint custody of their child, then the child may be released to either parent provided both names are listed on the registration form and the child care centre staff person is familiar with the individual.

If only one parent has legal custody of a child, a copy of the original letter or legal agreement is required to be on file and it must indicate the visitation schedule and any restrictions. This is required on or before the first day that your child attends the program.

Allergies/health policies

Our goal is to keep all children healthy at the child care centres. Despite our best efforts, illnesses do occur.

The centres are an **allergen reduced environment**. In an effort to reduce risk, we ask that you do not bring any outside food or drinks into the centres.

Protecting children who have life-threatening allergies or other medical conditions is a shared responsibility. Please inform the centre's supervisor if your child has any medical conditions, including asthma, allergies or has had a severe anaphylaxis reaction. You will be required to complete additional information regarding your child's health that includes necessary precautions, signs and symptoms, treatments and medication.

Anaphylactic allergies/medical conditions

Parents with children who have been diagnosed with an anaphylactic allergy or a medical condition must provide a detailed emergency plan for their child. The plan must be developed in consultation with a parent of the child and with any regulated health professional who is involved in the child's health care and who, in the parent's opinion, should be included in the consultation (e.g., family doctor). Parents must train a staff member or supervisor on their child's emergency plan. This person then becomes the designated trainer for all other employees, students and volunteers. It is important that you inform the centre if there are any changes to your child's health.

Illness

All illnesses, communicable diseases and/or infections must be reported to the supervisor immediately. Children may not come to the centre if they are ill. If your child becomes ill during the day, you will be contacted to pick him/her up. Your child may return when they are symptom-free and able to participate fully in the program, including outdoor play. Please contact the centre if your child is going to be absent due to illness.

Note: We partner with the Halton Region Health Department in the event of an outbreak. Procedures for exclusions will be communicated to parents and guardians as directed by the Health Department.

Medications

Staff may only give medication to children when a parent or guardian has provided written permission. Medication is only accepted in its original container and must be stored in a locked container at the centre. Please take home all medication once it is no longer needed. Non-prescription medications (for example, Tylenol) must be in a new, unopened, sealed container and accompanied by the receipt.

Family partnerships

Parents and caregivers know their children best. We rely on families to work side-by-side with us in order to better understand and respond to their children's individual needs. We encourage families and educators to exchange information regularly which can be done informally at drop-off or pick-up, or with phone calls or by email.

Your involvement in the program is very important. Please plan to attend our annual family barbeques and open houses and feel free to invite your extended family. Please spend time in the classrooms, reviewing documentation of children's work.

There are many other ways for you to participate, including:

- becoming a member of our Parent Advisory Group;
- visiting us whenever you can;
- participating in field trips, community walks or special events;
- sharing your interests and hobbies;
- contributing to our parent bulletin boards; and
- sharing your family background with us, for example, languages, traditions or customs, special events or your favourite family recipes.

Note: Parent-teacher interviews are scheduled annually, however interviews may be arranged at other times as requested by the parent, educator or supervisor.

Contacting parents in an emergency

It is important that the supervisor is able to contact you in an emergency. You must advise the centre of any change of address, telephone number(s), employment or emergency pick-up person.

Clothing and personal belongings

Please label all of your child's belongings. Labelling helps determine ownership of coats, boots, clothes, etc. The centre is not responsible for lost items. We request that each child has a complete change of clothes which is to be left at the centre. This clothing should include:

- underwear;
- socks; and
- clothing for all weather (for example, snow pants, rain boots).

Safety measures require that outdoor clothing does not have strings or ties which might create a hazard. In winter, scarves are not permitted. A neck roll is safe and non-hazardous.

Parental supports and education

Our centres offer a parenting program called the Positive Parenting Program (Triple P) (visit halton.ca/triplep) for parents/guardians of children one to four years of age. Children who grow up with positive parenting are likely to develop to their full potential and have good self-esteem. Triple P promotes good communication and strong relationships between parents and children. This approach to parenting helps parents promote their children's development and guide their children's behaviour in a constructive and caring way.

There are a variety of ways for parents to get the support and information they need. For more information, please speak with your centre's supervisor.

Child development

Do you have questions about your child's development, behaviour, speech/language or hearing?

ASK is a no-charge, no-appointment, 15-minute consultation where you can have all your questions about your child's development answered by community agency professionals. Please plan to attend one of these clinics. Your classroom educator can provide you with more information.



Gift policy

We appreciate that on special occasions many families choose to thank a staff member by giving them a gift. If you choose to do so, please note that staff may only accept a gift valued at less than 50 dollars.

Photographs and social media policy

If you are taking pictures of your child in a program, whether using a smartphone or regular camera, please ensure that the photos only include your child. To preserve all children's safety and privacy, do not post any other child's pictures on any social media site (including, but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or Pinterest) without explicit permission from that child's family.

From time to time, our child care centre staff use the centre's cameras and iPads to capture children's learning and development. Children's photographs will only be used for publicity and educational purposes when we have written permission from parents.

Payment of child care fees

Halton Regional child care centres use a pre-authorized payment system for child care fees. You are requested to sign paperwork to enable the withdrawal of child care fees from your bank account. **Your information remains confidential.**

You will be invoiced at the beginning of each month for the services you received during the previous month. You will have 10 days to review this invoice and by the middle of each month, the invoiced amount will be withdrawn from your account. If your account shows non-sufficient funds (NSF) twice in one calendar year, the Region may end your child care placement. A NSF fee will be charged each time the bank alerts our accountant that funds are unavailable.

Note: Discharge from the centre requires 10 working days written notice or payment of fees in-lieu.

Absenteeism and lateness

If your child is going to be absent, please call the centre by 9 a.m. **No reduction in fees is made for any absenteeism** (illness, vacation, etc.). If you are unable to pick up your child by 6 p.m., alternate pick-up arrangements must be made in order to meet the centre's time of closure.

If you arrive after 6 p.m. the centre supervisor will remind you in writing of our lateness policy. Families who are late more than three times may be given two weeks' notice of termination of placement at the centre.

Should you arrive more than half an hour after the centre's closing time (6 p.m.) with no notice from you to the centre and if we are unable to contact your alternates, Halton Children's Aid Society may be contacted.

Transportation

Transportation to and from the child care centre is the responsibility of parents/guardians.





Halton Regional Child Care Centres

690 Dorval Drive, Oakville, Ontario

Dial 311 or 905-825-6000 • 1-866-442-5866

Visit halton.ca



SCS-165273

halton.ca 311

