



## Parent Handbook

W.J. Griffis Children's Centre  
Montessori Preschool

717 John Street  
Thunder Bay, Ontario  
P7B 1Z7

## Hours of Operation

The Griffis Centre is open 12 months of the year – Monday to Friday 7:30 am – 5:30 pm

The Centre is closed on all of the statutory holidays, for the week that falls between Christmas and New Years Day, and for several days before Labour Day for professional activities

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## **Quotes by Dr. Maria Montessori:**

*“The most important period of life, is not the age of university studies, but the first period from birth to age six. For that is the time when man’s intelligence itself, his greatest implement, is being formed”*

*“The education of early childhood should be based entirely upon this principle: assist the natural development of the child”*

*“A child is an active learner who is attracted by the things in this world. He learns everything without knowing he is learning it, and in doing so, he passes little by little from the unconscious to the conscious.”*

*“Anyone who spends some time with these children notices there is a special secret, which enables children to carry out their practical activities with success. It is the precision, the exactness with which the acts must be performed.....Of itself, movement is something unrefined, but its value increases when one attempts to perfect it....When children experience pleasure not only from an activity leading towards a special goal, but also in carrying it out exactly in all its details, they open up a whole new area of education for themselves. In other words, preference should be given to an education in movement: practical activities are simply an external incentive to the educational process, they provide a motive and urge the child on to organize his movements”*

## **Introduction**

### **Welcome**

We would like to extend a warm welcome to you, as the parent or guardian of a child who will be joining us at the W.J. Griffis Children’s Centre Montessori Pre-school.

The W.J. Griffis Children’s Centre is a non-profit day care centre, operating under the auspices of Community Living Thunder Bay.

We are licensed by the Ministry of Education, under the Early Years Act for children 18 months to 6 years of age. Funding is allocated through the District Social Services Administration Board. Bambini Program for children 18 to 30 months. Casa Program for children 30 months to six years of age.

### **About Community Living Thunder Bay**

Community Living Thunder Bay provides services and supports to children and adults with intellectual disabilities.

Current services and supports are offered by CLTB for children, adults and their families in many areas: child care, Montessori pre-school programs, community living, social, leisure and education services, and supports for obtaining and maintaining employment.

Community Living Thunder Bay is a dynamic organization with a proud history. Serving the community of Thunder Bay since 1954, CLTB continues a legacy of striving for improvement, particularly in what it can offer to individuals and families.



### Program Statement and Philosophy

We, the staff of the W. J. Griffis Children’s Centre, are dedicated to providing all children with the opportunity for optimal growth and development in a Montessori-enhanced environment, and to develop a partnership with families, in a nurturing atmosphere.

As a further guide, the Ministry of Education’s ‘how does learning happen?’ provides a pedagogical approach to our practices and relationships.

“How does learning happen? is organized around four foundational conditions that are important for children to grow and flourish:

1. Belonging
2. Well-being
3. Engagement
4. Expression

These foundations, or ways of being, are a vision for all children’s future potential and a view of what they should experience each and every day. These four foundations apply regardless of age, ability, culture, language, geography, or setting.”

This will be demonstrated by:

- **a view of children as competent, capable, curious and rich in potential**
  - “the first educational influence upon a child should have as its object the guidance of the child along the way of independence” and “if teaching is to be effective with young children, it must assist them to advance on the way to independence”
  - Service to children deprives them of a sense of independence and accomplishment, and serves to view them as helpless and less capable
  - Children are guided to complete tasks, with independent dressing and undressing skills, with feeding themselves, pouring their drinks, selecting activities and returning them to their base, to express their needs, and communicate effectively
  - Children are assisted to develop problem-solving skills – gestures are used, usually without verbal guidance; this enables children to determine what the issue is and to make the appropriate changes or modifications to their actions

- A child is tasked with performing useful acts, and to refine his or her methods; this leads to self-control and self-reflection
  - A staff will observe a child, and what activities he or she show interest in – the teacher will then teach that specific lesson, and invite the child to continue or to put the activity away
  - Through constant observations, the teacher can assess when the child can be shown extensions to an activity
  - Mastery of a skill is when a child is able to correctly teach the activity to another child
  - Children act as peer models and peer mentors to the other children in the program
- **Promoting the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of the children**
    - Snacks and lunches will be home-made, with optimal nutrition
    - The cook posts 2 weeks of menus on the bulletin board, outside the kitchen, with emphasis on good nutrition, a balance in food and colour, and exposure to new foods and diverse recipes
    - Protein is served at both snacks, as well as at lunch
    - We have a reverse-osmosis water purifier, for daily consumption
    - Milk, water, herbal tea, homemade smoothies, and occasionally home-made hot chocolate are served – we do not serve juices
    - There is an emphasis on fresh fruit and vegetables, and protein alternatives
    - Health and safety regulations will be followed, maintained and reviewed
    - The Centre does not use televisions and computers in the classrooms
    - The activities in the room are a reflection of the Montessori educational philosophy; they are kept simply and beautifully pleasing
    - Loose parts are provided for the children to use their imagination and create something unique and special to them
    - Music class is offered once a week in the bambini room, and in the casas
    - Children follow their interests
    - The Griffis Centre will promote an environment of respect, grace and courtesy
    - The Montessori philosophy promotes child-led learning
  - **Supporting positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents, educators**
    - The use of gestures and/or respectful questions are used to guide behaviour and interactions with the children

- The staff will call attention to a child's action with the use of gestures first
  - This is a gentle and respectful method that encourages the child to come to their own conclusion as to what needs to happen next
  - The gestures can be:
    - An expression on the teacher's face; one of surprise, happiness, sadness, quizzical, etc.
    - Raised hands to cover the teacher's ears – to indicate that something is too loud
    - Two raised hands – to indicate a question – what needs to happen next? or what is happening?
    - An open hand gently pointing to an object, item, or person – ie. a chair that the child forgot to push into the table, or please sit here
  - The teachers, while at the child's level, will gently and quietly ask him or her a question, or a series of questions, so that the child can determine what it is they may need to do
  - We prefer to let the child solve the issue, rather than the teachers; but if a child is having difficulty, then the teacher may need to quietly present the answer or present the child with a choice
  - The child feels a sense of accomplishment, and of being competent, in determining an outcome or solving a difficult issue
- **Encouraging the children to interact and communicate in a positive way, and support their ability to self-regulate**
    - Children are given time to reflect on their choices and interactions, and to develop problem solving skills
    - Respect for self, others and the environment are promoted
    - Children are taught to slow their movements down, to use a quiet voice, to carry items with two hands, and to be deliberate in their movements
    - Social graces, courtesies, the use of please and thank you, waiting and saying 'excuse me' all demonstrate a level of respect towards others, and presents oneself as being respectful
    - Materials and items in the environment are to be handled carefully and deliberately in order to maintain them
    - Materials and activities are to be returned to the shelf or place of origin quietly, with two hands, and ready for the next child to use
    - Any spills or messes are to be cleaned by the child immediately after completion of the task

- **Fostering the children's exploration, play and enquiry**
  - The Griffis Centre promotes a prepared and aesthetically pleasing environment
  - The curriculum areas include practical life, sensorial, language, mathematics and culture
  - Furniture is child-sized, materials and activities are accessible
  - The teachers are knowledgeable in the Montessori educational philosophy
  
- **Providing child-initiated and adult-supported experiences**
  - Children follow their interests, and the teachers teach to that
  - Children are free to choose an activity on a shelf, use it as long as they like, and then return it to its correct spot
  - Children learn to respect that if an activity is on a work mat, then someone else is using it, and they will need to wait until it is back on the shelf
  - Many activities or materials are 'self-correcting' – meaning that it becomes apparent that one item of the activity does not fit properly, or does not continue the pattern, etc. – a child is able to correct themselves, without requiring adult assistance
  - Mastery of a skill occurs when a child is able to spend a length of time on a particular activity
  
- **Planning for and creating positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development will be supported**
  - Children follow their own interests, and choose their own activities
  - Children work on an individual basis – children seek permission from each other before joining another's activity
  - The children are free to choose where they would like to work – on the floor, at an individual table, or at a group table
  
- **Incorporating indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play, rest and quiet time, into the day, and giving consideration to the individual needs of the children attending the program**
  - Children will go outdoors twice per day, for a minimum of 2 hours, weather permitting
  - A nature curriculum, outdoors, follows the rhythm of the seasons, with an emphasis on 'loose parts' play - this fosters creativity, the use of imagination, and co-operative play ie. Stumps and logs have been moved by children to create a teeter-totter
  - Active play can be done in the halls, during inclement weather – ie. Scooters, obstacle course, stepping stones, etc.

- Children will have an opportunity to rest their bodies with sleep or quiet time on a mat or a cot, or be involved in quiet activities after lunch or as needed – quiet activities are available for children during quiet time, for those children choosing not to sleep
  - Washrooms are accessible at all times, for the children
  - The Griffis Centre follows the rhythm of the seasons, indoors and outdoors
  - We celebrate the changes in the seasons and prepare for the next, with materials and activities, with displays on the bulletin board, and is reflected in seasonal menus
  - A subdued reflection is given to the traditional celebrations and holidays
  - Decorations in the rooms are kept simplistic and subdued, and are reflective of the seasons
  - A nature curriculum has been developed to observe and explore the changing seasons
  - Gardening contributes to a major focus for both the children and the staff – late winter, seedlings are begun in the classrooms – in the spring, the soil is enriched with sheep manure, and the beds are prepared in the garden – late spring, the garden is planted – during the summer, children and staff monitor the growth - late summer and early fall, we consume what we have grown – fall time, we clean out the gardens, and prepare them for
  - the winter
- **Fostering the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children**
    - Staff will greet families daily
    - Daily documentation will be made available for families to be aware of the activities of the day
    - Bulletin boards, outside each classroom, and kitchen, provide information, documentation and photographs of children working or involved with activities
    - Parent-teacher conferences are held in the fall and spring – this provides an opportunity for more in-depth discussions on each child
    - Celebrations with families may take the form of a spring tea, a June family gathering and potluck, a fall family gathering, and a holiday tea
    - Families are welcome to spend time in the programs, and to participate in family activities through-out the year
  - **Involve local community partners and allow those partners to support the children, their families, and staff**
    - Community partners do come into the Centre to provide screening, assessments, direct therapy, transitional planning, specialized programs, and individual education plans

- Students from various educational programs have placements at the Centre, and support from faculty
- The Ministry of Education and the Thunder Bay District Social Services Administration Board staff do come through the Centre for tours or visits

This program statement is a living document, and will be reviewed annually, and recorded in the Griffis policy binder.

## **Core Values**

- We value quality care and education that enables children to reach their full potential, in a safe and nurturing environment
- We value unconditional compassion for all people as unique individuals, and for all circumstances.
- We value the respect for children, their families and colleagues, and desire it in return
- We value the commitment it takes to establish a growing trust among the team, and the children and families that we support. Trust is the basis for establishing a healthy and supportive relationship.
- We value the community as an important resource.

## **Montessori Philosophy and Principles**

We believe:

- That the first six years of growth are the most important in a child's life – a child initially begins learning with an unconscious, absorbent mind and gradually develops to the conscious level of learning
- That all children learn and progress through observable developmental stages
- That the observant teacher will facilitate learning through a prepared environment which inspires children to develop confidence, independence, and essential social skills in a Montessori enriched atmosphere
- That the parent's role is essential in nurturing their child's needs
- That the parents, child and the teachers form a partnership that involves mutual trust and respect, nurtures the child's love of learning, and sense of personal and social responsibility.

## **Home/Centre Partnership:**

By embracing the Montessori philosophy at home, you build a bridge between home and Centre.

The home and Centre partnership is critical to the success of your child's learning experience.

The generalization of newly acquired skills, the development of self-discipline and self-esteem are strongly supported when Montessori practices are encouraged both at home and school.

Together, we can make the most of your child's Montessori experience

## **Promoting Independence**

- encourage your child to remove his/her outdoor clothing upon arrival and hang it on a hook
- encourage your child to put on their own indoor shoes
- encourage self-care skills – independent eating, dressing/un-dressing, hygiene
- encourage children to tidy up after themselves

Be sure your child is received, by a staff member before you leave the Centre, and signed in on the attendance sheet.

Be sure to inform the staff member if special care is required for that day.

Please notify the Centre daily of any absenteeism.

Please make alternate arrangements for your child, if he or she is not feeling well, and will be unable to participate in all aspects of the program..

Please provide your child with extra clothing (both for indoors and seasonally-appropriate outdoors), as children's work can be messy.

We encourage you to label all clothes/footwear.

Ensure that your child is dressed in casual clothes, when attending the Centre, so as not to discourage him or her from fully participating in the program. (Pouring activities, art, outdoor exploration)

## **Observation**

Daily conversation with parents to share information about children is a very important part of the program. This communication, between parents and the child's teacher, helps to build a mutual understanding of children's development and growth.

**Parents are encouraged to observe and participate in their child's care and education.**

Regularly documented observations are done by staff on individual children and on the group as a whole. These observations are used to assess the effectiveness of the work environment and curriculum, to evaluate group dynamics and teaching strategies.

Changes are then made to reflect the needs and strengths of the group, and of individual children.

The program teachers meet regularly to discuss their observations, set goals for the group and individual children, and plan their curriculum based on these goals.

Resource Teachers meet with the staff to assist with development and adaptation of curriculum, environment and materials.

## **Parental Involvement**

We feel that communication between parents and staff/educators is essential to the well-being and development of the child.

We, therefore, encourage phone calls and written messages from you regarding your child.

You are most welcome to come to the Centre to observe programming or discuss ideas and concerns with the staff/educators whenever possible.

Individual meetings may also be set up with staff when requested. A close relationship with the entire family is very important.

Parent Information Night is held every fall to outline the centre's direction for the year.

Parent-Teacher Conferences are held twice yearly. These conferences allow parents and teachers to meet in a relaxed setting to share information that will assist both in developing relationships and in setting appropriate goals for the children.

Various social or educational events are planned throughout the year. We hope parents will benefit from a feeling of support for their role as a parent.

Our goal is to include parents in our Centre as much as possible.

## **Funding and User Fees**

W.J. Griffis receives funding from MCFCS in the way of Wage Enhancement Grants and Subsidized Child Care Spaces.

Parent fees are reviewed yearly.

## **Insurance**

Our Insurance is held with Hunter, Keilty, Muntz and Beatty.

## **Policies and Procedures**

### **Admission Policy**

A meeting or tour will be arranged to familiarize you and your child with the surroundings, answer questions and complete admission forms, prior to enrollment.

We would encourage short visits to the center before your child's start date; the schedule to be arranged between the Supervisor and parent/guardians.

Once your child has started in the program, you are welcome to stay with your child at the beginning of the day in order to reassure him/her and minimize fears (until you and your child become more comfortable).

### **Discharge Policy:**

Written notice of permanent withdrawal of the child must be given two weeks in advance. If notice is not received, full program fees will be charged for a two week period.

A permanent space cannot be guaranteed if you wish to temporarily withdraw your child. In this event, your child will be placed on a waiting list.

### **Discontinuation of Service Policy:**

In the event that a family does not adhere to the policies and procedures of the centre, the centre may choose to discontinue service.

Other criteria for discontinuation of services are as follows:

- child is no longer attending the centre
- child reaches age of 6 years
- family's/ guardian's belief and philosophy conflicts with centre's philosophy and practices.

### **Waitlists**

The centre maintains a waitlist for services.

Full time request will have priority over part time requests.

A minimum of two days per week is mandatory upon registration.

### **POLICY**

The W. J. Griffis Children's Centre will have a clear waitlist policy to secure enrolment of children to the program.

### **PROCEDURE**

The supervisor will only take names of children from the Thunder Bay Childcare Registry to secure enrolment in the Griffis program. All families will be informed to create an account on the registry. There will be no fees for a family to be on the W. J. Griffis Children's Centre waitlist. Internal families, that is families who already have one child attending the program, will have preference over other families. This will assist families to drop off and pick up their Children at only one location.

Filters, on the registry, may be applied to suit the needs and viability of the program. These filters are:

- Special needs
- Full day or half day
- Five days a week or part time attendance
- Twelve months of the year or summer only
- Subsidized or full fee

Families may inquire with the manager current place on waitlist by email.

### **Arrival and Pick Up Times**

**Children are to arrive at the centre by 9:00 am to ensure access to the full work period.**

Parents must ensure that their child is in the care of the staff before they leave the building. Parents or designate are asked to report to a staff member when the child is arriving or leaving the Centre

The Centre's hours are from 7:30 am to 5:30 pm, Monday to Friday. Late fees may be applied, when necessary.

### **IMPORTANT:**

Please notify the Centre, if a change will occur around pick-up times or person(s).

**It is imperative that you stick to your arrival and departure times. Failure to do so will bring us over legally mandated staff/child ratios.**

### **Parents or Designate Under the Influence**

If in the staff's opinion, the pick up person (parent/guardian or delegate) is not capable of caring for the child(ren), e.g. intoxicated, incoherent or under the influence of drugs, the staff will offer to call a taxi and contact the designate person(s) listed in the child's file. If the pick up person still insists on taking the child(ren) with them, then the staff person must, by law, notify the proper authorities (i.e., other designate, Supervisor, police or Children's Aid).

### **Financial Policy**

#### **Fee Collection**

**Fee collection is based on enrollment, not attendance.**

This requires that you pay for the days you have enrolled your child/ren, regardless of whether you choose to use these days or not.

A daily attendance register is kept. This information is sent to Community Living Thunder Bay by the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month.

New families will be required to pay a fee of \$50.00 per child upon initial registration.

Statements will be included in the next billing for any unpaid balance. Parents are advised to consult with the Centre's Supervisor regarding any problems with the fee calculation charts or making payments.

Invoices can be paid by credit or debit card at the Center or at the Dease street office. Cheques are to be made out to:  
**Community Living Thunder Bay**

**Temporary/Short-Term Withdrawal Policy**

Written notice of temporary/short-term withdrawal must be given to the Supervisor 2 weeks prior to an anticipated withdrawal. If notice is not received, the family will be liable for full program fees for 2 weeks after the withdrawal their child.

Families, who temporarily withdraw from the Centre for a short-term period and do not pay a holding retainer prior to leaving, will not be guaranteed a space upon the requested date of return. In such cases, the child's name will be placed at the bottom of the waiting list.

**Hospitalization**

In the event that your child is hospitalized, your fees will be reimbursed when a doctor's note is provided.

**Subsidized Child Care Spaces**

Ontario Works Child Care Assistance is used to purchase child care for those most in need. Child care services are provided for parents who are participating in approved activities, i.e., working, attending school, attending professional services or receiving social counseling.

If you would like to be assessed for a subsidized space, please speak to the Supervisor at the Centre or call Intake at Ontario Works at 766-2107.

A needs assessment is completed before the child starts with the Centre.

Policies will be discussed upon registration.

**Hours and Statutory Holidays**

The Centre operates from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Our Statutory Holidays include:

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

In addition, we close for a period of several days before school starts in September, for the purpose of staff professional development.

The Centre typically closes between Christmas and New Years. The closure is at the discretion of the supervisor, and will be looked at annually. Families will then be informed.

Parents must make alternate arrangements for child care when the Centre is closed.

## **Dietary Needs and Allergies**

**The W.J. Griffis Children's Centre is a nut-safe children's center. Allergies related to nut products can be fatal; therefore we do not use any products which contain peanuts or any other type of nut.**

**We request that parents, who bring in food from home for their children, share in our concern about nut allergies and do not bring food containing nuts or nut products.**

Ensure that you complete the allergies information on your child's application for enrolment, and provide as much information as possible.

- Centre staff needs to be informed of any allergies/sensitivities/dietary needs of children enrolled in the programs.
- Parents are required to meet with the W.J. Griffis Children's Centre cook if special dietary needs are required.
- Children's special dietary needs and allergies will be posted in the main kitchen and in the cooking/eating areas of all programs.
- Peanut or nut products are not permitted in the Centre.
- Weekly menus will be posted outside the kitchen.

### **Meals**

Snacks are served mid-morning and mid-afternoon. They consist of juice, milk, water, fruit, vegetables and other nutritious foods.

The Day Nurseries Act requires that lunch consists of a full course meal which meets Canada's Food Guide Nutritional standards. Menus are posted in the Centre for the current and following week. To ensure the safety and health of children with allergies, parents are required to inform staff of any dietary needs of their child. If special food is required, it is the parent's responsibility to provide these items. Parents are requested not to send gum, candies or sweets etc. with their child.

We have developed the following guiding principles for an ecological kitchen:

- focus on whole grains, fruits and vegetables
- focus on 'slow foods'
- favour regional, seasonal produce
- buy organic where possible
- reduce garbage by buying in bulk and option for minimally packaged goods
- eliminate waste by menu planning and creative recycling of leftovers
- use of eco-friendly cleaning products
- use of reverse-osmosis purified water for consumption in the Griffis building



## DAILY MENU

\*We observe cultural and religious preferences

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Morning Snack 8:15 – 9:15	Rice Krispie cereal  Blueberries	Cinnamon toast Cheese slices bananas	Apple & cinnamon oatmeal  raisins	Scrambled eggs Toast peaches	Fruit yogurt  granola
Lunch 11:30 – 12:30 for bambini and casa	Chicken, broccoli and rice casserole  carrots	Beef chili  cornbread	Hamburger Soup Grilled cheese sandwiches cucumbers	Turkey & stuffing Mashed potatoes & gravy Carrots Cranberry sauce	Fish sticks  Fries  Mixed veggies
Fruit:	apples	oranges	melon	pears	oranges
Afternoon Snack 2:30 – 3:15	Blueberry cake  melon	Fruit tray  arrowroots	Pudding  bananas	Rice cakes  Jam apples	Cheese, crackers pickles
Substitutions (when required)		Soy cheese slices	Grilled soy cheese sandwiches		Dairy free yogurt Soy cheese
<b>Late day snack (5:00) – crackers and water</b>					

To drink: milk and purified water are provided with both snacks and with lunch  
Herbal tea and home-made smoothies are provided occasionally

All baking home made using vegan margarine and rice milk.  
Whole wheat bread from Current River Bakery.

Changes may occur to the posted menu to reflect the following:

- Availability of ordered produce and groceries
- Ripeness of produce
- Responsible use of food

## **Child Guidance**

At W.J. Griffis Centre, we believe there are three basic limits set to help define appropriate behavior.

These limits are:

- You must respect yourself. You cannot hurt yourself.
- You must respect others. You cannot hurt others.
- You must respect your environment. You cannot harm or damage the physical environment.

These limits are consistently reinforced by staff when guiding the behavior of the children at the Centre in a positive way. Positive guidance techniques are utilized by all staff. By using such techniques, the staff is able to stop or redirect inappropriate behaviors displayed by the children. Furthermore, positive guidance techniques build a child's internal control while keeping their self-esteem intact. Punishment breaks down a child's self-worth, and is not permitted at any Child Care Facility.

According to the standards and guideline set forth in the Day Nurseries Act (DN-0802-06), punishment entails:

- corporal or emotional punishment
- deliberate, harsh, or degrading measures used on a child that would humiliate a child or undermine a child's self-respect

It is encouraged that parent(s) or guardian(s) work together with staff when making guidance decisions for their child. Consistency at the Centre, as well as at home, is the key to positive behavioral management.

In the event that a child enrolled at W.J. Griffis Centre displays inappropriate behavior which cannot be regulated, parent(s) or guardian(s) will be notified. Upon notification, a meeting will be set up between the parent(s) or guardian(s) and the Supervisor and staff in order to discuss these behaviors and attempt to formulate some appropriate solutions which will benefit the child.

## **Illness Policy**

### **Exclusion Guidelines**

The W.J. Griffis Children's Centre will use the following guidelines, from the Thunder Bay Health Unit Day Care Manual, in order to determine if a child should not attend the Centre:

Certain symptoms in children may suggest the presence of a communicable disease. Children who have the following symptoms should be excluded from the child care setting until:

1. A physician has certified the symptoms are not associated with an infectious agent or they are no longer a threat to the health of other children at the Centre, or;
2. The symptoms have subsided.

### **FEVER**

Auxiliary temperature 38 or higher, especially if accompanied by other symptoms such as vomiting, sore throat, diarrhea, headache and stiff neck, or undiagnosed rash, is cause for concern. Parents will be informed of their child's illness.

### **RESPIRATORY SYMPTOMS**

Difficult or rapid breathing or severe coughing. The child makes a high-pitched croupy or whooping sound after he/she coughs. The child is unable to lie comfortably due to continuous coughing.

### **EYE AND/OR NOSE DRAINAGE**

Thick mucus or pus draining from the eye and/or nose.

### SORE THROAT

Sore throat, especially when fever or swollen glands in the neck are present.

### SKIN PROBLEMS

Skin rashes which are undiagnosed or contagious may be subject to exclusion. This may include infected sores, sores with crusty, yellow or green drainage which cannot be covered by clothing or bandages.

### HEAD LICE

Head Lice is a problem with infestation ~ it is communicable.

Transmission can occur through direct physical contact, as well as contact through shared items as hats, blankets, stuffed animals, clothing, upholstered items, etc. In order to keep an infestation to a minimum, **the Griffis Centre has a “no nit” policy. If a child is found to have nits, then the parent/guardian will be called to take the child home.** Once the proper treatment has been done and the nits have been removed, then the child can return to the Centre. Please report to a staff member so that the child can be checked for nits before leaving the child in care. If any nits are found, the child will have to be excluded until all of the nits are removed. Entry back into the Centre is dependant on “no nits.” Hopefully this will help eradicate head lice in an expedient fashion, and cause as little difficulty as possible in a difficult situation. Please feel free to ask for assistance or clarification if required.

### APPEARANCE AND/OR BEHAVIOR

Child looks or acts differently. Unusually pale, lacking appetite, confused, irritable, difficult to awaken.

### UNUSUAL COLOUR

Eyes or skin - yellow (jaundice). Stool - gray or white. Urine - dark, tea coloured.

If a child displays the above symptoms while at the Centre, the Supervisor or a staff person will contact the parent(s) so the child may be picked up from the Centre as soon as possible.

**If parent(s) are unable to be reached, the designated emergency contacts will be notified to pick up the child. This is for your own child’s well-being and the protection of others.**

If a child is diagnosed with a contagious disease, he/she cannot attend W.J. Griffis Centre until a doctor’s note confirms that the child is no longer contagious and is able to return to the Child Development Centre. Contagious diseases include, but are not exclusive to:

- Measles
- mumps
- chicken pox ( scabs need to be dried up in order to return to the centre)
- gastroenteritis
- impetigo
- conjunctivitis
- thrush
- bronchitis
- respiratory infections
- pneumonia

If your child is ill, it is recommended that alternate care be found until he/she is feeling better.

**Exclusion may occur based on several factors:**

- child's inability to participate fully in activities of the program
- child presents with new symptoms
- protection of others in spreading illness

The Supervisor is responsible for notifying parents if a contagious disease has been reported among the children of the Centre. Notification will appear in each of the rooms.

**If your child is absent from the Centre due to illness, it is your responsibility to contact the program in the morning. Parents are still required to pay for the space although your child may not be attending due to illness. Please ensure back-up child care arrangements are available for ill children.**

**Medication Administration Policy**

Ontario Regulation 137/15 ss. 40 (1) (2)

- 1) Where a licensee agrees to the administration of drugs or medications, the licensee shall ensure that,
  - a) A written procedure is established for
    - i. The administration of any drug or medication to a child receiving child care
    - ii. The keeping or records with respect to the administration of drugs and medications, including those records required under the Controlled drugs and substances act
  - b) All drugs and medication on the premises of a child care centre operated by the licensee are:
    - i. Stored in accordance with the instructions on the label
    - ii. Administered in accordance with the instructions on the label and the authorization received under clause (d)
    - iii. Inaccessible at all times to children, and
    - iv. In the case of a child care centre, kept in a locked container
  - c) One person in each child care centre operated by the licensee is in charge of all drugs and medication and that all drugs and medications are dealt with by that person or a person designated by that person in accordance with the procedures established under clause (a).
  - d) A drug or medication is administered to a child only where a parent of the child gives written authorization for the administration of the drug or medication and that included with the authorization is a schedule that sets out the times the drug or medication is to be given and amounts to be administered, and
  - e) A drug or medication is administered to a child only from the original container as supplied by a pharmacist and that the container or package is clearly labelled with the child's name, the name of the drug or medication, the dosage of the drug or medication, the date of purchase and expiration, if applicable and instructions for storage and administration.
- 2) Despite subclauses (1) (b) (iii) and (iv) and clause (1) (c), the licensee may permit a child to carry his or her own asthma medication or emergency allergy medication in accordance with the procedures established under clause (1) (a)

**Policy**

It is the policy of the W. J. Griffis Centre that the staff will administer the correct drug or medication to the correct child at the established time.

## Procedure

Parents are to inform the staff if their child is using any special medication.

Parents are to fill in the medication form that is supplied to them by the staff or supervisor, and return it to the staff person. If your child is transported to the program by bus, and has medication in their bag, please indicate to the staff that medication is enclosed.

All medication should be given to the staff member directly, in its original container, bearing the original label with legible information stating:

- Prescription number
- Name of drug or medication
- Dosage and quantity of drug
- Expiration date
- Directions for use
- Child's name and physician's name
- Date of issue
- Name and phone number of pharmacy
- Instructions for storage

The child's teacher will be responsible for administering the medication.

Staff administering medication, or witnessing self-administration by a child, will remain with the child until the medication has been taken.

When liquid medications are administered, the quantity prescribed shall be measured using proper apparatus. (ie. calibrated dropper or syringe)

Half-tablet dosage must be prepared by the parent, guardian or pharmacy.

### Storage of Medications:

Medications being administered by the child's teacher shall be kept in a locked cupboard in the child's classroom, or in a locked container in the refrigerator.

Creams, asthma inhalers and epi-pens are to be kept in the child's classroom and accessible.

School-age children (JK and SK age) can keep the epi-pen on their person if so allowed by the parent.

Left-over medication or expired medication is to be returned in the original container to the parent or guardian.

### Medication Forms:

Parents/ Guardians are to complete all aspects of the medication forms, with a start date and an end date, and their signature authorizing the staff to administer the medication.

If an older child is authorized by the parent to self-administer, then this will be stated on the medication form, and noted that the staff person will witness the self-administration.

The staff person will then enter the witnessed self-administration on the medication form.

When the medication is complete, then the medication form will be put into the child's file, and stored in the main filing cabinet in the supervisor's office.

### Administration of Narcotics:

The narcotic is to be directly passed from the parent, guardian, or caregiver to the staff, in its original container with enough medication for the day.

When a narcotic drug is administered to the child, the amount given will be subtracted from the original amount written on the form, and the number of remaining tablets will be recorded.

Half-tablet dosage must be prepared by the parent, guardian or pharmacy.

The drug is to be given to the parent, guardian, or caregiver at the end of the day.

When receiving or returning the narcotic to the parent or guardian, one staff member must count the amount of tablets in the original container. All medications need to be directly passed from the staff to the parent, guardian or caregiver.

## Medical/ Health/ Anaphylaxis Policies

### Policy

It is the policy of the W. J. Griffis Centre to have a medical or health plan for children requiring prescribed supports or interventions, while in attendance at the Centre. Plans involving medical or health procedures will be developed and reviewed by the family, in conjunction with the appropriate staff members and in consultation with a medical practitioner, when necessary.

### Procedure

The medical or health plan will include the following:

- Diagnosis
- Detailed description of equipment or materials supplied by the family
- Course of action
- Administration times
- Agreed upon location for administration
- Who can administer
- Amounts/ dosage
- Protocol before and after prescribed plan
- Possible side-effects
- Emergency plan or procedure
- Duration of plan
- Parent/ guardian signature
- Medical practitioner, if appropriate

The plan will be in effect for one year, at the maximum; at which time, a new medical/ health plan will be developed.

For children who are able to self-administer, it is the policy of the Griffis staff to provide adult supervision during the treatment or procedure. Documentation will be completed by the appropriate staff member, and kept in a location that can maintain confidentiality.

In circumstances where all staff need to be aware of life-threatening symptoms or side effects, the medical/health plan will be posted and made accessible only to staff members. Emergency contingencies will be provided in the plan, if necessary.

Training of appropriated staff for procedures used in a medical/ health plan will be the responsibility of the parent or guardian.

First aid, and children's CPR training is a requirement of employment with the Griffis Centre and must be maintained regularly. Epi-pen training can be taught by the parent or guardian, as well as during first aid training by a certified trainer.

All necessary materials or equipment will be supplied by the parent or guardian. Regular maintenance will also be the responsibility of the family.

Medical professional or parent signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **W. J. GRIFFIS CHILDREN'S CENTRE**

*This form must be completed by the parent of a child who is requesting that a drug or medication be administered during hours that the child receives child care, in accordance with the child care centre's medication administration policy and procedures.*

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**Child's Full Name:**

Child's Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy):

Date Authorization Form Completed (dd/mm/yyyy):

Date Authorization Form Updated (dd/mm/yyyy):

<b>Name of Drug or Medication</b> (as per the original container label):	
<b>Date of Purchase or Date Dispensed:</b> (dd/mm/yyyy)	
<b>Expiry Date:</b> (dd/mm/yyyy)	
<b>Authorization Start Date:</b> (dd/mm/yyyy)	
<b>Authorization End Date:</b> (dd/mm/yyyy or ongoing)	

**Method of Medication Administration (initial below)**

Child care centre staff are to administer the drug or medication to my child.

**Authorization for Child to Carry Emergency Allergy Medication**

I authorize my child to carry their own asthma medication.

Not applicable (this authorization is not for asthma medication).

**Medication Administration Schedule**

The drug or medication needs to be administered according to the following schedule:

Day(s) of the Week	Time(s) of the Day / Intervals	Amount/Dosage	Additional Information (where applicable)

Parent/Guardian Authorization Statement:

I hereby authorize the person in charge of drugs or medications at W. J. Griffis Centre to administer the above-named drug or medication to my child and handle the drug or medication in accordance with the procedures I have provided on this form.

I understand that expired drugs or medications will not be administered to my child at any time in accordance with the child care centre's medication administration policy.

I understand that staff at **W. J. Griffis Centre** are not medically trained to administer drugs and medications.

<b>Print name:</b>	<b>Relationship to Child:</b>
<b>Signature:</b>	<b>Date Signed:</b> (dd/mm/yyyy)

Received By:

<b>Print name:</b>	<b>Role at Child Care Centre:</b>
<b>Signature:</b>	<b>Date Signed:</b> (dd/mm/yyyy)

For Child Care Centre Use Only  
Location medication will be stored:

For Office Use Only  
Date Drugs/Medication Returned to Parent / Pharmacy (dd/mm/yyyy):

## **Medical / Health / Anaphylaxis Plans**

It is the policy of the Griffis Centre to have a medical or health plan for children requiring prescribed supports or interventions, while in attendance at the centre. Plans involving medical or health procedures will be developed and reviewed by the family, in conjunction with the appropriate staff member(s) and in consultation with the family physician, when necessary.

The medical or health plan will include the following:

- Diagnosis
- Detailed description of equipment or materials supplied by the family
- Course of action
- Administration times
- Agreed upon location for administration
- Who can administer
- Amounts/dosage
- Protocol before and after prescribed plan
- Possible side effects
- Emergency plan or procedures
- Duration of plan
- Parent/Guardian signatures
- Physician/ specialist signature

The plan will be in effect for one year, at the maximum. At which time, a new medical /health plan will be developed with the appropriate signatories.

For children who are able to self-administer, it is the policy of the Griffis Centre to provide adult supervision during the treatment or procedure. Documentation will be completed by the appropriate staff member and kept in a location that can maintain confidentiality.

In circumstances where all staff need to be aware of life threatening symptoms or side effects, the medical/health plan will be posted and made accessible only to staff members. Emergency contingencies will be provided in the plan, if necessary.

Training of appropriated staff for procedures used in a medical / health plan will be the responsibility of the parent or guardian.

All necessary materials or equipment will be supplied by the parent or guardian. Regular maintenance will also be the responsibility of the family.

**W. J. GRIFFIS CHILDREN'S CENTRE  
INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES  
FOR A CHILD WITH AN ANAPHYLACTIC ALLERGY**

**Child's Name:**

**Child's Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy):**

**List of allergen(s)/causative agent(s):**

**Asthma:** Yes (higher risk of severe reaction) No

**Location of medication storage:**

**Epinephrine auto-injector brand name:**

**Epinephrine auto-injector expiry date (dd/mm/yyyy):**

**Other emergency medications\*:**

**Emergency Services Contact Number:**



Photo of Child  
(recommended)

**Parental Statement**

<b>CHILD'S SPECIFIC SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A NON-LIFE THREATENING ANAPHYLACTIC REACTION:</b> <i>(specific to the child, e.g. wheezing and itchy skin)</i>	<b>CHILD'S SPECIFIC SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A LIFE THREATENING ANAPHYLACTIC REACTION:</b> <i>(specific to the child, e.g. inability to breathe, sweating)</i>
<b>DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURE TO FOLLOW IF CHILD HAS A NON-LIFE THREATENING ANAPHYLACTIC REACTION:</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURE TO FOLLOW IF CHILD HAS A LIFE-THREATENING ANAPHYLACTIC REACTION:</b>
<b>STEPS TO REDUCE RISK OF EXPOSURE TO CAUSATIVE AGENT/ALLERGEN:</b> <i>(e.g. nut-free environment)</i>	
<b>ADDITIONAL NOTES (if applicable):</b> <i>(e.g. use of other emergency allergy medication(s) to implement the emergency procedures)</i>	

- I \_\_\_\_\_ (parent/guardian) hereby give consent for my child  
(child's name) to (check all that apply):
- carry their emergency allergy medication in the following location (e.g. blue fanny pack around their waist):
- self-administer their own medication in the event of an anaphylactic reaction

**AND/OR**

I \_\_\_\_\_ (parent/guardian) hereby give consent to any person with training on this plan at the home child care premises to administer my child's epinephrine auto-injector and/or asthma medication and to follow the procedures set out in my child's Individualized Anaphylaxis Plan and Emergency Procedures.

Parent/Guardian initials: \_\_\_\_\_

**EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION**

Contact Name	Relationship to Child	Primary Phone Number	Additional Phone Number

**HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL CONTACT INFORMATION: (optional)**

Contact Name	Primary Contact Number

**SIGNATURE OF HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL (optional)**

X	Date:
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**SIGNATURE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN (required)**

Print name:	Relationship to Child:
X	Date:

**W. J. GRIFFIS CHILDREN'S CENTRE  
INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR A CHILD WITH MEDICAL NEEDS**

*This form must be completed for a child who has one or more acute\* or chronic\*\* medical conditions such that he or she requires additional supports, accommodation or assistance.*

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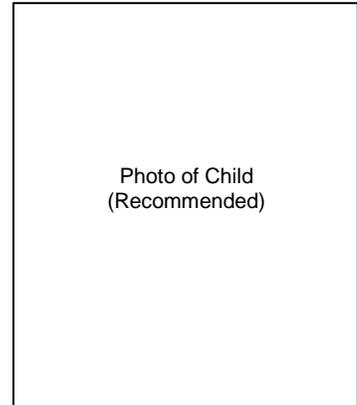
**Child's Full Name:**

**Child's Date of Birth:**  
(dd/mm/yyyy)

**Date Individualized Plan Completed:**

**Medical Condition(s):**

- Diabetes                       Asthma  
 Seizure                         Other:



**Prevention and Supports**

**STEPS TO REDUCE THE RISK OF CAUSING OR WORSENING THE MEDICAL CONDITION(S):**

*[Include how to prevent an allergic reaction/other medical emergency; how not to aggravate the medical condition (e.g. Pureeing food to minimize choking)]*

**LIST OF MEDICAL DEVICES AND HOW TO USE THEM (if applicable):** *(e.g. feeding tube, stoma, glucose monitor, etc.; or not applicable (N/A))*

**LOCATION OF MEDICATION AND/OR MEDICAL DEVICE(S) (if applicable):** *(e.g. glucose monitor is stored on the second shelf in the program room storage closet; or not applicable (N/A))*

**SUPPORTS AVAILABLE TO THE CHILD (if applicable):** *(e.g. nurse or trained staff to assist with feeding and/or disposing and changing of stoma bag; or not applicable (N/A))*

**Symptoms and Emergency Procedures**

**Additional Information Related to the Medical Condition (if applicable):**

This plan has been created in consultation with the child's parent / guardian.

**Parent/Guardian Signature:**

<b>Print name:</b>	<b>Relationship to child:</b>
<b>Signature:</b>	<b>Date: (dd/mm/yyyy)</b>

The following individuals participated in the development of this individual plan (optional):

<b>First and Last Name</b>	<b>Position/Role</b>	<b>Signature</b>

Frequency at which this individualized plan will be reviewed with the child's parent/guardian:

Regulatory Requirement - Ontario Regulation 137/15:

Children with medical needs

39.1 (1) Every licensee shall develop an individualized plan for each child with medical needs who,

(a) receives child care at a child care centre it operates; or  
(b) is enrolled with a home child care agency and receives child care at a premises where it oversees the provision of home child care or in-home services. O. Reg. 126/16, s. 27.

(2) The individualized plan shall 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. O. Reg. 126/16, s. 27.

(3) The plan shall include,

(a) steps to be followed to reduce the risk of the child being exposed to any causative agents or situations that may exacerbate a medical condition or cause an allergic reaction or other medical emergency;

(b) a description of any medical devices used by the child and any instructions related to its use;

(c) a description of the procedures to be followed in the event of an allergic reaction or other medical emergency;

(d) a description of the supports that will be made available to the child in the child care centre or premises where the licensee oversees the provision of home child care or in-home services; and

(e) any additional procedures to be followed when a child with a medical condition is part of an evacuation or participating in an off-site field trip. O. Reg. 126/16, s. 27.

(4) Despite subsection (1), a licensee is not required to develop an individualized plan under this section for a child with an anaphylactic allergy if the licensee has developed an individualized plan for the child under section 39 and the child is not otherwise a child with medical needs. O. Reg. 126/16, s. 27.

Intent

This provision requires that an individualized plan be developed for each child with medical needs and that licensees take all necessary steps to support the child's medical needs and ensure his or her inclusion in the program.

The review of each individualized plan (by employees, students and volunteers) supports the child(ren)'s ability to participate in the child care program, and provides staff with all necessary information to deal with any medical situation pertaining to the child.

## **Sun Safety and Shade Policy**

The Griffis Centre has adopted a shade and sun-safety policy.

Over exposure to ultra-violet radiation from the sun can cause skin cancer.

Children attend the Centre during the hours of greatest risk to sun exposure, which occurs from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Children spend approximately two hours per day, outdoors.

Strategies to reduce exposure to the sun:

- Provide shade through the use of pergolas, umbrellas or shade sails
- Plant trees to provide shade
- Have children apply sunscreen on at home
- Wear appropriate gear– hat, long sleeve clothing, sun glasses
- Bring re-useable, labelled water container for hydration when outdoors

## **Emergency Policies**

### **Contacting Parents / Emergency Back Up**

The following information is needed by the centre:

- Name, address and telephone number of place of employment, school, training centre, etc. where parents can be reached.

Parents attending college or University should leave:

- Copy of current timetable with classroom numbers clearly marked.
- Program co-coordinator's name and extension number.
- Name of building where classes are held
- Schedules, dates, location and name of field placements.

Two additional contact names and numbers should also be made available to the Centre in the event that parents cannot be reached, when possible. These contacts should be prepared to attend to your child if you cannot be reached.

Please update your information forms as changes occur.

### **Accident And Emergency**

#### *Fire*

Fire drills are held monthly. The procedure is posted in every room. Arrangements have been made to use E.Q. Jennings School during the school year, and Kinsmen Building ( July & August ) for evacuation purposes until the children can be picked up, in the event of an actual fire.

#### *Fire Drills*

Fire drills, using the actual alarm bells, are conducted monthly with the children.

Fire systems are tested on a monthly basis and records are kept.

### *Accidents and Severe Illness*

Minor accidental injuries (minor cuts, bumps, abrasions, etc.) shall be treated immediately by staff and a Accident Report Form filled out (see example form) All staff members are required to maintain valid First Aid/ CPR certificates.

Accident Forms are completed for any minor injury and reported to parents at the end of each day. In the case of more serious injury or illness (hard blows to the head, cuts that need stitches, sudden high fever, question of broken bones, etc.) staff will notify parents as soon as possible. If unable to contact parents the emergency back-up person will be contacted. Staff will continue to try to reach the parents.

In the case of a serious illness or accident that threatens the life or immediate well-being of the child, an ambulance will be called. Then staff will call the parents. If unable to reach the parent the emergency back-up person will be called. The staff member in charge when the illness began or the accident occurred will accompany the child to the hospital and remain there until the parents arrive. The staff member will give all necessary information to the parents and medical personnel. A serious occurrence form must also be filled out and sent to the Area office of the Ministry of Community and Social Services. The child's name, time and date of accident, brief description of the circumstances, first aid administered by staff, and other medical attention, if any, shall be recorded.

### *Early Closure Due To Severe Weather Conditions*

Cancellations due to early morning dangerous weather conditions will be reported to Thunder Bay radio stations before 7:00 a.m. The decision to close will be based on city wide shut downs and snow conditions in the immediate service area.

Staff will have class lists and telephone numbers at home and will attempt to contact persons to notify them that the Centre will be closed for the day. **(Be sure to inform staff of any phone number changes as soon as possible.)**

**In the event of a mid day Centre closure** a decision will be made based on weather reports and in consultation with the Executive Director of CLTB. Parents will immediately be informed of the early closing and will be requested to pick up their children.

Children who attend our After School Programs can be bused to the Centre or Algonquin school in the event of a mid day school closure, and parents will be immediately informed and requested to pick up their children as soon as possible.

### **Abuse Reporting Policy**

The staff at W.J. Griffis Children's Centre is required, by law, to report any suspected incidences of abuse and neglect. Children are to be safely secured in appropriate car seats, and are not to be left alone in a vehicle.

Failure to report suspected abuse or neglect can result in criminal prosecution and fines for the teacher. Initial reporting is made by telephone to Children's Aid Society. Suspicions of abuse and neglect do not have to be proven before they are reported.

## **Criminal Reference Checks**

All employees, volunteers or students of Community Living Thunder Bay are required to have a criminal reference check before they are hired.

## **Immunization of Staff**

All employees, volunteers and students of W.J. Griffis Children's Centre are required to maintain up-to-date immunization records.

## **Behaviour Management Policy & Procedures**

Behaviour Management Policies and Procedures have been formally adopted by the W.J. Griffis Children's Centre and will be strictly adhered to by all employees, volunteers and students of the Centre. This policy will be reviewed and signed by each member upon employment or placement and at each annual performance review thereafter. Any contravention to this policy will result in appropriate action being taken by the Supervisor, and Community Living Thunder Bay.

## **No-Smoking Policy**

All children's centres are required to have a no-smoking policy. Signs are to be posted on external doors, indicating this policy. Thus, no smoking is allowed on the entire Griffis property – inside or outside the building, in the outdoor green space, and in the parking lot.

## **Confidentiality Policy**

W.J. Griffis Children's Centre recognizes the right to privacy for all individuals receiving services. All information related to the child or family receiving or requesting support must be treated as confidential. This information may be in written, verbal or other form. Confidentiality extends to everything that people associated with the Centre learn in the exercise of their duties.

Essential information may be shared with co-workers or other support people to ensure that appropriate services are provided.

Notwithstanding the above, there are three other ways by which information may be released:

- 1) written authorization of the person or legal guardian or parent/guardian of the child
- 2) a court order
- 3) a written request of the Minister of Community and Social Services

Any misuse of information or unauthorized release of information shall be considered a breach of confidentiality and shall be immediately reported to the Executive Director. Disciplinary action will be taken and may constitute grounds for dismissal.

## **Outdoor Safety Inspection Policy**

Staff will conduct and log daily, monthly, seasonal and annual inspections of the outdoor space. The supervisor will schedule required maintenance and repairs and record when completed. The centre will incorporate outdoor program plans in monthly planning to ensure activities are offered to enhance gross motor play.

### **Lines of Communication**

At W.J. Griffis, hearing from you is essential in the delivery of quality care and education for your children. We encourage you to address your suggestions and concerns in the following manner:

- Step 1: Talk with your child's teachers. Let them know how you are feeling about an issue.
- Step 2: If your concerns have not been addressed, please speak with the Centre's Supervisor. It is the role of the Supervisor to help parents and staff revisit the issue, and come up with the best possible solution for all involved.
- Step 3: If you are not satisfied with the results of step 2, contact the Executive Director at CLTB. The phone number is: 622-1099
- Step 4: The program advisor, with the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, can be contacted at 475-1199, if you wish to further pursue the matter.

### **Toys and Clothing from Home**

It is requested that all children enrolled at the Centre have a pair of "indoor" shoes and a full change of clothing, which is to be stored in the child(ren)'s locker. **Please ensure that shoes and clothing have some form of identification on them in the form of initials or their name. Labeling ensures that clothing is not placed into another child's locker or is used by another child.**

The children are involved in a number of daily activities that can produce spills and stains. Please dress your child in clothes that allow them to participate in these activities.

We invite parent(s) or guardian(s) to bring in any special blankets or toys which will help their child(ren) to feel comfortable at the Centre. These items should be labeled in order to ensure they are not misplaced. We ask that all other toys, i.e action figures or dolls, electronic games, are kept at home.

### **Sharing Daily Information with Parents**

The relationship between the teacher and the parent is an important one. Reciprocal information sharing will benefit the child, will assist in the development of a trusting relationship between the families and the Centre, and will be maintained in a confidential manner.

### **Parent Satisfaction Surveys**

Parents / guardians are asked to complete a centre satisfaction survey annually. Results of the surveys are compiled, and plans for centre improvements are made. Please help us by completing and returning the survey. This is a wonderful opportunity to continue the betterment of our programs and services.

## **Additional Information**

### **Creativity**

**What Is It?** Creativity is defined as, *putting prior experiences into something new*. We hope young children will be able to do this when they use self-expressive materials, play imaginatively, solve problems, and generate original ideas to produce satisfying, freshly conceived products.

**How Is It Expressed?** Children are naturally creative. Everything they do or say reflects a unique perspective on our everyday world. They are creative in all aspects of their social, physical, emotional and cognitive development. As children work and play, they create and learn.

**How Do We Promote It?** At W.J. Griffis Children's Centre, we believe it is important to encourage and promote the young child's creativity. We provide children with the opportunities to express their individuality. We provide opportunities to create and learn by furnishing the Centre with a variety of developmentally appropriate materials which the children are able to examine, explore and use. We also believe in focusing on the process of creation, rather than the end product of the child's work. It is the enjoyment and satisfaction of the creative process which builds a child's self-esteem, which is vital to children's development. Furthermore, the creative process builds on a child's existing skills and helps them to master these skills. Mastery also enhances self-worth.

### **Brain Research:**

What is brain research? Thanks to new imaging technology used in neurobiology we can actually look inside the brains of living children and adults. We can see the brain in action ~ how it grows, how it acts, and how it reacts. What we are learning is astonishing and is making a major impact of how we view early living.

The brain is the only unfinished organ at birth. It will continue to evolve throughout our lives. The primary task of the brain in early childhood is the connection of brain cells. Babies are born with 100 billion nerve cells, called neurons. Every neuron has an axon that sends information out to other neurons and several dendrites that receive information from other cells. As axons hook up with dendrites, trillions of connections called synapses are formed.

During the first three years of life, an infant's brain will forge an estimated 1,000 trillion synapses. It is experience that will forge the connections of neurons. Neurons that are used will strengthen and those that are unused will eventually disappear. You might think of this like roads on a map. Those that are used become highways and those that are not used just fade away. According to neuroscientists sometime near the onset of puberty the brain will prune away all unused or replaced pathways. By late adolescence about half of the 1,000 trillion synapses of the three year old will be discarded. The brain will continue this strengthening and pruning process throughout our lives, but it is at its height between birth and puberty.

The quality of experiences and relationship in the first three years of life has a deep and lasting impact on how the brain gets wired. The richer the environment is ~ the greater the number of interconnections that are made. The larger number of interconnections ~ the faster and more meaningful learning will be.

Interactions (relationships) are also shaping children's brains. During the first year of life the baby is developing trust. Trust is the foundation for all relationships. The more loving and responsive the caregiver is, the greater the foundation for later social interaction. Both experiences and interactions are shaping little ones' brains and designing the neural architecture that will influence how they will handle all future experiences. If an infant gets too little stimulation, affection, language, and human contact, the development of the brain which depends on those experiences will be deterred or will fail to progress.

The quality, quantity, and consistency of stimulation will determine to a large extent the number of brain synapses that are formed and how those connections will function. This is true for both cognitive and emotional development, and the effect is life long.

Experience is the architect of the brain. In the early childhood classroom, we have the opportunity to fashion experiences through our choice of curriculum that will enhance the wiring of the brain.

We at the Griffis Centre support brain development by:

- Selecting a Montessori curriculum that includes activities that allow for time for focus and reflection.
- By making sure activities and experiences are multi-sensory whenever possible.
- By following the interest of the child. We all learn best when the information is of interest to us.
- By recognizing the value of repetition. Brain connections are strengthened and sometimes replaced or expanded by repetition.
- Intelligence is in large part our ability to see patterns. We use a curriculum that encourages children to find and build onto patterns.
- We include music and movement daily. There are a number of research studies that support the value of music and movement. We sing often because it has many benefits. It helps develop language, reduce anxiety, keeps us feeling happy, and enhances auditory discrimination.

## **Eco-friendly Practices**

The W. J. Griffis Children's Centre Montessori Preschool is committed to the use of eco-friendly practices.

With south facing windows, natural light is usually plentiful in the children's rooms. Soft-light lamps are used, with eco-friendly light bulbs, instead of the over-head fluorescent lights. Windows open to allow fresh air to pervade the rooms.

Two composters, purchased from Eco Superior, have been placed in the outdoor space. Children separate food into scrape buckets, and into compost buckets, thus learning about the cycle of organic matter. Potting tables have been erected for children and adults, to 'pot' new plants, using our created soil. Herb gardens and edible gardens have been created.

Eco-friendly cleaning products are only used in the Griffis Centre. As children have vulnerable systems, we wish to minimize their exposure to chemicals. Our cleaning products are ordered from Ecolab, with approval from the health inspector from the Thunder Bay District Health Unit.

We recycle all products that are acceptable in Thunder Bay. We encourage the children to put unwanted paper in a blue box, which others can access and use. Children are encouraged to use only one piece of paper for art.

Trees, shrubs, and gardens have taken the place of artificial surfaces.

We hope to continue expanding our environmentally friendly practices. Future acquisitions will be rain barrels, an old-fashioned lawn mower, more trees, more benches, an arbour. We hope to create a secret garden, and more.

Children are able to develop new skills and knowledge by being a part of the process of eco-friendly practices.

## **Griffis Greens**

“There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrain of nature.....the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after the winter.”

In the winter of 2007- 2008, a W. J. Griffis Playground Naturalization project was formulated as a partnership between parents and staff of the centre.

The mandate was to transform the typical outdoor playground into a more natural outdoor space.

It was based on the recognition of several factors:

1. Children have less contact with the ‘natural world’ than we did as children
2. Current playground design has evolved to minimize risk, yet some element of acceptable challenge and risk in play appears to be essential to healthy growth and development
3. Pre-designed play structures tend to dictate the terms of play, rather than respond to the needs of imaginative play. Play structures are widely available in the city parks and backyards, while supervised natural playgrounds are not.

So, in the summer and fall of 2008, the deconstruction phase began, with the removal of the outdoor play structures.

Children, families and staff had the opportunity to exercise their choice by voting for preferred items in the green space.

Through fund-raising, donations and volunteer work, the ground was broken, top-soil was brought in, river rock formed dry beds, bushes, shrubs, grasses, trees and gardens were planted. Children shoveled, alongside adults, pushed the wheel-barrow, dumped the soil, raked and spread the garden beds in preparation of further work to come. They were involved with planting and caring for the living matter. Harvesting brings its own natural rewards.

Thus, children, families and staff become in tune with the natural rhythms of the seasons, and the beauty and challenges that each bring.

The ‘Griffis Greens’ will continue to be an on-going project, that will ebb and flow with the seasons, and the people that populate its space.

It is a time of excitement and transformation.

It is with certainty that the natural space will enrich us all.

Please let us know how you can contribute.

## **Student and Volunteer Supervision**

### **POLICY**

This policy will be reviewed with employees before they begin their employment and annually afterwards; and with volunteers and students who will be providing care and guidance before they begin placement and annually there afterwards. This review will be signed and dated. Additional policies including behaviour management and anaphylactic policies and procedures will be reviewed with volunteers and students providing care and guidance before they begin placement and annually there afterwards. Reviews will be signed and dated. The Griffis Children’s Centre’s criminal reference check policy applies to all employees,

students and volunteers with the exception of students who are under the age of 18 and placed by an educational institution, example high school co-op students. The supervisor is responsible for the implementation, review and evaluation of this policy.

### **PROCEDURE**

Direct unsupervised access (ie. when the adult is alone with a child) is not permitted for persons who are not employees of this Centre. No child is directly supervised by a person less than 18 years of age. Volunteers and students are not counted in the staffing ratios. Volunteers and students are assigned a supervising mentor/staff member throughout their placement.

### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The supervisor/designate will be responsible for: Conducting the orientation process, using the orientation checklist;

Developing the expectations, roles and responsibilities of the students and volunteers;

- Assigning a mentor/staff member to supervise students and volunteers;
- Update the parent handbook statement to include information on students and volunteers;
- Inform parents/guardians of volunteers and students in placement at the Centre;
- Training for mentors/ staff members on their roles and responsibilities when supervising students and volunteers; and
- Monitoring the behaviour guidance practices of students and volunteers. The supervising mentors/ staff members will be responsible for:
  - Reviewing the expectations, roles, and responsibilities with the students and volunteers;
- Supervising the students and volunteers;
- Fulfilling the administration requirements of such placements; and • Communication with other staff members and the operator. The students and volunteers will be responsible for:
  - Reviewing and signing off on all policies and procedures relevant to this placement;
  - Adhere to the policies and procedures of the Centre;
  - Fulfilling the objectives and responsibilities of their role; and
  - Fulfilling administrative requirements of such placements.