

St. Thomas' Children's Day Care Centre PARENT HANDBOOK



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Information regarding the licensing of Day Care Centres may be found at:
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/>

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About Us

St. Thomas' Day Care is a safe, spacious and fun-filled place where learning opportunities are plentiful. We will work closely with you to guide your child through all stages of development and growth. Our policies have been created to comply with the Child Care and Early Year's Act, 2014.

Our Centre is licensed by the Ministry of Education(MEDU), Early Learning Division. We are inspected regularly by an MEDU program advisor to ensure compliance with the Child Care and Early Year's Act, 2014. We are also regularly inspected by Niagara Public Health.

Management: The Centre is overseen by a Board of Director's made up of members from St. Thomas' Church who meet a minimum 6 times per year. The Executive Director, Supervisor, and Assistant Supervisor oversee the day to day operation of the Centre and are responsible for the following staff:

Program Staff: Our teachers are mostly Registered Early Childhood Educators. RECE's have a minimum 2 year diploma in Early Childhood Education. Each RECE is registered with the College of Early Childhood Educators, the regulatory body for RECE in Ontario. All teaching staff are required to have up to date immunizations and Police Vulnerable Sector Checks, First Aid and CPR training. To assist families with identification, all program staff wear a uniform top with their name and position.

Dietary Staff: Our Food Servicer Manager is responsible for planning the menu ordering food and preparing our lunches and snacks, following the recommendations of Canada's latest Food Guide. At times an approved catering service may be used.

Resource Consultant: St. Catharines Preschool Services, a division of Community Living provides a Resource Consultant to our Centre to assist both the teaching staff and families with Children with Additional Needs.

Cleaning Staff: Crystal Clean, a local cleaning company provides us with custodial staff for our building.

Student Placement and Volunteer Policies: Direct unsupervised access is not permitted for any persons who are not employees of St. Thomas' Day Care with the exception of registered therapists, resource consultants, and optional elective program leaders all of whom must provide evidence of a recent Vulnerable Sector Check. Students and Volunteers are never counted in our ratios and will be supervised at all times by an employee of St. Thomas' Day Care.

We are a completely smoke-free facility!

Please do not smoke or vape on Church/Day Care premises at any time.

Ages of Children

St. Thomas' Children's Day Care has the staffing and facilities to accommodate the following capacities:

Toddlers (18 -30 months) up to 30 children (1:5 Ratio)

Preschoolers (30 months to 60 months) up to 72 children (1:8 Ratio)

Days & Hours of Operation

Full Time child care is provided 51 weeks each year. **The Centre is closed the Thursday and Friday prior to the long Labour Day weekend for a deep clean and reset. The Centre also closes on Dec. 24th at 1:00 pm and remains closed from December 25th through January 1st inclusive.**

Full-time care is offered:

- 5 days per week (Monday thru Friday)
- 7:00 am to 6:00 pm (maximum 9 hours per day).

Wait List Policy

The St. Thomas' Day Care Centre uses the Niagara Region's online Child Care Registry to place children in available child care spaces. Parents wishing to place a child on the wait list can visit the Registry at: www.niagararegion.ca

Our wait list is up-dated regularly. When filling vacancies, the following criteria will be taken into account:

- Date on the Application Form
- Age of the Child
- Requested Start Date

Parents will be contacted by email and/or telephone when a space becomes available. Every attempt will be made to place all children in a timely fashion as close to their requested start date as possible. Three attempts will be made to contact parents. The date and time of the calls and or emails will be documented. Failure to respond to notification of an available space within one business day on the third attempt will result in immediate removal from our wait list.

Building Security

All entrances to the building are locked. You will be issued a secure key card at the time of registration. There is a \$20. refundable deposit for each card issued. When cards are returned, the deposit is refunded. After your child has graduated from the Centre, you will have 30 days to return your key card. If you do not return your key card within that time, your deposit will be donated to off-set children's activities and events. Security cameras are located in the hall off the entrance and an alert is sounded in the Day Care office whenever someone enters or exits the building. Security cameras (some with audio capabilities) are also located throughout the building and in the main program areas. A screen located in the Day Care office enables monitoring of the building at all times. All visitors to the Centre must be signed in and out. The visitors log is located at the entrance.

Confidentiality & Access to Information

Our policies, procedures, and forms have been developed to ensure that all personal information necessary to support the health and safety of families and children at our Centre is kept confidential. All staff and Board members are required to sign confidentiality agreements annually. The collection of information is vital to us. It is important that we have your child's name, address, date of birth, work information for parents (including address and phone numbers), allergy information and your child's doctor's name and phone number. This information is collected as a requirement of the Child Care and Early Learning Act, the legislation governing all child care centers in Ontario. Please up-date us in writing when there is a change in any of your child's information.

St. Thomas' Day Care collects and retains this information, as stated by the Act which govern our business and disclose it only with your permission or through a legal requirement. Your informed consent is required prior to the release of your personally identifiable information to third parties. Your child's file will be kept in the day care office and will be available to at you upon request, at any time. Others with access to your child's file include administrative staff, program staff, the Day Care auditor and the Ministry of Education Program Advisor.

Parking & Drop-Off Areas

We have a parking lot off Cherry Street. There is a designated entrance and exit. For safety follow the directional arrows that are in the lot. Our parking lot is an idle-free zone – please turn off your car. Your child’s safety is important to us. Do not leave any child unattended in our parking lot.

Safe Arrival/Dismissal Policy

Young children depend on regular routines for their own security. It is therefore recommended that you establish fixed hours to pick-up and drop-off your child. When your child arrives, notify a staff member of his or her arrival. When picking up your child, make sure that a staff member knows you are leaving. If the children are in the middle of a transition from one area to another when you arrive, for safety, please wait until the children arrive at their destination prior to dropping off or picking up your child.

St. Thomas’ Day Care will ensure that any child receiving child care at the child care centre is only released to the child’s parent/guardian or an individual that the parent/guardian has provided written authorization the child care centre may release the child to.

Where a child does not arrive in care as expected or is not picked up as expected, staff must follow the safe arrival and dismissal procedures set out below:

Accepting a child into care

When accepting a child into care at the time of drop-off, program staff in the room must:

- greet the parent/guardian and child.
- ask the parent/guardian how the child’s evening/morning has been and if there are any changes to the child’s pick-up procedure (i.e., someone other than the parent/guardian picking up). Where the parent/guardian has indicated that someone other than the child’s parent/guardians will be picking up, the staff must confirm that the person is listed as an alternate contact or where the individual is not listed, ask the parent/guardian to provide authorization for pick-up in writing (e.g., note or email).
- document the change in pick-up procedure in the daily written record.
- sign the child in on the classroom attendance record.

Where a child has not arrived in care as expected:

- Where a child does not arrive at the child care centre and the parent/guardian has not communicated a change in drop-off (e.g., left a voice message or advised the closing staff at pick-up), the staff in the classroom must:
- inform the Assistant Supervisor, Supervisor, or Executive Director, and they must commence contacting the child’s parent/guardian no later than 10am or 15 minutes after their expected arrival time. The caller shall leave a voicemail instructing them to return the message within 15 minutes, or all emergency contacts will be called.
- If 15 minutes have passed without a return phone call, all emergency contacts will be notified, including the child’s subsidy caseworker if applicable.
- Once the child’s absence has been confirmed, program staff shall document the child’s absence on the attendance record and any additional information about the child’s absence in the daily written record.

Releasing a child from care

- The staff who is supervising the child at the time of pick-up shall only release the child to the child’s parent/guardian or individual that the parent/guardian has provided written authorization

that the child care may release the child to. Where the staff does not know the individual picking up the child (i.e., parent/guardian or authorized individual), they will confirm with another staff member that the individual picking up is the child's parent/guardian/authorized individual.

- where the above is not possible, ask the parent/guardian/authorized individual for photo identification and confirm the individual's information against the parent/guardian/authorized individual's name on the child's file or written authorization.
- Parents must make sure that if they are unable to pick up their child that they inform the Centre by phone, email or in person. The person should be familiar to the child, is on the authorized to pick up list, has photo identification, is over the age of 18.
- Children will not be released to any person other than those specified as Emergency Contacts listed in the child's Personal Information Folder. Parents must inform the Centre each time an emergency contact will be picking up. If the Centre was not notified about alternate pick up arrangements, the child will not be released until authorization is obtained from the parent. If the parent wishes to have an emergency contact pick up on a regular basis, they can inform the Centre in writing eliminating the requirement to call each time. It is the parent's responsibility to inform the Centre in writing if the agreed upon arrangement for pick up is terminated.
- No person (including parents) believed to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be permitted to pick up a child.

Where a child has not been picked up as expected (before centre closes)

- Where a parent/guardian has previously communicated with the staff a specific time or timeframe that their child is to be picked up from care and the child has not been picked up, the supervising staff shall proceed with contacting parent/guardian after 30 minutes of when the child was expected to be picked up, and advise that the child is still in care.
- Where the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian, staff must call again and leave a message for the parent/guardian. Where the individual picking up the child is an authorized individual and their contact information is available, the staff shall proceed with contacting the individual to confirm pick-up as per the parent/guardian's instructions or leave a voice message to contact the centre.
- Where the staff has not heard back from the parent/guardian or authorized individual who was to pick up the child the staff shall contact the child's emergency contact, wait until program closes and then refer to procedures under "where a child has not been picked up and program is closed"

Where a child has not been picked up and the centre is closed

- Where a parent/guardian or authorized individual who was supposed to pick up a child from care and has not arrived by 6:00pm, staff shall offer the child a snack and activity, while they await their pick-up.
- The staff shall stay with the child, and proceed with calling the parent/guardian to advise that the child is still in care and inquire their pick-up time. In the case where the person picking up the child is an authorized individual, the staff shall contact the parent/guardian first and then proceed to contact the authorized individual responsible for pick-up if unable to reach the parent/guardian.
- If the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian or authorized individual who was responsible for picking up the child, the staff shall contact authorized individuals listed on the child's file.
- Where the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian or any other authorized individual listed on the child's file (e.g., the emergency contacts) by 6:20pm, the staff shall proceed with contacting the Executive Director/Appropriate Designate. Family and Children's Services (FACS) will be contacted by Executive Director/ and will advise of next steps.

If you are going on vacation and leaving your child with a friend or family member, who will continue to bring the child to our Centre in your absence, you must provide us with notification in writing, along with any pertinent contact information.

Admission & Discharge Policy

A tour is arranged prior to enrolment to familiarize you and your child with the surroundings, answer questions, and completed admission forms including **all** Medical Forms which must be submitted before your child's first day. You are encouraged to visit with your child to reassure them and minimize fears, until you and your child become more comfortable, before leaving your child in our care.

Written notice of permanent withdrawal must be given two weeks in advance. If notice is not received, full programme fees will be charged. St. Thomas' Children's Day Care Centre may terminate services if policies are not followed, fees are not paid, or if the programme is unsuitable for the child.

Program Statement

St. Thomas' Day Care promotes the health, safety, and general well-being for all children and staff at our Centre as such we recognize the need for natural rhythms. Children need time for active play, rest and quiet play. Our day incorporates indoor and outdoor play experiences, quiet and active play, rest time, and healthy nutrition breaks including two snacks and a hot lunch daily. Children thrive where bodies and minds are actively engaged. While safety is our first priority, building risk competence is an important part of learning. Children will be invited to take safe reasonable risks to support all facets of learning.

The foundation for well-being, important for life- long health and wellbeing is established in the early years. Nurturing children's physical and emotional well-being is of utmost importance.

This Centre provides and supports early learning experiences, recognizing the importance of the four foundations of learning as outlined in the "*How Does Learning Happen?*" document available at www.ontario.ca/edu.

Belonging: Every child has a sense of belonging when he or she is connected to others and contributes to their world. St. Thomas' Day Care cultivates authentic, caring relationships and connections to create a sense of belonging among and between children, adults and the world around them. Learning happens best when children feel valued safe and have trust in their environment, and where there are opportunities to fully engage their minds. Each child is treated with dignity and respect and every individual personality is nurtured. Staff listen to each child and respond to their needs in a caring fashion. Thoughtfulness and caring – empathy is fostered by listening to children and by encouraging them to listen to others and share ideas.

Parents are recognized as partners: Parents know their children best and are their child's first teacher. Positive relationships with families lead to secure relationships with children. We celebrate all families and their uniqueness. Parents are encouraged to visit and observe when possible, and to ask for clarification about our program and or their child's development at any time. We are fortunate to have many opportunities to involve children in the greater community of downtown St. Catharines. We visit the Farmer's Market, the Library, Montebello Park, local neighbourhoods, the Fire Station and the First Ontario Performing Arts Centre.

Well-Being: This Centre nurtures children's healthy development and supports their growing sense of self. Daily health checks are conducted upon arrival to the Centre. Healthy eating is encouraged and promoted through a menu offering varied food choices from every food groups. Meals and snacks are prepared on site fresh daily. Locally available fresh fruits and vegetables are served when in season. A rest time is provided for all children. A designated cot, complete with bedding is provided for each child. Cots are disinfected and bedding washed, at minimum, weekly. Children are encouraged to talk about their

feelings fostering awareness of feeling and emotion. Emotional health is supported by recognizing and responding to children's needs. Children are comforted when they are distraught. We also share in their joy when they are happy and excited.

Engagement: Every child is an active and engaged learner who explores the world with body, mind and senses. We provide environments and experiences to engage children in activities, creative and meaningful exploration, play and inquiry. Children thrive in environments when their minds and bodies are actively engaged. Active play has physical benefits, but also enhances focus and attention, problem solving skills and independence. Consistency and developmentally appropriate limits and practices are developed to best support learning and development.

Expression: St. Thomas' Day Care strives to foster communication and expression in all forms. Children are encouraged to interact and communicate in a positive way and to develop self-regulatory skills. Inquiry and exploration is fostered by supporting child initiated and adult supported experiences in a positive learning environment. Staff extend and deepen learning opportunities by listening and responding to children with open ended questions. This allows for the exploration of numeracy, literacy, science and imagination. Through art, music, movement and imaginative play, staff encourage expression of ideas, feelings and interests.

We provide an environment rich with opportunity for exploration and learning opportunities discovered through play. In partnership with families and children we provide a child-centred emergent curriculum which fosters development through play encouraging children to reach their fullest potential- physically, emotionally and socially. Clear consistent goals are identified to assist children to become as independent as possible. We strive to provide a nurturing and stimulating environment while allowing children the freedom of choice by setting up our program in an open and unstructured fashion. We see children as competent and curious. Every day brings new opportunities to learn and build relationships.

Our environments and activities are inspired by the observed interests of the children and are designed to promote and support:

- curiosity, initiative, independence, and self-regulation;
- self-esteem and decision-making capabilities;
- empathy, interaction with, and respect for others;
- physical activity developing gross motor skills;
- communication skills (both verbal and non-verbal);
- fine motor development, and
- healthy eating

Intentional spaces are filled with "recycled loose parts", blocks, art materials, dramatic play props, books sensory experiences and more, to provide open ended experiences.

Staff are co-learners and are responsive and reflective of children's needs and the needs of their family when possible. Observations, conversations and experiences are documented regularly through journaling, learning stories, charting, photos and displays. Documentation allows for reflections and opportunities for questioning and adjustment of the environment as the interests of children change.

St. Thomas' Day Care is an active participant in the Quality Child Care Niagara initiative. Staff members are trained to screen children to assist with providing age- appropriate activities to enhance development in all areas. Screening provides an opportunity for early identification of children who may need further evaluation and or additional supports. A Resource Teacher from Preschool Services us visits regularly and provides further screening and support for children and their families as required.

Key community partners assist us in supporting children and their families. They include: St. Catharines Preschool Services, Niagara Region Children's Services, Niagara Public Health, Niagara Children's Centre, Pathstones Mental Health, Speech Services Niagara and the Early Childhood Community Development

Centre.

Parent meetings are offered periodically for your interest. Newsletters are sent out at regular intervals informing you of these meetings as well as topics of interest, and events. We use *Lillio* to document learning and as a communication tool for families. See *Lillio* section for further information.

Program Development

Programmes are re-evaluated regularly to reflect changes within the Child Care and Early Years Act (formerly the Day Nurseries Act), and ideologies in Early Childhood Education. Staff have received extensive training in the foundations of Learning outlined in the “How Does Learning Happen?” document. Staff attend seminars to learn and grow from other Early Childhood Educators. New ideas are shared at regularly scheduled staff meetings. We continue to learn and grow with the children, as we explore new and exciting learning opportunities each day.

The Executive Director or designee will observe program areas and staff/child interaction regularly to provide support and feedback to staff. Relevant observations are documented.

The Program Statement will be reviewed and revised if necessary, by all staff annually. Our program statement is a “living document.” All employees, student and volunteers must read the program statement, and sign off indicating that they fully understand the document, prior to commencing employment and that at least annually thereafter.

Our commitment to our values and those of the Ontario Pedagogy for Early Years, How Does Learning Happen? Encourages an environment rich with learning opportunities and strengthens our commitment to off the highest quality care for our children and families.

Behaviour Management

Children's behaviour is managed in an age-appropriate and positive manner to promote self-discipline, ensure health and safety, respect the rights of others and maintain equipment.

St. Thomas' Children's Day Care does not under any circumstances permit:

- spanking or any other form of corporal punishment;
- physical restraint unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting himself or someone else, and is used as a last resort, and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent;
- locking exits for the purpose of confining a child or confining a child in an area or room without adult supervision unless such confinement occurs in the case of an emergency and is required as part of emergency management procedures;
- use of harsh or degrading measures, threats or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child, or undermine his self-respect, dignity or self-worth;
- deprivation of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding;
- inflicting bodily harm, including forcing children eat or drink against their will.

The use of any of these identified prohibited practices may result in immediate termination of employment.

Behaviour management strategies are discussed at staff meetings, and consistent strategies are agreed upon.

The parent/guardian will be notified by the Director when a child regularly expressed themselves, in a way which impacts negatively on the physical, social or emotional well-being of another child or staff. An Action Plan, with input from the staff, parents, Resource Consultant, therapists, etc. will be developed and implemented if deemed necessary. Cooperation from all parties, including the family is critical in this process. Failure to provide full cooperation may result in the child's removal from the program.

Optional Elective Programmes

Optional Elective Programs such as Dance Drama, and Music are available from time to time based on interest and availability of Personnel.

Lillio App

Lillio is a communication tool to help staff share activities electronically as they happen throughout the day. Teachers can send pictures, learning stories, and short videos out to parents in real time. It also allows for activity reporting and details about nap time and nutrition to be shared with parents electronically. Parents must sign up and give permission for photos of their child to be taken and shared. Parents will also be responsible for setting up payment information in the system, to ensure all funds are received within a timely manner.

Health

Your child's health is of great importance to all of us. Upon enrolment you must submit your child's medical form with a copy of your child's immunization records or statement of Conscious Belief **before** your child's first day. A daily health inspection is given upon each child's arrival at the Centre. The person bringing the child must wait until the inspection is over before leaving the premises. Your child may be sent home if he or she appears to have symptoms of illness during the day. In such cases the child will be isolated from the others and a parent is contacted.

St. Thomas' Children's Day Care Centre, in conjunction with Regional Niagara Health Services Department, requires that a Health Information Form be completed upon enrolment. Please attach two copies of your child's immunization form to this form.

Regulations require daily outdoor play for each child. Therefore, it is our policy that children too ill to play outside remain at home.

Please keep your child at home if they have experienced any of the following within 24 hours of expected attendance at the Centre: runny nose, cough or fever, 48 hours for vomiting and diarrhoea. To prevent the spread of infection to other children please also keep your child at home when he/she has any new symptom such as a runny nose or cough, undiagnosed skin rash or infection, or discharge from the eyes or ears. Children can return when fever free and symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours, but remain off for the full 48 hours in the case of vomiting and or diarrhoea.

Should your child develop any of these symptoms while in our care, you will be called to pick up your child as soon as possible. In an effort to prevent germs from spreading, when possible, an ill child will be provided a cot and quiet activities in the Day Care office until such time a parent or designate can pick up the child. The child must stay at home until he/she has been symptom free for 24 hours.

Administration of Medications: This Centre will administer medications in accordance with provincial legislation. Parents are required to provide:

- a) written instruction, including the name of the medication, your child's name, the exact dosage and times the medication is to be given (complete a medication form). Physician's instructions regarding inhalers are especially important. See Allergy section for information on children

with Anaphylaxis.

- b) medication must be in the original container, clearly labelled with the child's first and last name, date of purchase, and the name of the drug, Medication must be properly stored in the designated locked medication boxes in each classroom, cabinet in the Caterpillar room or in the locked medication box in the kitchen fridge. The required documentation must be fully completed, in order for medication to be administered. Outdated and/or expired medications will not be administered. Prescription medications require the original prescription label.

Reporting of Injuries: An Accident/Incident report will be completed for any injury that occurs while your child is in our care. When an injury occurs, immediate first aid will be provided. Any head injury, no matter how minor, will always be reported, even if there is no mark and will be monitored throughout the day. You will be notified immediately if your child has a serious injury, requiring immediate medical attention while in our care. We have both indoor and outdoor Accident/Incident forms. The staff who witnessed the incident will complete the appropriate form which will be signed by the Executive Director or designate. You will be required to read and sign the report when you pick up your child and will receive a copy for your records.

Rest Time: Finding ways to reduce stress through providing space and time for rest and quiet play based on individual differences helps children become increasingly aware of their own basic needs and supports their developing self-regulation skills. Rest time is from approximately 12:30 - 2:30. The need for rest and sleep varies greatly at different ages and for different children. This period of time allows for a period during which quiet activities are encouraged and children can nap, if required.

All bedding is provided by the Centre and is laundered weekly or as necessary. Each child will be assigned their own cot. A rest time chart is posted indicating the child's name and or the corresponding cot number to ensure that each child uses the same cot and that it will be in approximately the same location every day. Arrangements will be made when possible to have children requiring less sleep in another area for quiet play for up to two hours.

Parents will complete a form at the time of registration to share their child's sleep time preferences. The child's sleep preferences will be reviewed when the child moves from one group to another and as required based on observations by either staff or parents. Conversations and any resulting changes to a child's rest time are documented.

Outdoor Play: The children are taken outside twice a day for some fresh air and exercise. Weather permitting, the children go outside each morning for approximately 1 hour and again in the afternoon for approximately 1 hour. On days when we experience extreme temperatures, the length of time we spend outside is adjusted accordingly. **Water is available to children at all times.**

Pet and Animal Policy: Parents will be consulted and provide written consent prior to any animals being introduced into the Day Care. Information regarding the benefit and risks, such as allergies and infectious disease, injury must be provided, as well as a plan to mitigate those risks. Documentation providing evidence of the animal's health and proof a rabies vaccination must be obtained prior to any animal visiting the Day Care.

Nutrition

Food Storage and Preparation: All food or drink will be stored, prepared and served so as to retain maximum nutritive value and prevent contamination. All food and drink is cooked or prepared according to the instructions on the package. Staff preparing food must be certified in Safe Food Handling as required by Niagara Regional Health.

Food supplied by Parents: Food and or drink supplied by a parent must be store bought and in the original unopened container labelled with the child's name. A form with instructions for serving must be completed for each item supplied from home. When opened, in the case of any item containing multiple servings, such as a beverage, the date must be recorded on the container to ensure disposal when applicable according to the instructions on the item, or within 5 days, whichever comes first. Both food or drink or both supplied by a parent of a child will be stored according to the directions on the package to preserve maximum freshness. Parents will be notified when supplies need to be replenished.

Supporting Children's Nutritional Needs: Adequate and appropriate nutrition is vital to children's Health, growth, development and well-being. Educators can support children's health and well-being by establishing positive eating environments that are responsive to children's cues of hunger and fullness.

Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide recommendations are followed with regard to food choices and portions. Canada's Food Guide is posted for reference.

Snacks will include at least 2 food groups. Lunch will include all four food groups. Morning snack will be served at approximately 8:45am, lunch 11:40 - 11:50 am, and afternoon snack at approx. 3pm. Any changes or substitutions made to menus will be noted on the posted menus.

Water will be available for children at all times, particularly during periods of hot weather.

Children's special dietary needs and allergies are posted in cooking, dining and program areas. Weekly menu plans are posted for the current and the following week to assist you in menu planning at home. We are able to accommodate most allergy and dietary restrictions as our meals and snacks are prepared daily. Any substitutions to the posted menu will be communicated to parents on a daily basis. When possible, we will modify the main meal to accommodate allergies. For example, in the event of casseroles containing dairy, dairy will be excluded in a portion of the casserole to accommodate children who cannot have dairy.

WE ARE A NUT AWARE DAY CARE CENTRE!



Any treats you may wish to supply for your child's Birthday must be store bought and have an ingredient list so that we can protect children with known allergies and dietary restrictions. Please do not bring any products containing peanuts, or tree nuts of any kind into the building. If your child has had peanut butter or any other identified severe allergy posted at our entrance prior to coming into the Centre - please ensure that your child washes their hands thoroughly before touching anything within the Centre.

Allergies and Dietary Restrictions: If your child has any allergies or dietary restrictions, please complete the required documentation. In the case of allergies, we need to know what your child is allergic to, the type of reaction to be expected, and the response required from staff, in the event that symptoms appear. Additional forms to assist us manage your child's food allergies must be completed at the time of enrolment. The Centre maintains a list of all food allergies and dietary restrictions for all children enrolled in our program. Any changes to a child's identified allergies or additions must be given to us in writing.

Anaphylaxis: Anaphylaxis is a serious allergic reaction and can be life-threatening. The allergy could be related to food, an insect sting, or medicine, among other things. An Individual Anaphylaxis Plan will be developed with the parent and physician providing information on your child's life-threatening allergy and the emergency procedures to be followed in the event of an exposure to allergens. This plan will be in the child's file posted in each play room, playground, food prep and dining areas. All participants in the program, including staff and students will review the Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan prior to beginning employment or placement and then annually as long as the child is in the program. Your child's teacher or designate will wear a pouch containing your child's plan, epi-pen and any other medication that is part of the plan whenever your child is in attendance. Emergency medication must be on site for your child to attend. A review of the child's Individual Anaphylaxis Plan will be conducted annually with the parent by a staff member. Any changes to the plan will require the completion of a new form including an updated photo.

Clothing & Possessions

Please dress your child in clothing that is appropriate for physical activity, the weather and the season. In the interest of safety, slippers smooth soled shoes, Crocs and similar footwear, flip-flops and jellies are not permitted. Running shoes or sandals with a back strap, are required.

Boots, snow suits, warm hats and mittens are required for the winter months. Please avoid jackets, scarves or hats with strings, as they present a safety risk as children climb and play outdoors.

An additional set of clothing is to be left at the Centre in case of accidents. Please remember to change clothing as the seasons change. We strongly recommend that all possessions be clearly marked with your child's full name, and that all possessions go home at the end of each week. St. Thomas' Day Care is not responsible for any lost or damaged items.

Please leave your child's toys at home or in your car. If an item *is* brought to the Centre, we cannot be responsible for its safe return. If you have a book that may be of interest to the children, we would appreciate this being shared with the class, but ask that it be left for several days.

Serious Occurrence Reporting

The safety and well-being of children in our care is our highest priority. We work diligently to provide a safe, nurturing and creative environment for the children in our care. That having been said there are times when a Serious Occurrence can sometimes take place.

Under the Child Care and Early Years Act, a "Serious Occurrence" is defined as:

- a) the death of a child while in our care;
- b) Abuse, Neglect or an allegation of abuse or neglect of a child while in our care;
- c) A Life-Threatening injury or a Life-Threatening illness of a child who is in our care;
- d) An incident where a child goes missing or is temporarily unsupervised;

- e) An unplanned disruption in normal operations that poses a risk to the health, safety or well-being of a child.

A Serious Occurrence Notification Form will be posted within 24 hours of a Serious Occurrence. The posting reports the incident and the follow up, and outcomes, while maintaining the privacy of the individuals involved. Often, policies are developed as a result of an incident to help prevent any recurrence in future.

This form will be located at the Day Care entrance, near our licensing information for 10 days. The intent of this policy is to help support the safety and well-being of children in licensed centres monitored by a licensing agency and to provide greater transparency for parents.

Field Trips



Throughout the year, trips are made to special places of interest. A notice will be sent home before the excursion informing you of the destination, cost, time, and date. It will also include a permission slip to be signed and returned.

Financial Policies

St. Thomas' Day Care is part of the Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) program.

Fee Schedule: The following fees are effective as of January 1, 2024.

	Daily Rate
Toddler (18 - 30 months)	\$22.00/day
Preschool (30 – 56 months)	\$21.50/day
JK/SK (42 – 72 months)	\$21.50/day

All diapers, wipes and sunscreen are provided by the Centre. Lunch and snacks are included in the fees.

Fee Subsidy: St. Thomas' Day Care has a Purchase of Service agreement with Niagara Region Children's Services for child care subsidy. Parents who qualify for either full or partial subsidy are required to adhere to the policies associated with fee subsidy as determined by the Region. Partial monthly fees are payable directly to St. Thomas' Day Care. Absent days not covered by the Region will be billed to families directly.

Payment: All fees must be paid in advance by the 15th of each month. We have an EFT program for those parents interested. Electronic funds transfer (EFT) happens on the 1st and 15th of each month. Fees can also be paid by e-transfer. Lillio is our interactive billing system. Parents can access their account to review billing and access receipts, including annual receipts at any time.

There will be a \$20.00 charge for NSF or returned cheques.

Overdue fees: Late fee payment for two consecutive weeks, will result in your child's space being forfeited.

Statutory Holidays: Payment for Statutory holidays is required, as we must pay our staff for these days off. We observe the following Statutory Holidays: New Year's Day, Family Day, Good Friday, Victoria Day, Canada Day, Civic Holiday, Labour Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and Boxing Day. Part-time children scheduled on a Statutory Holiday are required to pay for that day.

Sick/Absent Days: If your child will not be attending a regularly scheduled day, please call us or email the Day Care Office at daycare.centre@stthomaschurch.ca Please do not use Lillio for reporting absences.

Full fees are required for sick and absent days. If a child has been off for more than 10 days due to illness, a doctor's certificate is required before returning.

Emergency Closure and/or Snow Days: If the Centre is closed due to heavy snowfall, or other emergency situation, full fees will be required for the day or days the Centre is closed. A message will be sent through Lillio if the Centre has to close for any reason. In addition, please listen to your local radio and TV stations for closure announcements. Fees will not be required for planned closures with the exception of Statutory Holidays that may fall within the annual Christmas closure. The Centre closes the Thursday and Friday before the Labour Day weekend and every Christmas Eve at 1pm through to the first business day after January 1st. (usually 3 unbilled days)

Parent Issues and Concerns

Parents/guardians are encouraged to take an active role in their child's development. As stated in our program statement, we support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents/guardians, child care providers and staff, and foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents/guardians about the program and their children. Staff are available to engage parents/guardians in conversations and support a positive experience during every interaction. All issues and concerns raised by parents/guardians are taken seriously by St. Thomas' Day Care and will be addressed. Every effort will be made to address and resolve issues and concerns to the satisfaction of all parties and as quickly as possible. Issues/concerns may be brought forward verbally or in writing. Responses and outcomes will be provided verbally, or in writing upon request. The level of detail provided to the parent/guardian will respect and maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved. An initial response to an issue or concern will be provided to parents/guardians within three business day(s). The person who raised the issue/concern will be kept informed throughout the resolution process. Investigations of issues and concerns will be fair, impartial and respectful to parties involved.

Confidentiality: Every issue and concern will be treated confidentially and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of parents/guardians, children, staff, students and volunteers, except when information must be disclosed for legal reasons (e.g. to the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities or a Children's Aid Society).

Conduct: Our Centre maintains high standards for positive interaction, communication and role-modeling for children. Harassment and discrimination will therefore not be tolerated from any party. If at any point a parent/guardian, provider or staff feels uncomfortable, threatened, abused or belittled, they may immediately end the conversation and report the situation to the Executive Director or designee.

Concerns about the Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a child: Everyone, including members of the public and professionals who work closely with children, is required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect. If a parent/guardian expresses concerns that a child is being abused or neglected, the parent will be advised to contact Family and Children's Services Niagara (FACS) directly. Persons who become aware of such concerns are also responsible for reporting this information to FACS as per the "Duty to Report" requirement under the Child and Family Services Act.

For more information regarding the reporting of abuse or neglect of a child, please visit:
<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childrensaidd/reportingabuse/index.aspx>

NOTE: Specific procedures for how parents can have their issues and concerns addressed may be found in Appendix "A" at the back of this handbook

Emergency Management

The Day Care Centre has emergency policies and procedures in place which include: Lock Down, Fire Evacuation, Evacuation Shelter and Emergency numbers policies. Our designated emergency shelter is the Church's Rectory, located at 103 Ontario Street (adjacent to the Church). The Centre practices evacuation procedures through monthly fire drills. The meeting place for drills is the pre-school playground furthest from the building. All program staff members are trained in First Aid and Child and Infant CPR. Emergency Procedures and Policies are reviewed annually.

In the event of an emergency situation when the “All Clear” Notification is given:

- 1) As soon as possible, the Executive Director or designee will notify parents/guardians of the emergency situation and that the all-clear has been given via Lillio, telephone or e-mail, and upon pick-up of their children;
- 2) Where disasters have occurred that did not require evacuation of the Day Care Centre, the Executive Director will provide a notice of the incident to parents/guardians via Lillio, telephone or e-mail, and upon pick-up of their children;
- 3) If normal operations do not resume the same day that an emergency situation has taken place, the Executive Director will provide parents/guardians with information as to when and how normal operations will resume via Lillio, telephone or e-mail, as soon as this is determined.

When an “Unsafe” Notification is given:

- 1) Upon arrival at the Emergency Evacuation site, The Executive Director will notify parents/guardians of the emergency situation, the evacuation and the location to pick up their children.
- 2) The Executive Director will update the Day Care’s voicemail as soon as possible to inform parents that the Centre has been evacuated, the location of the Evacuation site and the contact information. Actions taken during the emergency to enhance the children’s safety will be documented in reports provided to parents and as otherwise needed. The Centre will also advise parents of any other actions taken and document them in a child’s file.

Vulnerable Sector Check

Obtaining a Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC) is a precautionary measure to assist with determining the suitability of staff, students and volunteers for our Centre. Relevant criminal history helps to ensure the safety and well-being of the children in our care.

A Vulnerable Sector Check must be completed for all individuals including employees, students, and volunteers, working directly with children prior to their placement.

If a VSC cannot be completed prior to hiring, a conditional offer of employment will be in place until the document is received. The individual will not be permitted to be left unsupervised at any time and must never be alone with a child. Written confirmation of complete understanding of the terms must be signed and dated. Contravention will result in immediate dismissal.

Current Board members must also obtain a VCS upon commencement of their term.

Employees: *(Including individuals hired for elective programs such as Dance or Music)* Every employee must obtain a VSC prior to being permitted to have unsupervised interaction with children at his Centre. The original VSC conducted by a police force, must be produced for review by the Executive Director or designate at the time of our initial interview. The VS search date must be within 6 months of the date the VSC is produced for review. A true copy will be made and maintained in the employee's personnel file. In addition, a declaration of Offence must be signed at the time of the interview.

If the original VSC search was conducted over 6 months prior to the pre-employment interview date, a new VSC is required. The receipt for the new VSC must be submitted. Until such time that your updated VSC is produced, you will not be permitted to interact with children unsupervised at any time. A Declaration of Offence must be signed stating that you do not have any of the previous offences listed below.

For all employees: A declaration of Offence must be signed annually within 15 days of the anniversary of the original VSC on file with this Centre. After 5 years, a new VSC will be required. Your Declaration of Offence documents will be kept in your Personnel file, in a locked cabinet in the Day Care Office. Any time you are convicted of an offence under the Criminal Code of Canada you are expected to provide the Executive Director with an Offence Declaration as soon as reasonable possible.

Employment will be immediately terminated: If the VSC reveals past convictions of any of the following offences: sexual interference, child pornography, duty of persons to provide necessities, murder and infanticide, and any other federal or provincial offence prescribed by the regulations (CCEYA 2014) OR you have been found guilty of professional misconduct under the Early Childhood Educator's Act, the Ontario College of Teachers Act, the Social Work and Social Service Work Act or another prescribed Act based on that finding.

Students and Volunteers: All students and volunteers must present a current VSC or copy thereof as conducted by a police force for review prior to placement at this Centre. If more than 6 months, but less than 5 years have passed since the date the check was performed, a declaration of offence that addresses that period of time must also be signed. Students and Volunteers must always be under the direct supervision of a RECE and are not permitted to be alone with a child for any reason.

Temporary Break in Employment: Less than 6 months: if the VSC is less than 5 years old or the declaration of offence on file is less than 1 year, the regular maintenance schedule - a Declaration of Offence must be signed within 15 days of the original VSC search date as per the protocol above. Any breaks longer than 6 months, including maternity, and sick leaves will require a new VSC prior to resuming employment with this Centre

Board Members: All Members of the Day Care Board of Directors must obtain a PRC and sign a Confirmation of non-interaction with children at the start of their term. An Offence Declaration must be signed annually within 15 days of the original search, for the duration of their term.

Appendix "A" - Procedures for Addressing Parent Issues and Concerns

Nature of Issue or Concern	Steps for Parent and/or Guardian to Report Issue/Concern:	Steps for Staff and/or Licensee in responding to issue/concern:
<p>Program Room-Related Ex: schedule, sleep arrangements, toilet training, indoor/outdoor program activities, feeding arrangements, etc.</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to - the classroom staff directly or - the Supervisor (905) 688-3191 or sandra@stthomaschurch.ca</p>	<p>- Address the issue/concern at the time it is raised or - Arrange for a meeting with the parent/guardian within five (5) business days or at the parent's earliest convenience.</p> <p>Document the issues/concerns in detail.</p> <p>Documentation should include: - the date and time the issue/concern was received; - the name of the person who received the issue/concern; - the name of the person reporting the issue/concern; - the details of the issue/concern; and - any steps taken to resolve the issue/concern and/or information given to the parent/guardian regarding next steps or referral.</p>
<p>General, Centre- or Operations-Related E.g: child care fees, hours of operation, staffing, waiting lists, menus, etc.</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to - the Executive Director (905) 688-3191 or heather.campbell@stthomaschurch.ca</p>	<p>Provide contact information for the appropriate person if the person notified is unable to address the matter.</p> <p>Ensure the investigation of the issue/concern is initiated by the appropriate party within [1] business day or as soon as reasonably possible thereafter.</p>
<p>Staff-, Director-, and/or Licensee-Related</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to - the individual directly or - the Executive Director (905) 688-3191 or heather.campbell@stthomaschurch.ca</p> <p>All issues or concerns about the conduct of staff, students, etc. that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the Executive Director or designate as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.</p>	<p>Document reasons for delays in writing. Provide a resolution or outcome to the parent(s)/guardian(s) who raised the issue/concern.</p>
<p>Student / Volunteer-Related</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to - the staff responsible for supervising the volunteer or student or - to the Supervisor (905) 688-3191 or sandra@stthomaschurch.ca</p> <p>All issues or concerns about the conduct of students and/or volunteers that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the supervisor as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.</p>	

Escalation of Issues or Concerns: Where parents/guardians are not satisfied with the response or outcome of an issue or concern, they may escalate the issue or concern verbally or in writing to the Chair of the Day Care Board.

Issues/concerns related to compliance with requirements set out in the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* and Ontario Regulation 137/15 should be reported to the Ministry of Education's Child Care Quality Assurance and Licensing Branch.

Issues/concerns may also be reported to other relevant regulatory bodies (e.g. local public health department, police department, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Labour, fire department, College of Early Childhood Educators, etc.) where appropriate.

Contacts:

(905) 688-3191

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heather.campbell@stthomaschurch.ca

Sandy Di Maria RECE, Supervisor
sandra@stthomaschurch.ca

Kelsey Knoll RECE, Assistant Supervisor
kelsey@stthomaschurch.ca

Family and Children's Services Niagara: 905 937-7731

College of Early Childhood Educators 1- 888-961-8558