

Inclusion Policy

Children of all abilities are accepted into Deer Lake Child Care and families interested in having their child attend the program will be given an equal opportunity for admission. A waiting list may be maintained and children will be accepted from the list on a first come first served basis. Personal individual and family information will be gathered during the enrollment process and this information will assist educators in adapting and modifying their program to meet the needs of the children and families. Deer Lake Child Care will offer a staff ratio that allows for educators to collaborate, observe and support all children.

Early childhood educators at Deer Lake Child Care use developmentally appropriate practices and consider the unique needs of all children when planning. Staff will make every attempt to make any adaptations or modifications necessary to meet the needs of the children. Schedules, routines and activities are flexible and early childhood educators will work with therapists, special educators and other professionals to integrate individual accommodations, modifications and strategies into classroom routines and activities. Any adaptations will be reviewed with families and other professionals supporting the child. It is the intention of Deer Lake Child Care that all families and children feel represented in their classroom.

Confidentiality applies to all verbal and written information about potential, enrolling and previously enrolled children and their families. All staff will be briefed on the need for confidentiality and will be expected to fulfill their obligation to respect the protection of privacy. Written records will be stored in a secure location with access limited to the educators. No information will be released about a child and the parent/legal guardian during enrolment or transition to another receiving program or school without first receiving the written permission of the parent/guardian. This excludes the responsibility held by early childhood educators as mandated reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect.

Training and support is provided to ensure that all staff are comfortable, confident and competent to meet the developmental and educational needs of all children. All staff receive an orientation on inclusion policies. Weekly staff meetings are seen as essential to allow time for educators to collaborate and discuss their observations.

Many children in our programs are supported by developmental and outside professionals. Deer Lake Child Care welcomes those professionals and works with them to assure the child's success. The service provider is encouraged to provide services to the child in the context of the early childhood classroom environment and the educators and the service provider work collaboratively to determine the best strategies to support the child in the group setting. Deer Lake Child Care feels strongly about the stated philosophy of their centre and will bring this to the table while collaborating with outside professionals.

We often have families that join our program that come with 'Support Guides', 'Care Plans' or developmental/health reports that come from outside professionals. While these greatly assist us learning about your child, part of our practice is to get to know your child first, before reading outside professional reports. This helps us to learn who your child is within the context of our program and philosophy, to then review those reports and use them as appropriate in our

practice. In this case, we work to create our own 'Care Plans' in coordination with the family, and any outside professionals (if applicable) in order to best support your child's healthy development. This could also include modifying or adjusting the program in order to meet the individual's needs. We believe that you the family are in charge of your own 'team' of professionals as you know your child best, and what works best for your lives.

Care plans may also be created to support children when we see an area that the child could benefit from some focus support work or learning goals. For example if a child would benefit from focusing on self regulation strategies, or language/communication tools or skills. This could also include modifying or adjusting the program in order to meet the individual's needs. We would work with the family to develop strategies to implement in our program (and possibly at home) to foster growth in that area. We ultimately aim to foster children's healthy development through goals.

Monthly reviews of care plans (or more frequently as needed) as a staff team are done to ensure optimal success for your child.

We believe in an enhanced staffing approach to supporting children in our programs. We have a higher than average educator to child ratio and we use small groups as a part of our programs. We believe that all children are best supported with these small groups and both peer and adult support to build skills in all areas of development. Some children will receive funding support from Supported Child Development or other funding sources and this staffing will be used to further enhance our teams. We DO NOT believe in a 1:1 approach in our classrooms and believe that this can actually stunt a child's ability to develop. At the start of the school year we will have a child focus on building a relationship with one educator and will slowly increase the relationships to include the other educators and peers as the child is ready. We believe that relationship building and social and emotional skills development is the most important skill we can support your child in learning and this will always be our priority.

If your child starts in our program and we feel they would benefit from staffing support we would work with you to find solutions to helping your child stay successful in our program. Communication surrounding inclusion of all families is imperative. If at any time you have concerns about our inclusion policies or practices please speak to us immediately.

At Deer Lake Child Care, we are an Anti-Racism program. As defined by the Canadian Government, "Anti-racism is the practice of identifying, challenging, preventing, eliminating and changing the values, structures, policies, programs, practices and behaviours that perpetuate racism." Racism divides communities and fuels fear and animosity. We must acknowledge racism and discrimination in order to work to overcome it. We see the diversity within our community as a strength. In light of our belief of children as caring, intelligent, capable and active participants of their communities, we are committed to empowering them to learn and explore history and cultures within developmentally appropriate contexts and to embrace with an open mind, the differences and the likeness of their peers and communities as a whole. As we work to foster a more just, inclusive and accepting community and society, we believe the children are at the forefront of this important work, often teaching and reminding us of its importance, as the future citizens of this world.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/multiculturalism-anti-racism/anti-racism>