
Parent Handbook

Tree of Life Childcare Centre

Cassandra Adams, RECE

2621 Highway 38, Kingston, ON, K7P 2Y7 • (613) 507-5743 • cassyadams@gmail.com



Welcome to Tree of Life Childcare Centre!

Cassy Adams is the Owner/Operator of Tree of Life Childcare Centre and Tree of Life Nursery School. She is a Registered Early Childhood Educator who has worked exclusively in the childcare field for the past 7 years, including positions in three Kingston childcare centres and, most recently, owning a successful non-licensed at-home childcare center. Through her education and employment experience, she has gained a comprehensive understanding of and appreciation for the extensive requirements involved in providing enriching, educational and overall effective childcare. As a mother of two, she has a genuine passion and love for working with children and their families and looks forward to partnering with parents/guardians to enhance their child's education.

This parent handbook is designed to outline the details of Tree of Life Childcare Centre including: vision statement, overview of policies and procedures, programming and curriculum (including a sample program plan), as well as pertinent information for parents interested in enrolling their child in Tree of Life.

Philosophy and Vision Statement

Our vision is to create a childcare centre that will provide high-quality childcare and education that enhances and encourages growth in all developmental domains: physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual. Through modeling positive behaviors rooted in strong values, children are taught the importance of loving relationships, mutual respect, care for the environment, and a passion for creatively exploring and understanding the world around them.

Hours of Operation

Tree of Life Childcare Centre and Tree of Life Nursery School will run 12 months a year with the exception of days outlined in the section entitled Holidays and Vacation Days on page 3.

Tree of Life Childcare Centre will be open Monday to Friday from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm.

Tree of Life Nursery School will operate the Toddler Program Tuesday and Thursday from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm and the Preschool Program Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm.

In the event that a child is picked up after closing, a late fee of \$25 will be added to the enrollment fees, which are outlined on page 4.

Holidays and Vacation Days

Tree of Life Childcare Center and Nursery School will be closed on all statutory holidays:

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

A regular enrollment fee will be charged to all children enrolled at Tree of Life for all of the above statutory holidays, however, there will be no fee applied to additional days when the centre is closed (Christmas break and summer vacation).

Tree of Life will be closed December 24th to January 2nd. If January 2nd falls on a weekend, the centre will re-open the first Monday of the New Year.

Additionally, Tree of Life will be closed the last two weeks of August. These additional weeks of closure will make up the vacation time for all staff and children. We suggest that vacations be planned with the centre's closing in mind. Written reminders will be given two weeks prior to closure.

Admission and Discharge from the Program

Children will be enrolled into Tree of Life's programs as space allows and according to their position on the centre's waiting list. An admission consultation will be arranged upon request which will provide parents/guardians the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the layout and structure of the facilities as well as become familiar with employees.

Parents/guardians will be provided with an application package which must be completed in full prior to a childcare space being held (spaces will only be held for full-time care). This package includes an application form, questionnaire about the child and family, signed compliance to Tree of Life's policies and procedures outlined in the parent handbook and a non-refundable enrollment fee of \$40. Additionally, up-to-date immunization records must be provided prior to the enrollment of a child into the program.

Two weeks written notice is required should parents/guardians choose to withdraw a child from the program. If there is insufficient notice, parents/guardians will be required to pay an amount equal to two week's tuition.

Tree of Life Childcare Centre has grounds to terminate services if policies are not followed, enrollment fees are not paid on time, or if the program is unable to meet the needs of the child and family. It is our policy to arrange a meeting between parents/guardians and the Owner/Operator to discuss the childcare needs of the family as well as provide one written warning to parents/guardians prior to the decision to terminate childcare services.

Arrival and Departure

Children strongly benefit from consistency and a predictable routine. As such, Tree of Life recommends that families establish fixed times for arrival to the centre and departure at the end of the day.

Additionally, dependable arrival and departure times are required to ensure that the centre is always appropriately staffed for the number of children present at any given time.

All children must enter the classroom with a legal adult (18 years or older) and report the child's arrival to the appropriate teacher. During the arrival routine, we ask that parents/guardians allow ample time to engage in a brief discussion with teachers about providing information regarding the previous night and morning. This assists the teacher in thoroughly meeting the needs of each child and will also help facilitate adjustment to the day.

During daily departure, children will only be released to parents/guardians or to designated individuals outlined on the child's application form. Any person unfamiliar to the teachers on staff will be asked for photo identification before the child will be released from the program. Any changes to the pick-up list must be done in writing and kept on file with the child's application form.

Enrollment Fees and Payment Policy

The following is a chart outlining the enrollment fees for each age group and program represented at Tree of Life Childcare Centre:

Age Group	Daily Fee
Toddler (18 months - 2.5 years)	\$46
Preschool (2.5 - 5 years)	\$41

Nursery School Age Group	Monthly Fee
Toddler (Two days/week)	\$180
Preschool (Three days/week)	\$210

A non-refundable \$40 enrollment fee is required upon registering a child for any Tree of Life Childcare Program.

Clothing and Personal Possessions

Children should arrive at Tree of Life in casual and comfortable clothing that provides them the flexibility to play freely without concern of becoming dirty. Seasonal and weather appropriate clothing should be available at the centre at all times (e.g. mittens, hats and snow-pants during the winter, sun hat during the summer).

The following is a list which outlines items that each child will need to have at the centre:

- Indoor shoes
- A full change of clothes
- Diapers/pull-ups and wipes (if applicable)
- Tooth brush
- Sunscreen (during appropriate months)

Field Trips and Special Activities

Special Activities will be planned each week and will be outlined on the posted program plans for each group. When field trips are planned, a written notice will be given to parents providing information about the destination, time of the field trip, and the date it will take place. Also provided will be a Permission to Participate form that will have to be signed and returned to the child's teacher prior to the date of the trip.

Parents/guardians are welcome to attend any special event or field trip that is organized through Tree of Life.

Inclusion of Children with Special Needs

Tree of Life Childcare Centre is committed to providing exceptional childcare and early learning to all children through an inclusive approach. Tree of Life focuses on developing children's strengths and abilities while working with local community agencies to create and implement specialized plans (IPP's) for children with special needs.

Absence and Illness

In the event of illness that requires a child to be absent from childcare, Tree of Life must be notified as early in the morning as possible in order to continue with scheduled activities. We endeavor to provide uninterrupted play and learning experiences, therefore, the schedule and routine of the day is crucial.

Illnesses that require a child to remain at home include, but are not limited to, fever, vomiting, diarrhea, and any illness that prevents a child from participating in programmed activities (including outdoor play).

If a child becomes ill while at the centre and is unable to participate in programmed activities, parents/guardians will be contacted immediately and arrangements made for the child to go home. If staff are unsuccessful in reaching parents/guardians, the child's emergency contacts will be called.

Our policy stipulates that children with a fever above 38 degrees celsius (100.4 Fahrenheit) are to be sent home and continue to recover at home until they are symptom-free for a minimum of 24 hours (without the need of medication).

Children who are sick with vomiting or diarrhea (or a combination) are to remain at home until they have been symptom-free for a minimum of 48 hours. These guidelines are stipulated by the Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox & Addington Public Health Unit policies, which Tree of Life employees will use to assist in determining when a child should be excused from the program.

A maximum of 5 sick days per year is allotted for each child enrolled in full-time care without penalty. If absence exceeds 5 days or proper notification is not provided, the regular fee will be required for the missed day(s). Sick days cannot be carried forward if unused during the calendar year.

Accident Reports and Serious Occurrences

Tree of Life is committed to providing a safe and dependable environment for all children and staff. We recognize, however, that a guarantee cannot be made and occasionally accidents may occur. Due to this reality, Tree of Life has put into practice steps to avoid accidents and prevent them to the best of our ability. In the event that an accident does occur, an Accident Report Form will be completed which will provide detailed description to the parent/guardian about what occurred and what treatment or care was used for their child. Parents/guardians, the teacher, and the Owner/Operator will all sign this document and information will be kept on file at the centre.

All accidents, including serious occurrences, are documented and appropriate notification given to parents/guardians and the Ministry of Education. A Serious

Occurrence Notification will be posted on the communication board for 10 days if a serious incident occurs at the centre.

Immunization Records

Every child enrolled in Tree of Life Childcare Center is required to have up-to-date immunization records on file, as required by the Day Nurseries Act. Any exemptions to this will require a written explanation from the child's parent/guardian as well as written approval by a medical professional. All records are securely locked in the child's individual file to ensure safety of information and confidentiality.

Administration of Medications

Staff of Tree of Life are permitted to administer only prescription medication unless written approval and explanation from a medical professional is provided, which stipulates the frequency and dosage of non-prescription medication.

All medication must be given directly to the child's teacher and stored in a locked space, accessible only by employees. Medications are never to be left in the child's bag or in the locker area.

Prior to administering medication, parents must provide written authorization and complete a Medication Consent Form. The Medication Consent Form will include the name of the medication, dosage, times the medication is to be given and any possible side effects. In addition, all medication must be in the original container and be clearly labeled with the child's name, name of medication, the date of purchase and instructions on administering to the child.

Any new medication or change in prescription must be updated by the parent/guardian on the Medication Consent Form.

The employee assigned to administer medication will ensure that the medication meets the following criteria prior to administering to the child (The Five Rights):

- the right child
- the right medication
- the right dosage
- the right time
- the right administration instructions (for example by mouth or ear)

All medications administered at Tree of Life will be recorded on the Medication Record Log to ensure the procedural accuracy and provide documentation for all medical information.

Behaviour Management

Tree of Life Childcare Center is committed to encouraging and modeling positive interactions and behaviours. If an undesired behaviour occurs our policy is to:

- 1) Gently remind the child what behaviour is appropriate and expected
- 2) Redirect the child to a new activity
- 3) If undesired behaviour continues or progresses the child will have a short age-appropriate quiet time

Quiet times consist of individual play with a choice of quiet time activity. The goal of a quiet time is to redirect the child to an individual project that will assist in calming and promoting a positive change in behaviour. Achieving a positive change in behaviour will indicate the child is ready to participate in group activities.

Tree of Life believes modeling positive behaviour is the most effective way to guide children toward loving relationships and mutual respect, therefore, children are always treated and spoken to in an affirmative and courteous manner.

Corporal punishment is never permitted in any situation. This includes, but is not limited to, hitting, slapping, biting, restraining, confining a child to a room by locking exits or the use of a lockable room or structure to confine a child, kicking, humiliation or undermining a child's self-respect, deliberate harsh or degrading measures, or deprivation of basic needs (food, shelter, clothing, bedding, etc.) These prohibited practices apply to all employees, volunteers, students, and parents/guardians while on the premises of Tree of Life.

Menus and Nutrition

Tree of Life adheres to Canada's Food Guide when planning weekly menus which include a morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack each day (morning snack only for the nursery school program). All snacks served will consist of at least two different food groups and all lunches will include foods from all four food groups and one additional fruit or vegetable.

Menus for the current week and the following week will be clearly posted on the communication board outside of each classroom. Any changes or substitutions to the menu will be indicated directly on the menu the day the change occurred.

Manners and meal time behaviours will be modeled by all employees, volunteers, and students, and will be taught to children according to their age and stage of development.

Parents/guardians are to notify the centre if a child has any allergies or dietary preferences with written description of the child's needs. Tree of Life strives to accommodate your child's individual dietary requirements when possible.

Fire Safety Procedure

Each room used by Tree of Life Childcare Center will have a Fire Safety Procedure Plan posted in a visible place on the wall which states the church portable (located to the North of the church) as the established evacuation location for the centre. All employees, volunteers and students working in the centre will review the Fire Safety Procedure Plan and sign off on it annually.

Additionally, staff and children will take part in monthly fire alarm testing as well as monthly fire drills. During this time, employees will ensure that children understand the procedures involved in the event of a fire and provide opportunity to answer questions or engage in teaching opportunities.

Anaphylaxis Policy

Tree of Life Childcare Center is 100% nut free. We recognize that there are many anaphylactic allergies, therefore, steps need to be taken to ensure that children with life-threatening allergies are properly protected in a childcare environment. Special care will be taken within the center to avoid exposure to allergy-causing substances.

The following parent/guardian co-operation is requested:

Food products or drinks are not permitted to be brought into the center by parents or children. This includes items that are in backpacks and left on the child's hook. Any food for special events must be pre-approved by the Owner/Operator.

It is recommended that parents/guardians avoid giving products containing peanut butter or nuts to children at home before coming to the centre. If this occurs parents/guardians must wash their child's hands and faces with soap and water as well as brush their teeth before entering the building. For children with anaphylactic allergies even the scent of the allergen can trigger a life-threatening reaction.

Parents/guardians who have children with known anaphylactic allergies are required to complete an Anaphylactic Individual Emergency Plan for their child prior to enrollment in the program which must be signed by the parent/guardian as well as the child's doctor. Parents/guardians will be required to review this document with the Owner/Operator as well as the teachers directly working with the child. All employees, volunteers, and students will also review the

information outlined in the Individual Emergency Plan and any necessary training or education regarding the specific needs of the child will be provided.

All children with anaphylactic allergies must have a prescription Epinephrine Auto-injector (Epipen) that remains at the centre at all times. By designating one Epipen for childcare use only, the risk of forgetting to bring it to the centre is eliminated and attendance is not interrupted. If a child arrives without their prescribed Epipen the child will not be permitted to stay.

All medications, including Epipen's, are to be handed directly to the teacher on duty when the child arrives. Medications are not to be in the care of volunteers or students working within the program.

Tree of Life Childcare Centre recommends that all children with an anaphylactic allergy wear a Medic Alert bracelet at all times identifying their condition.

Supervision of Students and Volunteers

Children enrolled in Tree of Life will not be left alone with volunteers or students at any time during the day. Employed staff of Tree of Life will be the only acceptable adults used to meet child-staff ratios.

Parent/Guardian Participation and Communication

Tree of Life provides ample opportunity for open communication between parents/guardians and teachers. We believe that partnering and working together is the most effective way to provide the very best start in a child's life.

Avenues of communication include, but are not limited to, weekly program plans posted on the communication board outside of each classroom, daily interactions between employees and parents/guardians during arrival and departure from the centre, and semi-annual progress reports which include a comment and questionnaire portion.

Semi-annual Progress Reports

The ongoing progress of your child is of utmost importance to employees of Tree of Life. Semi-annual reports will be provided for each family outlining the goals that have been worked on and the progress made over that portion of the year. This is an integral method for communicating the accomplishments of developmental learning objectives as well as areas that may require more focus or specialized assistance. Progress reports will outline developmental achievements (touching on each developmental domain), provide examples of creative art activities, pictures of your child at play, areas of current interest, and ways that their education can be enhanced and furthered at home.

Consequently, there will be opportunity provided through the questionnaire portion of the progress reports for parents to comment on how they feel their child is progressing including suggestions and questions regarding their child's early education and care.

Curriculum and Programing

Curriculum planning and program development are key components to the day-to-day operations of Tree of Life. Tree of Life provides play-based, themed curriculum that connects all planned activities to developmental goals outline for the week (see sample program plan for examples).

Posted program plans will provide families with an overview of what they can expect their child to learn and how this teaching is to be structured. The framework of curriculum planning is organized so that children are given an active and indispensable role in their learning experiences while allowing for changes and expansion to planned curriculum.