



MIXED AGE GROUP POLICY

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| Updated/Approved MELCC: | Sept 2018 | Reviewed: | August 2018 |
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Preschool/Infant

During the day, Infants, toddlers and preschool children will be primarily in their designated areas. There may be intervals of times throughout the day where groups of preschool, toddler or infant children spend time together, following Manitoba Childcare regulations and Best Practices. This is most likely to occur during

- Opening (6:45 am -7:45 am) in the designated opening preschool or infant room. (The preferred room being in the infant room)
- Daily outdoor time in one of the 3 playgrounds located at the BBE centre, which is safe for all age groups
- Closing (5:15 pm - 6:00 pm) in the designated closing preschool or infant room. (The preferred room being the infant room).
- Other times may include when children come together for activities or events for a short period of time in one of the preschool rooms or infant/toddler room.
- When a infant/toddler is visiting a preschool room, prepping for their transition to the preschool program

During the times that the children come together in a mixed age group setting, the preferred room will be one that is accommodating to infants/toddlers. Small materials and equipment will be adjusted and placed high during the visit, staff will be familiar with the space and monitor the children closely. If preschool children are visiting the infant program, (for example, at the end of the day) materials will be provided that meet the needs of the preschool children and are safe for the infant/toddler children.

School Age Scheduling

Children in kindergarten (“kinders”) are considered pre-school age and require a ratio of 1 staff for every 10 children. School age children in grades 1 to 5 require a ratio of 1 staff for every 15 children.

Children in the kindergarten and school age programs at BBE are often in mixed ratios, such as before and after school, in-service days, and school breaks. A maximum of 10 kinders are in a group with 15 school age and 2 staff. The exception is between the hours of 8:20 am – 3:00 pm during the hours that the kindergarten program runs on a daily basis during the school year.

BBE utilizes 4 rooms at Phoenix School that are used for after school programming. The children are divided amongst these 4 rooms and spend approximately 1 hour in these groups before joining together either for outside time, in the gym for physical activities or between room 5 and the main room.

Developmental Benefits

These groups as noted above will have the opportunity to play and inter-act with one another at different times during the day. It is our belief that rich exchanges take place when children are permitted to play, socialize and interact with one another, fostering physical, social, emotional and cognitive development.

This time provides an opportunity for siblings to play with each other as well as develop; friendships, empathy, enhanced learning, nurturing and understanding of differences among the children. All of these occasions will lead to enhanced development for all children as modelling and observation occur.

The children will follow a similar schedule and routine, with differences allowed for each mixed age group noted above for varying needs such as naps, nutrition, and attention level. Children will be offered/provided with safe activities, materials and toys that are suited for their individual needs.

The Early Learning Curriculum, as set forth in the Parent Policy, will be used as a guideline for play, inclusion and development for all children. Children will be provided time to play in individual or small group activities. All children are encouraged to play interactively with direct supervision.

Ratio

Ratios will be met as per regulation 8(2)(b) , where children are cared for in mixed age groups, the ratio will be calculated on a pro-rated basis, based on the following;

| Age of Children | Staff | # of Children | Maximum Grp Size |
|----------------------------|-------|---------------|------------------|
| 3 months – 24 months | 1 | 4 | 8 |
| 2 – 3 years | 1 | 6 | 12 |
| 2 – 6 | 1 | 8 | 16 |
| 4 – 5 years (kindergarten) | 1 | 10 | 20 |
| 6 – 12 years | 1 | 15 | 30 |

Safety

Children's safety is a priority and supervision of children will be closely monitored. Safety policies and procedures will be in compliance with Section 5(g) and Section 17 of the licensing manual. Evacuation procedures and emergency procedures will follow the BBE Emergency Evacuation Plan outlined in the Enhanced Safety Manual, which is reviewed and updated annually or on an as-needed basis during the year. Portable first aid kits are accessible and contain emergency contact information for all children. All staff have current first aid training and attend an annual training session each year with the local Health Nurse. Fire, tornado and lock down drills will be practiced when in mixed age group settings several times a year and recorded in our drill log sheet.

All BBE policies and procedures will be followed.