



PLP 101 Access and Equity

Park Lawn Preschool Inc. develops policies, procedures and practices in accordance with our Access and Equity Policy and is inclusive and free of racism and bias. We strive to ensure centre and head office communications are sensitive, inclusive and non-discriminatory.

1. Inclusion

Park Lawn Preschool Inc. welcomes all children and families and values acceptance and appreciates the diversity that each individual brings. Children and families, regardless of race, age, ability/disability, language, culture, ethnicity or family are entitled to access our child care services. Our early childhood educators draw on a variety of experiences and methodologies and provide guided learning experiences to ensure that children will become more self-disciplined and be on a positive road for life-long learning.

Our plan of guidance refers to a plan of teaching young children as they learn appropriate behaviours. We may view the process of changing a child's random behaviour to controlled acceptable behaviour as discipline and will endeavour to make the experience a positive one. However, our goal remains the same. Through consultation and co-operation, we expect to maintain our standards and achieve the very best results for the children in our centres.

Children with special needs require special care and, to the best of our ability, we will provide the care and nurturing required. With the full co-operation of parents, early learning and care staff, city and provincial agencies, such as George Hull Centre for Children and Families, we strive to create an atmosphere that is positive for all the children placed in our care. It must be noted, however, that if full co-operation is not forthcoming and the child care cannot meet the needs of the child, then alternative care may become necessary.

In order to achieve our goals the following steps will be taken:

- Develop age appropriate plans that are consistent, reasonable, of interest and clearly identifiable to the child.
- Ensure up-to-date individualized support plans are in place for children with special needs, following plans put in place by agencies, such as George Hull Centre, or using *Park Lawn Preschool Inc's Early Learning Individual Support Plan (Appendix A)*.
- Individual Support Plans are kept in the child's file and reviewed at least annually to ensure they are current, and reviewed with staff, volunteers and students when they start, annually and when changes are made.
- Create positive interactions with language and eye contact.
- Set clear and reasonable expectations focusing on the positive and developing the child's ability to decide on an appropriate, socially acceptable solution to a problem.
- Anticipate and intervene in potentially difficult situations.
- Reinforce appropriate behaviour in order to foster positive self-esteem.
- Assist the child in expressing emotions in an acceptable manner.

- Work toward gaining the child's trust and respect, at all times building supportive, warm and trusting relationships with the child.

2. Anti-Racism

Park Lawn Preschool Inc. promotes positive attitudes in all persons and believes in the inherent dignity and equality of everyone in our centres. Partnerships between the child care centres and the community is based on trust, understanding and mutual respect, enhancing educational opportunities for all. Park Lawn Preschool Inc.'s child care centres develop programs and supply learning materials that promote self-esteem, pride in one's own culture and positive attitudes toward people of all racial and ethnic backgrounds. To assist with promoting awareness, and to develop the necessary knowledge and skills, Park Lawn Preschool Inc. endeavours to integrate activities about race and ethnic diversity into our daily program.

All Racial or Ethnic incidents are reportable as a Serious Occurrence.

Definition

Racial incidents involve prejudice or discrimination against a person or people of any culture, ethnic or racial background. Racial incidents can come in any; verbal, physical, exclusion or avoidance, written and/or inaction/passive behaviours.

According to Toronto Children's Services' Guidelines for responding to racial incidents in child care (1998), below are some indicators of behaviours:

1. Verbal behaviour

Name calling, insults, threats, slurs, degrading or unwelcome remarks, racial jokes, condescension, discourteous treatment that undermines self respect, jokes, innuendos, and/or taunting.

2. Physical behaviour

Threatening or rude gestures, physical intimidation or assault, insulting actions or practical jokes and vandalism.

3. Exclusion or avoidance behaviour

Refusing to talk, play, work or associate with someone because of their race, culture or Aboriginal status, religion or language.

4. Written material

Producing, displaying and/or distributing racist, derogatory or offensive literature or materials, jokes, pictures or cartoons, graffiti and/or compositions that imply the inferiority or superiority of a group of people.

5. Inaction/passive behaviour

Not taking an incident seriously, and not acting to resolve an incident. Dismissing an incident as unintentional or too trivial.

Park Lawn Preschool Inc. will NOT tolerate any expression of racial or ethnic bias in any form by children, parents, staff, students, volunteers or community members.

Resolution Procedures for Incidents Involving Children

Children are encouraged to report any racial incidents to an adult, the onus for reporting or responding are the responsibility of the adult; parent, teacher, board member, or any other adults involved. Once an incident occurs, it needs to be reported to the supervisor on site. The supervisor has primary responsibility for ensuring that the incident is investigated and reported to the Operations Manager.

Staff should support the children involved and explain to them why the behaviour is inappropriate. Some key elements taken from Toronto Children's Services' Guidelines for responding to racial incidents in child care (1998) are:

1. Provide support to the targeted child immediately and acknowledge the hurt they have suffered. This will help the hurt child to re-establish self-esteem.
2. Speak to the children individually; the objective of speaking with the offender is to correct the behaviour, not to punish. The offender should be assisted in seeking appropriate ways to express themselves.
3. Incidents can be used as learning opportunities for all children.
4. Document incidents, indicating who was involved using first names only, and include as much detailed information as possible on how the incident was resolved.
5. Discuss the incident and its resolution with each child's parent.
6. Staff should review the frequency of incidents, both within groups and with specific children.

If other children were present at the time and witnessed the incident, staff must try to resolve the matter by talking to these children and explain why the behaviour is inappropriate.

Different strategies can be used to support children in the inappropriateness of this behaviour; group activities, group problem solving, program and curriculum development with a focus on positive interactions and conflict resolution.

Consequences

For first time occurrences, consequences are developed based on each individual child's level of understanding and their experience. Staff will work with children and parents to support positive interactions and conflict resolution. Parents will be consulted on possible consequences.

Staff at Park Lawn Preschool Inc. will work closely with parents to prevent reoccurrences from happening. We will seek consultation with outside agencies and create strategies to instil positive

behaviours. However, if reoccurring incidents continue and cannot be resolved then withdrawal from Park Lawn Preschool Inc. programs following our **Withdrawal Procedure** may be required.

3. Anti Bias

Park Lawn Preschool Inc. is committed to creating and maintaining an anti bias environment at every setting, which values diversity. We conclude we have succeeded in our task when the total learning, environment respects, accepts and includes all the different children, staff, parents, and visitors to the setting, their backgrounds and beliefs.

Areas of Potential Bias:

- Ability
- Age
- Appearance
- Belief
- Class
- Culture
- Family Composition
- Gender
- Race
- Sexuality

Creating an Anti Bias Environment

- Raise awareness of anti bias in all aspects of the program.
- Look at how our practices affect the children and others around us.
- Discuss with children, as age appropriate, any anti bias issues to assess their understanding of diversity.
- Employ observations, discussions in groups, one-on-one talks, activities, materials, play and books.
- Assess the equipment in all areas of the child care. Are they adequate? Do we need more equipment that reflects diversity? Can the children learn from such equipment?
- Make plans to replace or buy materials and equipment that reflects diversity.
- Involve parents in anti bias practice so that staff can gain sound knowledge of families' backgrounds and use information in a positive way.
- Make observations of the child care setting and evaluate if all areas are creating a positive, inclusionary and non biased environment.
- From these observations, where needed, make a long term action plan to monitor necessary changes.
- Deal with all issues of anti-bias or ethnic discrimination immediately.
- Develop and obtain resources to assist in the resolution of issues of anti-bias or ethnic discrimination.
- Constantly adapt the environment and equipment to the growing needs of the children ensuring all children are included.
- Keep parents involved in all issues so that the message is reaching home and children have the consistency of care needed.
- Ensure equipment needed by children with physical impairments is integrated with daily activities in the classroom and is not brought out only at specific times.

Equipment and Materials to Promote Anti Bias:

- Book center books depicting different occupations, people, countries, cultures, religions, sexes, and family make ups
- Multi-language books
- Posters illustrating diversity
- Foods from around the world, including utensils in the Dramatic center
- Art materials reflecting a variety of cultures: beads, multi-coloured cloths, ribbons, stickers, etc.
- Images of male and female persons working in different occupations as well as working in the home
- Images of elderly persons as part of the community
- Able and disabled people shown in different roles, including career, parenting and recreational

Resolution Procedure

Park Lawn Preschool Inc. takes incidents of bias and/or racial and ethnic discrimination very seriously. The procedure below outlines steps that will be taken in an event any person witnesses a negative racial, ethnic, and/or bias incident involving children, staff, parents, students or volunteers.

1. Incident will be reported directly to the Supervisor.
2. Supervisor will report directly to the Operations Manager and/or Board of Directors.
3. A meeting will be set up with the perpetrator, the Supervisor and the Operations Manager to review the incident and a review of the incident in light of this policy will be made.
4. Support will be given to the victim and education will be offered to the perpetrator regarding the matter.
5. Incidents of racism and bias are to be reported as a Serious Occurrence.
6. Should incidents persist after an investigation and the perpetrator fails to comply with the Access and Equity Policy, further measures will be taken.
 - Parent/Families: May result in withdrawal of child care services for their child.
 - Staff Member: Disciplinary measures will be taken by the Operations Manager and the Board of Directors and may include dismissal.