

Children's Circle Montessori School

Playground Safety Policy and Procedures and Outdoor Play Policy

Date Policy and Procedures Established: September 6, 2011

Date Policy and Procedures Updated: September 1, 2024

Purpose

Outdoor play is an integral part of the daily schedule and plays an important role in the development of children's overall well-being.

Children thrive in programs where they can engage in vigorous physical play that present manageable levels of challenge. In addition to providing physical benefits, active play outdoors strengthens functioning in cognitive areas such as perception, attention, creative problem solving, and complex thinking.

While these environments need to be safe, it is also important for them to provide children with interesting opportunities for a reasonable degree of risk-taking.

The purpose of this policy is to set out the responsibilities of the licensee, staff, placement students and volunteers in ensuring that the playground spaces provide a safe and well-supervised environment for children's play.

This policy is intended to fulfill the obligations set out under Ontario Regulation 137/15 for a Playground Safety Policy.

Playground Safety Policy and Procedures

- Children's Circle Montessori School will ensure that there are enough activities available that are appropriate for the children's age, learning and developmental needs during outdoor play.
- The maximum capacity of the playground will not be exceeded at any time.
- New playground materials, fixed structures and surfaces created/constructed, installed or renovated will meet the requirements set out in the Canadian Standards Association.

Playground Inspections

- Playground, which consists of a north side and a south side, inspections will be conducted on a daily, monthly and annual basis.
- All playground inspections will be documented. All documentation and reports will be kept in Playground Safety files.

Repairs and Maintenance

- All issues identified in the inspections, requiring attention, will be documented in the Playground Repair Log and addressed in a timely manner. The amount of time required will depend on the scope of the work and who is required to conduct the repairs.
- Documentation on the Playground Repair Log will also include:
 - the date the issue was identified;
 - documentation of what steps and efforts have been taken to address any identified items which cannot be repaired immediately due to circumstances out of Children's Circle Montessori School's control; and
 - the date the related repairs were completed.
- Where issues requiring attention cannot be addressed immediately, section off the area with the hazard, deficiency, repair or replacement if it poses a hazard to children. Children will be always supervised during outdoor play to ensure that they do not approach or use spaces that are sectioned off pending repairs.
- Any repairs requiring alterations or renovations to the playground premises will not begin until site or playground plans are approved by a Ministry of Education Director.

Supervision

- Children will be always supervised during outdoor play.
- Staff will position themselves throughout the playground and rotate their position where required to ensure children can be visually supervised while engaging in play.
- Staff to child ratios will be always maintained on the playground.
- Reduced ratios will never be used on the playground.
- Toddler children and Casa children will not play on the same side of the playground at the same time.
- Staff will ensure that both gates are securely closed.

Documentation and Report Retention

- All documentation related to the playground will be:
 - Kept for three years from the date they were created.
 - Made available for Ministry of Education staff to review.

Playground Safety Procedures

Daily - Before using the playground:

1. One staff member must complete the Playground Daily Inspection Log, a.m., before 8:30a.m.
2. One staff member must complete the Playground Daily Inspection Log, p.m., before 2:45p.m.

When issues requiring attention cannot be addressed immediately:

- i. report the hazard, deficiency, repair or replacement to Daniela Purves, Owner/Operator, who will act and record the information in the Playground Repair Log; and
 - ii. section off the area with the hazard, deficiency, repair or replacement if it poses a hazard to children.
3. In preparation to exit the building to use the playground or go outdoors for a neighbourhood walk, a lead classroom staff member must:
 - i. ensure all emergency medication accompanies children, where applicable;
 - ii. ensure all emergency contact information is readily available;
 - iii. ensure the attendance record is readily available;
 - iv. ensure that the allergy and dietary restriction list is readily available;
 - v. ensure appropriate steps related to environmental factors have been implemented (For example: children are appropriately dressed for the weather, and
 - vi. conduct head counts prior to leaving the classroom, and while transitioning them to the playground.

Daily - While using the playground:

1. Staff must:
 - i. position themselves in areas that ensure that all children and areas of the playground can be properly supervised;
 - ii. ensure there is access to drinking water;
 - iii. complete a head count of children prior to leaving the playground;
 - iv. implement the goals and approaches of the program statement, such as engaging with the children in play; and
 - v. refrain from using outdoor time to socialize with other staff, placement students, or volunteers during outdoor play.

When a child is injured on the playground, staff must:

- i. administer first aid, where appropriate;
 - ii. contact emergency services, where appropriate;

Playground Safety Procedures

- iii. notify the parent of the child in case of a serious injury and/or the child's head has been injured;
- iv. complete an Accident/Incident Report and send a copy to the child's parent/guardian; and
- v. follow the Serious Occurrence Policy and Procedures, where appropriate.

Daily - When returning from the playground:

1. Staff must:
 - i. conduct head counts transitioning indoors, and upon returning to the classroom; and
 - ii. ensure that attendance records, emergency medication, and children's emergency contact information are brought indoors with the group.

Monthly:

1. The Designated Supervisor must:
 - i. complete the Playground Monthly Inspection Log;
 - ii. keep the Playground Monthly Inspection Log with the Playground Safety files; and
 - iii. review the Playground Repair Log and follow up on any outstanding identified issues.

When issues requiring attention cannot be addressed immediately, the Designated Supervisor must:

- i. report the hazard, deficiency, repair or replacement to Daniela Purves, Owner/Operator, who will take action and record the information in the Playground Repair Log; and
- ii. section off the area with the hazard, deficiency, repair or replacement if it poses a hazard to children.

Annually:

1. Where the playground does not have fixed structures the Designated Supervisor must:

- i. complete the Playground Annual Inspection Log

2. When issues requiring attention cannot be addressed immediately, the Designated Supervisor must:

- i. report the hazard, deficiency, repair or replacement to Daniela Purves, Owner/Operator, who will take action and report the information in the Playground Repair Log; and
- ii. section off the area with the hazard, deficiency, repair or replacement if it poses a hazard to children.

Outdoor Play Policy

There are situations which will prohibit children from outdoor play in the playground:

Inclement weather

- If the playground is not safe (i.e. slippery due to icy surface), children will go for a Neighbourhood Walk if the sidewalks have been cleared and are safe to use;
 - The staff-to-child ratio remains the same for a Neighbourhood Walk as it is in the classroom and playground.
 - No major streets (i.e. Bovaird Drive West) are crossed.
- If the temperature is -15 degrees Celsius or colder, or -20 degrees Celsius or colder including the Wind Chill Factor, children will remain indoors for Gross Motor Play;
- If the Region of Peel or Environment Canada issues a Heat and/or Humidity Alert, a Thunderstorm Warning, a Tornado Warning, or a Poor Air Quality Advisory, children will remain indoors for Gross Motor Play.
- If it is raining, thundering, lightening, heavy snow fall, hailing and/or extreme winds children will remain indoors for Gross Motor Play.
- Staff have the discretion to bring a child or children inside if it is no longer healthy or safe to remain outside (i.e., a child overheating).

Parent/Guardian Consent

- If a parent/guardian has provided a Consent for a Child to Remain Indoors During Outdoor Play Form indicating that their child is not permitted to go outside for medical reasons, a child will remain indoors for Gross Motor Play. Please be mindful that if a child is well-enough to attend school, they should be well-enough to play outdoors, unless there are extenuating circumstances.
 - Written consent must be provided daily for a child to remain indoors; form will be provided.
 - Children are permitted to remain indoors for a maximum of 2 days within a week.
 - A doctor's note is required if a child needs to remain indoors for longer than 2 days within a week.
 - It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to ensure that a child has weather appropriate clothing to go outside.
 - Children will only be permitted to stay inside if staffing is available, ratios must be always maintained.

Regulatory Requirements: Ontario Regulation 137/15

Playground Safety Policy

24(4) Every licensee shall ensure that, at each childcare centre it operates, any outdoor play space, fixed play structure or surfacing under those structures that is constructed or renovated on or after August 29, 2016, meets the requirements set out in the Canadian Standards Association standard CAN/CSA-Z614-14, "Children's play spaces and equipment", as amended from time to time. O. Reg. 126/16, s. 18 (2).

(5) Every licensee shall ensure that at each childcare centre it operates,

- (a) a playground safety policy is developed that reflects the Canadian Standards Association standard mentioned in subsection (4) and indicates the roles and responsibilities of employees regarding safety on playgrounds;
- (b) daily, monthly and annual inspections of the outdoor place space, fixed play structures and surfacing are conducted in accordance with the requirements set out in the Canadian Standards Association standard mentioned in subsection (4);
- (c) a plan is developed on how issues or problems identified in a playground inspection will be addressed; and
- (d) a Playground Repair Log is maintained.