



PARENT HANDBOOK



Please retain this booklet for future reference.

519-471-4300

346 Wonderland Rd. S., London, Ontario N6K 1L3

www.lcc.on.ca

Your Program Information:

School: _____

Room: _____

Staff: _____

On Site Contact #: _____

Program Coordinator: _____

LONDON CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

London Children's Connection is a non-profit organization. We provide high quality child care programs and related services that encompass the care, education and guidance of children, from infancy to school age, in London and the surrounding area. By supporting children and families, we are helping to build caring communities.

Our organization operates under a volunteer Board of Directors comprised of parents from the programs and interested members of the community. Individual Advisory Committees for each program provide a formal link to facilitate communication between the parents and the staff.

From its inception in 1974, London Children's Connection has viewed child care from a "neighbourhood focus" and has endeavoured to respond creatively to the needs of families. Many of our programs operate within or near, an elementary school building. Programs offered within neighbourhood communities provide continuity in the lives of young children and promote the development of long term friendships.

London Children's Connection values diversity and strives to provide programs and services which are welcoming, comfortable and responsive to the needs of all children and their families. An inclusive environment is fostered through clearly stated policies and practices and accepting, respectful and supportive relationships among staff, children, their families and the community.

WE OFFER

- child care/early childhood education programs in various neighbourhoods and schools
- regulated home child care in over 50 approved caregivers' homes
- **before and after school programs in over 60 elementary schools**
- a Montessori preschool program
- a parent cooperative preschool
- **P.A. Day and summer programs**
- **a program ("I'm Home") designed to prepare older school age children for the transition from supervised care to safe, self-care**
- **a telephone support service for older children who are making the transition to self-care**
- a family resource centre in London West with community outreach sites

REGISTRATION

REGISTRATION PROCEDURE

The parent/guardian must complete a full registration package and meet with the Program Coordinator prior to the child's participation in the program.

The registration package includes:

1. Child Registration Form
2. Child Information Form
3. Consent Form
4. Medication Form (if applicable)
5. Fee Information
6. Deposit Confirmation Form

PLEASE NOTE:

1. All forms must be fully completed prior to your child's start date.
2. Parent/Guardian #1 on the registration form is the designated parent/guardian who will receive all written correspondence. This parent will also be issued the annual income tax receipt by the end of February. Should you request a duplicate income tax receipt beyond the past calendar year, there will be a fee charged.
3. Payment arrangements for the school year must accompany the registration package in order to process your child(ren)'s enrollment.

DEPOSIT FEE

All September registrations require a per child non-refundable deposit upon submission of the registration forms. The deposit fee "reserves" your child(ren)'s space in our program and is applied to child care fees when your child(ren) starts the school age program.

PAYMENT METHODS

Payment for your child(ren)'s enrollment is due in advance of care.

1. A completed Pre-Authorized Debit form is required at the time of registration. Automatic withdrawals for your child(ren)'s monthly child care fees will be processed the first business day of each month during the school year.
2. If Pre-Authorized Debit is not possible, a series of post-dated cheques for the school year (dated the first of each month) must be submitted prior to your child(ren)'s start date. Please make cheques payable to the School Age Program (or "SAP") and ensure that all the dates are correct.

Please feel free to contact us by the "PAD CNCL" date shown on the calendar, should you anticipate an issue with your payment.

There will be a service fee charged for returned Pre-Authorized Debit and cheques.

DETERMINING OUR FEES

Each year the Board of Directors establishes the fees at an amount that will cover the operating costs of the program. The cost of the program is averaged out over the ten month school term to arrive at a set monthly fee. The fees are based upon the school year occurring as scheduled; however, if unexpected circumstances arise, such as changes to the school year calendar, fee adjustments may be required.

Families with 3 or more children enrolled in the before and/or after school program, qualify for a 50% discount for the third and subsequent children incurring the lowest fee(s).

Families with 2 or more children enrolled in the P.A. Day program, qualify for a 50% discount for the second and subsequent children.

WITHDRAWALS

Two weeks notice of withdrawal is required by notifying the Program Coordinator. A refund will be issued for any resulting overpayment, provided the required two weeks notice is given. In lieu of notice, two weeks' fees will be required. For parents enrolled in our Pre-Authorized Debit plan, notice of your children's withdrawal must be received by the 15th of the month to ensure cancellation of your next scheduled automatic withdrawal. Services may be terminated by LCC if policies are not followed, fees are not paid, or if the program is unsuitable for your child(ren).

RE-REGISTRATION

Each year parents who currently have children enrolled in a school age program have first priority to re-register for the following school term. The re-registration procedure takes place at your children's program in the spring. Re-registration is a required process if you wish to continue child care services for the following school years. A per child deposit fee is required at re-registration to "reserve" your child(ren)'s space for September. If you withdraw your child(ren) after the September withdrawal deadline in June, the deposit is non-refundable.

SIBLING REGISTRATION

If you have a younger child whom you wish to register for the following school term, please inform us immediately. Your child's name will be placed on a waiting list. If spaces are available at that point, siblings will have priority over other families on the waiting list.

TRANSFERING SCHOOLS

If you plan to transfer your child(ren) in September from one school age program to another, please inform us immediately. At the time of re-registration, children presently enrolled and siblings will have priority for the following school term. You will be contacted if we are not able to accommodate your request.

CHILD CARE FEE SUBSIDY

If you are currently receiving **child care fee subsidy**, fee assistance will continue based on approval from your subsidy provider (City of London or County of Middlesex). Your specific fees for the school year will be indicated in your confirmation package.

You **must** notify your subsidy provider:

- If there are changes to your address, phone number or job.
- To arrange approval if your child will be absent for 5 or more consecutive days (e.g. illness or vacation),
- To arrange approval for consistent absent days (e.g. every Friday).

Note: If you do not receive approval for your child's absence, subsidy will *not* pay for these days, and you will be responsible for paying **all full** fees to London Children's Connection directly. Refer to the information sheet that you received from your subsidy provider for further details.

Sibling Requests: Siblings do not *automatically* receive child care fee subsidy. If your Program Coordinator has contacted you to confirm your request for sibling care, you should contact your subsidy provider, who will confirm eligibility. Our office will be notified by your subsidy provider regarding your eligibility.

Interested in Child Care Fee Subsidy: Application forms are available from London Children's Connection Main Office, 346 Wonderland Road South or by calling the City of London at 519-661-4834 or County of Middlesex at 519-434-7321. Forms are also available on the City of London website at www.london.ca/childcare.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

The School Age Program offers “hands on” activity based experiences for children, within a familiar, comfortable environment. Safe, reliable care is provided before school, after school and on Professional Activity Days for children six to twelve years of age. The program is designed with flexibility and creativity in order to respond to and complement each child’s school day. Our child-centred program offers children opportunities for decision making and growth towards increased independence and responsibility. Qualified staff provide a variety of stimulating play activities daily.

LICENSING is obtained through the Ministry of Community and Social Services: Ministry of Children & Youth (MCYS) to operate our school age programs. The Day Nurseries Act and its accompanying regulations form the basis for the licensing procedure. Upon successful completion of the licensing procedure, a licence is issued. The program is inspected and licensed annually. Monthly visits to the programs are conducted by the Program Coordinators during which a “Visit Checklist” is completed. The Program Coordinator observes the daily schedule, reviews the snack menu and program plans, ensures that policies and procedures are followed and provides support if required.

PROGRAM STAFF

Our professional and caring staff are selected through a group interview process. This process includes: a) the completion of a program plan, b) discussion questions focusing on child development, child guidance, teamwork and responding to emergency situations, and c) group activity to determine effective communication skills. Candidates are then reviewed and reference checks are completed. Approval by MCYS for all Program Supervisors is required. Selected staff participate in a thorough orientation process. Each staff is required to have a valid first aid certificate, immunization record and a vulnerable position screening prior to employment; thus providing highly competent and capable staff to ensure the quality care that the School Age Program has established for over 20 years. Our staff:child ratio is a minimum of 1 staff to 15 children.

STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In-service training is an integral part of all positions and regular participation in workshops offered by the organization, is a requirement to further enhance staff skills. Each Program Coordinator meets monthly with their group of staff to facilitate information sharing, problem solving and open discussion. Program staff are expected to recertify their first aid every 2-3 years.

BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE

Our aim is for the children to have a safe and enjoyable time at the program. To help us achieve this aim, we establish reasonable limits for behaviour which are consistently monitored by all staff. These limits are appropriate to the developmental level of the child and consider health and safety and the rights of all individuals.

A positive approach is used to guide the children, and each situation and child is considered individually. Methods include: redirection, logical and natural consequences, limit setting, modelling, providing choices, anticipating situations and recognition for appropriate behaviour. In the event that intentional aggressive behaviour is displayed, please refer to our “STEPS TO SUCCESS: Ensuring Safe Programs” pamphlet for the procedure that will be followed.

Open communication with parents is an essential component for a cooperative approach to child guidance. The program staff will discuss your child’s day with you and will ask for your feedback to ensure that your child receives a positive experience in our program. We encourage you to discuss issues or concerns with the program staff, however if the issue is unresolved contact the Program Coordinator.

AGE PROGRAM

The STEPS TO SUCCESS: Ensuring Safe Programs was developed by the London Children's Connection's Safe Programs Committee. This document supports children's growth by encouraging them to act responsibly and practice respect for themselves and others. It also provides a framework for the children, staff and parents to work together to ensure our before and after school programs provide a safe and enjoyable environment. We request that you review the *STEPS TO SUCCESS: Ensuring Safe Programs pamphlet* with your child(ren) prior to participating in the School Age Program.

CONSENT FOR OBTAINING AND RELEASING INFORMATION Our philosophy regarding school age care views both systems, education and child care, as partners working together toward the healthy, all-round development of children. Ongoing communication between all of the adults involved in your child(ren)'s day enhances his or her educational and care experience. Through discussion with the school personnel, we will be able to provide continuity in your child(ren)'s day. You are requested to sign this form at the time of registration.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES include games, indoor and outdoor sports, creative arts and crafts, skill building projects, homework areas and leisure time board games and construction toys. Our child centred program offers children opportunities for decision making and growth towards increased independence and responsibility by taking part in program planning and leading activities. Outdoor activities are scheduled daily, weather permitting. Please ensure that your child(ren) is dressed appropriately. Use of the outdoor playground equipment is determined by MCYS (as per the Canadian Standards Association).

NUTRITIOUS SNACKS are provided in both the morning and afternoon programs. It is a requirement that the children not bring food into the program as other children registered may have food allergies; as well, some foods may not be suitable for eating without refrigeration. Please note that all possible strategies to reduce the risk of exposure to allergens is practiced, however it is not possible to reduce the risk to zero. A rotational snack plan is posted for your reference.

PARENT INFORMATION BOARDS are located in each program and display the following information:

- a) Program Licence/Summary of Inspection
- b) Snack Plan/Snack Plan Changes
- c) Program Plan
- d) Ministry Poster
- e) P.A. Day Information
- f) Parent Handbook
- g) STEPS TO SUCCESS: Ensuring Safe Programs
- h) Emergency Phone Numbers and Evacuation Site
- i) Emergency Procedures

PARENT INVOLVEMENT is welcome in all aspects of the program. We encourage you to consider participating on our Board of Directors or Program Advisory Committee, to assist on excursions or share a skill within your child(ren)'s program. Feedback through questionnaires and daily communication with your child's Supervisor are also valuable methods of contributing to the quality of your child(ren)'s care.

CORRESPONDENCE REQUIRING YOUR ATTENTION will be distributed through the program staff, throughout the school term. We request your cooperation by responding prior to the deadline date indicated. These dates are established to assist us with the planning and scheduling of P.A. Day activities, registrations for Summer programs and re-registration for September.

REQUESTS FOR COPIES OF ATTENDANCE AND/OR SIGN IN/OUT must be made by the requesting parent's legal counsel. There will be a fee charged to the ordering party.

We request your support regarding the following policies and procedures:

PROGRAM HOURS The opening and closing times have been established in consideration for the children and the length of their day, and to correspond with parents' needs. Our before school programs open at 7:30 a.m. and our after school programs close at 6:00 p.m. As per our lease/permit with the Boards of Education we must comply with these hours of operation.

SCHOOL CLOSURES may result due to severe inclement weather conditions, power failure or circumstances beyond our control. Please listen to a London radio station for announcements of school closures. When the school is closed, we are unable to operate. If the busses are cancelled, but the school is open, the School Age Program operates as usual. If, during program hours, your child(ren)'s program is unable to operate due to power failure or similar circumstances, you will be contacted immediately. Should inclement weather occur on P.A. Days, our decision to operate is based on the bus company and Board of Education's ability to operate.

SAFE ARRIVAL of children in the before school program is ensured by requiring that you take your child(ren) directly to the program staff each morning. You or your designate are required to initial the sign-in form as verification of your child(ren)'s arrival. The duty of care is not transferred until the child(ren) is signed in.

SAFE TRANSITION of children between the before and after school programs and the classrooms is ensured by requesting that the children gather their belongings and go directly from the before school program to their classroom and upon dismissal to go directly to the after school program. You are encouraged to visit the program with your child(ren) in order to familiarize him/her with the room location of the program in relation to his/her classroom.

SAFE DEPARTURE of children in the after school program is ensured by requiring that you or your designate pick your child(ren) up from the program and initial the sign-out form as verification of your child(ren)'s departure. You are responsible for ensuring that your child(ren) is picked up by 6:00 pm. If an unexpected situation arises and you are unable to pick up your child by 6:00 pm, please arrange for another adult to do so. This person must be identified on your child(ren)'s registration form.

Written notice is required if someone other than the registered parent/guardian or those adults who are identified on the registration form, is to sign out a child. This person will be required to show picture ID. A child will not be released to someone who does not have permission to sign him/her out. The parent/guardian/emergency contact(s) will be contacted should this situation arise. A child 12 years of age or under is not permitted to sign in or sign out a child in the program.

SAFETY OF YOUR CHILDREN is ensured through continual supervision during the program times. We require a note if there are any occasional changes in your child's daily schedule. Should your child be involved in continuous extra-curricular activities, you will be required to complete and sign the "Special Arrangements Form", prior to the start of the activity.

Periodically throughout the school year, as well as on specific P.A. Days, the children may be participating in ice skating, rollerblading or rollerskating. In order for the children to participate in these activities it is mandatory that you provide a helmet (hockey, bike) for safety reasons.

PROCEDURES

INFORMING THE SUPERVISOR when your child(ren) will be absent is essential. Written notice must be given to the Program Supervisor in advance. In circumstances where written notice is not possible, please call the program contact #, indicated on the front of this handbook.

CHANGES IN REGISTRATION INFORMATION must be relayed to the Program Coordinator at 471-4300 immediately, as well as to the Program Supervisor. Your child(ren)'s safety in the event of an emergency could depend on the accuracy of this information. During the months of September and January, you will be asked to review and sign your child(ren)'s registration form to ensure the information is accurate. When changes occur, you will be requested to sign and date the updated registration form as a verification of accuracy.

ILLNESS OF YOUR CHILD In accordance with the Day Nurseries Act, when a child is ill the parent must be contacted immediately and is required to pick up their child from the program to protect the interests of the sick child and to prevent further infection. If your child becomes ill during the program, care will be provided until you can be contacted and your child can be taken home.

HEALTH AND ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION

Since the School Age Program operates for a short period of time during the day, we request that you arrange for the administration of your child's prescription medication either prior to, or after program hours. If this is not possible, only prescription medication may be administered by the program staff. A medication form must be completed and signed by the parent/guardian prior to administering the medication to the child. Our staff will document the dosage, time given, side effects observed and initial for each administration of medication. In accordance with the Day Nurseries Act, the medication must be in the original container, clearly marked with your child's name, date, name of medication, and the instructions for storage and administration. Please ensure that the medication is passed on to the Program Supervisor for safe storage. To ensure your child's medical information is up to date and accurate, you will be required to review this form every 6 months. For children with an anaphylactic allergy, an emergency plan is established between the parent and the Program Coordinator, reviewed with program staff and posted on site. We may ask you to follow specific guidelines to ensure the safety of all children in our care.

EMERGENCY EXPENSES, such as any expense incurred in handling an emergency illness of a child, will be the responsibility of the parents/guardians. Our staff maintain a valid First Aid Certificate, therefore they are trained in emergency first aid practices. You will be informed of all accidents, as well as requested to review and sign an "Accident Report". Please inform the program staff immediately if medical treatment was sought after an injury in our program.

EXCURSIONS and community trips will require a signed permission form allowing your child to participate. The permission form will outline the date, time, means of transportation and destination. When special visitors are scheduled, you will be notified in advance.

FIRE DRILLS are practiced once per month in both the morning & afternoon programs. They are recorded by the Supervisor. Posted on the "Parent Information Board", is an outline of the emergency procedures followed in the event of evacuation. The evacuation site is also posted. Please familiarize yourself with this information.

SMOKE FREE ACT As a licensed school age program, we comply with the SMOKE FREE ONTARIO ACT. In compliance with this act, no smoking is permitted in any location where childcare is provided by London Children's Connection, whether or not children are present.

The School Age Program works hard to meet the needs of all children involved in our programs. If you have any concerns regarding your child(ren)'s participation in the program, please contact your Program Coordinator. We want to work together to resolve issues which might arise.

P.A. DAYS AND SUMMER PROGRAMS

P.A. DAY PROGRAMS Full day P.A. Day programs are offered to all children who are in grade 1 and older and currently enrolled in a school age program, on a first come first served basis. These programs operate from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Offsite excursions are planned for each of these days. Registration forms are mailed with your September confirmation package in July or distributed at the program in the fall.

**Registration will be accepted up to two weeks prior to the P.A. Day based on space availability and payment received.

SUMMER PROGRAMS *(full day programs designed for children 6-12 yrs of age)*

Full day summer programs operate at designated school age sites throughout the city of London. These programs operate from 7:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m.

Registration priorities for the full day summer programs are as follows:

- 1) Children presently enrolled at the host schools, as well as children currently enrolled in our school age program who attended the full day summer program last summer.
- 2) All other children enrolled in our school age program.
- 3) Children not enrolled in our school age program (if space is available).

Summer program information will be distributed in the spring.

LUNCHES FOR PA DAYS AND SUMMER PROGRAMS

- Pack your child(ren)'s lunch in an insulated lunch bag with an ice pack.
- Label your child'(ren)'s lunch with his/her name and school.
- Ensure there are no nut products and other food allergens specific to each program.
- Our staff will check each child's lunch for food allergens upon arrival in the morning.
- We will replace the food allergen with a food product from the program's snack supplies.
- Include at least 3 of the 4 food groups based on Canada's Food Guide (www.hc-sc.gc.ca).
- Morning and afternoon snacks are provided (refer to the posted snack menu).
- If your child forgets their lunch at home, we will provide a bagged lunch with snack supplies available in the program.

PAYMENT FOR THE P.A. DAY AND SUMMER PROGRAMS

If you are signed up for our Pre-Authorized Debit plan (PAD), P.A. Day fees will automatically be withdrawn from your account for any P.A. Day for which you are registered. If you are not signed up for our PAD plan post-dated cheques must accompany the registration form in order to confirm your child(ren)'s registration. Dates for the post-dated cheques are indicated in the registration information. There will be a service fee charged for returned cheques.

WITHDRAWALS

Two weeks' notice must be given prior to the P.A. Day you wish to cancel. Withdrawal dates for the summer programs are outlined in the registration information. A refund will be issued, provided the required notice is received.