Parent Issues or Concerns

APPROVED BY: Director, Children's Services
DATE: December 10, 2016
EFFECTIVE DATE: August 29, 2016
LATEST REVISION: August 20, 2024

Authority:

Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014.
College of Early Childhood Educators Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice For early childhood educators in Ontario, July 2017, *Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007.*
Children's Services, Niagara Region.

Definitions:

Complaint: An expression of grievance or resentment where the family is seeking redress or justice.
Licensee: The individual or agency licensed by the Ministry of Education responsible for the operation and management of each child care centre it operates (e.g. the operator).
Staff: Individual employed by the licensee (e.g. Registered Early Childhood Educator).
CECE: College of Early Childhood Educators.
CAS: Children's Aid Society.
FACS: Family and Children Services.
MEDU: Ministry of Education.
RECE: Registered Early Childhood Educator.
OCCMS: Ontario Child Care Management System.

CECE Expectations: Registered Early Childhood Educators must also follow the expectations set out in the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, July 2017.
Specifically the following:

- Responsibilities to Children
- Responsibilities to Families
- Responsibilities to Colleagues and to the Profession
- Standard 111: Safety, Health and Well-being in the Learning Environment

Intent:

The purpose of this policy is to provide a transparent process for parent/guardians, the child care licensee and staff to use when parents/guardians bring forward issues/concerns. Children Services,

Child Care Centres, are dedicated to ensure the delivery of high quality child care to all families. Children should be in a healthy, safe, happy environment. Children's Services is committed to work in partnership with families to resolve any concerns and complaints that they may have about their child's care.

Policy:

Children's Services, Child Care Centres will provide clear and transparent information to parents, the community and staff on how concerns and complaints will be managed and resolutions will be found. This will ensure that families have access to support and direction when attempting to resolve a complaint. Parents/guardians are encouraged to take an active role in our child care centres and regularly discuss what their child(ren) are experiencing with our program. As supported by our program statement, we support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents/guardians, child care providers and staff, and foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents/guardians about the program and their children. Our staff are available to engage parents/guardians in conversations and support a positive experience during every interaction.

Families can expect their concerns will be responded to in a courteous, respectful and timely manner. All issues and concerns raised by parents/guardians are taken seriously by the supervisor and staff of the child care centre. Every effort will be made to address and resolve issues and concerns to the satisfaction of all parties as quickly as possible. Families can expect an initial response within five (5) business days from the supervisor, designate or manager, after becoming aware of the complaint. The person who raised the issue/concern will be kept informed throughout the resolution. Supervisors will maintain a record of parent complaints on the Family Complaint Log Form and in OCCMS case notes.

At any time during the process the family may choose to involve an external agency such as the Ministry of Education, the College of Early Childhood Educators or Family and Children's Services.

Confidentiality should be adhered to throughout the complaint resolution process. Every effort will be made to protect the privacy of parents/guardians, children, staff, students and volunteers, except when information must be disclosed for legal reasons (e.g. the MEDU, CECE, law enforcement authorities or FACS). This means that the complaint should only be discussed by those people directly involved in the resolution process and/or governing bodies/agencies.

Procedures:

Steps to be taken by Parent/Guardian to Report Issue/Concern
First Point of Contact (should always be the child care centre).

All issues or concerns about the conduct of staff, students and/or volunteers that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the supervisor as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.
The family should:

- Contact the centre staff and/or supervisor to discuss the concern.
- Schedule a time with the supervisor to talk about your concerns if you are unable to connect with the supervisor.
- Be prepared to make notes ahead of time about your concerns.
- Issues or concerns may be brought forward verbally or in writing.
- Be clear about what's being said (if you need clarification or have concerns about the Centre's response, ask them to explain further).
- Responses and outcomes will be provided verbally, or in writing upon request.
- Arrange a follow up meeting if necessary.

Investigation of issues and concerns will be fair, impartial and respectful to parties involved. If you are unsatisfied or still have concerns you may want to then move to the second point of contact.

Second Point of Contact
The family should:

- Connect with the Program Manager of Children's Services, Direct Operations by calling 905-980-6000 ext. 3823

Move to the third point of contact if unsatisfied or still have concerns.

Third Point of Contact
The family should:

- Connect with the Manager of Children's Services, Direct Operations by calling 905-980-6000 ext. 3877

Move to the fourth point of contact if unsatisfied or still have concerns.

The Fourth Point of Contact
The Family should:

- Connect with the Director of Children's Services by calling 905-980-6000. ext. 3876.

Additional Points of Contact:
You may make a complaint to the Ministry of Education's Child Care Complaint line, regarding program concerns at:

MEDU Licensed child care complaint line (program concerns)

- Telephone: 1-877-510-5333
- Email: childcare_ontario@Ontario.ca

Complaints regarding Registered Early Childhood Educators can be filed with the regulatory body of the College of Early Childhood Educators at:

- Telephone: 1-888-961-8558
- Email: info@college-ece.ca

Family and Children's Services (FACS) Niagara (children in need of protection concerns of suspected abuse or neglect of a child) call 905-937-7731.

- Everyone, including members of the public and professionals who work closely with children, is required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.
- If a parent/guardian expresses concerns that a child is being abused or neglected, the parent will be advised to contact the local Children's Aid Society (CAS) directly. The CAS in Niagara is FACS.
- Persons who become aware of such concerns are also responsible for reporting this information to FACS as per the "Duty to Report" requirement under the *Child and Family Services Act.*
- For more information visit Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect Province of Ontario (https://www.ontario.ca/page/child-welfare-and-child-protection-services)

Public Health, Niagara Region (environmental concerns)

- Telephone: 905-688-3762 or 1-800-263-7248

Steps for Staff, Supervisor and/or Licensee in Responding to Issue/Concern

- Address the initial issue/concern at the time it is raised or arrange a meeting with the parent/guardian within 5 business days.
- Advise the supervisor or designate.
- Advise the Children's Services manager or designate.
- Document the issue/complaint in the Daily Log when the complaint affects the health, safety and wellbeing of a child.
- Document the issue/concerns in detail. Documentation should include:
- The date and time the issue/concern was received
- The name of the person who received the issue/concern.
- The name of the person reporting the issue/concern.
- The details of the issue/concern.
- Any steps taken to resolve the issue/concern and/or information given to the parent/guardian regarding next steps or referral.

- Provide contact information for the appropriate person if the person being notified is unable to address the matter.
- Ensure the investigation of the issue/concern is initiated by the appropriate party within 5 business days or as soon as reasonably possible thereafter.
- Document reasons for delays in writing.
- Provide resolution or outcome to the parent(s)/guardian(s) who raised the issue/concern.
- Document issue/concern in the Family Complaint Log.
- Indicate parent's needs/feelings.
- Indicate the follow-up.
- Indicate that the detailed notes can be found in the child's file.
- Indicate the final outcome of the issue/concern

Conduct

Our child care centres maintains high standards for positive interaction, communication and role-modeling for children. Harassment and discrimination will therefore not be tolerated from any party.
If at any point a parent/guardian, provider or staff feels uncomfortable, threatened, abused or belittled, they may immediately end the conversation and report the situation to the supervisor and/or licensee.

REGIONAL CHILD CARE CENTRE FAMILY COMPLAINT LOG

Name of Child Care Centre: _____

DATE	Name of Parent	Issue or Concern	Outcome	Signature