

**Umbrella Family and Child
Centres of Hamilton**



Program Handbook

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Welcome

Welcome to Umbrella Family and Child Centres of Hamilton (UFCC). We are a Not-for-Profit Child Care Centre licensed under the Ministry of Education. Our Program Handbook provides information for families on all aspects of our programs. A full copy of the Handbook can be downloaded from our website and from our family registration and communication app.

About Us

UFCC provides licensed child care services at 27 locations across Hamilton, Ontario. We offer full day early learning and child care programs for infants, toddlers and preschoolers, as well as before and after school programs for JK/SK and school aged children. Each of our programs provides indoor and outdoor environments for

children to explore, investigate their theories, and engage with others and the natural world through play-based learning opportunities.

Our full day and before and after school programs provide environments where children can engage in play-based learning at their own pace. Based upon Ontario's pedagogical approaches for the early years, we strive to ensure that each child feels a strong sense of belonging and well-being. Our programs are inclusive, responsive and accessible, and we continuously strive for excellence and innovation in early learning and child care.

As a cornerstone of the Hamilton community for over 37 years, our team is comprised of esteemed experts in early childhood education. Empathy, compassion, care, patience, and educating with a purpose are some of the core values for educators at UFCC.

Our Mission

Excellence in early learning and child care.

Our Vision

Responsible, accessible, and inclusive child care for all.

Our Values

Collaboration is the Key

Success is rooted in our partnerships with our team, children, families, and community partners.

Excellence Begins with Us

Investing in our team, promoting innovation, and nurturing quality improvement is what sets us apart.

Equity and Belonging Always

Children and families are at the centre of everything we do, and we celebrate their strengths with respect, passion and purpose.

Respect and Integrity are Essential

We will act with uncompromising honesty and integrity in everything we do.

Trusting Relationships Connect Us

We will create and build trusting relationships with our team, children, families and communities.

Policy	1 – Program Statement
Last Reviewed	September 2025

CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGY

The starting point for curriculum in our programs is the belief that children are curious, capable and they learn best by pursuing their own interests and goals in a carefully designed learning environment.

Educators view themselves as co-learners with children, listening carefully to children’s thoughts, providing materials and posing questions to allow children to explore, solve problems and draw conclusions. Children’s thinking and learning is recorded by educators through photographs and written observation and posted in the classroom for the review and consideration of both children and families.

Staff members use the document *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years* as set out by the Ministry of Education as a guide in supporting developmentally appropriate practice. This document includes expectations for programs centred on four foundations that are considered to be key ingredients for optimal learning and healthy development. These foundations are: **Belonging, Well-Being, Engagement** and **Expression**. Goals for children include:

- Every child has a sense of belonging when they are connected to others and contribute to their world.
- Every child is developing a sense of self, health, and well-being.
- Every child is an active and engaged learner who explores the world with body, mind, and senses.
- Every child is a capable communicator who expresses themselves in many ways.

The four foundations for learning are implemented in the UFCC Curriculum. Our Mission, Vision and Values statements closely align with these four foundations.

This program statement and the accompanying Implementation Policy is reviewed with all UFCC staff, students and volunteers prior to interacting with children and following any changes to the document. The Prohibited Practices and Monitoring Compliance and Contraventions chart forms part of the Implementation Policy. The review is signed by both UFCC staff and their designated supervisor.

UFCC is committed to supporting professional learning to support the implementation of *How Does Learning Happen?* through agency training, dedicated program development time, agency participation in the City of Hamilton’s Early Years Quality Program (HEYQP), coaching and financial support for professional learning.

Well-Being of Children

We are committed to nurturing all aspects of well-being for our children and families. We believe that children benefit when we build supportive connections with their families.

In order to learn and grow, children must be healthy and safe, both physically and emotionally. We view a child's physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health as interconnected.

Good nutrition and safe practices are the backdrop against which learning takes place. Our menus are reviewed seasonally by our nutrition team. Meal and snack times are opportunities to socialize and share nutritious food with other children and UFCC staff.

UFCC staff are trained to create safe environments for children. Written sanitary procedures ensure that safe practices are followed. UFCC staff are trained in First Aid and CPR and to respond to health concerns.

The daily schedule allows for indoor and outdoor play, active play, rest and quiet time, and considers the individual needs of the children receiving our care. Younger children have a mid-day rest time while older children have the opportunity for quiet times within the classroom environment based on their individual needs.

UFCC's learning environments are designed to offer children open spaces to interact with others as well as quiet cosy places to take a break from the group. Connections with nature are encouraged throughout the curriculum.

Individual support plans are developed collaboratively with families and community professionals for all children with special needs enrolled in the program. Our goal is to support the child's ability to participate in a meaningful and natural way through adaptations to the physical, social and learning environment.

Every centre has procedures in place to protect students and UFCC staff in the event of a serious incident in or around a school. Depending on the event, responses may range from Shelter in Place, Hold and Secure or Lockdown. These procedures are communicated to all users of the building and are practiced several times a year. UFCC staff and children are included in the procedures and participate in the practices when they occur.

Supporting children as they develop a strong sense of self and positive ways of interacting with others

Authentic, responsive relationships form the foundation for the development of self-regulation. Positive relationships with other children and adults help children to feel safe and competent, leaving them free to explore, solve problems, benefit from learning experience, co-operate and work collaboratively with others.

UFCC is committed to supporting children as they develop relationships with each other. Educators are responsive to children's needs and are alert to opportunities to support children as they develop ways of resolving conflict. UFCC helps children to develop self-awareness and constructive problem solving and decision-making skills through clarification of feelings, encouragement and modelling.

UFCC staff reflect the diversity of the children and families in the communities we serve. Diversity is affirmed both through everyday practices which include attention to an inclusive and bias free environment as well as experiences such as language, cultural celebrations, diverse cooking experiences and family engagement. UFCC strives for an environment where all families are embraced and supported as children thrive when educators and families work in partnership.

UFCC educators work alongside children to support identification and resolution of conflict by identifying feelings, describing problems and supporting child led resolutions. When children need adult support to guide their behaviour, it is done in a positive and caring way. Our goal is to help them learn to manage their own behaviour and self-regulate.

Everyone in the UFCC community is expected to demonstrate respectful and responsible attitudes and behaviour toward other participants and the environment.

The Learning Environment

The classroom environment is designed to encourage exploration. Children are encouraged to experiment with a variety of materials available to them. This play-based approach encourages children to learn through hands on experiences supported by knowledgeable educators.

UFCC staff members use the document *How Does Learning Happen?* as a guide in supporting developmentally appropriate practice. This builds on UFCC's long commitment to using the Reggio Emilia approach and the ELECT document.

UFCC educators are committed to learning alongside children. They are alert to opportunities to extend play and exploration using questions, prompts and encouragement, and listen carefully to children's thoughts, providing materials and posing questions to allow children to explore, solve problems and draw conclusions.

UFCC program plans reflect the developing interests of children and a deep understanding of the sequence of child development. This responsive programming sparks children's natural inquisitiveness and desire to learn. Children's work is displayed to extend learning and support reflection.

Children's thinking and learning is recorded by UFCC educators through photographs and written observations and posted in the program for the review and consideration of both children and adults.

Large and small group experiences designed to support social interaction and learning are led by UFCC educators daily. These opportunities can be initiated by children or educators.

UFCC's goal is to balance extended opportunities for children to engage in activities with daily self-care routines. When adaptations to the environment are needed to support a child to fully engage in the program, parents and community health professionals will be involved in developing an individualized plan in collaboration with educators.

Community Involvement

UFCC takes pride in our reputation for working collaboratively within the Early Learning and Child Care Community.

Our relationships with our school partners and community members reflect our belief that collaboration supports children and families. We reach out to our local communities, and we invite community

members into our programs. UFCC staff are also engaged in professional learning within the community. They serve on local committees and act as mentors for ECE and cooperative education students.

Continuous Professional Learning

Professional learning and reflection are integral practices for UFCC staff and supervisors. UFCC staff have the education, qualifications, knowledge, experience and professional commitment to promote children's learning and development.

UFCC educators are supported through dedicated time and financial support for program development, engagement with colleagues in collaborative learning and team building strategies.

We participate in local early years initiatives such as the City of Hamilton's Early Years Quality Program (HEYQP) which works to enhance quality in our programs.

Prohibited Practices

The following practices are prohibited in all UFCC programs:

1. Corporal punishment including but not limited to hitting, spanking, slapping, pinching.
2. Physical restraint of children including but not limited to confining to high chair, car seat, etc. for discipline or in lieu of supervision (unless there is an immediate risk of self-harm or harm to others).
3. Locking the exits of the child care for the purpose of confining the child or confining the area or room without supervision, unless in an emergency. If there is an emergency that requires a child to be restrained or confined, the supervisor needs to be informed to support the safety of child(ren) and staff, report to families and to determine if a Serious Occurrence Report needs to be made.
4. Use of harsh, degrading measures or threats or derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, scare, or frighten the child or undermine their self-respect, dignity or self-worth.
5. Depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, toilet use, clothing or bedding.
6. Inflicting bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

Policy	2 – Quality Assurance
Last Reviewed	September 2025

LICENSING

All UFCC programs are inspected and licensed by the Ministry of Education under the Child Care and Early Years Act (2014). The license is displayed in the program for families to view.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

UFCC works in partnership with the City of Hamilton’s Early Year’s Quality Program (HEYQP) to ensure high quality programs. This involves submitting documentation to the City of Hamilton annually, along with regularly scheduled visits from City of Hamilton staff.

In addition to meeting all licensing requirements, UFCC staff strive to stay current and implement best practices in Early Childhood Education.

Policy	3 – Parents
Last Reviewed	September 2025

PARENTS IN PROGRAMS

Parents are always welcome in UFCC programs. UFCC recognizes that families know their children best, and we look forward to working together with them to ensure their children receive the maximum benefit from our programs.

WHEN YOU HAVE CONCERNS

If families have a concern, they can arrange to speak with their child’s educator at a time and place that is mutually convenient. It is important to us that we have a place where confidentiality is preserved, and our educators can take the time to fully understand a family’s concerns. It would not be fair to families or to the children in the program if we engaged in these conversations while the educator is engaged with the children. Alternatively, families can bring their concerns forward in writing.

If the concern cannot be resolved through a conversation with the staff member, it may be suggested that the Supervisor become involved in the discussion. The Supervisor can also be contacted directly to request assistance. The Supervisor is ultimately responsible for the quality of programs and will work with all involved to address issues and resolve concerns as quickly as possible.

Most conflicts are resolved at the centre or Supervisor level; however, families do have the opportunity to request the involvement of the Program Manager.

The concern may be able to be resolved right away. If not, families will be contacted within 24 hours by a UFCC staff member with an update. We endeavor to resolve all complaints within one week.

The following guide will help you know who to contact. Please visit our [Locations Page](#) on our website to view each centre’s contact information or call our Head Office at 905.312.9836 to obtain contact information for the person to whom you wish to speak.

Type of Concern	Who to Contact
Program-related concerns (e.g., scheduling, sleep arrangements, toilet training, indoor/outdoor program activities, feeding arrangements, etc.).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise the issue or concern with the classroom staff directly. • There is also the option of speaking to the Program Supervisor.
Fees, hours of operation, staffing, waiting lists, menus, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact the Program Supervisor.
Staff, supervisor or volunteer related.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have the option of raising the concern directly with the individual or you may want

Type of Concern	Who to Contact
	<p>to speak to the Supervisor or Program Manager.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any concerns about the conduct of staff or volunteers that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the Supervisor as soon as families become aware of the situation.

CONCERNS ABOUT SUSPECTED ABUSE OR NEGLECT OF A CHILD

- 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, they will be advised to contact the local children's aid society (HCFS or CCAS) directly.
- Staff who become aware of such concerns are also responsible for reporting this information to HCFS or CCAS as per the "Duty to Report" requirement under the Child and Family Services Act.
- For more information, visit: <http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childrensaid/reportingabuse/index.aspx>.

CONTACTS FOR FAMILIES

Name	Contact Info
College of Early Childhood Educators	416.961.8558 info@college-ece.ca
Hamilton Child and Family Supports (HCFS)	905.522.1121 info@hamiltonsfs.ca
Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton (CAS)	905.525.2012 https://hccas.ca/contact/
Ministry of Education, Licensed Child Care Help Desk	1.877.510.5333

Section	4 – UFCC Staff, Students and Volunteers
Last Reviewed	September 2025

UFCC offers a collegial and collaborative working environment where our philosophy and programs focus on each child and their family.

Most of the staff in UFCC full day programs and kindergarten extended day programs have an ECE diploma and are registered in the College of Early Childhood Educators. Staff in school age programs may have an ECE diploma or degree or training and experience in a related field.

UFCC staff are required to demonstrate an awareness of the developmental needs of children and knowledge of current best practices in early childhood education. Experience working with children with special needs is considered an asset when joining the UFCC team and additional training is provided upon hiring.

All UFCC staff are required to provide a current Criminal Reference Check/Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC) prior to being employed. The Criminal Reference Check/Vulnerable Sector Check is to be renewed every five years, and all UFCC staff are also required to provide a Declaration of Non-Offense in the years in between. All UFCC staff are required to have Standard First Aid and Infant/Child CPR training and participate in WHMIS training on an annual basis. It is also mandatory that all Cooks, Supervisors, and Program Leaders obtain a Food Handler’s Certificate.

UFCC offers competitive wages, benefits, paid programming time, networking and professional development opportunities, including membership in Affiliated Services for Children & Youth (ASCY). This membership entitles UFCC staff to borrow items from the lending library, research topics of interest, and participate in workshops and networks throughout the year.

UFCC employees receive additional training upon being hired and are required to complete a minimum of 16 professional development hours each year.

Students and Volunteers

UFCC provides mentoring and practice teaching experiences for Early Childhood Education students. HWDSB high school co-op and Focus on Youth students and volunteers also participate in programs. The students and volunteers are not counted in the child/staff ratios and are never responsible for nor left alone with the children. In addition, students on placement and volunteers are required to comply with all UFCC policies and procedures.

Policy	5 – Our Programs
Last Reviewed	September 2025

INFANT, TODDLER AND PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS (FULL DAY)

Infants (0 – 18 Months)

Our Infant Program accommodates up to 10 full-time children from birth to 18 months of age. Although we have a daily written schedule, the schedule is based on the needs of each individual child. Children may sleep and eat as they require throughout the day.

Infants learn through play, exploration, and interaction with objects and meaningful relationships with trusted adults. Both families and UFCC staff will collaborate on learning goals for their child, creating learning opportunities for each child based on their unique skills, interest and needs.

Toddlers (18 – 30 Months), Preschoolers (30 – 44 Months)

The daily program for toddlers and preschoolers provides children with the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities that encourage and stimulate growth in all areas of development and includes both indoor and outdoor play. Children play outdoors for a minimum of one hour in the morning and one hour in the afternoon, weather permitting.

Each week, UFCC staff plan and implement a program based on the observed interests and developmental needs of the children in their group. A weekly program plan is posted in the Parent Information Area.

Toddlers and preschoolers are provided daily with lunch, as well as a morning and afternoon snack. The weekly menu is posted in the Parent Information Area.

The children also rest after lunch for a period not exceeding two hours on cots provided by the program.

KINDERGARTEN AND SCHOOL AGE PROGRAMS

Kindergarten Programs (44 – 68 Months)

UFCC staff in extended day programs work closely in partnership with HWDSB staff to provide a consistent experience for children and their families.

UFCC’s program curriculum is play-based and planned in alignment with the children’s current interests.

Before School Programs for School Age Children (68 Months – 12 Years)

Before school programs begin at 7:00 am. Families are required to bring their children into the school building to ensure their safe arrival into the program. Children remain in the program until the morning school bell rings.

A morning snack (e.g., fresh fruit, cereal with milk, muffins, toast) is offered. The menu is posted in the Parent Information Area in each program.

A variety of activities, designed to stimulate all areas of development, and based on the observed interests of children, are provided. The weekly program plan is posted in the Parent Information Area at each centre.

After School Programs for School Age Children (68 Months – 12 Years)

After school programs begin as soon as school is dismissed in the afternoon. Families are required to pick up their children by 6:00 p.m.

An afternoon snack (e.g., fresh fruit, cheese and crackers, sandwiches, vegetables and dip, etc.) is offered. The menu is posted in the Parent Information Area in each centre.

A variety of activities that are of interest to school age children (e.g., arts and crafts, games, puzzles, sports activities, music, etc.) are offered each afternoon, based on the observed interests of children. The weekly program plan is posted in the Parent Information Area.

Children participate in active outdoor activities each afternoon, so it is essential that children have appropriate clothing (e.g., running shoes, outerwear, etc.). Our outdoor session is longer than a 15-minute recess period, so hats, gloves, sunscreen, etc., are a necessity.

Extracurricular Activities

From time to time, children in school age programs may be involved in supervised activities organized by HWDSB that occur either before or after school. Permission to participate in such a program must be granted in advance by the child's family, not UFCC staff. Please notify the program using the appropriate UFCC form when your child will be participating in an extra-curricular activity. If a child needs to spend additional time in their school program (e.g., sports team, club, assisting a teacher, gaining additional help, etc.), the child must first report to UFCC staff to ensure their safety.

Professional Activity (P.A.) Days

Programs for kindergarten and school age children are offered in select locations on P.A. days. P.A. days provide kindergarten and school age staff and children opportunities to plan and implement activities that are not possible during regular program operation. Field trips are common on P.A. days, where children travel to and from a place of interest, under the careful supervision of UFCC staff. A variety of additional activities take place at each program, ensuring that children enjoy their day off. Families will be provided with information about these programs at the start of each school year and be invited to register. Spots are available on a first come, first served basis.

Programs During School Breaks

Full day programs are offered in select schools during school break periods (e.g., Christmas, March Break and summer) for kindergarten and school age children. If these programs are not available in a child's school, families will be offered care in another nearby school. Families will be provided with information about these programs prior to each school break and be invited to register. Children are accepted on a first come, first served basis.

Fees are Non-refundable

Please note that all fees for P.A. Days and School Break Periods are non-refundable. Fees apply regardless of whether a child attends or not.

Hours of Operation

Infant, toddler and preschool programs are open weekdays from 7:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Before and after school programs for kindergarten and school age children are open weekdays from 7:00 a.m. to the morning school bell and from the afternoon school bell until 6:00 p.m.

Policy	6 – Nutrition
Last Reviewed	September 2025

FULL DAY PROGRAMS: LUNCH AND SNACKS

Morning and afternoon snacks and a nutritious midday meal are prepared for infant, toddler and preschool children by an on-site cook who is required to complete the Food Handler’s course offered by the Public Health Department. If an on-site cook is not available, a catering service may be used. Site menus are created in consultation with a dietitian, in accordance with Canada’s Food Guide.

Weekly menu plans are posted in the Parent Information Area in each program. UFCC cooks meet regularly to review and adjust menus according to the seasons. If infants require food that is not part of the menu (e.g., formula, pablum, etc.), it must be provided by the family and clearly labelled with the child’s name.

EXTENDED DAY PROGRAMS: NUTRITIOUS SNACKS

Morning and afternoon snacks are prepared for children in extended day programs by UFCC staff who have completed the Food Handler’s course offered by the Public Health Department. Weekly menu plans are posted in the Parent Information Area in each program. Supervisors and Program Leaders plan and review snacks twice a year.

KINDERGARTEN AND SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN ATTENDING FULL DAY PROGRAMS

Kindergarten and school age children attending a full day program on P.A. days or during school breaks bring a bagged lunch unless otherwise stated. The lunch should be brought to the school in an insulated lunch bag containing an ice pack to keep food at a safe temperature. All food that needs to be served warm should be packed in an insulated thermos. The lunch bag and all containers must be clearly labelled with the child’s name.

Milk and fresh fruit will be provided by UFCC staff unless children are on a field trip/excursion.

ALLERGIES AND DIETARY RESTRICTIONS / BRINGING FOOD FROM HOME (APPLIES TO ALL AGE GROUPS)

During the enrollment process, families can communicate any allergies or dietary restrictions their child may have to the Program Leader or Supervisor. Should new allergies or restrictions develop, these will need to be communicated to the Supervisor or Program Leader as soon as possible.

A list of dietary restrictions/allergies will be posted in the food preparation area and in the area where food is served.

While we cannot guarantee an allergen-free environment, UFCC, in accordance with *Sabrina's Law: An Act to Protect Anaphylactic Pupils*, shall make every reasonable effort to:

- Reduce the risk of exposure to anaphylactic causative agents in classrooms and common areas.
- Ensure that personnel are aware of which students within the centre have been identified as being at risk of severe anaphylactic reactions.
- Implement procedures necessary to intervene effectively in the event of an anaphylactic emergency.

UFCC staff will ensure the health and safety of all children by checking any food brought from home to ensure all foods are safe to be consumed (e.g., have not passed their expiry date) and will remove any foods containing centre allergens, substituting with another food item if necessary. Should a child bring an item(s) containing centre allergens to the program, the item(s) will be wrapped and stored in the office and returned to the family at the end of the day.

If food/drink is brought to the centre from home because of dietary restrictions/allergies, the items should be in their original packaging and clearly list the ingredients. If that is not possible, a list of ingredients must be provided for the item(s), in case they affect the allergens of other children or UFCC staff.

Kindergarten and school age children attending a full day program on P.A. days or during school breaks must bring a bagged lunch, unless otherwise stated. Milk and fresh fruit snacks will be provided by UFCC staff members unless children are on a field trip/excursion. If a child forgets their lunch, UFCC will attempt to contact the family to see if they can bring the child's lunch. If not, UFCC will provide a lunch for the child for that day.

Families are requested to pack healthy foods/drinks based on information from Canada's Food Guide and ideally should consist of servings from four different food groups: meat and alternatives, milk products, breads and cereal, fruits and vegetables. UFCC staff will encourage children to eat the most nutritious items from their lunch bag before any treats are consumed (e.g., cookies, candy, etc.).

PEANUTS AND OTHER NUT PRODUCTS

Due to the increased frequency and severity of peanut allergies, UFCC programs have become 'Nut-Reduced Zones'. Please note that UFCC staff do everything in their power to ensure nut-free facilities but cannot control all possible sources of nut contamination.

UFCC does not serve food that may have peanuts or other nut products. Please respect the children or UFCC staff affected and do not bring any nut-contaminated items into the program. For some individuals, this could be a matter of life or death.

SPECIAL EVENTS AND CELEBRATIONS

Public Health regulations prevent us from serving food that has been prepared in someone's home so UFCC staff will plan special events and celebrations in collaboration with children and families.

Policy	7 – Sleep Supervision
Last Reviewed	September 2025

Rest time provides children with an opportunity to relax and take a break from active play. Regulations under the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 require that:

- Each child in a licensed toddler or preschool group who receives child care for six (6) hours or more in a day has a rest period not exceeding two (2) hours in length.
- A child in a licensed toddler, preschool or kindergarten group is permitted to sleep, rest or engage in quiet activities based on the child’s needs.
- Children under 12 months of age will be provided time to sleep based on their individual needs and will be placed in individual cribs for sleep.
- All children who are younger than 12 months of age will be placed on their backs to sleep, unless other instructions are provided in writing by the child’s physician. Parents of these children will be advised of the centre’s obligation to place their child(ren) to sleep on their backs, as set out in the *Joint Statement on Safe Sleep: Preventing Sudden Deaths in Canada*.
- Children between 12 and 18 months of age, who receive child care for six (6) hours or more, will be placed in individual cribs or cots for sleep in accordance with any written instructions from the child’s parent.
- Where children are sleeping in a separate sleep room or area, their names will be posted directly outside the sleep room so that UFCC staff can immediately identify which children are present in the room/area.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

- Families of children who regularly sleep at the child care centre will be advised of the centre’s policies and procedures regarding children’s sleep.
- Families will be consulted regarding a child’s sleeping arrangements at the time the child is enrolled and at any other appropriate time, such as at transitions between programs or rooms or upon request.
- Families will be asked to send in a small blanket or quilt to be used at rest time and informed that a small stuffed toy can also help their child feel more secure.
- UFCC staff will inform families of any significant changes in a child’s sleeping patterns or behaviours during sleep and will discuss adjustments to the way the child is supervised during sleep time.

REST TIME

- Children will be assigned individual cots.
- Children who do not sleep are provided with quiet play activities until the other children awaken.
- No child will be forced to sleep or to stay on a cot.

DIRECT VISUAL CHECKS

- UFCC staff in full day child care centres will perform direct visual checks of sleeping children every 20 minutes by physically checking for indicators of distress or unusual behaviours.
- For infants (children under 18 months of age), direct visual checks will be completed at a frequency based on consultation with each family and may be increased based on the observed sleeping patterns and/or medical needs of each infant or at least every 20 minutes.
- UFCC staff will ensure that there is sufficient lighting in the sleep room to conduct these checks.
- Direct visual checks will be documented for each child daily.
- Any concerns or irregularities will be noted.
- If there are any concerns identified, the information will be included in the child's personal file and communicated with the family.

Information regarding health concerns (e.g., allergies, asthma, dietary restrictions, special needs) is collected from each family upon registration of their child in a UFCC program. It is extremely important that UFCC staff are kept informed regarding the individual needs of each child. Please notify the Supervisor or Program Leader in writing using the appropriate UFCC form if the child has allergies or other health concerns.

APPROPRIATE CLOTHING

Please ensure children have appropriate clothing for daily outdoor play in all seasons.

For safety reasons, children are required to wear shoes with closed toes and heels. Running shoes are preferred. Flip flops and shoes with wheels are not safe for active play, especially outdoors.

IMMUNIZATION

As required by the Hamilton Public Health Department and the Ministry of Education, UFCC staff are required to forward proof of immunization to the Hamilton Public Health Department for infant, toddler and preschool children before admission.

DAILY HEALTH CHECK

To minimize the spreading of illness in UFCC programs, a health check is done upon each child's arrival to the program. Children cannot be accepted for the day, and families will be asked to make alternate arrangements when the child is experiencing conditions, including but not limited to:

- Diarrhea
- Fever
- Headache
- Vomiting
- Persistent Cough
- Severe Pain
- Discharge from Eyes
- Unusual Rash

If a child develops any of these symptoms while in the program, UFCC staff will contact the family (or designate) to plan to have the child picked up from the centre as soon as possible.

Children must be free of symptoms for 24 hours before returning to the child care centre. These exclusion periods can increase depending on the nature of the illness.

In the event of a public health crisis, UFCC may be required to comply with additional health regulations. During such events, any additional policies/procedures will be available at each child care centre.

FIRST AID

If a child sustains a bump or bruise while playing, appropriate first aid (e.g., disinfectant, bandage, etc.) will be applied. UFCC staff will complete an Accident/Incident Report Form. This may be recorded on paper or on our online family communication app. Families will receive a copy of this report.

If a child becomes seriously ill while in attendance at the centre, or suffers an injury requiring immediate medical attention, UFCC staff will call the family immediately to inform them of the situation. Whenever possible, a joint decision will then be made regarding the medical treatment required.

If the family cannot be reached, UFCC staff will seek immediate medical advice and follow through as directed. If necessary, the child will be transported by ambulance to the nearest hospital emergency department. A UFCC staff member will accompany the child, and UFCC staff remaining in the centre will contact families by telephone to inform them of the situation.

ADMINISTERING MEDICATIONS

While UFCC staff will administer medications, if necessary, it is preferred that families arrange for any medications to be administered at home.

Medication must be given directly to UFCC staff to ensure that it is locked up and stored appropriately.

Prescription Medications

UFCC's Administration of Medication procedures requires that families provide written instructions including the name of the drug, prescription number, dosage and administration times. UFCC staff will provide a Consent to Administer and Record of Drug/Medication Form for this purpose. The medication must be in the original container and clearly labelled with the child's name, date, name of drug and instructions for storage and administration of the drug, including dosage and administration times. An appropriate dosing device must be provided.

Non-Prescription Medications

Non-prescription medications may be administered by UFCC staff if the following conditions are met:

- The family provides the drug or medication in the original container and completes the provided label that includes the child's name, name of drug or medication, dosage, date of purchase, expiration date (if applicable) and instructions for storage and administration.
- The family completes a Consent to Administer and Record of Drug/Medication Form.
- The medication is not being used to provide symptom relief for an illness for which the child would otherwise be excluded.

Topical Medications

Written consent is also required to allow UFCC staff to apply topical creams and lotions with active medicinal ingredients. These include, but are not limited to, diaper creams, sunscreen and insect repellent.

Anaphylaxis Policy

UFCC staff must receive training on administration procedures from families if a child has an Epinephrine Auto-Injector (EpiPen), Families must complete the applicable authorization forms and provide UFCC staff with new medication before expiry. A child who has been prescribed an EpiPen will not be admitted to the program without a current (not expired) EpiPen.

School age children may be given permission to carry their own inhalers and EpiPens. If they self-carry, the medication must always be on their person. It is important that this type of medication be easily accessible in an emergency. If a child does not have permission to carry their own medication, it must be given to a UFCC staff member to carry on their person, so it is always available.

SAFE ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

Families must bring their children into the full day and before school programs each day and come into the program (full day and after school) to pick them up, so that their child(ren) can be signed in and out.

Families may request that a child who is in Grade 4 and up may arrive or be released from child care without supervision. Authorization and instructions for the arrival or release of the child including time of arrival/dismissal must be provided in writing. When a family provides written instructions for the release of their child from care without supervision, the family is aware that UFCC is no longer responsible for that child upon their dismissal. Please see specifics under the Independent Departure section below.

When a child does not arrive in care as expected or is not picked up as expected, UFCC staff will follow the safe arrival and dismissal procedures that involve calling the family by 10:00 a.m. for full day programs and within 15 minutes of the bell time for before and after school programs.

Safe Arrival Procedure

When a child that has not arrived in care to a full day program as expected and the family has not communicated a change in drop-off, the following must occur:

- Staff must inform the Program Supervisor or Program Leader.
- Staff must commence contacting the child's family no later than 10:00 a.m. Staff shall communicate with families via phone call, text message/email, or through the program's communication app to confirm the absence of the child.
- After 30 minutes of attempting to contact the family and no response is received, UFCC staff must contact a listed emergency contact (on the child's registration form), to confirm the absence.

- If an adult has still not confirmed the absence of the child by 11:00 a.m., the Program Manager will be contacted to advise on the next steps.
- Once the child's absence has been confirmed, UFCC program staff shall document the child's absence on the attendance record and any additional information about the child's absence in the Daily Journal.

When a child that is expected before school, but does not arrive by the ringing of the bell signaling the start of school, and the family has not communicated a change in drop-off, the following will occur:

- The Supervisor or Program Leader is informed.
- UFCC staff will commence contacting the child's family no later than 15 minutes after the school bell rings to signal the start of school. UFCC staff shall communicate with the family via phone call, text message/email, or through the program's communication app to confirm the absence of the child.
- If contact is not made within 15 minutes, UFCC staff will contact the school personnel to inquire if the child has arrived at school or if an absence was communicated to them by an adult.
- After 30 minutes of attempting to contact the family, if no response is received, UFCC staff must contact a listed emergency contact (on the child's registration form), to confirm absence.
- If an adult has still not confirmed the absence of the child by 11:00 a.m., the Program Manager will be contacted to advise next steps.
- Once the child's absence has been confirmed, UFCC staff will document the child's absence on the attendance record and any additional information about the child's absence in the Daily Journal.

Missing Child – After School Program

For any child who is expected after school, but does not arrive within the first five minutes of the bell ringing to signal school dismissal, UFCC staff will begin to initiate these steps:

- UFCC staff will notify the Supervisor that they require assistance in locating a child.
- UFCC staff will check the hallways of the school or in other program rooms in case the child has reported to the wrong room.
- UFCC staff will check the bus lines to see if the child went to the bus by accident. If the busses have left, UFCC staff will ask the school secretary to call the bus company to inquire if the child went on the bus by accident.
- If the child was at school and was NOT picked up, UFCC staff will ask the school secretary to page the child or ask the child's teacher to see if the child's whereabouts are known.

Calls to Police

If the child is not located within 10 minutes from the time of the school dismissal bell and UFCC staff have taken the steps above, UFCC staff will then:

- Call the family at home or at work to notify them that the child has not arrived and ask if they are aware of the child's whereabouts.

- Call the Police Department and advise them that a child is missing and request their assistance in locating the child.
- As soon as reasonably possible following the call to the police, the Supervisor or Program Leader in charge will notify the Program Manager.
- If the family, Supervisor or Program Manager cannot be reached, UFCC staff will notify UFCC 's Head Office immediately at 905.312.9836.

Before School Dismissal

- Designated UFCC staff will check with the school office to obtain the names of any children who were absent from school that day, who were picked up early by a parent/guardian or their designate, or who the school was advised should go home on the school bus.
- Designated UFCC staff will check the Daily Journal and voice mail for messages.

Authorized Pick Up Persons

- Families will discuss their child care needs with UFCC staff during the enrollment process and identify the people who will be responsible for the arrival and departure of their child(ren) on the Registration Form, including alternate adults who may hold this responsibility on occasion.
- If someone other than the family or authorized adult is to pick up the child, UFCC staff must be notified in advance, in writing. In case of emergency, UFCC staff may be notified by telephone when an alternate adult will be picking up the child.
- Designated persons picking up a child will be required to show identification until UFCC staff become familiar with them.
- UFCC staff are required to follow current custody orders when releasing children. Families are asked to work with the centre Supervisor to ensure the information on file is up to date.
- Should the person picking up the child demonstrate behaviour that suggests the individual may be impaired and is planning to drive with the child or does not appear capable of caring for the child, UFCC staff will call one of the child's emergency contacts.
- Should the family or designated adult insist they are taking the child from the centre, UFCC staff will attempt to discourage them from leaving but will not prevent the child from leaving the centre. If UFCC staff are concerned for the child's safety, they will call Hamilton Child and Family Supports or the Catholic Children's Aid Society for advice on next steps.

Independent Departure

- Families may authorize the centre to allow an older school age child (Grade 4 and up) to leave the centre at a predetermined time. This must be provided in writing in advance specifying the time of departure.
- Children with written authorization for independent departure must sign themselves out of the centre. UFCC staff will note the time of departure in the Daily Journal.

Extra-Curricular Activities

Older school age children may want to participate in after school activities before returning to child care. Families must provide written authorization in advance of the activity.

Late Pick Up

- If a child has not been picked up at the end of the day by 6:00 p.m., UFCC staff will attempt to contact the family and emergency contacts with the goal of developing a safe plan to have the child picked up.
- If more than an hour has passed and contact has not been made or there isn't a plan in place for safe pick up of the child, the Program Manager will be contacted for advice on next steps. This time can be shortened should an individual action plan for a child identify this. This plan would be discussed and signed by the family before it would be enacted.
- Families who are late picking up their child will be charged a late fee of \$5.00 per child, plus \$1.00 per child for every minute expired beyond the centre's closing time.
- UFCC staff may not remove the child from the centre.

TAXIS

It is preferred that children are delivered by a family member or designated adult; however, it is understood that emergencies may occur. While UFCC will work with families based on their individual and unique needs, the child's safety must not be compromised.

Taxi Delivery of a Child:

If a child must be delivered to a UFCC program by taxi, the following procedures will apply:

- The family will call the centre in advance of the child being sent in a taxi to alert them of the situation, and inform the centre of the driver's name, if available.
- The family will inform the taxi driver that the child must be delivered directly to UFCC staff.
- UFCC staff may request to check the I.D. of the driver.
- UFCC accepts no responsibility for the child until a UFCC staff member has been notified in person of the child's arrival.

Taxi Pick Up of a Child:

In the event of an emergency that results in a family arranging for a taxi to pick up the child, the following procedures will apply:

- The family will first attempt to have an designated adult pick up the child and notify the centre of this situation.
- If the only alternative for pick up is a taxi, the family will notify the centre of these arrangements.
- The family will call the taxi company to arrange the time of the pick-up and to get the name of the driver who will pick up the child.
- The family will then call the centre back to confirm the time of pick up and the identity of the taxi driver.
- Before the child is released, the taxi driver must provide proof of identification to a UFCC staff member. UFCC accepts no responsibility for the child after the driver has assumed care of the child and has left the centre.

The goal of any behaviour guidance is for children to learn to manage their own behaviour and interactions with others. Children will be encouraged to solve problems by identifying them, thinking about alternatives, making decisions and talking it over with their friends. Behaviour guidance is used in a positive and caring way as opposed to punishing children. It is intended to promote self-care, self-regulation and an awareness of the effects of one's actions on others.

Minor behavioural issues are dealt with by UFCC staff as they happen through supportive re-direction. If a recurring behaviour issue occurs, UFCC staff will advise the family and enlist support in resolving it. This may involve requesting resources from outside service providers to help resolve the situation.

All families are required to sign/follow the *Rights and Expectations of Children, Families, and Staff* document, which is available on UFCC's family communication app, as well as review our *Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging Statement*.

UFCC staff are not permitted to use harsh measures that would humiliate a child, withhold basic needs, confine a child in a locked area or physically punish children. All UFCC staff, students and volunteers are required to review and sign the *Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Statement* upon joining UFCC and annually thereafter.

Further, UFCC staff are not permitted to use any of the prohibited practices as outlined by the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*, including:

- Corporal punishment of the child.
- Physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a high chair, car seat, stroller or other device for the purposes of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting himself, herself or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent.
- Locking the exits of the child care centre or home child care premises for the purpose of confining the child or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the licensee's emergency management policies and procedures.
- Use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child or undermine his or her self-respect, dignity or self-worth.
- Depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding.
- Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

School Suspensions

In the case where a kindergarten or school age child is suspended from school, the child will not be allowed to attend the UFCC program until the school suspension period has ended. This action is dictated by the Education Act, which stipulates that a student is not permitted on school property while suspended. UFCC staff and the school work as partners and endeavor to support each other in these difficult situations.

Please note that daily fees are still required during the term of suspension.

Electronic Devices

Children participating in UFCC programs are expected to abide by all school policies including policies for the use of electronic devices. If the use of phones and electronic games are not allowed at the school, use of these devices will not be allowed in UFCC programs.

UFCC discourages children from bringing personal electronic devices to the program. Most UFCC programs have access to computers and electronic devices that children can use on a limited basis during program time. UFCC is not responsible for loss or damage of personal electronic devices should children bring these to the program.

Policy	10 – Emergencies
Last Reviewed	September 2025

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Families are required to keep UFCC staff informed of their current work and home telephone numbers, as well as emergency telephone numbers, which are recorded in the child’s file in the program. Should staff not have appropriate contact information, care may be paused until this requirement is met.

At least two (2) emergency contact telephone numbers are always required for each child. It is also critical to inform the program if you will be out of town for the day, or unavailable at the usual number.

FIRE DRILLS AND SECURE SCHOOLS PROTOCOL

Each UFCC program has a written procedure for fire drills that has been approved by the local fire department. Every UFCC staff member is familiar with this procedure, and each room has specific instructions for moving the children safely out of the building. The procedures are posted in each room and unannounced fire drills are carried out once per month in full day sites and once per month during the school year in extended day programs.

Every school has procedures in place to protect students and staff in the event of a serious incident in or around a school. Depending on the event, responses may range from Shelter in Place, Hold and Secure or Lockdown. These procedures are communicated to all users of the building and are practiced several times a year. UFCC staff and children are included in the procedures and participate in the practices when they occur.

EMERGENCY EVACUATIONS

Each program is required to obtain an emergency evacuation site, the location of which is posted in the Parent Information Area. If the building becomes unsafe, children will be evacuated from the school and moved to an emergency location. Once UFCC staff and children are safely at the evacuation site, families will be notified by phone.

UFCC staff will remain with the children until a family member or designated adult can pick them up. A copy of the Emergency Evacuation procedure can be found in the Parent Information Area or requested from the centre’s Supervisor or Program Leader.

INCLEMENT WEATHER / EMERGENCY CLOSURES

When the HWDSB decides to close schools for the day due to a snowstorm or other emergency, UFCC programs are also cancelled. Please check the HWDSB website for information regarding school closures. Should HWDSB decide to close schools in the middle of the school day, the family is responsible for arranging to pick their child up from the school/program as soon as possible.

WEATHER ADVISORIES

For the well-being of both children and UFCC staff, outdoor play will be reduced or eliminated when Environment Canada issues an advisory based on weather conditions (e.g., extreme heat and humidity, wind chill, smog, etc.).

SUSPECTED ABUSE OR NEGLECT

In compliance with the Child and Family Services Act, any UFCC staff member or person who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has suffered or may be suffering from abuse or neglect, must report the suspected abuse to the appropriate children's aid society (HCFS or CCAS).

Under the Act, a "child" is defined as a person under the age of 16 and "abuse" occurs if a person who is providing care of the child causes or allows the child to suffer physical harm, emotional neglect or sexual interference.

Suspected abuse MUST be reported to HCFS or CCAS by UFCC staff on the day the suspicion occurs. The Supervisor will also be notified of the action taken. HCFS or CCAS will then commence an investigation as appropriate and will contact the family, usually within 24 hours. HCFS or CCAS will often ask the reporting person not to inform the family that a report has been made, as this may interfere with the investigation.

CONCERNS ABOUT THE SUSPECTED ABUSE OR NEGLECT OF A CHILD

- 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 family members express concerns that a child is being abused or neglected, they will be advised to contact the local children's aid society (HCFS or CCAS) directly.
- UFCC staff who become aware of such concerns are also responsible for reporting this information to HCFS or CCAS as per the "Duty to Report" requirement under the Child and Family Services Act. For more information, visit <http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childrensaid/reportingabuse/index.aspx>

CONTACTS FOR FAMILIES AND STAFF

Name	Contact Info
College of Early Childhood Educators	416.961.8558 info@college-ece.ca
Hamilton Child and Family Supports (HCFS)	905.522.1121 info@hamiltoncfs.ca
Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton (CCAS)	905.525.2012 https://hccas.ca/contact/
Ministry of Education, Licensed Child Care Help Desk	1.877.510.5333

REGISTRATION AND ENROLLMENT

UFCC is committed to providing a transparent and consistent registration and enrollment process. The following policy outlines the steps to join one of UFCC’s child care programs including placement on the waitlist(s), offer of space, and completion of all necessary registration requirements. Families are encouraged to review this policy carefully to ensure timely and successful enrollment.

1. Care Request Submission

Families must begin the registration process by submitting a Care Request on our website’s ‘Locations page at umbrellafamily.com/locations. Upon submission, the child will be placed on the selected program’s waitlist(s). **Please note that each location has its own waitlist, and families must register for each site individually.**

UFCC staff will contact families as they approach the top of the waitlist. Families are responsible for ensuring their contact information is up to date.

2. Offer of Space and Centre Tour

When a space becomes available, it will be offered to the next eligible family on the waitlist. Prior to acceptance, families or their designate will be invited to tour the centre with the Supervisor.

If the space is accepted, a full registration package will be issued through UFCC’s parent communication and registration platform. At this stage, families must also schedule **one (1) orientation/play visit** with their child.

3. Orientation Visits and Observation

Orientation visits allow the child to familiarize themselves with the UFCC program environment and interact with peers and educators. Educators will observe the child during these visits to assess how they adjust to the setting and determine any additional supports the child may require.

4. Required Documentation

All registration forms **must be completed** in full through UFCC’s family communication and registration app before a child’s first day in the program. Families will be notified of any new forms introduced during the school year and will be provided with a deadline for submission and/or acknowledgement of policy changes or updates made to the Parent Handbook. Failure to complete required forms by the stated deadline will result in the **termination of care**.

5. Enrollment Completion Requirements

To confirm and finalize enrollment, families must complete the following three (3) steps:

1. **Phone Intake Meeting:** Must be completed within **five (5) business days** of accepting a space. This intake provides a program overview and gathers information about the child's needs.
2. **Submission of Registration Forms:** All required forms must be submitted through UFCC's parent communication and registration platform **within 48 hours** of the intake meeting.
3. **Orientation Visit(s):** At least one in-person orientation visit must be completed within **five (5) business days** of the phone intake meeting.

Failure to complete any of the above steps within the required timeframes will result in the space being offered to another family.

6. Maintaining Waitlist Status

When contacted with an offer of space, families will have **two (2) business days** to respond to the offer. If no response, UFCC staff will then reach out via email. Families will have **two (2) business days** to respond to the email. After both attempts, if there is still no response received, families will be contacted to be informed that they will be permanently removed from the waitlist and the next family on the waitlist will be contacted.

7. Reapplying After Removal

Families who are removed from the waitlist or who lose a space due to incomplete enrollment may reapply at any time. To rejoin the waitlist, please visit umbrellafamily.com/locations and select **Request Care** at the desired location.

Please note that reapplication does not guarantee placement, and all offers are subject to availability.

WAITLIST

UFCC is committed to maintaining a fair, equitable, and transparent waitlist process that respects the privacy and confidentiality of all families. When all program spaces at UFCC are full, families may request to be placed on a waitlist for future availability.

Families may inquire about their child's general position on the waitlist at any time by contacting waitlist@umbrellafamily.com.

Please note that a child's position on the waitlist is subject to change based on the needs and priorities of the organization.

UFCC does **not charge a fee or require a deposit** to be placed on the waitlist.

When offered a space, families may decline the offer a maximum of **two (2)** times. After two declines, the family will be removed from the waitlist.

Waitlist Prioritization

UFCC gives priority placement on the waitlist to the following groups:

1. Children of UFCC staff (in accordance with the Collective Agreement between UFCC and CUPE Local 3491)
2. Child Welfare and Protection Referrals (as requested by child protection agencies or legal authorities)
3. Children transferring between UFCC Centres
4. Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) transfers due to change in catchment area
5. Siblings of children currently enrolled in a UFCC Program
6. HWDSB French Immersion transfers

Group-Based Waitlist Management

UFCC has moved away from mixed-age groupings. This means that waitlists for all age groups are managed separately. Children will be offered placement based on the availability within their age-appropriate group, rather than in the order they appear on a single unified list. For example, Kindergarten-aged children will be enrolled in dedicated Kindergarten programs, while School Age children will be enrolled in School Age groups and will be placed on their respective waitlists accordingly. This ensures age-appropriate care and programming.

Exceptions to group-based placement may be made in consultation with the Program Manager, and only when location-specific waitlists do not support strict separation of age groups.

PART-TIME CARE

Priority for child care space is given to full-time enrollments. Part-time care is available on a limited basis. Whenever possible, Supervisors and Program Leaders will enroll children so that two children requiring part-time care share one full-time spot in the program. When staff cannot assign a full-time spot between two children, parents will be responsible for paying for a **minimum of three (3) days of care per week**, despite their individual care requirements. Requests to change from full-time enrolment to part-time will not be approved if the centre has a waitlist. An occasional or varied schedule for care is not guaranteed and can only be accommodated with a Supervisor's approval, and if there is not a waitlist at the centre.

ENROLLMENT CHANGES

Umbrella requires **two (2) weeks' notice** for any enrollment changes. UFCC does not accept any changes to enrollment from August 15 to September 12 of each calendar year.

Policy	12 – Fees and Payment Policy
Last Reviewed	September 2025

REGISTRATION FEES

Upon acceptance of a space, a **non-refundable registration fee of \$50.00 per child** is required. If a family withdraws and later wishes to re-register the same child, a **non-refundable administrative fee of \$25.00** will apply. These fees apply to non-subsidized children over 6 years of age only.

There is no fee charged for placing a child on the waitlist.

BASE CHILD CARE FEES

All UFCC base fees are per day and are set according to a child’s age group.

Late fees, NSF fees ,and/or any fees beyond base fees are determined on an as-needed basis and are considered non-base fees. Non-base fees are not eligible for the [Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care \(CWELCC\)](#) System fee reduction program.

Age Groups:

Base fees are applied based on the following age groups:

- Infant – less than 18 months
- Toddler – 18 months to 30 months
- Preschool – 30 months to the start of JK
- Kindergarten – 44 months (3.6 years) to 7 years
- School Age – 68 months (5.6) to 13 years

When a child moves to a new age group, the new base fee will apply based on the following schedule:

- Infants will begin paying toddler fees at 18 months.
- Toddlers will begin paying preschool fees at 30 months.
- Preschoolers will begin paying kindergarten fees as of the September when they enter their first year of kindergarten at school.
- Kindergarteners will begin paying school age fees as of the September when they enter grade 1.

Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC)

UFCC is enrolled in the [Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care \(CWELCC\)](#) System fee reduction program. CWELCC helps reduce child care fees for children 0-6 years of age.

Families do not need to apply to get a fee reduction. Fees will automatically be adjusted by UFCC to reflect the CWELCC reduced rate for their age group.

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL RATES

As part of CWELCC, the [City of Hamilton's Child Care Services](#) has replaced its Before and After School Affordability Grant Program with a new universal before and after school rate for children aged 6 to 12 years old. The universal rate will take effect September 2, 2025, and will help reduce costs for families for the 2025/26 school year. School Age Full Day rates are not included in the universal rate program.

Families do not need to apply for the universal before and after school rate. As is done with CWELCC, UFCC will automatically apply the reduced fees to a family's account.

CHILD CARE SUBSIDY

Families can apply to the City of Hamilton's Child Care Services for [financial support](#) in the form of subsidies for children aged 0-12 years of age.

Subsidies are based on a family's financial situation and need. The City meets with families to determine eligibility for fee subsidy. Depending on the circumstances, a family may be placed on a subsidy waitlist. The waitlist times depend on priority and funding availability.

Families receiving child care subsidy may still be required to pay a child care user fee. These user fees are paid directly to UFCC and are due on a bi-weekly basis in accordance with UFCC's Fee Schedule.

Families are responsible for fulfilling all payment requirements of the subsidy contract to maintain the subsidy, as well as for any absences not covered by subsidy (i.e. absences that are more than the allotted number of days established by the City, or sick days where appropriate documentation was not provided or was not permitted).

If families become ineligible for subsidy, they are responsible for paying the full cost of child care fees to UFCC.

Families who receive subsidies are expected to maintain their account in good standing. All UFCC policies regarding late pick-up fees, NSF charges, and accounts in arrears will apply.

Learn more about financial supports available to families that qualify at [Child Care Subsidy Services](#) or call 905-546-4870.

Holiday Closures

UFCC closes annually for the following statutory/civic holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Family Day
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday

- Victoria Day
- Canada Day
- Civic Holiday
- Labour Day
- Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve/New Year's – p.m.
- Christmas Day
- Boxing Day

Full base fees are payable for these statutory/civic holidays.

In accordance with HWDSB policy, the two half day closures (Christmas and New Year's Eve) may be combined for one full day closure. The date of the closure is determined by HWDSB each year and will be communicated to families.

Occasionally, UFCC staff participate in the City of Hamilton's Early Years Professional Learning Day and UFCC programs will close for the day. Parents/caregivers will be given advance notice of these dates.

School Breaks

Fees for school break programs (P.A. Days, March Break, Summer Camp) are paid separately. Due to the high demand for these programs, all fees are **non-refundable** even if a child is withdrawn from the program.

Emergency Closures

Daily fees still apply unless an event outside of UFCC's control requires centres to close for an emergency that exceeds two (2) consecutive business days. Examples of emergency closures include, but are not limited to, inclement weather such as snowstorms, extreme temperatures, utility outages (heat, hydro), labour disruption, health crisis (pandemics), etc.

Absences from the Program

Daily fees will apply even when a child is absent from the program (e.g., illness, vacation, etc.). Families who receive subsidized care are required to advise their subsidy worker of any prolonged absences or changes in their situation that will affect payment of fees.

Withdrawals from Care

Families are required to provide **two (2) weeks written notice** of a withdrawal from the program. Regardless of the last day of attendance, fees will apply for the remainder of the billing period.

Under certain circumstances, the two-week notice period may be waived by UFCC. These instances will be determined on a case-by-case basis where a family has extenuating circumstances and two weeks' notice cannot be given.

Late Pick Up Fees

It is the responsibility of all families to arrive on time to pick up their child and gather their belongings so that UFCC can close promptly at 6:00 p.m.

A late fee of **\$5.00 per child, plus an additional \$1.00 per child** for every minute expired beyond the centre's closing time, will apply to all families, even those whose child's care is fully subsidized.

Late fees are strictly enforced and must be paid **within three (3) business days**.

If families are late more than three (3) times in a row, UFCC will request a meeting with the family to discuss if alternative child care arrangements need to be made to avoid further late pick-ups and termination of care.

Non-refundable

All fees are non-refundable. If a family becomes eligible for fee subsidy, any prepaid fees will be adjusted, and a credit will be issued to the account. A refund may be issued if a family has no user fee, or the resulting credit is not used through regular billing within three (3) months.

PAYMENTS

UFCC's Payment Policies apply to all families, including those who are required to pay a daily user fee to UFCC while on full or partial subsidy.

Method of Payment

All existing care recipients and new registrants, must add **pre-authorized payment via bank debit (PAD) or credit card** on UFCC's family communication and registration app.

A small convenience fee will apply to fees paid by credit card.

The payment method selected can be modified or updated on the family communication and registration app at any time, but **a pre-authorized payment method must be maintained and kept up to date while a child is in our programs**. Failure to maintain the preauthorized payment method on the family communication and registration app will result in termination of care.

Billing Cycle

Fees are deducted from the bank or credit card on a bi-weekly basis (every other Monday). Fees are paid **two (2) weeks in** advance for each day the child is enrolled at UFCC. Notices are sent via UFCC's communication and registration app each pay cycle to remind families that the next payment is due.

NSF Charges

A charge of **\$45** will be applied to **ALL pre-approved bank or credit card payments** returned insufficient funds (NSF). Missed payment must be paid in full on the next scheduled pre-authorized payment date. Care will be terminated for children with accounts that have more than three (3) NSF charges in a 12-month period.

Missed Payments

UFCC has a strict missed payment policy. When a payment is missed, UFCC's Finance Department will notify families by phone and email so that arrangements to pay can be made before the next billing cycle.

Repeated missed payments and NSFs are not acceptable and **failure to keep payments up to date will result in termination of care.**

Repeated Failed Payments

Consistent and timely payment of fees is a condition of care at UFCC. While UFCC will make every effort to support families experiencing financial challenges through temporary payment arrangements, **repeated missed payments will result in termination of care.**

Accounts in Arrears

Accounts that have been in arrears for four (weeks) will result in termination of care and the debt will be referred to a collection agency. Families in collection will not be permitted to reapply for care in any UFCC programs for a minimum of 12 months.

An Account is in arrears when any of the following occurs:

- A payment is returned NSF
- An NSF, registration or late fee is not paid by the required due date
- Absences not covered by subsidy are not paid
- A valid payment method on the parent app is not maintained

UFCC understands that on occasion, families may miss a payment. If due to extenuating circumstances fees cannot be paid on time, UFCC's Finance Department may be able to set up a temporary, manageable payment plan to help families get their accounts paid up to date. Before the next billing cycle and to avoid NSF charges, families are urged to contact UFCC's Finance Department at 905.312.9836 to discuss the circumstances and to set up an agreed upon payment plan based on a set payment schedule.

While UFCC's Finance Department will work make every reasonable effort to work with families to bring accounts up to date through an agreed upon payment plan, **failure to pay fees in the determined timeframe will result in termination of care.**

Zero Tolerance Policy

UFCC has a zero-tolerance policy for abusive, threatening, or disrespectful behaviour toward UFCC staff who are notifying families of missed payments or who are attempting to collect outstanding fees. Verbal abuse, harassment, intimidation, or any conduct that undermines attempts to keep your account in good standing will not be tolerated and will result in the termination of care with limited notice.

Changes and/or Updates

Families will be notified by email and on the family communication and registration app at least four (4) weeks in advance of any changes to UFCC fees. UFCC will make every effort to notify families as soon as possible when information from the City of Hamilton, CWELCC, or other factors that affects fees occur.

Tax Receipts

Tax Receipts for paid fees in the previous year will be issued in February of the following year and will be posted on the family communication and registration app. Families can download the receipt directly from the app.

Our Locations & Programs

LOCATION	2024 PROGRAMS	LOCATION	2024 PROGRAMS
Ancaster Meadow	Toddler, Preschool, Before & After School	Lincoln Alexander	Toddler, Preschool, Before & After School
Balacava	Before & After School	Michaëlle Jean	Before & After School
Bellmoore	Infant, Toddler, Preschool, Before & After School	Mount Hope	Before & After School
Buchanan Park	OPENED SEPTEMBER 2024 Before & After School	Mountview	Before & After School
Cathy Wever	Toddler, Preschool, Before & After School	Queensdale	Before & After School
Dundana	Before & After School	Ray Lewis	Toddler, Preschool, Before & After School
Dundas Central	Before & After School	Rosedale	Before & After School
Eastdale	Before & After School	Shannen Koostachin	Infant, Toddler, Preschool, Before & After School
Gatestone	Toddler, Preschool, Before & After School	Sir Wilfrid Laurier	Toddler, Preschool, Before & After School
Gordon Price	CLOSED AUGUST 2024	South Meadow	Infant, Toddler, Preschool, Before & After School
Greensville	Toddler, Preschool, Before & After School	Templemead	Toddler, Preschool, Before & After School
Helen Detwiler	Before & After School	Viola Desmond	Infant, Toddler, Preschool, Before & After School
Hillcrest	Toddler, Preschool, Before & After School	Winona	Before & After School
James MacDonald	Before & After School		
Lawfield	Toddler, Preschool, Before & After School		

Umbrella Family and Child Centres of Hamilton



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