



**Umbrella Family and  
Child Centres of Hamilton**

# **PROGRAM HANDBOOK**

Our Program Handbook for families contains detailed information on all aspects of our child care programs at Umbrella. If you have any questions about Umbrella's policies, please contact your centre's Supervisor or email **[info@umbrellafamily.com](mailto:info@umbrellafamily.com)**.

Last Reviewed: May 2025

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<b>Policy</b>	1 – Vision, Mission, and Values
<b>Last Reviewed</b>	July 2024

## VISION

Responsible, accessible, and inclusive child care for all.

## MISSION

Excellence in early learning and child care.

## VALUES

### **Collaboration is the Key**

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

### **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.

### **Excellence Begins with Us**

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

### **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.

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Policy	2 – Program Statement
Last Reviewed	May 2025

## CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGY

The starting point for curriculum in the Umbrella 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 program for the review and consideration of both children and adults.

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 Umbrella Curriculum. The Umbrella Vision, Mission and Core Values statements closely align with these four foundations.

This program statement and the accompanying Implementation Policy is reviewed with all 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 the staff member and the designated supervisor.

Umbrella 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 Hamilton 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. Menus are reviewed seasonally by our nutrition team. Meal and snack times are opportunities to socialize and share nutritious food with other children and staff.

Umbrella staff are trained to create safe environments for children. Written sanitary procedures ensure that safe practices are followed. Umbrella 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 gives consideration to the individual needs of the children receiving child 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.

The learning environments are designed to offer children open spaces to interact with others as well as quiet cozy 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 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. Umbrella 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.

We are 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. We help children to develop self-awareness and constructive problem solving and decision making skills through clarification of feelings, encouragement and modelling.

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

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 Umbrella Family 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.

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

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

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 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 educators on a daily basis. These opportunities can be initiated by children or educators.

Our 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.

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.

## Community Involvement

Umbrella Family and Child Centres of Hamilton 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. Umbrella 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 Umbrella Family staff and supervisors. Umbrella staff have the educational qualifications, knowledge, experience and professional commitment to promote children's learning and development.

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 Hamilton Early Years Quality Program (HEYQP) which works to enhance quality in our programs.

## Prohibited Practices

The following practices are prohibited in all Umbrella 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 situation)\*
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 worth
5. Depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, toilet use, clothing or bedding
6. Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will

\*If there is an emergency situation that requires a child to be restrained or confined, the supervisor needs to be informed to support safety of child(ren) and staff, report to parent(s) and to determine if a Serious Occurrence Report needs to be made.

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Policy	3 – CWELCC
Last Reviewed	May 2025

Umbrella Family and Child Centres of Hamilton are participants of the [Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care \(CWELCC\) System](#). The Federal government committed to investing in a national child care system with all provinces and territories, as well as Indigenous organizations.

Funding under CWELCC will be used to build and leverage the success of Ontario’s existing early learning and child care system by increasing quality, accessibility, affordability and inclusivity in early learning and child care.

Parents do not have to apply to receive a child care fee reduction through CWELCC; it will be done by Umbrella Family in partnership with the [City of Hamilton](#).

For our full fee schedule, please visit [our website](#).

*Note: Effective June 2025, the City of Hamilton will no longer be providing the School-Age Affordability Grant for the 2025/26 school year. The new rates are outlined on the registration form on Kindertales and on the fee schedule available [on our website](#).*

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<b>Policy</b>	4 – Our Programs
<b>Last Reviewed</b>	July 2024

## **INFANT, TODDLER AND PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS (FULL DAY)**

### **Infants (0 – 18 Months)**

Our Infant Program accommodates up to ten, 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 parents and 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, staff members 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 (44 – 68 Months) and School Age (68 Months – 12 Years) Children**

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

As with all of our programs, curriculum is play-based and planned in alignment with the children's current interests. \*See additional information below regarding before and after school programs.

### **Before School Programs**

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

A morning snack, consisting of items one might eat for breakfast (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.

### **After School Programs**

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

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, sport 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 hat, gloves, sunscreen, etc. are a necessity.

### **Extracurricular After School Activities**

From time to time, children in school age programs may be involved in supervised activities organized by the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board that occur either before or after school. Permission to participate in such a program must be granted in advance by the child's parents, not the child care staff. Please notify the program, using the appropriate Umbrella 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 the Umbrella staff to assure their safety.

### **P.A. (Professional Activity) Days**

Programs for kindergarten and school age children are offered in select locations on P.A. days. If these programs are not available at your child's location, you will be offered care at another Umbrella centre. Children are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

P.A. days provide the kindergarten and school age staff members and children the 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 our staff members. A variety of additional activities take place at each program, ensuring that children enjoy their day off. You will be provided with information about these programs at the start of each school year and be invited to register.

When applying for PA Day Care, please note that all fees for School Break Periods are non-refundable. Once you have submitted your care request, if care is confirmed, fees are to be paid. Fees apply regardless of whether your child attends or not due to our coordination of staffing, trip locations, and buses based on the number of children enrolled.

### **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 your child's school, you will be offered care in another nearby school. Children are accepted on a first come, first served basis. You will be provided with information about these programs prior to each school break and be invited to register.

Once you register for these programs, fees will apply regardless of whether your child attends or not due to our coordination of staffing, trip locations, and buses based on the number of children enrolled.

Please note that all fees for School Break Periods (including summer camp programs) are non-refundable. Once you have submitted your care request, if care is confirmed, fees are to be paid

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Policy	5 – Quality Assurance
Last Reviewed	July 2024

## LICENSING

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All Umbrella 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 parents to view.

## QUALITY ASSURANCE

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

Umbrella 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.

<b>Manual</b>	UFCC Program Handbook
<b>Policy</b>	6 – Students on Placement and Volunteers
<b>Last Reviewed</b>	July 2024

Umbrella provides mentoring and practice teaching experiences for Early Childhood Education students. High school co-op students, 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 Umbrella policies and procedures.

<b>Manual</b>	UFCC Program Handbook
<b>Section</b>	7 – Staff in Umbrella Programs
<b>Last Reviewed</b>	July 2024

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

Most of the staff in Umbrella 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.

In order to be employed by Umbrella, 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 our team and additional training is provided on hiring.

All 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 staff are also required to provide a Declaration of Non-Offense in the years in between. All 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 Satellite Program Leaders obtain a Food Handler's Certificate.

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

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

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Policy	8 – Behaviour Guidance
Last Reviewed	July 2024

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 staff as they happen through supportive re-direction. If a recurring behaviour issue occurs, staff will advise the parent and enlist support in resolving it. This may involve requesting resources from outside service providers to help resolve the situation. Working together with parents, we are confident that most issues can be resolved. All parents are required to sign/follow the *Rights and Expectations of Children, Families, and Staff* document which is available on our online platform, as well as review our *Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging Statement*.

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 staff, students and volunteers are required to review and sign the Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Statement upon joining the Umbrella and annually thereafter. Further, 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; or
- inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will. O. Reg. 137/15, s. 48; O. Reg. 126/16, s. 34.

<b>Manual</b>	UFCC Program Handbook
<b>Policy</b>	9 – Children Suspended from School
<b>Last Reviewed</b>	July 2024

In the case where a kindergarten or school age child is suspended from a Hamilton-Wentworth District School, the child will not be allowed to attend the Umbrella 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. The Umbrella and school staff work as partners and endeavor to support each other in these difficult situations.

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

<b>Manual</b>	UFCC Program Handbook
<b>Policy</b>	10 – Electronic Devices
<b>Last Reviewed</b>	July 2024

Children participating in Umbrella 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 Umbrella programs.

Umbrella discourages children bringing personal electronic devices to the program. Most Umbrella programs have access to computers and electronic devices that children can use on a limited basis during program time. Neither staff nor the Umbrella will accept any responsibility for loss or damage of personal electronic devices should children bring these to the program.

<b>Manual</b>	UFCC Program Handbook
<b>Policy</b>	11 – Nutrition
<b>Last Reviewed</b>	July 2024

## **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. In the event that an on-site cook is not available, occasionally, 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. The Umbrella cooks meet regularly to review and adjust menus according to the seasons. If infants require food that is not part of our centre menus (e.g., formula, pablum, etc.) it must be provided by the parent 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 program 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. A group of 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. Milk and fresh fruit will be provided by Umbrella staff members unless children are on a field trip/excursion. Nutritious morning and afternoon snacks are provided daily by staff.

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.

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

The enrollment process will provide an opportunity for you to communicate any allergies or dietary restrictions your child may have to the Program Leader or Supervisor. Should your child develop any new allergies or restrictions, these will need to be communicated to the Supervisor or Program Leader as soon as you become aware of the new information.

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, Umbrella, 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 population have been identified as being at risk to experience severe anaphylactic reactions; and,
- Implement procedures necessary to intervene effectively in the event of an anaphylactic emergency

Please do not send any food/drink for your child to the program that contains any centre allergens. Umbrella staff will ensure the health and safety of all children by checking any food sent/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 sent/brought to the centre from home because of dietary restrictions/allergies in order to replace food items provided by Umbrella, 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 staff. Expiry dates will be checked by staff.

When food is sent to the centre, it should be 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. It is important that the lunch bag and all containers are labelled clearly with the child's name and food items are kept in the original container(s), if possible.

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 will be provided by Umbrella staff members unless children are on a field trip/excursion. Nutritious morning and afternoon snacks are provided daily by staff. If a child forgets their lunch, the Umbrella will attempt to contact the parent to see if they can bring the child's lunch. If not, the Umbrella will provide a lunch for the child for that day.

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

Please do not allow your child to bring any nut-contaminated items into the program. Umbrella staff members will ensure the health and safety of all children by checking the contents of lunch bags to ensure all foods are safe to be consumed, removing any foods containing nuts/peanuts and substituting with another food item, if necessary. Should a child bring an item containing peanuts to school, the item(s) will be wrapped and stored in the office. These items will be returned to the family at the end of the day.

## **PEANUTS AND OTHER NUT PRODUCTS**

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Due to the increased frequency and severity of peanut allergies, Umbrella programs have become 'Nut-Reduced Zones'. We do not serve food that may have come into contact with peanuts or other nut products. Please respect the children or staff affected, and do not allow your child to bring any nut-contaminated items into the program. For some individuals, this could be a matter of life or death.

Please note that Umbrella staff do everything in their power to ensure nut-free facilities but cannot control all possible sources of nut contamination.

## **SPECIAL EVENTS AND CELEBRATIONS**

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We love to celebrate occasions such as birthdays and special holidays! Public Health regulations prevent us from serving food that has been prepared in someone's home so staff members will plan special events and celebrations in collaboration with children and families.

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<b>Policy</b>	12 – Health
<b>Last Reviewed</b>	July 2024

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

## **IMMUNIZATION**

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

## **DAILY HEALTH CHECK**

Umbrella programs are not equipped to provide care for ill children. To minimize the spreading of illness in our programs, a health check is done upon each child's arrival at the program. Children cannot be accepted for the day and parents 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, a staff member will contact the parent (or designate) to make arrangements to have the child picked up from the centre as soon as possible. As your child recovers, they 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, Umbrella may be required to comply with additional health regulations in order to admit children into our programs. During such events, any additional policies/procedures will be available at each child care centre.

## **ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION**

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Umbrella staff will administer medications if absolutely necessary, but it is preferred that you arrange for any medications to be administered at home.

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

### **Prescription Medications**

Umbrella Administration of Medication procedures requires that parents provide written instructions including the name of the drug, prescription number, dosage and administration times. Staff will provide a Consent to Administer and Record of Drug/Medication Form for this purpose. The medication must be in the original container 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 staff if the following conditions are met:

- The parent provides the drug or medication in the original container and completes the provided label which 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 parent will complete 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 from parents to allow staff to apply topical creams and lotions with active medicinal ingredients. These would include, but not be limited to, diaper creams, sunscreen and insect repellent.

### **Anaphylaxis Policy**

Staff must receive training on administration procedures from parents if a child has an Epinephrine Auto-Injector (Epi-Pen.) Parents will be requested to complete the applicable authorization forms and provide the staff with new medication prior to expiry. A child who has been prescribed an Epi-Pen will not be admitted to the program without a current (not expired) Epi-Pen.

### **Inhalers and EpiPens**

School age children may be given permission to carry their own inhalers and EpiPens. If they self-carry, the medication must be on their person at all times. Since it is important that this type of medication be easily accessible in an emergency, it will be important that you discuss this with staff and with your child. If a child does not have permission to carry their own medication, it must be given to a classroom staff member to carry on their person so it is available at all times.

Manual	UFCC Program Handbook
Policy	13 – Safety
Last Reviewed	July 2024

## OPERATIONAL HOURS

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

## SAFE ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

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

A parent/guardian may request that a child who is in Grade 4 or older, may arrive or be released from child care without supervision. Parent/guardian must provide written and signed authorization and instructions for the arrival or release of the child including time of arrival/dismissal. Where a parent/guardian provides written instructions for the release of their child from care without supervision, the parent/guardian is aware that the child care is no longer responsible for that child upon their dismissal. Please see specifics under the Independent Departure section below.

Where a child does not arrive in care as expected or is not picked up as expected, staff must follow the safe arrival and dismissal procedures which involve calling the parent/guardian by 10:00am for full day programs and within 15 minutes of the bell time for before and after school programs. See details below.

### Arrival Procedure

- Where a child has not arrived in care to a full day program as expected and the parent/guardian 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 parent/guardian no later than 10:00 am. Staff shall communicate with the parent/guardians 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 parent/guardian, if no response is received, 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 am, the Program Manager will be contacted to advise on the next steps.

- Once the child's absence has been confirmed, 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.
- **Where a child who is expected before school, but does not arrive by ringing of the bell, signaling the start of school, and the parent/guardian has not communicated a change in drop-off, the following must occur:**
  - Inform the Program Supervisor or Program Leader.
  - Check in with the school office to confirm if the child's absence has been reported.
  - Staff must commence contacting the child's parent/guardian no later than 15 minutes after the school bell rings to signal the start of school. Staff shall communicate with the parent/guardians 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, the staff shall 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 parent/guardian, if no response is received, 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 am, the Program Manager will be contacted to advise next steps.
  - Once the child's absence has been confirmed, 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.

### **Child Missing 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, begin to initiate these steps:

- Staff must notify the Supervisor that they require assistance in locating a child.
- Staff check the hallways of the school or in other program rooms in case the child has reported to the wrong room.
- Staff check the bus lines to see if the child went to the bus by accident. If the busses have left, 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, staff will ask the school secretary to page the child or inquire with the child's teacher to see if the child's whereabouts are known.

### **Calls to Police and Parents**

If the child is not located within ten minutes from the time the school dismissal bell and staff have taken the steps above, staff will

- Call the parents at home or work to notify them that the child has not arrived. Ask if the parent is aware of child's whereabouts.
- Call the Police Department and advise them that a child is missing; 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 must notify the Program Manager.
- If the parent, Supervisor or Program Manager cannot be reached, staff will notify Head Office immediately at 905-312-9836.

### **Prior to School Dismissal**

- Designated 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 or their designate, or who the school was advised should go home on the school bus.
- Designated staff will check the Daily Journal and voice mail for messages.

### **Authorized Pick Up Persons**

- Parents will discuss their child care needs with centre 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 parent or authorized person is to pick up the child, staff must be notified in advance, in writing. In case of emergency, staff may be notified by telephone when an alternate person will be picking up the child.
- Designated persons picking up a child will be required to show identification until staff become familiar with them.
- UFCC staff members 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, the staff member will call one of the child's emergency contacts.
- Should the parent insist they are taking the child from the centre, the staff member will attempt to discourage the parent but will not prevent the child from leaving the centre. If the staff member is concerned for the child's safety, they will call the Children's Aid Society for advice on next steps.

### Independent Departure

- Parents may authorize the centre to allow an older school age child (Grade 4 and up) to leave the centre at a predetermined time. The parent needs to provide written authorization in advance specifying the time of departure.
- Children with parent authorization for independent departure must sign themselves out of the centre. Staff will note time of departure and/or any parental direction in the Daily Journal.

### Extra-Curricular Activities

- Older school age children may want to participate in after school activities prior to returning to child care. Parents need to provide written authorization in advance of the activity.

### Late Pick Ups

- If a child has not been picked up at the end of the day, staff will attempt to contact the parent 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. (CAS may be contacted for advice on how to proceed.) This time can be shortened should an individual action plan for a child identify this. This plan would be discussed with and signed by the parent before it would be enacted.
- Child care staff may not remove the child from the centre.
- Parents 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 closing time. Supervisors will issue these fees via the child care billing app.

### TAXIS

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It is preferable that children are delivered by a parent or designate; however, it is understood that emergencies may occur. While it is essential we 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 parent 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 parent will inform the taxi driver that the child must be delivered directly to the child care centre staff.
- Staff may request to check the I.D. of the driver.

- UFCC accepts no responsibility for the child until a staff member has been notified in person of the child's arrival.

### **Taxi Pick Up of a Child:**

In the event of an emergency which results in a parent arranging for a taxi to pick up his/her child, the following procedures will apply:

- The parent will first attempt to have a designate pick up the child and notify the centre of this situation.
- If the only alternative for pick up is a taxi, the parent will notify the centre of these arrangements.
- The parent will call the taxi company to arrange the time of the pick-up and to determine the name of the driver who will pick up the child.
- The parent 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 staff member. UFCC accepts no responsibility for the child after the driver has assumed care of the child and has left the centre.

### **APPROPRIATE CLOTHING**

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Please ensure that your child has 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 heels are not safe for active play, especially outdoors.

### **FIRST AID**

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If your child sustains a bump or bruise while playing, appropriate first aid (e.g., disinfectant, bandage, etc.) will be applied. Staff will complete an "Accident/Incident Report Form" . This may be recorded on paper or on our online communication app. Parents 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, the staff will call the parent immediately to inform them of the situation. Whenever possible, a joint decision will then be made regarding the medical treatment required.

If the parent cannot be reached, child care 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 child care centre staff member will accompany the child, and the staff remaining in the centre will endeavor to contact the parents by telephone to inform them of the situation. Parents will be required to report to the hospital to complete the necessary forms.

## **EMERGENCY CONTACTS**

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Parents are required to keep Umbrella 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 required for each child at all times. 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**

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Each Umbrella program has a written procedure for fire drills that has been approved by the local fire department. Every 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. Umbrella staff and children are included in the procedures and participate in the practices when they occur.

## **EMERGENCY EVACUATION**

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Each program is required to obtain an emergency evacuation site, the location of which is posted in the Parent Information Area. In the event that the building becomes unsafe, children will be evacuated from the school and moved to our emergency location. Once staff and children are safely at the evacuation site, parents will be notified by phone. Staff will remain with the children until their parents pick them up. A copy of the Emergency Evacuation procedure at your child's centre can be found in the Parent Information Area or requested from your site's Supervisor or Program Leader.

## **SNOW/EMERGENCY CLOSURES**

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When the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board makes a decision to close schools for the day due to a snowstorm or other emergency, Umbrella programs are also canceled. Please check the HWDSB website for information regarding school closures. Should the Board of Education make a decision to close schools in the middle of the school day, the parent is responsible for making arrangements to pick their child up from the school/program as soon as possible.

## **EXTREME TEMPERATURES AND/OR SMOG ADVISORIES**

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

## CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT

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In compliance with the Child and Family Services Act, any 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 (CAS 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 CAS/CCAS by the staff member on the day the suspicion occurs. The Supervisor will also be notified of the action taken. The CAS/CCAS will then commence an investigation as appropriate, and will contact the family, usually within 24 hours. CAS/CCAS will often ask the reporting teacher not to inform the family that a report has been made, as this may interfere with the investigation.

<b>Manual</b>	UFCC Program Handbook
<b>Policy</b>	14 – Sleep Supervision
<b>Last Reviewed</b>	July 2024

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 6 hours or more in a day has a rest period not exceeding 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 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 staff can immediately identify which children are present in the room/area.

## PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

- Parents of children who regularly sleep at the child care centre will be advised of the centre's policies and procedures regarding children's sleep.
- Parents 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.
- Parents 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.
- Staff will inform parents 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

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- 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 parent and may be increased based on the observed sleeping patterns and/or medical needs of each infant or at least every 20 minutes.
- 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.

Manual	UFCC Program Handbook
Policy	15 – Registration, Waitlist, Payments
Last Reviewed	May 2025

## REGISTRATION AND ENROLLMENT PROCESS

UFCC is committed to providing a transparent and consistent registration and enrollment process. The following policy outlines the steps to join one of our child care programs including placement on our 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](https://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.

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

For more information on our waitlist process, please refer to the **Waitlist Policy** section of this handbook.

### 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 **Kindertales**, Umbrella'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 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. Registration Fee

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.

**Note:** *These fees do not apply to families who are approved for Child Care Subsidy or who are enrolled under the CWELCC program.*

## 5. Required Documentation

All registration forms **must be completed** in full through **Kindertales** before a child's first day in the program. Families will be notified of any new forms introduced during the school year and 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 may result in the **suspension or termination of care** until all forms are submitted.

### 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 **Kindertales 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 may result in the space being offered to another family.

### 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, staff will then reach out via email. Families will have **two (2)** business days to respond to the email. After both of these 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.

### 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](https://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

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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 Umbrella 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 their centre's Supervisor. However, 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 in 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

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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 are not able to 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

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

## FEES

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Up to date information regarding our fees can be found on our website. If Umbrella fees change for any reason, parents will be notified at least four (4) weeks in advance of the change.

Please note that daily rates and registration fees are considered to be "base fees." Late fees, NSF fees and/or any fees beyond the base fees are determined on an as-needed basis and are considered to be non-base fees. Non-base fees are not eligible for fee reductions through CWELCC.

Umbrella utilizes an age-based fee schedule. Our fees are based on your child's age and may not reflect the group your child is placed in. This fee schedule reflects funding agreements with the City of Hamilton.

Child Care Fees are applied to age groups as follows:

- Infant – less than 18 months
- Toddler – 18 months to 30 months
- Preschool – 30 months to JK entrance
- Kindergarten – 44 months to 7 years
- School Age – 68 months to 13 years

Fee changes will apply according to the following schedule:

- All infants will begin paying toddler fees at 18 months.
- All toddlers will begin paying preschool fees at 30 months.
- All preschool will begin paying kindergarten fees as of the September when they enter their first year of kindergarten at school.
- All kindergarten children will begin paying school age fees as of the September when they enter grade 1.

## CHILD CARE SUBSIDY

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The City of Hamilton provides child care subsidies to eligible families, depending on a family's financial situation. To find out more about Child Care Subsidy, please call 905-546-4870 or visit the [City of Hamilton website](#).

## **FEE COLLECTION POLICIES**

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The following fee collection policies will apply to all families, including those on partial subsidy who are required to pay a daily contribution to cover centre fees:

### **Fee Payments**

As part of the enrollment process, the daily fees will be explained by the Program Supervisor. All parents/guardians must add preauthorized payment information to their profile on Kindertales in the form of banking or credit card information. This preauthorized payment information can be modified or updated by parents/guardians at any time. Failure to provide preauthorized payment information will result in termination of care.

Once the documentation is in place, child care fees will be deducted from your account on a bi-weekly basis. All tuition fees are non-refundable. In certain circumstances, in the case of error, or should a family become eligible for fee subsidy, any prepaid fees would be adjusted. Credits will be issued on a family account. In rare situations a refund payment would be issued where a family has no user fee or the resulting credit would not be used up through regular billing within 3 months. Parents must register for school break programs (e.g., P.A. days, March Break) separately. These fees are non-refundable due to high demand for these programs.

Fees are due, a minimum of two (2) weeks in advance, for each day the child is enrolled in the centre. Full fees are charged for statutory/civic holidays; therefore, parents are expected to pay their regular rate each week.

Umbrella Family follows the implementation outlined by the province with respect to Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) System. Please refer to our fee schedule for the current subsidy provided by CWELCC.

### **Absences From the Program**

The expenses of the Umbrella programs continue during periods of absence and parents are expected to continue to pay for care when their child is absent from the program (e.g., illness, vacation, etc.). Subsidized parents are required to advise their subsidy worker of any prolonged absences or changes in their situation. Full fees are payable on all statutory/civic holidays or HWDSB closures.

Umbrella centres are closed on the following dates:

- New Year's Day
- Family Day
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- Victoria Day
- Canada Day
- Civic Holiday
- Labour Day
- Thanksgiving

- Christmas Eve – p.m.\*
- Christmas Day
- Boxing Day
- New Year's Eve – p.m.\*

\*Please note that in order to align with the HWDSB policy, the two half day closures 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. Full fees are charged for this date.

Occasionally, UFCC staff participate in the City of Hamilton's Early Years Professional Learning Day. In these circumstances, UFCC programs close for the day. Parents are given advance warning of these dates when UFCC is provided the dates from the City of Hamilton.

### **Tax Receipts**

Receipts for paid fees will be issued once annually, in February of each year.

### **Notice of Withdrawal**

Parents are required to provide the Supervisor or Program Leader with two (2) weeks written notice of a child's withdrawal from the program. Regardless of the last day of attendance, the child will be billed for the remainder of the billing period. Should the family wish to register the same child at a later date, a registration fee of \$25.00 will be applied.

Umbrella staff will do everything possible to ensure that our programs work well for all the children who are registered. This includes making program adjustments and working with parents and members of other professions, when authorized by parents. In rare instances where it is not possible to accommodate a child's needs using the steps above, staff will provide parents with two (2) weeks' notice and work with them to find alternate and more suitable child care arrangements. Under certain circumstances, the two-week withdrawal period can be waived by Umbrella. These instances will be determined on a case-by-case basis where a family has extreme extenuating circumstances or where a family fails to abide by our Rights and Expectations of Care.

Umbrella staff strive to create an environment of mutual respect between themselves and families. Every effort will be made to accommodate family needs and work in partnership with parents. Parents and families are expected to treat staff with respect. Actions of parents and families that violate *the Rights and Expectations of Children, Families, and Staff* document, could also result in parents being asked to make alternate child care arrangements, at times, with limited notice (under the above-mentioned conditions).

### **Late Pick Up Fees**

Children become anxious when their parents are late. Staff members have other commitments to attend to after work. It is your responsibility to arrive at the centre in time to collect your child and their belongings so that the centre can close promptly at 6:00 p.m.

If you are late picking up your child, you will be charged a late fee of \$5.00 per child, plus \$1.00 per child for every minute expired beyond the centre closing time. The amount of the late fee will be billed to you by the Supervisor and must be paid within three (3) days.

This charge contributes to the overtime expenses paid to staff members who are required to stay beyond their regular shift.

If you are late picking up your child more than three (3) times, a meeting will take place with your Program Leader or Supervisor to discuss alternate child care arrangements.

Late fees apply to all families, even those whose care is fully subsidized.

### **NSF Charges**

A fee equivalent to the amount the bank charges Umbrella for an NSF will be applied to your account when a payment is returned NSF, including late-fee charges. If your payment is returned NSF, funds in the amount of your account balance must be received within three (3) business days. Upon receipt of a second NSF, all of the above will apply. Outstanding accounts must be paid in full on the next scheduled PAP withdrawal date.

### **Accounts in Arrears**

While the Umbrella recognizes that occasionally a family may find it difficult to pay fees on time, please be aware that an account in arrears is not acceptable. Failure to keep your payments up to date may result in your child(ren) being suspended from the program until outstanding account balances have been settled.

Accounts that have been in arrears for a significant amount of time will be referred to a collection agency.

If due to extenuating circumstances you are unable to pay your fees on time, it is in your best interest to speak to the Program Leader or Supervisor immediately. In some circumstances, Umbrella may be able to set up a temporary, manageable fee schedule.

### **EMERGENCY CLOSURES**

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An emergency closure is defined as any event which is outside of the control of the Umbrella and requires us to close our centres. Examples of emergency closures include, but are not limited to snow storm, centre without heat/hydro, labour disruption, pandemic, etc. In the case of an emergency closure, fees will be payable for all closures not exceeding two (2) consecutive business days. This means that should a centre need to close for up to two (2) days, parents will be expected to pay for care, even though they needed to make alternate arrangements.

Manual	UFCC Program Handbook
Policy	16 – Rates and Fee Schedules
Last Reviewed	January 2025

Please refer to our “Registration, Waitlist and Payments” policy in our Program Handbook for more details on our fee policies. Rates are per day, per child. Payments are due bi-weekly on Fridays in advance of the following two (2) weeks of care.

## RATES

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Please [CLICK HERE](#) to view rates effective as of January 2025.

More information on CWELCC Rates can be found in the “CWELCC” policy in our Program Handbook. Please note that daily rates and registration fees are considered to be “base fees.” Late fees, NSF fees and/or any fees beyond the base fees are determined on an as-needed basis and are considered to be non-base fees. Non-base fees are not eligible for fee reductions through CWELCC.

Manual	UFCC Program Handbook
Policy	17 – Parents
Last Reviewed	July 2024

## PARENTS IN PROGRAMS

Parents are always welcome in Umbrella programs. Please take the time to get to know the staff who care for your child(ren). We recognize that you know your child(ren) best and look forward to working together with you to ensure your child receives the maximum benefit from our programs.

## WHEN YOU HAVE CONCERNS

Arrange to speak with your child’s educator at a time and place that is mutually convenient for both of you. It is important to us that we have a place where confidentiality is preserved and our educators can take the time to fully understand your concerns. It would not be fair to you or to the children in the program if we engaged in these conversations while the educator is engaged with the children. Alternatively, you may wish to bring forward your concern in writing.

If the concerns 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.

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

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

The following guide will help you know who to contact. Please visit our [Locations Page](#) to view your 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"> <li>• Raise the issue or concern with the classroom staff directly.</li> <li>• There is also the option of speaking to the Program Supervisor.</li> </ul>
Fees, hours of operation, staffing, waiting lists, menus, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact the Program Supervisor.</li> </ul>
Staff, supervisor or volunteer-related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You have the option of raising the concern directly with the individual or you may want</li> </ul>

Type of Concern	Who to Contact
	<p>to speak to the Supervisor or Program Manager.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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 parents/guardians become aware of the situation.</li> </ul>

#### 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 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.
- Staff who become aware of such concerns are also responsible for reporting this information to CAS 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>

#### ADDITIONAL CONTACTS FOR FAMILIES

Name	Contact Info
College of Early Childhood Educators	416-961-8558 <a href="mailto:info@college-ece.ca">info@college-ece.ca</a>
Children's Aid Society of Hamilton	905-522-1121 <a href="mailto:info@hamiltoncas.com">info@hamiltoncas.com</a>
Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton	905-525-2012 <a href="https://hccas.ca/contact/">https://hccas.ca/contact/</a>
Ministry of Education, Licensed Child Care Help Desk	1-877-510-5333