



GNAG Playground Safety Policy

Policy Established: May 8, 2017

Policy Reviewed: June 21, 2023

Purpose

Outdoor play is an integral part of the daily schedule and plays an important role in the development of children's overall well-being. In order for children to thrive in outdoor play, it is crucial that there be sufficient toys and equipment for children to engage in active play and that educators engage as active participants in the play.

The *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years* document describes how children thrive in programs where they can engage in vigorous physical play in natural outdoor spaces and playgrounds that present manageable levels of challenge. In addition to providing physical benefits, active play outdoors strengthens functioning in cognitive areas such as perception, attention, creative problem solving, and complex thinking.

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

The purpose of this policy is to set out the responsibilities of the licensee, staff, students and volunteers in ensuring that the outdoor and playground spaces provide a safe and well-supervised environment for children's play and meet Canadian Standards Association (CSA) standards.

This policy is intended to fulfill the obligations set out under Ontario Regulation 137/15 for a playground safety policy for child care centres.

Policy and Procedure

- The child care centre will ensure that there are enough play materials available that are appropriate for the children's age and learning and developmental needs during outdoor play.
- The maximum capacity of the playground will not be exceeded at any time.
- FULL STAFF RATIOS is maintained at all times on the playground
- Daily visual and monthly/seasonal playground inspections/checklists and repair logs are completed and documented by program educators.

- Annual comprehensive inspection and written report by a certified third party inspector.
- The Executive Director of GNAG with the City of Ottawa Facility Manager will address issues or problems identified in the daily, monthly and annual inspections. If the issue or problem cannot be immediately addressed, all reasonable steps will be taken to restrict children's access to the unsafe area.
- Where outdoor space or playground repairs cannot be completed immediately, the area or space requiring repairs will be sectioned off to prevent children from using that area in order to protect their safety and reduce the risk of injury. Children will be supervised at all times during outdoor play to ensure that they do not approach or use spaces that are sectioned off pending repairs.
- To ensure the safety of our children, ZONE SUPERVISION IS ESSENTIAL. Staff "clustering" detracts from the proper supervision of the play yards. Be aware at the end of the day when parents are picking up and may wish to talk, stay alert to the children in your care.
- Zone supervision is to be done with as much view of the play yard as possible. It is a good idea to keep your back to the fence.
- Head counts will be done regularly by staff as children may leave the playground without the staff's knowledge.
- Children who need to use the washroom while out in the play yard must be accompanied by an adult. A staff member should be notified if you are leaving the play yard for this or any other reason. In order to maintain ratio, another staff member is called to help. If there is not another staff member available, half the children go back inside.
- Do not help younger children climb up to or jump from heights beyond their ability on climbing structures or trees.
- Children are to use the slides with their feet first. Do not allow children to run down the slides or go head first.
- Ensure surfaces are dry: slippery surfaces cause injuries.
- Encourage children to hold onto hand rails and grips.
- Children need free hands to climb: no hand-held objects are to be on the climber.
- Staff member will have a fully stocked first aid kit and cell phone on hand in event of an injury / emergency