



THISTLEOAKS
Child Care Centre

PARENT HANDBOOK

Revised June 2009



THISTLEOAKS
Child Care Centre

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WELCOME TO THISTLEOAKS CHILD CARE CENTRE!

We are a child care centre for the children of employees of Thistle town, Central West Specialized Developmental Services (Oaklands Regional Centre) and the Oakville Community. We are a non-profit organization, operated by a volunteer Board of Directors and a paid Executive Director. We are licensed by the Ministry of Community, Children and Family Services; our operation is guided by the Day Nursery Act. The license is posted in the sunroom and in the craft room at Central West Specialized Developmental Services (Oaklands) main building.

Thistleoaks is located on the grounds of Central West Specialized Developmental Services (Oaklands Regional Centre), a residential facility for developmentally handicapped individuals. This is their home and the residents are free to use the grounds. For safety purposes, please drive slowly and obey all traffic signs.

Thistleoaks Child Care Centre is a facility for children and families to learn, grow, explore and create. We believe in team work and as a part of Thistleoaks, we want you to feel like part of our team. Our goal is to nurture each individual child in a safe, warm, caring and educational focused environment. Your suggestions, support and ideas are valued and always welcome. Our handbook will provide information that relates to our Child Care Centre and programs. If you should require any further information about Thistleoaks, please feel free to contact our Executive Director.

Thistleoaks Philosophy

Thistleoaks Child Care Centre provides a warm and caring atmosphere to nurture the growth of the total child. Children thrive in a snug, secure and stimulating environment. We provide this special atmosphere to all children.

The teachers offer a flexible program, which promotes the children's sense of belonging and self-confidence, while recognizing their individual needs. The children are exposed to a variety of activities in large and small groups. Activities are geared to each child's age and stage of development to promote emotional, intellectual, physical and social growth.

We offer an integrated program for children with extra support needs. A Resource Consultant from the Region of Halton works with Centre staff to provide support and individual program plans.

Thistleoaks Child Care Centre Policy

We believe that every child is to be respected as an individual and as a member of the group. Our goal is to meet each child's needs and interests to ensure optimal growth. We appreciate your cooperation in reporting anything that could affect your child's behaviour. (e.g. change in eating, sleeping patterns, fears, crisis at home)

Our 'Open Door' policy encourages parents and guardians to drop in at any time during operating hours. We encourage parents to become involved with Thistleoaks, volunteering in their areas of expertise.

Admission

Thistleoaks Child Care Centre is a licensed child care centre for children between the ages of 6 weeks to 12 years of age. We admit children in the following programs:

Program	Children	Ratio	Age
Infant	10	1:3	6 weeks – 18 months
Toddler	10	1:5	18 – 24 months
Junior	10	1:5	24 – 30 months
Intermediate	16	1:8	2 ½ - 3 years
Senior	16	1:8	3 – 4 years
Kindercare (Junior Kindergarten)	20	1:10	4 – 5 years
Kinderclub (Senior Kindergarten)	23	1:12	4 ½ - 6 years
Thistle garden	14	1:8	3 – 5 1/2 years
School Age – before school	15	1:15	6 – 12 years
School Age – after school	30	1:15	6 – 12 years

In addition, we provide full-day care for School Aged children during professional development days and all school holidays.

During the summer, we offer summer camp programs for both the children enrolled in Elementary School – Kindergarten, as well as the older children in Grade 1 up to 12 years of age.

Parents/guardians are required to complete the forms provided in the registration package in full prior to attending the program.

General Information

Hours of Operation

Thistleoaks is open all year from 6:45 am – 6:15 pm, Monday to Friday, excluding statutory holidays.

Statutory Holidays

There is no fee reduction for statutory holidays. This pertains to the following days:

- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Victoria Day
- Canada Day
- Civic Holiday
- Labour Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day
- Boxing Day

Fee

Fees are based on the number days for which your child is enrolled. Invoices are distributed on the first working day of every month for that month. Your child's teacher will distribute invoices. Payment is due on the first of every month unless parents arrange otherwise with the Executive Director. Interest may be charged after the 7th day of the month on overdue accounts. Tax receipts are issued in February.

No reduction in fees is made to parents for statutory holidays, family vacations, illness or emergency closures. Missed days may not be exchanged. Children attend the days for which they are registered. Fees are based on a 9 hour day (except for part day children). Extra hours are charged after 15 minutes past the hour.

Parents will be charged the rate for the group in which their child is enrolled. If the child cannot be moved to their appropriate age group within 3 months, the next group rate will be charged. If you wish to change the days that you are enrolled in please inform the office *in writing*. We will try to accommodate changes to arrangements, written notice is required.

Late Fee

The centre opens at 6:45 am and closes at 6:15 pm. We would appreciate it if you would pick up your child by 6:00 pm allowing you time to obtain any information, dress your child, and depart by 6:15 pm. (Parents leaving the centre after 6:15 pm will be charged a late fee of \$15.00 for every 15 minutes or part thereof.)

Fee Structure

The Board of Directors reviews the child care fees at least annually. These fees are subject to change generally on the first day of April each year, but may be changed more often.

Professional Development Days

Children enrolled in elementary school will be automatically enrolled in all professional development days and school holidays (excluding Summer Holidays). Parents/guardians will be charged the P.D. rate unless the office is notified in writing two weeks prior to the P.D. day that they will not require care for that day. If notification is given then the regular rate will be applied.

Arrival and Departure

Always make sure that the teacher in attendance is aware of your child's arrival and departure. We cannot accept responsibility for children who are not inside the classroom or playground. If possible, spend a few minutes sharing information, this helps to make the transition easier. All parents are required to sign their children in and out. For your information, staff record your child's daily eating, sleeping and toilet information (where appropriate). This information is kept in the program communication binder located on the parent counter in the sunroom or in your child's room.

A keypad is located at the entrances of the main building. You will be given the code upon admission of your child. The code may change from time to time. A door bell is located by the keypad doors for visitors.

Emergency Evacuation

In case of an emergency evacuation, Thistleoaks staff will take the children to Oaklands Regional Centre gym. Parents will be contacted and are expected to pick up their children at this location.

Release of Children – Emergencies or Alternate Arrangements

In an emergency, you may enlist someone other than yourself to pick up your child. This person must be at least 18 years of age or older. We must be advised and be able to identify the person you have authorized. We will ask for photo identification. Your child will not be released to an unauthorized person. We require the names, addresses, telephone numbers and child's relationship to the adults you wish to authorize and this must be listed on our admission form at the time of registration along with your consent signature. Please advise us of any changes.

Discharge

The parents provide *written* notice of withdrawal, **one month in advance**. Parents are required to pay to the end of this notice period. Thistleoaks may terminate service, with written notice, if policies are not followed or fees not paid.

Procedure:

- a. Parents/guardians submit a written withdrawal notice to the Executive Director.
- b. Parents/guardians pay child care fees to the end of the one month notice period.
- c. The Executive Director may discharge children if payments are irregular.

Bad Weather Policy

Every effort will be made to keep the centre open on scheduled days. However, due to severe weather conditions, we may be forced to close. Parents/guardians will not be reimbursed for days missed due to severe weather conditions. If we are closed due to severe weather, it will be announced by 6:30 am if possible on our answering machine as well as over K-lite FM 102.9 radio station.

Sun Screen

Thistleoaks Child Care Centre supplies sun screen for all children. A permission form needs to be signed in order for us to apply centre provided sunscreen to your child. If you would prefer to provide your own, please label the sunscreen and inform your child's teacher. Sunscreen is not applied to children under 6 months of age. During the summer, we ask that you please apply sunscreen to your child prior to arriving at Thistleoaks Child Care Centre. We will reapply sunscreen during the day. (SF30 is recommended)

Clothing

Your child's safety is our number one concern, therefore please send your child in closed toe, rubber heeled shoes, i.e. running shoes. Label garments with child's name or initials. Please provide your child with a hanging bag, extra shoes or slippers and a complete change of clothes suitable to the weather.

- Summer clothing includes a sun hat, bathing suit and towel. Open toe sandals are not advisable.
- Winter clothing includes a hat, two pairs of heavy mittens, boots and a warm snow suit.
- Spring and fall clothing is to be transitional weather clothing, including rubber boots, hat, splash pants and a jacket suitable to the weather.

Meals

Your child will be served a nutritious morning, lunch and afternoon snack. Menus are posted outside the kitchen and the Infant/Toddler rooms. Please do not bring **ANY** outside food in to the building

Please inform us of all allergies and food requests. Allergies are posted in each classroom and in the kitchen. Thistleoaks will attempt to accommodate special food requirements (e.g. for allergies, personal or cultural reasons).

Children enrolled in summer camp provide their own summer camp and lunch. Afternoon snack will be provided. Please pack a healthy and nutritious lunch. We encourage you to be creative; don't forget to include a variety of fruits and vegetables.

NO PEANUT PRODUCTS OR OTHER NUT PRODUCTS ARE PERMITTED AT THISTLEOAKS CHILD CARE CENTRE DUE TO SERIOUS ALLERGIES.

Anaphylaxis Policy

Anaphylaxis (anna - fill -axis) is a serious allergic reaction. It can be life-threatening. Food is the most common cause of anaphylaxis, but insect stings, medicine, latex, or exercise can also cause a reaction. The commonest food allergens are peanuts, tree nuts, seafood, egg and milk products. Anaphylaxis affects multiple body systems: skin, upper and lower respiratory, gastro-intestinal and cardiovascular. Anaphylactic shock is an explosive overreaction of the body's immune system to a triggering agent (allergen). It can be characterized by swelling, difficulty breathing, abdominal cramps, vomiting, diarrhea, circulatory collapse, coma and death.

Symptoms of anaphylactic shock tend to develop rapidly, although the initial presentation can be delayed and/or deceptively mild. The victim may become uneasy, upset and red in the face. They may also develop a rapid heartbeat, prickling and itchiness in the skin, hives, throbbing in the ears, sneezing, coughing and difficulty breathing. Shock may then follow, in which blood vessels become leaky, blood pressure falls and the person becomes cold, clammy and faint.

Policy:

This policy provides direction to parents, staff and administrators to help minimize and reduce the risks for those who are identified as being susceptible to anaphylaxis due to individual allergy conditions. The intent of this policy is to develop a safe learning and working environment for all persons with allergies and special medical conditions. In this policy you will find the following:

- A strategy to reduce the risk of exposure to anaphylactic causative agents
- A communication plan for the provision of information on life-threatening allergies, including anaphylactic allergies
- An individual plan for each child with a special health concern, including anaphylactic allergies.
- Third party training for the individual procedures of each child with anaphylactic concerns.

Procedure:

Strategy:

Thistleoaks child care centre is a nut free centre. We do not serve products that knowingly contain nuts or any nut products. To help us achieve this, we ask that no food be brought into the centre.

All allergies will be listed in a common area in the classroom .Should children require an *Individual Health Plan*, it will be noted on the allergy sheet. Three copies of this plan will be made. One copy will be kept in the classroom attendance binder that stays with the teacher at all times, the other with any medication that needs to administered (if necessary) and the third in a main binder that is kept in the office.

Communication Plan/ Individual Health Plan:

All students, parents, staff and volunteers of Thistleoaks Child Care Centre that have medical concerns including anaphylaxis will complete an Individual Health Plan form (attached to this policy). This information will be provided upon enrollment/ hiring and updated with the teachers and office administration as conditions change.

The Individual Health Plan will be reviewed annually and when the child graduates to the next classroom or which ever is sooner. This plan includes current treatment, medication information and location, signs and symptoms as well as a current emergency contact list and training documentation.

Team Leaders will post a photo of any child with a life threatening allergy and inform the cook in the kitchen of any and all allergies and alert them when it changes.

It is the classroom teachers' responsibility to inform any supply and/ or part time staff and/ or volunteers of the children's health and allergy concerns as they enter the classroom.

Third Party Training:

It is the obligation of the student's parents or guardian to ensure that the information in the student's file be kept up to date and that staff are trained in the administering of medication and first aid procedures for their child. This will be documented on the Individual Health Plan. In the event that a parent is not able to train a staff, a third party such as a public health nurse or physician will be acceptable.

Staff are preauthorized to administer medication in response to an anaphylactic reaction when the school has up to date information on the child's individual treatment as well as signed consent from the parent or guardian.

If a staff member has reason to believe that a student is experiencing an anaphylactic reaction, the employee may administer an auto injector or other medication prescribed to the student for the treatment of an anaphylactic reaction, even if there is no preauthorization to do so.

We ask that parents provide 2 auto injectors when we are taking the children on field trips in the event that EMS response time is increased when we are off of Thistleoaks grounds. We ask that all staff, volunteers and parents read and abide by this policy. Its intention is not to segregate those children with special health concerns, but for us all to be an active part of prevention, treatment and understanding so that we can live happy and healthy lives without any undue risks.

High School Co-op and College Students

Thistleoaks supports our community by providing practical learning experiences. Staff supervise students from ECE and ECA college and high school co-operative programs.

Toys from Home

Children may bring a toy from home for special planned activities. Your child's teacher will provide you with advance notice of such occasions. Otherwise, it is best to leave toys at home. This prevents toys being lost or broken for which the teachers are not responsible. Please do not allow your child to bring guns, war toys or other toys or destruction. This is discouraged at Thistleoaks.

Rest

All Toddler, Preschool and Kindercare children will rest for 1-2 hours in the afternoon. They are not required to sleep but are requested to lie quietly on their cots. Children may bring a blanket and stuffed toy from home to be used at rest time.

The Kinderclub children may rest for up to one hour. A letter will be sent home prior to the commencement of the new school year (September). Parents/Guardians are required to sign and return the letter which indicates the options to waive sleep time or keep the one hour rest period.

Oaklands' Grounds and Entrance

Please use the Kerr Street entrance only. The Bond Street entrance is only to be used if the Kerr Street entrance is blocked. Please stop at all stop signs. They are there to protect the residents and your children. DRIVE SLOWLY.

Please turn your car engine off and lock your car. Do not leave children unattended in your car. Please obey the NO PARKING SIGNS. If all parking spaces are filled, please use Oaklands parking lot located to the south of Thistleoaks.

Parent/Guardian Information

Parent/Guardian meetings are held between 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., four times per year. This includes our Annual General Meeting and BBQ in June and our Holiday Celebration in December.

Social nights usually include a light meal with child care provided for the meeting portion of the evening. This is a great time to meet other parents, relax, meet staff informally and learn more about our child care environment.

If the parking lot is full for these events, please park in the Oakland's parking lot. Please do not Park in a fire route.

Special Activities

The children occasionally leave the premises for walks or other activities at Oaklands such as visits to SENECA for intergenerational programming. Please see program sheet for details. The children may visit local sites of interest that support the learning environment. We travel on local buses or Laidlaw transportation. Special field trips will be posted for your approval in advance. If you object to your child's participation, please speak to your child's teacher.

We would be pleased if you would share with us any traditional or special events.

Newsletters

You will receive a centre newsletter every two months, Via E-mail or in paper copy. The newsletter contains centre and board news as well as items of interest. Monthly you will receive your child's room calendar that highlights the curriculum and special events.

Transportation

We provide transportation to many local schools for children enrolled in elementary school. Parents/guardians requiring transportation services for the next school year are requested to submit notification of their transportation needs in writing by the end of June. Once the route is established then additional schools are not added. When determining the bus route, we consider the length of time that each child spends on the bus. Therefore, unfortunately we can not always service schools due to the length of the route. Transportation is contracted via Laidlaw buses.

Parents/guardians must notify the centre by 2:30 p.m. if your child will not be returning to the Centre via Laidlaw transportation. Continued failure in not notifying the Centre of a child's absence may result in the termination of transportation services.

The Centre will not accept or release children who are transported by taxi without an parent or guardian.

We will be transporting children to various outings both on Laidlaw and local Oakville buses. Please review these seven bus safety rules with your child.

1. Obey the bus driver
2. Walk as you get on and off the bus – don't run.
3. Keep the aisles clear of books and bags.
4. Talk quietly.
5. Keep your hands and head inside the windows.
6. Seat belts must be worn at all times (if available).
7. Stay in your seat.

8. Bus Safety Policy

Due to the safety and well being of children during transportation, we strictly enforce the bus safety rules. If your child does not comply with safe and appropriate behaviour on the school bus then the following procedure is followed.

If a child acts in an unsafe or inappropriate manner on the bus then a white bus slip will be issued.

- When one slip is issued then the Team Leader or designate staff will meet with the child and parent/guardian to discuss the inappropriate behaviour.
- When two slips are issued then the child will not be allowed to ride on the bus the next day. The child may attend the program but parents/guardians are responsible for transporting their child to and from the program.
- If three slips are issued then a meeting with the Executive Director is arranged to discuss whether continuing transportation service is a safe option.
- Transportation services can be terminated at the discretion of the Executive Director if the safety and well being of the children using the bus is compromised.

Behaviour Guidance

We realize that behavioral problems will occur from time to time. By using redirection and positive reinforcement, we modify the behaviour, not the child. Initially we look at the room, the program and then our individual response to the child's behaviour.

At no time shall a teacher, parent or guardian use corporal punishment on the child care premises, or while representing Thistleoaks. Parents/guardians may wish to reinforce these guidelines at home, please see your child's teacher for more information. Our behaviour guidance policy is posted in the sunroom.

Safe Environment Policy

Thistleoaks has the responsibility, in partnership with the student, family and community, to provide :

- a safe, positive and violence free environment for everyone in which respect and human dignity are valued
- and promote a sense of self worth and self discipline in the children
- and develop a primary prevention strategy and environment that stresses sociably, acceptable attitudes and effective social interpersonal skills

It is the intent of our policy:

For parents:

- to teach and instill good values
- respect the rights of others
- a sense of societal responsibility for their children and themselves
- to foster a safe and secure environment

For children:

- to be respected in both person and beliefs
- to respect person, safety, property and rights of others
- to give respect and cooperation to all persons in positions of responsibility at Thistleoaks

Safe Environment Procedure

BEHAVIOUR	FIRST OCCURENCE	SUBSEQUENT OCCURENCE
DEFINITION: Assault-the act or attempt To do physical harm	Letter informing parents & meeting with family, may Suspend child for one day depending on severity	Suspend child at discretion of Executive/Assistant Directors, meeting with family before child may return to program, child may be discharged from program

Defiance of Authority – persistent refusal to comply with persons in positions of authority – same as outlined in procedures.

Disorderly conduct-behaviour that displays persistent opposition to authority, conduct injurious to the moral tone of the Centre or to the well being of others in the centre-same as outlined in procedures.

Each situation is influenced by the child's age and their abilities. Children are directly responsible for their behaviour to Thistleoaks' staff while at Thistleoaks or under our authority (i.e. bus field trips). The primary responsibility for young children's behaviour always rests with the parent(s)/guardians.

Reference: Halton Board of Education Policy

Accident Form

An accident form will be completed by a staff member if your child obtains an injury. If the injury is serious we will immediately contact you and follow emergency procedure. If the injury is minor we will administer first aid treatment and document the incident.

- The accident form comprises of a carbon copy.
- The staff member will document the incident, first aid treatment administered and further actions taken.
- The Executive/Assistant Director or designate will review and sign the form. Parents/guardians will be asked to review and sign the form when they arrive to pick up their child.
- A copy will be available for you to take home.

Smoking

There is no smoking permitted at Thistleoaks, or if you are representing Thistleoaks (e.g. field trips).

Health

A child can become ill whether in child care or at home. But, when illness occurs among a group of children, the situation becomes more complicated. For example, the teacher(s) must decide what implications any illness has to the sick child, to the other children in care and to themselves. The parents feel torn between the demands of employment and the lack of alternatives for the sick child and the child may need special care during the course of the illness.

Please notify Thistleoaks if any information changes e.g. health immunization, address, telephone number, emergency contact person, job etc.

Health Policies

1. The medical/health information sheet, information forms and emergency card must be completed prior to the child's entry into Thistleoaks Child Care Centre. This is in accordance with the Day Nursery Act and Halton Regional Public Health Department. Thereafter, children are required to have their immunizations kept up to date.
2. Communicable illnesses, suspected communicable illnesses or prolonged illnesses are to be reported to the teachers at Thistleoaks as soon as possible. We require a physician's note stating that your child is free from infectious or communicable disease before your child will be allowed to return to school.
3. Children who appear ill do not attend the Centre program. We ask (as supported by the Public Health Department) that your child be kept home if they have any of the following symptoms:
 - Fever or vomiting
 - Cough
 - Runny nose , especially with green or yellow discharge
 - Diarrhea

And also displays signs of:

- ❑ Low activity level
- ❑ Decrease in appetite
- ❑ Need for more emotional support
- ❑ Sleepless nights
- ❑ Behavioural changes

This tells us your child is not well.

We realize that some of the children will have been taken to the family doctor and either:

- ❑ Treatment has been prescribed
- ❑ No medication ordered, possible virus
- ❑ Cause unknown

We have found through our experience that the children's health improves more quickly if they remain at home 24-48 hours at this point. This also prevents other children in the Centre from coming down with the same symptoms and reduces the amount of time that the children remain unhealthy. Therefore if your child is sent home with previously mentioned symptoms, he/she may not return for 24 (preferably 48) hours after symptoms are gone. You will be required to sign the "Ill Child Form" to confirm this.

We understand that there are a number of stresses for working parents. Therefore, we strongly encourage you to arrange for a reliable back-up person or plan for situations when your child is not well. We would appreciate your co-operation in this matter, as our common goal is to have our children healthy and happy.

4. Prescription drugs are administered only when accompanied by the parent's written consent and instructions (i.e. Administration of Drug & Medication sign-in sheet). The drugs must be kept in the original, labelled containers and dated within the last month. Parents/Guardians must sign the medical sign-in sheet for each occasion. Medication is placed in the locked First Aid cupboard (fridge or Meds box) located by the office in the west building and in the kitchen located next to the craft room at Oaklands.

5. We do not administer over the counter drugs unless accompanied by a Doctor's written permission. The letter must state dosage and reason for administration i.e. to be administered for high temperatures over 101 F or for allergic reaction.
6. Please note that waist pouches will be provided so that school age children requiring Epi-pens and puffers will carry their own medication for quicker access. (Applies to school age program only).
7. Please notify the teachers of symptoms when your child is ill.
8. In case of accidental injury, you will be notified. If necessary, your child will be taken to the hospital by ambulance. Teachers will complete a full report if there is a head injury or other serious injury.
9. Please do not leave food, drink or medication in your child's cubby for safety, sanitary and food allergy reasons.
10. We use no medication such as Bactine, Polysporin, alcohol wipes, or Vaseline for first aid treatment. We only use soap and water and clean dry band-aids as needed.