



Owl
Child Care
Services of Ontario

Youth Development Program (YDP) WRDSB

Parent Handbook



This information is available in alternate formats and/or with communication supports, upon request. Contact marketing@owlchildcare.org for assistance.

Welcome to Owl's Youth Development Program (YDP)

YDP is extended care for students in grades 3 – 6. YDP before and after school programs are designed to engage children in learning, create adventures and nurture personal relationships. Students will explore in the six primary areas of learning: creativity/innovation, language, health & physical activity, numeracy, personal & social development, and science. There will also be opportunity for project work based on the children's interest.

Families may choose before school, after school or both and may enroll their child full-time, part-time, or on a flexible schedule, though a set recurring schedule is recommended.

Program Statement

Our educators aim to achieve 9 program goals to support learning and development.

1. To promote the health, safety and well-being of children, ensuring individual needs are met, within Owl's program.
2. To promote good nutrition and healthy eating habits for children.
3. To foster engagement and the development of positive, responsive relationships between children, families and educators.
4. To actively engage with community partners to enhance Owl's program.
5. To give children a voice for self-expression, exchange of ideas and positive communication among their peers and educators.
6. To support the development of children's self-awareness, self-confidence, self-regulation and self-esteem.
7. To foster children's exploration, play and inquiry through a variety of child-initiated, educator-supported activities; including a mix of indoor, outdoor, active and quiet activities.
8. To create positive learning environments that support children in their learning and development based on their individual needs.
9. To enhance the quality of Owl's program by supporting each employee in professional development and through on-going coaching and mentoring.

Families are encouraged to view the full Program Statement on Owl's website www.owlchildcare.org/program-statement. The online version of The Program Statement provides an overview of the following: Four Foundations, Pedagogical Approaches, Our Approaches to Achieve stated goals – including what you might see in our program and what we do behind the scenes. Alternatively, you can request a paper copy from the supervisor.

Enrolment Process

Owl uses OneList Waterloo Region as it's central registry and waitlist. Search under the licensed child care section www.regionofwaterloo.onehshn.com. Once we receive your application via OneList, you will receive an email with the YDP Registration Package of forms to complete. We require two-weeks (10 business days) from the date your forms package is received in order to process your child's registration and ensure all requirements are in place to meet Ministry guidelines.

Fees

- Programs are available to parents on a full/part-time basis (minimum 2 days per week) with a set recurring schedule.
- Fees are calculated on a daily basis and are charged based on scheduled days of care.
- Owl does not issue credits or reduce fees due to sick days, vacation days, or any unexpected centre closures.
- Full or partial subsidies are available through the Region of Waterloo.
Contact 519-575-4400
- Rates are determined annually and available at: <https://www.owlchildcare.org/ydp>
- Fees are not charged on statutory holidays, or during the Christmas closure.

Methods of Payment:

Pre-authorized Debit (PAD) is the primary method of payment. On a case-by-case basis, post-dated cheques or e-transfer may be approved.

PD Days, March & Winter Break

Opt-Out: Families with a child scheduled to attend are required to opt-out in writing if not attending a PD Day, March or Winter Break camp. You must opt-out with a minimum of 10 business days. Failure to do so, will result in your account being charged for these dates. Owl will provide reminders about the deadline.

Opt-In: If your child does not regularly attend on Fridays or attends another school, you may wish to opt-in for a full-day of care with Owl.

Opt-Out and Opt-In forms can be found on our website:

<https://www.owlchildcare.org/pd-days-wrdsb>

Owl reserves the right to provide care on PD Days, during Winter and March Break at an alternate location. Families will be notified in advance of the location and given the choice to opt-out.

Program & Schedule Changes

Should you require a change in schedule for your child care needs, please submit your request in writing to ydp@owlchildcare.org providing notice of at least 10 business days. A schedule change is intended to change the number of days of care on an ongoing basis or to change the specific days of the week within your schedule – again on an ongoing basis. There is no reduction in fees due to missed days or vacation.

Withdrawal of Program or Days

We require a notice of 10 business days to withdraw from the program, including families who have pre-enrolled but have not yet started.

Fees are owing for the duration of the notice period. Customer deposits will be credited to the account and any necessary adjustments (i.e., outstanding balances or additional credits) will be made.

Health & Safety

Owl has a purpose and obligation to ensure the safety and well-being of the children in its care. We have policies and procedures to ensure your child's health and safety in order to create a positive learning environment. These include:

- Secured entrance
- Staff Records Checks
- Positive Guidance Techniques
- Prohibited Practices
- Staff to child ratios set out in the Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA)
- Serious Occurrences

It is recommended that you keep your child home when they are showing signs of illness. There will be no reduction in fees due to illness. If a child has been suspended from school, they may not attend the Youth Development Program until the suspension is complete. There will be no reduction in fees due to suspension.

Accessibility

Owl is committed to ensuring that its services are provided in an accessible manner. Our educators work closely with special needs resource partners to ensure that the needs of all children are met.

Administration of Medication

Owl's educators are able to administer both prescription and non-prescription medication. It is preferable however that children receive all medication at home, if at all possible. If your child requires medication by injection (e.g., insulin), please speak to the centre supervisor as additional terms, conditions and training on your child's Individual Care Plan is required. Medication must be submitted directly to an educator for safe keeping and cannot be stored in your child's backpack.

Children's Arrival/Departure

Staff must mark all children in and out of care on our attendance rosters, so be sure to say hello when you arrive. Please note that a child will only be released to individuals on your Authorized Pick-up List. You may update this list at any time. Individuals picking up for the first time – or unknown to the educator – will be asked for photo ID.

Emergency Management

In adverse weather conditions, parents are advised to listen to local radio stations and monitor Owl's website or Facebook page for notices of an unexpected centre closure. Owl's educators are trained in emergency preparedness and response in relation to fire, tornado and lock down procedures. Should an emergency situation arise that requires the children and staff to vacate the building for a longer period of time, it may be necessary for the group to move to the designated emergency shelter. Owl will make every effort to provide timely communication with parents via phone and/or email.

Injury & Incident Reporting

When minor incidents (e.g., scrapes, bumps, behavioural concerns) do occur, the educators will reassure the child, provide first aid if needed and complete an Incident Report or a Notice of Inappropriate Behaviour (NIB) form. These reports explain the incident in detail. You will be asked to review it upon pick up and to sign the Report acknowledging its receipt. A copy will be provided or emailed to you. If medical attention is required, the educators will consult with you and/or call for emergency services as needed.

Late Pick-up Policy

Families with children picked up after the 6:00 pm closing time are tracked and can expect the following:

- **First Late:** A call or email from the supervisor reminding them of the service hours.
- **Second Late:** A formal warning letter from the supervisor.
- **Third Late:** A third late may result in termination of care.

***Should a child be left in care more than an hour after the program closes, with no communication from the parent or the emergency contacts listed, Family and Children Services will be notified by the educator.**

Off-Site Excursions

As part of the youth development program, educators occasionally include activities off premise. Parents/guardians are required to sign permission forms after reviewing the information sheet that contains details regarding the transportation, activities, risks and safety management strategies. To learn more about **Safety First!** – a risk management guide for off-site activities, visit www.owlchildcare.org/safety-first.

Nutrition

Morning and afternoon snacks are provided daily and are selected in accordance with Canada's Food Guide. Please inform us of your child's specific food allergies. If your child is attending a full day for PD days or camp, please provide lunch as per Owl's Bagged Lunch Policy. A menu of the snacks served and our Bagged Lunch Policy can be found on our website: <https://www.owlchildcare.org/ypd-weekly-menus>

Prohibited Practices

Owl believes in building positive relationships with children including the use of positive guidance techniques. Owl does not condone the following prohibited practices as outlined under the Child Care and Early Years Act:

- a. Corporal punishment of a child;
- b. Physical restraint of a child, such as confining a child to a high chair, stroller or other device for the purpose of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless used to prevent the child from harming himself or someone else.
- c. Locking the exits of the centre for the purpose of confining a 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;
- d. Use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or derogatory language directed at a child 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;
- e. Depriving a child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding; or
- f. Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

Owl — via the YDP supervisory team — regularly monitors its programs and observes RECEs and other staff. Any use of these practices is investigated and may result in progressive discipline, up to and including termination. If you observe such practices, please immediately report them to the YDP supervisor.

Supervision of Students and Volunteers

Owl has a purpose and obligation to ensure the safety and well being of its vulnerable clients as well as the security of its operations. As such Owl outlines its requirements for records checks, orientation and supervision of students and volunteers.

A clear police Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC) is required for students and volunteers, including those serving on Owl's Board of Directors, who are 18 years and older.

An Offence Declaration is required for all students and volunteers who are 13 years and older upon the start of their placement or volunteer commitment.

Direct unsupervised access to the children (that is: when an adult is alone with a child other than their own) is not permitted for persons who are not employees of Owl. Only employees will have direct unsupervised access to the children in Owl's care.

No child will be supervised by a person under 18 years of age and placement students and volunteers are not counted in staffing ratios to meet minimum requirements of the Child Care & Early Years Act (CCEYA).

Students and volunteers receive an orientation to – and are required to adhere to – Owl's program philosophy, policies, procedures and practices.

Students and volunteers are supervised by a registered ECE (RECE) at all times when providing care and guidance to the children. Failure to adequately supervise a student or volunteer may be deemed to be professional misconduct under the Early Childhood Educators Act (2007) and be reported to the College of ECEs.

Communication

We value the partnership we build with the whole family and encourage open communication. Please reach out to us if you have any questions or concerns.

Be sure to read our monthly e-news which includes important dates and learning that takes place in our programs.

You may also wish to follow us on: facebook.com/owlchildcare.org

Parent Issues & Concerns Policy

- Owl strives to provide a transparent process for parents/guardians, the YDP staff and management to use when parents/guardians bring forward issues/concerns.
- In support of Owl's Vision, Mission and Program Statement, all parties will foster positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents/guardians and child care staff. This includes fostering the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents/guardians about the program and their children.
- Owl staff will be available to engage parents/guardians in conversations and support a positive experience during every interaction.

Reporting Parent Issues and Concerns

- Issues/concerns from parents/guardians may be brought forward verbally or in writing. Parents are encouraged to take advantage of the following channels to communicate your suggestions, concerns and/or seek clarification about Owl's policies, procedures and practices as the need arises:

Type	Examples	Speak to
Program-related	absences, program activities, food arrangements, etc.	YDP Staff
Operational	schedule changes, fees, hours of operation, staffing, waiting list, etc.	YDP Supervisor
Staff/Volunteer/ Student Conduct	Any conduct concerns that may affect health, safety or wellbeing of a child.	YDP Supervisor

- Parents may also make a submission using the online contact us form on our website: <https://www.owlchildcare.org/contact>
- Parents, at their discretion, may seek clarification from, or voice concerns to, the Executive Director at lprospero@owlchildcare.org or by calling 519-894-0581, ext. 102
- All issues and concerns will be taken seriously and will be addressed. Every effort will be made to address and resolve issues and concerns to the satisfaction of all parties and as quickly as possible.

Responding to Parent Issues and Concerns

- Every issue and concern will be treated confidentially to the extent possible. Information may be shared with the centre supervisor and/or senior management to assist in a resolution. Every effort will be made to protect the privacy of parents/guardians, children, staff, students and volunteers, except when information must be disclosed for legal reasons.
- An initial acknowledgement or response to an issue or concern will be provided to parents/guardians within two business days with a follow up conducted within 10 business days.
- The YDP supervisor, together with senior management – where applicable, will determine if a full internal investigation is warranted.
- A parent/guardian who is not satisfied with resolution of their issue or concerns has the right to escalate their concern to any of the following:
 - The Board Chair by emailing: boardchair@owlchildcare.org
 - Ministry of Education: 1-877-510-5333; information.met@ontario.ca
 - College of Early Childhood Educators 1 888 961-8558; discipline@college-ece.ca
 - Family and Children's Services 519-576-0540

Respectful Conduct

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

Public Duty to Report Suspected Child Abuse

- 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 Family and Children's Services directly.
- Persons who become aware of such concerns are also responsible for reporting this information to Family and Children's Services 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>

Hours of Operation

Monday to Friday during the school year from 7 am until the arrival bell, and from the dismissal bell until 6 pm.

Closure Dates

- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day to New Year's Day
- Family Day
- Victoria Day
- Canada Day (if on the weekend, Owl will close on the following Monday)
- Civic Holiday

Image Release

Upon enrolment you will be asked to review and sign an Image Release. This outlines your options regarding consent for Owl to use such images internally within the program or externally for marketing, including photos we share on Facebook about the children's activities. You may change your consent at any time.

Membership

Membership is open to any individual, 18 years of age and older, who has a child in his or her care and custody who is enrolled in at least one (1) of Owl's programs for which recurring monthly fees are paid to Owl, and who is interested in furthering Owl's Mission and Vision. Visit: www.owlchildcare.org/membership

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