



A Tiny Lab for Early Learning
PARENT HANDBOOK

Revised July 2020

We acknowledge that we are in Mi'kma'ki, which is the traditional ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people

Mission Statement

A Tiny Lab is a licensed, early childhood centre, offering high quality child care to children between the ages of 18 months to 5 years. We provide a welcoming, supportive, engaging and challenging environment in which young children can play, learn, explore, discover and create.



Philosophy Statement

A Tiny Lab is a place for children. This is their place to create, to explore, to wonder, to ask questions, to seek answers, to grow, to learn, to laugh, to cry, to experiment, to get messy, to sing, to shout, to problem solve, to take risks and to spend their days.

We respect all children and the value that they bring to our program. We provide a developmentally appropriate program that fosters the ideas and experiences of children. Our teachers work hand in hand with the children to answer their questions, to seek out knowledge and understanding and to foster their sense of wonder and curiosity.

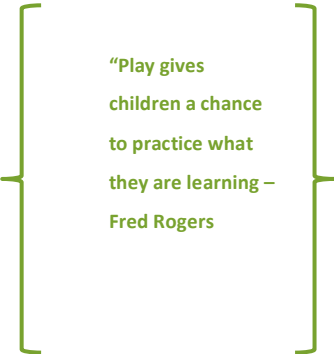
Our Image of the Child

Our program is greatly influenced by the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education. We view children as competent, curious, capable and full of potential. We understand that children have a need and desire to connect to the world around them and to establish meaningful relationships with others. Our centre has been created with the premise that the environment acts as a ‘third teacher’ in the lives of children. Our classrooms have been intentionally designed and organized to support and plan for various spaces for children to create, to learn and to explore.

“Children have a right to a good school — a good building, good teachers, right time, good activities. This is the right of ALL children” - Loris Malaguzzi

Our Program

We are a play-based child care centre that follows an emergent curriculum approach to learning. Research overwhelmingly shows that children learn best through play. For us – that is the most important part of how children spend their days here - making choices, exploring, discovering, creating, playing and having fun. Our Emergent Curriculum program is a way of teaching and learning that requires teachers to observe and listen to children. Teachers ask questions and listen for the children’s ideas, hypotheses and theories. After observing children in action, the teachers compare, discuss, and interpret their observations. Teachers plan activities, studies and projects in the classroom based on these observations. Teachers use their interpretations, intentions and goals (social, emotional and developmental) to make choices that they share with children. Learning is seen not as a linear process but as a spiraling progression in collaboration.



“Play gives children a chance to practice what they are learning – Fred Rogers

Loose Parts

Many of the materials in our classroom are comprised of ‘loose parts’ - materials that can be moved, carried, combined, redesigned, lined up and taken apart and put back together in multiple ways. They are materials with no specific set of directions that can be used alone or combined with other materials. Our Loose Parts are often made out of recycled, repurposed and thrifted materials.

Portfolios

Each child has their own personal portfolio that documents their time and learning while they are enrolled with us. Throughout each year we collect and curate samples of children’s work and writing with anecdotes and observations about their interactions and experiences. This work comprise each child’s portfolio and documents the learning and accomplishments that take place while they enrolled in our program. Portfolios are a memorable keepsake of your child’s time here, as well as a form of ‘authentic assessment’ as we believe that recording your child’s everyday experiences most accurately illustrate what children have learned and the progress that they have made. Your child’s portfolio will be yours to keep when your child graduates from our program.

Toddlers

Our Toddlers are between the ages of 18 months to 3 years old. Our toddlers are given opportunities to make choices daily, and their decisions are respected. When problems arise, they are helped to resolve conflicts and move on to new challenges and experiences. We do not require children to apologize, instead, utilize an approach to talk through the circumstances of the situation and model appropriate

language. You may hear us saying teaching phrases such as, 'I'm sorry that happened to you. Are you okay? I wonder if Charlie is okay?'

While your child is in the Toddler Room you will receive Daily Reports through our parent communication software, Sandbox. These reports will give you an overview of your child's eating, sleeping and toileting schedule from that day.

During this time of rapid growth in human development, we can see a wide range of behaviours in our classroom as children are learning about themselves and how to relate to those around them. A common 'toddler behaviour' that we see in group care is biting. Our Toddler Classroom is a safe place for children to learn about themselves and their peers. Toddlers are learning language and appropriate ways to express themselves. If your child engages in biting, we will work with your child and you to develop a plan to work with this behaviour in a developmentally appropriate way. Please see our Biting Policy in our Policies & Procedures section.

Community

We believe that fostering a sense of community, belonging and neighbourhood pride is an important part of early childhood development. Exposure to a stimulating, diverse environment and community helps to challenge children's curiosity and desire to understand their world. Our Preschoolers are off-site often, both on walks to various sites in the community (North Library, Hope Blooms Park, George Dixon

Playground, the Commons, the Citadel) and by bus to explore the city and Point Pleasant Park. Our Toddlers are also often out in the community on a smaller scale -community walks to Hope Blooms Garden, weekly Library visits, and community walks.

"If cities are not meant for children, they are not meant for citizens either. If they are not meant for citizens ourselves - they are not cities" - Aldo Van Eyck

Aldo Van Eyck

Messy Play

The work of children can be messy. Very, very messy. While your child is here we can guarantee you they will get messy. From exploring outside in our natural playspace, using art and sensory materials in the classrooms, painting and exploring with their hands and feet, learning how to serve and feed themselves snacks and lunch - the work of childhood is a messy (and fun!) learning experience. We require adequate changes of clothing daily to ensure your child's needs are being met. More on this is in the 'What to Pack' section of this Handbook. If you are concerned about an article of clothing getting dirty and/or stained here, **please do not send it to A Tiny Lab**. If this approach makes you uncomfortable, you may want to

discuss our philosophy before you enroll your child to determine if this is a good fit for you and your family.

Anti Bias, Social Justice & Equity

Anti-bias curriculum is an approach to early childhood education that is based on values-based principles and methodology in support of respecting and embracing differences and acting against bias and unfairness. Anti-bias teaching requires critical thinking and problem solving by both children and adults. The overarching goal is creating a climate of positive self and group identity development, through which every child will achieve their fullest potential. At our centre, we are committed to continual reflection on biases, privilege, and anti-racist teachings. Our team is actively engaged in professional development and learning around anti-racist teachings.

Gender Identity

We know that children do best when their caregivers and parents show them that they are loved and accepted for who they are. We provide children unconditional support while they may experiment with their gender expression. Our teachers engage in continual reflection on the environment, materials, language and messaging present in our centre that may reinforce traditional gender roles. From a child development perspective, we know that children are not born with knowledge of gender roles but develop it in the first years of their lives. It is our goal to provide an environment that is rich in gender diversity and free of stereotypes of traditional gender roles. Our team is actively engaged in professional development, learning and research around gender identity, development and expression in young children.

Behaviour Management

We believe that children display positive behaviours and engage in meaningful activities when the environment reflects their interests, is child-centered and is play-based. When children are respected for who they are and are supported by caring adults and peers to resolve difficult situations, they learn positive problem solving and coping mechanisms. In this way, children's behaviour is consistently dealt with by all teachers, staff, volunteers and students in a positive manner, always keeping in mind children's age and development. Staff re-direct children to alternative activities when necessary, use positive language, model respectful behaviour, and set reasonable expectations for children. Please see our Behaviour Guidance Policy in our Policies & Procedures for further information on Behaviour Management at A Tiny Lab.

Birthdays

Children's birthdays will always be acknowledged at A Tiny Lab, as this is a special and important day in your child's life. Teachers in the Preschool Classroom will brainstorm and plan with your child as to how

they would like their day to be recognized. This could include a special outing, or a designated day (pajama day, etc.). A Tiny Lab has recipes for a variety of foods and/or treats that your child can choose from to be prepared at the Centre. These represent our philosophy towards healthy food choices. Given the severity and prevalence of food allergies, we do not allow birthday cakes or treats to be brought into the centre. Please speak to one of your child's teachers discreetly if you have birthday invitations that you would like to be handed out.

Family Involvement & Communication

We believe that learning is a partnership between the child, the family and A Tiny Lab. We encourage family participation and involvement, as well as open communication between classroom teachers and parents. Children's work and pieces of documentation are displayed throughout the centre and classrooms so you get a sense of what the children are currently working on. We maintain an active Instagram account which we use as a tool to connect with families and other educators to share our experiences, our approach and the work of children. We encourage all families to follow our Instagram account (@atinylab) to keep up to date on what we are up to .

Our Parent Board is located in our front entrance and contains the following information:

- A copy of the Day Care Act & Regulations for the Province of Nova Scotia
- Our Parent Handbook
- Our current license and most recent inspection report
- Our Behaviour Guidance Policy
- Current Menus
- Sample Daily Program Plan & Routine
- Parent Committee Membership
- Recent minutes of our semi-annual Parent Committee Meeting
- Notification of funding by the Minister

Our Food

Food is very important to us at A Tiny Lab. We know that young children are active learners who experience the world through their senses, physical involvement, active play and from behaviors modeled by adults and peers. Research shows that the early years are a particularly sensitive period in the formation of life-long habits and taste preferences.

Nutrition education in the early years can prove instrumental in influencing the development of healthy eating habits while developing skills through hands-on activities in the areas of science, math, art and literacy. Research indicates that when children learn where food comes from, how it is grown, have

hands-on experiences, and use their senses to understand it, they are more likely to taste new food items and accept them as part of their diet, while building a foundation of lifelong healthy choices.

A Tiny Lab believes strongly that offering children healthy, fresh, seasonal and home-made meals and snacks help to lay the foundation for a happy and healthy day. When planning our menus we derive inspiration from locally grown, sustainable produce. Our menus are based on local and sustainable produce whenever possible, whole grains and simple recipes to make fresh and flavourful food. Meals are served family style so that children can engage with food and learn skills to foster independence. The following principles guide us in our menu planning:

- Appropriate portion sizes for each required meal set by the Standards for Food and Nutrition in Regulated Child Care Settings
- Consideration of food allergies, sensitivities and nutrition requirements of a vegetarian diet
- Low sodium and low sugar
- Recipes, experiences, and thoughts from “The Languages of Food”, by Reggio Children, “The Art of Simple Food” and “Edible Schoolyard” by Alice Waters and “The Family Dinner” by Laurie David

Children participate in setting the tables for lunch each day and have opportunities to practice serving themselves. Children are always encouraged to try at least one bite of everything offered but are never forced to finish all food served to them. Morning snack is offered at 8.30am, lunch is served at 12.00pm and afternoon snack is offered at 3.00pm.

We may offer alternative choices for children with documented food allergies or sensitivities, when possible. **We do not alter our menus for food preferences**, as thoughtful consideration has gone into providing a healthy and balanced daily meal. It is our belief that children should acquaint themselves with a variety of foods, flavours and textures in the early years.

Given the severity and potential risks of food allergies, we do not allow **any** outside food into our Centre, unless arrangements have been approved by the Director. When medical, religious, or cultural beliefs require a child to bring food from home, foods must be labeled with the child’s name and refrigerated if necessary. A Tiny Lab can only purchase or receive donations of food or beverages in accordance with the Department of Agriculture Food Safety Regulations.

The staff at A Tiny Lab are responsive to children’s cues around hunger and may provide snacks and meals outside of the regular schedule as required.

Breastfeeding Friendly

A Tiny Lab is a breastfeeding friendly facility. We support all breastfeeding mothers and encourage mothers to breastfeed at any time, anywhere within the Centre. We will work with families to support and accommodate breastfed toddlers who are attending our programs.

Our Schedule

Children feel confident and secure when they know what to expect and have consistency to their days. We keep our daily schedule consistent to ease stress and upset around transitions and to keep our days running as smoothly as possible.

Our daily schedules are planned to ensure that there is a balance between individual, small and large group activities, child-directed and teacher-initiated activity, as well as indoor and outdoor experiences. Our days remain flexible to meet the needs of children.

8.00-9.00am	Centre Opens & Arrival (8.30am Morning Snack)
9.00am – 10.00am	Morning Free Play Indoors
10.00am – 11.00am	Morning Free Play Outdoors
11.00am – 12.00pm	Clean up, Small Group Time, Bathroom, Stories
12.00pm – 12.30pm	Lunch
12.30 - 2.30pm	Rest time
2.30 - 3.30pm	Afternoon Free Play & Snack
3.30 - 4.30pm	Afternoon Free Play - Outdoors
4.00 - 4.30pm	Pick Up Time - Outdoors
4.30 – 5.00pm	Pick Up Time - Outdoors
5.00pm	Centre Closes

Pick Up and Drop Off

Our morning drop off times are between 8.00am and 8.30am and between 8.30am and 9.00am. All children must be dropped off and ready to start their day by 9.00am. Arriving after 9.00am can be confusing to your child as they are entering their classroom during a time of transition and can be disruptive to the children who have already settled into their routine for the day. Notably in the Toddler

Room, for a child who has had difficulty separating from their parent that morning, having a prolonged period of seeing parents come and go can be extremely distressing. **Unless otherwise arranged with the Director, we cannot accept children after 9.00am. We ask that you schedule your child's appointments for the end of the day and pick them up early, if necessary.** If your child is not attending for the day, we ask that you either inform the Director via email or send a message to your child's classroom through Sandbox.

All children are to be picked up by 5.00pm. We follow a strict Late Fee Policy which can be found in the Policies & Procedures section of this Handbook. If someone other than the child's parent/guardian will be picking them up, the contact information must be filled out with the office in the child's registration file. In addition, please advise the classroom teacher(s) if someone else will be picking up your child. At the time of pick up, staff will ask to see photo identification before your child can leave the centre. If you arrive later than 5.00pm to pick up your child you will be asked to sign a Late Form and the appropriate Late Fee will be added to your invoice.

Sleep

Our rest time is from 12.30-2.30. We provide a rest cot, sheet and blanket for each child. Due to COVID restrictions we currently cannot allow any soft toys from home for rest time. We follow a gentle approach to sleep - responding to children's individual needs and ensuring that they feel safe and secure so that they can relax and rest. The lights are dimmed and we play soft relaxing music. In the Toddler Room the teachers work with children that need extra support or attention: rubbing their backs, rubbing their heads, or rocking them. In the Preschool Room the beds are set up strategically so that the children that nap are grouped together in a quiet spot in the room. Children are encouraged to lay down and rest their bodies.

For children who do not sleep, we ask that they have a 'rest period' of 30-45 minutes where they lay on their beds quietly. For children who do not fall asleep after this period quiet activities will be provided to them. This can include books, paper and pencils and puzzles. At 2pm a table is set up in the classroom with quiet activities so that children may play quietly while their peers wake up and begin to start their afternoons. We do not force children to sleep nor can we ensure that they stay awake. We recognize that each child is unique and has varying needs based on their development.

Administration

A Tiny Lab is a small, privately owned child care centre, overseen by the full-time Director, Jillian Farris. All of our full-time teachers are trained Early Childhood Educators who have received a classification level

through the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. We employ three full-time Toddler Teachers, three full-time Preschool Teachers, a full-time cook, 2 part-time Support Staff and casual, on-call substitutes and support staff. We regularly welcome ECE students into our centre to complete Student Practicums from NSCECE, MSVU and NSCC. All staff, students and volunteers have current First Aid certificates and completed Child Abuse Registers and Criminal Record Checks.

Enrolment

A Tiny Lab maintains an active wait-list for both our Toddler and Preschool Classrooms. As spaces become available in our Toddler Room we consult our wait-list and offer spaces based on timing, need and age. When spaces become available in our Preschool Room they are first offered to currently enrolled Toddlers who will be aging out of the Toddler Room. This decision is made based on age, the child's enrolment schedule, progress with toilet training and the child's general readiness for the transition. Our typical times of movement into and out of classrooms is late spring throughout the summer months.

Admission

Once your child is enrolled, we will discuss your child's start date. If possible, we suggest a 'gradual entry' for your child. This may include spending some time at the centre with your child so they are comfortable getting acquainted with the teachers, the classroom and the other children. These visits will be individually scheduled based on children's needs and family availability.

Part-time Spaces

We reserve a set number of part-time spaces in each of our classrooms. Part-time spaces are comprised of a 2 day/week space or a 3 day/week space. In some circumstances we may be able to accommodate changing your space or days, if availability allows. If you have your child enrolled in a full-time space and would like to drop down to a part-time space, you will be placed at the top of the wait-list for the next available part-time space.

Fees & Payment

A Tiny Lab is a full-time child care centre, open year round. Our fees are \$46/day. Monthly invoices are issued prior to the first of each month and fees are to be paid monthly, by the 15th of the month. Fees can be paid by cheque or email transfer. There is a \$25 NSF charge for any returned cheque. It is each family's responsibility to keep your account balance current. We reserve the right to add a "Late Fee Service Charge" of \$25.00 to your account if monthly fees are not received by the end of the month.

We encourage all families to contact the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to inquire about eligibility for child care subsidy.

Please note that fees are charged regardless of statutory holiday, days missed due to illness, vacation or storm days.

Holidays & Closures

Our centre is open Monday to Friday from 8.00am to 5.00pm year round. We are closed on the following holidays (both statutory & non-statutory) and vacation days:

- New Year's Day (January 1)
- Heritage Day (3rd Monday in February)
- Good Friday (Friday before Easter Sunday)
- Easter Monday (Monday after Easter Sunday)
- Victoria Day (Monday on or before May 24)
- Canada Day (July 1)
- Natal Day (first Monday August)
- Labour Day (first Monday September)
- Thanksgiving Day (second Monday October)
- Remembrance Day (November 11)
- Christmas Eve (December 24) - close at 1.00pm
- Christmas Day (December 25)
- Boxing Day (December 26)

Our centre closes for the time period between Boxing Day and New Years Day (December 27-31).

Please note, if any of these holidays fall on a Saturday or Sunday (New Years Day, Canada Day, Remembrance Day, Christmas Day, or Boxing Day), the following weekday(s) will be observed as the holiday and our centre will be closed. Families will be notified by email prior to the closure and our social media pages will post our closure.

Please see our Policies & Procedures section for our Storm Closure Policy.

First Days – What to Bring

Your child will have their own personal cubby in their classroom to keep their belongings. This cubby will be labeled with their name and picture. We ask that you bring a family picture with you on your first day. Each classroom has a family board for children to look at throughout the day. If your child is missing you throughout the day we find it helpful to use these photos and talk about their families.

Each day your child is required to have a backpack, or bag that can be zippered which contains the following:

- 3 full changes of clothing (including socks and underwear)
- A sweater or sweatshirt for layering
- Appropriate outdoor wear based on the season (rain gear for spring and fall, snow gear for winter, hats for summer)
- Child Friendly Shoes – velcro is preferred. Please do not send your child in shoes that they cannot master themselves. We encourage self-help skills and fostering a sense of self confidence and independence in children’s abilities. When children are dependent on adults to get them dressed each day we are taking away opportunities for them to learn important life skills as well as taking time away from them engaging in meaningful play and activities.
- All diapering supplies for the day

Please ensure that all of your child’s personal belongings are clearly labeled.

We have Sharpies available for labeling should you need to borrow one. We cannot account for each child’s personal belongings if they are not labeled. We often have students and extra support staff in our classrooms which requires that all children’s personal belongings be clearly labeled to keep things going smoothly and to ensure that each child has the appropriate clothing for the day.

Health & Safety

Effective June 2020 A Tiny Lab for Early Learning is required to follow the Public Health Order issued by the Chief Medical Officer of Health and direction arising from the Order given under the authority of the Health Protection Act. As such, we have developed a Pandemic Operation Plan for COVID-19 which will be in place until further notice. This plan supersedes our regular Health and Safety measures as well as our Illness Policy and Cleaning and Sanitizing Practices. This plan can be found in the Appendix to this Handbook

A Tiny Lab follows the Provincial Guidelines for Communicable Disease Prevention and Control for Child Care Programs. We teach children proper hand-washing techniques to limit the spread of communicable illness. However, given the nature of group care, germs can be spread easily among children. To ensure a healthy environment we engage in the following practices:

- proper hand-washing by all children, staff and parents
- asking you to keep sick children home as per our Illness Exclusion Policy
- keeping our centre clean and sanitary
- regularly disinfecting and sanitizing food-prep areas, diapering area, toys and materials
- maintaining a safe environment, inside and out
- employing trained staff in Emergency First Aid & CPR

Illness

To ensure a safe and healthy environment for children and staff, and to help to reduce the spread of infectious and communicable diseases, A Tiny Lab has developed an Illness Exclusion Policy for our families. Please review this policy in our Policies and Procedures section of this Handbook.

Please note that if your child requires medication (fever reducing) to attend they are too ill to be in group care. Administering fever reducing medication before sending them to childcare makes it difficult to determine how sick they are or allow us to accurately take their temperature. This practice is strongly discouraged as we are not able to attend to the individual needs of a sick child in group care.

If your child becomes sick while in our care (vomiting, diarrhea, fever, too lethargic to participate in daily activities, inconsolable crying), we will call and/or email you to come and pick them up. Your child will need to be kept home for a 24 hour time period, or until they are symptom free before they may return. Under some circumstances, a doctor's note may be required to ensure children are not contagious and are able to fully participate in the daily activities of the Centre.

Accidents & Emergencies

Even with the best precautions, accidents may happen. When a child has a bump, bruise, cut, scrape or injury of that nature, staff will administer first aid measures and fill out an accident report. This report will be made available to you at pick up that day.

In the event of a serious emergency, 911 will be called and a staff member will administer any necessary First Aid/CPR. Parents and/or guardians will be called, followed by emergency contacts, if necessary. Messages will be left at all numbers if we are unable to reach someone. If deemed appropriate by the 911 operator, the child may be transported to the IWK Emergency Department by the Director, if the parent/guardian/emergency contact has not arrived. In this event, you and/or your emergency contact will be notified immediately. For this reason, it is imperative that we have the following on file for your child:

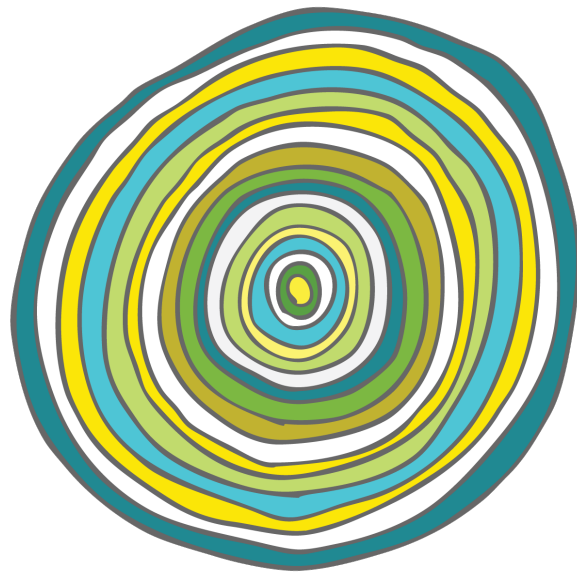
- current home, work and cell numbers
- names and contact numbers for at least TWO other adults we can contact in case of emergency
- child's health card number
- signed consent form for emergency transportation

Cleaning & Sanitizing

We know that conventional chemicals used in cleaning and sanitizing have an impact on our health and the health of the environment. For these reasons we use earth-friendly and child-friendly cleaning and sanitizing supplies at A Tiny Lab as much as possible. For our daily cleaning in our centre we use Down East All Purpose Cleaner. For disinfecting and sanitizing we use ES15.

Communication

Thank you for choosing A Tiny Lab for your child(ren). We look forward to having your family join our community. We believe in the importance of open and respectful communication and trusting relationships. We are committed to having conversations that are openly cooperative and collaborative. We welcome all perspectives; we value and respect all points of view. Our approach fosters respectful language and active listening. We use this approach for resolving conflicts, modeling appropriate language and problem solving behaviour and being aware of body language and tone. We ask that you engage in this respectful approach to communication while you are here with us. Please always be in touch with the Director or teachers with any questions that may come up throughout your time here with us and we will work hand in hand to resolve issues and celebrate achievements.



A Tiny Lab for Early Learning

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Revised July 2020

Anti-Bias & Inclusion Policy

Anti-bias is the practice of inclusion, which accepts that all people are of value and should be respected. Following an anti-bias curriculum in early care and education settings has the outcome of creating secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships that value diversity among people. At an early age, children have begun to construct a sense of self, of belonging, of gender and racial identity. If children are exposed to stereotyping, prejudice and discriminatory practices they will absorb these and, unless guided otherwise, reflect and practice them in our world (Bicultural Inclusion Support Services).

A Tiny Lab for Early Learning is committed to the creation and sustainability of a working and learning environment that recognizes the dignity and worth of every person and the provision for equal rights and opportunities without discrimination.

Guiding Principles:

- Every child is an individual and unique
- All children are welcome and bring value to our program
- Children learn best when they participate with others who have diverse goals and abilities
- Children will have the opportunity to demonstrate self-awareness, confidence, family pride, and positive social identities
- Children will express comfort and joy with human diversity; accurate language for human differences; and deep, caring human connections
- Children will increasingly recognize unfairness, have language to describe unfairness, and understand unfairness hurts
- Children will demonstrate empowerment and the skills to act, with others or alone, against prejudice and/or discriminatory actions (Derman-Sparks)

Procedures

- All staff, students, volunteers at A Tiny Lab have read, understand and agree to support the practices outlined in our Inclusion Policy
- All staff are encouraged to attend professional development opportunities on effective inclusive, diverse and culturally supportive programming whenever possible
- Staff will adapt the environment and routines as necessary to meet the needs of children enrolled. Our centre is committed to developing flexible programming that can be adapted as needed
- When needed, individualized program plans may be created, in partnership with other community support groups and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

- A Tiny Lab for Early Learning’s ‘Privacy of Information and Confidentiality Policy’ extends to include information regarding children’s needs, abilities, extra support and reports from community partners and or support organizations
- A Tiny Lab for Early Learning aims to foster partnerships by working collaboratively with parents and community supports in order to meet the needs of all children
- All families interested in admission to A Tiny Lab are dealt with in a fair and equitable manner. If the centre experiences difficulty in meeting the needs of any child the following will be ensured:
 - Reasonable care has been taken in assessing the child’s and family needs, including the centre’s ability to support those needs
 - Resources and support from the DEECD has been exhausted prior to notice of withdrawal
 - Any family asked to withdraw are dealt with in a fair and equitable manner
 - The procedures outlined in the centre’s withdrawal policy will be followed

Supporting Documentation

The following policies and reports guide us in our work with children and families. Staff at A Tiny Lab are familiar with these documents and remain up to date on current research and best practice in the field of early learning through our memberships with the Canadian Child Care Federation (CCCF), the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the Nova Scotia College of Early Childhood Educators (NSCECE) and the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Nova Scotia (AECENS).

- Anti-Bias Education for Young Children & Ourselves (Louise Derman-Sparks & Julie Olsen Edwards)
- Anti-Bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children (Louise Derman-Sparks)
- UN Convention of the Rights of Children

Funding

A Tiny Lab for Early Learning receives funding through the DEECD (Inclusion Support Grant), which helps to support inclusive and diverse child care programs in Nova Scotia. This funding may be used towards some of/or all of the following: wages for additional support staff, professional development and education of resource materials to be used in the program. This is a set amount of funding and is distributed quarterly.

Accountability

The Director at A Tiny Lab reviews our Inclusion Policy and procedures regularly to ensure it is current with respect to language and legislation. Funding is overseen by our Early Childhood Development Consultant, through the DEECD.

Behaviour Guidance Policy

At A Tiny Lab for Early Learning we believe that children display positive behaviours and engage in meaningful activities when the environment reflects their interests, is child-centered and is play-based. When children are respected for who they are and are supported by caring adults and peers to resolve difficult situations, they learn positive problem solving and coping mechanisms. In this way, children's behaviour is consistently dealt with by all employees, volunteers and students in a positive manner, always keeping in mind children's age and development.

Teachers use positive language, re-direct children to alternative activities when necessary, model respectful behaviour, and set reasonable expectations for children.

Within this positive environment, food will never be used as a reward for positive behaviour, for completing a task, nor withheld as a consequence for undesirable behaviour.

A Tiny Lab for Early Learning adheres to the Daycare Act and Regulations Section 19(1) which states: 'any operator, employee, or volunteer must behave in a manner that does not harm any child who is attending the day care program, and in particular must not do or permit any of the following:

- (a) Use corporal punishment, including, striking a child directly or with any physical object, shaking, shoving, spanking and any other forms of aggressive physical conduct
- (b) Require or force a child to repeat physical movements
- (c) Use harsh, humiliating, belittling or degrading responses of any form, whether verbal, emotional or physical
- (d) Confine or isolate a child
- (e) Deprive a child of basic needs, including food, shelter, clothing and bedding

All employees, volunteers and students are required to read and sign a dated witnessed declaration stating that they have read, understand and agree to abide by the Behaviour Guidance policy. This process is conducted yearly.

Resources

'Addressing Challenging Behaviours: Promoting Social & Emotional Health in Young Children' Child Care Information Exchange, Turn Key Learning.

Biting Policy

Biting is a behaviour that is both age and stage appropriate for children under the age of 3. Even in high quality settings, where teachers are trained, experienced and vigilant, where a variety of activities are available and age appropriate, and when many preventative strategies are being used, biting may still occur. Understanding the reasons for biting, taking the necessary preventative measures and communicating with families will hopefully bring an end to biting incidences in the classroom. We understand the frustration from both sides of a biting incident and our teachers work very hard to ensure that any biting incident is handled in a way that respects all children involved, as well as addresses each families needs and concerns.

We handle a biting incident as follows: The child who is bitten is attended to immediately. If needed, the child is taken to a quiet area and the bite is examined and the child comforted. The bite is cleaned and, if needed, ice is applied to prevent swelling. After the child is taken care of, we focus on the biter. Removing the child from the area of play to another area and communicating that we need to talk about what has happened. You will hear us using developmentally appropriate language such as 'Ouch. Biting Hurts. You may not bite your friends. Teeth are for biting food, not people. I won't let you bite your friends. I see you are angry, upset, frustrated You hurt your friend'

Children at this age learn through imitation, therefore you will see us explaining and demonstrating what gentle behaviour is, what is acceptable, and what we can do with our mouths, bodies and hands. We will point out that the bitten child is hurt and encourage them to help us take care of the child that has been hurt as a way to foster empathy and illustrate the cause and effect of their behaviour on others.

If the skin is broken, and depending on the severity of the bite, an incident report will be completed by a teacher and given to the parent(s) of the bitten child at pick up that day. If an incident report is not needed, the parent(s) of the bitten child will be verbally informed of the incident at pick up. With respect to confidentiality, we do not share the name of the child that has bitten.

The parents of the child who has bitten will also be informed of the incident at pick up. We have a growing library of reference and resource material available on best practice and current research available for parents to better understand biting behaviour and what they can do to support their child.

The Director will consult with the parent(s) of a habitual biter to develop strategies that can be used at the centre and in the home so that the child and family are supported during this period of child development.

Strategies that we may use to help prevent biting incidences from happening are:

- Close observation throughout the day to pick up on any triggers, times of increased anxiety, frustrations or environmental pressures
- To the best of our ability, 'shadowing' children who are experiencing a 'biting phase' anticipating trigger times/points/situations and intervening immediately
- Ensuring the environment is meeting the needs of the children currently enrolled through the provision of developmentally appropriate toys, activities and equipment; providing opportunities for gross motor experiences in our daily schedule; maintaining an organized and aesthetically pleasing classroom which allows children choice, consistency and clear expectations; providing duplicates or multiples of certain toys to ensure that children are not being asked to 'share' outside of their developmental level
- Being aware of times throughout the day when a child is tired or hungry or may be overstimulated. Being aware of transitional times which can often foster feelings of anxiety or stress
- Using positive reinforcement, praising children when they are playing cooperatively, displaying pro-social behaviour and exhibiting empathy
- Encouraging children to use simple words to communicate their wants and needs. When conflicts arise we remind children to use their words. For non-verbal children we encourage using their hands and body language (shaking their head no, using their hand to signal stop)
- For children who may be teething or requiring sensory stimulation, providing a wet wash cloth or biting rings. This can help to reduce the sensitivity to their teeth and gums and may satisfy their biting need

Illness Exclusion Policy

To ensure a safe and healthy environment for children and staff, and to help reduce the spread of infectious and communicable diseases, A Tiny Lab for Early Learning has developed an Illness Exclusion Policy for our families. Please follow these guidelines when your child becomes ill:

Colds & Coughs

If a child appears ill and/or has any of the following symptoms, we require that you keep your child home. If they develop any of these symptoms while attending A Tiny Lab, we will contact you to pick them up immediately.

- Fever (Temperature above 100.4F/38C EAR) accompanied by behaviour change or other signs and symptoms of illness such as sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, earache
- The child is listless and not able to participate in all activities including playing outdoors
- The child has difficulty breathing or a persistent cough

Diarrhea

A child who has diarrhea will need to stay home until there are no more symptoms of diarrhea, fever, or discomfort. They must be symptom free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever or pain reducing medication. If your child has more than one episode of diarrhea at the centre you will be required to pick them up immediately.

Vomiting

If a child vomits, has a fever, and/or has diarrhea, they must stay home for at least 24 hours and be symptom free without the use of fever or pain reducing medication before returning.

Rashes

A rash can be a symptom of a number of illnesses that spread through physical contact, through the air, and through contact with fecal matter. It can be difficult to distinguish between different types of rashes as children can develop many kinds of rashes. A rash is a symptom of a health condition that may or may not be contagious or infectious. If your child has a rash and exhibits any of the following symptoms they must be kept home : rash + fever or cough or vomiting or diarrhea. If persistent, we may require a doctors note before returning to A Tiny Lab. If your child exhibits an unidentifiable rash that persists, it is required that your child be seen by a doctor to advise if they may attend group care.

Hand Foot & Mouth

If it is suspected that your child has Hand Foot & Mouth you will be required to get your child checked out by a doctor to confirm. HFM is characterized by small, circular red bumps on the hands and feet - often between fingers and toes. They can sometimes affect other parts of the body as well, sometimes

on the buttocks. Other symptoms include fever, sore throat, loss of appetite, lack of energy, small, painful sores inside the mouth (tongue, gums) or a skin rash.

Once diagnosed, your child can return to child care if they feel well enough to attend and are not exhibiting any of the other symptoms.

Pink Eye

Pink eye can be either viral or bacterial. It is characterized by a scratchy feeling or pain in the eye and may have watery or pus discharge. The infection turns the whites of the eyes pink or red. When the child wakes up after a sleep, pus or discharge often makes the eyelids stick together. If it is suspected that your child has pink eye you will be contacted to pick up your child immediately and have them assessed by a doctor. If the pink eye is bacterial and your child is prescribed an antibiotic eye drop or ointment, they will need to stay home for 24 hours from the time the treatment was started.

If it is diagnosed that your child has viral pink eye, they may return after 24 hours. In all cases, a child must be seen by a doctor.

Head Lice

Head lice are very common among young children, especially in child care programs and schools. Head lice spread easily among children who are together in one place. Head lice spread through direct contact among children or indirectly on items such as hats, combs, hairbrushes and head phones. They don't fly or hop, but they can crawl very quickly.

If it is discovered that your child has head lice you will be contacted to pick up your child. You will be required to treat the lice with an over the counter insecticide, following the package directions or guidance from a pharmacist. Most products require a retreatment after 7 to 10 days.

Once your child has received one treatment they may return to child care the next day. All children will be encouraged to avoid head-to-head contact until all signs of lice are gone.

Resources & Support

Guidelines for Communicable Disease Prevention and Control for Child Care Settings, 2015.

Allergy & Anaphylaxis Awareness Policy

A Tiny Lab for Early Learning is an inclusive child care centre, accepting children with a variety of needs and abilities and providing extra support whenever possible. This includes children with severe allergies. This policy aims to support children with severe allergies, and inform parents, employees, students and volunteers with information on anaphylaxis management. A Tiny Lab follows these guidelines to reduce the risk of exposure to allergens:

- Good handwashing practice followed by adults and children
- Separate meal preparation and food storage for children with known food allergies
- Allergy lists posted in the kitchen and classrooms
- Allergy lists checked regularly and updated when needed
- Menus have been created with food sensitivities and allergies in mind
- Outside food is not permitted under any circumstance
- Children with Epi-Pens are identified on allergy lists posted in classrooms. Epi-Pens are stored in clearly labeled containers in corresponding classrooms
- Ensuring all staff have valid First Aid training

Parents of children with allergies must:

- Detail their child's allergy and any special consideration or requirements needed with the Director
- Provide the centre with information on monitoring and avoidance strategies used at home
- Communicate signs and symptoms that staff should look for should a child have an allergic reaction
- Provide a consent form for staff to administer the child's Epi-Pen should the need arise
- Ensure the centre has up to date emergency contact information
- Update any changes to their child's allergy, medication or treatment, including if the child outgrows their allergy and no longer requires medication to manage it
- Provide the centre with a current Epi-Pen, and any other medication that is required to treat the child's allergy, along with a medical note from the doctor, giving staff consent to administer the medication

Medication Storage

Epi-Pens will not be in a locked container. They will be stored in each classroom in a central spot that all teachers are able to freely utilize should the need arise.

All other medication, including over the counter medications needed to treat and/or manage the symptoms of an anaphylactic or allergic reaction will be stored in the kitchen in a container above the fridge.

Late Pick Up Policy

A Tiny Lab for Early Learning is open Monday to Friday from 8.00am to 5.00pm. Our centre opens promptly at 8.00am and all children must be picked up promptly by 5.00pm each evening. It is required that all families have collected their child's belongings and exited the building by 5.00pm. In the event that a parent or guardian is late to pick up their child, a late fee will be charged. Our late fee is as follows:

Arrival time between 5.01pm and 5.15pm a charge of \$15/ child will be added to your monthly invoice with the date of the late pick up noted. Arrival after 5.15pm an additional \$15/child will be charged, increasing with each 15 minute interval.

Upon arrival, a teacher will ask you to sign a late pick up form and the time will be recorded. This will inform the amount that is charged to your monthly invoice.

Please note that any hassling or questioning of staff will not be tolerated as each family is made aware of this policy upon enrolment of their child. We respect our staff's personal time and work-life balance. Consistently late parents may be asked by the Director to make alternative child-care arrangements. In this event, parents would be given two weeks notice to withdraw their child and make other child care arrangements.

In the event of inclement weather, if a snowstorm has been forecasted and the weather is progressively deteriorating throughout the day, it is our expectation that you allow yourself plenty of travel time to make it to our centre safely to pick up your child, or to make arrangements for someone else to pick them up.

Storm Policy

During the winter months, every attempt will be made to operate as usual during winter storms.

However, there are times when it becomes unsafe for our staff and families to travel due to inclement weather. In this event, a decision may be made to close A Tiny Lab. Multiple factors are used to come to this decision, including, but not limited to: emergency personnel advising to stay off the roads, university closures, disabled service to public transit and the most current weather forecast. If a decision is made to NOT open the centre for the day, families will be notified by EMAIL by 6.30am. Our social media accounts will also be updated.

In some circumstances it may be necessary to delay opening due to weather conditions. If this happens, families will be notified by EMAIL ONLY by 6.30am.

If a significant winter storm develops while children are present at A Tiny Lab, and if the weather report is calling for deteriorating weather conditions, a decision may be made to close the centre early. In this event, all families would be notified via email and/or phone, to pick up their child(ren) by a certain time.

Withdrawal Policy & Starting School

If you intend to withdraw your child from our program at A Tiny Lab, we require, at a minimum, one months written notice. Failure to give adequate notice of withdrawal directly impacts the centres operational budget and the opportunity for other children to participate in our program in a timely manner. Parents will be charged one months fee in lieu of giving proper notice (one month). This notice must be received in writing.

When your child will be starting school in the coming September (Pre-Primary or Grade Primary) it will be assumed that you will be withdrawing your child(ren) prior to the first day of school. If you intend to delay entry to the school system you must let us know by April of the coming school year, as this is the time that we begin to fill spaces for the upcoming year.

Termination of Services Policy

As a family focused child care centre, we believe in the importance of strong, trusting relationships with families. Open communication, trust, and respect all inform our approach to creating and sustaining relationships with families.

In some circumstances it may be necessary to terminate services with a family. The following are conditions which could result in a family being asked to withdraw their child(ren) from A Tiny Lab and make alternative childcare arrangements.:

- An inability to respect the staff, children, or other parents/guardians at A Tiny Lab
- A family who does not support our philosophy, practices or values at A Tiny Lab and it becomes clear that this is interfering with other families, staff and children's experiences here
- Child or adult behavioural problems that, after consultation, cannot be resolved or cause immediate harm

All concerns will be discussed with all parties and put in writing, should any of these circumstances arise. Depending on the issue, an opportunity to change the behaviour/situation in question will be considered. However, A Tiny Lab for Early Learning, Ltd. reserves the right to terminate services without notice.

please note that the use of cloth diapers is suspended under COVID-19 restrictions

Cloth Diaper Policy & Procedures

We support families in their choices with regards to how they diaper their children while in group care.

We are happy to support families in using cloth diapers as an economical and eco-friendly choice for diapering.

As per guidelines provided by the Department of Agriculture, cloth diapers will be handled in the following manner:

- Cloth diapers will be stored out of reach of children
- Soiled cloth diapers (urine and/or feces) will be stored out of reach of children
- Soiled (WET ONLY) cloth diapers will be placed in a labelled, zippered wet bag. More than one of such diaper may be stored in one bag, allowing for the bag to be re-opened for further use throughout the day
- Soiled (FECES) cloth diapers will be individually stored in a labelled, zippered wet bag, OR individually stored in a firmly tied plastic bag which is then placed in a zippered wet bag. Zipper wet bags may be re-opened if the soiled diapers have been individually stored in plastic bags
- Soiled diapers may not be rinsed at the centre
- Soiled cloth wipes will be stored in the same manner, with the soiled diapers
- All soiled diapers and cloth wipes will be removed from the centre by the family daily
- If not removed, the bag will be disposed of by the centre

Please note, in the case of continued leaking with cloth diapers, we ask that you send disposable diapers for your child while they are in group care. Leaking cloth diapers can contribute to the spread of communicable diseases, disrupt the flow of the day with excessive changing of clothes and require staff to engage in additional sanitation of toys and equipment, outside of our regularly scheduled cleaning and disinfecting schedule.