

MUNRO ACADEMY
EARLY LEARNING CENTRE



PARENT HANDBOOK

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Parent Handbook

Welcome! We are so glad that your child can join us to laugh, learn and play! The Munro Academy Early Learning Centre provides a nurturing environment for your child that is staffed by qualified, caring individuals, in a world-class facility that encompasses a Christian worldview. This Parent Handbook has been designed for you to have all important information at your fingertips. Please read it and keep it for future reference. If you have any questions, concerns, comments, or suggestions please do not hesitate to bring them to our staff or myself. You are invited to bring your little one to visit the Centre before he/she starts. It is a good idea to help them transition into their new daily routine. Your child may have difficulty adjusting to their new environment. It will probably take a week or two for him/her to really get used to their new routine and feel more comfortable. We encourage you to bring a comfort item that is familiar to your child such as a blanket or soft toy. This will help make their adjustment period more comfortable. We value your ongoing communication with our team. Please stay in touch with any questions or creative ideas. We want to make this the best possible experience for your child!

Sincerely,

MAELC Team

Mission Statement

The MISSION of Munro Academy's Early Learning Centre is to facilitate a Christian worldview and community transformation through the provision of a nurturing, developmentally appropriate learning environment that welcomes all children.

Philosophy Statement

MUNRO ACADEMY EARLY LEARNING CENTRE (MAELC) Munro Academy Early Learning Centre (MAELC) integrates ECE best practices, age appropriate Christian worldview content and compassion. The MAELC will reflect the values of award winning educational innovation embodied by the Munro Academy day school since its inception in 2009, underscoring the formative role the early years play in the healthy development of social skills, a positive self image, and the development of independence and a love of learning.

As an ELC offering Christian worldview integration for families from any faith background or none, the MAELC seeks to incorporate values such as kindness, self control, patience, love, and peace into everyday life and this will be achieved through music, lessons, and games that follow the children's interest.

Our high-quality program is available to all families in the community. Parents and staff will work together to develop and enhance a program that will meet the individual needs of each child.

Inclusion And Diversity

At Munro Academy Early Learning Center we are committed to providing a nurturing, supportive environment for children and families. Our goal is to present an inclusive community where everyone feels respected, valued, loved and supported for the unique individual they are.

Munro Academy's Early Learning Center aligns with the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child through providing an environment that all children have the opportunity to thrive, and fully engage in. We are dedicated to ensuring that children have equal opportunities to participate in the Center.

Our Inclusion policy is based on the following principles and practice:

- **Equal access and participation for all**

We observe that every child has the right to access and fully participate in our program regardless of their race, ethnicity, family structure, socioeconomic status, abilities or extra support needs. We are committed to providing an inclusive environment where children and families feel welcome and supported.

- **Individual Support**

We recognize that each child is uniquely created. They have their own strengths, interests, and needs. We aim to provide individualized support to children in our care. Through Collaboration with families, and community partners to create Individualized support plans.

Open communication and partnerships with families are essential to ensure their goals for their child are incorporated into our inclusive practices. We strive to continuously provide inclusive practices and ensure that every child feels respected, welcome, and loved.

- **Diversity**

Our Center is open to all children, and we promote an atmosphere of respect, and understanding, while encouraging the children to appreciate and embrace individual differences. Our staff are committed to fostering a culture of inclusivity, where children learn to value diversity, and develop empathy towards others. This is done through stories, songs, and the introduction of culturally responsive materials into the environment.

- **Family Partnerships**

We understand the importance of building strong partnerships with families, as well as community partners, to support the diverse needs of children in our care. We encourage

open communication and collaboration to ensure that each child receives the support and resources they require.

- **Environment**

Our Facility is designed to be inclusive and accessible to all. Adaptations can be made to ensure that all children are able to fully participate in our daily activities and program.

- **Professional Development**

Staff are required by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to maintain 30 hrs of professional development. MAELC provides ongoing training and professional development opportunities to our staff to enhance their knowledge and skills in supporting children with diverse abilities, and various support needs. We believe that well educated, compassionate educators are essential in creating an inclusive environment.

Through the implementation of our inclusion policy and practices, we can create an environment where every child feels a sense of belonging and acceptance. And where optimal opportunities are provided for them to grow and develop to their full potential. We are dedicated to providing a culture of inclusion, diversity and equity that enriches the experiences of the children in our care.

Administrative Structure

Our program, policies, procedures are governed by Munro's independent Board of Directors. The Board of Directors is responsible for monitoring all operations of the organization via the Executive Director. All staff from Kitchen/cleaning staff to Level 3 Early Childhood Educators report directly to the Director. A list of the names and contact information of all Board members is posted on the main Parent Information Board.

Programs and Activities

Munro Academy Early Learning Centre is an inclusive child care centre that provides full time care for children aged 6 months to 12 years.

A classroom schedule includes daily teacher directed group activities, nutritious lunches and snacks, outdoor and indoor play (including gym time), a rest period, art and music exploration and free play.

The daily routine is flexible and responsive to the needs of the children and the program. We will provide plenty of notice about any special events or changes to the routine.

Schedule

7:30-9:30 am	Open Snack/ Wellness Routine
7:45-11:30 am	Play Opportunities: Gross motor, fine motor, cognitive development, sensory, language and literacy, math and science, sociodramatic play, open-ended art, social skills, construction, music and movement, sand and water play, gym time, manipulative play, snack and outdoor play. Activities happen in both small and large groups depending on the day and the interests of the children.
11:30 am-12:30 pm	Lunch / Wellness Routine Hand washing, diaper changing, toileting, lunch
12:30-2:30 pm	Nap/Rest Time
2:30-3:00 pm	Snack Time (open snack)
2:30-5:00 pm	Play Opportunities Gross motor, fine motor, cognitive development, sensory, language and literacy, math and science, sociodramatic play, open-ended art, social skills, construction, music and movement, sand and water play, gym time, manipulative play, snack and outdoor play.

Hours of Operation

Monday – Friday: 7:30 AM – 5:00 PM

Children engage in exploratory play and open snack from 7:30 to 9:30 am. We ask that children are dropped off **no later than 9:30am**.

Staff to child ratios will always be fulfilled. It is important that you identify regular times of arrival and departure to classroom educators. These times are expected to correspond with your work/school hours. In the case of non-working parents, we recommend no more than 8 hours per day. Any changes in the arrival or departures of your child should be directed to your child's teachers. Regular arrival and departure times are important for your child's routine and the Centre to ensure ratios are always met.

Holidays

If any day designated as a holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the holiday will be on the Monday immediately following. Munro Academy's Early Learning Centre will be closed on the following holidays as well as 1 week over the Christmas holidays TBA each year.

New Year's Day

Canada Day

Remembrance Day

NS Heritage Day

Natal Day

Christmas Day

Good Friday

Truth and Reconciliation Day

Boxing Day

Easter Monday

Labour Day

Victoria Day

Thanksgiving Day

Absences

Full tuition fee payment is required regardless of absences due to vacation, illness, holidays, and Centre closures due to weather and other unforeseeable circumstances.

Tuition fees reserve your child's space in our program and all the services connected to that space during their absence.

Storm Days

MAELC weather closure decisions are made by MAELC administration on the basis of student, parent, and staff safety. Closure decisions are communicated in a timely manner to parents via *Lillio* our communication app.

Attendance

It is important that your child be dropped off and picked up as close to the same time everyday as possible. This is to ensure proper ratios are met with staff but also for your child to maintain a comfortable routine.

Parents are required to give a **four weeks notice for your child's withdrawal** from the Centre.

Your Child's First Day

This is a very important day for your child. Children who are introduced to a childcare setting with the help of their parent/s tend to adjust more readily to the new environment. The introduction helps to build trust and open lines of communication between parent/s and educators.

In addition, you and your child become familiar with the environment, the educators, the routine, and the activities at the Centre.

1. We suggest that you and your child visit the Centre together for a portion of the first day. This visit should be brief, with you in attendance for the first hour or so. Your child's first day should not be overwhelming or tiring; we recommend starting with a half-day.
2. If taking the time off is not possible for you, we suggest bringing your child in early for the first few mornings and spending time together in the classroom.
3. We suggest that your child's first few days be shorter than normal so that his/her days are not too overwhelming.
4. If this is your child's first childcare experience, you and your child may need some extra support. The educators will assist you and your child through transition. Please feel free to share your concerns and feelings with them.

Arrivals And Departures

Arrivals

1. Upon arrival, please go past the main Munro Academy reception and go directly to the MAELC. Ensure that your child's outerwear is removed and placed in her/his cubby and that indoor shoes are put on.
2. Please then escort your child to her/his classroom, directly handing off your child to the classroom educator (do not leave children in the cubby area).
3. An educator (a designated teacher in each classroom) marks down arrival and departure date/time on attendance forms. This allows us to see who is on the premises during fire drills and emergencies and to keep attendance records.

4. Field trips and outings occur on a regular basis and will leave at the specified time. We cannot wait for late children if no phone call is received, however the MA receptionist will have details about the trip should a child arrive late.

Departures

1. We generally expect you, as the parent (or other people you have specifically designated), to be picking up your child. In the event that you are unable to do so, notify the educator, in advance, regarding who will be coming for your child and the approximate time.
2. Educators will only release your child to those persons listed on the authorization form at the time of enrolment. Please keep us updated to any changes.
3. If you want someone not listed on the authorization form to pick up your child/children, we ask you to provide the name in writing. If that is not possible, we must be able to contact you for authorization and they must provide a photo ID or we will not be able to release your child/children to them.
4. We cannot release your child/children to anyone under the age of 12 years.
5. The Centre closed at 5:00 PM. Parents will be charged 1 dollar for every minute after 5:00 PM to be paid to the educator who has had to wait.

Your Child's Needs

Munro Academy Early Learning Centre programs are designed to encourage and facilitate active learning and development through exploration and play.

1. Children should wear comfortable clothing so that they can participate in all aspects of the program.
2. You should label all articles of clothing with your child's name or initials.
3. Parents are required to provide the following items:

- a. indoor shoes
 - b. complete change of clothing
 - c. small blanket, pillow if needed
 - d. (optional) your child may also bring a soft toy or comfort object for rest time
4. Your child's possessions will be stored in his/her designated cubby.
 5. You are responsible for providing diapers and wipes for your child (please deliver directly to your child's educator).
 6. If your child requires any special diet it is the parent's responsibility to provide them.
 7. Please send your child in appropriate outdoor clothing for the day. We will be going outside regularly to the playground, walks and field trips and in all kinds of weather. Below is a list of seasonal clothing that should be brought or kept at the daycare:

Summer	Winter	Fall/Spring
Sun Hat	Warm Hat	Sun Hat
Light Jacket	Snow Suit	Warm Hat
Rain Boots	Scarf/Mittens	Jacket
Sneakers (outdoor)	Boots	Rain Pants
Swim Suit	Sweater	Rain Coat
Sun Screen	Pants	Rain Boots
Sweater		Sneakers
Shorts		Sun Screen
		Mittens

\$50 is required at the time of registration to purchase a muddy buddy for your child to be left at the centre.

Communicable Disease Manual

At Munro Academy Early Learning Centre we are concerned about the health and safety of all children and staff. To keep illness at a minimum, equipment and common touch surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected regularly. A cleaning schedule is maintained at all times and is a licensing requirement. MAELC, we use a product that kills 99.9% of germs but is 100% safe not only for the children, but for the environment. Educators will also follow hand-washing guidelines.

Illness

1. If your child is going to be absent due to illness, please notify your child's educators of your child's symptoms through the *Lillio* app..
2. An ill child cannot function well in a busy Centre and his/her presence may spread illness to other children, as well as prolong his/her own illness. Please keep your child at home if he or she has a fever or any of the following symptoms:
 - a. Diarrhea
 - b. Vomiting
 - c. Infection
 - d. Persistent coughing
 - e. Swollen glands
 - f. Rash
 - g. Pain/aches
 - h. Chicken pox etc.
3. If your child becomes ill at the Centre, you will be notified immediately and are expected to pick them up as soon as possible..
4. Please inform the child's educator if your child has a contagious condition.

5. Children who have been diagnosed with a contagious condition cannot return to the Centre until 24 hrs after symptoms are gone, or until a doctor has cleared them to return.

Medication

Recognizing the critical importance of safely and appropriately administering medication, we ask parents to partner with us based on the following guidelines:

- For safety reasons, all medication must be handed directly to educators by parents. Medication delivered by the child through their bags will not be administered. All medication must be in the original container, with a readable label.
- You will be asked to complete an authorization form for each new medication stating your child's name, date, nature and reason for the drug, complete instructions on administration and dosage and any special instructions, please send measuring utensils along with all medications.
- The classroom educator will check the directions of the label of the bottle as well as the instructions on the form filled out by the parent. Should the information be different the lower dosage will be administered unless otherwise directed by a physician's instructions. The time of each dosage must also be recorded.

Universal Precautions

Munro Academy Early Learning Centre (MAELC) helps control the spread of infections by practicing proper hygiene and following universal precautions. Children and staff wash their hands thoroughly with warm water and soap before meals, after toileting, before and after administering first aid and throughout the day as required. Toys, dishes and eating surfaces are sanitized daily. Floors are swept daily and as required throughout the day. The laundry, kitchen and bathrooms are cleaned daily and as required throughout the day.

Communicable Disease Manual:

1. Hands are washed immediately after exposure to blood and all other bodily secretions

2. All cuts are covered with a sterile bandage until healed
3. Disposable latex gloves are worn by staff treating open cuts
4. Blood-soiled surfaces are disinfected with bleach which kills HIV
5. Laundry stained with blood and other bodily secretions is washed separately in hot, soapy water
6. Materials stained with blood and other bodily secretions are placed in a sealed garbage bag and discarded in a lined, covered, plastic container.

For strategies to prevent communicable diseases please refer to the following link:

<https://novascotia.ca/dhw/CDPC/>

Emergency Information

Munro Academy's Early Learning Centre is regularly inspected by relevant provincial authorities, including the Fire Inspector and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Staff conduct all required fire drills on a routine basis, and designated team members are certified in First Aid and CPR. Please inform the Centre of any changes to your address, place of work, telephone numbers and authorization list and injuries that your child receives outside the Centre.

Incident Report

MAELC staff are required to complete an accident report form for any incident that requires first-aid treatment. The form must be signed by the staff member who administered the treatment, the parent or guardian, and the director. Once signed, it is placed in the child's file. Parent(s) are to be informed of the injury at an appropriate time (depending on the extent of the injury), maintaining confidentiality of any concerned parties. If a serious incident occurs 911 will be called then the parents and it will be reported to the Department.

Serious Incidents

- 30B (1) In this Section, “serious incident” means any of the following:
- (a) the death of a child while the child is attending a day care program;
 - (b) any injury to a child that occurs while the child is attending a day care program and that requires emergency medical attention;
 - (c) a fire or other disaster on the premises of a facility, agency, play group space or family day care home;
 - (d) a concern or an occurrence relating to an element of the physical environment or an operational or safety practice in a facility or a family day care home that poses a risk to the children’s health, safety or well-being.
- (2) If a serious incident occurs, the facility director or, in a family home day care program, the care provider must do all of the following:
- (a) immediately secure any necessary medical assistance and make all possible efforts to notify the parents of any child affected;
 - (b) notify the licensee no later than 24 hours after the time the serious incident occurred
 - (c) prepare a summary report that meets the requirements of clause 30A(2)(b) and place a copy in the file of each affected child no later than 7 days after the date of the serious incident
- (3) A licensee must ensure that the Department is advised of a serious incident no later than 24 hours after the serious incident occurs.

Emergency Medical Treatments

It is the educators' responsibility to handle emergency medical treatments for which they are trained. Each educator is required to maintain up-to-date certification in standard First Aid and CPR.

If a child requires medical treatment, the parent will be contacted at an appropriate time, depending on the severity of the injury, and will be required to take the child for professional medical attention.

If the parent cannot be reached, an authorized emergency contact will be called to fulfill this responsibility, and attempts to reach the parent will continue.

If neither the parent nor the emergency contact can be reached and the child requires immediate medical attention, Centre educators will continue to attempt to reach a contact person.

In the event of a life-threatening emergency, an ambulance will be called immediately.

Emergency Evacuation

In the event that we have to evacuate the Centre due to fire or emergency and the Centre must close, you or an authorized person will be contacted immediately and expected to pick up your child immediately at the far corner of the playground at the back of the building.

Media

Pictures, video or audio recordings of your child may be used on the Munro Academy website, social media, brochures, promotional advertisements, newspaper/radio/television interviews, etc. Parental consent is necessary.

Fee Structure

Please **submit a \$50 fee** upon registration to purchase a 'Muddy Buddy' for your child. Please note that an invoice will not be issued for the Muddy Buddy fee.

Fees

Fees are based on daily rates recommended by the Provincial Government. Standard daily rates are as follows:

Infant Program: \$41.00/full day - Government Fee Reduction of \$23/day

Toddler Program: \$38.00/full day- Government Fee Reduction of \$18.25/day

Preschool Program: \$35.00/full day- Government Fee Reduction of \$18.25/day

School-Aged Program: \$30.00/full day - Government Fee Reduction of \$10/day

Your first month's payment is due prior to your child's enrollment.

Payments Are Due On The 5th Of Each Month

If payment is not received by the due date, a \$40 late payment fee will be applied.

Your first month's payment is due prior to your child's enrollment.

Payment options

E-transfer:

Send to: payments@munroacademy.org

Please add **MAELC, your child's name** and the **invoice number** in the message. No password required.

Cheques:

Cheques are made payable to **Munro Academy**. Please add your **child's name** and the **invoice number** in the message.

Any NSF cheques may be subject to a \$40 surcharge.

The above guidelines seek to avoid any potential of late payments; it is assumed that payment is required to hold a student's position in MAELC.

Late Departure Fee

Parents who pick up their child after 5:00 pm will be charged \$1.00 per minute that they are late. This payment is to be given directly to the educator who had to stay late with your child.

Food and Nutrition Standard

Munro Academy's Early Learning Centre menu follows the guidelines set out by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Our menu plan runs on a four-week rotation and includes a wide variety of foods. Menus are posted weekly for your convenience.

MAELC provides each student from Infancy to preschool with a healthy lunch including all recommended food groups and healthy morning and afternoon snacks including foods from at least two food groups, and always including a serving from the fruit and vegetable group. All food is prepared in MAELC's licensed kitchen by appropriate staff. Staff will provide a relaxing and enjoyable environment during meal times. Staff members eat with children to help model appropriate eating behaviors, and positive food choices in a family style setting. Teachers do not force children to eat, or withhold favorite foods for inappropriate behaviors, but encourage children through positive modeling and reinforcement to try new foods.

Please keep us informed of any food allergies, and food substitutes can be discussed at the time of registration. If your child requires supplements or special foods due to a medical condition and or religious/ cultural beliefs, you will be responsible for providing them.

Menus For Infants

Food will be prepared to accommodate the infants developmental stages according to the food and nutrition Standards set out by the Department Of Education and Early Childhood Development and Public Health. We encourage infants to explore their food, feed themselves, and respond to hunger and fullness cues

Honey and products containing honey are not served to children who are less than two years old.

Munro Academy Early Learning Centre is a breastfeeding friendly centre. We welcome mothers to breastfeed in our center and will provide a comfortable space for breastfeeding if requested.

With respect to Standards for Food and Nutrition in Regulated Child Care Settings, we are required to serve only food prepared in our licensed kitchen that is regularly inspected by the Department of Agriculture and complies with the Food and Beverage Nutrient Criteria; therefore, children cannot bring homemade treats to share. Any food served in the center must be labeled with a list of ingredients and any special preparation, storage or serving instructions. If any toddlers require a special formula or food, families must provide this daily in labeled containers with clearly written instructions for staff.

Rest Time

(Licensee Manual for Regulated Child Care Reg: A37)

Sleep is crucial to healthy child development. Children ranging in age from 1-3 years typically require 12-14 hours of sleep per day. Children aged 3-5 years typically require 10-12 hours per day. Staff and care providers should discuss the rest period with parents to ensure that each child's needs for rest are being met.

At MAELC, children from infancy to preschool participate daily in scheduled rest times. Typically, children who need to nap will fall asleep within 20 to 40 minutes. Children who do not nap are provided with developmentally appropriate quiet activities. As well, quiet activities are provided for children when they awaken. The rest period is scheduled at a consistent and natural time each day. For toddlers and preschoolers, this is typically after lunch. The rest period for infants is flexible to meet their individual needs. The area where children rest is nurturing and welcoming with soft music and appropriate darkness. Children who have difficulty falling asleep are assisted and comforted by staff.

School aged children attending a full day will be required to have a “quiet time” during the younger children's rest time. During this time they will be encouraged to read, or work on quiet activities.

Family Communication Plan

A family communication plan is a way for parents to get involved in their child's learning and see how their child's day looks. It is also a way parents are able to communicate any issues or concerns they may have themselves regarding the care of their child or with the Centre itself.

Lillo

Here at Munro Academy Early Learning Centre the main form of communication used is an app called *Lillo*. Upon enrollment of your child parents receive a link that is sent to the email address you provided on the enrollment form.

The *Lillo* app enables educators and childcare programs to make profiles for children, track their development, and keep parents in the loop. *Lillo* offers:

- *Lillo* app and web portal - Parents can view photos, videos, daily reports and schedules, update their child's information, and message educators in their own private, secure account.

- Real-time photo sharing - Parents can receive timely updates throughout the day.
- Email, text, and in-app communication - Parents can receive messages, alerts, reminders, and have access to billing information.
- *Lillo* takes privacy very seriously - No one else can have your child's information without express consent being provided by the parents or guardians.
- It is also a way for parents to view our monthly newsletter and to receive information regarding our parent committee meetings. All are welcome to attend.

Information Board

At the main entrance to the MAELC hall, on the white board you will find our communications to parents as well as the following information:

- Our License
- Daycare Act
- Parent Handbook
- Recent Inspection reports
- Behavior Guidance Policy
- Current menu
- Parent Committee meeting information and minutes
- Daily program/schedule
- Government funding information

MAELC Contact Information

Parents may contact the Director of the Centre at: elc@munroacademy.org or (902)241-5085.

Please feel free to contact us at any time with any questions/concerns that you may have. Your partnership is valued!

MAELC Policies



Behavior Guidance Policy

Munro Academy's Early Learning Centre will follow the guidelines outlined in the Behavior Guidance Policy from the Department of Community Services. The following policies are designed to help each child develop self-control and self-confidence so that he/she will have the ability to act appropriately in given situations.

- Staff **will not use** corporal or physical punishment of any form.
- Staff **will not use** harsh, humiliating, belittling or degrading responses of any kind, including verbal, emotional or physical.
- Staff **will not confine** or isolate children.
- Staff **will not deprive** a child of basic needs including food, shelter, clothing, or bedding
- Staff **will not offer** food to reinforce positive behaviors.
- Staff **will not withhold food** as a consequence for inappropriate behaviors.
- Food is **not used as a reward** for completing a task or finishing a meal (e.g. dessert will not be withheld if the child does not finish the main meal).

Munro Academy's Early Learning Centre recognizes that a well-planned program with interesting activities helps prevent many inappropriate behaviors. We structure our program with a variety of developmentally appropriate and interesting activities that encourage children to participate with appropriate behaviors.

- When a child's team (which may include staff, external professionals and the child's parents/guardians) has determined that food is the most appropriate and natural way to reinforce desired behaviors and support the child's development, then a routine-based

plan (RBP) must be developed for the child. The RBP must include a plan for replacing and/or reducing the use of food as a motivator.



Child Abuse Reporting Policy

Childcare staff is under legal obligation to report all suspected cases of child abuse immediately to the Department Community Services (DCS). Please contact any staff member if you need help with child guidance strategies.

It is a legal responsibility to report any suspicion of child abuse encountered in the course of one's professional duties. The responsibility to report those suspicions applies not only to individuals directly involved with the children, but to any volunteers, students or support staff who have contact with the children.

Abuse has been defined in Section 47 (1) The Child Welfare Act 1978 as; "A condition of

- (1) physical harm;
- (2) malnutrition or mental ill health of a degree that is not immediately remedied could seriously impair growth and development or result in permanent injury or death;
- (3) sexual molestation."

A child is defined in Part 3 of the Child and Family Services Act, as a person under, but not including, 16 years of age (CFSAs #37(1)a.)

Confidentiality

The individual's duty to report overrides the provisions of any other provincial statute, specifically those provisions that would otherwise prohibit disclosure by a professional or official. The professional must comply with the reporting laws even though the reported information may be confidential or privileged. The only privilege not subject to the reporting law is that between a solicitor and his/her client.

