



PRESCHOOL
CANADA
Early Learning Academy

Eh to Zed Preschool Canada Early Learning Academy

Child Abuse Policy

We at Eh to Zed Preschool Canada Early Learning Academy are committed to ensuring the prevention of child abuse by:

- Updating ourselves with professional development
- Attend annual meetings, focused explicitly on abuse and our abuse policy
- Ongoing observations of children in our care
- Ensuring that communication is always kept within the center and families

Our Duty to Report

In accordance with the *Child and Family Services Act*, it is the responsibility of every person in Ontario to immediately report to a Children's Aid Society if he or she believes that child abuse has happened or if there is a risk of abuse. In Ontario, a child ranges from birth until his or her 16th birthday. In addition to everyone's duty to report, the legislation places additional responsibility on individuals who professionally facilitate children. Professionals need to report his/her suspicion of child abuse or risk of abuse to a Children's Aid Society. This policy also pertains to any operator or employee of the child care center.

Failure to Report

It is an offense under the *Child and Family Services Act* to violate one's reporting responsibilities. A penalty of up to \$1000.00 can be issued. A child's safety surpasses any other concerns (C.F.S.A. 85 (1)).

Confidentiality

It is our professional duty to report suspicion of child abuse. This right override everything else.

Protection from Liability

All individual's making a report of suspected child abuse are protected, unless the person is seen without reasonable grounds for the belief or suspicion (C.F.S.A.) 15 (6) or if the offender is proven guilty.



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Child Care and Early Years Act

It is required that every licensed childcare facility follows their behaviour guidance and procedure policies. These policies are found in the Policy Manual. It is also required under legislation that if a staff/person has been suspected of child abuse, a Serious Occurrence report needs to be submitted within 24 hours to the Ministry of Education. Please follow the instructions in the Serious Occurrence Policy

Making the Decision to Report

Every case will vary, and deciding to report will be based on these scenario questions:

- We will observe the child's behavior and potentially any other indicators of child abuse.
- Did the child disclose information?
- Was it by accident or on purpose?
- Is there any other information, which can be added to the overall situation?

Procedure:

1. If any employee/student/volunteer suspects that a child may have been or is at risk of abuse, he or she must immediately call the Children's Aid Society. This must be done by the individual who suspects the abuse and no one else.
2. If there are any concerns or doubts regarding making a report of suspected abuse, the staff/student/volunteer needs to consult with a worker from the Children's Aid Society. You must not discuss your suspicions with anyone else until you have spoken with a child protection worker.
3. It is the responsibility of the person who suspects child abuse to follow through on the report to a Children's Aid Society. You cannot just leave a message. You must talk to an intake secretary or worker when filing a report.
4. The staff/student/volunteer who suspects any potential abuse can inform the supervisor of his/her need to report to the Children's Aid Society. However, **DO NOT** discuss your suspicions with anyone, including your supervisor, until you have consulted with a child protection worker. The supervisor should provide support. If your supervisor does not want you to make the call, you must follow through on your legal responsibility and call the Children's Aid Society (CAS).



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Documentation

Please document only the facts

- **DO NOT** include how you are feeling about the incident, or any personal thoughts about what might have happened.
- Refer to the form HOW TO DOCUMENT CHILD ABUSE (end of this policy). This form needs to be completed **every** time a staff/student/volunteer has reason to suspect that child abuse has occurred or is likely to occur. In the process of monitoring a child suspected to be at risk for child abuse, the form needs to be completed.

Connecting with the Supervisor:

When a supervisor is informed by a staff/student/volunteer that he/she is reporting suspected child abuse, the supervisor will provide help and support. This form of support may be as simple as giving the individual time to write up the report.

If the reporting individual has further concerns after the first call was made, he or she must phone the child protection worker again.

What to Report to a Children's Aid Society?

The individual making a report of suspected child abuse to a Children's Aid Society may not have access to all the information listed below. If this is the case, **DO NOT** waste time and search for this information. It is necessary that the individual reports to a Children's Aid Society as soon as possible.

When making the report, try and have this information (if not available, do not waste time searching for it)

- Identifying information (e.g., Name, address, primary caregiver/caregivers)
- Current whereabouts of the child/family
- Present physical or emotional condition of the child
- Any special vulnerabilities, medical conditions, communication issues
- The name of the center attended

What initiated the report

- What was it that led to the report being made today?
- What are the sources of the information for the report?
- What are the details regarding concerns?
- Do you have any other details?
- What actions, if any, have you taken before reporting the matter to the Children's Aid Society?



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Information about the child's family and the alleged offender

- Families: name, date of birth, address, telephone numbers, place of work
- Alleged Offender: name, date of birth, address, telephone numbers, places of work. Relationship to the child.
- If the offender is unknown, the suspected abuse must be made known.
- Does the alleged offender have access to the child, siblings, or other children?
- Any cultural considerations?
- The name of the child's physician(s)
- What is the language spoken by the family/alleged offender?
- Any concerns for family members with respect to mental health, physical illness, substance abuse, weapons/violence?
- Names and addresses of extended family members and others who could be supportive of the child and the family

Discussing the situation with a parent/caregiver

Consult with the Children's Aid Society before discussing any suspicions of child abuse with a parent/caregiver. This may alter the investigation. Consultation with a child protection worker is very important in the following circumstances:

- Sexual abuse is suspected
- The alleged abuser is a member of the child's immediate family
- There is a potential chance of the family withdrawing the child from the center, or not being available for further investigation
- There is a chance the child will be further abused

It is important to do Health Checks/Observations each day at drop off. If any sort of injury is present, ask open-ended questions in a none threatening manner to the adult or child at drop off.



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When the Children's Aid Society/Police investigates the Centre

The Family Services Act team may request permission from Eh to Zed Preschool Canada Early Learning Academy to come in and observe and further investigate within our premises.

If a Staff/Student/Volunteer is suspected of child abuse

1. If a staff/student/volunteer/parent suspects another educator in the centre of abusing a child(ren), she/he is legally bound to report these suspicions immediately to the Children's Aid Society. The supervisor should be informed of the report as soon as possible. If the Staff suspected of abuse is the supervisor, then this concern should be directed to the Director/Head Office.
2. The accuser will document all necessary information as outlined under the HOW TO DOCUMENT CHILD ABUSE outline and follow the reporting policies. The supervisor will **NOT** inform the suspected person of the accusation until a Children's Aid worker has been consulted.
3. The Supervisor/Director/Head Office will notify the Children's Aid Society within 24 hours of the occurrence.
4. The Supervisor/Director will notify the Head Office and together will determine what action, if any, will be taken with respect to the suspected person's employment responsibilities while an investigation is being carried out.
5. The Supervisor/Director may need to meet with the suspected person to discuss any potential changes in duties and responsibilities. These changes will be recorded and placed in the individual's folder.
6. If the suspicion of child abuse is confirmed, further action will be taken. This action may be a suspension or dismissal.

Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information to others

Any information related to the report of child abuse is confidential between the person directly involved, the person making the report and the Children's Aid Society. The supervisor, after consultation with the Children's Aid Society, will have a better idea of what can be shared with staff (if required). Disclosure of information can become a breach of confidentiality.



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How to Document Child Abuse

When documenting any observations/facts of child abuse, please remember to:

- Record any information as soon as you can. Make sure to add dates and times
- Document the facts, with **NO** personal biases
- Try your best to give a clear description of the situation, what was seen or heard and **NOT** what you think might have happened
- Include what you did, said and why you chose to do these things
- Record the words used by a child/parent
- Include any additional information that may be important
- If injuries are present. Describe the colour, size, shape of any injury (bumps, burns, marks, bruises)
- Use a pen when documenting your observation. Use your own words to describe what you saw or heard.
- If a mistake occurs, cross out the mistake and initial any mistakes and continue documenting. **DO NOT** use white out.
- Make sure the documentation/entry is complete, signed and dated
- If additional information arises, start a new entry at a later date. Complete it, sign it and date it.

*****VERY IMPORTANT*****

Your first recording is your documentation. **DO NOT** make a rough copy and then write it over again. It is also important to **NOT** go back and change any of your original notes.

Important phone numbers

Police: 911

Children's Aid Society: (905) 363 – 6131

- Speak to **INTAKE**