

SAFE ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE OF CHILDREN

1. OVERVIEW

For the safety and well-being of children, Upper Canada Child Care (UCCC) implements strategies to encourage supportive transitions while strictly enforcing procedures to ensure each child's protection during arrival and departure from care. This policy will provide employees, students, and volunteers with a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities for ensuring the safe arrival and dismissal of children receiving care, including what steps are to be taken when a child does not arrive at the childcare centre as expected, as well as steps to follow to ensure the safe dismissal of children.

2. REVIEW

- 2.1 All employees must review this policy prior to commencing work. A written record must be signed and dated by those participating in the review.
- 2.2 Subsequent policy review, and a written record of the review may be required at the discretion of UCCC.
- 2.3 This policy is reviewed annually by the organization to ensure that it is current and meets requirements.
- 2.4 Records of reviews are to be kept on file in a secure location for at least three years from the time of entry.

3. SCOPE

This statement of policy applies to all employees, students, and volunteers.

4. RESPONSIBILITY

- 4.1 **Employees** are responsible for:
 - 4.1.1 ensuring the safe arrival and departure of children through consistent and effective implementation of the outlined procedures; and
 - 4.1.2 striving to maintain records (e.g., information, data, documentation) in a timely, and accurate way, without falsification.
- 4.2 **Supervisors** are also responsible for:
 - 4.2.1 ensuring that all employees and families are informed of the arrival/departure procedures;
 - 4.2.2 ensuring effective implementation of the policy; and
 - 4.2.3 documentation as per policy.
- 4.3 **Assistant supervisors or designates** are responsible for:
 - 4.3.1 assuming all duties of the supervisor in the absence of the supervisor.
- 4.4 **Regional directors** are responsible for:
 - 4.4.1 being available for consultation in the case of any child's extended unexplained absence, and in the event of a missing child, and/or police contact.
- 4.5 **Parents** are responsible for:
 - 4.5.1 making direct contact with an employee upon each arrival/departure of their child (and ensuring that authorized persons also understand this expectation);

- 4.5.2 providing the centre with current and accurate information about authorized persons and any relevant documentation pertaining to custodial arrangements; and
- 4.5.3 notifying the centre if their child will be absent from care.

5. POLICY

- 5.1 Employees will record arrival/departure times of children immediately upon their acceptance to/release from the program.
- 5.2 All occasions of absence, illness, and vacation will be noted on the Attendance Form.
- 5.3 Children are the responsibility of the centre once they have been signed into a program, and until they have been signed out and released.
- 5.4 A child will only be released to their parent(s) or authorized persons (minimum 16 years of age).
 - 5.4.1 In cases where a family has difficulty arranging for an authorized person who meets the age requirement of 16 years, the regional director will be notified and will work with the family to establish a mutually agreeable arrangement.
 - 5.4.2 Families must submit a signed Consent and Assumption of Risk form.
- 5.5 Children will not be permitted to leave the program unaccompanied by a parent or authorized person.
- 5.6 Employees are obligated to act in a manner that ensures the safety of the children in their care and implement all safety procedures detailed within this policy if a child cannot be located, an unsafe or unauthorized person arrives to pick up, or there is a failure to pick up.
- 5.7 If a child is **absent for three consecutive days** without any communication from a parent:
 - 5.7.1 Employees will inform the supervisor of the child's absence.
 - 5.7.2 Employees or supervisor will make every attempt to contact the child's parent(s) to determine cause of absence and anticipated return date.
 - 5.7.3 Childcare spaces will not be held indefinitely. Supervisor will consult with the regional director in the case of any extended unexplained absence.
- 5.8 When **managing sensitive situations** employees should endeavor to:
 - 5.8.1 Remain calm and polite.
 - 5.8.2 Attempt to communicate with parent or authorized person away from the child.
 - 5.8.3 Notify supervisor, or other employee when supervisor is not available, of the circumstances.
 - 5.8.4 Never put themselves at risk by attempting to physically prevent a parent or authorized person from departing with a child.
- 5.9 **Arrivals**
 - 5.9.1 Employees will conduct a visual check of each child and note in the daily log any signs of ill health, concerns, or instructions from parents. Parents will be encouraged to share information regarding their child's health, morning, mood, etc.
 - 5.9.2 **When a Child Has Not Arrived in Care as Expected**
 - 5.9.2.1 Where a full day child (Infant/Toddler/Preschool, or Kindergarten/School Age during PA days and school breaks) has not arrived to care prior to lunch, and the parent has not communicated a change in routine, an employee will notify the centre manager or otherwise designated individual.

5.9.2.2 A parent will be notified by either phone, email, or communication app, and asked to confirm the child's absence from care. Parents will be notified once only, regardless of whether they provide a response.

5.9.2.3 Any attempt to notify a parent of their child's absence will be documented.

5.9.2.4 Measures taken where a Kindergarten or School Age child has not arrived to care for their regularly scheduled Before School session will be limited to documenting the child's absence from care on the classroom attendance record, due to the following:

- the inconsistent nature of Before School Care use for many families
- the requirement for parents and caregivers to directly accompany their child to Before School Care
- existing safe arrival protocols in all school boards

5.9.3 **Late Arrivals (After School Programs)**

5.9.3.1 All children are expected to arrive at the childcare within 15 minutes of school dismissal.

5.9.3.2 If a child has not arrived within the allocated time, an employee will attempt to locate the child by contacting the following: school office, child's home, parent's emergency numbers; and/or bus company.

5.9.3.3 If a child is not located, upon consultation with the supervisor, employees will contact the police promptly for further guidance.

5.9.3.4 The regional director must be notified in the event of a missing child and/or police contact.

5.10 **Departures**

5.10.1 When picking up a child, individuals are to enter the building through designated entrances.

5.10.2 Employees will provide information to parents regarding the child's day, including: important messages, information regarding changes in the child's routine, accident reports, or medication needs etc.

5.10.3 Sensitive information should be discussed outside common areas and the hearing range of children where possible to maintain confidentiality.

5.10.4 Parents will be asked to provide written consent (including by email) to the supervisor if someone other than an authorized person will be picking up the child.

5.10.5 Where the parent is unable to provide written consent for an alternate individual to pick up their child(ren), they must provide verbal consent to supervisor/site lead, who must record the information in the centre logbook.

5.10.6 Employees must confirm identity and pick up authorization for any person unfamiliar to them and must check photo ID and written authorization if this is not possible.

5.11 **Late Departures**

5.11.1 If a child has not been picked up by the centre's closing time and employees have not yet received a call to notify them of a late pick up, employees will attempt to contact parent(s).

5.11.2 If parent(s) cannot be reached, attempts will be made to call the emergency contacts on file.

- 5.11.3 If there is no response from parent(s) or emergency contacts by 7:00 PM, in consultation with the supervisor, the employee may contact police, and/or the Children's Aid Society.
- 5.11.4 **Late fee charges** are posted in each centre and are paid directly to the attending employee. Rates for late fee charges are \$2 for first 5 minutes, \$1 for each additional minute thereafter.
- 5.11.5 Employees will encourage families to make every effort to pick up their children on time.
- 5.12 **Release to School**
 - 5.12.1 Where Before and After School Program children are being released to school employees (yard duty) from outdoor play, each child must visually "check in" with a UCCC employee prior to being signed out on the attendance. Employees must remain outdoors until all children have reported to them. If a child does not check in prior to release, missing child procedures must be implemented.
 - 5.12.2 During inclement weather, when School Age children are being released to their classroom, employees must sign out each individual child upon their release to school employees. Children leaving the childcare are to progress directly to their classrooms with supervision.
- 5.13 **Release to Attend School Organized Events**
 - 5.13.1 A Consent and Assumption of Inherent Risk Form must be used if a parent notifies the centre that their child will be absent from the program on any regularly scheduled day(s) to attend school organized events.
 - 5.13.2 Children are to return to the After School Program immediately following the event.
 - 5.13.3 If a child does not arrive at the childcare within 15 minutes of the time outlined on the consent form, employees are to follow Late Arrivals (After School Program) procedures.
 - 5.13.4 All signed consent forms are to be kept in the child's file.
- 5.14 **Custodial Issues**
 - 5.14.1 No child will be withheld from an authorized contact or parent named on the enrollment form unless a current court order is on file at the centre.
 - 5.14.2 For separated families, either parent can add a contact in writing unless a court order is provided stating that one parent has sole custody and responsibility.
 - 5.14.3 If a custodial court order has been provided to the centre, and a parent attempts to contravene the court order, the custodial parent and police will be notified immediately. The most recent court order on file with the childcare program will take precedence over any later requests for changes made by parents.
- 5.15 **Impairment**
 - 5.15.1 If an employee has reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or is physically or emotionally impaired in a way that might endanger the child, the following actions will be taken:
 - 5.15.1.1 Employee will offer to contact an alternate individual to pick up both the parent and the child.
 - 5.15.1.2 Employee will offer to call a cab for transportation of parent and child, if the employee believes that the child will be safely cared for by the parent or authorized person upon leaving the centre.

- 5.15.1.3 If parent or authorized person insists upon the release of the child, and that person is driving, an employee will notify the police of the incident and will provide them with the make, model, and license plate number of the car if possible.
- 5.15.1.4 Employees will notify the Children's Aid Society of the incident if they believe that a child needs protection.

6. ENFORCEMENT

An employee found to have violated this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

7. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- 7.1 Attendance Form
- 7.2 Consent and Assumption of Inherent Risk Form
- 7.3 Policy Review Acknowledgement Form