Playground Safety Policy and Procedure

Revised: August 19, 2016, October 16, 2017, Feb 22, 2018. May 8, 2018, August 9, 2019, September 26, 2019, May 11, 2023, November 1, 2023, October 3, 2024, November 20, 2026
Reference: Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, Compliant Policies, Ministry of Education June 28, 2021
Date approved by Board of Directors: January 18, 2018

Purpose:

Outdoor play is an integral part of the daily schedule and plays an important role in the development of children's overall well-being. In order for children to thrive in outdoor play, it is crucial that there be sufficient toys and equipment for children to engage in active play and that the educators engage as active participants in the play.

The How Does Learning Happen? Ontario Pedagogy for the Early Years document describes how children thrive in programs where they can engage in vigorous physical play in natural outdoor space and playgrounds that present manageable levels of challenge. In addition to providing physical benefits, active outdoor play strengthens functioning in cognitive areas such as perception, attention, creative problem solving and complex thinking

While these environments need to be safe, it is also important for them to provide children with interesting opportunities for a reasonable degree of risk-taking

The purpose of this policy is to set out the responsibilities of the Orde Day Care staff, students and volunteers in ensuring that the outdoor play provided is safe and well-supervised environment for children and meet Canadian Standards Association (CSA) standards Staff is required to plan daily activities that promote active play while maintaining ratios and optimum positions of supervision at all times.

All staff, volunteers and placement students are required to review the playground policy when commencing employment, training or volunteering and annually thereafter. A written record of the review will be signed annually by the individual and the Supervisor to ensure compliance. Staff must stay informed of all current playground requirements and restrictions.

Any new and current equipment or renovations, repairs or replacements will meet CSA Standards. All playground inspections, daily, monthly and annually are performed while ensuring the Canadian Standard Association standard is met. A yearly inspection is performed by a Certified Playground Safety Inspector annually and a written report is kept on file.

Policy

- Orde Day Care will ensure that there are enough play materials available that are appropriate for the children's age and learning and developmental needs during outdoor play.
- The maximum capacity of the playground will not be exceeded at any time.

Procedure: Playground Inspections/Checks:

To further ensure safety we have developed a Playground Safety Binder that includes:

1. **Accident Reports** (program staff) to track all injuries on playgrounds.

2. **Playground Injury Log** (Site Supervisor) to highlight problem areas.

3. **Daily Inspection Checklist** (program staff/caretaking staff) done prior to children entering playground which ensures the following areas are visibly checked before children enter the playground:

    1. Outdoor play space
    2. Fixed play structures
    3. Surfacing checks

    a. children will not use the playground, unless the playground checklist has been completed
    b. staff must review the daily playground inspection prior to going outside to ensure that it has been inspected – this must be done both in the am and pm dependent on the program
    c. on days that the playground is not used due to inclement weather or a field trip the daily playground checklist must indicate the reason why the playground was not used or inspected
    d. any identified hazards will be verbally communicated to the Supervisor and noted on the daily check
    e. The Supervisor will review the daily playground checklist to ensure compliance and identify any ongoing issues
    f. Supervisors will inform caretaking staff that ropes or plastic tape cannot be used to cordon off a defective area
    g. Supervisor will file all playground inspections in the Playground Check Binder for the current year

4. **Monthly Maintenance Inspection (Supervisor**) to record hazards or defects that need immediate attention or require a plan of action within a specific timeframe.

    - Supervisor will maintain an ongoing Repair Log
    - Supervisors will log any repairs or maintenance issues in the Playground repair log from the daily, monthly and annual inspections on the Playground repair log,
    - Playground repairs will be emailed to the caretaking staff of the TDSB and the school principal (Orde Site) or the playground manufacturer.
    - Supervisors will note the date the TDSB or the manufacturer of the structure was emailed on the log
    - Supervisor will review the log on a monthly basis to ensure repairs or concerns have been addressed.
    - If repairs are still outstanding, Supervisors will send a secondary email to the caretaking and Principal if applicable and note the second date on the repair log.
    - If repairs, which affect the health and safety of the children are still outstanding after a second notice, the Supervisor will inform outside inspectors of the needed repair i.e. Toronto Public Health inspector, Ministry of Education, Program advisor and City of

Toronto, Children Services consultant

- Once a repair has been completed Supervisors will enter the date of completion on the playground repair log.

5. **And a 3rd party inspection** which is conducted annually for the fixed structures and surface check of the playground

   The third-party inspector must:

   a. Declare non conflict of interest including declaration of non- affiliation with playground equipment and protective surface manufacturers, suppliers and/or other contractors involved in retrofit, upgrade or repair of the playground or the protective surfaces:
   b. Has proof of current Professional Errors and Omissions insurance coverage and
   c. Has proof of playground inspection certification

Repair and Maintenance:

Maintenance of playground repair log for any problems or unresolved issues on the playground will includes;

a. The date the issue was identified
b. Documentation of what steps and efforts have been taken to address any identified items which cannot be repaired immediately due to circumstances beyond the daycare's control
c. All request for repairs through the TDSB will be emailed to the head caretaker and principal of the school, and/or playground manufacturer to ensure documentation of the requested repair
d. Supervisors will note date of email on the repair log
e. Supervisors will review the log on a monthly basis and provide written updates on log
f. If repair is outstanding for more than one-month Supervisors will send a secondary email to the caretaking and Principal if applicable and note the second date on the repair log.
g. If repairs are still outstanding after a second notice, the Supervisor will inform outside inspectors of the needed repair ie Toronto Public Health inspector, Ministry of Education, Program advisor and City of Toronto, Children Services consultant
h. Once the repair has been completed the date of completion will be noted in the log
i. If the repairs cannot be completed immediately, the area or space requiring repairs will be sectioned off to prevent children from using that are in order to protect their safety and reduce risk of injury, Children will be supervisor at all times during outdoor play to ensure that they do not approach or use spaces that are sectioned off pending repairs. Tape or string should not be used to cordon off areas
j. Any repairs requiring alterations or renovations to the playground premise will not begin until site or playground plans are approved by the Ministry of Education Director

Compliance with CSA Standards:

- Any outdoor play space, fixed play structure or surfacing under those structures that is constructed or renovated will meet the requirements set out in the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) standard CAN/CSA-Z614-14 "Children's Play space and Equipment"

- Written confirmation of compliance with the CSA standard will be obtained from a "Certified Playground Inspector", upon completion of any repairs or renovations which have resulted in a non-compliance, with the CSA standard as outlined in a playground inspection

Playground experiences are an integral part of our program and planning. A playground safety checklist must be completed daily by a designated staff and outdoor program plans must be posted weekly. Programs are designed as an extension of our program, with opportunities for learning and enhancement of many skills identified in the ELECT document.

Playground Procedures:

When we are outdoors, safety is our top priority. Safety of the children includes monitoring for proper use of equipment. Staff are encouraged and expected to play with the children and/or lead them in games and activities while ensuring that all areas are properly supervised.

Playground Safety:

a. Children will be supervised at all times during outdoor play
b. Staff will position themselves throughout the playground and rotated their position where required to ensure children can be visually supervised while engaging in play
c. CCYA ratios must be maintained at all times,
d. Reduced ratios are never permitted on the playground
e. Staff will ensure that the gates are securely closed at all times
f. Staff must review the playground rules with the children on a regular basis
g. Emergency contact information is available on the playground
h. Main attendance and transition attendance is brought on the playground
i. Allergy and dietary restriction information is available
j. Children are transitioned in small groups based on permitted ratios.
k. Children should always enter and leave the playground in an orderly fashion
l. Staff must redirect aggressive or unsafe behaviour
m. All scarves, drawstrings or cords must be tucked inside children's clothing
n. NO skipping ropes, gimp, loose toggles, loose scarves, toys, etc. on structures or wheeled toys
o. If skipping ropes are available to the children, they must be closely supervised for appropriate use on the turf area only
p. children should never use rope for tying each other up
q. The number of skipping ropes brought out by the staff should be reflective of the interest and will not exceed 15 at one time
r. food or snacks are to be eaten ONLY if the child is sitting with a staff member
s. children should not hang off or sit on gates, or anything that is not considered playground equipment
t. children should not go behind sheds or climb on fences
u. children should keep their shoes on at all times
v. children should always come down the slide feet first, never jump from top of climber
w. bikes must be ridden in designated areas only
x. helmets must be worn when riding two wheelers

General Information:

Orde Site

- first aid kit is available in each emergency trip bag which is taken on the playground
- accident reports are available in attendance binder of each room
- keys or combinations to the shed are kept with the attendance binder
- both entrance gates must be closed with a chain while supervising children in the yard
- children should not be on stairs leading into the school
- all gates into the playground should be securely closed and latched while children are in playground

Satellite Site

- a first aid kit is located in the shed and emergency trip bag
- accident reports are located in the shed and trip emergency bag
- staff must ensure that one of the programs has a cell phone/walkie talkie
- keys for the lock are available in the trip bag of each room
- the shed and gates must be locked after each use
- infants and toddler children will be separated from other children during outdoor activities
- all gates into the playground should be securely closed and latched while children are in playground

Equipment:

- outdoor toys and equipment must be put away at the end of end of day (or after each use, if need be)
- the shed should be left tidy and organized
- all toys and equipment needing repair should be brought to the attention of the Site Supervisor

Structures:

- the compaction of the ground/mulch under all structures must be tested prior to use
- staff must check absorbency of mulch to a depth of 4" inches minimum (where applicable)
- children must not use structures when snow or ice covered or when ground surface is frozen

Orde Street Site - Outdoor Supervision Procedure:

- a staff member is responsible for giving the playground an overview for safety each time it is used
- daily playground checklist and the key for the shed is stored in the Playground binder
- staff ensure that children have been toileted & are properly dressed for the weather, prior to going out
- staff must take attendance and do a head count before going out to yard
- 1st staff outside will bring emergency bag and walkie talkie
- only day care children are allowed in the playground during day care permitted hour
- CCYA ratios must be maintained at all times

- **all staff must broadcast to all staff present the number of children they brought into the yard and the total number of children in the yard when arriving and departing**
- **when entering and leaving the playground staff should only have a small number of children with them as per the required ratio**
- there must be an adequate number of activities for the children on the playground
- any child who has had an accident or is feeling ill must be escorted to the day care office by an adult
- when taking a child in for any reason ensure that another staff is made aware and covers your position
- staff must indicate each child's departure time on the attendance sheets
- when re-entering school, children should line up at base of stairs in room groupings
- one staff member must scan the yard calling for children to line up
- count the children and do a roll call against the attendance sheet before returning to the building
- parents should be discouraged from picking up child by calling through the fence or from their cars
- Individuals who are observed hanging around the outside of the yard will be monitored, should they begin engaging with the children, a staff member should intercept this conversation or immediately inform the supervisor of the occurrence
- Last staff outside will bring in knapsack and walkie talkie

Positions for Supervision in the West Yard:

Depending on the number of staff available, staff must position themselves to ensure that all areas are supervised when in use.

1. General
    1. (1 person) Play Structure and gate
    2. (1-3 persons) Play Structure, gate
    3. (1-4 persons) Play Structure, gate and bike area.

2. Play structure (1-3 persons)
    1. (1 person) must monitor monkey bars **when being used at all times- CLOSED DURING THE WINTER (when children are wearing gloves)**
    2. Wooden logs- **CLOSED DURING THE WINTER – slippery when wet**

3. Front Gate (1 person)
    1. Keep children away from the gate, and off the fence, monitor retaining wall, monitor people coming and going and ensure gate is closed at all times and the chain is over the gate

4. Storage Sheds and Back Gate (1 person) this area must be closed to children.

5. Access to stairs and behind the kindergarten storage sheds must be blocked.

Attendance binders must be staffed at all times so children leaving can be marked off and notes given to parents. Whenever possible full-time staff should be recording the time of departure of children.

Positions for Supervision in the East Yard:

Depending on the number of staff available, staff must position themselves to ensure that all areas are supervised when in use.

1.
   i. (1 person) Room 6 staircase
   ii. (1 person) Storage shed area with all the attendance binders
   iii. (1 person) End of astro turf, near building
   iv. (1 person) Basketball net

PYLONS MUST BE LINED UP FROM SCHOOL STAIRS TO STORAGE SHED TO OUTLINE THE PERMITTED PLAY AREA.

CLIMBING STRUCTURE and THE SAND PIT IN THE EAST YARD ARE NOT TO BE USED BY THE DAYCARE. THE CLIMBER DOES NOT MEET CSA STANDARDS- DO NOT ALLOW CHILDREN TO USE THE EAST PLAYGROUND STRUCTURE.

2. Inform "non-daycare" people using the yard that they must leave the area until our permit expires. Question any adult who may be hanging out and contact Supervisor.
3. Keep children away from the gate and off the fence, monitor people coming and going.
4. Attendance binders must be staffed at all times so children's departure time can be marked off and notes given to parents.

Satellite Site - Outdoor Supervision Policy

- a staff member is responsible for giving the playground an overview for safety hazards each time it is used
- prior to going outside staff should ensure that children have been toileted and properly dressed for the weather
- staff must ensure that scarves, drawstrings and cords are tucked inside children's clothing and not tied around their necks
- staff must take attendance and do a head count before going out to yard and a 2nd head count once in the yard
- **all staff must broadcast to all staff present the number of children they brought into the yard and the total number of children when arriving and departing the playground**
- the gate must be opened and closed by an adult
- **when entering and leaving the playground staff should only have a small number of children with them as per the required ratio**
- ratios must be maintained at all times
- the staff member conducting the playground check must ensure that the cell phone/walkie talkie is working and take it with them
- no staff member is permitted outside alone with children unless they have a cell phone/walkie talkie
- when taking a child in for any reason ensure that another staff member is made aware and covers your position
- in an emergency, staff can call the office or kitchen for assistance or bring their group inside

- there must be an adequate number of activities for the children on the playground
- staff must indicate each child's departure on the attendance sheets
- count the children and do a roll call against the attendance sheet if available before returning to the building
- one staff member must scan the yard calling for children to line up
- toadstools and balance beam may only be used as seating apparatus

Positions for Supervision in the Yard – Satellite Site

Staff must position themselves to ensure that all areas are supervised when in use.

Toddler Yard:
1st staff – gate area
2nd staff – walk around the climber area
3rd staff – sandbox

Preschool Yard:
1st staff – rung ladder
2nd staff – fence wall near children's picnic table
3rd staff – chain net with rails

Communication on the Playground

All programs are required to have a charged walkie talkie with them prior to leaving for the playground.
The first staff member to go to the playground should bring the walkie talkie with them upon departure from the room.
Walkie talkies should be accessible and available to all staff on the playground.
The last staff member to leave the playground should keep the walkie talkie while the first and second groups go inside.
Walkie talkies can be used to inform the management team if there is a safety issue or emergency on the playground.
Management will ensure that they have a walkie talkie on their person at all times when children are outside.

Children needing to use the bathroom should be brought in small groups in keeping with the allowed ratios.

Documentation and Report Retention

- All documentation and reports related to the outdoor space or playground will be
  a. Kept for three years from the date they were created and/or updated (whichever dates is most recent); and
  b. Made available for the Ministry of Education staff to review at all times

Playground Safety Procedures

Timeline	Steps to Follow
Daily: before using the outdoor play	Staff must:

Timeline	Steps to Follow
space/ playground	walk around the entire outdoor play space or playground to look for and identify hazards and defects as indicated in the daily playground inspection checklist remove any garbage, hazards or defects using gloves; or contact the caretaker for removal of any garbage items prior to the children's use. complete the playground inspection checklist, sign and date it; and file the playground inspection checklist in the on the clipboard until the month end when it is picked up the Supervisor for review **Where hazards or defects cannot immediately be removed or repair Staff must:** i. report the hazards or defects to the Supervisor who will log and maintain the information in the repair log and take appropriate action to initiate any repairs. Section off the area with the hazard/defect if it poses a hazard to children. In preparation to exit the child care centre, to use the outdoor play space or playground, Staff must: i. ensure all emergency medication accompanies children, where applicable; Ensure the following is readily available a. all emergency contact information for children; b. Children's attendance record; c. Allergy and dietary restriction lists Ensure appropriate steps related to environmental factors have been implemented (e.g.: children are appropriately dressed for the weather, there are no entanglement risks, bug nets are in place, etc.); and Conduct head counts prior to leaving the indoor play activity area, and while transitioning them to the outdoor play space or playground.
Daily: while using the outdoor play	1. Staff must:

Timeline	Steps to Follow
space/ playground	I. position themselves in areas that ensure that all children and areas of the playground can be properly supervised at all times; II. ensure that there is access to drinking water at all times; III. complete head counts of children upon arrival and departure of playground and anytime there is a change in staff on the playground IV. implement the goals and approaches of the program statement, such as engaging with the children in play; and V. refrain from using personal cellular phones (except in emergency situations) or using outdoor time to socialize with other staff, students or volunteers during outdoor play. **Where a child is injured on the playground, staff must:** I. Administer first aid, where appropriate; II. Contact emergency services, where appropriate; III. Notify the parent of the child; IV. Complete an accident report and provide a copy to the child's parent; and note the accident in the centre's mail log or daily communication book V. Follow the serious occurrence policy and procedures, where appropriate.
Daily: When returning from the outdoor play space/ playground	1. Staff must: i. Conduct head counts prior to returning indoors from the outdoor play space or playground, while transitioning indoors, and upon returning to the indoor play activity space. ii. Ensure that attendance records, emergency medication and children's emergency contact information is brought indoors with the group.
Monthly	1. Supervisor must: I. Walk around the entire outdoor play space or playground to look for and identify hazards and defects as indicated in the monthly playground inspection checklist II. Remove any hazards or defects, where possible;

Timeline	Steps to Follow
	III. Complete the monthly inspection checklist (including verification of seasonal issues), sign and date it; and IV. file the playground inspection checklist in the Playground Check binder . **Where hazards or defects cannot immediately be removed or repaired,** Supervisor **must:** I. Report the hazards or defects to the Caretaker by email who will log and maintain the information in the repair log and take appropriate action to initiate any repairs. II. Section off the area with the hazard/defect if it poses a hazard to children. Supervisor must: i. Review outdoor injuries and accidents that have occurred to look for trends; ii. Take appropriate action to prevent similar injuries and accidents from happening in the future Supervisor must: i. review the repair logs and follow up on any outstanding identified issues still requiring repair.
Annually	**1. Where the playground has fixed equipment,** Supervisor **must:** I. ensure a certified playground inspector conducts an annual playground inspection; II. discuss the findings of the playground inspection with the certified playground inspector, including items that need to be repaired or replaced; and III. obtain a copy of the playground inspection report. **Where the playground does not have fixed equipment** Supervisor **must:** I. walk around the entire outdoor play space or playground to look for and identify hazards and defects as indicated in the annual playground inspection checklist; II. remove any hazards or defects, where possible;

Timeline	Steps to Follow
	III. complete the annual inspection checklist, sign and date it; and IV. develop a written plan to address any hazards and/or defects, including a timeline to address the issues identified during the inspection. **Where hazards or defects cannot immediately be removed or repaired,** Supervisor **must:** I. report the hazards or defects to Caretaker by email who will log and maintain the information in the repair log and take appropriate action to initiate any repairs. II. section off the area with the hazard/defect if it poses a hazard to children.

Glossary

Canadian Standards Association (CSA): a non-profit, voluntary association engaged in standards development and certification activities. The current standard in Ontario for licensed child care centre playgrounds is CAN/CSA Z614-14 - Children's Playspaces and Equipment. This standard specifies design and maintenance criteria to reduce the risk of injury.

Certified Playground Inspector: An individual who holds a current certification with the Canadian Playground Safety Institute.

Fixed play structure*:* a structure anchored to the ground that is designed for children to climb on (e.g., a climber).

Licensee: The individual or corporation named on the licence issued by the Ministry of Education responsible for the operation and management of the child care centre.

Staff (Employee): Individual employed by the licensee (e.g., program room staff).

Policy and Procedure Review:

This policy and procedure will be reviewed and signed off by all employees before commencing employment, annually, and at any time changes are made.

I acknowledge receipt of Orde Day Care **Playground Safety Policy and Procedure.** I understand it is my responsibility to read, understand, and comply with the **Playground Safety Policy and Procedures**. I understand that if I have questions, at any time, regarding the policy and procedure**,** I will consult with my immediate supervisor.

Please read the **Playground Safety Policy and Procedure** carefully to ensure that you understand the policy before signing this document.

Staff Name	Supervisor Name:
Staff Signature:	Supervisor Signature:
Date:	Date:

Playground Repair Log

Date	Description of repair required	Name of company repair has been sent to/attach email to log	Notification number	Date of follow up or completed
