



# Seeds & Roots

## Full Day Toddler and Preschool Programs Guide

Welcome to the Greenbelt Academy family! We are excited for you and your child to begin their educational journey with us. Please find that our guide includes all the required information to ensure your child is prepared for the Toddler/Preschool program and you, as parents/guardians, know what to expect.

- Mission/Vision Statement.....2**
- Age and Enrollment of Children.....3**
- Toddler/Preschool Program.....3**
- Registration Process and Waitlist.....4**
- Admission and Discharge.....5**
- School Year**
  - Calendar.....5**
- Extended care.....6**
- Child Entry and Release.....6**
- Tuition Rates.....7**
- Payment Plan Options/ Refund policy.....7/8**
- Immunizations.....9**

Illness Policy.....	9
Minor Accident Reporting Procedure.....	10
Serious Occurrence/ Emergency Shelter Location.....	10
What to bring; Preparing for Forest School.....	11
Lunch & Snacks/ Sample Menu.....	11/12
How Does Learning Happen.....	13
Sample Daily Schedule.....	14
Individual Learning Assessment.....	15
Contact numbers/ email.....	15
Program Statement Implementation Policy.....	15
Parent Issues or Concerns.....	20
Behaviour Guidelines.....	21

## Mission & Vision Statement

**Mission:**

Education rooted in nature to inspire in our students a deeper connection to the community around them.

**Vision:**

Every child is given the opportunity to learn about their world through daily access to extended time in nature. Quality educators facilitate an emergent curriculum that reflects the needs of the whole child and meets the demands of the world in which we live.

**“The children and nature movement is fueled by this fundamental idea: the child in nature is an endangered species, and the health of the children and the health of the Earth are inseparable.”**

**- Richard Louv**

## **Age and Enrollment of Children**



### **Toddler Program- “Seeds”**

Ages 18 months *up to* 2.5 years

Our toddler outdoor learning program provides children from ages 18 months up to 2.5 years with opportunities to engage with nature on a regular basis. Our full-day child-led, inquiry-based program will focus on developing social, physical, cognitive, creative, and emotional well-being while fostering a connection with the world around them. We offer small class sizes (1:5 ratio) which provides educators with the opportunity to connect with and build upon children’s learning in our unstructured-play environment.



### **Preschool Program- “Roots”**

Ages 2.5 years up to 4 years

Our Preschool outdoor learning program will prepare our students for Kindergarten, with references to the Ontario Kindergarten curriculum as well as the Forest School Curriculum while introducing other learning theories to reinforce learning. We offer small class sizes (1:8 ratio) which provides educators with the opportunity to connect children with nature and build upon children's interests while providing teacher-directed opportunities and offering an unstructured-play based environment. Our days vary throughout the week with two mornings (Tues/Thur) immersed in Nature offsite. Free play is an important aspect of our program and children are given time each day to explore and engage freely (in the Forest and at our home base).

\*\* Our permanent classroom teachers are all trained Registered Early Childhood Educators (R.E.C.E.), members of the College of Early Childhood Educators, who continue to engage in Professional Activities to upgrade their training and education. All employees, volunteers and students require a Police Clearance Check with Vulnerable Sector prior to interacting with the children in our care.

<b>Maximum Capacity of Centre</b>	
"Seeds" Toddler Program- 18-30 months	15
"Roots" Preschool Program- 30 months- 4 years	16

\*\* Part-time care will be considered once all full time spots have been allocated. Care is on a first come first serve basis. Additional requests will be maintained on a waiting list and reviewed regularly to ensure age appropriate placement.

## **Registration Process and Waitlist**

All parents must register on Niagara OneHSN (<https://niagara.onehsn.com/>) and indicate if they are looking for Full or Part time care (which days/ min. 3 days per week) and their preference in start date. Please note that priority is given for Full Time Care.

You will be contacted by the Program Supervisor or Director of the Preschool Programs when a space becomes available to you. Greenbelt Academy and Early Learning Centre offers registration for child care from our waiting list on a first come, first served basis, per the date registered on the list.

*There shall be no charge or collection of a fee or deposit for the placement of a child on a waiting list for admission. Should the family decline the spot or wish to be removed from the waitlist then the available space will be offered to the next family on the list, meeting age appropriate program availability.*

Parents will receive an admission package and information about the program when contacted via email. All forms must be returned before your child's first day. It is absolutely essential that all information be completed, including payment, immunization record, and an emergency contact person to ensure the safety and security of your child.

## Admission and Discharge

A deposit and registration fee of \$300 is required and can be paid at the time of registration. This fee will be applied to your last invoice of care with our Early Years Program (Seeds & Roots) at Greenbelt Academy and Early Learning Centre. Please note that this deposit is only refundable (less \$50 administrative fee) if one months written notice is given. We will not refund any deposit once received by GAELC if you change your mind proceeding with registration.

Written notice of permanent withdrawal must be given four weeks in advance. If notice is not received, full program fees will be charged. Fees must be paid up to and including your child's last day, prior to withdrawal. Please note that we do not offer refunds for any already accepted monthly tuition payments, and one-month tuition will be held for term and yearly payment options.

A permanent space cannot be guaranteed if you wish to temporarily withdraw your child. Therefore, your child will be placed on a waiting list. Greenbelt Academy and Early Learning Centre may terminate services if policies are not followed, fees are not paid or if the program is unsuitable for the child. If a child is absent from school for more than 30 days due to illness, the parent is required to give written notice, plus a doctor's note and the child's place will be held. Payment of the fees is still required. In the event the child withdraws due to illness, 30 days written notification is required and the remaining fees will be refunded.

## School Year Calendar 2020/21

**\*\*Our toddler and preschool programs operate all year long.**

### 2020

- Feb 17th (family day), school closed
- March 16-20th (March break), school closed
- April 10 th (Good Friday), school closed
- April 13th (Easter Monday), school closed
- May 18th (Victoria Day), school closed
- July 1st (Canada Day), school closed
- Aug 3rd (civic holiday), school closed
- Sept 7th (labour day), school closed
- October 12th(Thanksgiving), school closed

### 2021

- Dec 21-Jan 1st(Winter break), school closed
- Feb 15th(family day), school closed
- March 15-19th (March break), school closed
- April 2nd(Good Friday), school closed
- April 5th (Easter Monday), school closed
- May 24th(Victoria Day), school closed
- July 1st (Canada Day), school closed
- Aug 2nd (Civic holiday), school closed
- Sept 6th (labour day), school closed

## **Extended Care**

- Our Full-day program runs from **8:30am to 4:30pm**.
- Before care is available starting at **7:30am** and our aftercare is available until **5:30pm**. Please register at the beginning of the year if you will consistently need extended care. The fees will automatically be applied to your monthly invoices. No refunds will be granted for missed days. Refunds will not be applied retroactively if extended care is cancelled for the remainder of the year.

Beforecare(registered)- \$5/ day

Aftercare (registered)- \$5/day

Drop in beforecare- \$10/day

Drop in aftercare- \$10/day

### **Drop In /Late Pick Up Fees**

If you have not registered for before/aftercare at the beginning of the year, and drop off before 8:30am and/or pick up after 4:30pm, you may be charged for the drop in fee on the subsequent months invoice.

## Child Entry and Release Policy

Parents must give Greenbelt Academy written authorization for the people who may have access to their children (i.e. a relative who picks up child, emergency contact in cases where parents cannot be reached). If written authorization is not possible, the parent must phone or email us to give authorization. Parents must notify the school before changing the usual pick-up routine. We always act in the best interests of the child if there is any confusion or uncertainty.

### **Unauthorized Pick-up Procedure:**

If someone other than a parent/authorized alternate pick-up person arrives to pick up a child and we haven't been notified in advance by the authorized parent or pick up person we will:

1. Call guardian for verbal authorization.
2. If guardian cannot be located to give verbal approval, the child is not allowed to leave the premises until a guardian has been contacted.
3. Greenbelt staff will remain with the child until an authorized pick-up person arrives.

### **Custody and Access to Children:**

According to the law, both parents of a child have equal access to a child and to the information about the child's development, health and welfare. The only time a staff member can deny access of a parent to a child is when there is a written separation agreement or a legal court order. Greenbelt Academy requires a copy of this document.

### **Release of Children to a Person Who Appears Intoxicated/Impaired:**

Staff will not release a child to a person who appears intoxicated or impaired. In such cases, staff will assist in making other pick-up arrangements (i.e., a spouse or other authorized person). Staff members are legally responsible to protect the children in their care from any perceived risk.

## 2020/2021 Tuition Rates

Full-time- \$1200/month

Part-time-(4 days)-\$960/month

Part-time(3 days)- \$720/month

Part-time(2 days)- \$480/month

We are happy to offer a 10% sibling discount on all of our programs.

## Payment Plan Options

Monthly plan- Payment for the upcoming month is due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month. Your monthly statement will be calculated based on the average number of days attended per month - this means your monthly statement will be the same every month.

Yearly plan - Payment for the entire upcoming school year is due on the date of enrollment.

Program	Monthly	Term	Yearly	Daily
Toddler & Preschool- Full-time	\$1,200	n/a	\$14,400	n/a
Toddler & Preschool- Part-time	2 days/wk- \$480 3 days/wk- \$720 4 days/wk- \$960	n/a	n/a	n/a

## Refund policy

Any refunds issued will be subject to a \$50 administration fee (unless otherwise stated).

**Absences** - NO REFUND for absence due to illness. In extreme circumstances that may prevent a child from participating, Greenbelt Academy reserves the right to determine and assess these circumstances on a case by case basis.

**Vacations** - We offer a credit for a maximum of 5 vacation days during the year for the Toddler and Preschool program if notified at least a month before the intended days off. Failure to notify staff may result in a loss of credit.

**Inclement Weather** - NO REFUND if the day's program is cancelled due to inclement weather. Parents will be notified within an hour of, by their child's teacher via email or text or through Seesaw.



**Unforeseen Closures-** NO REFUND if the day's program is cancelled due to unforeseen closures. These closures include but are not limited to: Pandemic, water main burst, electrical disturbances, etc.

**Withdrawing Your Child from Care** - We require one month written notice if you plan to withdraw your child from Greenbelt Academy and Early Learning Centre for any reason. Please note that we do not offer refunds for any already accepted monthly tuition payments, and one-month tuition will be held for term and yearly payment options.

## Immunization

The Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 stipulates that prior to admission, each child must be immunized according to the local medical officer of health. Parents must keep their children's immunization records up to date with their child's school. Greenbelt Academy and Early Learning Centre requires that a signed medical certificate confirming a complete medical assessment including immunization be submitted. The child medical forms are included in the registration package. A copy of the child's immunization record must be submitted at the time of admission and should be updated annually or as new immunizations are received. All employees must be fully immunized, a primary series plus a booster every ten years is required. Volunteers who give more than 25% of a work week are also required to follow the above recommendation.

For more information about immunizations or immunization schedules please refer to:

<https://www.niagararegion.ca/health/vaccinations/default.aspx>

### Exemptions to Immunization

A child may be exempted from immunization for medical reasons. Parents will need to have a legally qualified health care professional complete a Medical Exemption form. Or if a child is not immunized due to conscience or religious belief, parents are required to complete a Statement

of Conscience or Religious Belief form, signed by a Commissioner for Taking Affidavits. These forms must be submitted prior to the child attending child care.

For more information:

<http://www.forms.ssb.gov.on.ca/mbs/ssb/forms/ssbforms.nsf/FormDetail?OpenForm&ENV=WWW&NO=014-4897-64E>

## Illness Policy

Outdoor play is an essential part of your child's program. If your child is not well enough to participate in outdoor play, he/she is not well enough to attend.

In the following cases, we ask that participants (including students, teachers, and accompanying volunteers) stay home from Greenbelt Academy for at least 24 hours after their last symptom has subsided:

- Temperature over 101 degrees F or 38.3 degrees C
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea (watery, profuse stools)

Should the above-mentioned situations arise while at school, the affected participants will be asked to return home.

Participants affected by communicable diseases such as measles, chicken pox, mumps, flu, strep throat, viral pneumonia, conjunctivitis (pink-eye), etc. must stay home from Greenbelt Academy until their health care provider (i.e. naturopath, doctor, nurse, etc.) has communicated that it is safe for them to attend. Notes are not required.

## Medication

Our Child Care staff will administer only medication prescribed by a physician or nurse practitioner. Parents are required to sign a medication authorization form outlining dosages and times to be given. For safety reasons, medication must be in the original container as supplied by the pharmacist, must be clearly labeled with the child's name, date, and the name of drug, instructions for storage, and administration of the drug and must be a current prescription. These requirements also apply to holistic medications.

If children are prescribed medication by a doctor while they are too sick to attend child care, or when they have been sent home from child care because they are sick, they must have been receiving the medication for at least 24 hours before returning to child care.

All creams and lotions to be applied externally (ie: diaper creams, sunscreens, etc.), including natural or holistic products, must also be in an original container, clearly labelled with the name of the product, ingredients, and instructions for application.

An individual plan for all children with medical needs will be developed in consultation with the parents. This includes but is not limited to Asthma, Seizures, Diabetes, etc. Parents are required to complete a form to give permission to administer the product.

Parents are encouraged whenever possible to give any drugs or medications to their children at home, if this can be done without affecting the treatment schedule.

## Accident/ Serious Occurrence

When a serious occurrence is deemed to have taken place and following the submission of an Initial Report to the Ministry of Education, a Serious Occurrence Notification Form will be posted on the parent board within 24 hours of becoming aware of an occurrence, and updated with additional information such as additional actions taken or resolutions results.

Any injury to a child which occurs while participating in school services, this could include, but not be limited to the following:

- unconsciousness
- fracture of a bone
- stitches
- loss of a tooth
- concussion

The staff will immediately assess the situation and use appropriate first aid treatment, or seek emergency medical attention if needed. Our qualified staff will contact the parent or emergency contact if required by phone. Where immediate emergency medical attention is needed a staff member will call an ambulance. If parent or guardian has not arrived, a staff member will accompany the child to hospital and remain until parent/guardian arrives.

### In the event of an evacuation/ emergency:

- All classes will meet in the rear preschool playground by the fence.

### Alternative Shelter/ pick up:

- Centennial Park Baptist Church- 11 Kennedy Rd, Grimsby, ON L3M 1E8

## Minor Accident Reporting Procedure

In the event of a minor accident, an Accident Report will be completed. The Accident Report must be completed by the staff/volunteer that witnessed the incident or discovered that the incident occurred. The report must be completed on the same day the incident occurs.

- The incident must be reported to the staff/volunteer’s supervisor/Director
- The Accident Report must be reviewed by the designated Supervisor/Director
- A copy of the Accident Report will be given to the child’s parents/guardians on the same day it was prepared. If the report is not completed by the time the child is picked-up, the parents/guardians will be notified of the incident verbally. The Accident Report will be provided on the next school day. The original Accident Report will be kept in the school file.

## What to Bring to Nature School

Children should be ready, upon arrival each day, for outdoor time. We are a rain or shine program and operate on the belief that *there is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing*. During inclement weather, we take all precautions to ensure the safety and comfort of our students, which means that we will run our nature based program inside when necessary. Please ensure that students have appropriate dress for the weather and please send extra clothing. Please take a look at our checklist below to ensure your child is prepared:

## Program Item Checklist

	Indoor shoes
	Favourite napping/resting blanket & pillow/case (limited to a small blanket and travel size pillow)
	Water bottle
	Sunscreen/insect repellent (Fall & Spring)
	Spare change of clothes (pants/shirt/socks/underwear)
	Outdoor hat (Fall/Spring)
	Rain boots or snow boots
	Waterproof rain jacket or winter jacket (Fall/Spring)
	Waterproof rain pants or snow pants

Winter accessories (gloves/mittens, warm hat, scarf,) - We recommend that all winter items be waterproof.
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### **Tips for dressing your child appropriately for the Winter weather:**

For cold weather please consider the following factors when dressing for school:

1) Insulation: Natural fabrics such as wool or silk work well as an inner layer, as does fleece. Polyester pyjamas are another good option. The key for this layer is to wick moisture away from the skin and insulate it with a breathable layer.

2) Middle Layer: This is another insulation layer that creates 'dead-air space' between skin and the elements. This airspace helps in keeping warm. Wool sweaters (Merino wool is exceptionally warm and soft on sensitive skin) and fleece tend to work well.

3) Outer Shell: This layer should be waterproof and windproof, as well as breathable.

#### A note to parents/caregivers:

It's not necessary to invest in expensive brand names to keep your child warm. Thrift stores are great places to look for children's wool clothing at cheaper prices. If you are looking for a regular store to purchase outdoor clothing, Mountain Equipment Coop (MEC) has excellent children's outdoor wear for all seasons.

In terms of boots, we recommend purchasing boots that are one size larger than your child's foot. Again, this creates dead-air space to assist in insulation. Socks help to wick moisture away from the skin, (please note: cotton tends to sweat and doesn't do a great job at wicking moisture). The best foot insulator would be two pairs of wool socks with waterproof boots that have wiggle room.

For warmer winter weather we ask that your child has a light cotton/silk/hemp long sleeve shirt on for the day plus a vest and/or windproof layer. Children are encouraged to wear a hat at all times. Children will be encouraged to stay hydrated for both cold and warm weather as this will assist in regulating body temperatures.

**Please label ALL of your children's items. Children may store extra clothing at the school. Wet/soiled clothing will be sent home in your child's backpack. Wet bags are available for purchase from your teacher for \$10 each/ please enquire if interested.**

**Please check daily to ensure that extra items are replaced.**

## **Lunches and snacks**

Daily lunch and two snacks will be provided for children participating in our full-day program. Greenbelt Academy and Early Learning Centre is NUT FREE. ***Please be sure to make a note of ANY allergies or food sensitivities upon registration.***

Our weekly menus will be posted Friday on Storypark and on location at the school for the following week. Our menu is available on a 3 week rotation. Please email us with any changes or special requests, and we will do our best to accommodate the individual needs of your child(ren). Please take a look at a sample weekly menu below.

We strive to incorporate local, organic, GMO free, and whole foods in our vegetarian menus each week. Vegan Express Catering (<https://vegan-express.square.site/>) provides lunch each day, and snacks are provided by GAELC. All staff that will be handling food preparation, will also be Food Handlers Certified. Allergies will be posted in applicable classrooms, outdoor play space as well as the kitchen. We are a nut-free safe centre in that we do not cook with nuts or nut oils or butters and we discourage people from bringing nuts into the centre. We request that anyone who has eaten peanut butter to brush their teeth and wash hands and face before coming to daycare. Parents are asked not to bring food into the centre except in the case of an allergy to foods that we provide. In this case please bring the food to the program supervisor with the child's name clearly marked on the outside of the container. Water is always available to drink throughout the day. We encourage each child to bring their own labeled water bottle.

Greenbelt Academy and Early Learning Centre does have an Anaphylactic Policy and Procedure in place and staff have been trained in the use of EpiPen. Upon registration, parents of children with a risk of an anaphylactic response, will complete an Anaphylaxis Action Plan Document.

**SAMPLE WEEKLY MENU**

<b>Week 1</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
<b>Snack</b>	Homemade Granola with yogurt and seasonal fruit (vegan option available)	Apple slices with cheese (vegan option available)	Homemade whole grain apple-cinnam on Muffins with veggie and fruit smoothies	Chopped veggies and hummus dip	Homemade Granola bites with banana
<b>Lunch</b>	Rice, black bean, avocado, with salsa and grain free chips	Whole grain pancakes with fruit and 100% pure maple syrup.	Homemade vegan chili with whole grain pitas	Homemade squash soup and fresh whole grain bread & fruit sticks	Whole grain vegetarian pasta with salad and cucumber dressing.
<b>Snack</b>	Ants on a Log- (celery, raisins,	Whole grain crackers	Fruit salad with yogurt	Homemade applesauce and whole	Zucchini brownies

	sunflower butter)	and hummus dip		grain crackers	
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## How Does Learning Happen?

Our program is based on the Forest School Principals, as well as learning models from around the world with links to the Ontario Curriculum. Here are the key aspects of our program:

**Immersed in Nature** – research supports our own observations that time in the woods is good for a child’s physical, mental, and emotional health. Reliance is built when children trek into the woods in all kinds of weather; negotiating trails, working as a team, and assessing and taking risks in the physical environment. Regular and extended time visiting the same location in the woods helps develop the relationship the child has with nature, as well as allowing them to witness the changes that happen as the seasons change throughout the year.

**Child Centred**- trained teachers work individually with your child to develop their educational plan. Our model allows for regular individual consultations and lessons, as well as providing resources for individual practice of academic skills.

**Inquiry Based**- “I notice, I wonder, it reminds me”. Children will be encouraged to ask their own questions, and practice mindfulness and observation skills. As children spend more time in the woods, their sense of wonder is heightened, questions become more complex and connections are made.

**Risky Play**  
 Children will have opportunities to participate in safe-risky play. Teachers’ help students learn to assess and manage risk. Children are permitted to fully engage with their environment, and while doing so, assess personal risk. All of our staff are CPR certified, and are trained to take survey of the environment prior to and during our time in the woods. Our goal is to keep your child safe, while giving them the freedom to choose which risks are appropriate. Risky play helps develop autonomy, self-confidence, and self-preservation skills.

## Sample Daily Schedule

8:30 am	Arrival and free play
9:00 am	Morning meeting
9:30 am	Morning Snack/ transition to outdoors

10:00 am	Go to the forest: or outdoor time in the yard (dependant on day of the week) Hike, explore, and investigate- Reference books, tools, loose parts, music, drama, and art supplies available.
11:40 am	Mid-day meeting & sharing circle
12:00 pm	Lunch
12:30 pm	Nap/ rest period (2 hours)
2 :30 pm	Snack and transition to outdoors
3:00 pm	Outdoor or indoor classroom exploration: Reference books, tools, loose parts, music, drama, and art supplies available.
4:00pm	Clean up and transition time
4:30 pm	Home time

Our daily schedule adapts to the children’s needs and interests. We include the children’s ideas and goals into the planning structure of any specific day. The Preschool Program (ages 2.5-4 years) will have the opportunity each week for visiting “Centennial Park” by foot and other local community field trips. Notices will be placed on Parent Boards in respective rooms, or individual approval slips distributed, advising Parents of upcoming prospects or community field trips.

### **Volunteer and Placement Student Policy**

Placement students (hereafter known as students) and volunteers bring talents, skills, life experiences and resources to Greenbelt Academy and Early Learning Centre (GAELC). The centre is committed to student and volunteer participation in our programs.

GAELC supports the education of future professionals in the early learning and care sector and family education through the provision of field placements in our programs. Volunteers provide additional support and value to our programs.

Students and volunteers function under the direction of staff. They should never be left alone with a child and should never replace a staff member or caregiver.

## **Individual Learning Assessment**

Teachers will document your child’s progress through photos, videos, collection of art and language work, as well as written documentation (anecdotal and objective) for parents to be aware of their child’s development and activities. Staff will also utilize phone calls and emails as well as newsletter/calendars to maintain communications with Parents. Parents are welcome to



set up a meeting with the teachers at any time; however, teachers will request a meeting with parents to discuss the transition to our school aged Kinder Program.

Greenbelt Educators are also available for brief “check-ins” during pick-up/drop-off times, and are happy to share the day’s highlights with you, though their priority will always be on participants during that time. If you would like to have a longer or more focused conversation with staff, please do not hesitate to communicate via email or text, or to set up an in-person meeting time via email/text.

Teachers are available Monday- Friday from 7am-7pm.

Email- [greenbeltniagara@gmail.com](mailto:greenbeltniagara@gmail.com)

Call or Text- Joelle Kanakis, 905-984-0686

-Jackie Giesbrecht, 905-329-2713

## Program Statement Implementation Policy

The following policy has been developed in order to demonstrate how our Program Statement is brought to life in our centres on a daily basis. The children, parents/guardians and educators are all partners in the children’s learning. Children are viewed as competent, capable, curious and rich in potential. Every child is an active and engaged learner who explores the world with body, mind and senses. Play evolves from natural curiosity. Our goal is to foster a strong self-image within each child. The children develop skills in choice-making, problem solving and socialization. We are dedicated to the concept of learning through play. The techniques of child guidance used and the design of the environment support this objective. Expectations for Implementation of Our Program Statement has been developed in such a way that reflects not only key elements outlined in section 46 of the Child Care and Early Years Act but also the Four Foundations introduced in the document How Does Learning Happens, Forest School Principals, as well as learning models from around the world with links to the Ontario Curriculum. It is the expectation that all staff and volunteers are familiar with and utilize this living document. Please review our Specific Goals & Approaches Section in this handbook.

### Our Goals and Approaches

#### **a) We will promote Health, safety, nutrition and well-being of the children.**

Daily group meeting times are used as an opportunity for children and educators to share thoughts, feelings, issues and successes.

Educators strive to be responsive to the children’s inquiries in the moment or as soon as possible in order to further the children’s exploration and to make sure that the children know that their thoughts and ideas have value. Daily exposure to Nature will promote, in its participants a connection to the Environment and Natural world.

Our permanent Classroom Teachers will be Registered Early Childhood Educators (R.E.C.E.) licensed by the College of Early Childhood Educators. All Staff will be trained in health and safety protocols. Staff supervise the children at all times.

The Centre observes and follows the Ministry of Health and Safety guidelines and hold evacuation and fire drills on a monthly basis.

All Staff will be trained in standard first aid, including Infant and Child CPR (upon hire and prior to expiry) and the use of Epi-Pens. Greenbelt Academy and Early Learning Centre will collect information from each Staff member and child, including documentation of immunization. Teachers will review all information regarding a child before said child starts in their classroom (especially noting allergies, diet and Parental preferences). The health of each child is documented on a daily and monthly basis including documentation of immunization. Any child who is sick must be 24 hours fever, vomit and diarrhea free before returning to daycare. Our medication policy requires that medication be kept in a locked medicine box, out of reach of children, and there is a box in the kitchen fridge for any that needs to be refrigerated. Only a R.E.C.E. administers medication and medication must be pharmacy labeled and have the child's name on it. A medication log is kept for each child and parents must sign it and specify the medication and the dose (as well as the time to be administered) and it must match the pharmacy label. The R.E.C.E. will sign the log when the dose has been administered. Good hygiene habits are strongly encouraged, such that everyone (Staff and children) are required to wash their hands upon entering the room, after toileting and before eating.

Parents may provide and we will apply sunscreen ( SPF 30) during the summer; adhering to Parents' preference and application instructions.

The Centre supplies 2 healthy snacks and a balanced lunch, based on the Canada's Food Guide. All Staff staff that will be handling food preparation, will also be Food Handlers Certified. Allergies will be posted in applicable classrooms, outdoor play space as well as the kitchen. We are a nut free safe centre in that we do not cook with nuts or nut oils or butters and we discourage people from bringing nuts into the centre. We request that anyone who has eaten peanut butter to brush their teeth and wash hands and face before coming to daycare. Parents are asked not to bring food into the centre except in the case of an allergy to foods that we provide. In this case please bring the food to the program supervisor with the child's name clearly marked on the outside of the container. Please be sure the supervisor is fully aware of it so that it can be stored and prepared properly.

Water is always available to drink throughout the day. We encourage each child to bring their own labeled water bottle.

Greenbelt Academy and Early Learning Centre does have an Anaphylactic Policy and Procedure in place and staff have been trained in the use of EpiPen.

There will be a menu posted informing Parents what food was provided for lunch that day.

Staff will provide a clean and safe environment. Washrooms are cleaned and disinfected after each washroom routine and floors are swept after lunch and snack. Toys are cleaned and disinfected weekly as well as before being stored and any time they have been mouthed. Beds and linen are washed and disinfected weekly or more frequently if required, as well as when illness or bedwetting accidents occur. All furniture is kept clean and in good order (broken furniture is fixed or removed immediately upon discovery).

All staff will follow the CCEYA guidelines for Behaviour Guidance. Ontario Regulation 137/15 48(1) No licensee shall permit, with respect to a child receiving child care at a child care centre it operates or at a premises where it oversees the provision of child care,

(a) corporal punishment of the child;

(b) physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a high chair, car seat, stroller or other device for the purposes of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the

purpose of preventing a child from hurting himself, herself or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent;

(c)locking the exits of the child care centre or home child care premises for the purpose of confining the child, or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the licensee's emergency management policies and procedures;

(d)use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child or undermine his or her self-respect, dignity or self-worth;

(e)depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding; or

(f)inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will. (2) No employee or volunteer of the licensee, or student who is on an educational placement with the licensee, and no person who provides home child care or in-home services at a premises overseen by a home child care agency shall engage in any of the prohibited practices set out in subsection (1) with respect to a child receiving child care.

We will use positive language when talking with children and adults. We will guide behaviour through the use of positive language, questions and encouragement. We make every effort to create a space where students feel safe, and respected. If a child is behaving in a way that causes harm to themselves, others or disrespecting property, every effort will be made by our staff to work with the child and their guardian to create a supportive environment for them to succeed. Only after every effort has been made, and with consultation with guardians will the child be refused access to our programs.

Each staff member will sign off on a review of all policies & procedures upon being hired.

### **b)Partnerships with families and communities help early childhood settings to best meet the needs of young children.**

We have an open door policy with Parents. Staff will greet the Parents and children each day on arrival and departure and share information pertaining to the child through verbal or written communication. Staff will also utilize phone calls and emails as well as newsletter/calendars to maintain communications with Parents. Teachers will make themselves available for Parent/ Teacher meetings when the needs of the child or Parent require it.

Staff will encourage self-help skills. Because we view the child as capable we will allow every child the opportunity to develop their potential. This means that we will encourage children to do as much for themselves as possible without becoming discouraged or frustrated. We will assist them as needed. Staff will challenge the children's skills so as to facilitate the development of new and stronger skills. Staff will also encourage the children to be helpful to each other as well.

All staff will follow the CCEYA guidelines for Behaviour Guidance. We will use positive language when talking with children and adults. We will guide behaviour through the use of positive language, questions and encouragement. Never use Prohibited Practices, i.e. corporal punishment, verbal degradation, confinement and deprivation of basic needs (including food, clothing or bedding). We make every effort to create a space where students feel safe, and respected. If a child is behaving in a way that causes harm to themselves, others or disrespecting property, every effort will be made by our staff to work with the child and their guardian to create a supportive environment for them to succeed. Only after every effort has been made, and with consultation with guardians will the child be refused access to our programs.

### **c) Encourage the children to interact and communicate in a positive way and support their ability to self-regulate.**

Staff will model the use of positive language and behaviour at all times when talking with the children and

other adults. We will work to help children to develop communication skills and problem solving skills such that they become competent in using multiple forms of communication (words, sign language, and body language) to solve any issues.

To encourage self-regulation we strive to create an environment where every child feels safe and supported to find a variety of ways in which to express their emotions. We work to teach the children to recognize their emotions and to discover ways in which to deal with them effectively and calmly.

Children will have opportunities to participate in safe-risky play. Teachers' help students learn to assess and manage risk. Children are permitted to fully engage with their environment, and while doing so, assess personal risk.

#### **d) Foster the children's exploration, play and inquiry**

"I notice, I wonder, it reminds me". Children will be encouraged to ask their own questions, and practice mindfulness and observation skills. As children spend more time in the woods, their sense of wonder is heightened, questions become more complex and connections are made.

To discover those interests the Teachers observe, listen and talk with the children and document their interactions.

Through play based learning, children will develop the skills needed to expand their abilities as well as their knowledge and understanding of their world.

#### **e) Provide Child-initiated and adult supported experiences**

The R.E.C.E. will follow the child's lead in our interactions and in developing an environment (both indoors and outdoors) that is rich in opportunities for exploration and interaction.

Reflecting on our documentation we discover the child's current interests, which guide us in the materials we provide and the opportunities we offer in all areas of the child's development. While considering the needs of the group, individual needs are always considered as well.

The environment will then be set up to encourage the children to challenge their abilities, expand their interests and develop relationships.

#### **f) Plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development will be supported**

Our outdoor and indoor classrooms are nature-based, with materials that promote open-ended play, authentic learning and creativity; rich in opportunities for art, inquiry and learning. On a daily basis, educators document the children's interests, wonders, questions, findings and thoughts while engaging with the children in their play.

We provide a welcoming and nurturing environment that is respectful of each child as an individual.

Each child is treated as an individual as we introduce activities, materials and situations that enhance their physical, emotional, social, and intellectual level of development. Emphasis is placed on the "process rather than the product" in order to encourage a feeling of success without pressure.

Educator's link to the Ontario Curriculum to prepare the students education standards developed by the province, also pulling from other learning theories to elevate learning.

**g) Incorporate indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play, rest and quiet time, into the day and give consideration to the individual needs of the children receiving care.**

Students in our programs will benefit in countless ways with unstructured time in nature.

We will follow the guidelines of the CCEYA in setting our program. We strive to provide equal opportunities for all children to find the active and quiet time that meets their individual needs.

We ensure at least two hours every day of outdoor time on or offsite, weather permitting, providing a variety of active materials.

Nap time is offered for two hours per day after lunch.

**h) Foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with Parents about the program and their children**

Parents are encouraged to share information about their child on a daily basis to create continuity of care for the children and peace of mind for parents. We encourage parent participation in every aspect of our program from planning, volunteering and sharing ideas or resources.

Teachers will keep communication open via short discussions, notes, phone calls and emails or through Seesaw.

Monthly newsletter/calendar

Parent/Teacher meetings occur whenever necessary.

**i) Involve local community partners and allow those partners to support the children, their families and staff**

Regular volunteers from the community (parents, grandparents, community members) will come in to share real life skills with the children. Some examples: a community garden, exercise program, sewing and baking just to name a few.

Parent Council will meet monthly to help with community outreach and fundraising initiatives.

Students will participate in gardening and greening projects, revitalization of habitats and ecological restoration projects, composting, recycling and reduction of waste. Anything we can do to promote stewardship in our students and become active citizens in the community.

**j) Support Staff, home child care providers or others who interact with the children at a child care centre or home child care premises in relation to continuous professional learning**

Greenbelt Academy makes our facility available to visitors from within our field as well as E.C.E. college, university students and High School Co-op students.

Occasionally, we invite leaders in our field to provide onsite workshops and training sessions for our staff.

Educators are provided with dollars to cover the cost of Professional Development offsite on an annual basis.

### **k) Document and review the impact of strategies set out in this statement on the children and their families**

Surveys will be sent out to our Parents and Staff in an effort to further evaluate our effectiveness.

Staff, Students, and Volunteers will read this Program Statement and sign off prior to interacting with the children, when the statement is updated and on an annual basis. The Director will review this yearly.

Each program within Greenbelt Academy will use a binder for observations, plans and documentation to support understanding. Documentation will be shared with families primarily using Seesaw.

The educators in each group meet weekly to discuss observations of the children and to determine changes/ additions to the program that will support the children's exploration and learning for the following week.

## **Parent Concerns or Issues**

If there is a problem concerning the facility or a staff member, follow these steps below:

1. Speak with the educator involved with your child/ren.
2. Allow follow up from the educator to you. (within 24 hours)
3. If you are still not satisfied with the results of your concerns, please make an appointment to personally talk to the Centre's Director of Greenbelt Academy. **Call or Text- Joelle Kanakis-Director of Preschool Programs, 905-984-0686 or email [greenbeltniagara@gmail.com](mailto:greenbeltniagara@gmail.com) attn: Joelle**
4. At this time, it may be appropriate to discuss any other issues that the Director may feel is important concerning the child/ren in the context of the complaint.

## **Behaviour Guidelines**

Our goal is to ensure Nature School is a positive experience for all of our students. Our staff are trained to deal with mild to moderate behaviour issues as they arise. If your child is severely misbehaving or is endangering themselves, another student or the staff, a phone call home will be made and a solution oriented discussion will be scheduled with the caregiver(s) to discuss how to best manage behaviour to maintain a safe learning environment. Following this phone meeting if there are ongoing behaviour issues that compromise safety, an in person meeting will be scheduled with the caregiver(s). If following this meeting improvements are not made, the child will be removed from school. This will only occur in extreme circumstances and no refund will be issued. Please inform staff ahead of time if your child has any special needs or

considerations so that we can make your child's school experience a positive one.

***Behaviour Principles;***

***No Violence,***

***Respect all life,***

***Respect diversity,***

***Respect all people,***

***Respect the learning environment,***

***Use things with care,***

***Enjoy learning,***

***Help other's learn,***

***Be prepared.***

## **Conflict Resolution between Children**

Each day, students will participate in teacher-led and student-led activities and also have time for free play. Sometimes children will have interactions between them that are challenging for both the children involved and for the adults around them. If conflict resolution is necessary, a teacher may intervene and assist the children in resolving their conflict. Discipline methods used by facilitators and volunteers will focus on gentle discipline and redirection.

Teachers will make every effort to do the following when challenging interactions occur:

- Be proactive. Take note of the social interactions between the children
- Be physically close to a child or children if concerned about a social or safety situation
- Remind the children to use gentle (kind, respectful) words when asking for what they need
- Remind the children that hands are for working and playing, not hitting
- Redirect the children to different activities or have them chat with an adult who will help them calm down
- When the children are calm, discuss the situation with the children involved. Encourage discussion of any differences so that the children can work on communicating their needs to each other and understanding the needs of another
- Acknowledge children's feelings and encourage them to express their feelings about a situation (i.e. "I felt sad when..."), help them to identify and name feelings if needed
- Encourage the children to consider alternative actions that they could take in the future

**“Unless we are willing to encourage our children to reconnect with and appreciate the natural world, we can't expect them to help protect and care for it.”**

**-David Suzuki**

In closing, we hope that you find this parent guide informative and helpful. In an effort to save trees, this parent handbook is readily available for all families interested in care (online via email or on our website).

Again, welcome to Greenbelt Academy and Early Learning Centre and thank you for your interest in our Early Years Programs!

Sincerely,  
The Greenbelt Academy Team