

Centre de la petite enfance de McGill
McGill Child Care Centre

Volunteer Handbook

Approved by the Board of Directors: 2008
Revised: 2012

Introduction

It has been long established that volunteers play an important role in our community, allowing for the improved quality of life for many. Children represent a particular group that benefits greatly from the generosity of volunteers. The word “volunteer” speaks of generosity, donation, giving, commitment, sharing and gratifying work. Volunteering is open to anyone regardless of age, sex, race or religion. Some experience with young children is required.

The centre de la petite enfance de McGill (CPE McGill) is a non-profit corporation holding permits from the City of Montreal, the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of the Family. CPE McGill has been in operation since March 13, 1973 and offers child care services to full-time McGill students, faculty and staff. There are a total of 106 children in the community, ranging in age from four months to five years.

This guide addresses those individuals who wish to share their time in bringing a positive experience to the lives of the children of CPE McGill. The volunteer committee of CPE McGill is pleased to offer this guide to assist you in your work with our special clientele.

Philosophy

The Centre philosophy and mission are the foundation for all decision making and policy setting of the organization. It is for this reason that the philosophy is referred to here:

The philosophy of the McGill Childcare Centres is based on the belief that children learn through hands-on, age-appropriate activities which enhance their creativity and sense of discovery. Children learn about the world around them as they explore their surroundings. Through an individualized approach within a group setting, the staff strives to provide the children with a warm, secure and consistent environment. The open door policy and emphasis on the “team approach” to childcare makes parental participation fundamental. Together, the staff, parents and volunteers help to provide a nurturing and stimulating environment for the children in our care. Exposure to the multicultural facets of Canadian life is encouraged. The Childcare Centre is fortunate to serve a community that reflects the diversity of the McGill University population, which in turn, reflects the rich cultural life of Montreal.

Mission Statement

At CPE McGill, we are dedicated to the development of the whole child in a nurturing child-centered environment. Through the expertise of childcare professionals in partnership with parents and the larger community, a multitude of rich learning opportunities is provided to help each child to reach his or her fullest potential.

The guiding principles of our Mission Statement are located outside of each classroom.

Staff

Our staff members are qualified early childhood professionals. They have many years of experience working with young children. They are very dedicated to the field of Early Childhood Education. Please feel free to ask any of the staff members questions you may have, they will be more than happy to help you.

Volunteers in our center

Volunteer involvement benefits both the volunteers and the organization.

In a childcare setting, volunteers contribute to the improved quality of care in the daily lives of the children. For the volunteers, there is a sense of pride and accomplishment to be gained. In general, volunteering your time with young children is a wonderful opportunity to express your generosity and can be a source of personal satisfaction.

CPE McGill offers volunteers the opportunity to:

- gain experience in a child care setting
- develop their creativity
- develop a sense of responsibility
- gain experience working within a team
- become familiar with Quebec and Canadian culture
- function in a multicultural environment

Volunteers are an essential part of the team at CPE McGill. Together with the guidance of the staff they assist us in providing a happy, healthy and stimulating environment for the children.

The Rights of the Volunteers

The volunteer who offers his/her time to CPE McGill is an invaluable resource for our organization.

As such CPE McGill recognizes the following volunteers rights:

1. To an orientation at the beginning of his/her volunteering experience.
2. To receive information about the organisation.
3. To receive support throughout his/her experience.
4. To be treated with fairness and respect.
5. To be assigned tasks that are of interest to him/her and that are within his or her abilities and talents.
6. To refuse to work in an environment where there is personal conflict.
7. To end his/her volunteering either permanently or temporarily having given notice to the CPE.
8. To keep confidential his/her personal contact information.
9. To offer suggestions that may be helpful towards improving his/her tasks.

10. To request a letter of reference from the cooperating educators for his/her volunteer experience at CPE McGill.

Orientation

Orientation at CPE McGill is a two- part process. A meeting is set up with the administration to complete necessary paperwork, to address questions and to introduce the volunteer to the assigned group. The second part of orientation takes place with the educators and tends to be an ongoing process. Volunteers are encouraged to ask questions and take initiative in the classroom.

Code of Conduct

Professional Work Ethics: Volunteers should conduct themselves with dignity, courtesy and consideration and be professional. The conduct of volunteers should reflect the values of CPE McGill: caring, integrity, respect and teamwork.

Attendance: Volunteers should be punctual and are asked to call the center in case of absence.

Cell Phones: Cell phones should be kept on silent or vibrate and should not be used in the presence of the children (or in the classroom).

Photos: The taking of photos are not permitted. Please refer to the Recorded Images Policy on our website www.mcgill.ca/daycare

Dress: Volunteers should be dressed appropriately for the day with comfortable closed-toe shoes and appropriate clothing for outdoor play.

Smoking: CPE McGill is a smoke free environment.

Confidentiality and Privacy: Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality and privacy of all information they may receive while serving as a volunteer. This information applies to all information whether it involves volunteers, staff and children. In all situations, it is wise to be constantly on your guard not to discuss or share any privileged information.

Hours of Operation

The Centre is open from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Group Structure

The group structure of the daycare is as follows:

First Milestones: 10 children/2educators + 1 part-time assistant
Ages between 4 months & 17 months in September.

Little Discoverers:	10 children/2 educators + 1 part-time assistant Ages between 4 months and 17 months in September.
Curiosity	10 children/2 educators
Stepping Stones:	12 children/2 educators
Adventurers	19 children/3 educators
Explorers	14 children/2 educators
Creative Crew	17 children/2 educators
Team Players	18 children/2 educators

Typical Daily Routine

8:00 – 10:00	Family grouping (arrival, welcome and free play)
10:00 – 10:30	Toileting routine and snack
10:30 – 11:15	Teacher directed activities i.e. cooking, art, circle time
11:15 – 12:00	Gross motor activities (indoor and outdoors) i.e. backyard fun
12:00 – 1:00	Toileting routine and lunch
1:00 – 3:00	Nap
3:00 – 3:30	Slow wake up time and toileting routine
3:30 – 4:00	Snack and circle time
4:00 – 5:00	Teacher directed activities or free play
5:00 – 5:25	Quiet free play (indoors or outdoors)
5:25 – 6:00	Departure and farewell will take place in the gym

* The schedule is extremely flexible and changes to meet the needs of the children within the group*

Free Play – is a time when children initiate their own activities and move around freely in the room. Volunteers are encouraged to interact with the children; be responsive and let the children develop and carry out their own play.

Toileting Routine – is directed by an educator and volunteers are welcome to supervise the hand washing routine.

Snack and Lunch – are times when children are expected to sit at the table and we encourage them to use this time as an opportunity for social conversation. Volunteers are encouraged to help serve food, sit with the children and help with cleanup.

Nap Time – occurs after lunch and the length of the nap time varies with the age of the children. Volunteers are encouraged to help with bed setup, reading a story and the settling of the children.

Teacher Directed Activities – such as circle time include stories and songs, art projects, music, etc. Volunteers are encouraged to help educators set up for activities, help supervise the activity and assist the educators as needed.

Outdoor Play – in the backyard and other green spaces requires a lot of supervision. Volunteers are encouraged to support educators to ensure the safety of the children. Backyard and Fieldtrip Guidelines are available in the classrooms. Please take the time to read them if applicable.

Allergies

Some of the children in our care have either food allergies or intolerances that we are aware of. These vary from the common nut allergies to milk, fish, eggs and others.

All of the daycare snacks and lunches are peanut and nut free. All adults must be extremely careful with any foods which they bring into the centre. We ask that you keep this in mind during the preparation of your lunch or any food you may bring into the centre.

Health and Safety

- Should a volunteer be sick he/she should not come to the centre. The voice mail is in operation 24 hours daily and a message can be left for any particular classroom. Messages can also be sent via e-mail to director.cpe@mail.mcgill.ca
- One of the most common means of germs transmission is via hand contact. The importance of frequent hand washing by children and adults cannot be stressed enough. Hands should be washed thoroughly at the following times:
 1. upon entering the daycare;
 2. before and after eating;
 3. before cooking activities, lunch, and snack preparations;
 4. after toileting and diaper changing;
 5. after nose cleaning/blowing;
 6. after "messy" activities (gluing, sand; play, outdoor play).

Hand washing is a simple task that is of utmost importance. Hand sanitizers, for adults only, are located at each entrance.

- Become familiar with fire exits and evacuation procedures. The educators will advise you of your role in the event of an evacuation.
- Be familiar with the location of the first aid supplies in case you may have to get them in a hurry for an educator.
- To avoid spills and burns, hot beverages must be in travel mugs with secure lids in the centre.
- In accordance with our Nutrition Policy, all foods brought into the centre should be healthy and nutritious i.e no soda, candy, gum, etc.

Helpful Hints

When working with children....

- get down to their level – sit on a chair or on the floor to interact.
- avoid conflict and forcing an issue. Allow the educator to handle these situations. Remember that the aggressive child is upset. To help avoid conflicts or the forcing of an issue give children two acceptable choices so the child feels in control (for example, "Please turn the pages in the book carefully or if you wish to tear paper, I can give you an old newspaper.").
- avoid giving choices that you are unwilling or unable to allow. For example, "Would you give me the knife? " is not appropriate when you mean, "I must have the knife now. It is very dangerous."
- whenever possible, it is better to let the children settle their own conflicts. Step into the situation only when it is necessary to prevent injury or when the children are unable to find a satisfactory solution on their own. To assist, move close to the children involved, crouch down to their level, and talk to them using eye contact.
- allow the children to do everything they can do for themselves. Know the children and vary the amount of help you give according to the situation.
- observe the educator's approach with individual children; her answers and methods of dealing with situations may vary according to the needs of the child. If you have any questions about an educator's approach or methods ask the educator at an appropriate time (not in front of the children).
- please do not discuss the children or their families in their presence. Children hear, understand, misunderstand and occasionally repeat what we say out of context.