

CENTRAL EGLINTON CHILDREN'S CENTRE SEXUAL HEALTH EDUCATION POLICY

Date Policy and Procedures Established: July 26, 2022

Date Policy and Procedures Updated: February 27, 2024

Sexuality is an important part of the personality of every human being; it includes the physical, physiological, psychological, social, emotional, cultural, and ethical dimensions of sex and gender. Sexuality is a basic need and aspect of being human which cannot be separated from other aspects of life. It influences our thoughts, feelings, actions, and interactions. CECC is committed to raising sexually healthy children by teaching them the facts, values, responsibility, and self-esteem. CECC ensures that its staff are trained in child development, including the sexual development of children. It ensures that staff, parents, and children abide by the Centre's *Code of Conduct* and the Ministry regulations for reporting Child Abuse. Staff act as positive role models for children and families.

Staff teach appropriate sexuality language using dictionary or polite terms for body parts. Children have the right to learn and grow in a bias-free, sexually healthy environment. They also have the right to privacy and to be treated with respect. Staff respond to children's questions and comments about sexuality with honesty and openness. They regularly provide opportunities that enable children to learn through their own observations. Books and other written materials, pictorials, anatomically correct dolls, puppets, and toys depicting a variety of healthy relationships and workshops are provided to encourage positive learning about sexuality for staff, parents, and children. Children are clearly and directly told what age-appropriate behaviour is without making them feel guilty. Children are encouraged to tell each other how they feel and to speak up for themselves.

We encourage families to maintain an open dialogue with their children and the CECC staff so that we can work together to foster healthy sexual development in the children. Some information and particular topics around sexuality are better addressed by families in their own way at home. Information is shared with the children based on their chronological age and social emotional developmental age. Parents are notified when issues or questions are raised by their children so they can facilitate discussions at home.

Staff in their daily interactions with children may use a non-obtrusive touch that supports positive feelings and care. Staff provide equal opportunities for boys and girls to feel valuable and capable; gender role stereotypes and use of sexist language are discouraged. Children are provided with the appropriate language and reminded of the negative impact of using sexist language. Incidents will be addressed on a case-by-case basis and parents will be notified immediately if their child has been involved in an incident. If children persist in using sexist language, they may be asked to leave the CECC as per the Centre's *Code of Conduct*. Staff remind children in a gentle manner that self-pleasuring is a private matter that needs to take place at home in the privacy of their bedroom or bathroom. Children are taught that their bodies are private and not to be touched by anyone without their permission.

While "toilet talk" and "street language" are used by many children, they will be discouraged at CECC. We strive to create an inclusive climate where everyone feels welcomed, appreciated, and accepted. As such, children will be encouraged to make choices about the toys and peers that they play with. Staff attempt to purchase toys that are non-biased and not gender specific. Ample opportunities are provided for children to play with toys and take part in play situations that are traditionally associated with another gender.

Staff are trained in child development; as such, they are aware of typical behaviours for children's body exploration and play.

This policy is reviewed annually or when changes are necessary. Staff, student teachers and volunteers review once per year, or when changes have been made.

This is a new policy, provided to us by the Coalition for Better Childhood. **New Policy March 2016**