



Sakura Sprouts Daycare

Policies & Procedures Handbook

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Section 1: Welcome & Philosophy

About Us

Sakura Sprouts Daycare is an **unlicensed home daycare** located in St. Catharines, Ontario, offering care for children aged **12 months to pre-junior kindergarten**. Our goal is to provide a **safe, nurturing, and engaging environment** where children can learn, grow, and thrive through **hands-on activities, gentle guidance, and a consistent daily routine**.

My name is **Michelle**, and I am the owner and sole provider at Sakura Sprouts. I live with my husband and our wonderful 9-year-old daughter who inspires me daily. Together, we've created a warm, welcoming home environment designed to support young children's development in a personal and caring setting.

I graduated from **Wilfrid Laurier University with a degree in Psychology** (2009), which has deepened my understanding of child development and behavior. I am also **certified in CPR C + AED** (Feb, 2025), have completed **food safety training** (Apr, 2025), and hold a current clean **Vulnerable Sector Police Check** (July, 2025).

Outside of childcare, I enjoy spending quality time with my family, friends, planning playdates and outings, and supporting my daughter's extracurricular activities. I understand the importance of **play, structure, and connection** in a child's early years and am passionate about fostering each child's growth through a **balanced, developmentally appropriate, and caring daily routine**.

Curriculum & Activities

Our program offers a **balanced mix of play, learning, and creativity** to support each child's development. Activities include **free play, story time, music, sensory exploration,**

Parent/Guardian Initials: _____ 1.

outdoor play (weather permitting), arts and crafts, and monthly and weekly themes designed to spark curiosity and engagement.

We follow a **consistent daily routine** that children can **rely on and feel comfortable with**. This schedule blends **structured learning, guided activities, and free play** to encourage independence while maintaining a comforting rhythm throughout the day.

Children enjoy outdoor fun in our large, safe, fully fenced, and supervised backyard. We offer multiple engaging outdoor options including play structures, a playhouse, slides, ride-on cars, and a variety of outdoor activities. ***Please note: The large trampoline is off-limits to the daycare children to ensure their safety.**

Daily Schedule

- 8:30 AM to 9:00 AM - Drop off, Free Play
- 9:00 AM - 9:30 AM - Circle Time
- 9:30 AM to 10:00 AM- Morning Snack
- 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM - Outdoor Play
- 11:00 AM to 11:30 AM - Free Play
- 11:30 AM - 12:00 PM - Lunch
- 12:00 PM - 12:30 PM - Books, Potty
- 12:30 PM to 2:30 PM - Nap/Quiet Time
- 2:30 PM to 3:00 PM - Afternoon Snack
- 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM - Arts & crafts/Themed Activity
- 4:00 PM to 5:30 PM - Free play/Outdoor Time & Pick-Up
- 5:30 PM - Daycare Closed

Please Note: This schedule is a general outline and may be adjusted as needed based on the children's needs, weather conditions, or special events.



Section 2: Enrollment & Fees

Admission Requirements

We accept children **aged 1 year to pre-junior kindergarten**. Parents/guardians must provide:

- A **non-refundable deposit for future start dates** of care.
- A **completed Registration and Medical Consent Form**.
- Acknowledgment that you have **read and agree to the policies outlined in this handbook** and the **signed contract**.
- **Up-to-date immunization records** (or exemption documentation, if applicable).
- Necessary **supplies**, such as diapers, wipes, and extra clothing as needed, etc.
- **Weekly tuition fees must be paid in full prior to the first day of care each week.**

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Enrollment Deposit

To secure a future start date for care, a **deposit equal to the cost of the first week of care** is required at the time of enrollment. This deposit **guarantees your child's spot** will be held until the agreed-upon start date. The deposit is **non-refundable** if you choose to **cancel services prior to your child's first day**. However, if care begins as scheduled, the **deposit will be applied toward your first week's payment**.

If you wish to **change your start date** after reserving a spot, you must submit your request **in writing**. Changes are **not guaranteed** and are **subject to availability**. In cases where the start date is significantly delayed, a **new deposit may be required**. Please note that deposits are **not transferable or refundable** if care is canceled before the start date, **regardless of the reason**.

Change of Start Date & Holding Fee Policy

If you wish to change your child's agreed-upon start date after enrollment and payment of the initial deposit, you must submit your request **in writing**. All start date changes are **subject to availability** and are **not guaranteed**.

If the requested new start date is **more than 30 days later** than the original start date, Sakura Sprouts Daycare requires a **non-refundable holding fee equal to one week of tuition** to continue reserving your child's spot.

This holding fee:

- **Does not apply toward tuition** when care begins
- **Is separate from the original deposit**
- **Is non-refundable**, even if care is later canceled

The original deposit will still be **applied toward the first week of care** as long as services begin on the revised start date.

If the holding fee is not paid by the agreed-upon deadline, Sakura Sprouts Daycare reserves the right to release the reserved spot.

Rates and Registration

Sakura Sprouts' hours are Monday to Friday from 8:30 AM to 5:30 PM. Daycare is offered at the following daily rates:

- **Full-Time Care** (5 days per week): **\$45 per day**
- **Part-Time Care** (2–4 days per week): **\$50 per day**

Part-time care is subject to availability and may not be guaranteed on specific days. Priority will be given to full-time families. A **minimum of 2 consistent days per week** is required for part-time enrollment.

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Tuition fees are billed weekly and are due each Friday for the upcoming week of care. Fees are charged to reserve your child's spot and are required regardless of attendance. There are **no refunds or credits** for missed days due to illness, vacation, or personal reasons.

A **minimum of two weeks' written notice** is required to terminate care. If notice is not provided, families will be charged for the full two-week period.

***Please note: Tuition fees are subject to change. In the event of any fee adjustment, a minimum of 30 days' written notice will be provided.**

Payment and Late Fees

Daycare payments are **due every Friday** for the **upcoming week of care**.

A **late fee of \$5 per day** will be applied to any payment not received by Friday at the end of the business day. Late fees will continue to accrue daily until the balance is paid in full.

If payment has not been received by **Monday morning at drop-off**, care will be **suspended until the account is brought current**, including all late fees.

Returned or disputed payments (e.g., due to chargebacks or insufficient funds) will incur a **\$25 fee** to cover bank charges and administrative costs. Both the replacement payment and the \$25 fee must be paid immediately. Care will be suspended until the full outstanding amount is paid.

It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to ensure timely payments. **Repeated late payments may result in termination of care.**

Payment is to be made by e-transfer to sakurasprouts43@gmail.com, credit card, debit, paypal, or cash. **Receipts** will be provided after each payment, and an **annual tax summary** will be issued for your records.



Section 3: Attendance & Scheduling

Drop Off & Pick Up Policy and Fees

Daycare hours are Monday to Friday from 8:30 AM to 5:30 PM. Please notify us in advance if you will be arriving late or picking up early.

Drop-off times are between **8:30 AM and 9:30 AM only**. Please use the side door for drop-off and avoid lingering to help ensure a smooth transition for all children. Upon arrival, please be sure to sign the Attendance Sheet at both drop-off and pick-up to help us keep accurate daily records.

Pick-ups are not permitted during nap time (12:30 PM to 2:30 PM daily) to minimize disruptions. Children must be picked up no later than **5:30 PM, when daycare officially ends**. For your child's safety, only individuals listed as authorized on the registration form may pick up your child.

There is a **five-minute grace period after 5:30 PM**. After that, a **late fee of \$1 per minute** will be charged and added to your next weekly invoice. Late fees must be paid with your regular childcare tuition fees.

We understand that occasional delays can happen and appreciate timely communication. However, **frequent late pick-ups may result in termination of care** (see *Termination Clause* for details), as repeated delays impact the daily routine and the provider's schedule.

Persons Authorized to Pick Up

For your child's safety, only individuals listed as **authorized pick-up persons on your child's registration form** will be permitted to pick up your child.

If **someone other than a parent/guardian** will be picking up your child- even if they are on the authorized list, **written or verbal notice must be provided in advance**.

Photo identification will be required for any unfamiliar person at pick-up. **Children will not be released to anyone without prior parental authorization.**

In the event of an emergency, please contact the provider as soon as possible to make alternate arrangements.

Absent Days

Daycare fees are charged to **reserve your child's spot** in the program and are not based on daily attendance. Weekly fees remain the same regardless of absences, including illness, vacations, holidays, or personal reasons.

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to notify the provider by **9:30 AM** if their child will be absent. This helps us plan the day and ensures we are aware of your child's whereabouts. If no communication is received by that time, **your child will be considered absent for the day, and care will not be provided**. The provider is **not obligated to contact you** for confirmation.

Weekly childcare tuition fees are **due regardless of attendance** and are **not prorated or refunded** for missed days, as your payment secures a dedicated space that cannot be offered to another family.

If you plan to take a vacation or extended time off, please provide **at least two weeks' written notice**. Your regular payment is still required to hold your child's spot during the absence. **Failure to pay** may result in forfeiting your child's spot, which may be offered to another family.

After **six months of continuous enrollment**, each family is eligible for **one unpaid vacation week per calendar year**. The vacation must be taken as a **full 5-day block** (Monday through Friday), and a **minimum of two weeks' written notice is required**. Any additional vacation time will be charged at the **regular weekly rate**.

Please note: Frequent or prolonged absences without communication may be considered a withdrawal from the program.

Holiday & Vacation Closings

The provider will make every effort to give families at least **one month's notice prior to any planned vacation closures**. The daycare will also be closed on all statutory public holidays.

Families will **not be charged** for any days the daycare is closed due to the **provider's vacation, scheduled appointments or public holidays**.

In the event of unplanned closures (such as illness or emergencies), the provider will notify families as soon as possible; however, advance notice may not always be possible. Families will also not be charged for these unplanned closure days.

Inclement Weather

We will make every effort to remain open during inclement weather. However, the safety of the children, the provider, and families is our top priority. In the event of severe weather (e.g., heavy snow, ice storms, power outages, extreme heat or cold), the following policies apply:

- **Open Status:** We will notify parents/guardians via text by 7:30 AM if we will be closed or have a delayed opening.
- **Early Pickup:** If weather conditions worsen during the day, we may ask parents/guardians to pick up their children early. Please ensure someone is available to do so on short notice. **Children must be picked up within one hour of receiving a phone call or notification.**
- **Transportation:** We do not provide transportation during inclement weather. Please ensure safe travel arrangements to and from daycare.
- **No Fee Reduction:** Tuition will not be reduced or refunded due to weather-related closures or early dismissals.



Section 4: Child Care Practices

Nap Time

Nap time is provided daily to support your child's well-being between 12:30 PM to 2:30 PM. Parents/guardians may provide a **comfort item and a blanket**; these will be sent home weekly for washing to maintain cleanliness.

The designated **nap room is separate from the play area** and is used exclusively for naps and quiet time to create a calm, restful environment.

Each child is provided with their own individual sleeping space — either a **daycare cot or a pack-and-play**, depending on age and developmental needs. Pack-and-plays are used for toddlers who are not yet ready to transition to a cot. All bedding is washed weekly or more often as needed.

The nap room is monitored continuously via a **baby monitor**, and **regular in-person checks are conducted every 15 minutes** to ensure all children are safe, comfortable and resting peacefully.

Meals and Snacks

Nutritious meals and snacks are provided daily at Sakura Sprouts. All food is prepared by a **Certified Food Handler** and follows **Canada's Food Guide**, ensuring balanced, age-appropriate meals that support healthy growth and development.

We make every effort to accommodate **dietary restrictions and allergies** where possible. Please communicate any dietary needs or food sensitivities during registration and update us immediately if there are any changes. **Please note: We are NOT a nut-free daycare.**

Outside food and drink is not permitted unless approved in advance by the provider. With prior approval, exceptions may be made in the following situations:

- When a parent/guardian requests to send food due to **medical or dietary needs**;
- When a parent/guardian wishes to send in food for the group to celebrate a **special occasion**, such as a child's birthday.
- A parent/guardian chooses to provide **homogenized (3.25%) milk** for their child, instead of the 2% milk served at Sakura Sprouts.

Sample of weekly meal plan:

| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|--------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| Snack #1 9:30am- 10:00am | Pretzels and yogurt | Cheese cubes and sliced apples | Homemade banana muffins | Toads on a log (celery, peanut butter, raisins) | Homemade bran muffins |
| Lunch 11:30am- 12:00pm | Penne with homemade tomato sauce and orange slices | PB&J sandwiches, yogurt and bananas | Chicken strips with buttered noodles, steamed carrots and apple sauce | Sliced turkey and cheese tortilla rollups, cucumber and pear slices | Cheeseburger sliders with mixed fruit |

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|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| Snack #2 2:30pm - 3:00pm | Homemade mixed berry muffins | Cinnamon bagel and orange slices | Graham crackers and canned peaches | Jello and arrowroot cookies | Animal crackers and fruit cocktail |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---|-----------------------------------|--|

Television

Children may have **up to 1 hour of television time per day**, limited to age-appropriate and educational programming. Screen time is used sparingly and intentionally to support learning, relaxation, or group engagement. All content is previewed or selected by the provider, and children are **supervised during viewing**. Screen time is never used as a substitute for active play, creative activities, or outdoor time.

Handwashing, Health & Safety

Children and the provider practice regular handwashing to help reduce the spread of germs:

- Upon arrival
- Before and after eating
- After toileting or diaper changes
- After outdoor play
- After coughing or sneezing
- When hands are visibly dirty

Cleaning and Disinfecting

At Sakura Sprouts, we prioritize a clean and healthy environment through consistent, child-safe cleaning practices.

- **Toys, surfaces, and shared spaces** are cleaned and disinfected daily.
- **High-touch areas** such as doorknobs, light switches, tables, and bathroom fixtures are disinfected multiple times throughout the day.
- Toys that are **mouthed or heavily used** are sanitized immediately after use.
- **Food-contact surfaces** are rinsed with water after disinfection to ensure safety.

One product we use is **Dr. Thym®**, a **Health Canada–approved disinfectant** (DIN: 02498669), made with **botanical thymol**. It is non-toxic, biodegradable, and effective against 99.9% of common bacteria and viruses. Dr. Thym is safe for use in child care environments and contains no bleach, ammonia, or harsh chemicals.

All disinfectants are stored securely and used according to manufacturer guidelines. Regular cleaning and disinfection help prevent the spread of illness and support the overall health of children in our care.

Guidance and Discipline

At Sakura Sprouts, we believe in fostering a safe and nurturing environment where children learn appropriate behaviors through positive guidance. Our approach focuses on teaching rather than punishing, using methods that promote respect, self-control, and cooperation.

We use:

- **Positive reinforcement** to encourage good behavior.
- **Redirection** to guide children away from inappropriate actions toward constructive activities.
- **Clear, consistent expectations** to help children understand boundaries.
- **Modeling** of respectful and kind behavior by caregivers.

We have a designated **Quiet Corner**, a calm and cozy space where children can choose to go or be gently guided when they need a moment to relax, regroup, and practice self-regulation.

Occasionally, if necessary, **brief time outs** may be used as a way for children to pause and calm down. Time outs are always explained clearly, are never used as punishment, and are followed by supportive conversations to help children understand and improve their behavior.

We do **not** use physical punishment, verbal humiliation, or any form of harsh discipline. Such practices are strictly prohibited at Sakura Sprouts to ensure a safe and respectful environment for every child. Our goal is to support each child's emotional growth and social development in a respectful and compassionate manner.



Section 5: Health & Safety

Illness and Communicable Conditions Policy

To maintain a safe and healthy environment for all children in care, we ask that parents/guardians keep their child home if they are showing signs of illness. **Children must be well enough to participate fully in the daily routine, including outdoor play.**

Please keep your child home if they exhibit any of the following symptoms or conditions:

- Fever of **100.4°F (38°C)** or higher
- Vomiting (within the past 24 hours)
- Diarrhea (2 or more loose stools within 24 hours)
- Persistent coughing or difficulty breathing
- Thick yellow or green nasal discharge
- Rash that is unexplained or potentially contagious
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye) with discharge
- Unusual fatigue, irritability, or inability to participate in normal activities

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- Signs of communicable illness (e.g., chickenpox, hand-foot-mouth, COVID-19, flu, etc.)
- Presence of head lice (live lice or nits)
- Evidence of bedbug infestation (bites, bugs on belongings, or confirmed exposure)

Please note: If a child develops any of the above symptoms during the day, parents/guardians will be **notified immediately and expected to pick up the child as soon as possible. If parents/guardians cannot be reached, emergency contacts will be notified to arrange for prompt pickup.** This helps protect the health and safety of all children and the provider in care.

When can my child return to care?

Children may return when:

- They are **fever free for at least 24 hours** without the use of fever-reducing medication
- They have not vomited or had diarrhea for at least **24 hours**
- Any other **symptoms are improving** (e.g., runny nose, fatigue)
- **The cough is mild, non-disruptive**, and the child is well enough to participate in regular daily activities
- Any rash has been **diagnosed as non-contagious** by a healthcare provider
- They have been on **antibiotics for at least 24 hours**, if applicable (e.g., for conjunctivitis or strep throat)
- They are well enough to **participate in all daily activities**
- Children may return to care **after appropriate lice treatment has been administered and no live lice and nits are present.**
- **Any evidence of bedbugs has been addressed (e.g., confirmed treatment of home/personal items), and there are no signs of active infestation on the child or their belongings**

The daycare will also be closed if the provider is experiencing any contagious illness symptoms. In such cases, families will be notified as soon as possible, and care will resume once the provider is well enough to safely care for the children.

Incident Reports

In the event that a child is injured or involved in an incident while in our care, **an incident report form** will be completed detailing what happened, any actions taken by the provider, and any follow-up recommendations. A copy of the incident report will be provided to the parent or guardian promptly for their review and signature.

Prohibited Substances

Smoking, vaping, the use of tobacco products, alcohol consumption, or the possession and use of any prohibited substances is strictly prohibited **during daycare hours**, including

drop-off and pick-up times. This applies to all individuals—parents, guardians, visitors, and the provider—and covers the entire premises, including the driveway, yard, and all outdoor spaces. This policy is in place to maintain a safe and healthy environment for all children in care.

Emergency Plans

Two emergency exits are accessible from the daycare area: **the side door** as well as an **egress window** located in the nap room. A **fully stocked first aid kit** is kept on site. **Smoke detectors** are installed and tested regularly and a **fire extinguisher** is located in the nap room for quick access in case of emergency.

In the event of a power outage or loss of running water, care may continue for **up to one hour** while assessing the situation. If services are not restored within that time, parents/guardians will be contacted and **required to pick up their child promptly.** If parents/guardians cannot be reached, the designated emergency contact will be notified to arrange for pickup.

Household Pets

Please be aware there is an **indoor cat and hamster** living in the house. The hamster is kept in a separate area and is inaccessible to the daycare. Both pets are well cared for and will be supervised to ensure the safety and comfort of the children and animals.

Child Abuse Reporting

As required by Ontario's **Child, Youth and Family Services Act**, I must report any suspected child abuse, neglect, or situations where a child may be in need of protection to the **local Children's Aid Society (CAS).**

This legal duty applies to everyone, including unlicensed child care providers. I am **not required to inform the parent/guardian** before making a report, and anyone who reports in good faith is protected by law.

If a child is in immediate danger, I will call **911** before contacting CAS.



Section 6: Family Communication & Expectations

Communication

Regular updates and candid photos of your child will be shared through convenient, parent-approved methods (such as email, text, or WhatsApp). **Please note:** Photos will only be shared on social media with written consent on our **Photo Release Form.**

Parents/guardians must provide at least one emergency contact in addition to themselves. In the event of an emergency, illness, or other urgent situation, we will first attempt to contact the **primary parent/guardian** on file. The **secondary parent/**

guardian will only be contacted if the primary cannot be reached. If neither parent or guardian can be reached, we will then contact the **designated emergency contact**.

Parental Access

Parents/guardians are welcome to communicate openly and visit as needed. To ensure smooth operation and minimize disruptions, **please schedule visits in advance**.

Provided by Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians are responsible for providing the following for their child, labeled with their name:

- Diapers, wipes and diaper rash cream
- Leakproof drinking bottle
- Extra clothing (including underwear and socks)
- Sunscreen
- Weather-appropriate clothing, including but not limited to hats, mittens, scarves, snow pants, slush pants, winter boots, rainboots, etc.
- Comfort items if needed (blanket, soother, etc.)
- Formula or Homogenized Milk (Sakura Sprouts provides 2% milk)

Please ensure your child's supplies are kept up to date. Families will be notified when items need to be replenished or replaced.

Items not permitted:

- Diaper Bags
- Toys from home
- Food from home (unless previously discussed and agreed upon)

Special Requests and Individual Agreements

We understand that each family and child is unique. While this handbook outlines our standard policies and procedures, we will do our best to accommodate special requests or individual needs whenever possible.

If you have specific requirements, preferences, or unique circumstances, please discuss them with us prior to enrollment. Any additional agreements or accommodations will be documented in writing as part of your enrollment agreement.

Our goal is to work with families to ensure the best experience for both your child and our daycare community.



Section 7: Final Terms and Termination

Termination Clause

Standard Termination:

Parent/Guardian Initials: _____ 12.

This agreement may be terminated by either party with a minimum of **two weeks' written notice**. If two weeks' notice is not provided, the parent/guardian agrees to **pay two weeks of tuition fees in lieu of notice**.

Immediate Termination for Serious Policy Violations:

Sakura Sprouts Daycare reserves the right to terminate care immediately in the event of:

- Non-payment of fees.
- Repeated failure to adhere to policies and procedures.
- Behavioural or safety concerns that cannot be reasonably accommodated.
- Disrespectful, aggressive, or destructive behaviour by a child and/or parent/guardian toward any individual on the premises, including the care provider, other children, or parents/guardians, or toward the property itself.

Progressive Discipline for General Policy Violations:

For any violation of daycare policies or expectations, the following steps will be taken before termination, except in cases warranting immediate dismissal (e.g., serious safety concerns):

1. **Verbal Reminder:** The first time a rule is broken, the parent/guardian will receive a verbal reminder along with a review of the relevant policy.
2. **Written Warning:** If the issue continues, a written warning will be issued and added to the child's file.
3. **Final Written Notice:** If the issue persists after the written warning, a final written notice will be given explaining that continued violations may result in termination of care.
4. **Termination:** If the violation continues following the final notice, Sakura Sprouts Daycare reserves the right to terminate care immediately at the provider's discretion.