



**Umbrella Family and  
Child Centres of Hamilton**

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**5.6 OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES POLICY**

<b>MANUAL</b>	<b>Child Care Centre Program Policy Manual</b>
<b>SECTION</b>	<b>5- Safety</b>
<b>POLICY</b>	<b>5.6 Outdoor Activities Policy</b>
<b>LAST REVISED</b>	<b>June 19, 2024</b>

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**RATIONALE**

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Children benefit physically, intellectually, and emotionally when they have regular opportunities to explore outdoor spaces. Our safety procedures are based on guidelines from the Canadian Pediatric Society and the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014.

**RESPONSIBILITY**

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All staff, summer camp staff, volunteers and students on placement.

**PROCEDURE**

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**Extreme Weather**

*During Periods of Extremely Cold Weather:*

- Staff members will ensure that each child is dressed appropriately for the weather conditions (e.g., snow pants, boots, coat, hat, mittens and scarf). All clothing items should be labeled with the child's name.
- When a child is missing an item of needed clothing, it will be provided by the centre from a stock of spare clothing that is maintained in various sizes.
- Staff members will dress appropriately for weather conditions, allowing them to remain outdoors comfortably for the required time as well as participate in play with children.
- Children will be encouraged to play in the snow but discouraged from eating the snow.
- Children will be discouraged from throwing snowballs.
- Staff members will monitor the children's comfort and will shorten the scheduled play time as needed.

**Children will be kept indoors if:**

- The temperature falls below -25 °C (-13 °F) regardless of the wind chill factor.
- The temperature is reported as -28 °C with the wind chill factor (-15 °F) or greater.
- Conditions on the individual playground make it inadvisable to go outdoors.

*During Periods of Extremely Hot Weather:*



- Staff members will ensure that each child is dressed appropriately for the weather conditions (e.g., light-weight clothing, sun hat, etc.). All clothing items should be labeled with the child's name.
- If a child needs a clothing item and it is not readily available to them, it will be provided by the centre from a stock of spare clothing and sun hats that is maintained in various sizes.
- Sunscreen will be applied before outdoor play each day.
- Drinking water and cups will be provided on the playground, at the camp sites and on field trips.
- Children will be encouraged to drink before and after going outdoors in the heat.
- Field trips or outdoor camp time may be shortened.
- The daily schedule will be amended on days when there are heat alerts or smog advisories. Two hours of outdoor play time may be scheduled first thing in the morning in order to avoid being outdoors during the hottest part of the day.

**Children will be kept indoors if:**

- The temperature is too high to stay outside safely. This depends on many factors, including the availability of shade on the playground, camp site or on field trips. Staff members will decide collaboratively, based on the information available.
- The weather reports advise that the UV index is very high or extreme.
- The weather reports advise that the Smog Alert index is at 150 or higher.
- Conditions on the individual playground make it inadvisable to go outdoors.

*During Extreme Weather Events (Storms, Lightning, High Winds):*

- The Supervisor or their designate will monitor weather reports to determine if changes need to be made to planned outdoor or off-site activities.
- Staff and children will return to the child care building when there is the potential for unsafe weather.
- There is no safe place outside in a thunderstorm. When you hear thunder, lightning is within striking distance. If the group is off-site, staff will lead the children to a pre-determined safe location where they will wait for the storm to pass. Picnic shelters which have open sides are unsafe because they don't have a method to ground the lightning strike.
- If caught outdoors, far from shelter, stay away from tall objects. This includes trees, poles, wires and fences. Take shelter in a low-lying area.
- Stay in a safe location for 30 minutes after the last rumble of thunder.

### **Walks and Hikes**

1. Staff will notify the on-site or camp Supervisor of their walk or hike including their planned route.
2. Staff and children will discuss where they are going and their joint purpose of the walk or hike.
3. Children will be dressed appropriately for the weather and environment. Sunscreen and/or insect repellent will be applied if needed.



4. Equipment, records and supplies listed below will be taken with the group.
5. One staff member will be at the front of the group with a second staff member at the back.
6. When the group stops for a picnic or rest stop, staff will check the site for safety prior to the group using the area.
7. UFCC transition procedures will be followed as outlined in the Supervision of Children Policy. (Head count and attendance confirmation before leaving, at mid-point or destination and upon arrival back at the centre or designated gathering place.)

*Equipment and Supplies to be Taken on Walk or Hike:*

- Map of park or conservation area
- Cell phone or walkie talkie for emergency use
- Medical authorization for all children
- First Aid kit
- Epi-pens or other emergency medication
- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent

### **Sunscreen**

- Parents will authorize use of sunscreen on the appropriate form during the admissions procedure. It will be updated when applicable (e.g., change in sunscreen product or directions).
- UFCC will provide sunscreen for all children unless otherwise advised by parents. The Supervisor will purchase sunscreen for their centre and parents are informed of sunscreen ingredients. In case of an allergy, the parent will supply a sunscreen product for their child. The sunscreen will be labeled with the child's name and will be kept at the centre. Staff will wash hands, use gloves or a disposable applicator when applying sunscreen to a child with an allergy.
- Sunscreen will be applied to each child before any outdoor play in warm weather. Staff will be responsible for ensuring that sunscreen is applied to each child in their group following product directions.
- Some children will be able to apply their own sunscreen with staff assistance.
- Staff members should wash their hands between applications or to use a disposable applicator to prevent the possible spread of contamination from child to child and to protect the child with allergies to certain products.

### **Insect Repellent**

- Parents will authorize use of insect repellent on the appropriate form during the admissions procedure. It will be updated when applicable (e.g., change in product or directions).
- Do not use insect repellents on children under 6 months of age.



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- For children 6 months to 2 years of age, use an insect repellent with the least concentration of N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide or DEET (10% or less), only once a day. For children between 2 and 12 years old, use a product containing no more than 10% DEET, no more than 3 times a day. Avoid products containing citronella or lavender oil, which can cause an allergic reaction.
- Spray repellent sparingly on children's clothing and exposed skin. Do not apply it directly to a child's face or hands.
- Be careful where you spray. Repellents containing less than 10% DEET can be sprayed on cotton, wool and nylon but may damage spandex, rayon, vinyl and plastic (e.g., sunglasses).
- Be careful not to get spray in children's eyes. If that happens, rinse immediately with water.
- Do not spray irritated or sunburned skin.
- If you think a child is having an allergic reaction to a repellent, bathe the area and get medical help. Take the spray with you.
- Advise parents to wash off bug spray at the end of the day.
- If necessary, administer First Aid treatment as follows:
  - *If in eyes* - Hold eyes open and rinse slowly and gently with water for 15 to 20 minutes. Remove contact lenses if present, after the first 5 minutes, then continue rinsing the eye. Call a poison control centre or doctor for treatment advice.
  - *If ingested* - Call a poison control centre or doctor immediately for treatment advice. Have person sip a glass of water if able to swallow. Do not induce vomiting unless told to do so by a poison control centre or doctor.

### Tick Prevention and Management

- Children and staff are encouraged to wear closed toed shoes, socks and long pants when visiting wooded areas.
- Insect repellent is applied only according to UFCC procedures.
- When a child finds a tick on themselves, they will notify a staff member or their camp leader. We do not remove ticks from children's bodies if embedded. If the tick has not embedded and can be easily brushed off the skin, this is permitted.
- The staff or camp leader will bring the child to the designated Supervisor and discreetly inform them that the child has a tick on their body.
- The Supervisor verifies through observation whether the child does have a tick on their body.
- The Supervisor will then take the child into the designated meeting space for this outing while parent is notified.
- The Supervisor will call the parent and inform them of the location of the tick on the child's body.
- The Supervisor will let them know that we cannot remove the tick from the child's body.
- The Supervisor will outline options for parent:
  - The parent (or authorized pick up person) can come to remove the tick from the child. The child can then stay in the program if they choose to do so.



- The parent (or authorized pick up person) can come pick the child up and take them to a medical professional to have the tick removed.
- The child can stay at camp and the parent can pick them up from the home centre and have the tick removed then.
- If the parent chooses for their child to continue the excursion or to stay at camp, the staff will make the child as comfortable as they can until they go home.
- The Supervisor will then notify public health that a tick has been found on a child's body.

**Policy Attachments:** N/A