



*Trinity Bellwoods Community  
Children's Group/C.A.R.E.*

*155 Crawford Street, Toronto, Ontario M6J 2V6 ☎ 416-537-9021*

# **Inclusion, Equity, Anti-Bias and Anti-Racism Policy**

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## **Inclusion, Equity, Anti-Bias and Anti-Racism Policy**

Trinity Bellwoods Community Children's Group/CARE (CARE) is committed to creating and maintaining a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment where all children, families, staff, students, volunteers, visitors, and board members are treated with dignity and respect.

CARE recognizes that discrimination, racism, and bias can negatively impact children's well-being, identity development, and sense of belonging. Early childhood environments play an important role in shaping how children learn about diversity, fairness, and empathy for others.

Children are not born with racist beliefs. Attitudes about race and difference are learned through interactions with adults, peers, and the broader environment. For this reason, educators and adults within the program environment have a responsibility to model respectful behaviour and actively address discriminatory behaviour when it occurs.

CARE strives to celebrate the cultural diversity represented in the program and within the surrounding community. The centre supports an anti-bias approach that helps children develop positive identities and respectful relationships with others.

This policy applies to:

- staff and Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs)
- students on placement
- volunteers
- families and visitors
- members of the Board of Directors.

Everyone participating in the CARE environment is expected to follow this policy.

CARE operates in accordance with:

- Ontario Human Rights Code
- Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 (CCEYA)
- Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017 (CYFSA)
- Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007
- The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice of the College of Early Childhood Educators
  
- How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years.

The Ontario Human Rights Code prohibits discrimination in services on the basis of protected grounds. CARE recognizes and respects all protected grounds, including:

1. race
2. ancestry
3. place of origin
4. colour
5. ethnic origin
6. citizenship
7. creed (religion)
8. disability
9. sex
10. sexual orientation
11. gender identity
12. gender expression
13. age
14. family status
15. marital status.

Discrimination, harassment, or exclusion based on these grounds will not be tolerated within the CARE program.

## Understanding Bias and Racism

Bias occurs when individuals make assumptions or judgments about others based on characteristics such as appearance, culture, language, ability, or identity. While all protected grounds under the Ontario Human Rights Code are respected, the following areas are commonly explored through classroom discussions, learning materials, and daily interactions in early childhood settings.

Racism occurs when individuals or groups are treated unfairly or excluded because of race, ancestry, culture, or ethnic background.

Bias and discrimination may occur intentionally or unintentionally. Even when unintentional, these behaviours can cause harm and must be addressed.

CARE supports an anti-bias approach that encourages children to develop empathy, fairness, and respect for differences.

### 1. Areas of Diversity and Bias Addressed in the Program

While all protected grounds are respected, some areas are more commonly explored through classroom experiences, discussions, and learning materials in early childhood settings. These include:

**Ability (Disability)** Differences in physical, cognitive, developmental, sensory, or emotional abilities. CARE promotes inclusion and ensures that children with varying abilities are supported in participating in the program.

**Age:** Differences in developmental stages and abilities as children grow.

**Appearance:** Differences in body size, height, physical features, or visible disabilities. CARE promotes respect for differences in appearance.

**Beliefs and Religion (Creed):** Differences in religious or cultural beliefs, traditions, and practices.

**Culture, Language, and Ethnicity:** Differences in traditions, customs, languages, celebrations, and cultural backgrounds.

**Socioeconomic Background:** Differences in access to resources, housing, employment, or economic conditions.

**Family Composition (Family Status):** Families may include single parents, extended families, blended families, adoptive families, guardians, or same-sex parents.

**Gender Identity and Gender Expression:** Children may express gender through clothing, names, play roles, and social interactions.

**Race and Ancestry:** Differences related to racial identity, ancestry, and cultural heritage.

**Sexual Orientation:** Some children may have family members who are part of LGBTQ2S+ communities. CARE respects all families.

Educators ensure that learning materials, books, and classroom experiences reflect the diversity of the children, families, and communities served by CARE.

## 2. Commitment to Anti-Bias Practice

CARE works to create environments where children develop a strong sense of identity and respect for others.

Staff, families, and children can contribute to eliminating bias by working together to:

- nurture the development of each child to their fullest potential
- actively address issues of diversity and equity in the classroom
- honour diversity through anti-bias programming
- create environments that support positive self-identity
- encourage empathy toward people from diverse backgrounds.

Inclusion means accepting and supporting all children regardless of their similarities or differences.

CARE is committed to maintaining a climate of mutual respect and understanding.

## 3. Program Environment

To maintain a safe and respectful environment:

- Toys that promote violence or aggression, including toy guns or weapons, are not permitted in the centre
- Films shown to children must be family-rated, educational, and approved in advance by the Supervisor.

CARE is committed to accessibility and supports the inclusion of children with special needs. The centre works with families and community partners to support integrated care whenever possible.

## **4. Microaggressions and Subtle Bias**

Discrimination may sometimes occur in subtle ways known as microaggressions.

Examples may include:

- Making negative comments about a child's skin tone or hair
- Repeatedly mispronouncing a child's name after correction
- Questioning whether a child belongs to a cultural group
- Assuming a child cannot participate in an activity because of their background.

Even when unintentional, these behaviours may affect a child's self-esteem and sense of belonging.

Staff, students, volunteers, and families are expected to avoid such behaviours and address them respectfully when they occur.

## **5. Recognizing Bias or Racist Incidents**

Bias incidents may occur in different ways.

### **Verbal Behaviour**

Examples include:

- name-calling or insults
- racial or cultural slurs
- degrading remarks or jokes
- mocking language, accents, or appearance
- taunting or condescending comments.

### **Physical Behaviour**

Examples include:

- threatening gestures
- intimidation
- physical aggression
- damaging property.

## Exclusion or Avoidance

Examples include:

- refusing to talk or play with someone because of their race, culture, language, or religion
- excluding someone from activities because of their identity.

## Written or Visual Material

Examples include:

- producing or displaying racist or offensive drawings
- distributing discriminatory materials
- graffiti or images implying the superiority or inferiority of a group.

## Inaction

Failing to respond to discriminatory behaviour or dismissing incidents as unimportant may cause harm and is unacceptable.

## 6. Roles in Bias Incidents

Bias incidents may involve several roles.

**Aggressor** – the person responsible for the behaviour.

**Targeted Person or Group** – the individual or group affected by the behaviour.

**Authority** – individuals responsible for the environment where the incident occurs, such as educators, supervisors, directors, or board members.

**Witnesses** – individuals who observe the incident and may help clarify what occurred.

**Context** – the social and environmental factors that influence behaviour and attitudes.

Understanding these roles helps staff respond appropriately.

## 7. Responding to Bias or Racism Between Children

Educators must respond immediately when discriminatory behaviour occurs.

Educators will:

1. Intervene calmly and stop the behaviour.
2. Support the child who was targeted and reassure them that the incident was not their fault.
3. Speak individually with the children involved.
4. Clearly explain that discriminatory comments or behaviour are not allowed at CARE.

5. Help the child understand the reason behind their behaviour.
6. Reinforce expectations for respectful behaviour.

Children may be encouraged to respond assertively, for example: "I don't like what you are saying. Please stop."

If other children witnessed the incident, educators may discuss the situation with the group in a developmentally appropriate way to reinforce respectful behaviour.

Activities that promote empathy, conflict resolution, and cooperative problem-solving may be incorporated into the curriculum.

The goal of the response is to correct behaviour and support learning, not to punish the child.

## **8. Reporting Bias Incidents Between Children**

When a bias incident occurs:

1. Staff must inform the Supervisor or Assistant Supervisor
2. Parents or guardians of the children involved will be informed.
3. The incident must be documented, including:
  - date and time
  - individuals involved
  - description of what occurred
  - actions taken by staff.

Documentation will be placed in the appropriate child file. The Supervisor/Assistant Supervisor will determine whether further action is required.

## **9. When Adults Are Involved in Bias Incidents**

### **Adult to Child**

If a staff member is alleged to have engaged in discriminatory behaviour toward a child:

- The Supervisor/Assistant Supervisor will follow centre policies and applicable legislation
- The situation will be investigated
- disciplinary measures may occur, including progressive discipline up to dismissal.

The targeted child will be reassured and supported.

### **Staff to Staff**

Incidents between staff will be addressed under the centre's Workplace Harassment and Violence Policy.

### **Parents, Volunteers, or Visitors**

CARE expects respectful behaviour from all families, volunteers, and visitors. If discriminatory behaviour occurs, the Director will address the situation to ensure a respectful environment for everyone.

Individuals also have the right to contact the Ontario Human Rights Commission to file a complaint about discrimination.

## **10. Review of Classroom Materials and Environment**

Educators will regularly review classroom materials to ensure they represent diverse identities and experiences.

Materials should reflect diversity in areas such as:

- race and ethnicity
- culture and language
- gender roles
- family structures
- abilities and disabilities
- occupations and community roles.

Materials that reinforce stereotypes or present groups negatively will be reviewed and replaced where appropriate.

## **11. Representation in Curriculum and Learning Experiences**

CARE supports children in learning about diversity through everyday experiences and planned activities.

Examples include:

- reading books representing diverse cultures and families
- incorporating music, art, and stories from different cultures
- encouraging children to share their own traditions and experiences
- exploring community events and celebrations.

Educators ensure that cultural learning experiences are respectful and avoid stereotypes.

## **12. Professional Responsibilities of Registered Early Childhood Educators**

Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) working at CARE are regulated by the **College of Early Childhood Educators** and must follow the **Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice**.

These professional standards require RECEs to:

- promote the well-being, learning, and development of children
- respect the dignity and diversity of children and families

- maintain professional relationships with children, families, and colleagues
- create inclusive learning environments that support belonging and equity
- act in ways that uphold public trust in the profession.

Under the **Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007**, it may constitute professional misconduct for a member to contravene a law if doing so places a child at risk or compromises the safety or well-being of a child under their professional supervision.

All RECEs working at CARE are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with these professional standards in addition to the policies and procedures of the centre.

More information about the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice can be found at:

<https://www.college-ece.ca/members/standards-in-practice/>

### 13. Training and Policy Review

Education and reflection are essential to maintaining an inclusive environment. Staff, students, and volunteers will review this policy:

- during orientation, or annually
- during professional development or staff meetings as needed.
- Through formal or informal workshops

#### Policy Acknowledgement

I \_\_\_\_\_  
have read and understood the CARE Inclusion, Equity, Anti-Bias and Anti-Racism Policy and agree to follow the expectations outlined in this policy.  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Resources for Families

These resources are provided for informational purposes to support families who wish to learn more about children’s development, human rights protections, and inclusive practices. CARE does not provide legal or medical advice.

### **Ontario Human Rights Commission**

Information about discrimination, protected grounds, and human rights protections in Ontario.

Website: <https://www.ohrc.on.ca>

Phone: 416-326-9511

Toll Free: 1-800-387-9080

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### **Ontario Human Rights Code**

Ontario legislation that protects individuals from discrimination in services, housing, employment, and other areas.

Full legislation: <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90h19>

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### **Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014**

Ontario legislation governing licensed child care programs.

Information for families:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/find-quality-child-care>

Full legislation:

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/14c11>

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### **Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017**

Ontario legislation that outlines the rights, protection, and well-being of children and youth.

Full legislation:

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/17c14>

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### **College of Early Childhood Educators**

Professional regulatory body for Registered Early Childhood Educators in Ontario.

Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice:

<https://www.college-ece.ca/members/standards-in-practice/>

Phone: 416-961-8558

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### **Toronto Public Health**

Resources and programs supporting children’s health, development, and family well-being.

Parenting and child development resources:

<https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/health-wellness-care/health-programs-advice/children-and-parenting>

Sexual health information line:

Phone: 416-338-2437

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### **Kids Help Phone**

Confidential support for children, youth, and families across Canada.

Website: <https://kidshelpphone.ca>

Phone: 1-800-668-6868

Text: CONNECT to 686868

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**Canadian Paediatric Society**

Evidence-based health and parenting information for families.

Website: <https://caringforkids.cps.ca>

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**The 519**

Community organization in Toronto providing resources and support related to gender identity, inclusion, and LGBTQ2S+ communities.

Website: <https://www.the519.org>

Phone: 416-392-6874