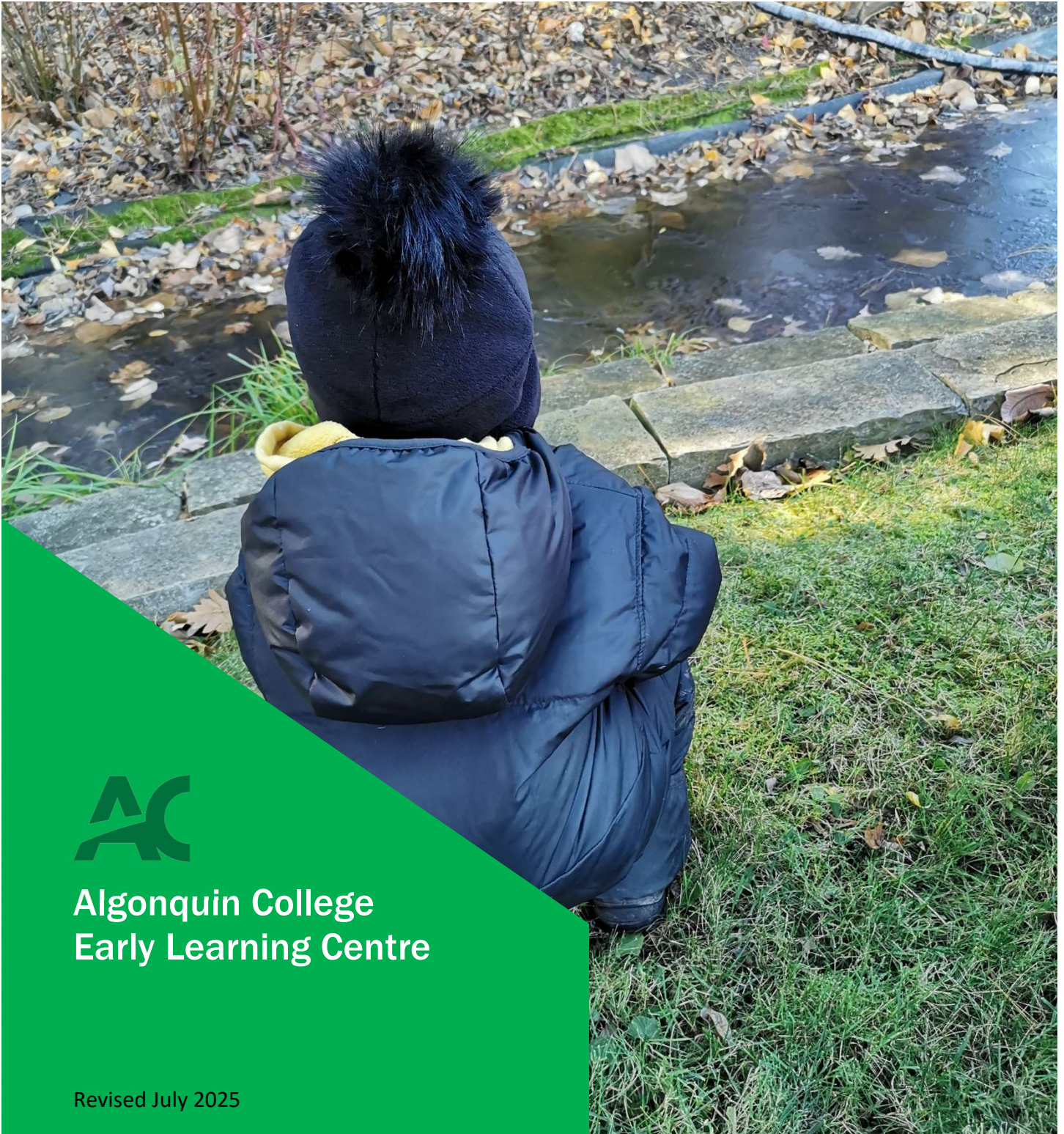


TODDLER PROGRAM MANUAL



Algonquin College
Early Learning Centre

Revised July 2025

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About Our Program

Mike, April and Tessa
toddler@algonquincollege.com
613-727-4723, ext. 5545

Welcome to the Toddler Program at Algonquin College's Early Learning Demonstration Lab School.

This manual is a collection of information relevant to the Toddler Program's smooth operation. Some of the information may change due to the mandates and regulations from the Ontario Ministry of Education, Ottawa Public Health, as well as Algonquin College and/or Manager of ELC (Liane Gallop).

The Toddler Program consists of children aged 18 months to 2.5 years in age. There are 3 Registered Early Childhood Educators in the program with a maximum of 15 toddlers (ratio of 1:5).

The hours of operation for the Early Learning Centre are:
Monday to Friday 7:30am - 5:15pm

IMPORTANT: The ELC is a SCENT FREE environment. There are educators in The Toddler Program that are sensitive to fragrances in various products. As such, we ask that you refrain from using ANY scented products when you are coming to the centre. This includes scented laundry detergents, laundry boosters, body sprays and perfumes and colognes.

The Centre closes for statutory holidays and between Christmas and New Year's Day.

The Land as a Teacher

We would like to acknowledge that Algonquin College is located on the unceded and unsundered territory of the Algonquin people. The Algonquin Anishinabeg are the original inhabitants of the wide swath of territory along the Ottawa River.

We are co-learners alongside the children and use the land in a respectful way by respecting the plants, animals and insects in our learning environment. This is done by sustaining a natural habitat in our yard that welcomes various animals, plants that are native to this region and co-existing with the various insects. We encourage the children to allow the plants to grow and not pick the flowers or leaves, catching and releasing any insects we find indoors and observing the different animals, such as rabbits, ducks, geese, squirrels, voles and chipmunks that we share our outdoor space with.

Some Algonquin (Kitigan Zibi dialect) words that your child may learn while in our program are:

Kwey – Hello

Kwey kakina – Hello everyone

Miigwetch – Thank you

Zibi - Water

The Toddler Program also provides the children with learning materials and experiences that may be their first introduction to the Inuit, Métis and First Nations cultures.



Toddler Program Expectations

Routine

We encourage you to have your child in the program no later than 9:30am.

Much of our curriculum is programmed during indoor morning play (7:30-9:45). It is valuable to your child's education and sense of security to have a consistent daily schedule. When a child has a sense of security, they are in the right frame of mind to learn!

Absences

If your child is going to be absent, you must notify us by 9:30 am of their absence and provide us with the reason why. If they are sick, it is important to tell us the symptoms they are experiencing so that we can track them.

Illness Policy

If your child is sick, please keep them home until they are physically able to keep up with the demands of the Toddler Program. This is to limit the spread of illness and give them adequate rest to aid in their recovery. If your child looks visibly unwell at drop-off you will be asked to take them home. If your child develops symptoms while in care, you will be required to pick them up and keep them home until symptoms have subsided.

The detailed Illness Policy can be found in the Parent Handbook, please familiarize yourself with this policy. If your child is displaying two symptoms, they are required to stay home, any new rashes **MUST** be diagnosed by a doctor before a child returns to the ELC.

When there is an increase in illness we will post notices outside our door to alert the families.

Baseline Check-ins at Drop-off

When you drop off your child in the morning, please take the time to check in with the educator and let them know any necessary information about your child. This includes:

- How they slept the night before
- If you suspect they are teething
- If someone else is picking them up.
- If you are picking them up early
- If they didn't eat a lot of breakfast

Having this extra bit of information helps us best support your child during the day.

Child Development

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's development, please feel free to ask the educators. We do have time available to set up meetings with you to discuss this.

If we are noticing some developmental concerns with your child, we will ask to meet with you. This is to see if you have similar concerns as well as to provide you with resources and guidance. Early intervention is the best policy when it comes to concerns about delays and we can guide you on how to access community resources.

We have LookSee Developmental checklists that we can provide you with so that you're able to track your child's development.

Encouraging Autonomy & Independence

In the Toddler program we encourage self-help and independence. The skills learned through self-help provide for future development as they grow. It is important that they practice these skills both at home and at the Early Learning Centre. When toddlers practice self-help skills, it boosts their confidence.

Children are naturally inclined to want to do things for themselves. Encouraging your child's self-care, reduces their stress and promotes their self-esteem. Teaching your child to be self-sufficient is a gradual process.

Children begin to learn new self-care skills as infants, and it continues until the day they leave home. Self-help skills encourage young children to start taking responsibility for themselves. When we trust children to do things for themselves, they feel empowered.

Throughout the daily routines, we encourage the children to practice their self-help skills, building their confidence and independence and to support their sense of agency.

Daily Schedule

7:30-9:45	Open/Free Play Exploration: a variety of planned curriculum based on observations and children's development
8:30-9:15	Nutritious snack available
9:00-9:45	Opportunities to explore and investigate while a diapering/toileting routine occurs
9:45-10:00	Children dress for outdoors in staggered groups
9:45-11:20	Outdoor investigative play
11:00-11:20	Staggered entry of groups of children indoors to undress; diapering/toileting routine occurs Circle time (when time permits)
11:30-12:30	Nutritious lunch provided
12:30-3:00	Sleep time
1:45-3:00	Quiet Open/Free Play Exploration, diapering/toileting as children rise from nap
2:00-3:15	Nutritious snack available
3:15-3:30	Children dress for outdoor play
3:30-5:15	Outdoor play, diapering/toileting for remaining children
5:15	Centre Closes

Items Required in Program

Each child in the Toddler Program is required to have 2 labeled sets of extra clothing in their cubby basket. Please be conscious with what you choose to bring in, we encourage self-help skills as much as possible, having the appropriate clothing that is easy to put on and off will help with this.

Your child will need:

- Two shirts, two pairs of shorts/pants (no one piece overalls) and two pairs of socks
- Running Shoes with Velcro – No light up running shoes since its very distracting in sleep room
- Diapers with tabs (NO Pull-ups/360 diapers) and Diaper Cream
- Soother (If needed for sleep time only – no sleep toy or personal blankets)

There are 15 children in the Toddler Program – **labeling** all clothing and personal items with a label or permanent marker is essential.

Spring & Summer	Fall & Winter
▪ Sun hat ▪ Sunscreen ▪ Raincoat/suit ▪ Splash pants ▪ Rubber boots	▪ Warm coat ▪ Snow pants ▪ Warm hat ▪ Neck warmer (no scarves) ▪ 2 pairs of warm, waterproof mittens ▪ Warm & waterproof boots

To avoid forgetting items at home, it is recommended you have a set of accessories (hats, gloves, etc.) that stay at the centre. We do have a **limited** number of extra clothing items and accessories available. If you do forget something, please let us know! ELC hats and mittens are to remain at the Centre at the end of the day. Spare clothes must be laundered and returned as soon as possible.

New Child Transition Schedule

We understand the transition period can be hard for both the parents and child. We ask for at least **ONE** week to help transition your child into the program, but many children will need more time. If possible, it is best to plan and provide more time for your child to transition into the toddler program.

This is a typical schedule and can be adjusted to meet the needs of your child. We will be in communication with you throughout this transition to ensure all the needs are met and we are successful as possible. Please ask us if you have any concerns or questions.

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5
Arrive at 9:45 am Parent stays with child till 10:30-11:00	Arrive at 9:45 am Parents stay with child until they are settled, then they say goodbye. Pick Up – 10:30-11am	Check with Educators Parent says a quick goodbye; child stays with us for lunch Pick Up – 12:15pm	Check with Educators Parent drops off and child stays for lunch and sleep Pick Up – 2:00pm	Check with Educators Parent drops off and child stays for lunch, sleep and PM snack Pick up – 3:30pm

Infant Move-up

The transition period can be overwhelming even for children who are familiar with the ELC. We may suggest a shorter day to help with the transition from the Infant program to the Toddler Program.

Here is a suggested schedule for when your child moves up from the Infant Program. We will be in communication with you throughout this transition to ensure all the needs are met and we are successful as possible. Please ask us if you have any concerns or questions.

We recommend in the week leading up to the move-up that when you pick your child up, you come and do a walk through with them of the Toddler Program to help familiarize them with the space.

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
Drop-off in the Toddler Program 9:30am Parents can come into the room, stay for a few minutes then say goodbye! Pick-up 3:30pm	Drop-off 9:30 Same routine as previous day Pick up at 4:30pm	Drop-off 8:30 Same routine as the previous day Pick up at 4:30pm	Full Day

Practicing Self-Help Skills

Dressing Routine

It is important that toddlers are a part of the dressing and undressing routine. Providing them opportunities to put on and take off their shoes or boots, pushing down and pulling up their pants as well as putting those items away on a hook or in a drawer. Providing them with time to try and giving them prompts or cues about what is next and not stepping in to do it for them is key to successful dressing.

The Flip Trick

We encourage the toddlers to put on their own jacket by having them place it on the floor with the hood closest to them. Once the jacket is in the right position, they place their arms in the sleeves and lift their arms up in the air, flipping it over their head while keeping their arms inside the sleeves. The next step is zipping it up!



The Star Trick

We encourage the toddlers to put on their one-piece rain or snow suits by having them lay the suit out flat on the floor; making sure the suit arms and legs are straight out (resembling a star).

Have them sit midway placing their legs in first and pulling up until their feet come out of the bottom. Once that is completed, they can lay down and place their arms in the sleeves and stand up and pull up their zipper/s.



Leaning Boot Trick

We encourage the toddlers to put their boots on independently. This is done by:

1. Loosening any Velcro or ties
2. Facing the boots towards a wall, their cubby or bench
3. While standing, the toddler lifts their foot up and into their boot.

Having something solid to lean against is key as it gives them the ability to stabilize themselves if they happen to become unbalanced. Once their feet are in their boots, the educators make sure they are securely on their feet and tucked in under their outerwear (snowsuit/pants or splash suit/pants).

Toileting Routine

The toddlers have many opportunities to use the toilet throughout the day. We encourage the children to push down their own pants, then take their own diaper off and throw it into the garbage. They are encouraged to sit on the toilet by giving them skills on how to move their bodies backwards and pushing themselves up and onto the toilet. They may not release initially, but with much practice and their body being ready, they will!

Within the bathroom, the children have their own basket with their diapers in it. It has a picture and their name for easier recognition. They will become familiar with where their basket is and can bring their diaper to an educator to help put the diaper on. The educator encourages them to then pull their own pants back up. And finally, they can go and wash their hands, which is another skill important to know. (Turning the tap on, wetting their hands, getting soap and rubbing their hands together, rinsing their hands, turning the tap off and finally getting paper towel to dry their hands.)

. Signs of Toilet Readiness

Toilet training is a big milestone in your toddler's life. Here are some signs you can look for to indicate that your child is ready to start the toilet training process.

- Is your child comfortable sitting on the toilet and is releasing?
- Are waking up from naps with a dry diaper or having more periods during the day where their diaper is dry?
- Can they indicate that they have soiled their diaper or are they telling you that they need to go?

Once we see these signs and it is consistent, we start the discussion of toileting training at home and possibly the use of underwear instead of a diaper at the Early Learning Centre.

Eating Routine

Encouraging your child to eat on their own and introducing utensils (fork or spoon) early on offers them opportunities to experiment with the food through their senses and gives them practice with eye/hand or hand to mouth coordination. Giving them small pieces to pick up with their hands provides them practice of independent eating and chewing skills.

Eating is also a wonderful time to bond with your child and model the love of food. In the toddler program, we love to eat with the children, and we encourage them to try all the amazing food the cook makes. Eating with the children also provides us with an opportunity to build their vocabulary and encourage them to use descriptive words to describe the food: crunchy, juicy, ripe, crisp, sweet, savory, roasted, baked and colours.

Water is served in an open cup, and we encourage you to do so at home as well. Doing so gives your child the opportunity to practice and build that emerging skill as well as promoting independence. Providing them with opportunities to serve themselves is also key in our family style dining. Serving themselves what they think they can eat while also developing stronger fine motor skills

Our lunch is served in stages as this encourages your child to try foods they may be hesitant to try. We start with a finger food (vegetable) and then move to the main course. Once the children have eaten most or all of their main course, we will then move to serving bread and finish the meal off with two different fruits.

When your child finishes their lunch, they will take their bib off, shake it over the garbage can to remove any food from the pocket. Next, they will scrape their plate and then sort their dishes on the cart. These small jobs give them a sense of autonomy as well as provide them with the opportunity to benefit their overall development in the following ways: cognitive development, fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination, language development and builds their attention span.

The background image shows a modern building with a curved glass facade, illuminated from within. In the foreground, there is a playground area with a wooden structure and a grassy lawn. A white rectangular box with a green border is centered over the image, containing the text.

**We look
forward to a
wonderful
relationship
with your child
and family.**

**Mike, April & Tessa
Toddler Team**