



Parent Handbook

September, 2017

Revised September 2020



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Welcome

Welcome to the 2020-2021 Ralph Thornton Community Centre After School Program. We are excited to offer another year of safe, fun, quality after school care at our centre!

Inside this handbook you will find information about our After School Program team, important information about our program and answers to frequently asked questions.

Our Staff

This year we have a dynamic team of skilled, qualified and passionate staff who will be providing after school programming and care. This team is supported by the RTCC administrative and management teams. Should you have any questions or concerns during the program, please feel free to contact us. We are here to ensure that everyone has a positive experience and answer any questions.

Programming Staff:

Lainey Little, Program Co-ordinator

laineyl@ralphthornton.org (416) 392-6810 x 233

Mariah Wheeler, Andrew Fuller, Maia Richard, Ebrahim Lulat, Amber Marsden, Shamyia Phillips, Meera Mehta, Robin Irwin, Jen Allard

Administrative and Management team:

Rose Scher, Administration and Reception

Wenlin Huang and Grace Cameron, Reception support

Who can be reached at info@ralphthornton.org and (416) 392-6810 x 221

Colleen Gray, Manager of Strategic Initiatives

colleeng@ralphthornton.org (416) 392-6810 x 225

Glenn Gustafson, Director of Finance

glenn@ralphthornton.org (416) 392-6810 x 229

John Campey, Executive Director

johnc@ralphthornton.org (416) 392-6810 x 227



Our After School Program:

The After School Program provides:

- **After-school care and supervision:** for children 6-12 years in a safe and welcoming environment
- **Skill building and social inclusion:** participant leadership, social and recreational skills

The After School Program offers a range of activities including:

- **Safe walk:** a group walking transportation service from Morse Street & Dundas P.S.; street safety
- **Leadership skill development:**
- **Arts and recreation skill development:** Art, photography, music and movement projects and activities including free play - LEGO, toys, movies, board/card games
- **Technology:** digital photography, basic computer skills building, learn animation, and create interactive digital artwork projects
- **Science:** projects and activities
- **Homework Help and Literacy skills development:** Book club, storytelling, weekly library visits include reading, comprehension, and writing activities, guest tutors.
- **Life skill development**
- **Physical activities:** -outdoor play at a range of local parks.
- **Group development and team building activities**
- **Free nutritious snack**

Eligibility

- Children ages 6-12 years.
- Students enrolled in local schools (Morse Street Public School & Dundas Public School)

Suitability

- Able to safely participate in scheduled program and activities
- Families must make required fee payments according to agreed fee schedule
- Ability to travel to program by agreed upon method (e.g. safe walk from Morse street Dundas)



After School Program Operating Hours

The program hours are Monday to Friday, 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm, except during TDSB holidays and professional development days.

Late fees/late system

In the event that pick up of a child occurs beyond 6:00 pm on a recurring basis (three strikes), the parent will be issued an invoice for a late fee charge of \$1.00/minute. This late fee payment will be made in cash directly to the staff member on duty at the time of pick up.

Program Location

The program operates out of the Ralph Thornton Community Centre (RTCC) at 765 Queen Street East. The program's main operating space is in the basement; however, the program also utilizes a variety of locations within the building.

Weekly Schedule

Our team has worked hard to create activity plans that are interesting, age appropriate, and engage children in a variety of skill building activities. Weekly schedules will be posted outside the main program room.

In order to develop a healthy routine, we have developed a schedule with a variety of broad themes (e.g., cooking, art, computer development). These themes rotate on a bi-weekly basis. Knowing the schedule in advance will mean that children can look ahead to exciting activities and prepare for new experiences.

An example of the weekly schedules you can expect:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
3:10-4:00 Pick Up/Park Play Morse or McCleary Playground	3:10-4:00 Pick Up/Park Play Morse or McCleary Playground	Outdoor Programming Jimmie Simpson Playground <i>(Weather Permitting)</i> 4:15 Snack Head back to RTCC @ 5:15 pm	Outdoor Programming Jimmie Simpson Playground <i>(Weather Permitting)</i> 4:15 Snack Head back to RTCC @ 5:15 pm	3:10-4:00 Pick Up/Park Play Morse or McCleary Playground
return to RTCC	return to RTCC			return to RTCC
4:15 Snack	4:15 Snack			4:15 Snack
4:30 pm – 5:30 pm Activity Stations Computers	4:30 pm – 5:30 pm Activity Stations Computers			4:30 pm – 5:30 pm Activity Stations Computers



Outings and Field Trips

On occasion, there may be opportunities for special outings and field trips. All participants will be notified in advance and be required to complete a field trip authorization form.

Personal Belongings

Please send your child to program prepared for the weather conditions and program activities.

The Ralph Thornton Community Centre is not responsible for lost or stolen items. Participants are asked to leave valuables at home and to label personal belongings.

Due to limited space and storage we ask you not to bring bikes, skateboards, or scooters to the program.

Snacks and outside food items

Every day we provide a healthy, nutritious snack as part of our program. The snack is prepared in accordance with student nutrition program guidelines. We ask that you limit outside food and snacks.

If you have special dietary requirements or food allergies, please ensure this is communicated at time of registration and updated as required.



Group Guidelines (Initial and return)

We recognize the importance of creating and regularly reviewing group guidelines with all of our participants. As the school year progresses, children will have the opportunity to grow and develop with the program. They will meet new people and enjoy time with friends. Each child is unique and brings with them a variety of strengths and areas of growth. These guidelines are created in order to provide structure and support for all participants.

Attached is a list of the most common guidelines we use in the program. All participants, staff, and volunteers are expected to follow these guidelines. We ask that you spend some time reviewing the guidelines with your child(ren).

Walking

Line up in pairs

We listen to instructions (hold the railing etc.)

At the Centre

Indoor voices

We listen when others are speaking

Always ask staff before leaving the room

Walk

Treat each others with respect

Feet on the floor

At the park

Stay inside the park

Climb on things meant for climbing on

Sticks on the ground

Conflict resolution

If a child is not following a guideline, they will be asked to follow the guideline and guideline will be clarified. If the guideline is still not followed the child will be asked to sit separately from the rest of the group for the length of their age. A staff will stay with



them and discuss how to follow the guideline and complete a short reflection worksheet. The child will then be supported to rejoin the group.

Roles and Responsibilities

RTCC will:

- Provide safe, fun, quality, after school care and supervision
- Ensure effective and timely communication
- Actively engage children and families in programming that is age appropriate, skill building, and fun!
- Promote and implement healthy behaviour management practices as well as addressing issues of concern in a respectful and professional manner.

Participants (Parents/guardians and children) will:

- Support the delivery of safe, fun, quality after school care
- Follow RTCC policies & procedures and the RTCC code of conduct
- Notify appropriate staff of any questions, concerns as they arise
- Respond to requests, concerns as needed

Program Fees and Payment procedure

Program Fees

The RTCC After School Program operates using a “fund recovery model”. At this time, fees are determined based on operational costs including staffing costs. The fees are developed in collaboration with the leadership team and approved by the Board of Management.

The program strives to be affordable in comparison to similar programs in the community.

For the 2020/2021 school year fees are \$370 per month. Fees are reviewed on an annual basis.

Partial enrollment

RTCC is not able to provide a discount for partial enrollment. In order to ensure adequate staffing and program design RTCC operates the program consistent with a model of full time participation.



Deposit

One (1) currently dated cheque or credit card/debit card payment (non-refundable), equivalent to one month's fee, representing the last month of the school year (i.e., June) is required at time of registration.

Post-dated/preauthorized payment

Postdated CHEQUES or PRE-AUTHORIZED CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS, dated the 1st day of each month, covering the academic year from September to May or starting on the 1st day of the initial starting month up to May are required at time of registration.

NSF Cheques/Credit card failure

All NSF or credit card charges will be paid by the participating family

Split payment

Full payment must be received by the first of the month. Families that require split payment are required to ensure full payment is received on or before the fee deadline. It is the responsibility of the family to ensure full payment.

Arrears

Full payment is required in order to participate in the RTCC After School Program. If a family misses a payment they will be required to make full payment prior to returning to the program.

Voluntary Withdrawal Notification

In the event that you wish to withdraw your child from enrolment in the After School Program, two months' notification (as of the 1st day of the month) must be provided in writing. All postdated cheques beyond this two months will be returned. Deposit payments remain non-refundable.

Safe walk, pick up, participant absence notification

Safe walk: A safe walk from Morse Street Public School and Dundas Public School is offered **once daily** at dismissal time. Participants must indicate at enrollment their intention to participate in the safe walk program. Staff from RTCC will pick up and accompany children to the RTCC After School Program. As part of the safe walk program, staff will regularly review travel safety guidelines and ensure the group is



taking a safe and direct route to the Centre. From time to time, the group may choose to take public transportation.

Participant Sick/vacation: Participants must notify program staff of authorized absence from the program. Where an absence will occur participants are required to email the coordinator before the 2:30 p.m. to ensure staff are aware before pick up. Please leave the following information:

- child's first and last name
- your name
- contact information
- dates of absence & expected date of return.

Notification can be made by calling the program cell phone after 2:30 pm @ **416-799-5616** or sending through text message.

When no notification is received: If notification of absence is not received prior to dismissal and a child is not present at our pick up location as expected, staff is directed to follow emergency procedures such as guardian emergency notification and missing child procedures.

Pick up policy: Our program ends at 6:00 pm daily, after which time our room is used for other purposes. Pick up locations are listed on the weekly schedule. Pick up may occur at RTCC or Jimmie Simpson Park. A sign will be posted at the main location (765 Queen Street East, basement).

For unexpected delays in pick up due to inclement weather or unforeseen circumstances, we extend a grace period of 15 minutes. We respectfully request that parents who are not able to pick-up their children by 6:00 pm make alternate pick up arrangements.

Authorized guardians for pick up: Staff will only release children to those people considered "authorized individuals for pick up" purposes. These individuals are authorized at the time of registration. Should you wish to change your authorization you must do so in writing prior to the date of pick up. Staff reserves the right to request identification prior to releasing a child.

Guests in Program (e.g., Tutors, activity facilitators, observers): We define a guest in the program as "An authorized, occasional, or one time visitor to the program". A guest may be present in the program in a number of situations for example, special speakers, activity facilitation, tutors, support workers, etc.



In order to maintain a safe environment, only guests pre-approved by the Program Co-ordinator are welcomed into the After School Program.

Guests and Volunteers provide support to the program and are not to be placed in a position of sole responsibility for direct supervision of children.

Tutors and support workers: Special guests such as tutors or special support workers are required to receive written permission from the Program Co-ordinator and legal guardian of a participant. These individuals will be considered to be authorized to “be the direct caregiver of the participant” during the operation of the program. All guests are required to sign in and out of the program and provide name and contact information prior to participation. Tutors are asked to meet with children in a location other than the program (e.g., pre-arranged office space, library, etc.).

Court/custody orders: Only authorized individuals may drop off and pick up participants. Authorization must be made in writing. When a custody or court order is in effect which may limit the authorization of participants, it is the responsibility of the legal guardian to provide appropriate authorization. A copy of relevant court/custody orders must be provided to program staff and Program Director at time of enrollment or initiation of order. Program staff will maintain a copy of the order in the family file and note the order in emergency contact information.

Program Closures (planned and unplanned)

Planned After School Program closures (PA Day, Spring Break, Winter Break, and Statutory Holidays)

The Ralph Thornton Community Centre After School Program runs on an academic calendar year. Our program is closed for all statutory holidays and for the two weeks over the Christmas holidays. In addition, our regular programming is suspended during TDSB professional development days and the March Break week.

Please note that fees will not be refunded or waived due to student absence for any reason during the school year.

The Ralph Thornton Community Centre After School Program will not operate on the following dates and authorized breaks. You can sign up for PA Day Camps and March Break Camp as separate fee based programs. For further information please consult our website www.ralphthornton.org or speak directly with program staff.



Professional Activity (PA) Days:

November 20, 2020

January 15, 2020

February 12, 2020

June 4, 2020

Alternate all day programming (PA Day Camps) will be offered at RTCC during PA Days.

Winter Break:

December 21, 2020-January 4, 2021

The After School Program does not operate during winter break, and at this time we are not offering *alternate day programming*.

April Break:

April 12th to April 16th, 2021 (inclusive)

Alternate all day programming (April Break Camp) will be offered at RTCC during April Break.

Stat Holidays

(Thanksgiving) October 12, 2020

(Remembrance Day) Nov. 11, 2020

(Christmas Day) December 25, 2020

(Boxing Day) December 26, 2020

(New Year's Day) January 1, 2021

(Family Day) February 15, 2021

(Good Friday) April 2, 2021

(Easter Monday) April 5, 2021

(Victoria Day) May 24, 2021

The RTCC After School Program does not operate, and the Ralph Thornton Community Centre is closed, during Statutory Holidays



Unplanned Closures

Incident weather/School closures

The RTCC After School Program will not operate during TDSB board-wide school closures. An email notification will go out to all families no later than 1 p.m. on the day of the closure.

You are responsible for ensuring up to date contact information including emergency phone number and email addresses.

Participants may contact the main reception and/or the Website to confirm operation of the program.

Emergency closures

In the case of an emergency closure or evacuation, parents will be notified (where possible by phone and email) at first opportunity, advising of the nature of the emergency and the marshalling point for the program participants. Families are responsible for providing up to date contact information.

Emergency closures will be determined at the discretion of the Executive Director.



Accidents and Illness:

Accidents and incidents

The following outlines the measures taken by staff in the event of injury occurring at the Centre or while attending events off the Centre's premises.

In the event of minor injuries or incident:

1. A qualified staff will administer first aid and make the child as comfortable as possible.
2. An Accident / Incident Report Form will be written to inform parent(s) of the details.
3. Upon arrival or pick up of child, parent will be asked to read and sign the form to indicate that they have been informed of the details.
4. A copy of the report will be signed and retained in the child's file for the school year.

In the event of major injuries or incident:

1. A qualified staff will administer first aid and make the child as comfortable as possible.
2. An ambulance will be called (as necessary).
3. Management staff onsite at RTCC will be notified by program staff.
4. Parents of the child will be notified of the accident/incident and asked to pick child up from school or meet the staff at the hospital.
5. A staff will accompany the child in the ambulance to the hospital and stay with the child until a parent arrives.
6. An Accident / Incident Report Form will be written to inform parent(s) of the details.
7. The child's parent will be asked to read and sign the form to indicate that they have been informed of the details.
8. Parents will receive a photocopy of the Accident/Incident Report Form and a copy will be retained in the child's file for the remainder of the school year.
9. The incident report will be emailed to management staff of RTCC within 24 hours of the incident.

After School Program staff will act on behalf of the parents/guardians in case of an emergency. In order to take the best possible action on behalf of the parents/guardians, the parents/guardians agree to release and indemnify the Ralph Thornton Community Centre from any and all claims for damages arising as a result of



any accident or injury sustained by the child while participating in any school activities. All families must complete the medical authorization form at the time of registration.

Medical/Allergies/Anaphylaxis

All allergies (severe or mild) must be recorded on the registration application form.

It is the responsibility of the parent to inform the Centre of any changes in this information in writing so that our records can be updated promptly.

The Centre is not able to ensure an environment free of allergens. However we strive to minimize the risks. For example, we request that you provide nut free snacks, we document any allergies, and practice proper sanitization procedures.

Parent Responsibilities

Parents of children with a potentially life-threatening allergy (anaphylaxis) are responsible for adhering to the procedures below as part of the Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan:

- Upon registration, indicate child's medical condition on the registration form.
- Attend a meeting with administrators and staff to review child's history, symptoms and pertinent information relating to the individual child.
- Parent and staff to review emergency plan to be followed should their child have an allergic reaction.
- Complete and sign the anaphylaxis form which includes: child's name, photo, allergy, type of auto-injector and dosage, expiry date of auto-injector, emergency contact information.
- Parent to ensure child has auto-injector on them at all times.
- Communicate all changes in allergy, medical condition, symptoms etc. in writing to the Program Coordinator and Program Director. Changes in our records will be made and updated as required.

The Ralph Thornton Community Centre is a public facility, and we are not able to ensure a nut free environment.

We do ask that all children's program participants refrain from providing nuts in order to minimize the risks associated with nut allergies.

Medication

Parents/guardians must provide written documentation of all medications that are in the possession of a child participant. Staff will log the information in our records. Children will be required to administer their own medications. Staff may offer supervision during



the administration of medication. All medication must be in a clearly labelled prescription bottle.

Any special circumstances must be discussed with the Program Coordinator.



Behaviour Management (practices and participant meetings)

At the Ralph Thornton Community Centre, each child is respected as a unique individual.

RTCC's behaviour management goals include:

- Providing a safe and secure environment for children to express their individuality, emotions and to develop healthy communication skills.
- Practicing verbal and non-verbal negotiation skills
- Developing the self-advocacy skill of each child
- Creating and maintaining a consistent yet flexible behavior management systems which promote healthy decision making capabilities of children

Our disciplinary practices are based on empathy and respect for children and their parents. If a child demonstrates behaviours which are deemed unacceptable, cause for concern, endangering the safety of the other children, displaying resistance to authority, or a child is non-responsive to efforts to modify his/her behaviour, our policy is to engage in a restorative approach which is positive and aims to keep the child's best interest in mind. Our staff will nurture, comfort, and assist the child as we guide them toward safe and healthy behaviour.

Additionally, as we are committed to the principle of inclusion, anti-racism, and anti-oppression, our policy of acceptable behaviour management practices supports a culturally appropriate, racially sensitive, and non-discriminatory environment for the children in our care.

The program's policy on behaviour management supports the philosophy of the Ralph Thornton Community Centre, wherein the safety, emotional, and physical well-being of the child are the primary goals.

Behaviour Management/ Disciplinary Practices

Acceptable Disciplinary Practices

Staff will be required to follow the acceptable disciplinary practices as follows:

- All staff will be expected to treat children with respect and utilize positive methods that aim at maintaining the child's self-esteem at all times.



- Staff are expected to speak to children using a calm tone of voice at all times.
- Staff will observe the child to recognize patterns or changes in behaviour that may be cause for concern, endanger the safety of the other children, display persistent resistance to authority, or are non-responsive to efforts to modify their behaviour.
- Staff will support the child to complete reflection sheets that strategize for improvement.
- Staff will notify the Program Coordinator of any child whose behaviour reflects any of the above conditions.
- Parents will be notified of any behavioural concerns and a meeting will be arranged between the Program Director and parents to consult on next steps and develop a support plan which keeps the best interest of the child in mind.

Actions and next steps may include:

- Parent meeting to develop a support plan
- Requesting that parents contact the service of an independent professional
- Requesting that parents find alternative programming that is better suited to the child

Professional Practice:

Staff must always display a professional attitude while at the RTCC. Staff will keep the following points in mind at all times:

- Respect confidentiality. Never discuss a child when another child is present
- Do not discuss one parent's handling of a situation with another parent

Unacceptable Practices

This provision forbids violence and aggression as a method of discipline and sets out other prohibited disciplinary practices in order to protect the emotional and physical well-being of children in the care of the After School Program. Our behaviour management practices reinforce goals related to safety, quality, and wellbeing by setting out clear prohibited behaviour management practices and acceptable behaviour management practices.



The following practices are not permitted:

- Physical discipline/violence (e.g., pinching, squeezing, hitting, spanking)
- Deprivation of basic needs
- Degrading or humiliating measures (physical or verbal), including sarcasm
- Confinement or isolation
- Harsh, loud, or angry voices
- Racist and/or oppressive, intolerant treatment
- Food must not be used as a punishment or threat at snack time as a disciplinary measure for any reason

Family meetings:

From time to time, family meetings will be initiated to discuss any success, issues, or concerns that may arise. Program staff may identify the need for formal meetings as a result of general observations, incidents or concerns. Parents/guardians may request a family meeting in order to address needs and supports required. Documentation of family meetings will be logged in family files.

Support plans:

When behaviour management and/or participant needs are identified, a support plan will be developed between the participating guardian, program staff and program co-ordinator. The support plan will include identified needs, supports, actions, and resources required. The plan will contain determined timelines, follow up terms, and will be agreed upon by all parties involved. It will include the roles and responsibilities of all parties and include the potential next steps/consequences.

When a need for a support plan is identified, the program staff will notify the Program co-ordinator, who will contact parents/guardians to schedule a meeting to develop and review the plan. Support plans will be developed in a timely manner and be consistent with behaviour management and age appropriate guidelines.

All support plans must be designed with the wellbeing, growth and safety of participants in mind.

Discharge policy

The After School Program reserves the right to exclude any child from attendance, temporarily or permanently, who is deemed to be interfering with the health, safety,



and educational development of themselves or any other child in the program. A child may be discharged from enrolment after the following measures have been implemented:

- Initially, parents will be advised via conversation or in written form of the circumstance which is deemed by the Program Director to be interfering with the health, safety, and educational development of themselves or any other child in the program. In this meeting or conversation, parents are made aware of the child's readiness for and/or suitability to the program, and/or the perceived risk to others. Parents are made aware of any modifications or improvements required in order to continue the child's enrolment. A deadline will be established to provide child with the opportunity to adapt, improve or make modifications acceptable to the Program Director.
- A final meeting will take place between Program Director and parent(s) to determine a) continuation in the program, b) discharge, or c) next steps.

All timelines are established dependent upon severity of the circumstance leading up to consideration of discharge and are determined according to the impact that the child's behavior has on the health, safety, and educational development of him/herself or any other child in the school. In the event that your child is asked to withdraw, the initial deposit will be retained by the Centre. The final decision of discharge is made by the Program Director and Executive Director.

Privacy and Confidentiality

The Ralph Thornton Community Centre is committed to protecting the privacy of the personal information of its employees, volunteers, program participants, partners, and donors.

RTCC is a City of Toronto agency and complies with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and other relevant laws.

RTCC will ensure that all personal information is properly collected, stored, used, disclosed if needed, and destroyed as appropriate.

Personal information is collected only to assist RTCC to plan and deliver the best possible programs and services, to meet its obligations as an employer, to communicate with members, participants, partners or donors, and to comply with lawful requests.



Personal information is always considered confidential and will only be shared with relevant staff members, other than where required by law (for example, in a case of suspected child abuse) or in circumstances related to an individual's health or safety.

Personal information will be stored securely and destroyed at minimum seven years after it is no longer needed.

People are entitled to see any personal information collected about them, and may do so by making an appointment with RTCC. All complaints about the unauthorized collection or release of personal information will be investigated and resolved.

Our After School Program staff maintain participant files, which include:

- Registration packages,
- Authorization forms (trip, medical, media release),
- Daily logs and occasional observations, parent communications.

This information is kept in a locked and secure location consistent with our privacy policy. In situations which require RTCC staff to communicate with a third party, program staff will request you sign a release of information form.

Complaints procedure:

RTCC is committed to providing the best possible programming and experience for all of our users. In the event that parents have concerns that are not effectively addressed or resolved directly with the individuals responsible, please contact the Program coordinator who will work with you to understand and address your concerns. If they cannot be resolved at this level, they can be brought to the Executive Director.

As we strive to continuously improve our service to the community, we very much appreciate suggestions as to ways in which we can operate a better program, and view the constructive sharing of concerns as a key aspect of how we grow.