



The Child's Rights in a Preschool Setting

Introduction

“By setting out the rights of children, one can determine on an on-going basis whether children’s needs are being met. Children’s rights should be sufficiently elaborated so that the family and the community will have certain rights they can insist upon in seeking services for their children.”*

* The term preschool refers to all group settings for children five and under.

Emotional Rights

A child in the preschool setting shall be entitled to the right to:

1. encouragement to help foster a sense of self-esteem
2. opportunities for independence, success and fun
3. have his/her feelings fully accepted whether negative or positive
4. freedom to develop his/her own unique creativity
5. a sense of order, routine and consistency
6. realistic expectations, clear limits and positive guidance
7. opportunities to meet special individual needs
8. respect for individual ethnic and cultural differences, and a culturally integrated curriculum that stresses pride in each child’s own heritage as well as pride in being Canadian
9. special attention for children with English as a second language
10. courtesy and support for his/her parents
11. opportunities for input from his/her parents
12. access for his/her parents to parent education relating to child growth and development and parenting skills.

Social Rights

A child in the preschool setting shall be entitled to the right to:

1. play
2. freedom to interface with peers along with wise adult intervention
3. companionship
4. an environment in which a cooperative spirit is encouraged
5. opportunities for group experience
6. know the rules
7. discipline and guidance with encouragement toward self-responsibility for actions
8. clearly conveyed boundaries that are enforced and followed through with consistency
9. constructive criticism of inappropriate behavior
10. appeal decisions
11. flexibility
12. choose solitude
13. express his/her ideas, views and opinions and to have real input into the program
14. freedom from pressure/coercion to be busy and/or participating at all times
15. ample play materials to alleviate sharing problems
16. teachers who serve as good role models
17. freedom from sex-role stereotyping
18. teachers who are sensitive to his/her individual developmental needs.

Intellectual Rights

A child in the preschool setting shall be entitled to the right to:

1. a well-qualified, thinking teacher who is warm, practical, and involved, and has patience and a sense of humour while maintaining a professional approach
2. a quality education geared to his/her developmental level based on learning through play
3. a varied and challenging program in which he/she is exposed to thorough coverage of all the traditional curriculum areas: science, math, social studies, language and literature, music, art and physical education
4. an opportunity to explore in depth an area in which he/she has shown a real interest
5. a balance of individual, small group, and large group learning activities
6. a program that incorporates spontaneous self-chosen play exploration and some teacher planned and organized activity
7. a comfortable, relaxed atmosphere conducive to positive learning
8. every opportunity to be intellectually challenged to progress at his or her own rate and to reach his/her fullest potential.

Physical Rights

A child in the preschool setting shall be entitled to the right to:

1. close supervision to ensure safety at all times
2. comforting, when necessary
3. freedom from physical or psychological abuse
4. privacy when toileting, if desired
5. active and quiet individual and group play opportunities
6. conditions that promote good health: (e.g. sanitary conditions; good nutrition etc.)
7. a comfortable, inviting, spacious playroom with all the standard interest areas: block corner, playhouse, science area, library, music corner, art area, large muscle equipment
8. a well-designed, aesthetic playroom set up to provide an enriched sensory experience but that is not overstimulating
9. adequate playspace outdoors adjacent to the playroom, which has climbing, digging, and running space, and is aesthetically pleasing
10. private quiet spaces for play
11. a large open space indoors, if possible (e.g. gym or hall)
12. comfortable space for sleep time, if applicable.