

Research Policies and Guidelines:
Ryerson Early Learning Centre
&
Gerrard Resource Centre - EarlyON



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I. DESCRIPTION OF FACILITIES

THE CENTRES

Reviewed and revised September 2019

Ryerson University’s School of Early Childhood Studies supports and collaborates with two laboratory programs: the **Early Learning Centre (ELC)**, and the **Gerrard Resource Centre EarlyON program (GRC)**. These centres operate as models for the early childhood and family supports community as well as for faculty, students and the community. Utilizing these centres for research projects is encouraged and highly valued as a means of contributing to the enhancement of life for young children and families and to further early childhood research. We encourage research with our children, families, and early childhood educators.

1. EARLY LEARNING CENTRE

The ELC is a licensed early learning and care facility. The ELC provides an exemplary full-day model of early learning and care for 65 children, eighteen months to four-years-old. The ELC plays a key teaching and research role in the School of Early Childhood Studies.

The Manager of the ELC leads a team of ten full-time Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) in **four classrooms** as follows:

Classroom	Age Range	Capacity	Staffing
Toddler Room	10 months - 30 Months	10 Children	2 RECEs
Toddler Room	10 months - 30 Months	15 Children	3 RECEs
Preschool Room	30 months - 5 years	16 Children	2 RECEs
Preschool Room	30 months - 5 years	24 Children	3 RECEs

Hours of Operation

Monday to Friday
8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Contact Information

416-979-5338
elc@ryerson.ca

Qualified Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECE)

The centre manager and RECEs are registered with the College of Early Childhood Educators and hold degrees in early childhood studies or related fields. Many of the RECEs have experience working in the field and often facilitate workshops, tours and shadowing experiences for the early learning community.

Gerrard Resource Centre EarlyON Program

The GRC program is staffed by RECEs and support staff. The centre provides a variety of programs that serve and support families, caregivers, early childhood professionals

and family support practitioners in the care and healthy development of children within the community.

The program includes:

- EarlyON family and child resource program is a drop in program for families, caregivers, and children from birth to 6-years-old
- child care information and referral service
- consultation service for children with disabilities
- resource library

Hours of Operation

Monday to Friday
9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Contact Information

416-979-5000 ext. 2535

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

The Laboratory programs' research committee meets regularly to review research requests and discuss the process of current research practices and implementation. The research committee consists of six members 1) the Associate Director, 2) Manager, 3) ELC Supervisor 4) ELC RECE and 5) EarlyON RECE

Our Image of the Children, Childhoods, & Family

The laboratory schools provide an exemplary early learning model and child care services to families. Our centres encompass a community of children and adults living and learning together. With a focus on children's rights, central to our values are the following beliefs and practices:

- **Families are an integral support and decision maker for their children.** In keeping with our philosophy of equity, diversity and inclusion, we respect and acknowledge each family's culture, values and unique needs. As RECEs, we foster respect for the children's families, their cultural identity, language and values (UNCRC, Article 29 (1.c)). We are committed to providing a responsive program for families, embracing the Family Support Principles (Families Canada, 2018) while being accountable to our governing policies.
- **Families are the most important influence in their children's lives.** We strive to establish partnerships with families to strengthen our ability to meet their children's needs, to understand their personal contexts for learning, to enhance our program and to create inclusive environments for all members (UNCRC, Article 14 (1,2)).
- **Each child is an individual and a member of the community.** We recognize and appreciate that children have an innate curiosity and a determination to understand the world around them; children are competent, capable, and curious beings who have a right to live peacefully, participate in their

community and have a respecting relationship with others. (UNCRC, Article 29 (1.d)).

- **Each child has unique ideas and perspectives, and ways of reflecting and sharing them with others.** By understanding the child, we promote the development of social, emotional, cognitive and physical growth. Children have the right to express themselves freely and we provide opportunities for children to seek, receive and impart information through a variety of mediums including through print, orally, art, and media (UNCRC Article 13 (1)).
- **Each child has the right to participate fully in their home, community and early learning and care program.** We promote inclusive practice through ongoing interactions, observations, and reflection, to explore the main inquiries that children are investigating about their world. As co-investigators with the children, their families and community, we collaboratively create a supportive environment to foster this participation (UNCRC, Article 23 (1)).
- **Play is the child's primary medium of learning, which promotes problem-solving, decision making, and positive interactions with others.** Children benefit from both indoor and outdoor environments where they can rest, explore cultural life, the arts, nature, and take safe risks (UNCRC, Article 31 (1)).
- **All children, family members, students, staff, and faculty should be regarded and valued as unique individuals.** We offer opportunities to share these values through ongoing collaborative projects, interactions and student placements. In partnership with children, families and students, we create an environment of peace, tolerance, equality, inclusion and diversity (UNCRC, Article 29 (1, d)). The terms equality, diversity and inclusion are used in their broadest sense to include linguistic, cultural and racial identity as well as ability, gender, class, sexuality, age and migration status. Our approach recognizes children's need to develop a positive identity, not only as individuals but also as members of the groups to which they belong. Families, children, RECEs, and students and are welcome to share aspects of their culture and ethnic identity (UNCRC, Article 30).
- **Creating responsive and positive interactions between and among adults and children promotes opportunities to practice self-regulation and socially responsible attributes.** We encourage leadership behaviour in young children by providing opportunities for social learning. Children have the capacity to develop and enhance their sense of responsibility, empathy towards others, and environmental stewardship (UNCRC, Article 29 (1, e)).
- **Well-being, engagement, expression, and belonging are embedded within all aspects of an early learning program.** These four pillars of the Ontario Ministry of Education document *How Does Learning Happen?* are

interdependent and work together to offer a foundation of learning and engagement. As the ELC is licensed by the Ontario Ministry of Education, we uphold Ministry regulations as indicated by the Child Care and Early Years Act.

The intent of this program statement is to identify and celebrate the day-to-day interactions that take place at our laboratory programs. With the guidance of the provincial documents *How Does Learning Happen?*, and *Think, Feel, Act*, we embrace the foundational pillars of *How Does Learning Happen?* and expand on these values by embracing four of our own critical foundations to ensure that we honour, respect and achieve the ideological approach espoused in this document.

Four critical components comprise the framework that guides our work with children and families.

- 1) Pedagogical Approach**
- 2) Supportive, Responsive and Engaging Relationships**
- 3) Health, Safety, Nutrition and Well-being**
- 4) Integral Role of Partnerships**

For a more in-depth understanding of these foundations of intent, please refer to our Program Statement.

II. RESEARCH PROCEDURES

Researchers seeking to conduct research at the ELC or GRC must first obtain ethics approval by Ryerson University's Research Ethics Board (REB), which may take up to four to six weeks. <http://www.ryerson.ca/about/vpresearch/reb.html>

Please note that REB approval is valid for a period of one year. If your research extends beyond one year, you will be required to renew your ethics approval for the study. A copy of the REB approval letter needs to be provided to the Manager.

Once ethics approval has been obtained, the researcher(s) must:

1. Submit a *Research Implementation* form, and attach a copy of the REB letter of approval to the Manager of the program (the *Research Implementation* form can be found in Appendix A).
2. Contact the Manager to arrange a meeting to discuss the research.
3. The researcher is responsible for bringing copies of the consent form to the Manager.

The Manager is often able to assist with recruitment. The signed forms will be collected by the RECEs or family support practitioners and given to the Manager to give to the researcher.

Recruitment and data collection may not begin until signed consent forms from families have been returned.

Assent forms to be completed with the children are required.

Prior to implementing your study, ask the Manager to send you a copy of the most recent policies and procedures for you to review. Familiarize yourself with these policies prior to starting your research in the program.

Researchers must provide the manager with the *Project Information sheet* to be shared with families (see Appendix B). Upon completing the project, researchers must provide a summary to the program.

A recent, cleared Vulnerable Sector Checks is required prior to visiting the program (date is less than 6 months from the start date).

If RECEs are required to leave the classroom for research purposes, the Researcher will be responsible for supplementing the cost of their replacement.

III. RESEARCH PROCEDURES for UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

1. For the role and responsibilities of faculty members please refer to The Role of the Faculty Member and the School/Dept. or Faculty Committee in the Ethics Review of Undergraduate Student Research Assignments.
<http://www.ryerson.ca/about/vpresearch/faculty.html>
2. Students must familiarize themselves with the Student Bill of Research Rights and Responsibilities: Responsibilities of Undergraduate Students as Researchers for Class Assignments that include Data Collection involving Human Participants. For a companion piece to that document please see
http://www.ryerson.ca/about/vpresearch/student_researchers.html
3. We welcome non-Ryerson researchers to conduct studies in the laboratory programs; however, priority will be given to those who are part of the Ryerson community.

IV. GENERAL RESEARCH GUIDELINES

While we encourage research to be undertaken in our programs, the following general guidelines have been established to promote communication between the researchers
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and RECEs, protect the welfare of the children, and to ensure the regular functioning of the programs is not disrupted.

1. The Manager and or designate will take responsibility for documenting and scheduling all research taking place in the program and will take responsibility for monitoring the project and follow-up with the researcher.
2. The number of research projects at any given time will be limited depending upon the approval of the Research Committee who will take into account factors such as the nature of ongoing activities and number of adults already in the room.
3. Depending on the nature of the research, researchers may be requested to spend time in the program in order to establish some rapport with the children and/or families and to become familiar with the program.
4. Equipment used must be incorporated into the environment in the least intrusive way possible. Researchers are responsible for setting up and taking down their research materials and storing them between sessions. Please note, that outside food is not permitted to be used in studies or as tokens of appreciation.
5. Families will be told of the centres' role in research from the outset of their child's enrolment.
6. The involvement of research activities taking place in the centres could be initiated either by invitation from the researcher or at the request of the RECEs.
7. It is up to the Manager and staff to ensure that the Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA) (2014) and the policies of the program are adhered to during research activities (e.g. Anaphylaxis Policy etc.). A RECE who is a Ryerson employee must be present during on-site research sessions at all times. If an additional RECE outside of regular staffing is required, the researcher will be responsible for their hourly salary and benefits cost.
9. It is the child's right to refuse to participate. For younger children, it is especially important to be aware of non-verbal signs that a child does not wish to participate. The comfort level of all children should be given a priority and the researchers may need to provide some flexibility where needed. For resources regarding ethical research and children, see Appendix C.

Notes:

APPENDIX A

RESEARCH IMPLEMENTATION FORM

Name of Centre in which research is to be carried out.
Title of the research project

Principal Researcher:

School or Department Affiliation:

Email:

Phone Number:

Co-Investigator(s)

School or Department Affiliation:

Email:

Phone Number:

Research Assistants Names

Physical equipment and/or facilities required:

How much staff time will be required?

How often will staff be involved? For how long?

Will staff have to be replaced?

NO

YES (Please comment on how their salary and benefits will be covered.)

Proposed dates for the start and end of the study.

Days and time(s) of day when access will be required.

How do you plan to share the results of this study with children, families and staff?

APPENDIX B

INFORMATION SHEET FOR FAMILIES

Project Title:

Principal Investigator(s):
(also include Research Assistants)

Purpose of the Research:
(Abstract)

Description of the Project:
(Provide information re. data collection processes, timeline)

Dissemination of Research findings:
(e.g., will you send a summary to all participants, will you have a Q & A)

APPENDIX D

TITLE OF PROJECT:

I am willing to talk/look at pictures about nature/play a game (FILL IN ACTIVITIES)
with

_____ about

It's OK by me that:

1. Our conversations will not name or identify me
2. Our conversations will be tape-recorded
3. Only _____ and her teacher, _____, will listen to the tapes. The teacher will protect the tapes by keeping them in a locked filing cabinet for one year and then will make sure if they when they are not needed anymore to erase them, or give them to me.
4. I can stop the study at any time. One way I can do this is by saying "stop now" or I can say "next question."
5. I can end being part of the study at anytime without any questions being asked.
6. _____ might talk to someone responsible if they are worried about my safety.
7. It's okay to ask that your mom or your dad be with you when we are working.

My name: _____

My signature or special mark: _____

Today's date: _____

***Adapted from:**

Danby, S., A. Farrell, A., Leiminer, M. & Powell, K. (2004) *Children's accounts of governance in their everyday lives*. Technical Report, Centre for Innovation in Education, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia.