

CCSA Parents Handbook

Canadian Contemporary School of Art (CCSA)

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An organic approach to creative learning

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Benefits of Art

Art helps kids

- Improve dexterity
- Play with Others
- Be self-aware
- Respect their peers and teachers
- Follow instruction
- Take responsibility
- Enjoy open-ended play
- Value beauty
- Have a point of view
- Communicate better
- Ask questions
- Be experimental
- Be innovative
- Not fear failure
- Test their theories about the world
- Assess risk
- Problem solve
- Be self-reflective

- Interpret their experience
- Find their place in the world

CCSA Philosophy

We believe in creativity as an educational tool, one that builds a child's confidence and the development of their problem-solving skills. Art-led interactions teach children to be imaginative and trust their intuition — there is no wrong way to make an artwork. This type of experiential learning creates opportunities for self-expression and calculated risk-taking — along with the enjoyment of seeing one's creative efforts lead to tangible results.

Classes at the CCSA encourage a child's natural ability to be curious when engaging with the world. The school takes an organic approach to learning, teaching habits of open-minded inquiry that can help children be resourceful when faced with life's challenges, big and small. Art classes nurture the whole child, creating the foundations for the well-rounded adults they will grow up to become.

Located in Toronto's Leaside neighborhood, classes at the CCSA take place in a bright and open 3750 square foot space. Children are supervised at all times in small, instructor-led classes. Each class is devoted to both developing the skills necessary for mastering different art forms, and allows each child to experience the joy of learning about their creative selves.

Student Age Range

CCSA offers classes for children in the following age-ranges:

1. Preschoolers: 2–4 years
2. Children and Preteens: 4–12 years
3. Teenagers: 13–17 years.

Days and Hours of Operation

Our regular program follows the TDSB school year calendar.

- Day Classes for Preschoolers (September–June)
 - Monday-Friday: 9am–11:30am
- After School Classes (September–June)
 - Monday-Friday: 4pm–9pm
- March Break and Summer Camp (March/July–August)
 - Weekly: 9am–3:30pm
 - Weekly: Before and After Camp
 - 8am–9am
 - 3:30pm–5pm

Sign-In Sheets

Every day, instructors sign children in and out. Sign-In sheets include parents' cell phone numbers. In the event of an emergency, this number will be called. Please advise the CCSA immediately if this number changes, or if you want an alternate number called, on any given day.

Holidays

The following holidays are observed by the CCSA:

- Thanksgiving Monday
- December Break – Two weeks as specified by the Toronto Board of Education
- Family Day
- March Break – as specified by the Toronto Board of Education
- Good Friday and Easter Monday
- Victoria Day

Family Vacations

Missed days due to family vacations or for other reasons cannot be refunded. If possible, please notify the CCSA if your child will be absent.

Storm Policy

We follow Storm Policy of the local School Boards. If they close local public schools, we will also cancel classes. Email notification will be sent as soon as decision is made. Don't hesitate to contact us if you feel concerned about the weather and want to know our plans.

Admission Procedure

Prior to registering children for classes, parents are welcome visit the CCSA and meet with staff. A pre-interview can be arranged to familiarize parents with our facilities. We are happy to answer any questions you may have during the interview, over email or on the phone. Prior to enrollment, parents are required to complete an admissions form.

Fees

A fee schedule is revised and made available for each individual school year. Please pay monthly fees for courses on the first day of each month. Payment must be made either, with post-dated cheques for the entire year at the beginning of the school year, or by Interac e-transfer. If a cheque is N.S.F., a fee of \$25.00 per cheque will be charged.

Arrival and Pick-up

Upon arrival, for preschoolers, please ensure your child has used the washroom; or if they are not toilet-trained, change their diapers if necessary. We will ensure to change diapers in a safe manner, only after consultation with the parents. Liaise with the instructor, to add your child's name to the sign-in sheet, which also notes the name of the child's parent or carer. When classes end, children are only released to those persons specified on the sign-in sheet. It is important to notify us if you have to make alternate arrangements for pick-up or drop-off. We cannot release a child to a non-specified person, unless this has been prearranged. Please also take care to be punctual.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up Routines

In our experience, small children acclimatize better to attending the school if their parents leave quickly after delivering them for their initial art classes. If your child is having a hard time adjusting to the new environment, please feel free to pick them up early from class. If you plan to have the child's caregiver regularly drop them off at classes, we recommend that they be the one who does this for the first few classes. We feel this is the best way to familiarize your child with this new routine. Parental visits for special occasions or surprises work best after drop-off and pick-up routine is established.

Drop-off and pick-up times will involve daily interaction with the School's instructors. Although this is a chance to learn about your child's enjoyment of their classes, or discuss any issues you have, we ask that you keep these discussions brief. For a more in-depth conversation with CCSA staff, please make an appointment to discuss on the phone. Please advise us if you feel difficulties with a child's at home behaviour, are school related. We will be happy to discuss.

Parking

Parking is Free in the plaza however due to the high number of classes for children held at the plaza, we kindly ask parents to use the parking lot for drop off and Pick up only. Thank You

Toilet Training

If your child is toilet training, please discuss this with our staff so we can help you maintain a consistent effort. Ample diapers and clothing should be provided throughout the training period.

Fire Drills

The CCSA practices monthly Fire Drills and we post instructions for the procedure – during the drills and in the event of a fire – in each room.

Allergies and Dietary Restrictions

Please advise us of any allergies your child may have and how to spot signs of a reaction – what are the symptoms? The CCSA is a nut-free environment and we will strive to, when at all possible, eliminate any specified allergens from the class environment. We take all necessary measures to sanitize the CCSA facilities, but cannot guarantee a 100% safe environment. All classroom materials used are eco-safe and child-friendly. Any dietary restrictions for your child will be accommodated, but please give us advance notice.

Healthy snacks

We provide Preschool and Day Camp (March Break and Summer) students with a healthy snack, daily. The day's snacks will be posted at the school each morning. Snacks are nut-free and include organic fresh fruit purchased daily and presoaked in white vinegar. The CCSA welcomes parents bringing healthy snacks for special occasions. Please remember, all food should be nut and nut oil free.

Health Policy

Children who are unwell should not be sent to CCSA classes. Please work with us to help prevent the spread of germs.

CCSA Health Policies are as follows:

- Prior to the start of classes, the immunization of all children must be up to date.
- All communicable diseases will be reported to Toronto Public Health.
- Parents will be advised if their child becomes ill during class, and the child will be sent home.
 - In all of the following circumstances, parents will be notified and the child sent home:
 - Children who develop a fever (a temperature of over 37C)
 - Children who have an episode of diarrhea or vomiting
 - Children with unexplained rashes, sores or blisters. Doctor letter about the non-communicability of the rash etc. will be required before the child can return to classes.
 - Children with lice or nits. Children are welcome to return to classes once they are lice/nit free.

- We reserve the right to send a child home, if we feel they are unwell., for any reason.
 - Before returning to classes, children must be free of fever, vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours.
 - In the event of flu or other illness outbreak, all children must be free of all symptoms before returning to class.
- CCSA Health Policies about the administering of medication are accordance with the Day Nurseries Act:
 - Parents will need to sign the Medication Authorization Form.
 - Medications **MUST** be in their original packaging and have the child's name clearly labelled on it.
 - The school cannot administer fever-masking medications (e.g., Tylenol or Tempera)

Procedure for Medication and Drug Administration

1. The CCSA will only administer the following medications:
 - a. EpiPens
 - b. Benadryl
 - c. Asthma Inhalers
2. All drugs and medications will be stored in a locked metal container.
3. Instructors for each class are will administer any prescribed drugs or medications for the children in their group.
4. Written parental authorization is required for the administration of any drug or medication. Parental authorization should include a schedule specifying the times and amounts of the drug or medication to be administered (see form attached).
5. Drugs or medications can only be administered if provided in their original container or packaging as supplied by a pharmacist. Please clearly label the container or package with the following:
 - child's name
 - the name of the drug or medication
 - the dosage of the drug or medication
 - the date of purchase
 - instructions for storage and administration.

Guidelines for Determining Your Child's Health

The CCSA offers the following guidelines to determine whether your child is healthy enough to attend classes:

- In the case of colds and coughs, yellow or green mucus may indicate infection, and we recommend keeping your child home.
- Germs are easily spread from a productive or loose cough, and again we recommend keeping your child home.
- Children in need of medication for pain or fever relief should be considered not well enough to attend class and should be kept home.
- Please advise us immediately if your child has any contagious disease,
 - such as Hand/Foot Mouth, Fifth's Disease (Slapcheek), chicken pox, pediculosis (lice), or conjunctivitis (Pink Eye).
 - In the above cases, the CCSA will take every measure to sanitize the premises immediately and alert the other parents to possible outbreaks.
 - Please confer with us, before deciding when to send your child back to classes, after any of the above illnesses.
- Please regularly check your child's head for lice throughout the year.

In all cases of absence, kindly phone or e-mail the office and let us know when your child will be away, whether it be for illness, travel, appointments, etc.

Appropriate Clothing

Please dress your child in clothing that will be appropriate for the weather and the season, and bear in mind your child will be taking art classes. Clothing should be suitable for spills of paints and other non-toxic art materials. We recommend providing a second set of clothes to be kept at the school in case of accidents. Please also clearly label all clothing and footwear with your child's name.

Art Materials

All art materials used by the CCSA are child-proof and non-toxic. For the paints, we mix in liquid detergent to help make it more water-soluble; however, there is a chance that dark colours will still stain. We suggest always dressing children in clothing suitable for art-making activities and washing the stained articles as soon as possible in cold water.

Discipline

If called for, children will be disciplined in a friendly and age-appropriate manner. The goal of any disciplinary measures will be to keep the peace in the classroom, encourage children to practice self-discipline, and to respect their fellow students and ensure health and safety for all.

Under no circumstances, will children be disciplined with spankings or corporeal punishment.

Identifying Child Victims

By law, any staff person at the CCSA, who is concerned about the safety, well-being or protection of a child must, contact a Children's Aid Society (CAS).

The CCSA will inform parents if the CAS has been called. Parents will be informed by CAS or police, if abuse is suspected in a medical emergency.

Behaviour Management Policy

Our instructors adhere to a written policy for behaviour management and these are reviewed on an annual basis. Criminal reference checks are done on all new teachers, or any placement students and volunteers. The CCSA monitors all staff to ensure Behaviour Management Policies compliance. Unsupervised access to children is not permitted by volunteers and students, and this includes going to the washroom. A complete copy of our Behaviour Management Policy is available for review, upon request.

Serious Incidents

In the case of a serious incident at the school, we will post a notice on the bulletin board for 10 days following the event. Information posted will avoid identifying those effected by the incident. If the incident involves allegations of abuse, the notice will only be posted after the investigation into it is completed.

Meeting the Needs of Our Students

CCSA strives to meet the educational and emotional needs of all children under our care. If we notice a child having difficulties coping with any of our programs, or the cooperative environment of the school, parents will be advised. We will work together with the parents to determine how to best help the child, including advising them to seek alternative classes if necessary.

Communication

The CCSA values open communication and we want to hear your input. We are happy to discuss any of your questions, concerns or other matters related to your child's progress. Please feel free to call us or arrange a meeting anytime. We are also available at the start and ending of each class, if you need to discuss any pressing issues. We will regularly update you by email about our news and events.

How to Respond to Your Child's Artwork

We encourage parents to take an open, enquiring approach when responding to their child's artworks. Asking questions, and conversing with your child based on their answers, can give them a strong sense of accomplishment. Making artworks, after all, will be an early experience for a child of having an effect on the world, independent of the actions of their parents or caregivers. A measured approach is recommended; we have observed that over-enthusiasm can be off-putting for the child artist. Remember, at this stage of a child's development, the process of making art is more significant than the final result.

CCSA Programs

Art Classes for Preschoolers (ages 2-4)

These classes are specially-designed for children ages 2-4. A year-long program, the CCSA morning classes for children, take an art-centred approach to learning. A safe, welcoming environment (including on-site receptionist and surveillance camera) and certified instructors nurture the creative potential in children. Class size is limited to 10, with a maximum of 40 students, and learning is always accompanied by music suitable for children. CCSA classes for preschoolers include:

- Painting
- Sculpture
- Pattern Making
- Creative craft making
- Art-based Math and Alphabet Learning

Preschoolers Daily Schedule

A schedule of activities is posted daily. For Preschoolers, each day's program of activities will include:

- Creative Play
- Art Instruction
- Gentle Exercise, including Yoga and Dance
- Healthy Snack
- Guided Computer Work
- Discussion Circle

After School Program (ages 4-12)

Offered all year round, the CCSA's after school program for children is suitable for ages 4-12. Classes are led by practicing artists and the school provides a safe environment for children to experience the personal satisfaction that derives from guided self-expression. Classes for older children include:

- Drawing
- Painting
- Sculpture
- Print on Fabric
- Creative Craft making
- Filmmaking
- Animation
- Puppetry
- Architecture
- Fashion Design
- Flipbook Making
- Cartooning
- Photography

Art Classes for Teenagers (age 13-17)

Budding artists get an in-depth chance to develop their skills by taking our after-school classes. The CCSA provides an intimate setting and individual instruction for a range of art mediums. Teenagers can explore different types of art practice, and through this process, gain a better understanding of how best to use their talents.

Portfolio Preparation

The CCSA offers special prep classes for young artists who want to pursue art studies at college or university. Our instructors will assess a student's skill set and particular aptitudes for the different art mediums, and help to develop their application portfolio accordingly. Please contact the School for more information.

March Break and Summer Day Camps

Week-long art courses provide a fun and structured environment for children to learn about art making, and explore their endless creativity. Courses offered for kids age 4 to 12 years, with classing take place from 9am to 3:30pm weekdays. Please refer to our website for additional course information. Parents are asked to ensure each child brings their own nut-free lunch and bottled water to classes for each day of the week. All courses will provide a healthy snack daily.

- ### Before and After Camp Childcare

Children are welcome to enjoy supervised play on the premises, from 8:00-9:00am and 3:30 to 6pm, for an additional fee.

- Before Camp Care for \$30.00 + HST per week (8:00-9:00am)
- After Camp Care for \$50 + HST per week (3:30-5pm)

Birthday parties

Contact us to book your child's birthday party and we will plan a fun and creatively-focused celebration. Birthday activities are designed with special attention paid to the gender, age and specific likes and personality of the birthday child. Every birthday party we plan is unique. Call and discuss today!

CCSA Gallery

The CCSA features Toronto's only art gallery dedicated to showing artworks by children. The CCSA hosts a yearly painting competition for children and also presents biannual exhibitions of kids' work chosen by professional curators. Check our website for upcoming exhibitions.