

# Information About Child Care Centre Parent Advisory Committees

## What is a Parent Advisory Committee?

Parent Advisory Committees (PACs) are required by *The Child Care Act, 2014* when a child care centre is exempted from being governed by a board that has a majority of its members as parents of children attending the centre.

The purpose of a PAC is to ensure that parents of children attending the centre have the opportunity to ask questions, express concerns and share suggestions with the board governing the child care centre.

## Why is a PAC important?

Parent involvement is an important feature of centre-based child care. Parents have a primary role in ensuring the well-being and positive developmental experiences of their children.



*The family is a child's first teacher.*

Providing an advisory role in centre decision-making processes will ensure that parents' perspectives are considered in how the child care centre operates.

## How is a PAC different than a board?

The PAC serves a supportive role in centre operations. Whereas the decision making authority for centre operations rests with the board, PACs represent the voice of parents in decision making processes.

**There are several differences between a PAC and Board of Directors.**

Parent Advisory Committees	Child Care Centre Boards
Are not financially or legally responsible for centre operations	Are financially and legally responsible for centre operations
Inform the development of policy	Develop and approve policy
Advisors	Decision-makers

*The PAC has a supportive role in assisting the Board of Directors with the development of policies, procedures, and guidelines.  
- Child Care Licensee's Manual*

### How can a PAC support a child care centre and board?

A PAC provides a voice for parents by making recommendations, and bringing forward concerns and ideas on behalf of parents. This support can be provided through various ways, such as:

- providing input on changes to the centre’s policies and procedures (e.g. late pick-ups, late payments, child management practices, prevention of injuries and unusual occurrences)
- planning, organizing and assisting with excursions and fundraising
- organizing donations of reusable and recyclable items, such as items for artwork, dress-up clothes and outgrown children’s clothing for mishaps at the centre

### What is the relationship between a PAC and a board?

PACs and boards share a common goal of ensuring children and families have access to reliable child care that supports children’s optimal development. The relationship between a PAC and a board should be collaborative in achieving this goal.

The Board of Directors is required to hold an annual meeting of parents of children enrolled in the centre to elect the PAC. The board is also required to meet with the PAC at least twice per year.

These meetings are an opportunity for PACs to provide input in centre operations and are a platform for exchanging ideas about centre direction. The PAC may provide recommendations on emerging issues and advise the board about program strengths and areas for improvement.

The PAC and Board of Directors may also mutually agree upon other forms of communication, such as regular e-mail communication or additional meetings where board members attend.

Best Practices for the PAC /Board Relationship
The PAC and a board member meet at least six times per year.
A representative from the PAC is also a member of the Board of Directors.
Space is provided in the centre in a location frequented by parents for the PAC to post meeting notices, names and phone numbers of committee contact persons and other relevant information.
Child care services are provided for PAC meetings, courtesy of the Board of Directors.

### Who else regularly collaborates with the PAC?

PACs may also regularly collaborate with their child care centre’s director and Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Consultant in meeting PAC goals.

Child care centre directors are responsible for managing the daily operations of child care centres. Directors provide oversight for the ELCC program, manage centre staff and ensure policies established by the board are followed.

Child care centres also receive the support of an ELCC Consultant. The role of an ELCC Consultant is to promote quality child care services and enforce *The Child Care Act, 2014* and

*The Child Care Regulations, 2015.* ELCC Consultants attend a minimum of one PAC meeting each year.

**PACs may collaborate with their child care centre director and ELCC Consultant in achieving goals.**

Child Care Centre Director	ELCC Consultant
Employed by the Board of Directors	Employed by the Ministry of Education
Manages the daily operations of the child care centre	Ensures that the centre is meeting legislated standards
Oversees the implementation of a quality child care program	Acts as a resource in supporting the implementation of a quality program
Engages families in their child’s program	Available to support all families, including PAC members, who have questions or concerns

**What are the benefits of being a PAC member?**

There are many organizational and personal benefits to being a PAC member, such as:

- providing input in the development of centre policies, procedures, and guidelines
- sharing your talents and skills for the benefit of the child care centre
- collaborating with other parents in supporting quality child care
- networking with other parents and community members
- learning new transferable skills such as fundraising, volunteer coordination, and community mobilization

**What are the responsibilities of individual PAC members?**

PACs are required to appoint a chairperson from among committee members for a term not to exceed two years. The chairperson typically organizes and leads meetings and provides guidance to the PAC in representing and communicating the parent’s perspective.

The responsibilities of individual PAC members will vary depending on the projects of the committee. Individual PAC members may be involved in leading or participating on subcommittees to achieve PAC goals.



**PACs play an important and diverse role, from organizing donations of materials aligning with *Play and Exploration* to advising on matters of policy and procedure development.**

## Helpful Tips for PAC Communication

To facilitate communication between centre staff, parents, and PAC members, consider:

- posting pictures of PAC members (with their permission) and brief biographies for staff and parents to know who PAC members are
- posting meeting notices, names, contact information for PAC members in a space frequented by parents
- establishing lines of communication between the Board of Directors and PAC to address emerging issues between joint PAC-Board of Directors meetings



## Where can I find out more information about becoming a PAC member?

If you are interested in becoming a PAC member, let the director or a board member for your child care centre know. PAC members are elected at an annual meeting of parents. However, many centres may welcome parents interested in belonging to the PAC throughout the year, depending on centre policy.

**PACs can be a significant support in mobilizing community efforts for major projects, such as creating natural outdoor learning environments.**

## Useful Resources for PACs

Ministry of Education <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/government-structure/ministries/education>

*Child Care Licensee's Manual*

<https://publications.saskatchewan.ca/#/products/76930>

*Information for Child Care PACs: What Do You Need to Know About Play and Exploration?*

<https://publications.saskatchewan.ca/#/products/79912>

*Play and Exploration (and related supports)*

<https://publications.saskatchewan.ca/#/products/74066>