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*The following outlines the Terms of Reference for DEIB committee, and steering committee for RisingOaks Early Learning's diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging work.*

## **Mission**

RisingOaks Early Learning Ontario provides nurturing, play-based early learning to support each child in realizing their potential while giving families peace of mind.

### **Our Mission as it pertains to DEIB:**

The DEIB committee aims to foster a safe, inclusive, and equitable work and learning environment for all employees, families, and children at RisingOaks Early Learning Ontario, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, ability, or sexual orientation.

### **Our Vision as it pertains to DEIB:**

The DEIB committee reflects and celebrates the diversity and intersectionality of the communities we serve, ensuring inclusivity in staffing, leadership, membership, parent engagement, and the experiences of children in our care.

## **Purpose:**

The DEIB committee is responsible for guiding and supporting the implementation of the DEIB Action Plan, ensuring alignment with RisingOaks' current strategic plan and informing future strategic plans. This includes identifying and addressing barriers, promoting inclusive policies and practices, and fostering a culture of belonging across all RisingOaks' locations.

## **Roles & Responsibilities:**

### **DEIB committee members:**

- Serve as *champions of belonging* within their respective locations, fostering a psychologically safe, inclusive workplace culture.
- Provide insights, recommendations, and feedback on DEIB initiatives and policies.
- Promote engagement with and implementation of the DEIB Action Plan.
- Support the development and facilitation of DEIB-related programs, events, and training.
- Collect feedback and maintain open communication channels between staff, leadership, and stakeholders.
- Active engagement at various meetings and events within the organization. This may involve sharing about your experience(s) on the committee and/or the work we are undertaking.

### **Parent Representatives:** in addition to responsibilities listed above.

- Offer a family-centered perspective on DEIB initiatives.
- Support engagement with the broader RisingOaks' parent community.

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## Steering committee

- Provides strategic oversight, guidance, and accountability for DEIB initiatives.
- Ensures that DEIB efforts align with organizational objectives and resource allocation.
- Oversees the implementation and progress of the DEIB Action Plan.
- Lead DEIB committee meeting and engage the committee in regular planning and activity.
- Support DEIB committee members through appropriate appreciation and recognition, including paid time and/or an honorarium for non-staff committee members.
- Assesses and measures the impact of DEIB efforts.
- Ensure RisingOaks remains accountable for its commitment to DEIB, including informing the development of the next strategic plan.

## Sr. leadership team (CEO, director of operations):

- Provide strategic oversight and ensure DEIB initiatives align with organizational goals.
- Support and approve key DEIB-related recommendations and initiatives.
- Allocate resources necessary for the successful execution of the DEIB Action Plan.

## Executive assistant & marketing communications coordinator:

- Provide administrative support, meeting coordination, and documentation.
- Assist in the communication and promotion of DEIB initiatives.

## Credence & Co. consultant:

- Provide expert guidance and recommendations based on best practices in DEIB.
- Assist in the ongoing assessment and refinement of DEIB strategies.

## Core Principles

- **Equity & Access:** Identifying and removing systemic barriers to inclusion.
- **Belonging & Inclusion:** Creating an environment where all individuals feel valued and supported.
- **Learning & Growth:** Encouraging continuous education and reflection on DEIB-related matters.
- **Accountability:** Ensuring the organization follows through on DEIB commitments.
- **Respect & Care:** Fostering safe and respectful dialogue, acknowledging the emotional labor of DEIB work. We invite each person to create a space that is honest, that respects a diversity of experiences, that leans into discomfort and that recognizes the risks associated with re-traumatization.

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## **Governance and Accountability**

### Reporting Structure

- The DEIB committee reports to the DEIB steering committee.
- Committee members are accountable for fulfilling their roles while balancing their primary work responsibilities.
- If a committee member cannot meet their commitments, they may request a review of their participation.
- The steering committee is accountable to the CEO, and together they ensure that DEIB initiatives align with organizational goals and resources.

## **Membership & Terms**

### Composition of DEIB committee

- One representative from each RisingOaks child care centre selected based on a combination of the following factors:
  - Role (staff, parent, member)
  - Race/ethnicity
  - Gender
  - Sexuality
  - Centre representation
  - Generational mix
  - Tenure with RisingOaks Early Learning
  - Family status
  - DEIB experience (lived or professional)
  - Ability to be a change champion
- Up to two parent representatives.
- Two sr. leadership members (CEO & director of operations).
- Supported by the executive assistant, marketing communications coordinator.
- With additional support from consultants as determined from time to time.
- The steering committee will appoint two co-chairs.

### Composition of steering committee

- Comprised of the two DEIB committee co-chairs, the CEO, and the consultant from Credence & Co, with support from the executive assistant.

### Term Limits

#### DEIB committee

- Members will serve staggered two-year terms to ensure continuity.
- Members may renew for one additional term (maximum of four years).

#### Steering committee and employee supports

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- Other than the DEIB committee co-chair, other members of the Steering Committee, and the employee supports, will serve by virtue of their position.
- The DEIB committee co-chair will serve for the duration of their remaining term on the committee. If they choose to stand for reappointment for an additional term, an open call for the co-chair role will be made to all committee members.
  - For example, if a committee member's term ends in February 2026 and they are serving as co-chair, their co-chair term will also conclude at that time.
  - If they seek reappointment for another two-year term on the committee (2026-2028), the co-chair role will be opened to other committee members. If no other nominations are received and they are reappointed to both the committee and the co-chair role, their co-chair term would extend to February 2028.
- Upon completion of their role as co-chair, they may be invited to remain on the steering committee for a period of 1 year for continuity at the discretion of sr. leadership.

### Resignation and Replacement

- Members may resign by providing two weeks' notice in writing.
- If a vacancy arises, the committee will identify a replacement through an application and selection process.

### Meetings & Communication

- The DEIB committee will meet at least quarterly, with additional meetings as determined by the steering committee.
  - Additional working group meetings may be scheduled to plan and implement actions arising from the DEIB Action Plan.
- The DEIB steering committee will meet quarterly to review progress and provide strategic direction.
- Communication and updates will be shared through internal channel with the leadership team and all staff.
- All external communications, including formal updates to RisingOaks' members and families, must be reviewed and approved by senior leadership.
  - Any DEIB-specific posted materials produced at the centre level must first be approved by the DEIB committee member in consultation with their supervisor and/or a member of the senior leadership team.

### Confidentiality

All committee members must sign an Oath of Confidentiality to protect sensitive discussions and personal information.

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## **Mandate**

The DEIB committee will:

- Review and update the Terms of Reference annually.
- Implement and monitor the DEIB Action Plan.
- Support RisingOaks in embedding DEIB into organizational policies and culture by promoting the use of the DEIB mission, statement, principles and decision-making criteria in our work together.
- Foster open dialogue and continuous improvement in DEIB efforts.
- Recognize and celebrate the contributions of those engaged in DEIB work.
- Promote a culture of inclusion and belonging within RisingOaks Early Learning Ontario.
- Work in collaboration with the DEIB steering committee to ensure strategic alignment and organizational commitment to DEIB initiatives.
- Find ways to break down organizational silos and develop strategic approaches and key messages regarding DEIB issues.