

# Oak Learners

2022-2023



Creativity. Confidence. Community.



*“Every child can excel when they are given the skills and experiences to support them on their learning journey.”*



*Creativity. Confidence. Community.*



## *A message from the Director*

At Oak Learners, we strive to create an engaging curriculum that is progressive, interdisciplinary, and most importantly student-driven. Not only are we an innovative not-for-profit learning centre, but we are also a team of leaders in the community, working to ensure all students are supported and cared for.

On behalf of the entire staff at Oak Learners, I want to welcome you and your family to our school this year. The global pandemic caused adversity and change. However, as a community, we have adapted by working together to support all the learners in our classrooms and, despite these circumstances, we have ensured that all students received the education and support they needed while remaining safe.

The 2022-2023 school year is no different, with a focus on equity, diversity, ingenuity, and inclusion. All the educators at Oak Learners will face the coming challenges and continue to adapt to create a caring and welcoming school environment.

Raising resilient and successful children certainly does take a village! I love working together with parents to support their child's education; in a true partnership between the school and families. Communication between home and school is paramount to a child's success and we strive to demonstrate this value on a daily basis.

I am proud to welcome you to our 7th school year and look forward to working with the entire school community once again!

*Kelly Farrell*



## Our Philosophy

Oak Learners is a private alternative school and learning centre, offering a full time day school, as well as a wide variety of online and outdoor programming. This includes tutoring, music lessons, art classes, outdoor education, dance, yoga, day camps and more.

Since 2015, teachers, families, and students have been working together to nurture an enriched and collaborative learning environment following a holistic approach to elementary education. Oak Learners delivers an educational alternative, that cultivates authentic and creative critical thinkers who are prepared for a life of learning and community engagement.

Day School at Oak Learners is a Reggio Emilia Inspired Private School for students Junior Kindergarten (JK) through Grade 8. Our curriculum is progressive, interdisciplinary, inquiry-based programming, in a student-driven, teacher-facilitated, alternative learning environment.

At Oak Learners, our mission is to inspire an engaging learning environment, nurturing children's natural curiosity about their world with student-centered experiences. We believe every child is capable and will be successful when belonging to a supportive educational community.

***"My son has been thriving at Oak Learners for over 4 years now. He loves the teachers, who are attentive, responsive and make learning fun." ~Asha, Parent***





The three “C’s” that form the foundation of the Oak Learners philosophy are more than just a tagline with alliteration, they are the core beliefs that bring success to every student who passes through the doors.

### **CREATIVITY**

Creativity is natural in the minds of children, and a trait that should be encouraged. We focus on creating an environment where these inclinations can be nurtured and celebrated. Walking down the hallways of Oak Learners, one will see examples of children’s creativity adorning the walls and displayed for all to see. Each piece of artwork looks as unique as the children who created them.

### **CONFIDENCE**

Confidence is the driving power behind success and can often be the difference between children who want to take risks and try new things, and children who become complacent with maintaining the status quo. At Oak Learners, the teachers understand that in order to find success with academic endeavours, students must first believe that they can!

### **COMMUNITY**

Community is exceptionally important for education. A supportive community is irreplaceable to the success of children. As they grow, so does their community and their sense of belonging to that community. At Oak Learners, children are not just part of a “class” or a “school”, but part of a space where the roles of every student, teacher, parent and volunteer are recognized and celebrated.

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**Our Curriculum:** Oak Learners focuses on an inquiry-based programming in an alternative enrichment learning environment. Each learner goes through a cyclical process of identifying their unique strengths, needs, goals, and interests. Through collaboration with teachers, peers, parents and members of their community, students design inquiry-based projects to guide their learning over the course of a term.

Oak Learners brings new opportunities and experiences through an integrated and immersive approach to education. Ontario Curriculum content and skill achievement guidelines are covered and enriched through a Reggio Emilia inspired approach to learning in a 21st century environment.

**Academics:** Oak Learners maintains a program that is flexible and progressive. It features interdisciplinary learning opportunities in a student-driven, teacher-facilitated learning environment.

**Arts:** Oak Learners is dedicated to inspiring minds through Arts Education. Our programming integrates the Arts, encouraging children to explore emotions and coping strategies for reducing stress and anxiety, increasing focus and attention, and improving overall mental health.

**Mindfulness:** Oak Learners facilitates an approach that is infused with mindfulness-based understanding. Our environment promotes a calm, focused, and alert state of mind, which directly influences cognitive performance, creativity and confidence.





*Enriched learning beyond the walls of the classroom*

### **Programming Features**

6:1 ratio / S.T.E.A.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math) / Field Trips, and Experiential Learning Opportunities / Arts-Integrated Programming / Social Leadership / Personalized Support for Learning Exceptionalities including but not limited to: Gifted, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Generalized Anxiety, Learning Disabilities (LD).

### **Assessment & Reporting**

Students work together with teachers and peer-mentors to develop their individualized criteria for success and assessing their progress. Teachers track each student's progress in alignment with Ontario Curriculum standards. At the end of each term, students, teachers and parents meet to conference, reflect and, set goals for the next term. Reporting on assessment is designed for each student's unique profile and will take place primarily through formal and informal teacher-led portfolio conferences.

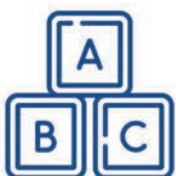
### **Independent Study**

Students at Oak Learners are encouraged to spend time regularly on an independent study project of their own choosing. Teachers will act as mentors and guides for facilitating research and reporting. Independent inquiry projects provide an opportunity for the students to also learn from each other. Allowing them to recognize that each person brings unique interests and talents to the classroom.

### **Curriculum Enhancements**

The regular academic curriculum is enhanced with special guest instructors, field trips and regular involvement in the community. Students will spend a great deal of time out in the community, enriching their learning experiences inside and outside of the classroom.

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### Kindergarten Readiness / Pre-Kindergarten

The Kindergarten Readiness program lays a strong foundation for a positive educational experience and a smooth transition to school, while fostering classroom and independence skills. Students spend 2.5 hours daily in this program, exploring literacy, numeracy, science among other fields, through a natural, inquiry-based program.



### Kindergarten

The Kindergarten program lays a strong foundation for an enriching educational journey. Children may attend two, three, four or five days per week. Experienced educators spend time exploring literacy, numeracy, and S.T.E.A.M through a Reggio-Inspired constructive learning program.



### Grades 1-3

The grade school program brings new learning opportunities each day, through an integrated and immersive approach to education in the primary grades. Ontario Curriculum content and skill achievement guidelines are covered and enriched through a holistic approach to learning in a project-based and mixed-grade inquiry learning model.







*Here for every step of your child's learning journey.*



#### **Grades 4-6**

The junior program maintains aims to inspire and create authentic curriculum, provide a balanced learning environment, nurture children's natural curiosity about their world, all using: student-centered experiences. Students are encouraged to participate in real-world projects that expand their circle of influence to their community and the rest of the world. Integrated learning projects that include aspects of STEM and the Arts as well as reinforcing core skills such as Literacy and Math, are a fundamental aspect of our curriculum.



#### **Grades 7-8**

The upper years program at Oak Learners has expanded to include the Intermediate levels for the 2022-23 school year. Our research-based approach to skills-based teaching provides students with a strong preparation for the High School grades. Students are encouraged to become advocates for their own learning and engage in a daily reflection on successes and goals in an effort to build learner self-awareness, confidence and motivation. Cross-curricular style learning and real-world projects integrate skills for comprehending and solidify Ontario Curriculum expectations.

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## The Kindergarten Readiness (Pre-K) Program

This program is intended for children aged 3-4 years who plan to enter Kindergarten in September 2023. This program lays a strong foundation for a positive educational experience and a smooth transition to Kindergarten, by fostering classroom skills and independent self-care skills that contribute to school success.

Experienced Early Childhood Educators spend time exploring literacy, numeracy, science, along with other fields, through a natural and inquiry-based program inspired by the philosophy of the Reggio Emilia approach.

Oak Learners believes in the core principles of the Reggio Emilia approach which state:

- Children must have some control over the direction of their learning;
- Children must be able to learn through experiences of touching, moving, listening, and observing;
- Children have a relationship with other children and with material items in the world that they must be allowed to explore;
- Children must have endless ways and opportunities to express themselves.

***"It always amazes me when the educators take time to upload pictures, videos and share such detailed written updates after already having a full day with students."  
~Samira, Parent***





## The Kindergarten Readiness Curriculum

**Early Literacy** is nurtured and developed through daily exploration of print concepts, music and sound exploration, and active storytelling. Children also develop phonemic awareness and pre-literacy skills as well, as stronger fine-motor skills through our targeted multi-sensory approach to learning to write.

**Early Math Concepts** are built through intentional play-based learning activities. Children solidify skills in numeracy and patterning, which build a stronger foundation for elementary mathematics.

**Self-Expression and Creativity** is developed through creative play invitations. Children are encouraged to develop their independence, self-awareness and confidence while also learning about cooperation and communication skills with peers

**Cognitive Skills** are built in a developmentally appropriate way through memory games, science experiments, sequencing, books, musical instruments, songs and games, visiting police and fire stations and fingerplays.

**Gross Motor Skills** are developed in our indoor space, which is suitable for running, jumping, climbing, swinging and sliding. Teachers also foster gross motor development through the use of balls and bean bags, songs and games.

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## The Kindergarten Enrichment Program

Kindergarten students at Oak Learners spend their days creatively exploring literacy, numeracy, science and the arts. Children learn through a natural and inquiry-based program inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach.

Our Kindergarten program follows a skill-based curriculum through a cross-curricular and arts-based approach. This curriculum has a unique focus on outdoor education. Spending time in our community and in nature provides our students unique opportunities to engage meaningfully with their environment and their peers.

Daily programming for Kindergarten students at Oak Learners includes blocks of time devoted to Core Skill Development (ie. Literacy and Math), Outdoor Education (ie. Ecology and gross motor development), and S.T.E.A.M. Monthly theme-based units guide the learning and provide a foundation for project-based knowledge and real-world application of the skills they are acquiring.

***"The teachers think are passionate and helpful. They think outside the box to make Oak Learners a successful and fun educational experience for the students!"***  
***~Larissa, Parent***





**Literacy development** is enhanced through early writing tasks, gross-motor development and oral expression. It is also developed through literature appreciation and reading skills such as fluency, phonetics and comprehension.

**Mathematical development** is enhanced through a variety of tasks, including patterning, numeracy skills and problem solving. The program focuses on mental math skills and building comprehension of the role of mathematics in the world around us.

**Science Inquiry** is enhanced using hands-on learning experiences with the natural environment. The program uses natural materials from the community and direct observations of seasonal changes in our lives. Oak Learners also participates in the hatching of ducklings or chicks each year to encourage the children's understanding of the beauty of life and the creatures around us.

**Cognitive Skills** and problem solving strategies are nurtured through memory games, STEM design and building investigations.

**Self-Expression** and creativity are explored through daily arts integration, including: Visual Art, Music, Dance, Drama and more.

**Independence** and self-awareness are influenced through confidence-building activities, cooperation and communication with peers, teachers and community members.

**21st Century Learning** focuses on skill development including, but not limited to: critical thinking, collaboration and leadership as well as intentional and responsible use of technology.



## The Elementary Program for Grades One to Eight

### Integrated Literacy

Reading and Writing form the building blocks for communication. At Oak Learners, we approach literacy through an integrated approach, which means that reading and writing skills are taught within other subject areas, such as Science, Social Studies or The Arts. Children develop strong literacy habits and communication skills through meaningful experiences with text. This program uses a variation of tactics for developing skills in writing. Such as through programs like “Handwriting without Tears,” or real- world applications of writing, like letter writing and blog publishing. Students at Oak Learners continually meet or exceed the Ontario Curriculum expectations.

### The Arts

We believe that Arts Education plays a very important role in enriching the education for all young learners. Everyday experiences at Oak Learners are fully immersed and integrated with Art, Music, Drama and Dance. The Arts bring learning to life and provides a context for deep emotional and social learning. To supplement the curriculum and integrated approach to The Arts, we also have specialist teachers available for private, extra-curricular Music and Art classes.

### Independent Study

Teachers act as mentors and guides for facilitating research and reporting. Independent projects provide children the opportunity to pursue personal interests that have meaning and purpose to further enhance their own learning growth and experience. It further provides the opportunity for students to also learn from each other, recognizing that each person brings unique interests and talents to the classroom.



### Mathematics

Math is all around us and students at Oak Learners are taught to recognize mathematical patterns and apply problem solving skills through real-world applications. Our program takes a very hands-on approach, using manipulatives as well as leveled workbooks to provide an enriched approach to learning Math that exceeds the Ontario Mathematics Curriculum. At Oak Learners, we teach Mathematical skills on a continuum; progressing students when they are ready to move to the next level and, providing scaffolding support for students who need help bridging gaps in learning.

### STEAM Curriculum Enhancements

S.T.E.A.M = Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math

The regular academic for Science and Social Studies curriculum is enhanced with special guest instructors, field trips and regular involvement in the community. Students will spend a great deal of time out in the community, enriching their classroom learning experiences. S.T.E.A.M projects help students integrate curriculum skills with real-world applications.

### 21st Century Learning

Preparing students for an ever-changing future needs to include the development of “soft skills” as much as traditional curriculum. These skills include nurturing and challenging students with critical thinking, collaboration and leadership as well as intentional and responsible use of technology. Learning how to communicate learning and present projects in public platforms (ie. Blogs, assemblies, etc.) is fundamental to building student confidence and motivation. Oak Learners students are encouraged to get involved and apply their academic and artistic skills through unique community initiatives and activities.

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## **Inquiry in the Classroom**

The inquiry model of learning allows for children of different ages and abilities to access information at their own pace while developing important 21st century skills for lifelong self-directed learning. The following integrated unit on "Hatching Duck Eggs" demonstrates how our students and teachers at Oak Learners utilize the inquiry model, aligning our teaching and learning around this experience while also connecting to Ontario Curriculum skill-based development.

**Theme:** Living Things in the Environment

**Inquiry Skills:** Connections, observations, predictions

### **Central Ideas:**

Kindergarten ~ Living things go through changes and adaptations in their lifetime.

Gr. 1-3 ~ Living things have specific needs that exist in their habitats

Gr. 4-6 ~ All living things are interconnected in the environment

### **Lines of Inquiry:**

Kindergarten ~ How do ducks change from eggs to adults? What needs do ducks have in their environment to help them adapt to their lifecycle changes?

Gr. 1-3 ~ What do living things need to survive? How do habitats serve the needs of living things? How do living things adapt to changes in their environment?

Gr. 4-6 ~ How do living things adapt and change? How are living things connected within a habitat? How do changes in the environment affect living things?







## Seamless Blended Learning for the 21st Century

Oak Learners has always aimed to be ahead of the curve in educational practice. When the education world prepared to pivot towards online and inquiry-based learning, Oak Learners was already there.

Online Learning provides more flexibility for schools and students to access specialists and classes outside of the typical academic selections. Online learning is one way for students to access new courses and a variety of teachers to expand their learning experience and develop important connections between academic achievements and real-world applications.

Oak Learners has been offering flexibility to families since 2015. Parents collaborate with educators and support workers to create an individualized learning plan, delivered in a safe, nurturing and creative environment. The progressive, interdisciplinary approach to programming engages students in the learning process and supports them in developing essential skills in 21st century competencies, including resiliency, goal setting, collaboration, technology and creativity.

The move to online education provides a unique opportunity for teachers to further individualize learning and present material to each student in a way that is accessible and engaging. It is forcing everyone to think outside of the 4-walls of the classroom and find new ways to present curriculum to today's students. At Oak Learners, we can't wait to see where this new adventure leads!

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## Outdoor & Experiential Education

Playing and exploring outdoors are experiences that most adults today grew up with. Yet, in the past few decades, the amount of time that children spend outdoors and the ways they experience their neighbourhoods, have changed drastically. Much of the recreational time of today's children is spent on indoor pursuits, even among children who live in rural areas.

Research shows that students who receive daily lessons outdoors in green spaces had greater self-regulation than those who had infrequent learning experiences outside the classroom. Many studies over the past decade link children's mental, emotional, physical and spiritual health with time spent outdoors, experiencing nature. For example, students have been shown to have increased focus, confidence, self-esteem and overall feelings of happiness and satisfaction with school.

Even something as simple as looking at a tree can have surprisingly calming effects! In addition, directly observing plants and animals help children develop an understanding of "systems", that is, the relationships and processes in nature, while building their connections to community. Not only that, but learning outside is fun! Students are excited and enthusiastic to try new activities and discover new things. This type of experiential, "hands-on" learning often reaches students who don't thrive in a typical classroom setting.

***"Children cannot bounce off the walls if we take the walls away." ~Erin Kenny***





## Taking academic excellence beyond the 4 walls of a classroom!

Oak Learners strives every day to inspire learning through an authentic skill-based curriculum and this extends to our Outdoor Education programming, which accounts for 30-50% of each and every day! Our teachers nurture children's natural curiosity about their world with student-centered experiences, regardless of the weather.

Our Elementary and Middle School Campuses are located in South Etobicoke, walking distance from naturalized urban forests and conservation areas. With the entire Lake Ontario waterfront as our backyard, our students have opportunities to explore their community in a way that many other schools are unable to offer.

Every day, all year round, students and staff of Oak Learners take their learning beyond the classroom walls. As the saying goes, "there is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing", and a large part of our teaching self-care revolves around being prepared for whatever nature is going to send our way.

A Science lesson on ecosystems is likely to take place in the watershed along the Humber River, where students can see and experience what they are learning about and internalize the importance of environmental stewardship. Neighbourhood walks with Kindergarten students are opportunities to take Literacy and Math into everyday life; signs become sight words and buildings become mathematical patterns and subjects of problem solving.

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## Programs for the whole family!

Oak Learners is a private alternative school and learning centre, offering a full-time and part-time day school, as well as a wide variety of extra-curricular programming for the community, including tutoring, music, art, yoga, dance, day camps and more.



Music Lessons



Tutoring, K-12



Private Day School K-8



Art Classes



Summer Camps



Outdoor Learning



Yoga



Dance

## Programs Partners

In addition to our in-house specialties, Oak Learners partners with several other service providers to offer the best available programming to our community through our Learning Centre.



Island-essence Yoga & Wellbeing with Donna Reed



## School Year Calendar 2022-23

School Year Begins	September 6, 2022
Fall Term(15 weeks)	September 6, 2022 – December 16, 2022
Winter Term (14 weeks)	January 3, 2023 - April 14, 2023
Spring Term (10 weeks)	April 17, 2023- June 23, 2023
Summer Term (Summer Camps ONLY, 8 weeks)	July 3, 2023 -August 25, 2023

## Oak Learner's School Holidays & Closures

Labour Day	September 5, 2022
Thanksgiving Day	October 10, 2022
Winter Break (inclusive) -School Closed	December 19, 2022 - January 2, 2023
Family Day	February 20, 2023
March Break (inclusive)-No Classes, camps	March 13 - March 17, 2023
Good Friday	April 7, 2023
Easter Monday	April 10, 2023
Victoria Day	May 23, 2023
Canada Day extended weekend Break (inclusive) - School Closed	June 26, 2023 - July 3, 2023
End of Summer Break - School Closed	August 26 through September 4, 2023

## March Break & Summer Camps

Summer Camps	March 13-17, 2023
Summer Camps	July 3 - August 25, 2023

## Tuition for the 2022-23 School Year

\*2022-2023 Academic Year Fees are based on 188 instructional days from September 6, 2022 to June 23, 2023.

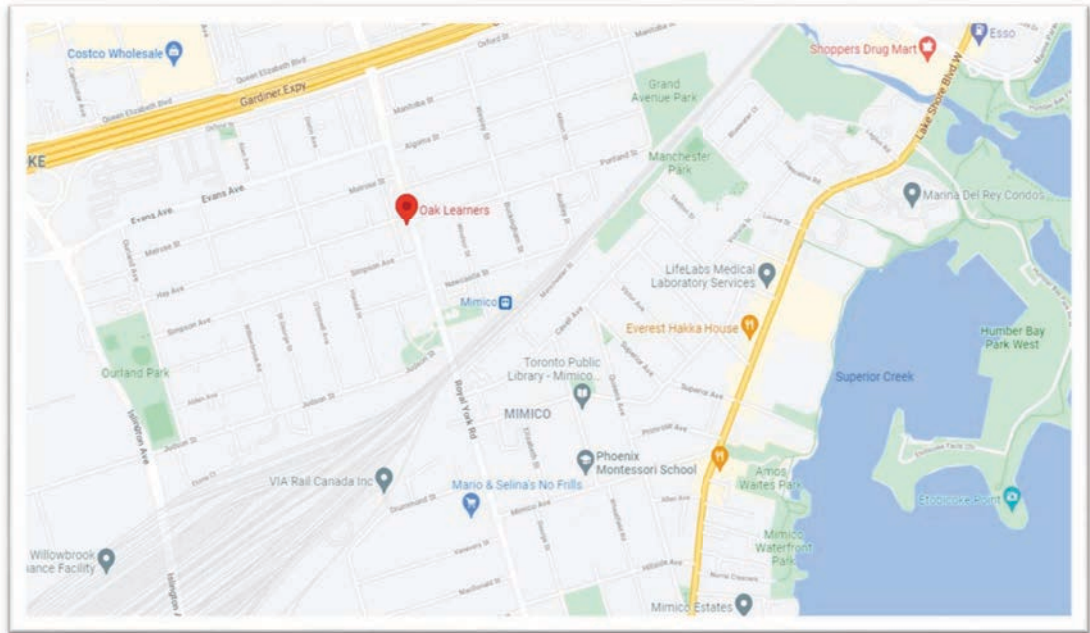
Returning Full Time Students (JK through Grade 8)	\$16,900
New Full Time Students (JK through Grade 8)	\$19,250
Part Time Students (JK through Grade 4) – 2 Days per week (Tue/Wed)	\$9,132
Part Time Students (JK through Grade 4) – 3 Days per week (Tue/Wed/Thu)	\$11,655



## Royal York Campus

394 Royal York Rd.  
Etobicoke, ON  
M8Y 3R2

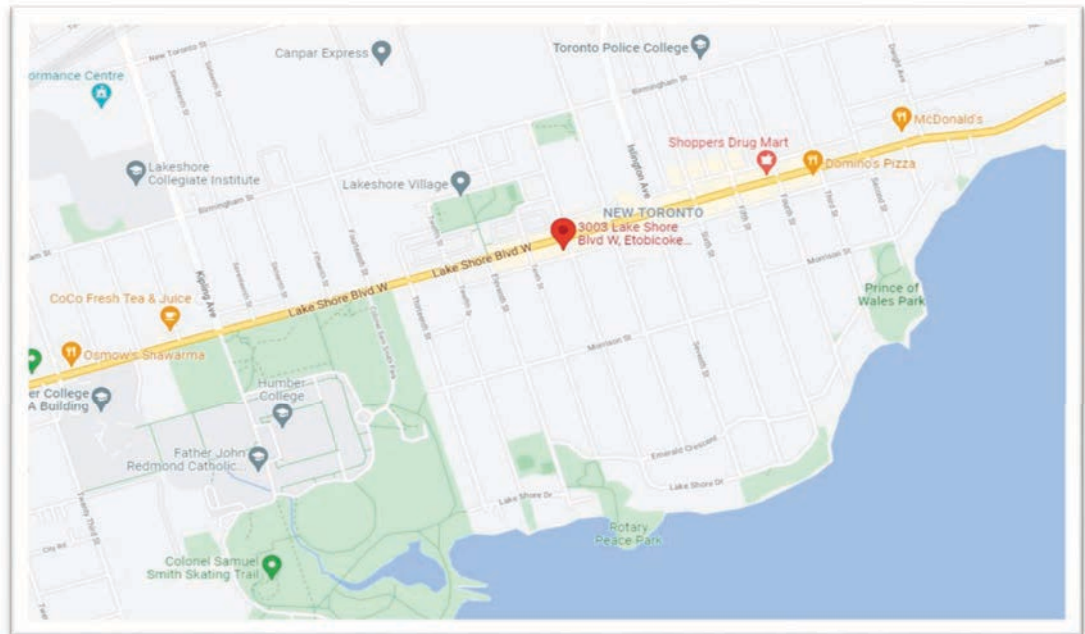
416-820-5233  
info@oaklearners.ca



## Lakeshore Campus (Opening July 2022)

3003B Lakeshore Blvd  
Etobicoke, ON  
M8V 1K2

416-820-5233  
info@oaklearners.ca







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