

Parent Handbook



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Philosophy

At Dragonfly Family Day Home Agency Ltd. we recognize the importance of the early years development as a valuable foundation on which children build a healthy future. Children are confident, resourceful, and capable learners.

Families are viewed as partners, collaborators and advocates for their children and are encouraged to share their culture, language and experiences with providers and staff. We have a deep commitment to the power of diversity. We respect the dignity, worth and individuality of each person.

We value the relationships children have with family day home providers. Committed, passionate, knowledgeable, and creative providers are essential to providing a positive learning environment.

We provide an environment where children are able to learn and develop through inquiry based play, exploration, and active learning in a safe and caring environment.

We strive to help children build a sense belonging and self-worth by developing connections with peers, staff, community and their natural environment.

We encourage community stewardship and environmental sustainability by gaining knowledge and understanding of our environment through daily outdoor activity and exploration.

We are committed to ongoing professional development to develop our skills and abilities. Staff and providers value and respect each other and the contributions they make to our team.

We coordinate with and utilize existing resources in the community, collaborating with all stake holders to generate a culture of quality practices in early childhood.

Agency Organization

The Agency Program Coordinator

The Coordinator is available to you for information regarding programming and registration. The Coordinator will give you an orientation of the day home and answer any questions regarding your child's placement in the program. If you would like information regarding any other joint programs being offered through the day home or other outside agencies such as Parent Link or Brighter Futures, please feel free to ask us for brochures and upcoming workshops for parents.

The Agency Providers

The providers will facilitate the day-to-day programming within the program. They will be dedicated to each child's physical, emotional, intellectual, and social development. As trained professionals, they supplement the care provided by the family through organized activities and will maintain a stimulating and nurturing environment. All providers welcome any information you can share with them about your child to help provide an easy transition from home to the day home. Some examples of information that the provider would encourage is; child's sleeping pattern changes, illness, dramatic changes in home environment, changes in your child's eating habits, etc.

Provider Meetings

The Agency Provider meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month but starting at 7 pm, and are a maximum of (1) hour long. Agendas for these meetings will be distributed the week prior to the meeting date. If you require changes made to the agenda please let the Coordinator know ahead of time. Handbooks will be reviewed once a year in January at a staff/provider meeting, prior to this meeting parents will be given notice so that they could bring up any concerns they may have. A date will be added to the handbook indicating the revision date.

Parent Concern/Complaint Policy

Situations may arise that you as an involved person within our program may need addressed. Please address any concerns in the following manner:

- Verbal or written concern.
- If the issue is not resolved, please discuss it with the Agency Coordinator. Please inform him/her that you have discussed it with the provider.
- Inquiries with regard to Licensing Standards and Best Practices or further information can be obtained through Central Alberta CFSA (403) 341- 8642.

All complaints are followed up by the Agency Coordinator by a home visit or interview with the provider and the outcome will be communicated in writing to the complainant.

Monthly complaint records are submitted to CFSA.

All contact between agency staff, parents and providers is documented on CFSA approved contact record.

Hours and Availability

Year round, for children ages 0-12 yrs, Monday- Friday (hours set by the individual day home provider). Please note the following government statutory holidays when the day homes will be closed.

- New Year's Day, Family Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Victoria Day, Canada Day, Heritage Day, Labor Day, Remembrance Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, Boxing Day,
- Day Homes are open during March Break and all Professional Development Days.

Agency hours – 9:00am to 4:00pm, Monday to Friday – (Closed on Statutory Hours)

please call for an appointment

Parent Correspondence:

Administration will provide parents with letters and newsletters. All correspondence will be given to your provider, emailed, or as deemed necessary, mailed to you. We do encourage you to read through all information sent home as it will keep you up to date with upcoming events or notices of changes.

Consistency of Care in Day Home Environments

BACKGROUND:

One of the indicators of quality child care is consistency of care. It involves consistency of relationship between the child and the caregiver.

Consistency of care facilitates emotional connections. Being warm and caring and forming a strong bond with a child early in life (parents and caregivers) can strengthen the connections in the brain that will in later life help children deal with emotional issues. The child may handle feelings better, adapt more quickly to new situation, and handle stress better. Children without this strong bond produce more cortisol, a stress hormone that affects the body's metabolism and immune system as well as the brain. High levels of cortisol alter the brain, reducing the number of connections. In addition, children who have many caregivers for short periods of time can find it difficult to form close bonds and may fail to reach their intellectual potential.

Any child may get upset when left with a caregiver, but as long as they are getting loving attention from their provider, there are no permanent ill effects. In fact, studies show that children with working mothers and good quality child care are often more independent, confident, and less anxious about the little things.

In a family day home environment the same adult provides care over the entire child care day rather than people working sequential shifts. When children remain in the same setting for several years they maintain the same provider in family child care. Parents talk to the same care provider every time the child is dropped off and picked up, the relationship between provider and parent can last years and the relationship tends to be more personal, more intense and of longer duration. Children get personalized care and have the ability to develop long term attachments to one person.

The same home child care environment, the same child care giver, the same rule and expectations, the same routines.....**consistency**.... something the child can count on.

INTENT

PROVIDERS:

The Agency will endeavor to screen day home providers who demonstrate a commitment to quality child care, recognize the importance of education and training and believe that positive early childhood experiences foster the well being of child and family. The Agency recognizes that dedication to the early childhood field requires professional long term commitment and obligation.

FAMILIES:

The Agency will endeavor to find appropriate child care in a day home environment that meets the individual needs of each family. Parents will interview and select a provider that they feel will best meet their need and will provide consistency of care for the duration of time that the care is required. Keeping the child/ren in one home for the entirety of the child care experience is the optimum goal for all parties.

When the primary caregiver is unavailable to provide service (due to health, personal situations, etc.) parents are given the opportunity to secure back up service in an alternate day home that has been screened, approved and is monitored by the Agency, The Agency will endeavor to ensure that this short term care arrangement will meet the individual needs of the child and family. Interviews can be arranged to ensure comfortable transition for both parent and child. In addition, the Agency attempts to secure any subsequent future sub care in the same back up care home – again to facilitate consistency, stability, compatibility, confidence and comfort.

When long term sub care is required (due to maternity leave, long term illness, LOA, etc.) the Agency will endeavor to arrange interviews between parents and provider who can meet both the needs of the family and the needs of the long term sub care (this is to facilitate long term care in one home). – again, the goal is**consistency**.. .. Upon return of the primary caregiver, the family will be relocated back into the primary child care arrangement with consideration given to transition comfort of family and child. Transfer may be immediate or transitioned over time.

Parent Involvement

Because families are of primary importance in a child's development, we will strive to bring about collaboration between the home and our day home in ways that enhance each child's individual development. The provider has a commitment to develop relationships of mutual trust with the families they serve; to respect the dignity of each family, each family's child rearing values and their right to make decisions for their children; to interpret each child's progress; and to help families understand and appreciate the value of developmentally appropriate early childhood programs.

Parents are encouraged to participate in our daily activities as it may fit into their busy schedule. To better establish relations with our families we encourage the following:

1. **Parent Orientation** : Each parent new to the day home will be given a tour and have an opportunity to meet the provider. Upon registering, parents will receive a parent handbook which outlines all of the day homes policies, procedures, and philosophy.
2. **Gradual Entry** : Each family registering will be asked to come in for an orientation and then a second visit to spend time with their child within the program setting. This is to build confidence in both parent and child. It also will give the provider an opportunity to understand the individual needs of the child and to ask questions pertaining to care. (i.e. allergies, fears, exceptional needs or gifts)
3. **Communication**: It is of utmost importance that parents are at ease while their child is in care. Parents are welcome to phone or drop in at any time to inquire about or visit with their child. The providers are here to support families and will help in any way with resources or information you might be seeking regarding concerns you have about your child.
4. **Daily Programming**: Any parent who feels they could lend their talents or gifts to a theme or occasion is greatly encouraged to do so. There is always opportunity to enrich a theme or special event with guests or visitors. Please let the provider know if you would be interested in donating your time this way.
5. **Current Events Board**: A board containing the month's events, menu plans, etc. will be available for parents to review. Any suggestions will also be welcome and can be made to provider or the Agency

Child Development

Children's Development will be documented in the following ways:

- Ages and Stages Questionnaires (done by providers and parents)
- Children's Portfolios (ongoing as kept by the providers) with checklists being done in January, April, July, and October
- Home visit notes and discussions
- Provider meeting discussions

If a Provider has concerns about a child's development they will inform the Agency Coordinator who will in turn investigate the documentation and home visit observations. The Coordinator will then contact the parents and discuss those concerns. The Coordinator can supply the parents with information on community agencies that can provide services and support for the child and parent. The provider and the parent will be encouraged to work together on implementing consistent supports for the child. *At no time will the Provider or Agency give a diagnosis of a child.* We will only direct parents to professional agencies where they can obtain help for specific concerns.

The Agency will support Providers in implementing strategies to aid in child development as directed by the parent or professional agency with whom the parents are working with.

Child Referrals

The Agency has regular and systematic documentation of children's growth and development which involves providers and parents completing an Ages & Stages Questionnaire four times per year. The questionnaires are kept on file at the agency office in the children's file, in the children's portfolios in the family day homes, and with parents.

Issues of developmental concern are identified by families, providers and home visitors. If a provider identifies a developmental concern they will initially inform the Agency (not the parent). Action is initiated with the support of the agency in consultation with families. The Agency will provide resources (as available) to families and direct/refer them to appropriate services within the community.

The Agency will keep a current knowledge of the services available to families in the community and support families in connecting with those services.

At no time will providers or agency staff diagnose, judge, or give advice to families on developmental issues or concerns. However, the Agency will assist families in accessing supports that are available to them.

Enrolment Information

Enrolment in our program is open to children within the age limits (0 months to 12 years) provided the program can meet the needs of the child. Enrolment is granted without discrimination against: gender, race, creed, religion, or political belief.

Our providers offer full, part time and casual/drop-in care. By definition casual/drop-in care is sporadic care within a one month period; part time is two (2) or less full days per week; full time is three (3) to five (5) days per week.

1. First month's fees are due when parents confirm acceptance of a space in the program. First and last month's fees are due to confirm a space in the program for parents who intend to apply for subsidy. Partial month's fees for the first month of care will be prorated to include only those days in which the child has been enrolled. Parents who are applying for subsidy will not receive this money back until they have finished their last month of care to balance out any fees not covered.
2. Registration Fee – All new accounts will be charged a one time administration fee. This is a non-refundable fee which will apply to all accounts (full time, part time, casual/drop-in). In the event a family terminates care and returns again within the same twelve month period, the fee will NOT be charged again.
3. Parent Monitoring Fee – All accounts will be charged a monthly parent monitoring fee.
4. Parents will need to meet with the Agency Coordinator to discuss policies, procedures and proper placement of their child into a home (such as drop-off times, pick-up, payment, parent interview, etc.).
5. Parents must return a completed registration package to the Agency Coordinator. These documents must be filled in including Alberta Health Care number and *all* contact names that will have authorization to pick up the child from the premises.

Only after receiving all of these items will your child's space be reserved and held for you until your start date.

Provincial Child Care Subsidies:

Subsidy must be arranged in advance to entering our program. Due to the manner in which child care subsidies are paid out by the province, **parents are required to pay their fees for the first month of care in full**, until receipt of your subsidy approval. Upon receipt of subsidy payments your account will be credited, and the next month's invoice will reflect the applied subsidy amount. A deposit equal to the approved subsidy amount for the child will be held on account until the last month of care. If you think you may be eligible please come speak to the Coordinator for forms. We can assist in filling out these forms as well. Parents are responsible for fees not covered by subsidy. i.e. Registration fees. Monthly Parent Monitoring fees. Any remaining balance after final month subsidy audit will be reimbursed to the parent

If you are unfamiliar with the Alberta Child Care Subsidy program and would like information please ask or go on line to www.child.gov.ab.ca. Online applications are also available.

Wait Lists

When the program has reached full capacity we will have a waiting list. Parents on the list will be given notice that there is a space. They will have 48 hours to respond and pay their fees before it will be offered to the next name on the list.

Payment Policy

On or before the 5th of the month, parents must fill in the days (on the attendance sheet) they will require child care for the following month. The sheet will be supplied by the Provider. The Provider will submit this to the Coordinator no later than the 20th of the month. Parents will be invoiced in the last week of the month according to the days of care needed. Fees are paid one month in advance and are due on the first day of the month. Fees can be paid by emt, cash, or cheque to the Agency Coordinator.

Should fees not be paid by the 5th of the month, care will be suspended until payment is made within the month. Should fees not be paid by month's end the termination of care conditions apply.

Interest will be charged at a rate of 2.5% on the 30th day to pay the balance owing on account. If at any time the account cannot be paid in full, the Agency will terminate the service being provided, until fees are paid in full.

PLEASE NOTE: Childcare fees do not cover the provision of: special field trips, diapers, pull-ups, diaper wipes, special dietary foods, change of clothing or medication of any type.

Nine Hour Maximum Care

The main foundation on which our program's mission is based on is caring for both the child and the family. In trying to balance the need for child care we cannot dismiss our vision of the health and wellness of the child and family. There is concern for children that their attendance in the day home beyond nine hours is a lengthy time to be in care, and is not giving them enough time to be within their family" environment. The day home is well equipped to offer a well balanced program to meet the developmental needs of children involved but does not want to be a replacement to the time that is also needed with their caregiver at home.

Withdrawal and Termination of Service

Withdrawal

Families are required to provide at least two weeks written notice when they withdraw their child. More notice is preferable if the family can give it. This is crucial as most families on the waitlist require two weeks notice for their current care-provider before they can accept a space. In lieu of notice we require two weeks payment.

Termination of Service

The Agency can terminate its services to a family under the following circumstances:

- if fees for services are not paid in full and on time and suitable arrangements cannot be agreed upon;
- if the provider is unable to satisfactorily resolve a problem with a family;
- if a family member harasses, threatens, or commits a violent or unlawful act toward a provider, child or other family involved in the program;
- if a family picks up their child late three times within six months without having made previous suitable arrangements;

- if the child has been absent from the program twelve consecutive working days without the parent giving notice of the situation and a date when the child will return.
- if, in the assessment of the provider, a child is unable to manage safely in a group of children within the given adult-to-child ratio. In this case, termination of services will be a measure of last resort.

All efforts will be made to accommodate the child's needs. These would include:

- working with the family to develop consistent strategies;
- encouraging a collaborative use of all outside agencies to come up with a strategy to best help the child and family.

Gradual Entry

Admission to the Agency Program begins with a gradual entry as agreed upon by provider and families. Gradual entry has several goals. These include:

- that separation between the child and family be gradual and positive;
- that the child and the provider develop a positive relationship before the child is left on his/her own;
- that the child and family are gradually introduced to, and become familiar with, the routines, activities, and philosophy of the day home;
- that the child has a secure start to his/her child care experience with the support of both family and child care provider.

While we understand that gradual entry is not always convenient for families, it is a key component to a positive adjustment to child care. Usually gradual entry begins in the mornings, but we can be flexible, scheduling gradual entry around families' schedules. Before the child attends the child care full-time we suggest a minimum of three visits of increasing length by the child and his or her family.

Children's Files and Confidentiality

All documents that are part of registration will go into the child's file. All information about children and families in this file is considered confidential and will be stored in a secure place. The provider will respect confidentiality of families at all times. In cases of emergency or injury, information may be released to the proper authorities, medical staff, or in the case of suspected abuse, the appropriate child welfare authority. Information may be released to other authorities with written or verbal permission from the parent or guardian. The provider can not release information to other parents or the general public.

Changes of Information

Families are expected to inform the provider of any changes so that registration forms can be kept up to date at all times. We must be able to reach families at all times. We must be informed immediately of any changes in address, phone number, class schedule, or place of work and if there is any change in the people who are authorized to pick up a child.

Types of Care

Drop-In Care

Care provided by the Agency program that is not regularly scheduled weekly or monthly is classified as drop-in care. Availability of drop in care varies with the individual Agency provider. To qualify for drop-in care you must, complete an orientation, read the parent handbook, complete the registration forms, and pay the registration fee. A notice of forty-eight (48) hours is required for booking drop-ins and a daily fee (cash or cheque) is due upon arrival at the day home. If your child(ren) has not attended the program in six (6) months you will be required to go through the orientation process again and update your registration forms. The registration fee will not have to be paid again for reactivating the file or if you choose to enroll your child(ren) into regular scheduled part-time or full-time care in the program.

Summer Care

Any families not currently registered with the Agency program and wanting summer care must notify the Agency Coordinator by June 1, of the calendar year. A registration fee will apply to hold the child's space and an orientation prior to the child's first day is required. Siblings of children enrolled in the program will have first opportunity for summer care; however, notice is required by June 1 of the calendar year.

Part-Time Care

Care that is scheduled for two or less full days per week is classified as part-time care.

Full-Time Care

Care that is scheduled for three to five days per week is classified as full-time care.

Should spaces be open during the summer months then the "Drop-In Procedure" will apply, if you require up to three consecutive weeks will be charged a rate as agreed upon with the provider. Scheduling exceeding the three consecutive weeks will be charged a monthly rate.

After School Care

Any families not currently registered with the Agency Program and wanting after school care must contact the Agency Coordinator for space availability. A registration fee will apply to hold the child's space and an orientation prior to the child's first day is required. Siblings of children enrolled in the program will have first opportunity for after school care. Should spaces be open during the school months then the "Drop-In Procedure" will apply. After school care will be charged as decided on with the provider.

Arrival and Departure

**** VERY IMPORTANT** Each parent must sign their child in on arrival and sign them out on departure.** Since the posted attendance sheets will be used to verify the presence of children in an emergency, parents must follow this sign-in/sign-out procedure each day. This is a legality and is required by the Alberta Children's Services Licensing and Best Practices. Any person who is not the child's caregiver and is signing a child "In or Out" must be 18 years of age or older. Any visitors to the day home during child care hours must also sign "in and out". Regular routines for pick up and drop off help reassure children.

Arrival

We encourage you to take ample time when you arrive and suggest the following routine:

- First sign your child in
- help your child with his or her belongings
- encourage your child wash his or her hands when you arrive at the day home to help prevent spread of infection and disease

As there is limited space for storage at the Agency we are *unable to allow personal childcare items to be stored at the day home*. The provider does not accept responsibility or liability for any personal items left on the premises.

Toys from home: Please leave toys at home. There are lots of activities to participate in and plenty of toys to play with in the day home. Stuffed animals are welcome to come for naptime. This policy is in place to prevent accidental loss, breakage, or inappropriate toys.

Please note that the provider will not accept responsibility for lost or damaged toys. **NO GUNS, WAR TOYS, OR OTHER TOYS OF DESTRUCTION.** These items are absolutely unacceptable to be on the day home property as they promote aggressive behavior. We encourage children to find other means to express anger or frustration.

Separation Anxiety

- Our providers support you and your child as your child works through feelings of anxiety over separation. Our providers are sensitive to the emotions and anxiety when a child starts a new program and are available to help make this new situation manageable for you and your child. A joint

effort by parents and provider should promote a relatively smooth adjustment. The way you feel about your child going to the Agency for the first time significantly affects your child's adjustment. The following suggestions may help:

- think and speak positively to your child about beginning care, as your feelings will affect how your child adjusts to the separation
- help your child deal with his or her feelings
- assure your child that you will return
- make sure you inform your child of your arrival and departure (attempts to slip away unseen will increase your child's level of anxiety on subsequent occasions)

Departure

Provincial regulations state that children can only be released to adults who are authorized **in writing on the registration form** by the child's legal guardian. Upon registration parents are asked to submit a list of names of persons authorized to collect their children. Any changes to this list must then be made in writing. Children will only be released to individually named adults. **Only in emergency situations will a child be released by verbal permission. All parents are asked to provide a code word known only to the provider and themselves. In the case of verbal authorization, parents will be asked to provide this code word.**

When an unknown person to the provider requests a child, that provider will ask for a piece of photo identification and compare that person's name to the list of persons authorized by the child's legal guardian. If the individual's name does not appear on this list then the child will not be released, the person will be asked to leave the day home and the parent will be notified by phone. **Please remember it is very important to notify the agency of any special circumstances regarding pick up (i.e. custody arrangements, restraining orders, threat of abduction etc.).**

If any person (including the child's legal guardian) arrives to collect the child and the provider has reason to believe that individual is under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, the provider is directed to call the RCMP giving a description of the parent (vehicle, license etc) so that every attempt is made to keep the child being released safe. An attempt will be made to reach another authorized individual provided by the family on their contact list to assist.

Late Pick Up

If parents are late more than three times (in a six month period without making prior arrangements) they will be asked to make other child care arrangements for their child. If a personal emergency occurs, parents should notify the provider before closing time so that they will be aware of the difficulty. In the event that a parent or authorized person fails to pick up a child by closing time, the following action will be taken unless suitable arrangements have previously been made:

- 15 minutes late the provider will attempt to contact the person(s) named by the parent as an emergency contact.
- 35 minutes late the Program Coordinator will be contacted and appropriate arrangements will be made for your child. A note will be left with the RCMP stating where your child can be picked up.

Independent Departure

Independent departure allows a child enrolled in the After School Care Program ten (10) years or older to walk home with the expectation of meeting a caregiver there. The child will leave the Day Home and walk independently to their home at a time designated by their caregiver.

If you are interested in this policy please see the Agency Coordinator.

Release of Children

If a parent has indicated that another guardian/parent/relative is NOT to pick up a child, they will need to provide this information in writing along with a photo of the named parent/guardian to the Agency and Provider. If they have a court order we will also request this to be kept in the child's file. The only circumstances that we could ever withhold a child are:

1. If the child appears to be in danger leaving with this person (ie they are uttering threats or being abusive to the child, inebriated, or under the influence of narcotics) or;
2. If the Provider is not sure the person is in fact the parent and the person there to pick up is unable to provide identification to match information we have on file.

Should a person whose listed as not to pick up a child (parent, relative or non-relative) comes to take the child the following procedure will be used whether there is a court order or just written letter from the parent:

1. Politely inform the person who is picking up the child that they are not listed on the contact forms and that we are required to contact the parent for permission. If there is a court order in place for no contact and is enforceable by RCMP, the local police should be notified immediately.
2. Ask that they wait outside the home until the call is made. Do not force this issue or engage in any type of argument with them. The provider should then lock the door.
3. Phone the parent and inform them of who is there and ask that they come to the Day Home for their child.
4. If the person picking up the child becomes aggressive, the Provider will contact RCMP.

THE PROVIDER IS NOT TO PUT THEMSELVES AT RISK!

If the person picking up the child physically picks up the child to leave the Day Home, we are not able to take the child from him/her. We can only inform the RCMP and the other parent at this time, note the time and, if possible, license plates of vehicle, and any other information they would find important.

IMPORTANT

It's important to remember that although these parents are listed as "do not release" we do not always have a court order, this is just the opinion of the other parent. It's also important to not expect this person to become aggressive and to not deal with them in an aggressive manner. Many people would not want to "create a scene" and will simply decide to leave if there is going to be a hassle in picking up the child. As well, in many cases when the parent(s) have been contacted, they have said "yes" the child can be released to them.

Transportation

All parents are responsible for delivering or picking up their own child from the program. All children must be restrained in an up to date government approved child safety restraint system. The restraint system must be installed according to the manufacturer's instructions and be appropriate for the age and size of the child.

All children being transported by a Provider must have an "Ongoing Transportation" permission form signed by the parent. The Ongoing Transportation permission forms must be current. If the child is being transported for the purposes of a field trip that is outside of regular daily transportation, they must have an "Intent to Transport" form signed by the parent.

All children being transported in a vehicle by a day home provider must be restrained in an up to date government approved child safety restraint system. The restraint system must be installed according to the manufacturer's instructions and be appropriate for the age and size of the child.

Communicable Diseases and Health

We know that health is a complex issue in a child care environment. In establishing our health policy, we considered the following factors:

- The inability of a child who is too ill to cope with the day's program.
- The need to protect all our children from communicable disease.
- Parent's need for a guideline to assist them in deciding whether to bring a child who is "not quite well" to the day home
- The responsibility and commitment of parents who work full time and their ability to pick up an ill child
- The responsibility and commitment of parents who work full time and their ability to pick up an ill child.

To reduce spread of flu or any type of common virus or communicable disease the day home has the following hand-washing policy.

Hand Washing

How to wash your hands properly with soap.

1. Use liquid soap or a clean bar of soap. Wet your hands with warm, running water. Rub on soap, lather well. You don't need antibacterial soap; regular soap is sufficient.
2. Rub your hands together briskly for at least 15 seconds.
3. Scrub all over, including the backs of your hands, wrists, between your fingers, and under your fingernails.
4. Rinse under running water.

Wash your hands BEFORE and AFTER:

- preparing, serving or eating food, or feeding others.
- brushing or flossing your teeth.
- putting in or taking out contact lenses.
- after blowing your nose or wiping a child's nose.
- after coughing or sneezing.
- after handling garbage.
- playing in the sandbox.
- using the bathroom

When Your Child is Sick

If a child appears to be ill the child may be separated from the other children , and the provider will notify the parents immediately. If the parent is not available, emergency contact numbers will be phoned for your child to be picked up. Obvious Symptoms to Indicate a Child is Ill are:

- Temperature , with a fever over 38 degrees Celsius. Even if a fever is being controlled by Tylenol it is an indication that your child is fighting infection and should be seeing a doctor as soon as possible.
** In the event that a child's fever reaches over 40 degrees Celsius, an ambulance will be called to transport the child to the Drayton Valley Hospital & Care Centre. The parent will be contacted as soon as possible and updated on location and condition of their child. Parents will assume care of their child at the hospital and any costs incurred for ambulance or care provided by the hospital.*
- Unexplained pain.
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea or loose stool.
- Cold with fever, runny nose and eyes, coughing, and sore throat.
- Sore throat, difficulty swallowing.
- Rash or red eyes (thick mucous or pus draining from eye).
- Headache or stiff neck.
- Severely itchy body, or scalp.
- Known or suspected contagious illness. eg., chicken pox, mumps, and measles.
- Wheezing/Persistent Coughing
- Mouth sores with drooling
- New or unexplained rash or cough

Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to keep ill children at home to prevent the spread of illness at the day home. Children must be free from symptoms for 24 hours before returning to the day home. Please ensure you have back-up plans to accommodate any such spontaneous child care needs.

There are other times when a child is not showing signs of a definite illness but yet not able to handle the stress of the day. In these instances, it will be the decision of the provider as to whether the child should be sent home.

Medication

When it is necessary for the provider to administer medication, the following shall be required:

- **A family day home provider may administer prescription or non-prescription medication or herbal remedies, only with written permission from the parent/guardian on a daily basis.**

Prescription Medication must be labeled with the following:

- Name of the medication
- Physicians' name
- Patient's name
- Date of Issue
- Instructions for administering
- Dosage and time period

Other Considerations:

- All medication must remain in its original container with the original label.
- Prescription medication cannot be administered to any family members unless their name is also on the prescription label.
- The agency will provide medication forms for parents to complete and sign. Providers will ensure all required information is completed. The signature of the provider is required on the forms to indicate if/when the medication was administered.
- All medication will be stored in a locked box within the home with the exception of emergency medications. This requires the provider to have two locked medication boxes: one for refrigerated medications and one for non-refrigerated. Emergency medications such as epi-pens or inhalers will be kept immediately accessible to providers in the home above 5 feet to eliminate the children from accessing the medication.
- Any unusual effect on the child following medication being administered, shall be reported to the parent immediately and reported to the agency. This information will be recorded on an incident report form.
- Parents will notify the provider in writing of any medication/herbal remedies given to their child prior to arriving at the day home.
- Providers will return medication/herbal remedies to families when the authorized period has ended.
- Providers will note the expiration dates of emergency medications (ie EpiPens, inhalers) and notify parents within one month of the expiration date, so parents can replace the medication.
- Providers will wash their hands before and after administering medication.

Immunizations

All immunizations must be up to date with reference to the following schedule advised by the Public Health Agency of Canada

Immunizing on schedule gives your child the best immunity possible and lasts throughout childhood. Booster doses are required for some vaccines.

If parents are not having their child participate in the regular immunization schedule, they are responsible to provide a written notice to the Agency Coordinator to be held in your child's file. The provider will try to contact parents should they ever feel that their child could come in contact with any of the listed communicable diseases that would put them at risk.

Guidance Policy

The guidance policy will be part of our Provider Handbook as well as our Parent Handbook. It will be given out upon registration and will also be posted on the day home bulletin board.

Children within our program will always be treated with respect.

The provider will encourage positive interactions between children, will promote a supportive environment in which children's development and self-expression may be stimulated, and will focus on the child's assets and strengths.

The provider will encourage children to be responsible for their behavior by reasoning with the child and offering set limits. Should the child choose to continue negative behavior or lose control and cannot reason, the child will be removed for a "cooling off" period away from the situation. In all incidents, the provider will discuss with the child the reason for cooling off and the importance of the limits that have been set out. In the case where a provider is experiencing difficulty with the child's behavior (i.e. total disregard of a caregiver's authority or hurting others physically), the parent will / may be called to pick up their child.

Children will be given every opportunity to help resolve conflicts themselves through the use of language and problem solving skills. The provider will foster and model these skills through social stories. All children are expected to stay within the limits of consideration for people and things. Should a situation arise where child management action is required, the provider will employ the least intrusive means to effectively deal with the child. Acceptable approaches to child discipline include:

- Setting limits.
- Rewarding positive behavior and setting standards of acceptable behavior.
- Providing explanations and choices.
- Ensuring that the child understands.
- Being firm, but flexible.
- Anticipating the child's needs.
- Recognizing differences in age, temperament, and experience.
- Ignoring behaviors or minor disruptions, where appropriate.
- Distracting and removing the child from the situation.
- Providing logical and natural consequences.
- Informing parents when the behavior is disrupting the flow of routine for other children attending.

The Agency Program believes in stimulating children through engaging them in activities such as outdoor play, story time, etc. We believe that all children, regardless of their age, gender or abilities should have access to technology, and we believe that appropriate technology should be integrated into the regular learning environment and used as one of many options to support children's learning. Each day home has the option of having one technological device available for use by the children, who will be permitted to use the device for no more than 20 minutes.

Naptime Procedures

Nap is very important for children; it needs to be a relaxed enjoyable experience in order for children to feel comfortable and secure. It is important to establish and follow a naptime routine that is consistent and predictable for the children. This routine should include:

- Turn off or lower the lights in the room
- Ask all children to take washroom turns, do diaper changes and wash hands
- Turn on some relaxing music at a low volume
- Have all children lay on their beds/mats
- The provider should visit each child, encourage them to lay still to rest their bodies so they can grow and cover them with their blanket
- A provider should sit with children and offer to rub their backs and help them to relax
- Once children are asleep make certain they are covered and monitor them on a regular basis.

Waking Procedures

All children have different sleep habits. If you have children waking earlier be prepared by having:

- A lit area away from the sleeping children
- Books ready at hand to read to one or two children at a time
- Quiet activities set out on table for them to find ie. play dough or coloring
- A CD player and books on tape at a listening centre

Encourage children as they wake up to take their time, stretch and use the bathroom. Offer them a drink or a quiet moment with you to help ease them back into playing. If a child has been awakening earlier than they are ready for, take the time to rub backs or rock them for a while to help them relax and get back to sleep.

Infant Sleep Supervision

- Children up to 19 months old must be within the provider's sight at all time, unless the children are napping, in which case, an infant monitor must be used.
- Providers must always place young infants (those who are unable to roll over by themselves) on their backs for sleeping.
- The Agency will provide each Provider with detailed information regarding Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) during their Orientation process.

Program Delivery

Daily Routines

Many common play activities help to meet the goals of learning socially, emotionally, cognitively, and physically. These are some of our objectives set out for the children through play.

Centres: Blocks, dress-up materials, pretend play (i.e. small toys such as cars, dolls etc.) and craft materials will be open to the children at all times. To retain diversity and interest, music/sound centers, puzzles, and crafts such as painting will be opened at varied times throughout the day. These centres will at times also directly reflect the theme for the month to encourage language and vocabulary growth. Children will be able to come and go as they are open. Some of these centres will at times be set up for one-on-one time for children. There is a great importance for one-on-one time to observe a child's developmental growth. It will be through observation and time such as this that providers will be able to evaluate their own day to day programming and enrich or alter it to meet children's specific needs. **

**Please note that centers and activities will vary among individual day homes

ACTIVITY	WHAT IS LEARNED
<u>Finger-plays</u>	Language development, fine-motor skills, counting, co-ordination, and self-esteem.
<u>Games at circle time</u>	Large motor skills, creativity, cooperation, and spatial awareness. Children also increase vocabulary, cultural awareness, and practice rhythm and rhyme through song and games.
<u>Pretend Play</u>	Social skills, (cooperation, turn-taking, and sharing) language and vocabulary development, imagination and emotional expression.
<u>Puzzles</u>	Problem solving, abstract reasoning, shapes, and spatial concepts.
<u>Block Building</u>	A foundation for more advanced science and comprehension including gravity, stability, weight, and balancing concepts.
<u>Sand-box Play</u>	Measuring and problem solving. Fine motor skills.
<u>Cooking</u>	Math skills (counting and measuring), nutrition, and science concepts (prediction, cause, and effects).
<u>Colouring / Painting</u>	Creativity, emotional expression, symbolic representation, fine-motor skills, pre-reading, and pre-writing skills.
<u>Water play</u>	Math skills such as conservation, weights and measurement, counting, data and information collection, etc. while learning to work and interact with other children.
<u>Rhythm and Movement</u>	Children learn to channel aggression, relieve tension, and express themselves through music and dance, while learning new skills in rhythm, balance, grace and co-ordination, and developing kinesthetic and cultural awareness.
<u>Physical Literacy</u>	Meet the children's physical development needs which in turn affect the development of other domains. They need to be physically fit, and that means possessing endurance, muscular strength, flexibility, and good health. They need to learn skills in locomotion, dynamic and static balance, body and space perception, rhythm and temporal awareness, rebound and air borne activities, projectile management and other manipulative motor skills.

Sample Schedule:

7:00 – 8:00 a.m.	Arrival / Health Check / Free choice in activity areas Table toys, open art, sensory play, and fine motor activities
8:15 - 9:15 a.m.	Snack—will be available for a half hour. Children arriving later can have the snack until 9:15. Children engage in free choice activity. areas after finishing eating.
9:15 - 9:45 a.m.	Clean-up
9:45 - 10:30 a.m.	Group Time/Circle Time—by choice for children who are interested for up to 15 min. Provider facilitated activity for short time to encourage language/ listening skills. (songs, finger plays, stories, discussion)
10:30 – 11:00 a.m.	Outdoor play or vigorous indoor activity (including provider-directed games)
11:00 – 11:30 am	Toileting, clean-up
11:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	Lunch—children will all sit together for lunch. This is an excellent opportunity to model table manners with children.
12:00 - 12:30 p.m.	Preparation for nap, story time
12:30 - 2:30 p.m.	Naptime—Children are required to rest for a reasonable period but not required to sleep. Developmentally appropriate activities are available for those who are awake before others, i.e., quiet books, puzzles, listening centre, etc.
2:30 - 3:00 p.m.	Toileting/hand washing
3:00 - 3:30 p.m.	Group Time—Free choice in activity areas. Provider facilitated play to introduce turn taking, enhance speech, work on visual/fine motor skills.
3:30 - 3:45 p.m.	Preparation for outside play
3:45 - 4:45 p.m.	Outdoor play or vigorous indoor play
4:45 - 6:00 p.m.	Departure / Free choice in activity areas. Clean-up of areas not in use. Preparations for departure

Child Supervision

Children receive developmentally appropriate supervision at all times.

<u>Age of Child</u>	<u>Level of Supervision Required</u>
Up to 19 months old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within provider's sight at all times, unless the children are napping, in which case, an infant monitor must be used
20 months to 4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not allowed to use outdoor play space without supervision • Must be within hearing distance at all times • When children are napping, an infant monitor may be used. • Provider physically goes to check every 3-5 minutes
5 years to 8 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May use outdoor play space without supervision if they are within sight of provider (e.g. through a window) • Provider physically goes to check every 5-10 minutes
9 years to 12 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be allowed more freedom within the residence and in the provider's private outdoor play space • Provider must know where children are at all times • Provider physically checks frequently, considering what is age appropriate and developmentally appropriate for the children.

Outdoor Play

Except in the most inclement weather, we are required by CFSA Licensing and Best Practices, to take the children outdoors everyday throughout the year. There will be no exception made to this aspect of the programming. Children will be going outside twice a day, depending on the weather, please make sure that each child has the appropriate outdoor clothing.

A first aid kit and all emergency contact information will accompany the provider while they out of the day home area. All outdoor play structures comply with the standards outlined in the current edition of “*Guideline of Children’s Play spaces and Equipment.*”

Inclement Weather

If in the event a weather advisory is sent out regarding severe weather, children will remain in the day home. Our day home will follow the weather forecast given the Environment Canada website, www.weather.gc.ca

Winter: Inclement weather will be deemed when the temperature outside is -20C including wind chill in the winter months. Children will be dressed in appropriate clothing either in hats, mitts, boots, snow-pants and jackets. Please provide a second pair of mitts as weather warrants it.

Spring / Summer: If the Temperature is higher than 29 C for summer months the children will remain indoors. Appropriate attire for summer is a summer hat, t-shirts, shorts for summer. The parent will be responsible for providing sunscreen during the summer months. Please clearly label the bottle for the provider.

Meals

There will be a monthly menu posted inside on the parent board. The provider will be knowledgeable about the safe handling and preparation of the childcare menus. The provider is responsible for providing nutritional snacks and meals that meet all standards set out by the Alberta Nutritional Guidelines for Children and Youth and in compliance with the Canada Food Guide.

Nutrition

In developing our menu plan and nutrition program for children we will be using the *Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth* as our reference. These guidelines can be found at www.health.alberta.ca. These guidelines were commissioned by Alberta Health and Wellness and were prepared by the Alberta Institute for Human Nutrition at the University of Alberta. Parents are informed in the Orientation process that outside food is not allowed in the day home as it may not fall under the Canada Food Guide Standards.

Serving Sizes:

- portion sizes will be appropriate for the age of the child based on hunger and fullness
- size and number of servings provided will be consistent with Canada’s Food Guide.

- children will be allowed additional portions until they are full.
- new foods will be introduced in small amounts and provided on multiple occasions for children to try.

Addressing Food Allergies:

To prevent children from coming into contact with foods they are knowingly allergic to the provider will:

- post a current list of children’s names with their allergies and type of reaction.
- have ingredient lists in the kitchen for all food served should parents request more information in the event their child reacts to something that is not a recognized food allergy to them.
- provide updated information from DTHR and provide assistance in maintaining an allergy aware environment.

Special Diets:

- Parents will need to authorize in writing any food restrictions based on medical conditions, cultural or religious preference.
- The provider will maintain a record of all children with special diet restrictions.
- The provider will ensure that appropriate substitutions are available to children with medical, cultural, or religious food restrictions

Prohibited /Caution Foods

Foods that will not be served *regularly** at the Day Home are:

1. Foods containing limited nutrients
2. Poor choices of fiber
3. High in sugar, fat and / or salt
4. Are not part of the four food groups in Canada’s Food Guide

Examples being chocolate bars, chips, cake, soft drinks, iced tea, high sugar cereals, deep fried foods, whipped cream.

**note: on a child’s birthday or special occasion, we may have a “treat” but it will not replace any part of the regular snack or lunch menu.*

Pets

Where there are pets in the provider's home or other animals on the provider's property:

- Litter boxes and food dishes must be kept clean
- Children must not have access to animal/pet foods or wastes – indoors or outdoors.
- Children should ONLY interact with pets under the direct supervision of the provider (due to risk of animal scratches and bites)
- Children and providers shall wash hands after handling pets and other animals.
- Pets must have vaccinations up to date according to local veterinarian recommendations
- Birds, chinchillas, ferrets, reptiles and amphibians (including snakes, lizards, frogs, newts, salamanders, iguanas, and turtles) must be kept in locked aquariums/cages at all times.

AGGRESSIVE ANIMALS

Any dog or animal known to the provider to have displayed aggressive tendencies or behaviours such as but not limited to growling, lunging, baring teeth, snapping, or biting with intent to harm will not be permitted on any day home premises unless they are absolutely inaccessible to children.

Any day home provider that has an animal or pet is required to disclose the animal's known aggressive behaviours or tendencies in writing to the Agency and registered families.

Program Assessment

The purpose of program assessment in early childhood is to answer the question: "How much value did the program contribute to the children?" Our assessment then has three distinct purposes

- To document program effectiveness.
- To provide information for program development
- To align program practices with program standards.

Program assessment and evaluation provides formative and summative information to document program effectiveness. This may include how well the program is being implemented, how well the program is achieving intended outcomes or reaching standards, and the effectiveness of the program. But, most importantly, program evaluation provides information that assists program leaders, providers and parents to bring about improved program practices.

Program evaluation also provides information that allows others to duplicate effective programs. Certainly, effective programs that meet the intended outcomes or program standards are worthy of replication.

	Review and Submission of QEP
	Contract Renewal – CFSA
JUNE	Survey parents annually for feedback

Performance Evaluations of the Providers will be conducted on an annually and ongoing basis as per policy.

Restrictions and Guidelines

- The use of *aerosol sprays* is prohibited in Day Home during child care hours.
- The use of *pesticides*, both indoor and out is prohibited when children are present. Children are to be kept away from any area where pesticides have recently been applied and kept indoors if pesticides are being or have recently been sprayed for as long as is recommended by the local health authority. Please speak with the Coordinator for more information.
- *Toxic plants* are not permitted in day homes. The outdoor play space will be monitored and kept free of toxic plants at all times. A list of these plants is available upon request. If you notice any toxic plants please notify the Agency Coordinator immediately.
- All *sand boxes* will be covered when not in use.
- Children's *wading pools* must be drained after each use and stored up ended or in the storage shed or basement.
- Only non toxic *arts and crafts supplies will be permitted*. If you have a concern about any supply please speak with the Agency Coordinator.
- The provider is required to *check toys and equipment* routinely during use to ensure that any potential hazards are identified and responded to in a timely and appropriate manner.
- All *fans* used within the Day Homes will be in excellent repair with covers securely in place and are placed on high shelves away from the children.
- All *appliances* used within the Day Homes must meet CSA safety standards, be in good repair and cleaned on a regular basis.
- Trampolines are not to be used during day home hours or by day home children. If providers own trampolines they must be made inaccessible to day home children.

Emergency Information

Children will leave the building as stated in the fire drill procedures. Attendance will be immediately taken once the children are approx. 15 meters from the building. Once all children are accounted for the provider will take them to a previously arranged location in a safe building. Each individual provider will have their own specific evacuation procedures.

Please complete the below form and return it to the Agency Coordinator.

I, _____ have read the Parent Handbook in its entirety and I am aware of and understand all the policies and procedures of the Agency.

Signature

Date

Witness