

# HOME & HEART Family Home Day Care Agency CARE PROVIDERS HANDBOOK

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(1) WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Home & Heart Family Home Day Care Agency.  
Please keep this Care Provider Handbook for reference.

Contact information:

**DIRECTOR / HOME CONSULTANT**

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**CHILD CARE PROVIDERS**

Names and contact information will be included.

**(2) MISSION STATEMENT**

*“Our mission is to offer quality, enriched community-based, child care in approved homes, by trained caregivers, where each child’s physical, emotional, social and intellectual needs are met within the warmth and security of a home setting.”*

**(3) PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT**

*Our family home day care agency will provide monitored and supported care to all children in the program through an anti-bias and inclusive approach. We believe that effective child care should be family-centered so that parents can pursue their work or training with peace of mind, assured that their children are in a safe, nurturing and child-friendly environment, where the caregiver is supported, monitored and trained.*

**(4) ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE & PERSONNEL (Owner Operated)**

The Home & Heart Family Day Care Agency is licensed by the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services and is a private business owned and operated by Director Lila Hope-Simpson. All guidelines and regulations as outlined by the Day Care Act and Family Home Day Care program have been complied and approved.

The Director / Owner will also serve as the Home Consultant and will be the liaison between parents, staff and child care providers. All family day care homes will be approved and monitored by the Director under the guidelines of the agency.

The agency will be supervised by the regional Early Childhood Development Officer.

**Duties of Owner:**

- The owner of the agency is accountable for the following duties:
- Ensure that regular planning of agency activities is carried out
- Ensure that the agency meets all legal requirements
- Ensure that a high quality child care and education program is in place, and is in accordance with the Philosophy and Mission Statement
- Develop policies, make informed decisions and oversee the agency’s operations, in accordance with the Philosophy and Mission Statement
- Ensure favourable external relations for the agency
- Define staff job descriptions
- Oversee selecting, hiring, and disciplining of Agency staff

- Ensure that there are fair hiring practices and employment of the most suitable, qualified staff in an unbiased, consistent process
- Monitor performance of Agency staff and complete annual performance evaluations
- Ensure staff and care providers are delivering the family home day care program in accordance with program guidelines and documentation submitted in the agency's application for a license
- Monitor the financial viability of the agency
- Ensure that the financial resources are sufficient to meet operational requirement
- Review and set parent fees
- Identify other sources of income and assist with fundraising campaigns
- Increases public awareness of the agency
- Develop publicity and advertising materials for the agency
- Ensure that the physical premises which house the agency are in good repair and well maintained in compliance with the current rules and regulations set by the Day Care Act , Family Home Day Care Regulations and the municipality guidelines.
- Review of the licensing reports and recommendations and ensure that facilities are in compliance
- Plan and implement any improvements to the agency's structure and property

#### (5) Roles and Responsibilities of Agency Staff

The staff at our agency consist of an Agency Director/Family Home Consultant/administrative coordinator. We also work regularly with volunteers and occasionally with students.

#### Director of the Agency

The agency director/owner and is the person primarily responsible for the delivery of the Family Home Day Care program on behalf of the agency.

The agency director /owner is responsible for the implementation, supervision, and coordination of all aspects of the operation of the agency. This work is done under the direction of the owner, and in compliance with the Day Care Act, Day Care Regulations and Family Home Day Care Program Regulations.

#### Qualifications

- ECE training or equivalent and minimum of five years experience.
- Emergency First Aid certification.

The agency director is accountable for the following duties:

#### Financial

- Accountable for the financial management of the agency, including revenue and expenses, payroll, records, bills, bank deposits, statements, tax deductions and payments, grants, donations, petty cash.
- Develops and regularly reviews the annual budget

- Monitors the financial situation monthly, and make proposals to the owner regarding income, expenditures, and assets
- Is knowledgeable about all previous financial reports
- Prepares reports and makes application for subsidy payments if applicable
- Purchases supplies and equipment as needed, subject to owner approval
- In consultation with the owner, devises potential fundraising campaigns
- Implements and oversees approved, viable fundraising campaigns and identifies potential funding sources and assists owner in preparation of grant applications
- Maintains updated inventory records of supplies and equipment

#### Reporting and licensing

- Attends meetings as required, and provide regular updates on program and agency activities to owner
- Assists with appropriate officials in meeting annual licensing requirement
- Ensures comprehensive insurance coverage is in place for the agency
- Maintains a healthy and safe environment, and ensures agency's compliance with fire, safety and health regulations in consultation with the owner

#### Communication

- Communicates openly and frequently with staff and parents
- Annually reviews and evaluates the Parent Policy Manual and recommends changes to the owner
- Keeps staff updated on policies, procedures, changes, admissions, current field research and ideas through regular staff meetings and communication

#### Program review

- In conjunction with staff and care providers, completes annual review of program
- Makes recommendations to the owner regarding improvements or changes to the Family Home Day Care program
- Keeps up-to-date on issues relating to program design and delivery

#### Personnel management

- Assists in interviewing, hiring, disciplining, dismissing, and orientation of staff in consultation with the owner
- Plans and arranges training workshops for agency staff development
- Reviews and updates job descriptions in consultation with the owner
- Supports and supervises staff and ensures staff follow duties set by the job description
- Evaluates family home consultant and other agency staff
- Maintains confidential personnel records in relation to agency staff and care providers
- Assumes family consultant responsibilities for brief periods of time when necessary

### Family Home Consultant:

The family home consultant coordinates a Family Home Day Care program on behalf of the agency and delivers the support services to the care providers. This includes recommending approval of, supporting and monitoring care providers for an agency

### Qualifications

A family home consultant must have:

- (a) Completed a two-year diploma in early childhood education from a recognized training program approved by the Director; and
- (b) At least two years experience working in an early learning and childcare program.
- (c) Current first aid and CPR training

### Duties

The family home consultant is accountable for the following duties:

- Maintains updated medical information on staff and children and care providers
- Interviews potential clients and register children
- Deals with parent complaints/concerns/comments
- Provides parents with information on program activities and changes
- Updates Parent Policy Manual and publicity materials in consultation with agency director
- Acts as liaison between agency and community
- Maintains detailed knowledge of relevant community resources
- Provides information to care providers about community resources
- Maintains current substitute list to assist care providers who need relief
- Monitors availability of child care spaces, develops a waiting list, and works with care providers maintain maximum enrolment
- Works with care providers to match waiting children and families to care providers and available spaces in appropriate settings
- Posts all required and relevant information at the agency for parents, staff and visitors
- In collaboration with agency director and the care providers, plans and implements play group activities that provide children with developmentally appropriate activities
- Keeps updated on new program ideas and activities
- Maintains resource files/library for personal use and use by care providers
- Maintains updated supply list for play groups & lending library and
- Organizes space, equipment and materials as needed for activities, and in compliance with the Day Care Act and Regulations, and Family Home Day Care Regulations

- Develops community and multicultural awareness, and self-help skills to assist care providers
- Evaluates the care providers' programs and assists care providers with improvements
- Complies with all agency policies and procedures, philosophy and mission statement
- Maintains open communication and shares ongoing information regarding concerns/comments about a program with parents, staff, care providers, specialists and director as needed, and respecting confidentiality policies
- Notifies Director of program needs
- Supervises substitutes, students and volunteers
- Maintains knowledge about and complies with Day Care Act and Regulations, Family Home Day Care Program Regulations and agency policies
- Maintains confidentiality of information relating to children, families, staff and the director
- Maintains current first aid and infant CPR training
- Works with care providers to implement monthly practice procedure for fire and other emergencies

#### Volunteers:

Volunteers are always welcome at our agency to assist agency staff with the delivery of the family home day care program. They will work under the direction of the agency director or the family home consultant. Requirements and responsibilities will vary with the situation.

Volunteers must adhere to agency policies and are responsible for signing in and out of the volunteer binder, noting the date and the activity in which they are participating or the care provider home in which they are helping out.

## (6) DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CARE PROVIDERS

With respect to the delivery of the program, the care provider is responsible to:

- Cooperate with monthly visits from family home consultant
- Participate in regular professional development coordinated through the agency
- Assist with recruitment and selection of families who need child care
- Provide quality day care that ensures the health, safety and well being of the children in their care and promotes positive healthy development in children
- Provide a developmentally appropriate program to the children that facilitates and stimulates intellectual, physical, emotional and social development appropriate to the developmental level of the child and includes activities to encourage language development.

With respect to keeping parents informed, the care provider is responsible to:

- Develop policies and parent guidelines regarding hours of operation and other matters pertaining to the delivery of family home day care
- Encourage participation of parents in program and communicates well with parents, including participating in parent advisory committee when requested
- Post required information on a parent bulletin board which is located in a conspicuous place within the family day care home. This includes information on how parents can access the Day Care Act, Day Care Regulations and Family Home Day Care Regulations and policies on enrolment and attendance criteria, monthly menus, program and staff/child ratios on reasonable notice and at a reasonable time.
- Display a copy of the agency license.

With respect to keeping appropriate records, the care provider is responsible to:

- Maintain current first aid and CPR certificate
- Complete personal Child Abuse Register & Criminal records check every three years
- Ensure Child Abuse Register and criminal records checks are completed every three years for all other people who live in the family day care home
- Maintain daily records in respect of infants and toddlers regarding any special information such as unusual occurrences and other pertinent information that is not necessarily a daily occurrence. Provide space in the daily records for the parents to write special instructions or information in respect of their child and make the daily infant and toddler records available to the parents at the end of each day.
- Keep a register and for each child enrolled in the family day care home, which includes:
  - the names and home addresses of the parents or guardian and the child, and the date of birth of the child;
  - the name and address of the child's physician and the person to be notified in case of an emergency, the admission, daily attendance and discharge date for each child.
- Keep a record of each child including applications for admission, medical, financial, progress reports, consent forms from the parents or guardian for emergencies and outings, and such other

information as may be required, and maintains those records for two years following the date the child leaves the family day care home.

With respect to managing behavior, the care provider is responsible to:

- Understand and apply the agency's behavior guidance policy at all times
- Post a copy of the agency's written policy with respect to permitted and prohibited behavior guidance practices on the parent bulletin board
- Review the behavior guidance policy annually and demonstrate understanding of behavior guidance principles.
- Review the written behavior guidance policy with the parents of each child at enrolment time.

With respect to health and safety, the care provider is responsible to:

Ensure proper food handling.

- Monitor water safety.
- Ensure that the sleeping area for infants is under their supervision at all times when infants are present.
- Monitor the health of the children being cared for, be able to recognize symptoms of ill health in the children and act appropriately, including
  - safely removing any child with a communicable disease and not permitting that child to associate with other children in the family day care home until the child can be seen by a qualified medical practitioner;
  - immediately securing the necessary medical assistance and notifying the parents or guardian of the child when an accident, or serious illness or communicable disease occurs;
  - keeping readily available a first aid kit approved for emergency treatment.
- Maintain a healthy and safe child care environment by:
  - ensuring that all medical supplies, drugs or medicines, whether or not ordered by a qualified medical practitioner or used by any staff, are carefully labeled with the name of the child or the staff person, the date, and instructions, and kept out of reach of children in locked storage space.
  - keeping cleaning and medical supplies out of reach of the children
  - ensuring that safety belts are used for infants when they are in highchairs, infant seats and strollers;
  - washing hands before and after diapering each child and before food preparation;
  - ensuring that the counter of the diapering area is cleaned with a disinfectant after each diapering;
  - cleaning all toys for infants and toddlers with disinfectant when necessary or at least twice weekly and checked for broken pieces or other hazards on a daily basis;
  - cleaning highchair trays with a disinfectant after each use.

With respect to fire safety, the care provider is responsible to:

- Establish and post rules and procedures respecting evacuation from fire or other emergencies.
- Carry out a monthly fire drill.
- In a conspicuous place such as the parent bulletin board, post a list of addresses and telephone numbers of taxi, ambulance, hospital, fire department, police and other emergency information.

With respect to maintenance of the premises and equipment, the care provider is responsible to:

- Comply with municipal by-laws
- Ensure that the family home is a suitable and appropriate space for caring for children and that equipment used is safe, and
  - Provide adequate storage space for food, beds, play equipment, program supplies, cleaning and medical supplies;
  - Provide children with furnishings of a suitable size
  - Provide children with appropriate play materials and equipment
  - Provide children with dishes, cutlery and personal hygiene items on an individual basis and maintain them in a sanitary condition at all times
  - Provide each child under school age, who attends for more than half a day, with separate cots or mats, with washable and moisture resistant covers
  - Provide bedding that is clean and sufficient for warmth.
  - Ensure that office facilities and equipment shall not infringe upon the space or interfere with the routine activities of the children.
  - Provide a crib or portable for each infant cared for and ensures that cribs meet the standards of the *Cribs and Cradles Regulations* made under the *Hazardous Products Act*.
  - Ensure that strollers are equipped with a sun shade.
  - Do not use playpens, jolly jumpers or walkers for children of any age.
  - Ensure that outdoor play area is enclosed by fence at least 1.5 meters high or there is access to a safe and appropriate outdoor space nearby.

With respect to nutrition, the care provider is responsible to:

- Provide a nutritionally adequate meal providing 1/3 of daily nutrient requirements for any child that stays over the lunch hour
- Provide a nutritious snack in the morning and afternoon for all the children
- Ensure that regulations respecting the safety, preparation and serving of food as approved by the Minister are in effect.
- Ensure that formula brought to the facility for a child is labeled as to contents, feeding instructions, name of child, dated and placed in a refrigerator at 4.4°C or lower and used within 24 hours.
- Ensure that all open foods are dated and kept refrigerated at all times except during feedings and are not kept or used beyond the expiry date.
- Hold infants under 6 months of age during bottle feeding and do not feed infants in cribs

With respect to insurance and transportation, the care provider is responsible to:

- Carry adequate liability insurance to cover the family day care home.
- Ensure that every vehicle operated by or for the family day care home for the purpose of transporting children meets the requirements of the Motor Vehicle Act.
- Ensure that every person who is the driver of a vehicle operated by or for the family day care home for the purposes of transporting children is a responsible person, licensed under the Motor Vehicle Act to transport children.
- Ensure that the driver of a vehicle operated by or for the family day care home delivers every child transported in the vehicle to care provider is a member of agency staff or to the parent of the child or to a person appointed by the parent.
- Ensure the safety of the children in transit where the family day care home is providing transportation for the children.
- Ensure that infants and toddlers being transported in vehicles are seated in child restraint systems certified by Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (CMVSS).

#### (7) CATCHMENT AREA

The agency will monitor homes in the Wolfville area, including New Minas, Greenwich, Port Williams, Grand Pre, Gaspereau and Hortonville. Family Day Care homes in other jurisdictions will be included at the discretion of the Director.

#### (8) NUMBER & AGES OF CHILDREN

Our agency serves children 0-12. Each care provider serves a slightly different age group and mixture of children.

By law, each approved family home care provider is permitted to care for a maximum of 6 children at a time, including their own children, and must not have any other children in their care, subject to the following restrictions:

- (a) no more than 2 of the 6 children may be infants (0-17 months inclusive);
- (b) no more than 3 of the 6 children may be toddlers or younger than toddlers (0-35 months inclusive).

If a care provider is only looking after school aged children, they may care for a maximum of 8 school age children at a time, including their own children, and must not have any other children in their care.

If you have an infant of your own and you want to look after only infants, or if you have no children of your own but want to limit your child care responsibilities to looking after infants, then the you may look after a maximum of 3 infants at a time, including any of your own infants, and must not have any other children in their care.

### (9) AGENCY PROGRAMS & SERVICES

#### a) Toy & Resource Lending Library for Child Care Providers

Caregivers will be able to borrow age appropriate toys, books and resources for the children in their care from the agency's lending library.

#### b) Play Group

Caregivers will have access to a weekly play group offered at the Home & Heart Child Development Centre. Children will have access to play equipment, craft materials and toys at the centre and activities will be facilitated by the Director.

#### c) Training

Your children's caregivers will participate in training and professional development through the agency.

#### d) Pre-School

The Home & Heart Child Development Centre offers a fully licensed pre-school program for children ages 2.5 to 5 years of age.

#### e) Special Needs

Our agency is inclusive and makes every effort to provide services for children with special needs. Please contact the agency for information on special needs services offered by the agency's care providers.

### (10) CARE PROVIDERS PROGRAM

In order to provide the children with routines and consistency needed for their development and to manage behavior (see behavior guidance section), each care provider is required to develop a daily/weekly/monthly program and schedule for the children. The program must be designed to facilitate and stimulate intellectual, physical, emotional and social development appropriate to the developmental level of the child and should include activities to encourage language development.

Care givers are to work with the family home consultant to develop a superior program that incorporates outdoor activities and interaction with other children through play groups and other services offered by the agency.

Parents will be interested in knowing the general routines and daily/weekly/monthly program schedule, so it is recommended that a copy of the schedule and other program information be posted on the parent bulletin board.

### (11) FEE STRUCTURE & RECEIPTS

Fees will be determined by the child care provider and will be paid by the parents directly to the caregiver. Fees must be paid on time. Income tax receipts will be issued annually by the caregiver.

Early drop-off and late pick-up fees may be charged by the caregiver.

Fee payments:

Care providers set their own daily/monthly fees, however the agency strives to ensure that the child care fees are in line with the daily rates recommended by the Provincial Government. We work with our care providers to keep fees as low as possible.

Fees may be paid in the form of cash, cheque, or money order. Parents are asked to provide post-dated cheques six months in advance.

If you have the capability and wish to accept debit, or credit card payments as well, you may do so, however keep in mind that there is usually a fee charged by banks for using such a service.

Fees are payable directly to the care provider.

Fees are payable for each day of the month that child care is provided regardless of whether or not the child is attendance.

The agency has set the following policy for following up on outstanding balances. If the outstanding balance remains unpaid for two weeks, you must advise the agency and the agency will contact the parent regarding the matter. Depending on whether the child has a subsidized space, the family may be required to pay the balance immediately or a repayment schedule may be created to ensure that the balance is paid.

**(12) HOURS OF OPERATION & STORM DAYS:**

The Home & Heart Family Day Care office hours are:

Monday to Friday, from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. Evening or week-end workshops or programs will be conducted as required to accommodate the schedule of parents and child care providers.

Some programs may be cancelled due to storms when the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board is cancelled. Caregivers and/or parents will be notified. Caregivers will be open on storm days at their discretion.

After hour meetings, workshops, home visits and support may be offered as needed.

Hours of individual family day care homes will be set by the caregiver. Please respect the caregivers hours of operation.

**(13) HOLIDAYS**

The agency office will be closed for Statutory holidays, including Christmas Day, New Years Day, Good Friday, Canada Day and Victoria Day. The office will also be closed for the following holidays: Easter Monday, Natal Day, Thanksgiving Day, Natal Day, Remembrance Day, Boxing Day and Labour Day.

If any of these holidays fall on a week-end, the following Monday will observed as a holiday.

It is up to the discretion of the individual child care provider to inform parents of closed or open holidays.

**(14) CLOSURE FOR ILLNESS**

Child care providers are self employed and do not get paid sick days, however it is in the agency's interest to find alternative child care services, if you are unable to look after the children.

If you are ill and unable to care for children, you must notify the agency director or the family home consultant as soon as possible, and preferably with sufficient notice that alternative arrangements can be made for the children in your care. Once you have notified the agency, the agency will be responsible for contacting the parents to let them know that you are ill.

The agency will try to arrange a substitute care provider who can care for the children in their home and will let parents know if this has been arranged. If alternative care is not available, parents will be required to make their own care arrangements.

## (15) CHILD ATTENDANCE

### Suggestions for the First Day

The first day that a child attends the family home day care is a very important day for the child and the parents. Children who are introduced to a child care setting with the help of their parent/s tend to cope better with their new situation. The introduction helps to open lines of communication between parents and care provider, so that special information about the child can be shared. In addition, the parents and child become familiar with the environment, care provider, the routine, and the activities at the family home day care.

We suggest the following ideas for a child's introduction to your family home day care:

- We suggest that the parent and child visit the family home day care together the first day. This should be a brief visit with the parent in attendance for the first hour or so. The child's first day should not be overwhelming or tiring, so a half- day is best.
- If taking the time off is not possible for the parent, we suggest that the parent bring the child in early the first few mornings and spending that time together in the family home day care.
- We suggest that the child's first few days be shorter than normal, so that his/her days are not too overwhelming and tiring.
- If this is the child's first child care experience, the parents and child may need some extra support. You will need to assist the parents and child through the transition. Parents should be encouraged to share any concerns and feelings with you.

### Withdrawal:

We hope that the children in your care will be part of our family for many years, however we understand that children will leave our care from time to time. If a parent plans to withdraw their child from the family day care home, they are required to provide a minimum of two weeks notice.

### Arrivals and Departures:

#### Arrival:

We ask that care providers ensure that the following guidelines are followed when children arrive at your family day care home:

- Parents must bring the child into the home. The child's outerwear must be removed in the designated area
- The child must be escorted into the home and greeted by you. Our responsibility for the child does not begin until the child is in your care. Children are not to be left at the door or unsupervised area.
- The person arriving with the child must sign the attendance sheet, noting the date and time of arrival. This allows you to see who is on the premises during fire drills and emergencies, and to keep attendance records.
- For after school programs, you will record these times in the morning, lunch time, and after school.

- For infants and toddlers, parents are asked to advise you on arrival of any special circumstances that may affect your child's behavior or well-being that day. These are noted in the daily records, which parents are entitled to view.
- For those attending the whole day, the child is expected to be at the family home day care by 9:30 am. This enables the child to take part in all planned activities and field trips.
- Parents are asked to notify you if their child will not be attending, or will be late – ask for an approximate time of arrival.

#### Departure:

We ask that care providers ensure that the following guidelines are followed when children leave your family day care home:

- Children must be picked up by the closing time you have designated.
- If, due to unforeseen circumstances, a parent will be late picking up their child, the parent must call you in advance. Note that a late pick-up fee, due immediately, will be charged.
- Parents of infants and toddlers should be encouraged to review the daily activities log to see if any unusual occurrences impacted their children during the day.
- Children must be picked up by an authorized parent or guardian. In the event that a parent is unable to pick up their child, the parent must notify you in advance regarding who will be coming for the child, and an approximate pick-up time.
- You must only release a child to those persons listed on the authorization form at the time of enrolment. *Parents should be asked regularly to keep this information up to date.*
- If a parent wants someone not listed on the authorization form to pick up their child, the parent must inform you in writing. If this is not possible, you must be able to contact the parent for authorization, or you will not be able to release the child to the person.
- You must not release children to anyone under twelve years old.

#### Vacation:

We strongly recommend that all children take a two-week vacation a year. These vacations provide the child with a refreshing break from the program, as well as valuable time with family.

Parents are asked to notify you in advance if their child will be absent from the family home day care for any period of time.

## (16) PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS

Our agency's programs are designed to encourage and facilitate active learning and development through exploration and play. To ensure that children gets the most out of the program and is safe, comfortable and happy throughout the day, we have developed the following guidelines:

- Each child will need the following personal items, which should be kept at the family day care home (and replaced with clean items when required):
  - a small blanket, pillow and sheet for rest period,
  - a toothbrush,
  - indoor shoes (sneakers are best, but no slippers), and
  - a complete change of clothing (underwear, socks, pants, shirt, etc. - just in case!).
- Each child's possessions will be stored in a storage bin marked with their name. The bin will also be a place where you can put notices, artwork, soiled clothing, etc. You will need to inform parents regarding the location of the bins, and allow parents to check daily so that they can ensure that they collect any items which need to be taken home, and to ensure that spare clothing and bedding are clean and in good condition.
- If a child is being toilet-trained, the parents are responsible for providing approximately 20 diapers per week, and any special toileting supplies that the child needs (you should keep parents updated on their child's diaper needs).
- Each child may bring a safe, soft plush toy for rest period, such as a plush or stuffed toy, a doll, or a favourite nap time blanket.
- Children should wear inexpensive, comfortable clothing so that they can participate in all aspects of the program. Parents are asked to send their child in the appropriate outdoor clothing for the day. You will be taking the children outside at least once a day, at the playground, for walks, or field trips, and in all kinds of weather.
- All items of clothing should be clearly labeled with the child's name or initials.
- While every effort is made to protect each child's clothing and possessions from loss or damage, the agency and care provider cannot guarantee that this will not happen. You may want to set up a Lost and Found box and encourage parents to check it regularly.

### (17) PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT & COMMUNICATION

The agency is extremely interested in having parents involved in the Family Home Day Care program. Communication with parents and receiving feedback from parents are keys to our success. For the most part the agency will communicate with parents through you, as the daily care provider who has close contact with the parents. When required, the agency will communicate with parents directly by regular mail and email, where possible.

#### Parent Bulletin Board:

Each care provider must have a parent bulletin board that contains information of interest to parents and information required by the regulations to be posted (see list below). The bulletin board must be posted in a conspicuous spot in the family day care home (we recommend close to the entrance/exit where parents will be sure to see it every day).

Besides the required information, the bulletin board should also include program information that may be of interest to parents, notices regarding upcoming meetings and activities, as well as parenting and community information that may assist parents. Parents should make sure to check the bulletin board regularly.

The regulations state that the parent bulletin board must include the following information:

- A copy of the agency's license from the Department of Community Services (will be provided to you by the family home consultant)
- A copy of the last licensing inspection report from the Department of Community Services (will be provided to you by the family home consultant)

A notice indicating that the following information is available for viewing by the parents:

- The Day Care Act, the Day Care Regulations, and the Family Home Day Care Program Regulations (see also link at: <http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms/families/elcc.html>)
- The agency's policy respecting licensing and care provider approval
- The agency's policy regarding enrollment and attendance
- Information on the agency's program
- A copy of the agency's behavior guidance policy (will be provided to you by the family home consultant)
- The minutes of the last parent advisory committee meeting (will be provided to you by the family home consultant)
- Notice of the next parent advisory committee meeting (at least two weeks before the meeting date) (will be provided to you by the family home consultant)
- Rules and procedures respecting evacuation from fire or other emergencies (must be developed by you as soon as you set up your family day care home)
- A card listing addresses and telephone numbers of staff members, substitute staff, taxi, ambulance, etc.
- A copy of any critical issues notification sent to parents (see next subsection)

**Critical Issues Notification:**

When critical issues arise which could impact the way the family home day care is run or managed, the agency must provide notice in writing to parents. In particular, the agency must notify the parents if any of the following occur:

- the approval of a care provider or a family day care home they manage is or will be revoked;
- a family day care home or agency is closed or sold;
- conditions are imposed upon the agency's license or any written information about the agency's license or program has been given to the agency by the Director;
- the police or an agency established under the *Children and Family Services Act* are investigating a matter involving a child enrolled in its approved Family Home Day Care program and a care provider or other person associated with the family home day care, unless the police or the agency established under the *Children and Family Services Act* directs otherwise.

Notice of a closure or sale under (b) above must be given at least 2 weeks before the date of the closure or sale. Any notices under this section must be in writing and must be

- sent by registered mail to the last known address of a person who is required to be notified;
- posted in a conspicuous location in the family day care home.

**(18) PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Another method for communicating with parents is the parent advisory committee. Each agency must establish a parent advisory committee to provide a forum for parents to have input into, and receive notice of, any matters of interest or concern to the parents. The parent advisory committee is also a body that will be used by the Department of Community Services to communicate directly with the parents, if there are issues with the agency's license. This communication will come from the Director of Early Childhood Development Services (referred to as "the Director" in the regulations). If you are interested in being a care provide representative on the parent advisory committee, or if you know of any parents interested in being a parent representative, please speak to the family home consultant.

Below are the relevant parts of the regulations:

**Membership of parent advisory committee**

- An agency's parent advisory committee must be composed of at least 4 members, as follows:
- at least 2 parents of children currently enrolled in the agency's family home day care program;
- at least 1 care provider;
- 1 nonvoting representative of the agency, who must attend each meeting of the committee.
- The majority of the voting members of an agency's parent advisory committee must be parents of children currently enrolled in the agency's family home day care program.
- An agency's parent advisory committee must be open to all parents of children enrolled in the agency's family home day care program.

- An agency must give the Director all of the following information for each member of the agency's parent advisory committee:
  - name;
  - mailing address;
  - email address, if any;
  - telephone number.
- An agency must notify the Director annually of any changes in the composition of its parent advisory committee or any changes in the information required by subsection (4).

Director must provide information about agency to committee

The Director must give a copy of any notice or written information about the status of the agency's license to each member of the agency's parent advisory committee at the same time that the Director gives it to the agency.

Parent advisory committee meetings

- A parent advisory committee must meet at least twice a year.
- At least 2 weeks before the date of an agency's parent advisory committee meeting, written notice of the meeting must be
  - given to the parents of all children enrolled in the agency's family home day care program;
  - and
  - posted in a conspicuous location in each family day care home the agency manages.
- A notice of a parent advisory committee meeting must inform the parents that they may place items on the meeting's agenda.
- An agency must ensure that the agency's parent advisory committee has an opportunity to discuss any matters of interest or concern to the parents, including all of the following:
  - the safety, care and wellbeing of the children;
  - the agency's license;
  - the services provided;
  - the equipment and materials available for the children;
  - staffing patterns and staff qualifications.

Parent advisory committee minutes

No later than 2 weeks after the date of an agency's parent advisory committee meeting, the agency must

- produce minutes of the meeting; and
- post a copy of the minutes in a conspicuous location in each family day care home the agency manages.
- A copy of the minutes from an agency's parent advisory committee meeting must
  - remain posted in accordance with clause (1)(b) until the minutes of the next meeting are posted; and
  - be kept on file by the agency for inspection by the Director, as required.

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## (19) HEALTH POLICIES

At our family home day care we are concerned about the health and safety of all children, staff and care providers. You must be strict about enforcing health regulations. Infections can spread rapidly within a family home, so universal precautionary measures are taken at all times.

### Illness:

- If a child is going to be absent due to illness, parents are asked to call you to notify you of the condition of the child.
- Parents are asked not to send a child if there is any question of illness, as care providers are not equipped to accommodate sick children.
- Children who exhibit the following must not be accepted for care:
  - conditions of illness which make the child unable to cope with the regular activities of the program.
  - symptoms of a contagious or transmittable illness (ie. Fever, diarrhea, vomiting, infection, persistent coughing, swollen glands, unidentified rash, pain/aches, chicken pox, etc.)
- If a child becomes ill while attending the family home day care, you must notify the parents immediately. Parents are expected to have an authorized person pick up the child within a reasonable amount of time.
- Parents are asked to inform you if their child has a contagious condition which has been diagnosed by a medical doctor.
- You will need to inform all of the parents of any contagious condition their children may have been exposed to while at the family home day care.
- Once diagnosed with a contagious condition, a child is not permitted to return to the family home day care without a letter from his/her doctor stating that the child is past the contagious period of the condition and able to participate in family home day care activities.
- In the event that a child has been hospitalized for any reason, the child will require a note from the doctor stating the s/he is ready to return to the family home day care.

### Medication:

- You are only permitted to give medication authorized by a doctor or parent.
- All medication must be in the original container, with a readable label.
- Parents must be asked to complete an authorization form for each new medication (or provide a written letter of consent), stating the child's name, date, nature of and reason for medication and instructions.
- You may not give over the counter medication unless written instructions are received from the parent or the child's doctor. These instructions are to include the child's name, date, nature of and reason for the drug, complete instructions on administration and dosage.
- Parents are asked to send measuring utensils along with their child's medication.

- All medications are to be given directly to you by the parents, and for safety reasons must not left with child's spare clothing and bedding.
- It is recommended that a child who has been prescribed an antibiotic take it for 24 hours before returning to the family home day care.
- Certain medical procedures can only be done with special training. If a child has special medical needs, these cases will be covered by a child's Individual Care Plan.

#### HIV and AIDS Policies:

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus), the virus that leads to AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome), is not transmitted through everyday contact. No confirmed cases of transmission through casual contact or biting have been reported. HIV is transmitted from one person to another by sperm, vaginal secretions, breast milk, blood, and from mother to child during pregnancy.

HIV is considered a disability, and by law discrimination on the basis of disability is illegal.

Parents have no obligation to tell the agency or you if they are aware that their child is HIV- positive. If such information is disclosed to you, you have an ethical obligation to keep the information confidential.

#### Universal Precautions

Those who work at our agency or are associated with the agency as care providers, help control the spread of infections by practicing proper hygiene and universal precautions. The way you do this is by doing the following:

- Washing your hands and ensuring children wash their hands thoroughly with warm water and soap before meals, after toileting, before and after administering first aid, and throughout the day as required.
- Dishes, eating surfaces and diapering areas must be sanitized after each use.
- Toys must be checked for breakage daily and sanitized at least twice each week.
- Floors must be swept daily, as required throughout the day.
- The laundry, kitchen and bathrooms must be maintained in a clean and organized manner.

Other universal precautions adapted by the family home day care include:

- hands are washed immediately after exposure to blood, and all other bodily secretions
- all cuts are covered with a sterile bandage until healed
- disposable latex gloves are worn by staff/care providers treating open cuts
- blood-soiled surfaces are disinfected with bleach, which kills HIV
- laundry stained with blood and other bodily secretions is washed separately in hot, soapy water
- materials stained with blood and other bodily secretions are placed in sealed garbage bags and discarded in a lined, covered plastic container.

**Emergency Preparedness:**

- The agency inspects all of the family day care homes on an annual basis to ensure that the premises are safe.
- The agency facilities and a portion of the family day care homes are inspected annually by the Department of Community Services.
- The agency has an emergency evacuation plan and practices fire safety procedures during monthly fire drills. You must also develop an emergency evacuation plan for your family home day care and hold monthly fire drills. It is important that emergency evacuation procedures include keeping a list of parent's addresses and contact information in a location close to the exit where it will be easy to pick up should an emergency occur.
- All agency staff and care provider have been trained in First Aid and infant CPR and are required to keep their training up to date.

Parents are asked to inform you of any changes to their address, place of work, telephone numbers, and authorization list, and injuries that their children receive outside the program.

**Accident Reports:**

Agency staff and care providers are required to complete an accident report form for any accident which requires first-aid treatment. It will be signed by the person who administered treatment, and by a representative of the agency, and placed in the child's file. Parents must be informed of any injuries at the appropriate time depending on the extent of the injury. Maintaining confidentiality regarding any concerned parties is a priority.

**Emergency Medical Treatments:**

Emergency medical treatment will only be provided by agency staff or by you if your first aid training gives you the skills required to do so. You must have current training in emergency first aid and CPR.

If a child requires emergency medical treatment that cannot be safely provided by you or agency staff if they are present, you must call the parents and have them take the child for professional medical attention. If the parent cannot be reached, an authorized person will be called to fulfill this responsibility, and efforts to contact the parent will continue. Any extraordinary costs associated with transporting the child for emergency medical care (such as ambulance) will be paid by the parents of the child.

**Emergency Evacuation:**

In the event that you have to evacuate the family day care home due to fire or other emergency and the home is not fit for immediate habitation, you must contact the parents or an authorized person immediately so that they can pick up their children immediately at the designated emergency location. It is important that emergency evacuation procedures include keeping a list of parent's addresses and contact information in a location close to the exit where it will be easy to pick up should an evacuation be necessary.

**(20) NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION**

We require our care providers to offer balanced and varied menus that utilize nutritious foods. You may plan meals in advance and may decide you wish to post menus for the interest of parents. This is not required, but may be a service provided by your care provider. You should use the Canada Food Guide for Children when you are developing menus or planning meals. The family home consultant may also be able to provide you with information on nutritious meals that children will eat and enjoy.

You must offer a nutritious morning and afternoon snack and for children who stay over lunch hour, a full lunch is provided which includes 1/3 of the daily nutrient requirement for the children. If you are not making a lunch for younger children, school aged children are permitted to bring their own lunches.

If a child requires supplements or special foods due to a medical condition, the parent will be responsible for providing them. You should eat with the children to help model appropriate eating behaviors and positive food habits. You should not force children to eat, or withhold favourite foods for inappropriate behaviors, but should encourage children through positive modeling and reinforcement to try new or other foods.

Parents should be asked if their children have any food allergies or sensitivities.

**(21) REST PERIOD**

Infants sleep according to their own individual schedule. For children under school age, a rest period is a part of the day's schedule. During rest period, you should encourage all children under school age to rest on their mats for one half hour. This includes children who do not sleep. After this half an hour, any children that are not sleeping may engage in quiet activities until the rest of the children wake up.

**(22) POLICY ON REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE**

As per the protocols outlined by the Department of Community Services for the prevention and reporting of child abuse, you are legally required to report cases of suspected child abuse. If a situation arises that causes you to think child abuse may be an issue, please speak to the family home consultant.

### (23) BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE POLICY

The agency has a written behavior guidance policy with respect to permitted and prohibited behavior guidance practices. The policy applies to all agency staff, volunteers and care providers.

Staff, volunteers and care providers are required to follow the guidelines at all times.

- You will be asked to read and understand the behavior guidance policy before you start working as an approved care provider
- During your annual assessment, the family home consultant will ask you to review the policy and will ask you to demonstrate that you understand the agency's behavior guidance policy and are able to apply the policy
- A copy of the behavior guidance policy must be posted on the parent bulletin board in the family day care home and is also posted at the agency facilities. Parents who would like a copy of the policy should be directed to the agency.
- You must review the written behavior guidance policy with the parents of each child when they are first enrolled in the family home day care program.

The following provisions are included in the Day Care Regulations and must be followed by every agency and are included in the agency's behavior guidance policy:

6C No operator shall

- (a) permit corporal punishment, including but not limited to
  - (i) striking a child directly or with any physical object;
  - (ii) shaking, shoving, spanking, or other forms of aggressive physical contact;
- (b) require or force a child to repeat physical movements;
- (c) use harsh, humiliating, belittling or degrading responses of any form, including verbal, emotional or physical;
- (d) confine or isolate a child; or
- (e) deprive a child of basic needs including food, shelter, clothing or bedding.

### (24) HYGIENE AND SAFETY

It is the direct responsibility of the care provider to ensure that a safe environment is provided for children in the approved home, outdoors, and in the car. The care provider must be diligent in supervising children at all times. In addition to the required duties as listed under Section 7 of this handbook, the agency has developed the following guidelines to assist care providers in creating a safe environment:

- Children should never be left in the home alone, or in the care of an unapproved care provider.
- Electrical outlets in rooms used by children under 5 years of age, should be covered with childproof protective covers.
- Fireplaces, wood stoves, and space heaters should be separated from the children's play space by a protective barrier.
- Where children are unable to climb up and down stairs safely, stairways should be blocked off. Safety gates should meet current safety standards, and be installed according to manufacturers' directions.

- Clear glass door panels should be clearly marked at the child's eye level. Children's art work or decorative decals are appropriate markers.
- Firearms and ammunition should not be permitted in the family home unless the agency is aware of their presence. Any firearms must be stored separately under lock and key.
- Many house plants are harmful to children if ingested and should be kept out of reach.
- Pets should be immunized against rabies according to veterinary guidelines.
- Pets should be monitored carefully when present with children.
- Plastic bags should not be used under sheets to protect mattresses.
- All toys should be age appropriate, safe, and free of lead based paint and sharp edges.

#### (25) FIRE SAFETY

Family home day care must be free from fire hazards, and are governed by the same fire prevention guidelines as any family dwelling unit. When you are setting up your family day care home you must contact the local fire department or the office of the fire marshal to arrange an inspection. The following fire safety guidelines have been developed by the agency to assist care providers in creating a safe environment.

- Care providers must establish and post rules and procedures respecting evacuation from fire or other emergencies.
- Every facility must carry out a monthly fire drill.
- Unnecessary garbage, newspapers and litter around the home should be removed.
- Flammable liquids should be stored in labeled containers, out of reach of children, in a room other than the kitchen or furnace room.
- Electrical outlets, switches, and cords should be in good working condition.
- Doors and windows should be free from debris, so that they can be easily opened in case of fire.
- Steps and landings both indoors and outdoors should be kept in good repair.
- Heating units should be in good repair and screened from children.
- Fire extinguishers in good working condition should be located in the kitchen and play room.
- One battery operated or hardwired smoke detector should be located on every level of the home.
- A fire warning signal, e.g., smoke detector or bell, and the word 'fire' should be identified for children as an indication to leave the house immediately.
- An evacuation plan should be devised indicating all rooms in the house, and their exits, and the role of the care provider in an evacuation
- Fire drills should be practiced monthly with the children, recorded on the daily time sheet, and submitted to the agency.
- A safe place to meet outside the approved home should be identified and visited by the children and care provider.

#### (26) INSURANCE

The care provider is responsible for purchasing and maintaining in full force and effect insurance to protect the care provider from liability. The agency will provide the care provider with information on insurance companies that are familiar with the family home day care program and may be willing to provide insurance.

#### (27) CHILD ABUSE REGISTER SCREENING

All care providers and prospective staff, students and volunteers that will have direct contact with children in a child care setting or with the children's records must be screened through the Child Abuse Register. The Child Abuse Register is a central record of the names of people who have abused children as determined by a Nova Scotia court. The Child Abuse Register is confidential and can only be used under certain conditions and when certain procedures are followed.

Child Abuse Register screening of agency staff, volunteers and care providers that will be working with or interacting with children or children's records is required as soon as they become associated with the agency. As well, screening is required for any person over the age of 12 who resides in a family day care home.

To complete a child abuse register check the person whose records are being searched must consent in writing to the search. A special form must be used, Form XIII, Child Abuse Register - Request for a Search. It takes about ten working days from the time that the form is received by the Department of Community Services until the search is completed and the response is sent by registered mail. Because a search of the Child Abuse Register is a time-consuming process, only names of those who have been approved to work with the agency, or reside with an approved care provider should be screened. This search must be done immediately after hiring or approval and then must be repeated every three years.

The law requires that persons be advised when their name is put on the Child Abuse Register. Therefore, it is unlikely that you would not know that your name is included in the Child Abuse Register. You are not required to consent to the search; however you cannot be approved as a care provider with the agency if you do not agree to the screening.

### (28) CRIMINAL RECORD CHECK

Criminal records screening is another tool used to determine the suitability of an applicant who will be working with or providing services to children, youth, or vulnerable adults. The intention is to identify criminal records which may present risk to children, youth or vulnerable adults. The regulations require a criminal records check be completed on any care provider, volunteer and staff person who will have contact with the children or their records. As well, a criminal records check must be done for every person 18 or older who lives in the care provider's home.

The criminal record check form can be obtained from the police department in your region.

The agency requires potential staff; volunteers and care providers to complete the request for criminal records check and provide it to the agency. The agency will submit the criminal records request form to the police to request the search.

When the police receive a request for a criminal records check, the police review their records to determine whether there was a criminal record and any relevant convictions or outstanding criminal charges. The criminal record check is the property of the person whose record is being searched. This report may be provided by the police directly to the agency, who must return the police record search to the person and shall not make a copy. Alternatively, the police may have a policy of only providing the results of the search to the person whose records are being searched. In this case, the agency must ensure that they have an opportunity to review the results to ensure that the person does not have a criminal record.

The agency must maintain confidentiality with respect to the police record information provided by any staff, volunteer, care provider or other person. The agency shall only use the police record information for the purpose of assessing the person's ability to provide child care services.

### (29) MONTHLY MONITORING AND ANNUAL ASSESSMENT

All care providers receive monthly visits from the agency's family home consultant. The family home consultant is a resource and support person who should help you in providing the best possible care. The family home consultant is also accountable for ensuring that you are following the requirements of the law, regulations and any relevant policies. During the monthly visits, the family home consultant will give you guidance and information to make sure that you are in compliance with the law.

On an annual basis, the family home consultant will do a more formal inspection which will be documented. During annual visits, the family home consultant will:

- Confirm that all required regulations are met
- Confirm that the agency's license and any approval certificate and any other documents are posted if so required
- Confirm that the number and ages of the children in attendance are those for which the home is approved
- Confirm that the register is accurate
- Address any follow up from previous visits
- Address any aspect of the service that the provider or family home consultant wishes to discuss

The agency has developed an annual assessment process to assist the care provider in meeting the requirements of the law and will be distributed to care providers in their orientation package.

### (30) RIGHT OF ENTRY

The Department of Community Services Director of Early Childhood Development Services, or a person acting on the Director's behalf (for example a licensing inspection officer), may, at any reasonable time, enter an approved family day care home and may examine the premises, equipment, facilities, books and records.

You are required to permit any departmental inspection staff to enter the premises and view your records. Inspection staff are not required to give you notice of their visits. Each year a portion of the family day care homes managed by each agency in the province will be inspected by the departmental staff.

Care providers are required to complete the family home day care training within one year of being approved by the agency. The agency will arrange and pay for your attendance at this course and may provide a substitute care provider if the course is held during the day.

Care providers must also take several hours of professional development each year after they have completed the family home day care course. This will also be organized and paid for by the agency.

Care providers must also keep their first aid and CPR training up to date.

### (31) PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Care providers are required to complete the family home day care training within one year of being approved by the agency. The agency will arrange and pay for any materials or supplies for this course.

Care providers must also take several hours of professional development each year after they have completed the family home day care course. This will also be organized and paid for by the agency.

Care providers must also keep their first aid and CPR training up to date.

### (32) ACCIDENT REPORTS

Staff and care providers are required to complete an accident report form for any accident which requires first-aid treatment by the staff and care provider. It will be signed by the staff member who administered treatment, and by the agency director, and placed in the child's file. Parent(s) are to be informed of the injury at an appropriate time (depending on the extent of the injury), maintaining confidentiality of any concerned parties.

### (33) INCIDENT PROCEDURE

This procedure will be followed for any incident occurring in the agency or care provider's home which the agency director or owner deems as a threat to health and safety, but which is not initially indicative of gross incompetence on the part of the staff. The incident is reported to the agency director, and a written report will be completed by both the staff member and the agency director. The owner will be informed as soon as possible.

The owner will then direct a letter of concern/warning to the staff person or care provider responsible in the incident, which will be kept in their file. If the staff member is involved in a second incident within a reasonable amount of time, the owner may consider a probationary period. A performance evaluation will be completed at the end of the probation, and may impact on the annual performance evaluation.

### (34) GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Although our family home day care agency, through the family home consultant, makes every effort to provide valuable support services to our care providers, there may be occasions when you have concerns about particular events, situations or staff and wish to raise your concerns with the agency. If this occurs, care providers are encouraged to talk to the family home consultant as a first point of contact. It is best to have this discussion after regular hours, one-on-one, when you are not looking after children.

If the family home consultant is not able to address your concerns satisfactorily, or if the concern is serious enough to warrant immediate review, care providers are encouraged to contact the agency directly at the numbers listed at the front of this handbook. The agency will

then investigate the concern/situation, will schedule meetings as necessary with appropriate parties to gather relevant information, and will work with the care provider and the family home consultant to resolve the issue. You will be kept informed throughout the process (within confidentiality requirements).

Our goal is support you as you provide quality child care. Just as we encourage parents to bring their concerns to our care providers and the family home consultant as soon as they arise, so that we can work together to resolve issues quickly without impacting the quality of the care provided, we also encourage our care providers to raise their concerns with the family home consultant or the agency as they arise, so that no issue continues without resolution. Working together we can resolve any outstanding issues or conflicts.

THANK-YOU FOR CHOOSING  
HOME & HEART FAMILY HOME DAY CARE AGENCY

*Caring, Working & Playing Together!*