

PARENT HANDBOOK

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HOME & HEART Family Home Day Care Agency
PARENT HANDBOOK

(1) WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

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

Contact information:

a) DIRECTOR / HOME CONSULTANT

Lila Hope-Simpson

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341 Main Street
Wolfville, NS

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Wolfville, NS B4P 2R1

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b) 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-centred 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 AND PERSONNEL

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.

(5) 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.

(6) 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 a care provider is looking after only infants, then the care provider may care for a maximum of 3 infants at a time, including their own infants, and must not have any other children in their care.

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(7) 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) Children with Special Needs

Since this agency operates an inclusive program, every effort will be made to accommodate children with special needs, physical, cognitive, social or emotional.

(8) 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.

(9) 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 your caregivers hours of operation.

(10) GENERAL 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.

(11) ILLNESS OF CARE PROVIDER:

If the care provider is ill or otherwise unable to accept children into their homes, they should contact the Director as soon as possible. Alternate back-up child care arrangements may be made if possible, but there is no guarantee that a space will be available. Parents are advised to have alternate child care plans in the event that the caregiver and agency are unable to provide care due to illness or absence.

(12) HEALTH OF CHILDREN & MEDICATIONS

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

Illness:

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

- In the event that your child has been hospitalized for any reason, s/he will require a note from the doctor stating the child is ready to return to the family home day care.

Medication:

- The care providers are only permitted to give medication authorized by a doctor or parent.
- All medication must be in the original container, with a readable label.
- You will be asked to complete an authorization form for each new medication (or provide a written letter of consent), stating your child's name, date, nature of and reason for the drug, complete instructions on administration and dosage, and any special instructions.
- Over the counter medication will not be given by the care provider unless written instructions are received from the parent or the child's doctor. These instructions are to include your child's name, date, nature of and reason for the drug, complete instructions on administration and dosage, any special instructions, and the parent's or doctor's signature.
- Please send measuring utensils along with your child's medication.
- All medications are to be given directly to care provider, and for safety reasons must not be left with child's spare clothing and bedding in the cubby area.
- 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 your child has special medical needs, these cases will be covered by your child's Individual Care Plan.

(13) PARENT MEETINGS**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 parent representative of the parent advisory committee, please let us know. Below are the relevant parts of the regulations:

Membership of parent advisory committee

- 1) An agency's parent advisory committee must be composed of at least 4 members, as follows:
 - a) at least 2 parents of children currently enrolled in the agency's family home day care program;
 - b) at least 1 care provider;
 - c) 1 nonvoting representative of the agency, who must attend each meeting of the committee.
- 2) 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.

- 3) An agency's parent advisory committee must be open to all parents of children enrolled in the agency's family home day care program.
- 4) An agency must give the Director all of the following information for each member of the agency's parent advisory committee:
 - a) name;
 - b) mailing address;
 - c) email address, if any;
 - d) telephone number.
- 5) 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

- 1) A parent advisory committee must meet at least twice a year.
- 2) At least 2 weeks before the date of an agency's parent advisory committee meeting, written notice of the meeting must be
 - a) given to the parents of all children enrolled in the agency's family home day care program; and
 - b) posted in a conspicuous location in each family day care home the agency manages.
- 3) A notice of a parent advisory committee meeting must inform the parents that they may place items on the meeting's agenda.
- 4) 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:
 - a) the safety, care and wellbeing of the children;
 - b) the agency's license;
 - c) the services provided;
 - d) the equipment and materials available for the children;
 - e) staffing patterns and staff qualifications.

Parent advisory committee minutes

- 1) No later than 2 weeks after the date of an agency's parent advisory committee meeting, the agency must
 - a) produce minutes of the meeting and
 - b) post a copy of the minutes in a conspicuous location in each family day care home the agency manages.
- 2) A copy of the minutes from an agency's parent advisory committee meeting must
 - a) remain posted until the minutes of the next meeting are posted; and
 - b) be kept on file by the agency for inspection by the Director, as required.

(14) PARENT BULLETIN BOARD

The agency and 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 place in the family day care home and also at the agency.

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
- A copy of the last licensing inspection report from the Department of Community Services
- 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
- The minutes of the last parent advisory committee meeting
- Notice of the next parent advisory committee meeting (at least two weeks before the meeting date)
- Rules and procedures respecting evacuation from fire or other emergencies
- A card listing addresses and telephone numbers of staff members, substitute staff, taxi, ambulance, hospital, fire department, police and other emergency information
- A copy of any critical issues notification sent to parent.

(15) GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Although the Home & Heart Family Home Day Care Agency, through approved care providers, makes every attempt to offer the highest quality care to all children and families, there may be occasions when parents have concerns about particular events, situations or staff. If that occurs, parents are encouraged to talk to the care provider as a first point of contact. It is best to have this discussion after regular hours, one-on-one, when the care provider is not still looking after children.

If the care provider is not able to address the concern satisfactorily, or if the concern is serious enough to warrant immediate review, parents are encouraged to contact the agency's family home consultant at the numbers listed at the front of this handbook. The family home consultant 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 parents to resolve the issue. Parents and the care provider will be kept informed throughout the process (within confidentiality requirements).

Our goal is to provide quality child care. 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.

(16) MEETING YOUR CHILD'S NEEDS

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

- Your 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 please), and
 - a complete change of clothing (underwear, socks, pants, shirt, etc. - just in case!).
- Your child's possessions will be stored in a storage bin marked with their name. The bin will also contain notices, artwork, soiled clothing, etc. Ask the care provider where the bin is stored, and check it daily so that you can ensure that you collect any items which need to be taken home, and to ensure that spare clothing and bedding are clean and in good condition.
- If your child is being toilet-trained, you are responsible for providing approximately 20 or more diapers per week, and any special toileting supplies that your child needs (the care provider will keep you updated on your child's diaper needs).
- Your 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 comfortable clothing so that they can participate in all aspects of the program. Please send your child in the appropriate outdoor clothing for the day. We try to go outside at least once a day in all kinds of weather.
- All items of clothing should be clearly labeled with your child's name or initials.
- While every effort is made to protect your child's clothing and possessions from loss or damage, we cannot guarantee that this will not happen. Please check the Lost and Found box regularly.

Arrival

- You must bring your child into the home. His/her outerwear must be removed in the designated area
- Your child must be escorted into the home and greeted by a care provider. Our responsibility for your child does not begin until s/he is in the care of a care provider. Children are not to be left at the door or unsupervised area.

- The person arriving with your child must sign the attendance sheet, noting the date and time of arrival. This allows us to see who is on the premises during fire drills and emergencies, and to keep attendance records. For after school programs, the care provider will record these times in the morning, lunch time, and after school.
- For infants and toddlers, on arrival please advise the care provider of any special circumstances that may affect your child's behaviour or well-being that day. These are noted in the daily records, which you are entitled to view.
- Your child is expected to be at the family home day care by 9:30 am. This enables your child to take part in all planned activities. In addition, field trips may start at this time.
- Please notify the care provider if your child will not be attending, or will be late (please give an approximate time of arrival).

Departure

- Children must be picked up by the closing time designated by the care provider.
- If, due to unforeseen circumstances, you will be late picking up your child, you must call the care provider in advance. Note that a late pick-up fee, due immediately, will be charged.
- Parents of infants and toddlers should 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 you are unable to pick up your child, you must notify the care provider in advance regarding who will be coming for your child, and an approximate pick-up time.
- Agency staff members and the care provider will only release your child to those persons listed on the authorization form at the time of enrolment. *Please keep us updated with any changes to this authorization list.* If you want someone not listed on the authorization form to pick up your child, you must inform us in writing. If this is not possible, we must be able to contact you for authorization, or we will not release the child to the person.

Your Child's First Day:

The first day that a child attends the family home day care is a very important day for your child. 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 parent/s and care provider, so that special information about the child can be shared. In addition, you and your 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 your child's introduction to our family home day care:

- We suggest that you and your child visit the family home day care together the first day. This should be a brief visit with you 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 you, we suggest bringing your child in early the first few mornings and spending that time together in the family home day care.
- We suggest that your child's first few days be shorter than normal, so that his/her days are not too overwhelming and tiring.
- If this is your child's first child care experience, you and your child may need some extra support. The care provider will assist you and your child through the transition. Please feel free to share your concerns and feelings with her/him.

(17) WITHDRAWAL FROM PROGRAM:

Please note that a minimum of two weeks notice in writing is required for withdrawal from your caregivers' program.

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

Caring, Working & Playing Together!