

Early Learning & Child Care Centre



Parent Handbook

Muskoka Family Focus and Children's Place
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WELCOME

We are pleased to welcome you to our Early Learning and Childcare Centre. We trust that your child will enjoy his/her experience at our centre.

Muskoka Family Focus and Children's Place is a not-for-profit and registered charitable organization incorporated through the Ministry of the Attorney General. Our ELCC's are licensed under the Child Care Early Years Division of the Ministry of Education. Qualified Early Childhood Educators and teaching assistants play an important role in maintaining program quality. Our staff strive to promote a healthy caring inclusive learning environment.

As a not-for-profit and registered charitable organization, governed by a volunteer Board of Directors, Muskoka Family Focus & Children's Place strives to support the needs of all families with young children in Muskoka. Your input is both valued and welcomed. If you would like to forward us your feedback, this can be done by contacting Lee Ann Rogers, Program Manager at 645-3027.

*Our childcare services are available Monday through Friday, year round, excluding all statutory holidays. We **may** also close the week between Christmas and New Year's Day. Our Centres open at 7:30 a.m. and close promptly at 6:00 p.m.*

At Bracebridge Children's Place Early Learning and Childcare Centre, we offer care to all children from 15 months to 6 years on a full or part time basis. We also provide a program for all children aged 3.8 to 12 years before (provided there is sufficient enrollment) and after school. Bracebridge Children's Place is located at Monsignor Michael O'Leary Catholic School.

At BPS Early Learning and Childcare Centre, we offer care to all children from 2.5 to 6 years on a full or part time basis. We also provide a program for all children aged 3.8 to 12 years before (provided there is sufficient enrollment) and after school. This centre is located in the Bracebridge Public School.

Our Gravenhurst Children's Place Early Learning and Childcare Centre offers care to all children from 0 to 6 years on a full or part time basis. We are located behind the Centennial Centre in Gravenhurst.

Huntsville Children's Place Early Learning and Childcare Centre (formerly Sabrina Park Early Learning and Childcare Centre) offers care to the families of Sabrina Park for children aged 18 months to 6 years on a full or part time basis.

Other services offered by Muskoka Family Focus and Children's Place, Before and After School Programs in Huntsville, Gravenhurst and Bracebridge as well as workshops for parents and caregivers.

PROGRAM STATEMENT

Our Early Learning Centres and School Age Programs strive to provide a positive learning environment for your child to enhance his or her level of development through play experiences and the guidance of professionally trained Registered Early Childhood Educators (and assistants) who are members of and in good standing with the Ontario College of Early Childhood Educators. Staff, students and volunteers will review this program statement prior to interacting with the children and at least once annually and when this statement is modified.

We believe children are "competent, capable, curious and rich in potential".

Our Early Learning Centres use the *How Does Learning Happen, (HDLH) Ontario's Pedagogy for The Early Years - 2014*¹ as the document to guide programming and pedagogy²

For the children, their families and our staff, our program strategies are designed to foster physical, social, emotional, intellectual, creative and spiritual development by offering experiences that promote:

- a) Health, safety, nutrition and well-being;
- b) Curiosity, creativity, initiative and independence;
- c) Self-esteem, confidence and decision making capabilities;
- d) Respect for themselves, others and their environment;
- e) Encourage responsive feelings of friendship and consideration;
- f) Communication and interaction to foster positive responsive relationships;
- g) Self-regulation and co-operation;
- h) Inquiry based play through child initiated exploration and adult-support experiences;
- i) A well balanced daily schedule that includes active indoor and outdoor play as well as rest/quiet time that provides consideration to individual needs;
- j) Integration of children with challenging needs. Along with the assistance of various resource services in the community, we strive to meet the needs of all children.
- k) Document and review the impact of the strategies set out in (a) to (j) on the children and their families.

As stated in the *How Does Learning Happen?* document, "Learning and development happens within the context of relationships among children, families, educators and the environment." Our qualified staff, students and volunteers guide the early learning environment to promote the Four Foundations of *How Does Learning Happen?* These four foundations include: Belonging, Well-Being, Engagement and Expression. Our staff, students and volunteers use these foundations to provide a nurturing environment that creates a vision for all children's future potential. Our staff, students and volunteers

¹The HDLH document can be found on the Min. of Ed. website: www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/HowLearningHappens.pdf

² Pedagogy - The method and practice of teaching, especially as an academic subject or theoretical concept.

are supported to participate in continuous professional learning. They are required to document and review the impact of the strategies as stated above on the children and their families. Our staff, students and volunteers are also monitored throughout the year to ensure that all components of this program statement are implemented in the operation of each program.

Our goal is to provide a secure and safe learning environment through enjoyable experiences for all children attending our program. We involve local community partners and allow those partners to support children, their families and our staff, students and volunteers.

Program Statement Goals Approaches

Health, Safety, Nutrition and Well Being (a) (g)

Staff, students and volunteers create positive eating environments

Staff, students and volunteers are responsive to children's cues

Stimulating, safe environment available for intentional active play that supports individual children's abilities

Challenging experiences in available that support varied abilities in order for children to practice self-regulation skills and work towards mastering a skill

All meals, snacks and beverages must meet the recommendations in the Canada's Food Guide

Child health check completed daily (on attendance)

Safe, calming and nurturing environment

Self-regulation and co-operative skills encouraged

Children are dressed appropriately for the weather

Inquiry Play Based Programming (b) (h) (i) (k)

Well balanced daily schedule

Outdoor time (2 hrs) with activities offered OR indoor physical activity during inclement weather

Indoor physical activity

Creative opportunities available

Diverse age appropriate books available

Science/nature exploration available

Music/language opportunities available

Block play available

Sensory experiences offered

Dramatic play opportunities available

Co-operative opportunities offered to children

Area available for spiritual reflection ie: cozy tent

Quiet/rest period offered with appropriate activities

Program plans current and posted based on the interests of the children

Various documentation is visible to support the pedagogical learning of all children

Interactions with Children (c) (e) (f) (j)

Tone of voice is calm and nurturing to the children

Genuine interest shown to each child

Children are listened to and respected to help foster positive reciprocal relationships

Children are supported with positive reinforcement to build self-esteem, self-confidence and to nurture decision making skills

Children's emotions are recognized and responded to with empathy through responsive communication between educators and children

Educators, students and volunteers at child's level role modelling and encouraging independence, curiosity, initiative and self-help skills through reciprocal age appropriate conversation

Educators, students and volunteers communicate with children to identify feelings/emotions encouraging friendship and consideration of others ie: 'bucket filling' and inclusion of all

Educators, students and volunteers encourage children to be respectful of others and themselves

Frequent age appropriate verbal interaction with children to foster a sense of security

Frequent appropriate physical contact with children

Appropriate use of body and verbal language to foster positive communication and relationships

Each child greeted (by name) and acknowledged

Children encouraged to meet individual developmental goals

Children with special needs are integrated including the development and implementation of Individual Program Plans (IPP)

Focus is on children as opposed to the adults in the room

Interactions with Families and Our Community (f) (j) (k)

Families are greeted daily by name in a friendly welcoming manner (eye contact)

Family inquiries answered or redirected/referred

Communication between educators, students, volunteers and families is respectful to foster positive relationships between the children, parents and educators

Families are encouraged to participate in the program ie: scheduled visit, drop in, call, etc. and engage in the documentation displayed/demonstrated to ensure our strategies are effective

Respect for individual differences, sensitivity to differing parenting styles, culture, etc...

Sanitary Practices (a)

Staff, students and volunteers follow all recommendations by the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit

Children helped to wash before eating, after toileting, outdoor play, and as needed

Surfaces cleaned and disinfected as appropriate

Equipment/toys cleaned and disinfected per policy

Cots cleaned and disinfected, linens laundered at least weekly

Children assisted/encouraged to use sanitary practices when using the toilet

Safety Practices (a)

Children supervised AT ALL TIMES

Cleaning supplies inaccessible to children

Children sitting while eating or drinking

Environment (d) (g)

Educators, students and volunteers use the environment as a 'third teacher' ie: children are involved in room set up

Respect for the environment is woven into all activities throughout the day

The environment is designed to accommodate varied children`s sensitivities and arousal states and to allow for a calm, focused, alert state as well

Toys/equipment to promote all areas of development – inquiry play based learning

Toys/equipment suitable to developmental levels

Food Handling (a)

Allergies listed – staff, students and volunteers aware of allergies, list up to date

Staff, students and volunteers sit with children during meal times and it is a friendly social time

Good eating habits and manners encouraged

Children are assisted when needed

Children are encouraged to serve themselves

Proper food eating techniques modelled (use of utensils, dishes, cups)

Proper use of dishes ie: wet food must be on a plate or in bowl

Kitchen Maintenance and Duties (a)

All meals, snacks and beverages must meet the recommendations in the Canada's Food Guide

Culturally diverse options offered

Individual food preparation opportunities offered to children ie: fruit sticks

Healthy meals and snacks are being prepared with as much 'homemade' food as possible ie: homemade granola bars

Low fat, aspartame, trans fat and high sodium food are not included in our menus

Homogenized milk is being served to children under 2 years of age

Water is offered and available throughout the day

Kitchen floor swept daily

Cleaning and disinfecting happens regularly throughout the day

Cleaning checklist is completed daily, weekly, etc.

VISION, MISSION STATEMENT AND VALUES

VISION

To support and nurture Muskoka children and their families to be strong and healthy by providing affordable, accessible and flexible learning environments.

MISSION STATEMENT

Muskoka Family Focus and Children's Place is dedicated to providing high quality child and family supports and educational resources.

VALUES

We value children and families.

We value learning, loving and laughter.

We value open communication.

We value teamwork, recognizing the unique contributions of all individuals.

We value the health and safety of our children, families, caregivers and staff.

We value educators who are qualified and highly skilled.

We value collaboration throughout the community.

We value inclusion and early intervention for all children.

We value learning through play.

Parents are welcome to volunteer at the centre. It helps to build a sense of community instead of just a place for parents to leave their children for the day. The Program Supervisor, will be happy to guide you through the process of volunteering at one of our Early Learning and Childcare Centres.

We accept student educators from the Early Childhood Education college and/or university programs and co-op students from the high schools.

Students and volunteers are supervised at all times by the staff.

"It takes a whole village to raise a child"

Staff, Students and Volunteers

All staff members are certified in Standard First Aid/Infant and Child CPR, and are immunized as recommended by the local medical officer of health. They have a current satisfactory Vulnerable Sector Screen and complete an annual offence declaration form.

Centre Supervisor	who is responsible for meeting your family's needs by ensuring a high quality child care setting. She is also responsible for the staff and overall program. She interacts with the children on a regular basis.
Registered Early Childhood Educators	who plan and implement a fun filled inquiry based program, for children to learn through play, in a safe environment for the children enrolled in the program.
Assistants	who work cooperatively to assist the Early Childhood Educator to plan and implement the program as well as assist with the child care responsibilities in the assigned setting.
Cook	who is responsible for menu planning, preparing the snacks and lunch, shopping, as well as maintaining a healthy and sanitary environment.
Relief Staff	who are under the supervision of a qualified educator, who cover for our staff when they are sick, or on vacation.
Resource Teachers	who assist the Educators and Assistants with children with special needs or children who require a little extra help to learn at their highest potential. The Resource Teachers are employed by Community Living South Muskoka and Community Living Huntsville.
Students/Volunteers	who are under the supervision of a qualified educator, may assist in the classrooms with child care tasks.

FEE STRUCTURE

Admission

Before care begins we require parents to pay a two-week deposit for each child being enrolled. This deposit will be applied to the child's last two weeks of care. There is an annual administration fee of \$60.00 per family, which will be added to your first September invoice. This deposit is non-refundable should you decline the space.

Accounts are paid by preauthorized debit, online payments or interact payments only. Invoices will be emailed to your email address. We reserve the right to discontinue care if payment is not received. In the event a payment is returned due to NSF, a \$25.00 fee will be charged to your account. On inclement weather days, the program is open, therefore you will be billed.

WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO DISCONTINUE CARE IF PAYMENT IS NOT RECEIVED.

Rates are subject to change. Notification of change of rates will be forwarded to all parents prior to implementation.

Discharge

A **TWO WEEK WRITTEN NOTICE** is required for termination of care. If no notice is given, a two-week payment will be required.

A two-day minimum registration is required. Parents are required to pay for their child's space in the event of being absent (including sick days), and for all vacations and holidays as laid out in this handbook.

Daily Fee Structure (up to 9 hrs/day) effective October 1st, 2018

ELC	Toddler		Junior		Senior		Infant
	Part Time	Full Time	Part Time	Full Time	Part Time	Full Time	Part Time Full Time
BCP	\$41.00		\$40.00		\$40.00		-
BPS	-		\$40.00		\$40.00		-
GCP	\$41.00		\$40.00		\$40.00		\$45.50

****\$3.00 extended day fee will apply to any child using the daycare for more than 9 hours per day.**

The centres are open Monday to Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. except on the following Holidays:

New Year's Day	Labour Day
Family Day	Easter Monday
Good Friday	Civic Holiday
Victoria Day	Thanksgiving Day
Canada Day	Christmas Day & Boxing Day

Although childcare is not provided on these days, parents are still required to pay for these days. The centre will close at 3:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. The centre may be closed between Christmas and New Year's.

Subsidies

The District of Muskoka may provide full or partial financial assistance for those families who are eligible. Please feel free to call the District office at 645-2412 and ask to speak to an intake worker to arrange for an appointment.

OUR PROGRAMS

Daily activities follow a regular pattern so that the child can feel secure knowing what to expect and when to expect it. Our educators use the How Does Learning Happen? document to guide their programming to ensure children experience inquiry based opportunities for learning through play.

Children learn through play, therefore the centre offers a varied and stimulating program that includes gross motor activities, sensory experiences, dramatic play, creative art activities as well as puzzles, games, literacy and numeracy activities, music and rhythm, nature walks, supervised field trips, and outdoor play. Children are given the freedom to explore through activities based on their interests and curiosity.

These activities provide unlimited possibilities to inquire, construct, create, imagine, discover and work out small problems. The thrill of satisfaction from such achievements gives the child confidence to try new and more difficult tasks and thus paves the way for formal learning.

The children are taken outside daily, weather permitting. They receive a full lunch prepared from a menu, which is based on the revised Canada Food Guide. A snack consisting of foods such as vegetables, fruit, crackers and cheese, milk and water is served morning and afternoon. Menus are posted at each centre. All children nap or rest for at least one hour in the afternoon in accordance with the Child Care and Early Years Act.

The Nipissing Developmental Screening Tool is a developmental tool our Educators use to monitor each child's development. This tool supports our Educators to provide program planning that will meet the needs of all children in the program promoting growth and development in all areas of development: cognitive, vision, hearing, speech, language, communication, gross motor, fine motor, social/emotional and self-help. The Nipissing will be completed with your child in the fall and spring each year. You will be notified if the Educators feel your child may need extra support in a certain area and you will also be provided with the tool to complete with your child at home. At any time if you wish to discuss your child's development with his/her Educator, please contact the centre supervisor and time will be made for you to talk with the Educator outside of the classroom.

The actual program plan is subject to change, depending on the particular needs and interests of any one group at any time. The programs are posted on a bulletin board in each room and parents are welcomed and encouraged to look them over and familiarize themselves with their child's daily activities.

. *Due to Covid-19, we will not have the opportunity to communicate as much in person at the beginning and end of the day. Communication is very important to us so please communicate with us via phone, e-mail and/or written notes to keep our communication open.

HOW TO ENROLL AND WHAT TO BRING

Be sure to:

1. Apply for subsidy, if applicable.
2. Fill out registration forms and enrollment agreement.
3. Bring in record of immunization.
4. Pay administration fee and two-week deposit.
5. Bring in a complete change of labelled clothing in a knapsack to be left at the centre.
6. Make sure your child has a complete set of appropriate seasonal outdoor clothing.

Field Trips

The children are occasionally taken on special outings. Your child's educator will announce the trip in advance. Parents are welcome to participate in the field trips as an educator-helper.

You will be advised of any outing other than neighbourhood walks and you will be requested to sign a permission form.

Parents may be asked to contribute to the cost of the trip.

Clothing

Your child should wear play clothes, which are comfortable and easy for him/her to manage. They should be easily laundered as he/she may get paint, mud, glue, etc. on them. They should be free of complicated fastenings, buckles, etc. as fostering independence is an important element of our program. Running shoes are a necessity especially for indoor footwear during winter months.

If you label your child's clothing, particularly items such as underpants, mitts, and boots, it will help prevent them from getting mixed up with other children's belongings. We are not responsible for lost clothing.

Any clothing borrowed from the centre must be laundered and returned promptly. We have a very small supply.

THE FIRST DAY

At our Early Learning Centres we appreciate that as a parent of a young child recently registered at our centre, you are probably asking yourself many questions.

Will my child be happy at the centre?

What if he/she cries?

What do I do if he/she does not want me to leave?

How long should I stay when dropping him/her off?

Your child is extremely sensitive to your feelings, and will know if you have doubts, whether you express them directly or not. For his/her sake and for yours, it is important that you believe in what you are doing, and try to resolve your own feelings from the start.

Before your child's first day, make time for a few visits with your child. The first day come for an hour or so, and if possible, on the next visit stay a little longer. This will give your child a chance to become familiar with the new surroundings, our staff and the other children while you are with him/her.

On the first day, our staff will show your child his/her cubby and where the knapsack/bag with the extra clothes go. Children like knowing where their special spot is. How long should you stay? That depends on you and your child. Some children feel comfortable enough from their first visit or visits, while others need a little more reassuring. When you are ready to leave, an educator will be available to help if necessary. When you **give** your child to the educator, you are telling the child that this is a person you can trust. It is a good idea to put that message into words also: "You can go with Karen now. She will take good care of you". If you sneak out after your child is interested in an activity, your child will not trust you out of his sight again. He/she needs to know that you are going and that you will be back. As soon as you say you are going, **go!!!** Otherwise he/she will sense your hesitation and will hang on for dear life. If you feel insecure when you leave, you are giving your child the message that you are uncomfortable with this environment. Your child needs the reassurance that this is a safe place, and that he/she will have a good day. A good way to do this is to say, "See you later, I will be back to pick you up", then leave with a smile.

Throughout the day, call your child's centre as often as you need to, in order to feel comfortable.

Bracebridge Children's Place – 705-645-3362

Bracebridge Public School Children's Place – 705-645-2229

Gravenhurst Children's Place – 705-687-6664

Huntsville Children's Place - 705-783-0255

****Due to Covid-19, parents are not permitted to enter our centres at this time. Each centre's drop off and pick up arrangement is site specific and will be communicated to you by the Program Supervisor or Educators.***

HEALTH POLICY

We do our best to ensure that your child is not in contact with children who have a contagious disease. Therefore, it is the Centre's policy to exclude ill children from regular day care activities. The following factors are taken into consideration in the formation of our health policy:

The inability of a child who is ill to participate in a full day of programming

- ☒ The need by parents for a guideline to assist them in deciding whether to bring a child who is "not quite well" to the Centre.
- ☒ The need for staff to have a guideline for assessing the child's condition, before the Supervisor makes the decision to call a parent away from work or school.

Guidelines for Illness

Generally, a child should not attend the Centre if he/she has any of the following:

- ☒ A temperature of 101°F or 38.5°C or over. Temperature should be normal for 24 hours before returning to the Centre.
- ☒ Diarrhea, vomiting, extensive or unexplained rash (within 24 hours).
- ☒ Red puffy eyes (pink eye or suspicion of pink eye).
- ☒ Untreated ear infection.
- ☒ A communicable disease.

If your child becomes ill during the day, we will telephone you to arrange for him/her to be taken home. Unfortunately, there are times when it is difficult for a parent to determine if the child should be at the Centre. A slight cold or the end of an illness, are two examples. In such instances a general rule for determining whether the child is well enough to be at the Centre is this; if the child is at the Centre he/she must feel well enough to cope with the regular daily schedule, including participation in the outdoor program (approximately one hour during the morning and one hour in the afternoon).

****Our programs follow all Covid-19 related requirements from the Ministry of Education and the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit. Information is continuously being updated, we will do our best to share all information we have.***

Communicable Diseases

If a child is suspected of having any contagious disease (for example: measles, mumps, gastroenteritis, impetigo, conjunctivitis, roseola, etc.) the child must **NOT** be at the Centre. The child will be able to return to the Centre with a consent form from the physician stating that the child is no longer contagious, or at the Centre Supervisor's discretion. A child with the chicken pox, or hand, foot and mouth disease, however, may attend, if he/she is feeling well (no fever, vomiting, or diarrhea) enough to participate in the program.

When a child has been exposed to or is suffering from a communicable disease the parents of all children participating in the Centre will be advised. The Supervisor will post a notice for parents indicating the name of the disease, general symptoms, length of communicability and incubation period.

Staff will be instructed to monitor all children at the Centre during the incubation period for any signs of the disease. Should the staff suspect that your child may have a contagious condition, he/she will be isolated and you will be contacted. If we cannot contact a parent, we will call your designated emergency person. If a child is very ill or in case of an emergency situation, we will call an ambulance. The illness will be noted in the child's file, and forms entitled "Report of Communicable

Disease" will be submitted to Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit on a monthly basis as specified in the Public Health Act Regulations.

Immunization

It is a requirement that your child is immunized as recommended by the local medical officer of health. Health immunization is to be up to date prior to the child attending the program and be kept current while your child is in care. Up to date immunization cards should be forwarded to the Supervisor when completed. Children who wish to be exempted for either religious or conscience grounds or for medical reasons, need to have the appropriate Ministry of Education form completed. Please contact the program Supervisor for the correct form.

Immunization is required for diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, polio, measles, mumps, rubella and haemophilus influenza type B. An immunization record will be kept in your child's file and a copy will be forwarded to the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit on an ongoing basis.

Medication

Any drugs or medication to be given to your child must be supplied in the original container, and must be clearly labelled with the child's name, the name of the medication, expiry date, and instructions for storage and administration. Ventolin must be in exact dosage, clearly labelled, with one extra dose to allow for spillage.

Medication will be administered by the Centre staff only when it is not possible at home, and only when the parent(s) of the child have given written authorization.

Prescription and non-prescription medication will be administered by staff with a signed consent from the parent(s) with dates, times and dosage clearly indicated. Further, recommended doses must not exceed those on the original container unless recommended by a physician in writing.

PLEASE NOTE THAT NO MEDICATION OF ANY KIND WILL BE GIVEN WITHOUT THESE FORMS BEING COMPLETED AND SIGNED.

Medication is placed in a locked cupboard. If it needs to be refrigerated, it is placed in a locked container in the refrigerator. You are asked to take home any medication each Friday and return it and resubmit forms on the following Monday, if necessary. Do not send medication to the Centre with school-aged children. Medication is to be given directly to the educator.

Head Lice

Head lice do not present a health hazard, but they are a nuisance and can spread quickly. In order to control and prevent this problem, regular screening checks are conducted, in particular if there is a confirmed case at the Centre or in local area schools. Parents of a child found to have head lice infestation will be informed, and asked to pick up their child immediately. Information will be supplied as to the treatment procedures to be followed prior to the child's return to the Centre.

The Centre has a "nit free" policy.

Allergies and Special Dietary Needs

It is important to recognize that we are required to follow the Canada Food Guide when preparing food for the children. Details of any allergies or special dietary needs that you have provided on your registration form, e.g. bee stings, peanuts, milk etc. should be accompanied by a note from your physician. The foods that need to be omitted from your child's diet will be posted in the kitchen and classroom areas. If an "epi-pen" is required for an emergency situation, it will be carried with the educator at all times.

The Nutritionist from the Muskoka Parry Sound Health Unit has advised us that your child may eat something and not react to it for a day or two, so narrowing down the specific cause may be difficult and requires a physician's assistance. An example of this is lactose intolerance.

The daycare endeavors not to use peanut products, however, we cannot guarantee a peanut free environment. Parents are responsible for managing their children's peanut allergies. In order to provide a safe environment, please do not bring peanut products to the daycare. Any other allergen that is life threatening will be given the same consideration.

It is imperative that you keep the Centre informed of any changes in your child's health.

OTHER POLICIES

Safety

Should your child suffer a minor injury e.g. pinched finger, scraped knee, etc., the educator will fill out an "Incident Report" or "ABC Report" - a description of the incident and the procedures administered. You will be asked to sign a copy of this report. A copy will be given to you and a copy will be kept in your child's file. Should you wish for additional information regarding an incident, please contact the Centre Supervisor. If the injury is more serious and requires medical attention, an Accident Report will be completed and forwarded with a Serious Occurrence report to the Ministry of Education.

Serious Occurrence Notifications

The safety and well-being of our children unlicensed childcare programs is our highest priority. Operators of licensed childcare centres work diligently to provide a safe, creative and nurturing environment for each child. In spite of all the best precautions, serious occurrences can sometimes take place.

The Ontario government has introduced a new policy that requires licensed childcare centres and to post information about serious occurrences that happen at a centre or home location. Effective November 1, 2011. To support increased transparency and access to information, a "Serious Occurrence Notification Form" must be posted at the centre or home location in a visible area for 10 days.

Serious occurrence categories include:

a) the death of a child who received child care at a home child care premises or child care centre, (b) abuse, neglect or an allegation of abuse or neglect of a child while receiving child care at a home child care premises or child care centre, (c) a life-threatening injury to or a life-threatening illness of a child who receives child care at a home child care premises or child care centre, (d) an incident where a child who is receiving child care at a home child care premises or child care centre goes missing or is temporarily unsupervised, or (e) an unplanned disruption of the normal operations of a home child care premises or child care centre that poses a risk to the health, safety or well-being of children receiving child care at the home child care premises or child care centre

Licensed childcare centres are already required to report serious occurrences to the Ministry of Education, which is responsible for childcare licensing. This new policy requires childcare operators to post information in their facilities so that parents also have access to it.

This posting will give parents information about the incident and outline follow-up actions taken and the outcomes, while respecting the privacy of the individuals involved. Longer-term actions taken by the operator will also be included to help prevent similar incidents in the future, where applicable.

Many factors may lead to a serious occurrence report. A serious occurrence does not necessarily mean that an operator is out of compliance with licensing requirements or that children are at risk in the childcare program.

This new policy supports the government's efforts to increase access to information about licensed childcare programs in Ontario. This includes the recent launch of childcare licensing inspection findings on the Licensed Child Care Website which is available at: <http://www.ontario.ca/ONT/portal61/licensedchildcare>.

Fire and Emergency Management Procedures

Your child will participate in monthly fire and emergency drills. The purpose of these drills is to familiarize your child with evacuating the building in a prompt and orderly manner, without panic. The fire drill procedure is posted in each room. MFF&CP has emergency management procedures in place including; in the event that a Centre must be evacuated, here are the designated alternate sites:

For Bracebridge Children's Place – Food Basics Grocery Store

For BPS Children's Place – St. Joseph's Catholic Church

For Gravenhurst Children's Place – The Gravenhurst Centennial Centre

For Huntsville Children's Place – Soul Sistas Restaurant

All parents would be notified by phone as to a designated pick up spot in the case of an emergency. This information will also be posted on our Face Book page and our website and announced on the local radio station.

****In the event of an emergency where our staff feel medical treatment is necessary, 911 will be called.***

Closing Time and Pick Up

- ☒ The Centre closes at 6:00 p.m. promptly and a \$1.00 per minute fee will be charged to parents who are late. MFF has the right to discontinue care after 3 late charges/pick-ups.
- ☒ If you foresee being late, please call and let us know; perhaps some arrangements can be made.
- ☒ Try to be punctual; educators have families to get home to.
- ☒ If by 6:00 p.m. a parent has left no message, the emergency person named on your registration form will be called. If this person cannot make arrangements to pick up the child at once, the C.A.S. will be called to pick up the child at 6:30 p.m. The educators cannot be made responsible. Our educators will take the necessary action to protect the children in our care if there is suspicion the parent or person picking up the child is under the influence of alcohol or drugs including recreational marijuana. An alternate person will be contacted to pick up the child. CAS and or the OPP may also be contacted if co-operation is challenging or our educator(s) feel the child is in need of protection.

****Due to Covid-19, parents are not permitted to enter our centres. Each centre's drop off and pick up arrangement is site specific and will be communicated to you by the Program Supervisor or Educators.***

In case of winter storms, the Centre will close at the discretion of the Management Team.

*Announcements will be made on The Moose and Country 102. Notifications will also be listed on the **calendar** on the home page of our website: muskokafamilyfocus.com, on our Facebook and Twitter pages. A staff person will be on site if possible, to turn families and children around. Consideration for safety is our first concern.*

In the case of a separation between parents, both parents will need to agree to the authorized people on the pickup list. If legal court documents specify otherwise, then that is what will be followed. Any changes to the authorized pick up list must be in writing.

**Parents/guardians must provide us with any legal court documents in place involving the children as well as any updates.*

Prohibited Practices

Muskoka Family Focus & Children's Place will not permit the following Prohibited Practices:

- a. Corporal punishment or restraint of a child by an employee, a student, a volunteer or by another child or group of children.
- b. Deliberate harsh or degrading measures that would humiliate, shame or frighten a child or undermine a child's self-respect, example: name calling, yelling or singling a child out in a negative way.
- c. Physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a high chair, car seat, stroller or other device for the purposes of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting himself, herself or someone else, and is used on as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent.
- d. Deprivation of a child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, clothing, bedding, sleep and toilet use.
- e. Locking or permitting to be locked without adult supervision for the purpose of confining a child, the exits of any building or structure where children are in attendance at any program operated by MFF&CP. *The exception to this section of the procedure is during an emergency when children could be confined to a room temporarily until the emergency is resolved as it relates to MFF&CP Emergency Management Plan. The use of a locked or lockable room or structure to confine or isolate a child, who has been separated from other children.
- f. Inflicting any bodily harm on children including, but not limited to making children eat or drink against their will.

Our program philosophy is to use positive verbal reinforcement to encourage respectful behaviour.

We understand that children will, from time to time, display inappropriate behaviour in our programs. When dealing with such behaviour, the developmental capabilities of each child as well as any relevant stressors will be considered when determining both expectations for behaviour and the consequences of inappropriate behaviour.

MFF&CP is committed to striving to the extent possible to accommodate children who have behavioural issues related to a disability when administering this policy. Parents are reminded of their responsibility to inform the Program Supervisor in writing and/or on our registration form of an accommodation related to a disability.

Children are encouraged to settle their own differences as much as possible to acquire problem-solving skills. The educators aim for a positive approach when handling any incident, and will redirect the child if the incident is of a minor nature.

If the incident is more involved, the child may be removed from the immediate area, but not from the total environment, with a brief explanation. He/she will sit by the side of the educator for a "cool down period" and then may return to the group with an understanding about his/her ability to interact and engage in a respectful and co-operative manner.

Only if the incident is of a severe nature, (e.g. tantrum, violent behaviour towards others) is the child removed from the playroom accompanied by a Facilitator. A Facilitator remains with the child adopting a limited speaking but supportive attitude until the child has calmed down and is no longer a possible threat to him/herself or other children, normally no longer than a few minutes. As a last resort, if inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour continues, the parents/guardians will receive written notice asking that the child (may) be asked to leave the Program.

Conflict Resolution for Parents

If a parent has a concern or complaint, this section outlines the procedure for the parent to follow. Muskoka Family Focus supports open discussions between our staff and families through a fair and transparent conflict resolution process. It is our goal to address all issues in a timely manner. Concerns and complaints received by employees, students or volunteers should be brought to the centre Supervisor's attention. The Supervisor will respond in writing or via e-mail to the initial concern and/or complaint within one week of it being received. The Supervisor will discuss with the Management Team the concern and/or complaint. An appropriate resolution will be determined. The suggested resolution will be communicated back to the complainant in writing or via e-mail. If the matter is not resolved, a written submission from the complainant may be made to the Management Team and a further investigation and discussion will take place. The Management Team will respond to the concern and/or complaint within one week of it being received. If deemed necessary by the Management Team, the concern and/or complaint will be forwarded to the Board of Directors where a resolution will be decided upon. The Management Team will then respond to the concern and/or complaint in writing or via e-mail with a final resolution.

Wait List

Families will be placed on the wait list on the date they confirm they would like a space at the centre. The entry on the wait list will be dated and include information about the childcare needs of the family; name and birth date of child, days of care required, requested start date, name and contact information of parents and any other specific information the family wishes to include. The program supervisor maintains the waitlist and contacts parents regularly when it is known a space will be available. Families are contacted and offered a space once available, in order of the date they were placed on the waitlist ie: the family who has been on the list the longest will be offered the first available space. Each time the supervisor contacts the family or attempts to contact the family, the date, time and method of contact will be noted on the wait list. The supervisor will keep accurate updated notes about the communication to strive to meet the needs of the family. There are no fees charged to families for adding their name to the waitlist. Families are asked to contact the program supervisor should they wish to be removed from the wait list or if they have any changes to the original information provided. If after 3 attempts to communicate with the family the supervisor does not receive a return phone call or e-mail, the family will be removed from the wait list. Families are able to confirm they are on the wait list by requesting to view (in the presence of the program supervisor) their spot on the list confirming the wait list is managed according to our policy with the correct dates in the order in which the family was placed on the waiting list without contravening confidentiality. Other family/children's names will not be visible to the inquiring family to maintain the privacy of all children listed on the wait list.

Sleep Supervision

It is the policy of Muskoka Family Focus and Children's Place to reduce the risk of harm and injury, including death for children who sleep at our childcare programs. MFF will take every measure possible to ensure our employees, volunteers and students follow this policy for children who sleep at our programs in accordance with the ["Joint Statement on Safe Sleep: Preventing Sudden Infant Deaths in Canada"](#)

1. All children will be provided with the opportunity to sleep or engage in quiet activities based on their needs.
2. Children under 12 months of age will be provided time to sleep based on their individual schedules, and will be assigned a crib. Children between 12-18 months of age will be assigned to a crib or cot to sleep for a period of no longer than 2 hours.
3. Only age/size appropriate sleep sacks will be used for children under 12 months of age.
4. Children 30 months or older but younger than 6 years old, will be provided with a cot unless otherwise approved by the Program Supervisor in consultation with the Ministry of Education Program Advisor.
5. All cots and cribs will be labelled with the child's name on them.

6. Where children are sleeping in a separate room or area, their names will be listed on the window, door or wall beside the door so employees can immediately identify which children are present in the sleep room.

Procedure:

1. Children under 12 months of age will be placed on their backs to sleep, unless written instructions are received by the child's physician. Parents will be advised of our obligation to place infants on their backs for sleeping.
2. An Educator in the classroom performs a direct visual check and documentation of sleeping children under 12 months at 15-20 minute intervals throughout the sleep period. This will be communicated with parents and adjusted at the written request/approval of the parent. Children who are older than 12 months, direct visual checks will be performed at 30 minute intervals throughout the sleep period, by being physically present beside the child while the child is sleeping and looking for indicators of distress or unusual behaviours (such as change in skin colour, change in breathing or signs of overheating) and reacts as required; any changes will be documented in the daily written record and/or on HiMama. Direct visual checks during sleep times will be documented on the sleep check form (included in the list of forms under these policies and procedures on the intranet page) and/or on HiMama.
3. Any changes in sleep behaviours will be communicated to the child's parent by the Educator in the classroom or by the Program Supervisor in writing or via e-mail; adjustments may be made to the child's supervision during sleep time, where appropriate, based on consultation with the child's parent.
4. These changes will be documented in writing in the child's file and/or in the child's daily report on HiMama .
5. Sufficient light will be provided in the sleeping area or room to conduct direct visual checks;
6. Parents will be consulted regarding a child's sleeping arrangements at the time of registration (noted on the registration form) and at other appropriate times such as transitions between programs, rooms or at a parent's request. All communication will be in writing, via e-mail with a confirmation response, or with direct conversation with the Program Supervisor or Registered Early Childhood Educator (RECE) in the classroom. Sleeping arrangements will be documented in the child's file. The Supervisor or RECE in the classroom will share these files with employees, volunteers and students working with the child.
7. As this policy is revised or updated, parents will receive notification of the revised policy. This policy is also included in the Parents Handbook which the parent receives at registration.

Procedures for Completing Direct Visual Checks:

Educators must:

- be physically present beside the child;
- check each child's general well-being by looking for signs of distress or discomfort including, at a minimum:
 - laboured breathing;
 - changes in skin temperature;
 - changes in lip and/or skin colour;
 - whimpering or crying; and
 - lack of response to touch or voice.

Where signs of distress or discomfort are observed, the Educator who conducted the direct visual check must attempt to wake the child up. Where no signs of distress or discomfort are observed, proceed to step 3.

Where the child wakes up, Educators must:

- attend to the child's needs;
- separate the child from other children if the child appears to be ill;
- document the incident in the daily communication log and in the child's daily report on HiMama.

Where the child does not wake up, Educators must immediately:

- ☒ perform appropriate first aid and CPR, if required;
- ☒ inform other employees, students and volunteers in the room of the situation;
- ☒ contact emergency services or, where possible, direct another individual to contact emergency services;
- ☒ separate the child from other children or vice versa if the child appears to be ill;
- ☒ inform the Program Supervisor/Designate of the situation; and
- ☒ contact the child's parent;

Where the child must be taken home or to the hospital, the Program Supervisor or Designate must immediately:

- ☒ contact the child's parent to inform them of the situation and next steps.

Where the child's condition has stabilized, and/or after the child has been taken home and/or to the hospital, the Educator who conducted the direct visual check and any employees who assisted with responding to the incident must:

- ☒ follow the serious occurrence policies and procedures, where applicable;
 - ☒ document the incident in the daily written record; and
 - ☒ document the child's symptoms of illness in the child's daily report on HiMama.
- Educators/Employees must:
- ☒ adjust blankets as needed;
 - ☒ ensure the child's head is not covered;
 - ☒ ensure there are no other risks of suffocation present;
 - ☒ document the date, time and initial each direct visual check on the classroom's sleep check form and/or in the child's daily report on HiMama; and
 - ☒ verbally inform other Educators/Employees in the room that the check has been completed, where applicable and possible.

Use of Electronic Devices

Where electronic devices are used to monitor children's sleep, Educators/Employees will:

- ☒ **not use electronic sleep monitoring devices to replace direct visual checks;**
- ☒ check the monitor daily to verify that it is functioning properly (i.e. it is able to detect and monitor the sounds and, if applicable, video images of every sleeping child); and
- ☒ actively monitor each electronic device at all times.

Policy Regarding Leaves

Any family taking their child (ren) out of a Centre for a temporary leave (maternity, strikes, holidays, etc.) of four weeks or more at any time will lose their space. This family will then be placed at the TOP of the waiting list.

All parents leaving for the summer who wish their child (ren) to return in September will be asked to notify the Centre in writing of the date they hope to return, so we can make every effort to continue to care for their child(ren).

Sick Leave/Holiday Policy

It is recommended that parents continue with one or two days a week throughout the summer to keep children familiar with the routine. Parents may be required to commit to a part-time schedule over the summer to hold their space.

For children in part time attendance, the days eligible for credit shall be prorated.
After your child has attended the centre for 3 months, unpaid vacation days are prorated as follows:

CHILD	VACATION DAYS/YEAR	
5 full days/week	10	full days
4 full days/week	8	full days
3 full days/week	6	full days
2 full days/week	4	full days

In extenuating circumstances, a written submission requesting an extended absence may be made.

PLEASE NOTE- A TWO WEEK WRITTEN NOTICE IS REQUIRED WHEN WITHDRAWING YOUR CHILD FROM THE CENTRE

Extended Closure Policy (serious illness and/or pandemic)

Muskoka Family Focus and Children’s Place strives to provide a safe, healthy environment for your child(ren). However, despite our best efforts there may be times when the centre/program may have to be closed for an extended period. Decisions to close for an extended period are made based on recommendations by one or more of the following ministries: the provincial and federal ministries of health, education, labour as well municipal departments of health and childcare licensing bodies. The reasons for an extended closure may include but are not limited to, faulty construction, mold, flooding, serious illness outbreak, pandemic. etc.

In the event of a serious illness outbreak or pandemic and our centres/programs remain open, you may be required to sign a declaration confirming that you and your child have not been exposed to the identified contagion. Based on recommendations by the federal, provincial or municipal departments of health you may be asked to remove your child from the program for a specified period of time, if they or any family member residing in the home, have been exposed to an identified contagion. If your child has been removed from the centre/program for any of the above health reasons, you may be required to provide a doctor’s letter confirming that your child is fit to return to the centre/program. As per the Fee Structure section in our Parent Handbook, you will be billed for any sick days when your child is absent due to illness.

In the event of absences due to the above reasons but our centres/programs are closed, you will not be billed for any days.

We will make every effort to reopen the as quickly as possible when it is deemed safe for us to do so. Your child’s spot in the program will not be affected by the closure.

Should you inform MFF&CP in writing that you wish to relinquish your child’s spot in the centre/program while the centre is closed, please do so by advising the Program Supervisor. Upon re-opening, if you wish to relinquish your child’s spot, you are required to provide 2 week’s notice to withdraw your child.

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) – Customer Service Standard Policy

Muskoka Family Focus is in compliance with the AODA. We are committed to developing policies, practices and procedures that provide accessible quality services to its clients and their children. Services will be provided to clients with disabilities in a manner that promotes and respects dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity. MFF is dedicated to ensuring all programs and services are accessible to clients and their children in accordance with Ontario Regulation 429.07 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.

Supervision of Volunteers and Students Policy

Muskoka Family Focus and Children's Place supports the safety and well-being of children in licensed childcare programs by ensuring that no child is supervised by a person under 18 years of age. Only employees will have direct unsupervised access to children. This will be followed as a best practice for all unlicensed programs. Direct unsupervised access (ie: when an adult is alone with a child) is not permitted for persons who are not employees of our licensed childcare programs. Placement students and/or volunteers will be supervised by a MFF&CP employee at all times. Placement students and/or volunteers may not be counted in the staffing ratios in childcare centres.

Covid-19

Parents are responsible and have agreed to (by signing our declaration form) screen their children prior to entering our child care centres every day by using the QR code to access the screening tool at your child's centre. Our Provincial Chief Medical Officer of Health has now directed all schools and licensed child care centres in the province to move to a single-symptom screening tool. Our QR code screening tools have been revised to reflect this guidance.

In addition, there is now a requirement regarding household members of ill persons.

Everyone in your household **MUST** stay home if your child or anyone else has COVID-19 symptoms until one of the following occurs:

1. The child or person with symptoms is tested for COVID-19 and test results are negative; OR
2. An alternate diagnosis (not related to covid-19) is given by a healthcare provider for the person who has symptoms.

If the person with symptoms in the household does **NOT** get tested, everyone in the household **MUST** stay home for:

- ☒ 14 days from the last contact with the person with symptoms (if they can self-isolate away from the rest of the household); or
- ☒ 24 days from start of the sick person's symptom(s) (if they **CANNOT** self-isolate away from the rest of the household).
- ☒ Siblings and staff who are household members of an ill child/staff at your centre are not required to leave at the same time as the ill child/staff. They can complete their day at the centre then will need to be excluded until one of the above criteria is met.

Parents please continue to wear your masks while picking up your child at the centre. The Ministry of Education has now made it mandatory for all children grade 1-12 to wear masks and is encouraging ages 2- SK to do so also.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. Please tell your child's educator anything you think she/he should know (i.e. your child slept poorly, you have given him/her medication etc.).
2. Bring your child directly to the educator; she/he cannot be responsible for a child she/he does not know has arrived.
3. When you pick up your child, be sure he/she says good-bye to the educator so that she/he knows the child is being picked up.
4. Before departing with your child, please allow him/her a few minutes to tidy up whatever toy he/she was using.
5. If you cannot come for your child, please notify us as early as possible who will be picking up your child. We will not release your child to an unauthorized person or to a child less than 13 years of age. Identification will be requested and confirmed before we release your child.

6. We recommend that you bring in and pick up your child at a regular time, as children generally feel more secure when their daily timetable is predictable.
7. If your child is going to be absent, be it for a day or an extended period; please notify us as soon as possible.
8. If you are discarding any children's clothing, please consider giving it to the Centre. We always need extras for emergencies, including indoor and outdoor clothing, and especially underwear and socks.
9. Children are encouraged to leave all their own toys at home, with the exception of a soft toy and blanket for sleep time, if needed. Any items that are brought from home should be labelled with the child's name.
10. Children are not allowed to chew gum at the Centre, as they may choke on it during their more active play.
11. The children may occasionally be filmed or photographed as a group during their regular playtime activities. These films will be used for educational or promotional purposes only. This is noted in your registration package.
12. Newsletters are sent home on occasion with HiMama being our main avenue for communication and parent engagement.

***Thank you for choosing Muskoka Family Focus and Children's Place
for your child care needs.***

Please Read Carefully

1. All information provided by a parent is strictly confidential. If there is any information, of which we should be aware to help us in the care of your child, please include it on the forms.
2. Your child will not be permitted to leave the program with anyone other than those documented on the release consent form UNLESS written permission is received or in an emergency, a telephone call may be acceptable. Anyone picking up your child must be 13 years or older. **Staff will ask for identification from the person who is picking up the child.**
3. Bi-weekly payment MUST be made or will be withdrawn on the date specified. Fees will be paid in the manner agreed upon during the interview with the program supervisor.
4. Fees will apply for days your child is enrolled and expected in care, but is not. Fees will not be applied to pre-arranged scheduled holidays.
5. Parents receiving child care fee subsidy are responsible for paying their portion of the fees to Muskoka Family Focus, if any, as determined by the District of Muskoka.
6. Ten- (10) working days' notice is required when taking your child out of the program in order that we may notify another parent of vacancy. If no notice is given, you will be charged for 10 days.
7. On overdue accounts over 30 days, 2.5 % interest will be charged. Any account not paid within 60 days will be sent to the Credit Bureau for collection.
8. A \$25.00 carrying charge will be made on all Non-Sufficient Funds. (N.S.F. cheques).
9. As a last resort, if inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour continues, the child may be asked to leave the Program.
10. Muskoka Family Focus and Children's Place reserves the right to make alternate pick up arrangements for children as they deem necessary, for the safety of the children, if they feel the person who is picking up the child is incapacitated in any way, ie., under the influence of drugs or alcohol. This includes the use of recreational marijuana.
11. Regarding late charges/pick-ups - after 3 times, Muskoka Family Focus has the right to discontinue care.

I have read and understand the Parent Handbook and agree to follow the policies and procedures as outlined.

PARENT/GUARDIAN: _____

DATE: _____

SUPERVISOR: _____

Please return this form with the registration