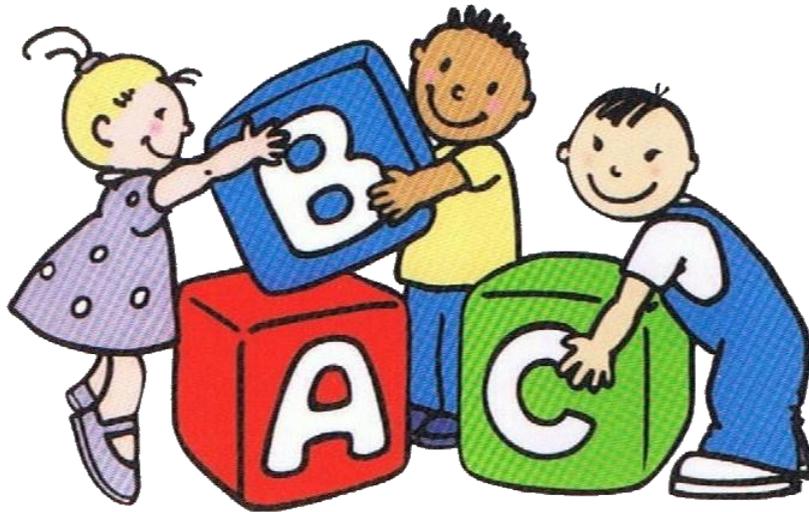


## Parent Handbook



**[halifaxdaycare.com](http://halifaxdaycare.com)**

## **Welcome**

This handbook is designed to provide you with valuable information about our policies, procedures, programs, and nutritional information. Detailed descriptions of our policies and schedules will allow you to feel comfortable and confident enrolling your child in our safe and stimulating environment. If you have any questions, comments, ideas or concerns, please speak to our director or assistant director at your convenience.

## **Provincial License**

The centre is a licensed facility, inspected annually by the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services. We follow the regulations set out in the Nova Scotia Day Care Act and Regulations, which are monitored by the Department of Community Services. You will find the following documents posted on our parent bulletin board – Nova Scotia Day Care Act and Regulations, a copy of this handbook, our most recent licensing inspection report, our behaviour guidance policy, our current menu, our daily routine and program plan, notification of funding provided by the Department of Community Services, minutes from the most recent minutes of our parent committee, our license and Staff bios. We are also regularly inspected by the Halifax Regional Fire Service and the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture (Food Safety Section).



### **Philosophy statement on early childhood development**

At our children's center our philosophy is provide a nurturing and loving environment for each child in our care. We believe that children are capable, confident and curious, born with a natural desire to learn and engage with their world. We know that children learn best through play and therefore we provide an inclusive daily program with a carefully planned environment, rich with opportunities for children to explore and discover the world at their own pace.

### **Mission Statement**

The mission of our day care is to provide a safe, developmentally appropriate environment all children in our center welcoming all cultures/diversities . Our focus is to provide a stimulating early care and education experience which promotes each child's social/emotional, physical and cognitive development. Our goal is to support children's desire to be life-long learners. We will include children who identified special needs.

### **Inclusion Statement**

At our children's center we strive to offer high quality care to all children and families regardless of socio-economic status, racial or cultural background or abilities of the child. Our teachers are encouraged to continue to learn through available resources and professional development. We believe that all children benefit from participating in an inclusive program. Children learn acceptance of others through their experiences and having the opportunity to meet and socialize with many different people expands their knowledge and understanding of different needs and cultures.

## **Hours of Operation**

Our children's centre is open Monday to Friday. Please arrive by 9:30am to ensure your child obtains full participation in our program and outings. Accompany your child to their classroom, Please ensure make a staff member is aware that your child has arrived in order to ensure proper supervision.

## **Holidays**

Our children's centre is closed on the following holidays:

### **\*Statutory Holidays:**

New Years Day  
Good Friday  
Canada Day  
Labour Day  
Christmas Day  
Heritage Day

### **\*Additional Holidays:**

Easter Monday  
Natal Day  
Thanksgiving Day  
Boxing Day  
Victoria Day  
Remembrance Day

\*While the centre is closed on the above holidays, fees still apply. Please note that the centre will close at noon on Christmas Eve & New Years Eve. Full day fees apply as staffs are paid for a full day.

## **Storm Days**

Our children's center does not close in the case of winter storms, except when buses are removed from service.

Our policy is to notify you of a closure by 6:00 AM on the day of a storm via website, and a voice message left on the centre's phone.

## **Family Participation**

At our children's centre we recognize the importance of developing a relationship with the families that we serve. We welcome your input on our programs and policies, and welcome you to visit the centre at any time of the day and participate with your child.

You will also have the opportunity to be involved with the centre through volunteering for our parent committee, If you have a specific concern we would ask that you make an appointment to speak with your child's teacher or our director, as during the day, our staff's primary concern is supervision of the children and we would prefer to be available to fully address any concerns in a confidential manner.

## **Parent Committee**

As a requirement of our license we shall establish a parent committee, consisting of parents, a teaching staff and one of our administrators. The committee will hold bi-annual meetings where information on our programs will be available to all families. We encourage parents to consider joining the committee and take an active role in our programs.

## **Educators**

All of our child care staff have current first aid and CPR training; and are subject to a vulnerable record check and child abuse registry check prior to employment. In addition, staffs are required to accumulate professional development hours every year.

## **Programs and Goals**

At our children's centre we believe children are naturally curious and learn best when they are provided the opportunity to explore their world at their own pace.

Through an emergent curriculum we will provide the environment and materials to spark the interest of children in a variety of topics and will allow them to explore those topics in a variety of ways. Our Early Childhood Educators, through observation, will determine the interests of the children and provide the materials to enhance that interest and challenge the children to “dig deeper” and “discover more”.

Through this exploration we will ensure opportunities for growth in all developmental areas.

## **Nutritional Information**

Our children's centre follows the Food and Beverage Criteria in Regulated Child Care Settings. Our menu plans run on a four week rotation, and include a wide variety of foods. Menus are posted weekly for your convenience. A full time experienced cook who has obtained a Nova Scotia Food Handling Training Certificate is part of our staff for all food preparation.

A morning and afternoon snack each including foods from at least two food groups, and always including a serving from the fruit and vegetable group, and a full course lunch including all recommended food groups are provided.

Staff will provide a relaxing and enjoyable family style environment during meal times. Staff members eat with children to help model appropriate eating manners and positive food choices. Teachers do not force children to eat, or withhold foods for any reason, but encourage children through positive modeling and reinforcement to try new foods. Staff are responsive to children's cues around hunger and thirst, and will provide snacks and meals outside of the regularly scheduled times if required. Please keep us informed about any food allergies, and food substitutes can be discussed at the time of registration between parents, the director and the cook. If your child requires supplements or special foods due to a medical condition and/or religious/cultural beliefs, you will be responsible for providing them.

For infants and toddlers requiring formula or breast milk, families must provide this daily in labelled containers with clearly written instructions for staff. An infant feeding plan will be developed once children begin eating solid food.

We welcome mothers to breastfeed in our centre and will provide a comfortable space for breastfeeding if requested.

With respect to Standards for Food and Nutrition in Regulated Child Care Settings, we are required to serve only foods prepared in a kitchen that is regularly inspected by the Department of Agriculture and complies with the Food and Beverage Nutrient Criteria; therefore children cannot bring homemade treats to share. Certain foods may be acceptable, please speak with the Director if you would like to bring food for a special occasion. Any food served in the center must be labelled with a list of ingredients and any special preparation, storage or serving instructions.

### **Your Child's First Day**

Prior to your child joining our program, an application package must be completed. This includes all required documents. In addition, a \$75 registration fee is due to secure your child's spot at the center.

Children need time to adjust to new environments, thus we recommend giving your child two opportunities to become familiar with their new surroundings (routine, staff & activities) before their first day this time is included in your registration fee. During the first visit, we suggest a parent/guardian spend about an hour with their child and participate in our program. During the second visit, we suggest a parent/guardian stay for a short period of time and then leave the child with us for two-three hours. Please keep in mind this process may vary depending on the age and developmental level of the child.

This will also give you the opportunity to familiarize yourself with our staff and routines. Please feel free to ask any questions and voice any concerns during these visits.

## **Tips and Necessities**

Our children's centre programs are designed to encourage and facilitate active learning and development through exploration and play. When packing your child's belongings, please keep the following in mind:

1. Children's clothing may get soiled during the day. Please dress your child in comfortable clothing that allows complete mobility to explore the multidimensional environment.
2. All clothing should be clearly labelled with your child's name or initials. While every effort is made to protect your child's items from loss or damage, it cannot be guaranteed. Please monitor the lost and found box regularly.
3. Please arrive at the center with appropriate outdoor clothing for the day. We go outside twice a day, take field trips regularly, and explore nature, which requires appropriate clothing. In addition, one pair of indoor shoes (sneakers are best) are required and a complete change of clothes.
4. Parents of infants and toddlers are required to provide diapers and any related supplies (wipes, creams etc.). Please label diapers, creams etc.
5. Children's possessions will be stored in their designated cubby. You may also find artwork, notices, or other items to be taken home in their cubbies or folders.
6. We ask that personal items like toys and treats be left at home unless we request them. This helps to prevent problems associated with sharing these items with classmates, and possible loss or damage. However, a small, soft toy for rest period like a blanket, or pillow is always welcome.

## **Arrival and Departures**

To maintain consistency within our programs, to ensure children experience few interruptions, and for the safety of all children, for arrival and departures we ask that:

### **Arrivals:**

1. Parents bring their children to their classrooms and assist in removing outdoor clothing and make sure items are placed in the appropriate cubby.
2. Parents must escort their child into the playroom where a staff member will mark their attendance, noting the time of their arrival. Our responsibility for your child does not begin until s/he is in the care of a staff member. Children are not to be left at the door.
3. Please arrive at the centre by 9:30am to enable your child's full participation in all activities. Departure for field trips may occur early to maintain consistent routine for optimal development (i.e. being back on time for lunch and rest time). As a result, Our children's center cannot guarantee supervision at the centre for children arriving after 9:00am.
4. Parents notify the centre as early as possible (preferably before 9:30am) to inform a staff member if your child will be late or absent.

### Departures:

1. Parents or authorized individuals pick up your child.
2. Parents keep authorization forms up to date, as staff will only release children to those on the list.
3. Parents inform staff in writing or in person if someone not on the authorization form will be picking up your child.

### Additional departure information:

-Under no circumstances will our Children's Centre staff release a child to anyone under the age of 12 years.

-As our staff are professionals who have provided care for the children all day we ask that you respect our business hours so that they can finish their shift as scheduled. For parents who must arrive late due to unforeseen circumstances there will be a late fee of \$10.00/child for every 15 minutes or part thereof past the scheduled 5:30 pm closing time. This can be paid in cash at the time of pick up or following business day to the closing day. If you are consistently late we will ask you to make other arrangements for child care that better suits your schedule.

### Drug & Alcohol

-Children will not be released from the center to a parent who is visibly under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

In such circumstances ,center staff will contact the other parent or emergency contact and ask that they should pick up.

The police will be contacted if a parent removes the child under the above circumstances.

### **Rest Period**

The Nova Scotia Day Care Act (<http://www.gov.ns.ca/just/regulations/regs/dayregs.htm>) stipulates that children under the age of five must have a rest period in their educational programs. Children are not required to sleep, but are given the opportunity for quiet time (i.e. lie down and look at books or other quiet activities). The rest period is necessary to prevent fatigue and illness.

## Health Policies

We, at our children's center, are concerned about the health and safety of all children and staff at the center. We strictly enforce health regulations as infections can spread rapidly within a childcare centre.

We are required to maintain updated immunization records for all children. Please inform us as your child receives immunizations.

### Illness:

1. If your child will be absent due to illness, call the center and notify the staff of the condition of your child. We are required to keep a log of symptoms of illness that children exhibit. This allows us to quickly determine if a particular illness is spreading throughout our facility.
2. Please keep your child home if there is any question of illness, as we cannot accommodate sick children. Children exhibiting the following will not be permitted to attend:
  - a) Condition of illness which make him/her unable to cope with the regular activities of the program.
  - b) Symptoms of a contagious of transmittable disease (i.e. fever, diarrhea, vomiting, infection, consistent coughing, swollen glands, unidentified rash, pain/aches, chicken pox, etc...)

*According to public health guidelines:*

*([http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms/families/provider/documents/Guidelines\\_for\\_Communicable\\_Disease\\_Prevention.pdf](http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms/families/provider/documents/Guidelines_for_Communicable_Disease_Prevention.pdf)) children are not permitted to attend our children's center if displaying the following symptoms:*

- *Fever (99.1 °F or higher taken in the armpit), diarrhoea, vomiting-child must be symptom free for 24 hours without the aid of medication before returning to care.*
  - *Runny nose with coloured discharge, rash, discharge from eyes or ears-check with a physician.*
  - *Lice-child needs to be treated and nits removed before returning to care.*
  - *Communicable diseases-chicken pox, measles, mumps, conjunctivitis (pink eye), influenza etc. The child may return when the incubation and contagious period is passed and the child is well enough to resume normal childcare activities.*
3. Should your child become ill while attending the center, you will be notified immediately and expected to have an authorized person pick up your child as soon as possible.
  4. Please inform the staff of any contagious conditions your child may have upon a diagnosis by a medical doctor. This will allow us to inform other families that their children may have been exposed to the condition.

5. You will be informed of any contagious conditions your child may have been exposed to while at the center.
6. Once diagnosed with a contagious condition, your child can return to the centre only when s/he is past the contagious period of the condition and able to participate in the center activities.

While we sympathize with all children and families experiencing illness, it is our responsibility to provide all children with a safe and healthy environment. We ask for your cooperation with regards to this matter.

### Medication

1. The staffs at our centre are only permitted to give medication authorized by a doctor or parent.
2. All medication must be in the original container, with a readable label.
3. 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.
4. Over the counter medication will not be given by the staff unless written instructions are received from 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.
5. Please send measuring utensils along with your child's medication.
6. For safety reasons, all medications are to be given directly to staff, and not left in the child's cubby.
7. It is recommended that a child who has been prescribed an antibiotic take it for 24 hours before returning to the centre.
8. Please keep us informed of all medication your child is taking even if it won't be administered at the centre. This is important information in case of a medical emergency.

### Precautions

Our children's Centre helps control the spread of infections by practicing proper hygiene and universal precautions. Children and staff 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 and eating surfaces are sanitized daily. Toys are sanitized weekly (twice a week in infant and toddler rooms). Floors, kitchen and bathrooms are cleaned daily and throughout the day as required. The following precautions are adopted by the centre:

- \* 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 treating open cuts
- \* Blood-soiled surfaces are disinfected with bleach
- \* 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 Information**

Our children's centre is inspected annually by the Fire Department, the Provincial Department of Health and by the Department of Community Services. We conduct monthly fire drills, and all permanent staff/substitutes are trained in First Aid and CPR. Please inform the center of any changes to your address, place of work, telephone numbers, and authorization list and of any injuries that your child receives outside the centre.

### **Emergency Evacuation**

If we are required to close during the day due to weather or emergency evacuation, we will send an email to all parents and also attempt to contact every family by phone with Instructions on when and where you may pick up your child.

**Under no circumstances is anyone to re-enter the building unless otherwise instructed by the Supervisor, or the Fire Department.**

### **Accident Reports**

Staff members are required to complete an accident report form for any accident which requires first-aid treatment by the staff. The staff member who administered the treatment will sign it. It is then shown to the parents and signed by the parents before being placed in the child's file. Parents will be informed of the injury at an appropriate time (depending on the extent of the injury), and confidentiality of any concerned parties will be maintained.

## Emergency Medical Treatments

It is the responsibility of staff members to handle emergency medical treatments for which they are trained. Staff members will continue to keep their training in First Aid and CPR up to date. If a child requires medical treatment, the parent will be called at an appropriate time (depending on the extent of the injury) and required to take the child for professional medical attention. If the parent cannot be reached, an authorized person will be called to fulfill this responsibility, and attempts to contact the parent will continue to be made.

If contact with the parent or authorized person cannot be made and your child requires immediate medical attention, a staff person will accompany your child to the IWK Children's Hospital in a taxi. Center staff will continue to attempt to reach a contact person, who will be expected to meet the child at the hospital. If your child requires emergency attention due to a life-threatening incident, an ambulance will be called and a staff member will accompany your child to the hospital.

## Behaviour Guidance Policy

Our children's center behaviour guidance policy is based on regulations outlined by the Department of community Services available at:

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/just/regulations/regs/dayregs.htm>

## Behaviour Guidance Policy

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### Philosophy

Our **Children's Center** our **philosophy** is, provide a nurturing and loving environment for each child in our care. We believe that children are capable, confident and curious, born with a natural desire to learn and engage with their world. We know that children learn best through play and therefore we provide an inclusive daily program with a carefully planned environment, rich with opportunities for children to explore and discover the world at their own pace.

### Behaviour Guidance Policy

Our **Children's Center** trained early childhood educators (ECEs) put priority on building a strong and trusting relationship with all children and families knowing that children thrive in an environment in which they feel welcomed, safe and secure. Children are encouraged to express themselves in a developmentally appropriate program which is designed to offer positive experiences and to respectfully honor the needs, interests and desires of all children.

At our **Children’s Center**, we focus on ways to prevent inappropriate behaviour as we seek to understand reasons why they may occur. Our nurturing educators respond in ways that teach and gently guide children, protects them from harm, respects dignity and privacy and promotes children’s well-being.

## Prevention

Preventative practices you will see at our center:

- Playrooms set up as developmentally appropriate
- We teach social skills and use positive behavior strategies to support the development of appropriate social behavior
- Model and teach appropriate use of materials and equipment (e.g. respectful environment)
- Reinforce positive social interactions with encouragement and modeling
- Offer choices and encourage decision making
- Set realistic expectations (e.g. sharing is not a realistic expectation for a toddler!)
- Set consistent limits (e.g. children feel more secure when they know their boundaries)
- **Understanding that every behavior is the communication of a message**

*As required by the Nova Scotia Day Care Act and Regulations, staff and volunteers at our Children’s Center are provided with training in this policy prior to their work at the center as well a yearly review. Also, this policy is reviewed with parents at the time of enrollment. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the guidance practices at our program, please do not hesitate to speak directly with your child’s early childhood educator or the Director. Upon request, we are happy to provide information and resources for you and your family to support healthy routines and behaviors at home.*

## Strategies

Early Childhood Educators provide positive guidance throughout the day. We acknowledge that behaviors are communicating a message. As Educators we are responsible to use our observation skills to find out what the behaviour is trying to tell us. When challenging behaviors occur, the following strategies for solving conflicts will be applied:

- **Approach quickly and calmly** to stop hurtful or unsafe behavior
- **Acknowledge each child’s feelings** with a simple description (e.g. “You seem angry”)
- **Gather information** from each child involved (e.g. “Let’s talk about what happened”)
- **Identify and state the problem** (e.g. “You both want to sit in the same spot at circle”)
- **Brainstorm solutions** with the children (e.g. “What else can you do?”)
- **Allow children to develop a solution** and use it (e.g. “What idea do you choose?”)
- **Follow up!** See how the solution is working.

We believe that it can sometimes be appropriate to ignore an undesirable behaviour. However, through consistent engagement with children, our ECEs have opportunities to model and encourage appropriate behaviours, explain why a behaviour may be inappropriate and can support children with appropriate options. We encourage co-operative behaviour and only remove a child from a potentially dangerous situation and explain why, helping to settle them into another activity. There may be times when Behaviour Guidance Plans are created and implemented in our program. In these cases, plans are developed with the child's family, professionals and educators as a team and are re-evaluated over time. The plan is intended to support the child through difficult situations. Children are NOT isolated for any reason (other than illness). Overall, children are supported in a wide variety of fun learning experiences every day! Staff who are trained, may conduct a Functional Behavioral Assessment (e.g. ABC Chart) which can result in a clearer understanding of the reason (i.e. function) of the behaviour.

**Regulation 19(1)** states that each licensee, Director, staff member and volunteer of a licensee must behave in a manner that does not harm any child who is attending the day care program, and must not do or permit any of the following:

- (a) Use corporal punishment, including
  - (i) Striking a child directly or with any physical object, and
  - (ii) Shaking, shoving, spanking and other forms of aggressive physical conduct
- (b) Require or force a child to repeat physical movements;
- (c) Use harsh, humiliating, belittling or degrading responses of any form, whether verbal, emotional or physical;
- (d) Confine or isolate a child
- (e) Deprive a child of basic needs, including food, shelter, clothing and bedding.

During mealtimes, we create a relaxing and enjoyable meal environment. We respect children's ability to determine when they are hungry, and when they are full which will in turn promote healthy eating behaviours. Please note we abide by the following statements from the **Food and Nutrition Standards; Section 11.1**

- (i) Staff and volunteers do not offer food to reinforce positive behaviors
- (ii) Staff and volunteers do not withhold food as a consequence for inappropriate behaviors
- (iii) Food is not used as a reward for completing a task or finishing a meal (e.g. dessert will not be withheld if the child does not finish the meal).

**Agreement to Abide by our Children's Center Behavior Guidance Policy.**

I acknowledge that I have been trained in, and understand the Behaviour Guidance Policy of.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

In the event of inappropriate behaviour, a teacher will use child-centred discussion to understand and reinforce behaviour expectations. If the undesired behaviour persists, a teacher will redirect the child to a different stimulating activity where appropriate behaviour can be achieved.

According to provincial legislation ([www.gov.ns.ca/just/regulations/regs/dayregs.htm](http://www.gov.ns.ca/just/regulations/regs/dayregs.htm)) no

### **Child Abuse Policy**

As per the protocols outlined by the Department of Community Services for the prevention and reporting of child abuse, the centre staffs are legally required to report suspected cases of child abuse.

### **Photographs/Media**

Our center captures memories that occur at the center through photo or video. We may also receive requests from media for photographic, audio or video material of our programs and activities. Included in your registration package is a request for permission to photograph your child. Please discuss any concerns you may have about your child being photographed or included in any of the above with the director upon entering the program.

### **Our Children's Centre Financial Information**

Registration fee of **\$75.00** is due with your application prior to your child's start date.

A Pre-Authorized debit authorization form is included in your registration package.

**\*Please note:** Payments are required during vacation times, holidays and sick times. Fees are reviewed annually and are subject to change.

We do have a portable subsidy agreement with the Province of Nova Scotia. Please speak with the Director about criteria for qualification and application procedures. Once approved for subsidy you will be responsible for any fees that your subsidy does not cover.

### Withdrawal/Termination

30 days written notice is required for withdrawal of your child from our children's center. If withdrawal is immediate, parents are responsible for payment of 30 days in lieu of notice.

### NSF payments and late payment fees:

Late payments will be charged at \$10.00/day, up to 7 days, at which point your space will be filled with our waiting list (on day 8).

### Income Tax Receipts

**Our fees are tax deductible. Receipts will be issued by February 28 of each year for the previous year.**