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Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre

PARENT HANDBOOK

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Introduction

Boozhoo/Greetings!

This manual has been prepared for parents and guardians as an introduction to the services currently being offered. It is our hope that this handbook will help parents and guardians to become familiar with the administrative structure, parent and child policies, and the overall general operations of Mahmowenchike.

Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre is committed to providing culturally appropriate programs for children. A program that focuses on restoring and preserving Native culture and traditions will allow children to learn about their culture and identity. This, in turn, will help the child to develop self-esteem and instill pride in their culture.

Our program gives children the opportunity to explore and discover the environments around them by allowing the children to be active participants in their learning. Every aspect of our program will focus on and enhance the social, emotional, physical, and mental development of the child. We also firmly believe that to deliver a quality child program, it is important that those working both in and around the programs have a vested interest in the well-being of the child and know every aspect of the child's experiences, strengths, and needs. To ensure this can happen, the staff and your family need to have an open line of communication.

The word "Mahmowenchike" means working together, therefore, our philosophical belief is that parents, elders, and the community need to work together to foster the development of the child. Parents/guardians and extended family members are welcome at our centre. We hope that this manual will answer all your questions.

Miigwetch/Thank you!

Mission Statement

Mahmowenchike is a charitable non-profit organization dedicated to quality childcare and providing resources to empower families. Working together as a community, we practice and respect traditions to promote the cultural development of a strong generation of children.

Philosophy

The philosophy of Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre is based on the traditional value of “working together” with the parents, elders, and community to promote the growth and development of the young child. Mahmowenchike believes that by involving the family and community members in the child’s life that the circle will be made stronger.

Program Goals

Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre is a place where it is understood that children learn 90% from actual, hands-on experiences, therefore interesting objects, materials, and activities that are stimulating and provocative are provided for children as they are viewed as competent, capable, curious, and rich in potential.

At Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre...

- A) Children experience the Native language and gain knowledge of the Anishnawbe Culture and people through language activities, the telling of legends, foods, the environment, and taking part in traditional activities.
- B) A positive Native identity is fostered through displays, books, songs, words, and artwork.
- C) All children are included: Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. All children are welcomed, the learning of other languages is promoted, and all cultures are valued.
- D) The health, safety, nutrition, and well-being of children are promoted. Hygiene routines and practices are encouraged and modeled for the children. Proper cleaning of toys, equipment, and bedding is done. Healthy menus are planned based on the Canada’s Food Guide.
- E) Positive and responsive interactions among children, families, and staff are supported. The children and parents’ feelings are validated and respected, promoting the support of the children between educators and family members. We respect the opinions and are open-minded.
- F) The children are encouraged to interact and communicate in a positive way and their ability to self-regulate is supported. The staff talk the children through their feelings, scripting and giving them words to communicate in a positive way. A positive climate is created to encourage a feeling of safety and security for the child. Staff’s responses to the children encourages self-regulation. Staff remain calm and supportive in their responses.

- G) Children’s exploration, play, and inquiry are fostered. The environment is set up in an aesthetically pleasing and inviting manner to focus on the children’s interests (based on observations of the staff or information provided by family members). A variety of materials are included to encourage exploration. The staff have meaningful conversations with the children and ask open-ended questions.
- H) Child-initiated and adult-supported experiences are provided. Activities are based on the child’s interests and developmental goals. Observations and open-ended questions are used to extend the learning that is taking place.
- I) Positive learning environments and experiences are planned for and created in which each child’s learning and development is supported. Observations are used to plan appropriately based on the interests and individual goals of the children.
- J) Indoor and outdoor play as well as active play, rest time, and quiet time are incorporated into the day with consideration given to the individual needs of the children. Program flexibility and following the lead of the child and their interests are used in a holistic approach to providing activities during the child’s day.
- K) The engagement of and ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children is fostered. The staff are approachable and encourage open communication with families through written and verbal communication, as well as photographs, learning stories of the child’s day, and the childrens’ learning portfolios.
- L) Local community partners, parents, and elders are involved to support the program philosophy, children, families, and staff. Community guests and families are encouraged to share their culture and/or special talents. Families are invited to seasonal feasts and informal coffee mornings. Input from families is sought when menu and program planning.
- M) Family well-being and self-reliance are promoted. Information boards, newsletters, and handouts provide families with health, community resources, and child development information.
- N) All staff are involved in continuous professional learning. Staff are offered professional development workshops, attendance at the annual Early Years Learning Institute, have current First Aid and Infant/Child CPR, online training, CECE self-test, monthly staff meetings, and are required to develop and work on their professional portfolios.
- O) The implementation of these program goals is reviewed annually to determine their impact on services and program quality. These goals will be reviewed and assessed by the Mahmowenchike Board of Directors annually at Board meetings and by staff annually at the staff meeting in January.

The Value of Play

Play is...

...the most important avenue of learning for a child.

...the way the child explores their environment, experiments with new things, and acquires new information.

...the work of children.

Play teaches...

...children about the relationship between themselves and the world around them.

...things that no one else can teach them.

At Mahmowenchike, we believe in the value of play. We provide opportunities through play which...

- Build on the childrens' interests
- Build on the childrens' present skills and offer the opportunity to acquire new ones
- Empower children to make their own choices
- Promote creativity
- Enhance learning

We facilitate play in a variety of ways. These methods include...

- Providing actual experiences
- Remaining flexible and open to new ideas
- Providing a wide variety of equipment and materials
- Keeping the equipment and materials accessible to the children
- Providing a safe, attractive environment

Play is vital for the development of young children. We believe that play is the most important method of learning for children. Therefore, it is promoted and encouraged at our centre.

Creativity

What is it?

Creativity is defined as, "putting prior experiences into something new." (Hendrick, pp. 25-26). That is, we hope young children will be able to do this when they use self-expressive materials, play imaginatively, solve problems, and generate original ideas to produce satisfying, freshly-conceived products.

How is it expressed?

Children are naturally creative. Everything they do or say reflects a unique perspective on our everyday world. They are creative in all aspects of their social, physical, emotional, and cognitive development. As children play, they create and learn. Activities in their environment include:

- Block play
- Dramatic play
- Creative art
- Musical exploration
- Sensory play

- Science experimentation
- Cognitive activities
- Fine motor development
- Gross motor development

These activities offer young children the opportunity to utilize their natural creativity.

How do we promote it?

At Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre, we believe it is important to encourage and promote the young child’s creativity. We provide children with the opportunities to express their individuality through play. Play is a child’s work and is how they learn. We provide opportunities to create and learn by furnishing the centre with a variety of developmentally appropriate materials which the children can examine, explore, and use. We also believe in focusing on the process of creation, rather than the end product of a child’s work. It is the enjoyment and satisfaction of the creative process which builds a child’s self-esteem, which is vital to children’s development. Furthermore, the creative process builds on a child’s existing skills and helps them to master these skills. Mastery also enhances self-worth.

Creativity is important to young children’s development. We believe in supporting, encouraging, and promoting creativity at Mahmowenchike.

Program Description

Hours of Operation

Our centres are both open five days a week: Monday to Friday. Our hours of operation are from 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM.

Statutory and Civic Holidays

Mahmowenchike observes the following holidays and will be closed on these days:

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

Professional Development

Mahmowenchike will be closed on designated Professional Development days as determined throughout the year. Parents and guardians will be given ample notice in advance of these closures to ensure they have time to make alternate care arrangements for their child(ren).

March Break and Summer Enrolment

Spaces for summer will only be guaranteed to families who complete and return the summer enrolment request form by the due date. A “Request for Childcare Services for the Summer” form will be distributed to all families in the spring. Response to this form will determine your child’s eligibility for space for the summer months and will determine projected enrolment and dates (weeks or months) that the centre will be closed or staff layoffs will occur during the summer. It is essential to have a firm commitment from families to remain open.

If you return the form requesting space and later do not require space, you will be charged for the space(s) requested on the survey as a spot had been held for your child(ren). If you do not return the form by the due date, you will not be eligible for childcare space(s). (Approved by the Board of Directors: February 15th, 2005).

Similarly, parents attending school who do not have classes on March Break may not be eligible for care during that time. Please speak to the Director and/or Maria at the Thunder Bay District Social Services Administration Board (the DSSAB) to determine if you are eligible to receive care during that time.

Holds for September

Mahmowenchike is not able to hold spaces for September over the summer due to changing enrolment and centre financial needs. If you do not require childcare for the summer and will be returning to school or work in September, you can put your name on the Onelist (www.thunderbaychildcare.ca). You will have to update and confirm your request for space during the month of August, but no later than the 15th of the month, in a handwritten note to the Director either by mail or in-person. (Approved by the Board of Directors: February 15th, 2005).

Enrolment Policy

Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre enrolls children from the Onelist, a community waitlist found at www.thunderbaychildcare.ca. It is mandatory that all clients register and there is no charge to be on this waitlist. Parents may request to know where they are on the waitlist.

Site Supervisors offer spots when they come available based on the following criteria:

1. Priority is given to a family that wishes to enroll the sibling of a child currently attending. These families must still register on the Onelist.
2. Priority is given to a family requiring a full-time spot.
3. If there are no requests for full-time, then Supervisors will offer part-time care to families with set schedules. Every effort will be made to match families that have complementary schedules, for example, M/T/Th family matched with W/F family. This will ensure maximum use of the available spaces.
4. Flex care will only be offered if no full-time or part-time clients are available.

5. Flex care clients will be given a spot on the understanding that if the spot is needed for another family with a set schedule, they may be given two weeks' notice to make other arrangements.
6. We will not have more than one flex spot per program as the financial loss is too great.
7. Supervisors will remove a person from the waitlist if they refuse a spot three times.
8. Supervisors will remove a person from the waitlist if they do not call back within three business days of receiving an offer.
9. Mahmowenchike is an inclusive daycare and discrimination during enrolment for any reason is not tolerated.
10. Children with special needs are accommodated providing the program will not exceed their manageable mix.
11. Children are not enrolled on the basis of whether or not they are subsidized. We make every effort to keep this information confidential.

Families can contact the centre at 807-623-9580 ext 5 to find out where they are on the waitlist.

Staff

At Mahmowenchike, programming for children aged 6 months to 12 years is offered.

Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre in St. Vincent school is licensed for 40 children: 6 infants, 10 toddlers, 16 preschool children, and 24 school-aged children.

Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre in St. Ann school is licensed for 15 toddlers, 24 preschool children, and 15 school-aged children.

Staff members are required to have a diploma in Early Childhood Education or equivalent and if they have their ECE diploma or degree, they must also be registered with the College of Early Childhood Educators.

A knowledge of child development and an awareness of the Native traditions, culture, and language is essential. The Director ensures quality programming for each child. The Head Food Preparer is responsible for the preparation of nutritional snacks and lunches for the children.

Curriculum

Our centres follow an **emergent curriculum**.

Emergent curriculum is a way of planning curriculum that's based on the childrens' interests and passions at a certain point in time. Children thrive and learn best when their interests are captured. Learning occurs naturally.

Planning emergent curriculum requires observation, documentation, creative brainstorming, flexibility, and patience on the part of the educator. Rather than starting with a lesson plan which is repeated every year regardless of age, developmental level, or interests of the

children, emergent curriculum starts with the childrens' interests. In short, it's a child-directed and teacher-facilitated approach to planning the curriculum.

Emergent curriculum summons a lot of creativity and flexibility on the part of the teachers. There is no knowing where the learning will end up but this openness makes the curriculum more exciting for both teachers and children. The emergent curriculum process starts when a teacher sees an interest "emerging" in the field. Once the "emerging" interest has been identified, the teachers brainstorm different ways for the children to study the topic in-depth. Weaving all the activities together gives the teacher a roadmap full of possible journeys with no end in sight. The end comes when the children have moved their interest to a new topic and a new "emerging" interest has again been identified.

First Nations culture and traditions are also woven into the fabric of the emergent curriculum supporting the interests and developmental goals of the children in care within the philosophy of the centre.

Each day provides a variety of opportunities for planned activities, both indoor and outdoor.

Staff set up an environment to enhance the child's development intellectually, socially, physically, creatively, and emotionally. Playtime will be balanced with daily routines. Our staff will support and assist the children when required as well as encouraging them to be as independent as possible.

Infant Care (6-18 months)

Infant care is currently offered at the St. Vincent school site only. Our recommended age for infants starting daycare is 6 months, but younger infants will be considered on an individual basis.

The infant program focuses on meeting the individual needs of the child and, as the child grows, developing the child's self-help skills and independence. Activities such as reading stories together, discovery learning, musical activities, and creative art take place daily. Written reports about routines such as eating, sleeping, and diapering are provided on a daily basis.

Toddler Care (18-30 months)

Toddler care is offered at both the St. Vincent and St. Ann school sites.

The toddler group is designed to meet the needs found in this age group. Individual and group activities include discovery learning, musical activities, and reading stories together. The staff ensure that the environment is safe both indoors and outdoors. Emphasis is placed on setting up an appropriate environment to assist the child in the development of their independence. This leads to the enhancement of self-esteem and a refinement of self-help skills.

Preschool Care (2 ½-5 years)

Preschool care is available at both the St. Vincent and St. Ann school sites.

The preschool group is designed to enhance the child’s learning through play. Child-initiated and adult-directed activities indoors and outdoors are available. The staff incorporate the emergent curriculum model to assist in setting up the environment to enhance learning. These activities integrate the Native culture promoting identity, language, and culture retention for the children.

School-age Care (6-12 years)

School-age care is available at both the St. Vincent and St. Ann school sites.

The programs offered to this age group include before and after school care, as well as full day care for PA days and school holidays. We are located in schools within the Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board. In the event that the school calendars of the TBCDSB and the Lakehead Public School Board do not align, we will only be able to provide care based on the TBCDSB calendar.

The unique individual needs of the school-aged children will be met in an informal, relaxing learning environment in which each child can make activity choices within a recreational atmosphere. The staff will provide stimulating, challenging, and fun experiences through creative art activities, science exploration, language, and fitness activities. These activities integrate the Native culture promoting identity, language, and culture retention for the children.

This group may include up to 20% of license capacity of children in JK/SK.

Childcare Fees

Age	Ext day 9+ hours	Full day 6-8 hrs	¾ day 4-6 hrs	½ day <4 hrs no lunch	½ day with lunch	Before school	After school >2 hours	Before & After school
INF	\$73	\$68						
TOD	\$57	\$51	\$44	\$33	\$40			
PRE	\$50	\$45	\$40	\$29	\$35			
JKSK	\$45	\$40	\$36	\$27	\$32	\$13	\$13	\$26
SA	\$41	\$36	\$33	\$24	\$27	\$13	\$13	\$26

A ½ day is up to 4 hours in either the morning or afternoon but not to extend from one to the other. A ¾ day is up to 6 hours ending no later than 3:00.

Policies and Procedures

Admission & Withdrawal

Parents are required to place their child on the centre's Onelist by going to the website (www.thunderbaychildcare.ca), creating a user account, and inputting their child(ren)'s information. Once a space is available, the Supervisor or Director will contact the family to make an appointment for the parent and child to come and visit the centre. At this time, the staff will be introduced and the parent will be required to fill in the necessary Registration Forms.

If the family requires subsidy, the Supervisor or Director will forward a completed Confirmation of Space form to the DSSAB. If the parents want to transfer the child to another centre, they must go to the online registry to place their child(ren) on the other centre's list. If a sibling does not usually attend the centre, but is going to require PA day, March Break, or summer care, the parent will have to put the child on the online registry for our centre before that child can be offered space and enrolled.

Parents are required to inform the centre 2 weeks in advance if they are withdrawing their child(ren) from the program. Mahmowenchike will provide the parents with 2 weeks' notice if they deem it necessary to discontinue their childcare service.

Enrolling Staff/Relative Children

Children who are enrolled may have a parent or relative employed at Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre. The Director will ensure that the following guidelines are followed:

Placing the child in the same program as the parent/relative may be necessary depending on the age of the child and the group the parent/relative is currently working in. Consistency for the children and program are both Program Quality indicators and should be promoted.

Regular communication between coworkers and the staff parent/relative will occur. If concerns are identified, the Director will be informed immediately.

If parent/relative or staff in the program have concerns, the Director will help to identify the problem and suggest options, once all viewpoints are heard.

Regular communication between the staff, parent/relative staff member and the Director will occur.

Observations of the program will be done by the Director to ensure that group and individual needs are being planned for and are being implemented.

Child Observations & Developmental Screening

Staff observe the children on an ongoing basis and record their observations in order to plan appropriate activities for the children. These observations ensure that the staff plan according to each child's interests and developmental goals. Developmental screening is carried out by trained screeners who have participated in the Fair Start Screeners Training Program. This screening is to help identify any areas of concern in each child's development. This screening will also indicate whether the child is developing within the normal ranges for his or her age. Referrals may be made to community agencies with the parent's signed consent.

Special Needs Service Delivery Policy

1. Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre believes that all children have the right to be enrolled in the centre of their family's choice. To learn, grow, and develop in a safe and nurturing environment supported by caring, knowledgeable staff. A Resource Teacher is available to work with families upon completion of the Special Needs Resources Program Referral Form and the assignment of a Resource Teacher from our community partner, Children's Centre Thunder Bay (CCTB). Resources provided will enable the centre to provide programs and supports to children that have been identified as having special needs that will promote their growth and development while taking part in the day-to-day activities and routines of the centre.
2. The term Special Needs includes but is not limited to the following:
 - a. Speech and language
 - b. Fine and/or gross motor
 - c. Vision impairments
 - d. Hearing impairments
 - e. Social and/or self-help
 - f. Overall developmental exceptionalities
 - g. Any developmental diagnosis
 - h. Behavioural concerns

The program Director/Supervisor will meet with the family of a child that is presenting any of these concerns and will request consent to complete the Special Needs Resources Program Referral Form and to have Fair Start screening completed on them by the Resource Teacher. Once the appropriate consents are signed by the parents, a referral for Resource Teacher Support will be submitted. The child may or may not have had a Fair Start screening administered in the past, depending on the date of administration. The Resource Teacher would then decide if one needs to be completed.

The Resource Teacher will follow through with the referrals and/or recommendations from the Fair Start depending on the severity and score of the screen with the parent's consent. Once the parent has signed the request for service and release of information

forms, the Resource Teacher will take the child onto their caseload to provide more thorough assistance to the child and the program that the child is in. If the family declines the necessary referrals and involvement from the Resource Teacher, it will be the childcare staff and/or Supervisor/Director who will need to follow through with the child's needs. If the situation arises where the child's needs are unable to be met, a meeting will then take place with the family to discuss alternate care arrangements.

Throughout the process of the Fair Start screening and involvement from the Resource Teacher, there will be observations made by the ECEs and Resource Teacher.

3. The Resource Teacher will adhere to all of the program policies and procedures outlined in Mahmowenchike's policies and procedures manual.
4. A Team Support Plan will be developed within 2 months of the initial contact in the childcare service.

Program Support

The Resource Teacher will work in partnership with Early Childhood Educators by providing support and resources to assist in the development and implementation of developmentally appropriate programming that promotes full inclusion. Support and resources will include hands-on support, modeling, program adaptations, and providing resource materials.

Service Coordination

The Resource Teacher will coordinate services that are being utilized by the child, family, and program. This coordination will include facilitating meetings, making appropriate referrals and easing transition processes for families and children.

Procedures

Families request the involvement of the Resource Teacher or Resource Teacher involvement is offered if development concerns develop either during day-to-day observations and interactions with the child or Fair Start screening indicates there are developmental concerns.

The Supervisor or Director will complete the Special Needs Resources Program Referral form.

The Resource Teacher will ensure the Consent to Service form and Release of Information forms are completed and signed.

If the Resource Teacher's caseload is full, the family will be put on a waitlist.

The Resource Teacher will meet with the family to determine needs and provides some follow-up consultation.

Code of Conduct

To ensure the safety, security, and respectful atmosphere for our children, staff, and others in the childcare centre, the following policy is in effect for anyone in attendance at the centre, including parents/guardians, staff, and management:

- All children, families, and staff members will be treated with respect;
- All facilities and equipment will be treated with respect;
- No profanity, racial slurs, physical abuse, emotional abuse, or yelling at any person will be tolerated;
- No threats to anyone else's safety will be tolerated;
- No bullying behaviours will be tolerated.

Any infractions of these guidelines will result in immediate corrective action. Depending on the severity of the action(s) taken, an immediate permanent discharge from Mahmowenchike be involved. All facts and remarks made during the incident will be documented and kept on file. The appropriate authorities will be given a statement regarding the incident.

If any person in the centre, acting as a parent, guardian, staff member, member of management, or other visitor to the centre, becomes verbally, emotionally, or physically abusive to any other person, the procedure will be as follows:

First step: a meeting will be set up with the Supervisor or Executive Director to discuss the inappropriate conduct and why it is unacceptable. A plan will be put in place to prevent further instances from occurring.

Second step: A letter of warning will be issued explaining why the inappropriate action is unacceptable, how it can be improved upon and what the next step will be should it continue.

Third step: Childcare will be suspended until further notice (in the case of a parent or guardian) and/or suspension of work until further notice (in the case of a staff member).

Final step: Childcare will be terminated (in the event of a parent or guardian) and/or employment will be terminated (in the case of a staff member).

Please note that in extreme circumstances, immediate termination may result.

Child Guidance

At Mahmowenchike, we believe there are three basic limits set to help define appropriate behaviour. These limits are:

- Respect yourself
- Respect others
- Respect your environment

These limits are consistently reinforced by staff when guiding the behaviour of the children at the centre in a positive way. Positive guidance techniques are utilized by all employees at Mahmowenchike. By using such techniques, the staff is able to stop or redirect inappropriate behaviours displayed by the child while keeping their self-esteem intact. Punishment breaks down a child's self-worth and is not permitted at any childcare facility.

The following Prohibited Practices Policy (formerly called the Behaviour Management Policy) has formally been adopted by Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre and will be strictly adhered to by all employees of the centre.

1. Harsh or degrading responses that could result in humiliation of a child or the undermining of a child's self-respect.
2. Deprivation of basic needs including food, shelter, clothing, bedding, or toileting.
3. Corporal punishment by staff, another child, or a group of children. Corporal punishment includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - a. Striking a child with or without assistance of an object.
 - b. Shaking, shoving, spanking, or any other forms of physical aggression against a child.
 - c. Punishment of a child by another child or group of children that is condoned or instigated by staff.
 - d. Requiring or forcing a child to assume an uncomfortable position (i.e., squatting, bending, or standing against a wall).
 - e. Requiring or forcing a child to repeat physical movements as a method of punishment.
 - f. Interference with, or interruption of, a child's sleep as a method of punishment.
 - g. Secure isolation of a child (i.e., the use of a locked or lockable room or structure to confine a child who has been withdrawn from other children).

It is strongly encouraged that parent(s) or guardian(s) work together with staff when making guidance decisions for their child. Consistency at the centre, as well as at home, is the key to positive behavior management.

If a child enrolled at Mahmowenchike displays inappropriate behavior(s) which cannot be regulated, parent(s) or guardian(s) will be notified. Upon notification, a meeting will be set up between the parent(s) or guardian(s), Resource Teacher (if involved), and the Director in order to discuss these behaviours and attempt to formulate some appropriate solutions which will benefit the child. If the child's behavioural problems are deemed by the Director to be beyond the expertise of the staff, a recommendation will be made for the family to find an alternate care facility where his or her individual needs may be addressed. Removal of a child from the centre will be considered only as a last resort and only in extreme cases, whereby the behavioural problem poses a direct threat to the safety of either the other children, the staff, or themselves.

Procedure for Monitoring

The Director will monitor the behaviour management practices of employees, volunteers, and students who work directly with the children.

Nutrition

Meal time is a gathering when children and staff come together to sit, discuss, and share. It is a time for relaxation, enjoyment, and the discovery of new foods. All meals and snacks will be in accordance with the Canada Food Guide and the Child Care and Early Years Act.

For your information, menus are posted in each room in the center on a weekly basis. If there are any questions or concerns about items on the menu, please discuss them with the Director.

Meal preparation for infants will be carried out with special consideration. As well, parents are asked to supply any bottles their infant may need. Furthermore, formula, jarred infant food, and pablum or infant cereals are to be supplied by the parent(s) or guardian(s). Parents must label all dishes and food products which are brought from home. Labeling ensures that these items are not misplaced and are replaced in the appropriate room once they have been cleaned and disinfected in the kitchen.

If your child is an infant and has been exclusively or mainly breastfed before starting in a childcare setting, it is highly recommended that you provide breastmilk or ensure your child is acclimated to going without. Sometimes starting in a new setting can be a difficult adjustment for some infants and it helps tremendously to know they are eating and hydrated while present at the centre.

Parent(s) and guardian(s) with infants enrolled at the centre are required to complete a checklist of table foods which the child(ren) can eat upon enrolment. This checklist should also be updated as necessary. No staff member will introduce any new foods to infants under 1 year of age without the permission of the parent(s) or guardian(s). The checklist will be consulted before feeding the child any foods served at the centre.

Parent(s) of toddler, preschool, and school age children are requested not to bring in food or drink items for their children due to other childrens' allergies. If your child requires food substitutions based on their food sensitivities or allergies, please talk to the Director who will discuss your child's needs with you and possible substitutions that you or the centre can make.

Milk and water are served as beverages with meals and we do not serve juice to any age group. On special occasions (i.e., seasonal feasts) there may be juice served, however, on a daily basis, milk and water make up the childrens' beverages.

Allergy Alert

Mahmowenchike is a nut-free childcare centre. Allergies related to nut products can be deadly, therefore, we do not use any products which contain peanuts or any other type of nut. Due to severe allergies, outside food or drinks are not allowed to be brought to the centre by families.

Only foods prepared in our centre(s) or approved by our Head Food Preparer are served to the children. Alternatives may be brought by parents of children with food allergies after discussion with the Head Food Preparer.

Please inform the Director of any allergies your child(ren) may have. It may be necessary for the parents, Head Food Preparer, and the Director to meet and work out a specialized menu for your child.

Anaphylactic Allergies

Anaphylaxis is a serious allergic reaction and can be life-threatening. The allergy may be related to food, insect stings, medicine, latex, exercise, or other allergens. This policy is intended to help support the needs of a child with a severe allergy and provide information on anaphylaxis and awareness to parents, staff, students, and visitors at the centre.

In order to ensure the safety of children with life-threatening allergies, Mahmowenchike supports the provision of appropriate avoidance strategies and a plan for immediate response in the event of an emergency to deal with such circumstances upon the written request of the parent(s) and verification from a physician that a severe allergic condition exists.

The Board recognizes the seriousness of certain allergies such as those which may lead to life-threatening anaphylactic reactions. In accordance with our Medication Administration Policy, the centre staff are permitted to administer medication with the written consent of the parent/guardian.

The anaphylactic policy will be reviewed by all parents, staff, students, and visitors upon enrolment of a child with an anaphylactic allergy.

Policy

- Strategies to reduce the risk of exposure to anaphylactic causative agents may include:
 - a. Certain foods will be avoided on the menu.
 - b. Certain foods/materials will be avoided for craft and sensory activities.
 - c. Risk reduction strategies for stinging insects, latex, etc.
 - d. Only purchased foods containing secure ingredient labels will be allowed to be shared and/or distributed.
 - e. Peanut safe signs may be posted.
- Communication Plans will provide the following information:

- Signs/information regarding all children’s allergies will be posted in a designated area accessible to all parents (such as the Parent Information Board(s)).
- This policy will be outlined in the Parent Handbook.
- A list of known allergies of children will be posted in food preparation areas, eating areas, and activity rooms.
- Development of a child’s individual plan and emergency procedures:
 - The parent/guardian of a child with an anaphylactic allergy will provide input on the child’s plan, including the emergency procedure by completing the Child’s Individual Plan Form.
 - The information collected on this form includes:
 - A description of the child’s allergy.
 - Monitoring and avoidance strategies.
 - Signs and symptoms of reaction.
 - Action to be taken by staff.
 - Consent from parent/guardian that allows staff to administer medication.
 - Emergency contact information to be updated as required:
 - The Child’s Individual Plan is to be reviewed by staff upon employment and annually.
 - The Child’s Individual Plan is to be reviewed by all students and volunteers, including parent volunteers.
 - Parents will advise the childcare centre if their child develops an allergy and requires medication, of any change to the child’s individual plan or treatment, or if the child has outgrown an allergy and no longer requires medication.

Please note: Centres may allow children to carry their own emergency allergy medications and parents are required to give written permission for their child to self-administer allergy medication.

Training

Where a child has an anaphylactic allergy, the parent of the child or a medical practitioner, including a Public Health Nurse, will provide training on the procedures to be followed in the event of a child having an anaphylactic reaction, including how to recognize the signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis and administer medication.

Staff, students, and volunteers will have on file confirmation of their review of:

- Anaphylactic Policy
- Child’s Individual Plan
- Training

Special Instructions

It is the parent’s responsibility to ensure their child attends the program with an epinephrine auto-injector and:

If centre is located more than 15 minutes from Emergency Medical Services, then a minimum of two (2) epinephrine auto-injectors is required.

An appropriate number of epinephrine auto-injectors shall be available for on and off premises activities.

Procedure

Parents with anaphylactic children must complete an Anaphylactic Reactions Protocol Form for each child prior to being admitted to Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre.

Parents with anaphylactic children must provide a minimum of one dedicated prescription epi-pen for each child that will remain at the centre at all times. This pen will be taken on every outing with the children.

All staff will receive training on emergency procedures and epi-pen use.

A notice of all children's allergies will be posted in each classroom and in the kitchen.

Epi-pens and asthma inhalers must be provided to the centre's staff prior to the start of their child(ren)'s participation in any of the programs being offered at Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre. Epi-pens are stored in the pencil case in the program binder.

All medication must be provided to the staff in a clearly labelled bag with the following information:

Child's full name

Expiration date of medication

Clear instructions for use

A copy of the centre's medication administration form should be included in the bag indicating the dose per use and the time of day when it should be administered

Staff will review each child's individual protocol prior to commencing employment and yearly thereafter or when there are any changes in the child's medical requirements/needs. A review and signature form including the date and person making the review will be required.

Roles & Responsibilities

1. Responsibilities of the parent/guardian of a child with an anaphylactic allergy:
 - a. Identify their child's allergies and needs to the childcare supervisor/provider.
 - b. Provide the childcare facility with up-to-date epinephrine auto-injectors.
 - c. Participate in the development of a written Individual Health Plan for their child.
 - d. Provide foods from home (if applicable) after discussion with the Supervisor or Director.

- e. Provide support to the facility and staff, as required.
 - f. Provide epi-pen training for the staff, students, and volunteers.
2. Responsibilities of the Supervisor/Director:
- a. Meet and ensure the parent(s)/guardian(s) have completed all the necessary consent and authorization forms.
 - b. Assist with the implementation of policies and procedures for reducing risk in the centre.
 - c. Work closely with parent(s)/guardian(s) of the child with known risk of anaphylaxis.
 - d. Notify staff/providers of the child with known risk of anaphylaxis of their allergens and the treatment.
 - e. Ensure all staff/providers, students, and volunteers have received instruction in the use of the auto-injector.
 - f. Inform all parent(s)/guardian(s) that a child with an anaphylactic allergy is in direct contact with their child and ask for their support and cooperation.
 - g. Ensure staff, students, and volunteers review and sign the Anaphylactic Allergy Policy and the Child's Individual Plan upon employment and annually thereafter.
 - h. Ensure safety procedures are developed for field trips and extracurricular activities.
 - i. Ensure allergy list is posted in all rooms.
 - j. Develop an internal policy outlining the roles of the staff and action that will be taken if an anaphylactic allergy emergency occurs.
3. Responsibilities of Staff/Providers:
- a. Ensure that the child with an anaphylactic allergy only eats foods brought from home (if applicable).
 - b. Reinforce handwashing to all children before and after eating.
 - c. Facilitate communication with other parent(s)/guardian(s).
 - d. Ensure that epi-pens are accessible at all times (indoors and outdoors).
 - e. Designated staff responsible for administering medication will ensure that epi-pens are updated when expiring.
 - f. Know what their role is when an anaphylactic allergy emergency occurs.

Food Preparation Practices

The Head Food Preparer will be advised of the seriousness of the allergy.

The Head Food Preparer receives training in the reading of package labels and food preparation to avoid the substance causing the severe reaction.

Immunization

The Medical Officer of Health recommends children attending childcare to have up-to-date immunization. Therefore, Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre requires every child attending our licensed childcare facilities to have up-to-date immunization against diphtheria,

pertussis, tetanus, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, and haemophilus influenza type B. An annual flu vaccination is recommended.

Illness

For mildly ill children, exclusion will be based on whether the child is able to take part in regular daily activities and whether there are adequate facilities and staff available to meet the needs of both the ill child and the other children in the group.

Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre will use the following guidelines from the Thunder Bay District Health Unit's Common Childhood Infections Manual in order to determine if a child should not attend the centre.

From the Thunder Bay District Health Unit's website: If possible, the Health Unit encourages parents/guardians to keep their children home when ill. It is difficult for young children to "keep their germs to themselves." Children can rest at home to recover. The best way to reduce the spread of infection is to keep sick children away from healthy children.

Child care centres also have a role to play. It is the responsibility of the operator to enforce exclusion policies that are set out by the Health Unit for certain symptoms (fever, gastrointestinal symptoms like vomiting) and infections (mumps, chickenpox).

Certain symptoms in children may suggest the presence of a communicable illness. Children who have the following symptoms should be excluded from the childcare setting until:

- 1) A physician has certified the symptoms are not associated with an infectious agent or they are no longer a threat to the health of other children at the centre, or
- 2) The symptoms have subsided. If your child has a fever, diarrhea, or has been vomiting, they can return to the centre 24 to 48 hours (depending on the symptom) after the symptom(s) have subsided without the use of fever-reducing or other medications which may mask the symptoms.

Fever

If axillary (under the armpit) or oral (mouth) temperature reached 38°C/100.4°F or higher. This high of a temperature is a concern, especially if accompanied by other symptoms such as vomiting, sore throat, diarrhea, headache, stiff neck, rash, or change in behaviour. **Please note:** axillary temperature can be 0.5-1.0° lower than oral temperature. This should be taken into consideration when checking for fever. The child may return to the centre **24 hours** after the fever has subsided without the use of fever-reducing medications.

A fever of more than 38°C/100.4°F is considered by the Thunder Bay District Health Unit to be too high to be teething in infants or toddlers, especially associated with other symptoms.

Respiratory Symptoms

If breathing is difficult or rapid; severe cough. If child makes a high-pitched “croupy” or whooping sound after coughing OR if child is unable to lie comfortably due to continuous cough. Child must be able to participate in all centre activities in order to attend.

Diarrhea

If two or more abnormally loose stools within a 24-hour period. Observe the child for other symptoms such as fever, abdominal pain, or vomiting. Child may return to the centre **48 hours** after having a normal stool.

Vomiting

If two or more episodes of vomiting within a 24-hour period. Child may return to the centre **48 hours** after the vomiting has subsided.

Eye, Ear, and/or Nose Drainage

If thick mucus or pus is draining from the eye or nose, the child must be checked by a health care professional and a note must be provided to the centre for the child to return or the child has been on antibiotics or medicated ointment/drops for a period of 24 hours prior to returning and drainage has stopped.

Sore Throat

Sore throat, especially with fever or swollen glands in the neck are present. Observe the child for other symptoms.

Rashes

Skin rashes which are undiagnosed or contagious. Sores with crusty, yellow or green drainage which cannot be covered by clothing or bandages.

Itching

If child experiences persistent itching of the body or scalp. Mahmowenchike has a **no-nit policy**. If lice are present, all dead and live nits must be removed before the child returns to the centre. (Head lice procedure will be provided to parent or caregiver upon request). Staff will check the child’s hair upon return prior to the parent leaving. See Headlice and Ticks for more information.

Unusual Appearance and/or Behaviour

If illness prevents participation in normal activities. If child looks or acts differently, is unusually tired, difficult to wake, irritable, inconsolable crying, pale, confused, or lacking appetite.

If the child has unusual colour:

- Eyes or skin are yellow (jaundice)
- Urine is dark or tea-coloured
- Stool is grey, white, or black

If a child displays the above symptoms while at the centre, the Director or staff member will contact the parent(s) so that child may be picked up from the centre as soon as possible. If parent(s) are unable to be reached, the designated emergency contacts will be notified to pick up the child.

If the child is diagnosed with a contagious illness, he or she cannot attend Mahmowenchike until the child is no longer contagious, 24-hour fever-free (without the use of fever-reducing medications), 48-hour diarrhea- and vomit-free, and is able to take part in all normal daily activities. The Thunder Bay District Health Unit Common Childhood Infections Manual will be consulted.

You may be requested to provide a doctor's note to confirm the illness and their return to the centre. Common childhood illnesses include, but are not limited to:

Flu (influenza)	Gastrointestinal illness	Hepatitis A
Impetigo	Measles	Meningitis
MRSA	Mononucleosis	Mumps
Norovirus	Pink eye (conjunctivitis)	Respiratory illness
Ringworm	Roseola (Sixth Disease)	Rotavirus
Scabies	Rubella (German Measles)	Strep infection (Scarlet Fever/Strep throat)
Pneumonia	Whooping Cough	Bronchitis

Chickenpox: child will need to be able to take part in all daily activities, have no symptoms of illness as listed above, and all lesions will need to be crusted over prior to returning to the centre.

Impetigo, Bacterial Meningitis, Meningococcal Meningitis: exclusion is necessary until 24 hours after effective antibiotic treatment has been started and your child is well enough to participate in all daily activities.

The Common Childhood Infections Manual which we are required to follow can be found on the Thunder Bay District Health Unit's website.

If your child is ill, it is requested that alternate childcare be found until he or she is feeling better. A child that is subsidized and attends the centre full-time will be allotted up to 30 days absence including vacation and sick time.

Children attending part-time will have their absent day allowance prorated. Full fee families will have the same allotment for absent days, however, these days are to be paid for by the parent.

When all allotted absent days have been used, families need to contact the Director or Supervisor to make arrangements for maintaining their child's space as it will be deemed that the space is no longer required if absences are so frequent as to use up the allotted days before

the 12-month period. In the case of extended illnesses or hospitalization, the DSSAB may grant more absent days with doctor's notes.

The Director is responsible for notifying parents if a contagious illness has been reported among the children of the centre. Notification will appear in the main entrance, as well as in each room of the centre.

Headlice and Ticks

Headlice is not considered a communicable illness by the Thunder Bay District Health Unit, however, Mahmowenchike has a strict no-nit policy. If nits or live bugs are found in any child's hair, the parent/guardian will be called to pick up the child immediately for treatment and the child will not be allowed to return until they are completely nit-free.

If a child is brought to the centre for drop-off after being sent home for lice treatment, checked for lice, and the check is unsuccessful, the child will not be permitted to stay at the centre and will not be able to return for another check until the following morning at the child(ren)'s regular drop-off time. When a child is sent home with lice or endures an unsuccessful check at drop-off time, it will not be counted as an absent day.

If a tick is found on a child's body, it will not be the responsibility of the staff to remove it. The parent/guardian will be called to come remove it immediately and the parent will be asked to take the tick to the Thunder Bay District Health Unit for testing and identification.

Ill Parent or Ill Child Procedure

If a family is subsidized and a parent is ill and will not be going to school or work for the day but wants to use childcare for their child(ren) for the day, the parent needs to phone Maria at the DSSAB for approval before they bring their child to the centre. Maria's office hours are 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday.

In a situation where there are multiple children in the family and one of the children is ill and cannot attend the centre, parents may call Maria and get approval from her prior to bringing in the other child(ren). This is to ensure the children who are not ill or on vacation do not have to use their allotted absent days for this purpose.

In a family where there are multiple children and one of the children becomes ill while at the centre, the parent will be contacted. Depending on the time of day, they may be required to pick up all the children when they pick up the ill child. If the illness occurs in the first hour and a half of attendance, the other children will be allowed to stay if the parent wishes until their regular pick up time. This change does not require the approval of Maria as absent days are not affected in this case.

Medication and Non-Prescription Drugs

Parents are encouraged to administer medication to their own child. If the medication must be given during the day while the child is at the centre, requirements as set by the Child Care and Early Years Act must be met. These include:

1. All medication must be accompanied by written permission from the parent/guardian.
2. All medication must be in its original container with the label intact showing all the necessary information:
 - i. Name of the child
 - ii. Name of the drug
 - iii. Physician's name and address (prescription only)
 - iv. Pharmacy name (prescription only)
 - v. Expiry date
 - vi. Dosage to be given and number of times per day
 - vii. Prescription number (prescription only)
 - viii. Date medication issued (prescription only)
3. The parent must hand-deliver the medication to the appropriate staff (medication is not to be left in the child's bag or basket). Staff will return the medication to the parent at the end of the day, or as required.
4. Controlled substance medications (narcotics) will be counted upon receipt from the parent and the number recorded on the medication administration form. Medication (number of pills) will also be counted upon return to the parent or tallied when the medication has been completed.
5. All medication must be kept stored appropriately in a locked cabinet or container (according to parent's written instructions) with the exception of asthma inhalers and epi-pens which will be kept in the classroom and easily accessible to the child and staff. To ensure prompt administration of asthma and emergency allergy medications, these medications will be kept in a backpack (provided by the child's family) in the child's classroom and will accompany the child outdoors.
6. In order for the staff to administer medication, the parent must fill in the appropriate Medication Administration form and sign it. Staff are required to read the label on the medication and the parent's written instructions to ensure they are the same. If they do not agree, then a written note from the child's physician will be required to explain the discrepancy. Once administered and recorded, staff must initial the form. When medication is completed, medicine container will be returned to the parent and the medication form placed in the child's file.
7. Any accidental administration of medication (for example, medication given to the wrong child, wrong dosage, etc.) will be reported to the Director immediately. Poison Control will be called, the parent will be notified and necessary first aid measures will be enforced.

8. Non-prescription medication (apart from topical teething medications such as Baby Orajel, which we do not administer) may be given when requested by parents upon the completion of the Medication Administration form. Parents must be very specific as to directions on when to administer the medication as staff will not be responsible for interpreting or making decisions as to when to administer medications.

Dental Care

Good dental care habits will be promoted by encouraging healthy eating. We do not provide toothbrushes for children to use at the centre; parents are welcomed to bring their child's own dental hygiene products for their child to use independently. On request, the centre will provide parents with information on dental hygiene. The centre's concern is that the hygiene of the child would be compromised by providing toothbrushes for each child; the centre is unable to supervise each child brushing their teeth or guarantee safe storage of toothbrushes.

Safe Sleep

Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre believes that for healthy development, children must have an adequate amount of sleep. Rest time is respected in our centre and we make every effort to help children relax and enjoy the experience. Each age group has a different routine but we endeavour to adapt the procedure to each particular child as much as possible.

We are obligated under the *Child Care and Early Years Act* to ensure each child under 12 months is placed to sleep in a manner consistent with the *Joint Statement on Safe Sleep: Preventing Sudden Infant Deaths in Canada* document unless a child's physician recommends otherwise in writing.

Sleep Supervision

Supervision of children will take place every 15 minutes and will consist of physical and visual checks. These checks will be documented. This is done quietly and unobtrusively so it does not disturb their sleep. Infants will be observed by entering the sleep room and placing a hand near the chest as well as visually checking to see if the child is breathing and well.

The sleep checks for the infants will be documented on their daily information reports kept at the entrance of the room. Each infant is assigned a magnet which is kept on the sleep room door to immediately identify which children are in the sleep room.

When infants are in their cribs, they will be within sight and hearing of staff at all times. An audio-visual baby monitor is stationed in the sleep room, which is able to pan and view all 6 cribs at any given time. The baby monitor is within sight and hearing of staff whenever any children are in the sleep room.

In the toddler and preschool programs, the educator will position themselves in a manner that allows them to directly observe the resting or sleeping children. Each day, the educators will

document how that direct observation was completed during the rest and sleep period. Educators will complete direct visual checks more often, if required, for example, if a child is having trouble settling to sleep or a child is coughing.

Educators will ensure that all children younger than 12 months of age are placed to sleep on their backs unless the child's physician recommends otherwise in writing. Infants will not be placed on their sides or stomach to sleep. While infants will always be placed on their back to sleep, when an infant can easily turn over from back to front and front to back, the child will be free to choose and remain in their chosen sleep position.

In the case of an infant who has received a physician, practitioner, or clinician signed sleep position medical waiver, it will be kept up-to-date in their file. The waiver will also be posted on the infant's crib without identifying medical information.

Infants, toddlers, and preschoolers are encouraged to self-soothe and they are supported in learning how to do this. Children will not be left to cry and an educator will always be nearby while children are sleeping or falling asleep. Infants may be placed in their cribs when drowsy to fall asleep on their own, but will be monitored using the electronic audio-visual monitor or through the window of the sleep room to ensure their safety.

The program ratios are never reduced for infants. During rest time, as with all moments during the day, the infant ratio is 3 children for every 1 educator. During rest time, the toddler ratio can decrease to 8 children for every 1 educator and the preschool ratio can decrease to 11 children for every 1 educator. These ratio adjustments are to allow for staff shift changes and lunch breaks.

Sleep Equipment

The infant program will use cribs which meet the standards for cradles and cribs in the regulations made under the *Hazardous Products Act*:

- Crib slats will be less than 2 3/8" apart.
- Playpens will not be used for sleeping.
- Drop-side cribs are not used.
- Strollers, swings, bouncers, and car seats are not intended for infant sleep. Children will be placed in their crib once asleep.

Cribs are not used for storage of program items, blankets, etc. Items may be stored under the cribs in closed bins, but bins are never stored under evacuation cribs.

Each infant will be assigned an individual crib for their use. The same cribs will be used for each child every rest time. Only one infant will be placed to sleep in each crib. Siblings, including twins and triplets, will be placed in separate cribs.

Each toddler and preschooler will be assigned an individual cot for their use.

Bedding in each program will be assigned to each individual child weekly and laundered on the same day each week. Bedding is never shared. Sleep clothes for infants, such as sleepers, sleep sacks, and wearable blankets, may be used as alternatives to blankets.

Infants who are getting ready to transition to the toddler program or have displayed an interest or developmental readiness to sleep on a cot can be provided with an infant-sized cot. These cots will be placed in the main activity room where the staff member physically is at all times to ensure the child's safety. The cots are very low to the ground and will be surrounded by soft surfaces (e.g., pillows, carpets, mats) to ensure no injury is sustained if the child is to roll off the cot.

Discussion will take place between staff and parents prior to transitioning any child to a cot. Parents' written consent is obtained before any child in the infant program is placed on a cot for rest time. The form must be obtained prior to using a cot.

When an infant is awake, they will have supervised "tummy time." This will help babies strengthen their muscles and develop normally. Infants will spend limited time in car seats, swings, and bouncy seats when they're awake.

Children are never placed in their cribs with bottles. Infants who use pacifiers will be offered their pacifiers when they are placed to sleep and it will not be put back in their mouth should the pacifier fall out once they are asleep. Pacifiers will also be cleaned after each use, checked for tears, and will not be coated in any type of solution. Pacifiers and bibs and other items will not be tied around the child's neck or clipped onto a child's clothing during sleep.

Each crib will have a firm, tight-fitting mattress covered by a fitted sheet and will be free from loose bedding, toys, and other soft objects (e.g., pillows, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, stuffed toys, etc.)

In the case of children who use a tikinagan for sleeping, parents must provide written permission and demonstrate how they use it at home before staff can use it at the centre. Tikinagans will always be laid down on their back when the child is sleeping in it.

A rocking chair will be in the program room and the sleep room so that an infant may be rocked and lulled to sleep before being transferred to their crib.

Our electronic audio-visual monitor, which is used to detect and monitor the sounds and video images of every sleeping child, is actively monitored by educators at all times. It is checked daily by the educators to ensure it is functioning properly. It is not used as a replacement for the direct visual checks, but a supplement. The daily checks are performed by the program staff and documented in the cleaning checklist binder. If the device does not work, it is immediately reported to the director for replacement or repair.

All furniture and equipment is compliant with current standards and are sturdy and in good repair. Furniture is checked on a monthly basis during the Health and Safety inspection.

Sleep Environment

The infant program has a designated sleep room so that infants can nap at any time, following their natural rhythm. Their sleep routine is posted on the wall above the crib so that it is visible to any educator who is working that program.

The infant sleep room and the program rooms during rest time will be kept cozy and dark enough for sleeping but sufficient lighting is provided to perform direct visual checks of the children.

Music, if played during rest time, will not interfere with staff being able to hear children's movement and sounds. A white noise machine is played in the infant sleep room while the children are resting. It is at an appropriate level for soothing the children during sleep while allowing the staff to hear any noises the children may make. It also gives off light to allow staff to perform direct visual checks of the children.

If any educator observes significant change in a child's sleeping habits or behaviours, the educator is required to communicate/document the observations which will be discussed with the families to determine if alternate supervision is required for the child.

Joint Statement on Safe Sleep Principles

Infants placed on their backs to sleep, for every sleep, have a reduced risk of SIDS.

Preventing exposure to tobacco smoke, before and after birth, reduces the risk of SIDS.

The safest place for an infant to sleep is in a crib, cradle, or bassinet that meets the current Canadian regulations.

Infants who share a room with a parent or caregiver have a lowered risk of SIDS.

Breastfeeding provides a protective effect for SIDS.

Emergency Procedures

The staff are prepared to deal with the following emergency situations:

Fire

The centre is equipped with an electrical alarm system. Floor plans are located in the front entrance and in each of the program rooms showing the quickest way to safety. Fire response directions are posted at each Fire Alarm Pull Station. The children will be taken to the school's designated evacuation site in the event of an evacuation. Monthly fire drills are conducted to familiarize the children and the staff with the procedures.

Injury or Illness

All staff have a current First Aid certificate. In case of an injury, a staff member will perform minor first aid and seek medical attention if required. Parents will be contacted as soon as possible to inform them of the situation. An accident/illness report is filled out which outlines all of the details of the injury or illness. Parents are required to sign the report after they have read it. A copy will be offered to parents after it has been signed. If the injury requires medical attention, then a Serious Occurrence Report form for the Ministry of Education must also be completed.

Weather

The policy of Mahmowenchike is that if schools close during hours of operation, conditions are deemed serious, therefore, parents will be contacted to make arrangements for their child's pick up. If the parents cannot be reached, the emergency contacts will be called. If the school boards determine that it is not safe to open schools in the morning, then Mahmowenchike will also be closed for the day. Please listen to your local radio stations for school closures. If weather conditions are deemed severe enough to force city road closures and therefore endanger the transportation of children, emergency measures will be set up to accommodate children overnight.

Serious Occurrence

The following is a definition of a serious occurrence as stated in the Child Care and Early Years Act:

1. The **death of a child** who receives child care at the child care centre.
2. **Abuse, neglect, or an allegation of abuse or neglect** of a child while receiving child care at the child care centre.
3. A **life-threatening injury or a life-threatening illness** of a child who receives care at the child care centre.
4. An incident where a child who is receiving child care at the child care centre **goes missing or is temporarily unsupervised**.
5. An **unplanned disruption of the normal operations** of a child care centre that poses a risk to health, safety, or well-being of children receiving child care at the child care centre.

Serious Occurrences must be reported to the Ministry of Education within 24 hours of their occurring. The 24-hour time period starts at the time when staff members first become aware of the incident and/or deem the incident to be a Serious Occurrence. A Serious Notification form must be posted in a visible area for 10 days following the incident.

Transportation

If a child becomes ill or injured and requires medical attention, parent(s) or guardian(s) will be notified immediately. The child will then be transported to the hospital in the quickest manner possible.

The child will be transported to the hospital only:

- In parent or guardian's vehicle
- In a taxi cab
- In an ambulance

The Director or staff will accompany the child to the hospital in order to comfort and assist the child while the parent(s) or guardian(s) are on the way to meet them.

No child will be transported in a vehicle owned by any staff member at the centre.

Centre Security

Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre believe that the safety and security of the children and families is of the utmost importance. Both of our centres have doors that are always locked with buzzers to gain entry. Each program room is locked at all times with a coded lock. The parents/guardians are given the code to gain entry to the program rooms, however, it is asked that these codes not be given out except to those designated to pick up the child regularly.

If an unfamiliar person approaches the door, staff at Mahmowenchike will inquire as to who they are before allowing them to enter the centre. Parents are asked to please close the doors securely when leaving the room, locking the coded doors behind them, to ensure the security of those inside.

On occasion, agents from third parties such as Children's Centre Thunder Bay, George Jeffrey Children's Centre, Communities Together for Children, the Thunder Bay District Health Unit, as well as many others, may visit the centre and will have the opportunity to interact with your child(ren). Children will not be left alone with these visitors without the written permission of parents, for example, in the case of speech therapy. All third party representatives have undergone a Vulnerable Sector Criminal Reference Check.

Field Trips

Parents will be notified of any field trips arranged by Mahmowenchike staff. A notice will be posted outlining the specific details. The parents are required to review the information and state whether they give permission for their child to attend by signing the permission form. Alternate arrangements for child care will have to be made by families if they do not want their child to partake in the field trip as there is insufficient staff to supervise the field trip as well as allow staff to provide care for children remaining at the centre. Parents will be made aware of any changes to the field trip plans.

Throughout the child's regular program day, spontaneous walks around the neighbourhood are taken, giving the children opportunity to explore and learn about their surroundings. No advance permission is required for walks in the area.

Outdoor Play and Sun Safety

All children enrolled at Mahmowenchike will enjoy playing outside while at the centre. Only in cases of severe weather, such as thunderstorms, blizzards, ice storms, low winter temperatures, or extreme summer temperatures, will the children not engage in outdoor play. The children's health and safety is of utmost importance to us, therefore, enjoyable indoor activities will replace outdoor play if the Director and/or staff deem it to be appropriate.

According to the Child Care and Early Years Act, each child under thirty (30) months of age that is in attendance for six (6) hours or more in a day is outdoors (weather permitting) for sleep or play, or both, for a period of up to two (2) hours per day.

Each child over eighteen (18) months and up to and including five (5) years of age, may play outdoors (weather permitting) for at least two (2) hours each day.

It is not always possible for the infant and toddler groups to go outside in the winter months due to the practical difficulties, i.e., deep snow, icy conditions, etc. Infant and toddler groups will not go outside when the temperature is -15 degrees and below, including wind chill during the winter months. Preschool and kindergarten groups will not go outside when the temperature is -20 degrees and below, including wind chill during the winter months.

All groups will remain inside if the temperature with the humidex is greater than 30 degrees during the summer months.

Appropriate Outdoor Apparel

Children must be dressed appropriately for outdoor play. During the winter months, boots, hats, mittens, neck warmers, and a complete snowsuit will be worn by all children. These articles must be labelled with the child's name or initials. Labelling ensures these items will not be misplaced. Scarves and any long strings attached to mittens or jackets, for example, create a choking hazard and will not be permitted at the centre.

During the summer months, wide-brimmed sun hats to protect the face, ears, and neck, as well as sunscreen will be worn by each child.

If your child arrives for the day without appropriate outdoor apparel, you will be asked to leave and return with the appropriate items before the child can be left at the centre for the day. Providing children with appropriate outerwear is the responsibility of the parents.

Mahmowenchike does not accept responsibility for any lost or damaged articles.

Sunscreen

The centre will purchase sunscreen for use by all the children. Parents are required to sign a permission form to allow staff to apply the sunscreen. If your child has skin sensitivities and you would prefer to provide your own sunscreen, you are required to write your child's name on

the sunscreen container and sign a consent form to allow staff to apply it. The labelling ensures these items will not be used by another child.

If your child is scheduled to arrive when the centre has already gone outside (please ask your child's educator(s) for clarification on what time this may occur), we strongly recommend that parents apply sunscreen before arrival at the centre. If your child's group has already ventured outside, they may not be able, due to staffing or practical difficulties, to go back inside to apply sunscreen.

Parking

- 1) If you are dropping off or picking up your child(ren), or are planning to stay for some time, please park your vehicle in one of the parking spaces provided in the parking lot. Please do not block other vehicles.
- 2) If these spaces are full, please use on-street parking where permissible.

Your assistance in following this policy will alleviate congestion and provide easy access to the parking lot for parents, staff, and emergency vehicles. Please note that during the school year, the parking lot can become very hectic around 3:20 PM. If your pick up time is around this time, it may be advisable to arrive a little earlier to ensure you are able to get a parking spot and are not late picking up your child(ren).

Parental Involvement

The staff of Mahmowenchike believe that in order to develop a sense of community, we must continue to work at establishing a close relationship with the entire family. There will be opportunities throughout the year to attend social or education gatherings. Parents are welcome to visit the centre and spend time with their child and/or children to tell a story or share a favourite menu or recipe. We encourage and invite your participation.

We invite you to call or email (where applicable) throughout the day when you would like to check on your child. While we welcome you into our centre, it's important to note that it can sometimes be difficult on a child when their parents come to visit as they may become confused and think they are leaving to go home for the day.

Smoking

In accordance with Ontario legislation, Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre is a smoke-free area. The building, all property, including the parking lot, are designated as No Smoking areas. Offenders are subject to a Provincial fine in excess of \$300.00 for contravention of the legislation.

Toys and Clothing Brought from Home

It is required for all children enrolled at the centre who are walking (including infants) to have a pair of "indoor" shoes or non-slip slippers and a full change of clothing, which is to be stored in the child's locker. Please ensure that shoes fit well as your child will be wearing them all day at

the centre in case of a fire or fire drill. Crocs or swimming shoes are not suitable options and you may be asked to provide a better-fitting pair. We recommend a pair of correctly-sized running shoes. We also require a separate pair of outdoors shoes that are again, well-fitted and comfortable. All shoes and clothing should be labelled with the child's name or initials to ensure that clothing is not placed into another child's locker or used by another child.

The children are involved in many daily activities such as painting, gluing, and outdoor play. Please dress your child in clothes that allow them to participate in these activities.

We invite parents or guardians to bring in any special blankets or stuffies which will comfort their child at rest time. We ask that all other toys remain at home or with the parent/guardian at drop off time. Diaper creams and ointments are also supplies by parents and guardians, but will not be applied without the parent/guardian's written consent (see Medication and Non-prescription Drugs). These items must be labeled and placed into the child's basket or locker. Staff will notify families when these items become low in supply.

Mahmowenchike does not assume responsibility for any lost or damaged articles.

Pacifiers

Mahmowenchike has a no pacifier policy for children over the age of 18 months. Pacifiers have some benefits for infants if parents choose to use them, such as a lowered risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and encouraging self-soothing. However, after 18 months, they can cause more frequent ear infections, adverse dental effects, and they can be unsafe.

Pacifiers will not be given to children over the age of 18 months while they are attending the centre and will not be allowed to enter the program room(s). When the child is in the infant program, the staff will begin to wean the child off the pacifier beginning at around 12-15 months depending on the child's readiness. Parents will be notified when this change begins to take place. Parents and guardians are encouraged to adopt this policy as well to enforce consistency for the child.

Social Media and Confidentiality

By enrolling their child(ren) in Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre, families agree to refrain from publicly discussing children, families, or staff in attendance at Mahmowenchike, including on social media websites. All staff are required to sign an Oath of Confidentiality upon employment at Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre, protecting children and family files.

Families are asked not to take photographs or videos of the children, staff, or other families attending our centre without their permission. Families are welcome to take photographs of their own child at the centre, provided no other children are visible.

Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre strives to maintain a positive image in the community and we have adopted this policy to ensure that our employees and families are aware of their responsibility to maintain a positive image as a representation of our organization, using social media responsibly and appropriately.

Mahmowenchike employees, as well as families under Mahmowenchike's care, that maintain personal social media pages (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, blogs, Twitter, FourSquare, etc.) are expected to comply with the guidelines set out in this policy.

1. Families using social media are advised to maintain strict privacy settings on their personal accounts to ensure that any materials contained therein are not accessible to the public at large.
2. Employees and families that use these sites are prohibited from disseminating any private organizational information therein, or any negative comments regarding the organization.
3. Posts involving the following will not be tolerated and will subject the individual to discipline:
 - a. Proprietary and confidential information;
 - b. Discriminatory statements or sexual innuendoes regarding staff, management, clients, and;
 - c. Defamatory statements regarding the centre, its employees or clients.
4. Where a family publicly associates him or herself with the organization, all materials associated with his or her page may reflect on Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre. Please be advised that inappropriate comments, photographs, links, etc. should be avoided.
5. Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre policies governing the use of corporate logos and other branding and identity apply to electronic communications, and only individuals officially designated may "speak" (orally or in writing) on Mahmowenchike's behalf.
6. Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre reserves the right to take action against individuals for posting any of the following:
 - a. Proprietary and confidential information;
 - b. Discriminatory statements or sexual innuendoes regarding staff, management, clients, and;
 - c. Defamatory statements regarding the centre, its employees or clients.

This policy is not intended to interfere with the private lives of our employees or families or impinge on their right to freedom of speech. This policy is designed to ensure that Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre's hard-won and positive image and branding are maintained.

Attendance

Payment for scheduled days is the responsibility of the parent/guardian whether your child is in attendance on that date or not. A space is held specifically for your child's use on the dates that

your child is scheduled to attend the centre. We are unable to offer non-paid absences even when two weeks' notice is given. If your child does not require care for an extended period, you may either pay the full fee rate to hold your space or withdraw your child temporarily and be placed on the waiting list for space when you again require care.

If your childcare is subsidized, you may use absent days from your allotted total, however, if you go over the number of days you received, you will be responsible for paying full fee for any additional absent days or withdrawing your child from the program.

Two weeks' paid notice will be required for any withdrawal from the centre. (Approved by the Mahmowenchike Board of Directors: February 15th, 2005). This may be covered by absent days, but if you do not have enough remaining, parents will be required to pay for the remainder of the time.

It is imperative that you call the centre prior to 10:00 AM if your child will be absent or arriving late due, for example, to a medical appointment. If you do not call and you arrive after 10:00 AM (for full day programs), your child will not be permitted to stay as staffing adjustments will have been made by that time. This will still be considered a paid absent day.

Drop off and pick up times will not be allowed between the hours of 12:30 PM and 2:30 PM (except in the case of family emergencies) as this is rest/quiet time and arrivals and departures during this time will be disruptive for all the children in the program.

When dropping your child off or picking your child up, please ensure that your child's educator(s) are aware of your child's presence or that they are leaving.

Eligible Hours for Subsidized Families

Families qualifying for subsidy will be entitled to receive financial assistance for the time as approved by their Child Care Worker (Maria Mirabelli) at the Thunder Bay District Social Services Administration Board (DSSAB). If you are a student or an employee, that schedule will be based upon the time you are actually in class or at work (up to one-hour transportation time will be allowed depending on your main method of transportation). Students may be given some flex time (as approved by Maria at the DSSAB) for studying. This time is not to be used for personal errands, grocery shopping, or going home to prepare dinner before picking up your child from the centre.

If you arrive to pick up your child(ren) after the scheduled pick up time without making previous arrangements or attempting to notify the centre (in the case of an emergency), a late pick up fee will be charged. This late fee is not covered by the DSSAB subsidy and will be the sole responsibility of the parent/guardian. Arriving earlier than your scheduled drop-off time or staying later than your scheduled pick-up time may cut into another child's scheduled time slot or compromise staff ratios.

All children attending the centre must be picked up by before the late pick-up time at **5:20 PM**. Parents must be at the centre before this time in order to ensure staff are able to close the centre by the time their shift ends.

If the family would like to use childcare for non-approved hours or times that they are not working or attending class, they may make a request to the centre and do so at the full fee rate. Please speak to the Director or Maria at the DSSAB for more information on exceptions that may be approved (i.e., time for court appearances or medical reasons after appropriate forms have been completed by your physician.)

Eligible Hours for Full Fee Care

Families that are paying full fee for their child's care will also have a schedule of attendance they are required to adhere to. If you arrive to pick up your child(ren) after the scheduled pick up time without making prior arrangements, a late pick up fee will be charged. This late fee is the sole responsibility of the parent/guardian.

Late Fees

Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre's hours of operation are Monday to Friday, 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM. All children must be picked up in time to enable staff to close the facility and finish their shift at 5:30 PM. To ensure this is possible, families are asked to arrive to pick up their children by 5:20 PM. Parents arriving late will be given notice that further occurrences of late pick up will result in a late fee charge at a rate of \$25.00 per child for the first 15 minutes. Each additional 5 minutes will be charged at a rate of \$5.00 per child.

You will be informed of the application of a late fee on the day of the occurrence. You will also be asked to sign a form acknowledging that this late fee is being charged. The late fee will be applied to your next bill. The late fee rate will also apply to parents arriving after their scheduled pick up time (subsidized and full fee).

Late fees are not covered by the subsidy agreement with the DSSAB and are the sole responsibility of the parent/guardian. Frequent late pick ups can result in the termination of child care services. If you require a change in your schedule, please call Maria at the DSSAB if you are subsidized or speak to the Supervisor/Director if you are paying full fee.

In situations where the parent is more than half an hour late and has not called the centre to notify staff of their situation, Children's Aid Services or Dilico will be called.

This policy also applies to early drop offs.

Parental Contact

Parents and guardians must provide the following information upon registering their child(ren) at Mahmowenchike to be used in cases where an emergency may arise:

Working parents

Mobile telephone number (if applicable)

Telephone number and address of place of employment, training centre, etc. where parents can be reached at any time

Email address that is linked to their mobile phone (optional)

Parents attending school

Mobile telephone number (if applicable)

Copy of current timetable with classrooms clearly marked

Program Coordinator's name and extension #

Name of building where classrooms are held (i.e., Ryan Bldg, Shuniah Bldg, etc.)

Dates and locations of field placements, etc.

Fee Payment

(Approved by the Board of Directors: April 15th, 2002)

All families are required to pay half of one month of childcare fees upon enrolment.

Families who may be in town for a short period of time and do not have a permanent address in Thunder Bay are required to prepay in full for childcare required upon enrolment or on a monthly basis dependent on services needed.

Full payment is due by the 20th of each month, after which time a late fee of \$10.00 may be added. If full payment is not received by the 30th, childcare services may be terminated or suspended until payment in full is made or a payment plan has been approved by the Director. Once a payment plan has been established, a missed payment will result in the termination of childcare services. Postdated cheques for a period of 12 months at a time equal to the monthly fee amount are encouraged. If your child is withdrawn, any unused cheques will be returned to you. Electronic money transfers are also accepted. You can obtain the email address and security password from the Director or any staff member at Mahmowenchike. As of June 1st, 2017, cash payments are no longer accepted.

Families of children who attend the centre prior to completion of their application and approval for subsidy will be required to pay the full fee amount until results of their subsidy application are received.

NSF Cheques

A service charge of \$20.00 will be applied to any cheque which is returned from the bank due to insufficient funds. This service charge will be added to the outstanding charges.

Any parent or guardian who has an NSF cheque is required to pay their outstanding debt within 7 days. Payment may be made by certified cheque, money order, or e-transfer, or by reissuing a new cheque. If payment is not received within the allotted time period, childcare services will

be terminated. If a family has 2 cheques which are returned from the bank for insufficient funds during the time in which their child is enrolled at the centre, the Director will meet with that family in order to review their situation. If cheques are returned on more than 2 occasions, childcare may be terminated.

Parents are advised to consult with the Director about any problems they may have regarding their financial situation.

Children's Vacations

The centre appreciates 2 weeks' written notice for vacation time. This allows for the arranging of staff schedules to accommodate the fluctuations in enrolment. Each full time, subsidized child is allotted up to 30 days absence per year including vacation time unless otherwise arranged by the Director. Parents of children who are not subsidized are required to pay full fee for the time their child is off or withdraw the child and then re-register once they are to return if space is available at that time.

Emergency Contacts

Parents are asked to provide a telephone number and address of at least one person who may have access to their child in emergency situations. This individual will be contacted if staff are unable to reach parents in an emergency. Please be sure to inform this person that you have listed their name and phone number as an emergency contact.

Release of Children

Young children are dependent on regular routines for their own sense of security. We recommend that established hours of pick up and drop off be adopted.

Children can be released to the parent and to those individuals listed on the pick-up list. The parent is responsible for informing the centre of any alternative arrangements. This information will be made available to all staff members on an Alternate Pick Up form. Unless otherwise arranged in writing, children will not be released to any person other than those specified on the admission forms. A person delegated by the parent/guardian will be required to show identification when picking up the child to indicate that such person is indeed the delegate. Staff cannot release the child(ren) to anyone not listed without the parent's written permission.

In situations where the parent cannot provide written permission for the child to be picked up by an alternative person, emailed permission notices will be accepted. The email must indicate the name and relationship of the person to the child to be considered valid. The designate will still be required to show identification.

Parents Under the Influence

If a parent or guardian or designate picking up a child or multiple children appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs (i.e., smelling of alcohol, slurred speech, staggering, etc.), the following steps will be taken to ensure the safety of the children:

1. The Director or Supervisor will be notified immediately;
2. The staff member will offer to call a taxi or arrange for an alternate to pick up the child(ren). If possible, this is to be done away from the childrens' presence;
3. The staff will not continue the discussion if the person becomes loud, obnoxious, or in any way belligerent;
4. If the person insists on leaving with the child(ren), the staff member will phone 911 and give police or CAS as much information as possible, including the name and address of the parents/guardians or person under the influence, colour and make of vehicle and license plate number.

Insurance

Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre has adequate insurance coverage for the centre.

Yearly Evaluation

Once a year, the centre will send you an evaluation form for the program. This will assist us in looking at the services we are offering and assessing whether it meets the needs of the families. Your input is very important and we look forward to hearing your comments. If concerns arise, we would appreciate immediate input to the staff and Director at any time.

Supervision of Volunteers and Students

Purpose

Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre welcomes both placement students and volunteers into the various programs offered in our child care program. We believe it is a valuable part in gaining experience in a child care environment. Volunteers and students also play an important role in supporting staff in the daily operation of child care programs.

This policy will provide supervising staff, students and volunteers with a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

This policy is intended to fulfill the obligations set out under Ontario Regulation 137/15 for policies and procedures regarding volunteers and students for child care centres.

Policy

- Students and volunteers will always be supervised by an employee and never permitted to be alone with any child or group of children who receive child care.
- Students and volunteers will not be counted in staff to child ratios.

Procedures

The licensee/designate must:

- Ensure that all applicable policies, procedures, and individual plans are reviewed with students and/or volunteers before they start their educational placement or begin volunteering, annually thereafter and when changes occur to the policies, procedures, and individualized plans to support appropriate implementation.

- Ensure that all students and/or volunteers have been trained on each child's individualized plan.
- Ensure that a vulnerable sector check (VSC) and annual offence declarations are on file for all students and/or volunteers in accordance with the child care centre's criminal reference check policy and procedures and Ontario Regulation 137/15.
- Ensure that expectations are reviewed with students and/or volunteers including, but not limited to
 - How to report their absence; and
 - How to report concerns about the program.
- Inform students and/or volunteers that they are never to be included in staff to child ratios or left alone with children.
- Appoint supervising staff to the students and/or volunteers and inform them of their supervisory responsibilities.
- Inform students and/or volunteers of their duty to report suspected child abuse or neglect under the *Child Care and Family Services Act*.

The supervising staff must:

- Ensure that all applicable policies, procedures, and individual plans are reviewed with students and/or volunteers before they start their educational placement or begin volunteering, annually thereafter and when changes occur to the policies, procedures, and individualized plans to support appropriate implementation.
- Ensure that all students and/or volunteers have been trained on each child's individualized plan.
- Ensure that a vulnerable sector check (VSC) and annual offence declarations are on file for all students and/or volunteers in accordance with the child care centre's criminal reference check policy and procedures and Ontario Regulation 137/15.
- Ensure that expectations are reviewed with students and/or volunteers including, but not limited to
 - How to report their absence; and
 - How to report concerns about the program.
- Inform students and/or volunteers that they are never to be included in staff to child ratios or left alone with children.
- Appoint supervising staff to the students and/or volunteers and inform them of their supervisory responsibilities.
- Inform students and/or volunteers of their duty to report suspected child abuse or neglect under the *Child Care and Family Services Act*.

Students and/or volunteers must:

- Maintain professionalism and confidentiality at all times, unless otherwise required to implement a policy, procedure, or individualized plan.
- Notify the supervisor or designate if they have been left alone with children or have any other concerns about the child care program (e.g., regarding staff conduct, program statement implementation, the safety and well-being of children, etc).

- Submit all required information and documentation to the licensee, supervisor, or designate prior to commencing placement or volunteering, such as a valid VSC.
- Review and implement all required policies, procedures, and individualized plans, and sign and date a record of review, where required.
- Review allergy lists and dietary restrictions and ensure they are implemented.
- Respond and act on the feedback and recommendations of supervising staff, as appropriate.
- Report any allegations/concerns as per the “Duty to Report” under the *Child and Family Services Act*.
- Complete offence declarations annually, no later than 15 days after the anniversary date of the last VSC or offence declaration (whichever is most recent) in accordance with the child care centre’s criminal reference check policy.
- Provide an offence declaration to the supervisor/designate as soon as possible any time they have been convicted of a Criminal Code (Canada) offence.

Conflict Resolution

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a transparent process for parents/guardians, the child care licensee and staff to use when parents/guardians bring forward issues/concerns.

Definitions

Licensee: the individual or agency licensed by the Ministry of Education responsible for the operation and management of each child care centre it operates (i.e., the operator).

Staff: individual employed by the licensee (e.g., program room staff).

Policy

Parents/guardians are encouraged to take an active role in our child care centre and regularly discuss what their child(ren) are experiencing with our program. As supported by our program statement, we support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents/guardians, child care providers and staff, and foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents/guardians about the program and their children. Our staff are available to engage parents/guardians in conversations and support a positive experience during every interaction.

All issues and concerns raised by parents/guardians are taken seriously by Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre and will be addressed. Every effort will be made to address and resolve issues and concerns to the satisfaction of all parties and as quickly as possible.

Issues/concerns may be brought forward verbally or in writing. Responses and outcomes will be provided verbally, or in writing upon request. The level of detail provided to the parent/guardian will respect and maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved.

An initial response to an issue or concern will be provided to parents/guardians within 3 business day(s). The person who raised the issue/concern will be kept informed throughout the resolution process.

Investigations of issues and concerns will be fair, impartial and respectful to parties involved.

Confidentiality

Every issue and concern will be treated confidentially and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of parents/guardians, children, staff, students and volunteers, except when information must be disclosed for legal reasons (e.g., to the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities, or a Children's Aid Society).

Conduct

Our centre maintains high standards for positive interaction, communication and role-modeling for children. Harassment and discrimination will therefore not be tolerated from any party.

If at any point a parent/guardian, provider or staff feels uncomfortable, threatened, abused or belittled, they may immediately end the conversation and report the situation to the supervisor and/or licensee.

Concerns about the Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a Child

Everyone, including members of the public and professionals who work closely with children, is required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.

If a parent/guardian expresses concerns that a child is being abused or neglected, the parent will be advised to contact the [local Children's Aid Society](#) (CAS) directly.

Persons who become aware of such concerns are also responsible for reporting this information to CAS as per the "Duty to Report" requirement under the *Child and Family Services Act*.

For more information, visit

<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childrensaidthereportingabuse/index.aspx>