



# Parent Handbook

Mahmowenchike Family  
Development Centre

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## Table of Contents

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>INTRODUCTION</b>                       | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>PROGRAM STATEMENT</b>                  | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>ABOUT US</b>                           | <b>4</b>  |
| OUR ORGANIZATION                          | 4         |
| <i>Board of Directors</i>                 | 4         |
| <i>Staff</i>                              | 4         |
| <i>Students and Volunteers</i>            | 5         |
| <i>Resource Consulting</i>                | 6         |
| OUR PROGRAMS                              | 6         |
| <i>Infant Program</i>                     | 6         |
| <i>Toddler Program</i>                    | 6         |
| <i>Preschool Program</i>                  | 6         |
| <i>Before and After School Program</i>    | 7         |
| HOURS OF OPERATION                        | 7         |
| <i>Professional Development</i>           | 7         |
| <b>GETTING STARTED</b>                    | <b>8</b>  |
| WAITLIST                                  | 8         |
| ADMISSION                                 | 9         |
| <i>Registration Package</i>               | 9         |
| RELEASE OF CHILDREN                       | 10        |
| <i>Parents Under the Influence</i>        | 10        |
| WITHDRAWAL                                | 11        |
| SCHEDULES OF CARE                         | 11        |
| CHILDCARE SUBSIDY                         | 11        |
| SUMMER ENROLMENT                          | 11        |
| WHAT TO BRING                             | 12        |
| <i>Pacifiers and Bottles</i>              | 13        |
| <i>Anaphylactic Allergies</i>             | 13        |
| <b>AT THE CENTRE</b>                      | <b>13</b> |
| CODE OF CONDUCT                           | 13        |
| <i>Conflict Resolution</i>                | 14        |
| DROPPING OFF                              | 15        |
| PICKING UP                                | 15        |
| CHALLENGING BEHAVIOURS                    | 15        |
| PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT                      | 16        |
| <i>Welcome Morning</i>                    | 16        |
| <i>Parent-Educator Interviews</i>         | 16        |
| <i>Feasts</i>                             | 16        |
| <b>HEALTH AND SAFETY</b>                  | <b>17</b> |
| CONFIDENTIALITY                           | 17        |
| ILLNESS AND EXCLUSION                     | 17        |
| MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION                 | 20        |
| <i>Requirements</i>                       | 21        |
| <i>Storage and Handling</i>               | 21        |
| <i>Administration</i>                     | 21        |
| NUTRITION                                 | 22        |
| <i>Infants Under One Year</i>             | 22        |
| <i>Allergies and Dietary Restrictions</i> | 22        |
| ANAPHYLAXIS POLICY                        | 23        |
| SLEEP SUPERVISION                         | 24        |

|                                    |           |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| GUIDANCE TECHNIQUES                | 25        |
| SERIOUS OCCURRENCE                 | 26        |
| <i>Categories</i>                  | 27        |
| OUTDOOR PLAY                       | 27        |
| <i>Appropriate Outdoor Apparel</i> | 28        |
| <i>Sun Safety</i>                  | 28        |
| INCLEMENT WEATHER                  | 29        |
| EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT               | 29        |
| <i>Power Outages</i>               | 29        |
| <i>Fire Safety</i>                 | 30        |
| PARENT FEEDBACK                    | 30        |
| DUTY TO REPORT                     | 30        |
| <b>FINANCIAL INFORMATION</b>       | <b>31</b> |
| CHILD CARE FEES                    | 31        |
| ABSENCES                           | 31        |
| LATE FEES                          | 31        |
| FEE PAYMENT                        | 32        |
| <i>NSF Cheques</i>                 | 32        |

## Introduction

Boozhoo and welcome to Mahmowenchike!

We are so excited that you have chosen us to join in your child's early learning experience and we are looking very forward to learning and growing alongside your family and children!

We have put together this Parent Handbook in order to answer questions that you may have, provide guidance on issues that commonly arise, and clearly communicate policies and procedures in place to help facilitate a smooth and positive experience for your family and your children.

Please use this Parent Handbook as a reference during your time at Mahmowenchike – it will tell you (nearly) all you need to know about our centre and gives you some insight into our beliefs, values, and goals so you can be a part of our team!

Welcome to the Mahmowenchike family!

**Joy Vanasse**

Executive Director, Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre

## Program Statement

Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre strives to be a place for children of all backgrounds to come together and be regarded as people who are viewed as **competent, capable, curious** and **rich in potential**. It is important to us that all children are included regardless of where they came from, what they look like, or who they are. All children, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, are exposed to the Anishinaabe traditions, language, and values within the existing curriculum based on the interests, needs, and goals of the individual children within our programs. We strive to foster positive Indigenous identities in the children in our programs while gaining knowledge of Indigenous traditions, including smudging ceremonies, use of the Indigenous languages, discussion and implementation of the Seven Grandfather Teachings, and the use of storytelling in our programs.

We ensure that every child in our programs experiences a sense of **belonging**, cultivating strong, authentic, and caring relationships with the educators, staff, and each other. We create positive learning environments and plans for experiences which support each and every child's learning and development. We include local community partners, parents, educators, and Elders into our programs to support our growth as a centre and to incorporate a greater sense of community.

We support children in developing a sense of **well-being** by nurturing children's healthy development, encouraging children to make informed, healthy choices for themselves, and supporting them in their growth. We encourage the making of healthy food choices, offering a variety of meals on a four-week menu rotation which is posted and available for parents to

see at any time. We encourage risk-taking in a safe environment, supporting children's well-being and safety. We provide a calming environment for rest periods that meet each child's individual needs for sleep and allow for a smooth transition from play to rest time. We promoted family well-being and self-reliance.

We foster a sense of **engagement** within our programs by providing experiences that encourage children to engage with each other as well as the environment in meaningful exploration, asking questions and seeking answers that support their curiosity and inquiry. We provide child-initiated, adult-supported learning experiences. We provide indoor and outdoor learning experiences, recognizing the benefits and importance of outdoor play for children's growth and development. We provide experiences that encourage active play and quiet play, giving consideration to the individual needs of the children. We encourage the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents about the program and their child.

We allow for each child's **expression** of their thoughts, ideas, and feelings in their own unique ways. We support positive interactions between children, families, and staff and the children are encouraged to interact and communicate with the world around them in a positive way, supporting their ability to self-regulate.

Our educators are encouraged to be heavily involved in continuous professional learning, attending professional development workshops, seeking further learning on topics relevant to early childhood education and child development, and attending the Early Years Institute held in Thunder Bay each year.

This program statement is reviewed annually to determine their impact on our services and program quality.

## About Us

### Our Organization

Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre is a charitable non-profit childcare centre in Thunder Bay, Ontario. We currently have two locations in **St. Vincent, St. Ann, and St. Elizabeth** schools. Our Head Office is located within St. Vincent school.

### Board of Directors

Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors which is typically comprised of up to 9 individuals who may or may not be parents of children who attend the centre. Our Board of Directors meets on a monthly basis to discuss issues surrounding the centre's operation and goals.

### Staff

Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre is overseen by our Executive Director, **Joy Vanasse**. Joy works out of the Head Office at our St. Vincent school location, however, can often be found visiting the other locations.

Each location of Mahmowenchike has a Site Supervisor who acts as the main point of contact for children and families attending that location. Currently, the Site Supervisor of our

St. Vincent location is **Rhiannon Roy** and the Site Supervisor of both our St. Ann and St. Elizabeth locations is **Amanda Brizard**.

Our programs are staffed by qualified, caring educators. The majority of the educators employed by Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre have their diploma in Early Childhood Education and are required to be registered with the College of Early Childhood Educators. Mahmowenchike also hires individuals with other qualifications, providing ongoing training and support to those individuals in their professional development.

We have a Head Food Preparer based out of our St. Vincent location who prepares lunch for both locations, delivering lunch daily to our St. Ann location as well. We have an Assistant Food Preparer who assists with snack preparation and clean-up at our St. Ann location as well as preparing snacks for our St. Elizabeth location. Both of these individuals are required to maintain their Safe Food Handling certification.

### **Students and Volunteers**

Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre welcomes students from various locations, including Confederation College, Oshki-Pimache-O-Win Education and Training Institute, and occasionally high school students completing co-op placements. These individuals are supervised and mentored by skilled individuals within our programs at all times.

Mahmowenchike also welcomes volunteers into our programs. These volunteers may be parent volunteers, high school students accruing volunteer hours, or volunteering for personal purposes.

Students and volunteers will always be supervised by an employee of Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre and will never be permitted to be alone with any child or group of children receiving child care. In addition, students and volunteers may never be counted in staff-to-child ratios.

Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre is responsible to:

- Ensure that all applicable policies, procedures, and individual plans (including health plans, Early Learning Support Plans, and Anaphylactic Allergy plans) are reviewed with students and volunteers before they begin interacting with children, annually thereafter, and when changes occur to the policies, procedures, and plans to support appropriate implementation. This is to be done prior to interaction with children
- Ensure that students and volunteers have been trained on each policy, procedure, and individual plan prior to interacting with children, as well as being trained on the expectations of students and volunteers.
- Ensure that appropriate and up-to-date information is on file for students and volunteers.

Supervising staff are responsible to:

- Ensure that students and volunteers are never included in staff-to-child ratios, are supervised at all times, and are never left alone with children.
- Provide an environment that facilitates and supports students' and volunteers' learning and professional development.

- Provide students and volunteers with feedback on their performance.
- Monitor and notify the Site Supervisor and/or the Executive Director in the case of any student or volunteer misconduct or contraventions within the centre's policies, procedures, prohibited practices, or individual plans.

### Resource Consulting

Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre uses the services of a Resource Consultant employed by Children's Centre Thunder Bay. The role of the Resource Consultant is to work in collaboration with the educators, supervisors, and, with parental consent, do observations, conduct developmental screening, coordinate services, support the educators, and offer information and support to families.

Parents may request the involvement of our Resource Consultant at any time. It may also be recommended to parents by the staff of Mahmowenchike. The Supervisor will also be consulted in deciding to request the involvement of the Resource Consultant.

Our current Resource Consultant for our St. Vincent location is **Brenda Budge**. Our current Resource Consultant for our St. Ann and St. Elizabeth locations is **Debbie Gignac**.

### Our Programs

Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre offers care for children from birth to 12 years, however, we currently have an infant program within our St. Vincent location only.

#### Infant Program

Our infant program is located within our St. Vincent school location. We are licensed for 6 infants and have 2 educators in the program. We offer a program for children aged birth to 18 months.

The staff-to-child ratio for infants is 1 educator to every 3 children.

#### Toddler Program

We have toddler programs at both locations of Mahmowenchike. We are licensed for 10 toddler-aged children at our St. Vincent location and 10 toddler-aged children at our St. Ann location, and have 2 educators in each program. We offer programs for children aged 18 months to 2 ½ years but may be able to accept children who are younger than 18 months of age who are exhibiting signs of developmental readiness for the program based on a 20% mix of our licensed capacity.

The staff-to-child ratio for toddler-aged children is 1 educator to every 5 children.

#### Preschool Program

We have preschool programs at both locations of Mahmowenchike. We are licensed for 16 preschool-aged children at our St. Vincent location and 16 preschool-aged children at our St. Ann location, and have 3 educators in each program. We offer programs for children aged 2 ½ years until the time they go to school (up to a maximum age of 6 years). We may be able to accept children who are younger than 2 ½ years and exhibiting developmental readiness for the program based on a 20% mix of our licensed capacity.

The staff-to-child ratio for preschool-aged children is 1 educator to every 8 children.

### **Before and After School Program**

We offer before and after school programs at all three locations of Mahmowenchike.

Our St. Vincent school location can accommodate for up to 30 children with 2 educators.

Our St. Ann location can accommodate for up to 15 children with 1 educator.

Our St. Elizabeth location can accommodate for up to 25 children with 2 educators.

Before school spaces are available on a limited basis and depending on need. We may be unable to offer before school at select locations dependent on need at that location and space restrictions. We may also accommodate for children on professional development days and March Break, offering full day care, based on need and space availability.

We are only able to accept children who attend the schools we are situated within at this time. The staff-to-child ratio for school-aged children is 1 educator to every 15 children.

### **Hours of Operation**

Mahmowenchike at all locations is open Mondays through Fridays from 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM.

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     |                  |

Mahmowenchike may close for a longer period of time over the Christmas and New Year holiday period. This is decided annually by our Board of Directors. Families will receive notice by October 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.

### **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).



## Getting Started

### Waitlist

All parents and/or guardians wishing to apply for childcare at Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre must place their child(ren) on the OneList at [www.thunderbaychildcare.ca](http://www.thunderbaychildcare.ca). They will be placed on the waitlist in chronological order, based on the date and time that the application was submitted.

As spaces become available in the program, priority will be given based on the following criteria:

- a) Priority will be given to a family that wishes to enroll a sibling of a child currently attending a program at either location of Mahmowenchike.
- b) Priority may be given to children of employees of Mahmowenchike.

Once the above children have been placed, all other children on the waiting list will be offered space based on the following criteria:

- a) Priority will be given to a family requiring full-time, Monday through Friday, space.
- b) If there are no requests for full-time care, Site Supervisors will offer part-time care to families with set schedules:

Every effort will be made to match families with complementary schedules (e.g., a family wishing to enroll their child on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, will be matched with a family wishing to enroll their child on Wednesdays and Fridays). This will ensure maximum use of the available spaces.

- c) Flexible care will only be offered if no full-time or part-time clients are available.
- d) Flexible care clients will be given a space on the understanding that **if space is needed for another family with a set schedule, they may be given two weeks' notice that the space is no longer available.**
- e) We will **not** provide for more than one flexible space per program as the financial loss is too great.

Parents of children on the waitlist will be contacted occasionally to determine if their waitlist applications are up to date and are still considered accurate (if they still require care, if the schedule indicated on the waitlist is what is still required, and/or if they require removal from the list).

The Site Supervisors will be the contact persons for parents who wish to inquire about the status of their child's placement on the waitlist. They will respond to parents' inquiries and provide the child's current position on the list and an estimated likelihood of the child being offered a space in the program.

The waitlist will be maintained in a manner that protects the privacy and confidentiality of the children and families on the list and therefore only the child's position on the waitlist will be provided to parents. The names of other children or families and/or their placement on the waitlist will not be shared with other individuals.

Applications will be removed from the waitlist if:

- A space is refused 3 times.
- They do not respond within 3 business days of receiving an offer.
- They do not respond by the given deadline to a phone call message or email inquiring about care needs (typically 5 business days).

Mahmowenchike is an inclusive childcare centre and discrimination during enrolment for any reason is not tolerated. Children with special needs are accommodated provided the program will not exceed their manageable mix.

A parent wishing to enroll a child who is next on the waitlist will be contacted to schedule a tour of the facility. Please note that tours of the facility and meetings with the Site Supervisor are available **by appointment only**.

When a tour is scheduled, families are expected to arrive at that time and should they arrive late, they will be considered to have missed the appointment and will need to reschedule. Should a prospective family miss an appointment with the Site Supervisor twice consecutively, the space may be offered to the next family on the waitlist.

The tour of the facility will allow the parent/guardian the opportunity to ask questions, see the programs, and meet the educators. After the tour, the family will be contacted with an offer of space, after which time they will have 3 business days to accept or decline.

### **Admission**

Once a space has been accepted, the family will either be emailed a Registration Package or asked to come to the centre to meet regarding registration. This package must be completed prior to the child(ren) starting in the program.

1-3 visits will be scheduled for the parent and the child(ren) in the designated program(s). These visits will be scheduled by the Site Supervisor and the parent/guardian. Mahmowenchike recognizes that circumstances don't always allow for more than one visit in the program prior to starting and will make every effort to make the transition as simple as possible for each and every family.

The Parent Handbook is made available online to all parents in an effort to reduce the amount of paper used and the environmental impact, but a hardcopy is available at a parent's request. Parents are required to read the Parent Handbook and will agree to adhere to the information within on their Parent Contract.

### **Registration Package**

We require a Registration Package be completed in its entirety prior to any child starting in the program. Each Registration Package **must** contain:

- The child's full name, date of birth, sex, and home address
- The parent's home, mobile, and work addresses and telephone numbers
- The parent's email address

- Medical information including the child’s primary physician (including their contact address and phone number)
- Allergy information
- Any applicable specific dietary, exercise, or sleep instructions, in detail
- Emergency contact list and authorized pick up list
- Any additional information that may be helpful for the educators to know

### **Emergency Contacts**

Mahmowenchike requires a minimum of one individual to be added to each child’s Emergency Contact list. This list will be used in the event of an emergency if the parent(s) of the child cannot be reached.

### **Immunization**

Upon enrolment and prior to beginning in any program, a current, up to date immunization record must be received for each child.

### **Release of Children**

Mahmowenchike requires you to list the names of the individuals who may pick up the child(ren) on the second page of the Registration Package. This list can be updated as often as necessary by speaking to the Site Supervisor and/or program educators.

Mahmowenchike educators will not release any child to any person not listed on their pick-up list. Should a person come to pick up a child who is not explicitly identified on the pick-up list, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be called to confirm the name of the person and photo identification will be checked prior to allowing the child to leave.

Mahmowenchike requires individuals picking up any child to be over the age of 16 years old.

### **Parents Under the Influence**

If a parent, 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 Site Supervisor will be notified immediately.
2. The staff member will offer to call a taxi or arrange for an alternate person to pick up the child(ren). If possible, this is to be done away from the children’s 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 the vehicle, and license plate number.

## Withdrawal

Mahmowenchike requires two weeks' written notice when withdrawing care. If less than two weeks' notice is received, parents/guardians may be charged up to two weeks' worth of childcare fees.

## Schedules of Care

Upon enrolment, a schedule of care will be discussed between the Site Supervisor and the parent/guardian. The schedule of care must be adhered to as it is used to determine staff scheduling for educators within the program to ensure that Ministry of Education ratios are able to be met at all times.

**For subsidized clients**, the schedule of care is decided in conversation with the Child Care Worker at the DSSAB, the parent/guardian, and the Site Supervisor. The Child Care Worker at the DSSAB will assign approved hours of care that the DSSAB will subsidize the cost of, however, these hours must still be approved by the Site Supervisor in order to ensure that we are able to accommodate.

If a parent/guardian is a student or an employee, the schedule of care will typically be based upon the time they are actually in class or at work (up to one hour of transportation time will be allowed depending on the main method of transportation). Students may be given some flex time for studying.

**For families paying full fee**, the schedule of care will be decided in conversation between the Site Supervisor and the parent/guardian.

## Childcare Subsidy

Upon enrolment, the Site Supervisor will need to submit a Confirmation of Space to the DSSAB for any family wishing to apply for childcare subsidy. The DSSAB will then contact the parent/guardian to book an assessment date to determine their eligibility for childcare subsidy. Parents/guardians will be required to provide their Notice of Assessment to the DSSAB in order to qualify for subsidy and to proceed with the assessment date. Parents/guardians wishing for their child to start in the program prior to their assessment date will be required to sign a Finance Contract. If they do not qualify for subsidy, they will be responsible for the childcare fees for the days of care used.

## Summer Enrolment

Spaces for the summer months of July and August will only be guaranteed to families who complete and return the summer enrolment request form by the due date. A *Summer Enrolment Request* form will be distributed to all enrolled 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.

Should a family return the form requesting space and later decide they no longer require space, they may be charged for the space(s) requested on the survey as a spot had been

held for the child(ren). If the form is not returned by the due date, the child(ren) may not have space for the summer.

School age care over the summer months is tentative each year and depends on the availability of space in the schools we are situated within as well as enrolment need and staffing. School age care is available on a first come, first served basis, prioritizing families that are enrolled in the program over the school year.

Mahmowenchike is not able to hold spaces over the summer for September due to fluctuating enrolment and centre financial needs. If a family does not require care for the summer and will be returning to school or work in September, they can add their child to the OneList ([www.thunderbaychildcare.ca](http://www.thunderbaychildcare.ca)). We will contact families in early August to begin confirming September spaces.

## **What to Bring**

The following items are those that your child(ren) will require to be sent to or kept at the centre:

### **Infants**

- A supply of diapers, wipes, and diaper cream (if used)
- Two extra changes of clothes
- Indoor soft or hard-soled shoes (if walking)
- Appropriate outdoor apparel
- Prepared formula in bottles **or** a labelled can of formula as well as clean labelled bottles (if required)
- Breastmilk in bottles (if required)
- Infant cereal and/or baby food (if required)
- Extra pacifiers (if used)

### **Toddlers**

- A supply of diapers, wipes, and diaper cream (if used)
- Two extra changes of clothes
- Indoor shoes/slippers
- Appropriate outdoor apparel

### **Preschool**

- A supply of diapers, wipes, and diaper cream (if used and required)
- Two extra changes of clothes
- Indoor shoes/slippers
- Appropriate outdoor apparel

### **Before and After School**

- An extra change of clothes (in their backpack)
- Indoor shoes/slippers
- Appropriate outdoor apparel

## Pacifiers and Bottles

**Mahmowenchike does not allow pacifiers or bottles in the programs for children over the age of 18 months (toddler and up).** 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 and bottles will not be given to children over the age of 18 months while they are attending the centre and will not be permitted in the program areas. When the child is in the infant program, the staff will begin to wean the child off of the pacifier as well as the bottle beginning at around 12-15 months of age 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.

Should there be a medical or other reason a child may require a pacifier or bottle after joining a toddler program, discussion will take place with the child's parent/guardian to determine a plan of action to ensure the safety of the child and to create a goal plan for future weaning.

## Anaphylactic Allergies

Mahmowenchike is a **nut-free** and **fish-free centre**. Please refrain from bringing any nut or fish products into the centre. We also strongly discourage outside food and any outside food brought to the centre will not be permitted to be eaten in the program areas.

At any given time, Mahmowenchike may also have other allergies in the centre, including but not limited to eggs; dairy products; pet dander.

## At the Centre

### 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 may 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 consequences will be dependent on the severity of the actions taken:

- A meeting may be scheduled with the Site Supervisor and/or the Executive Director;
- A letter of warning may be issued;
- Childcare or employment may be suspended until further notice; and/or
- Childcare or employment may be terminated.

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

### **Conflict Resolution**

Parents and guardians are encouraged to take an active role in our childcare centre and regularly discuss what they and their children are experiencing within our programs. As mentioned in our Program Statement, we support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents/guardians, 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 and guardians in conversations and support a positive experience in 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 and 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 days. The person who raised the issue or concern will be kept informed throughout the resolution process.

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

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 or staff member feels uncomfortable, threatened, abused, or belittled, they may immediately end the conversation and report the situation to the Site Supervisor or Executive Director.

## **Dropping Off**

When parents are dropping off their children, it is essential that an educator is made aware of their child's presence before the parent leaves the room. All parents should ensure to check in with an educator prior to leaving the building.

Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre has a cut-off time for dropping off at 10:00 AM. At 10:00 AM, staffing adjustments will be made. If no call has been received and a family arrives after 10:00 AM, it is assumed they are not coming in and they may need to be turned away.

Having a consistent drop-off time is beneficial for the children in the program as well as the individual child, building a routine and allowing the child to understand what to expect from the program each day.

## **Picking Up**

Similarly, when parents are picking up their children, it is essential that they ensure to notify an educator that they have arrived and are taking their child. If the educators do not see a parent take a child, that may result in the child being assumed missing.

## **Challenging Behaviours**

Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre makes every effort to provide responsive and nurturing care to each child enrolled in our programs. We have committed to working collaboratively with parents, staff, and community partners to meet the individual needs of each child.

It is our policy to include each child and to focus on each child's strengths while protecting the safety and well-being of each child enrolled. In the case of a child that is exhibiting challenging behaviour within a program, a continuous and constant discourse will be created between the parents/guardians, staff, Site Supervisors, and Resource Consultant in unearthing any strategies and solutions that will help that child to succeed.

In the event that a child's behaviour is posing a direct threat to the safety and well-being of the other children in the program or the staff, the parent/guardian may be required to withdraw their child from the program and make other childcare arrangements. Every effort will be made to find working solutions and strategies for the child to maintain their enrolment in the program before this is considered.

When a child's behaviour is noted to be challenging and potentially threatening, an informal meeting will be scheduled between the parents/guardians and the educator. At this meeting, the parents/guardians will be informed of what has been observed in the program. Support may be requested at this time from the Resource Consultant. Parental or guardian consent will be required prior to Resource Consultant involvement.

The educators, Site Supervisor, Resource Consultant, parents/guardians, and any other parties that may benefit the child will collaborate to find strategies and solutions that may help the child adjust. These solutions may include, but will not be limited to, shortening the child's hours or days of enrolment, trying new strategies at the suggestion of the RC or



outside agencies (with parental consent), and/or switching the child to another location of Mahmowenchike where the manageable mix may be more suitable to the child's needs.

Should the child's needs be deemed by the Site Supervisor, Executive Director, and/or the Resource Consultant to be beyond the expertise of the centre staff and Resource Consultant, recommendation will be made in writing for the parents or guardians to withdraw their child and to enroll the child in an alternate facility where his or her needs may be better addressed. This final decision will ultimately be up to the Executive Director.

### **Parental Involvement**

Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre's philosophy is based on the principle of working together with the children, families, educators, and community. As such, we encourage parental involvement in the programs. Throughout the year, we have a number of different planned and spontaneous events for parents to get involved in. We welcome parents and guardians to attend field trips, however, we are required by the *Child Care and Early Years Act* to receive a Vulnerable Sector Criminal Reference Check from all volunteers, including parent volunteers.

### **Welcome Morning**

The exact date varies from year to year and from site to site, but in early October both locations of Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre hold a "Welcome Morning." During our Welcome Morning, parents are invited to spend some time within the programs engaging with their child(ren) or networking with other parents of children within their program. The educators in each program typically plan activities for parents and children to do together during this time and parents are encouraged to sit and eat morning snack alongside their child(ren)!

Below are some of our planned events throughout the year. There may be spontaneous parent coffee mornings or read-alongs planned throughout the year, but these aren't planned on an annual basis and will be advertised as they come up.

### **Parent-Educator Interviews**

During the month of February, we hold after-hours parent-educator "interviews." A sign-up sheet is posted for each program at least 2 weeks prior to the planned date and any family wishing to participate and meet with their child's educator is asked to put their name down for planning purposes. Time slots are booked in 15-20-minute intervals and this time can be used for discussing your child's progress, reviewing creations they might have made, or asking questions you might have for your child's educator. This is a great opportunity to have those one-on-one conversations with your child's educator that may not be possible after a busy work day!

### **Feasts**

We try to plan family feasts for at least 3 times annually, typically having one in the spring (a spring tea), one in the summer (a summer blowout) and one in the winter (a holiday feast). All families are invited to attend and can even bring other family members if they wish to do so.

## Health and Safety

### Confidentiality

Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre has a strict confidentiality policy. All staff, students, and volunteers are required to sign an Oath of Confidentiality to protect information related to our employees, families, and children within the centre. Various measures will be taken throughout the day to protect the confidentiality of these individuals.

### Illness and Exclusion

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.

**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.**

**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.

Childcare 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**, they can return to the centre 24 hours after the fever has subsided without the use of fever-reducing or other medications which may mask the fever. **If your child has diarrhea or vomiting**, they can return to the centre 48 hours after the symptoms have subsided without the use of medications.

If a child displays the symptoms below while at the centre, the Site Supervisor 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-hours fever-free (**without the use of fever-reducing medications**), 48-hours 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.

Parents may be requested to provide a medical note to confirm the illness and their child's return to the centre. Common childhood infections include, but are not limited to:

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

The Site Supervisor is responsible for notifying parents at the centre 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. We rely on the information received from parents in order to communicate illnesses that may be present in the centre and we appreciate being made aware of illnesses even if they occurred over the weekend or while the child was away from the centre as a precaution.

### **Fever**

If axillary (under the armpit) or oral (mouth) temperature reached 38°C/100.4°F or higher, the child will be sent home. **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 TBDHU 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 a child makes a high-pitched “croupy” or whooping sound after coughing or if the 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 the child has two or more abnormally loose stools within a 24-hour period, the child will be sent home. The child may return to the centre **48 hours after having a normal stool.**

In the case of children who have a doctor's note on file or other documentation stating that a dietary item (i.e., dairy products or milk) may cause diarrhea, they will still need to be excluded for 48 hours after two or more abnormally loose stools within a 24-hour period. It is highly recommended that parents/guardians do not serve these food or drink items at home as they will not be considered a reason to allow a child to stay with diarrhea symptoms.

### ***Vomiting***

If the child has two or more episodes of vomiting within a 24-hour period. In the case of a severe episode of vomiting, the child may be sent home after only having one bout at the centre. The child may return **48 hours after the vomiting has subsided**.

### ***Eye, Ear, and/or Nose Drainage***

If thick mucus or pus is draining from a child's nose that is bright green or yellow, the child may be sent home and a doctor's note may be requested. In the case of certain infections, the child may be required to be on antibiotics for 24 hours prior to returning to the centre.

In the case of pus or "goop" draining from one or both eyes, pink sclera, watery eyes, and/or itchy eyes, the child will be required to be assessed by a doctor for pink eye and/or on antibiotic drops or medicated ointment for 24 hours prior to returning.

In the case of drainage from the ear, the child may be sent home and it may be recommended that they see a doctor to ensure all is well before returning.

### ***Sore Throat***

A sore throat, especially with fever or swollen glands in the neck, may require the child to be sent home and assessed for possible strep throat.

### ***Rashes***

If the child has a skin rash that is undiagnosed, the child will be sent home and will require a doctor's note certifying that the rash is not contagious to return. If the rash is determined to be contagious, they will be required to be excluded based on the diagnosis and/or doctor's recommendations. Sores with crusty, yellow, or green drainage which cannot be covered by clothing or bandages will require the child to be kept home until the sores heal or crust over.

### ***Itching***

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 treatment 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 removed by staff. 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.

## Medication Administration

Children who require medication administration throughout the day and at the centre can still attend childcare, however, there are a number of procedures that need to be adhered to in order to meet licensing standards as well as internal policies for the protection of the health and safety of the children enrolled.

Drugs and medications refer to any product with a drug identification number (DIN), with the exception of sunscreen, lotion, lip balm, bug spray, hand sanitizer, and diaper cream that is not used for acute, symptomatic treatment.

There are two categories of drugs and medications that may be administered at Mahmowenchike:

- **Prescription drugs** which are intended for acute, symptomatic treatment; and
- **Over the counter drugs** which are intended for acute, symptomatic treatment.

Whenever possible, parents are encouraged to administer drugs and medications to their children at home if this can be done without affecting the child's treatment schedule.

Prescription and over-the-counter medications for acute, symptomatic treatment will only be administered to a child where a parent of the child has given written authorization to do so by completing the *Medication Administration Form*. This form must be accompanied by a doctor's note for over-the-counter medications. The authorization form must set out the times the drug or medication is to be given and the amounts to be administered.

Where a drug or medication is to be administered on an "as needed" basis (i.e., there is no specific schedule or time of day for administration), the drug or medication must be accompanied by a doctor's note outlining signs and symptoms for administering the drug or medication and the appropriate dosage. In addition, the *Medication Authorization Form* must clearly indicate the situations under which the medication is to be given as outlined in the doctor's note, including observable symptoms (e.g., "When the child has a fever of 39.5 degrees Celsius," "When the child has a persistent cough and/or difficulty breathing," or "When red hives appear on the skin," etc.)

Prescription or over-the-counter skin products (with a DIN) that need to be administered for acute or symptomatic treatment will only be administered to a child where a parent of the child has given written authorization to do so by completing the *Medication Authorization Form*, accompanied by a doctor's note indicating the need for the medication.

*Medication Authorization Forms* will be reviewed with parents every 3 months to ensure the dosage continues to be accurate (for example, based on the child's age or weight).

Items such as sunscreen, lotion, lip balm, bug spray, hand sanitizer, and diaper cream, provided they are non-prescription and/or are not for acute, symptomatic treatment do not require a *Medication Authorization Form* and can use a blanket authorization form.

Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre will not administer Orajel or any other similar oral pain relief medication due to the risk of methemoglobinemia or choking.

## Requirements

In order for the staff of Mahmowenchike to administer drugs and medications, a number of requirements must be met:

- Drugs and medications must be brought in stored in their original containers. If the medication has been removed from its original package and/or transferred into a different container will not be accepted or administered.
- All drugs and medications must be clearly labelled with:
  - The child's full name;
  - The name of the drug or medication;
  - The dosage of the drug or medication;
  - Instructions for storage;
  - Instructions for administration;
  - The date of purchase of the medication for prescription medications; and
  - The expiry date of the medication, if applicable.
- All information provided on the *Medication Authorization Form* must match the information listed above.
- If information is missing from a drug or medication label and/or the written parental consent does not match the label on the labelled container, we will be unable to administer the medication.
- Over-the-counter epinephrine (Epi-pens) purchased for a specific child can be administered to a child with an individualized plan and emergency procedures for an anaphylactic allergy as long as it is accompanied by a doctor's note and is clearly labelled with the child's name, the name of the drug/medication, the dosage, the date of expiration, and the instructions for storage and administration.

## Storage and Handling

All drugs and/or medications will be kept inaccessible to children at all times in a locked container or area. There are exceptions for emergency medications such as epi-pens and asthma inhalers. These will never be locked up and will be made easily accessible to all staff while being kept out of the reach of children. Where a child has written permission to carry their emergency allergy or asthma medication, precautions will be taken to ensure that these medications are not accessible to other children.

Emergency medications will be brought on all field trips, evacuations, and off-site activities.

Expired medications will be returned to the parents/guardians for proper disposal.

## Administration

Drugs and/or medications will be administered according to the instructions on the label and only with written parental authorization. Drugs and/or medications will be administered by the designated person(s) in charge of medications. Where this person is absent, they will delegate the responsibility to another individual.

Drugs and/or medications will only be administered using the appropriate dispenser (e.g., syringe, measuring spoon or cup, etc.)

Administration of medication will be recorded on the *Medication Authorization Form* each time it occurs. Completed records will then be kept in the child's file. The child's absences during the scheduled administration period will be documented on the *Medication Authorization Form*.

## **Nutrition**

Adequate and appropriate nutrition is vital to the health, development and growth of children. As such, Mahmowenchike believes in providing a varied menu that is reviewed by the Thunder Bay District Health Unit and communicated effectively with parents to ensure parents are fully aware of what their children are being served on a daily basis.

A morning snack is served at 9:00 AM. A lunch meal is served at 11:30 AM. An afternoon snack is served between 2:30 PM and 3:30 PM, based on the readiness of the children. Milk and water are offered at each meal to each child unless otherwise specified in writing by the parent of a child. Water is available for drinking throughout the day, including between snack and mealtimes and when the children are outdoors.

At Mahmowenchike, no child is ever forced to eat as children are seen as capable of determining when they are hungry and when they are full. Food is never used as a reward and the removal or deprivation of food or drink is strictly prohibited. Communication between the educators and parents/guardians takes place regarding changes to a child's appetite and eating habits.

## **Infants Under One Year**

Children under one year of age are fed in accordance with written instructions from a parent. A food checklist is completed by each parent of any child under one year of age to determine how that child will be fed. Food checklists will also be completed for children 12-18 months of age, but children older than 12 months of age will be exposed to the centre's menu unless written instructions from the parent are received to the contrary.

Bottles will never be given to infants while they are lying down. Children under one year of age are held at a 45-degree angle or greater when feeding and a staff member is always holding the bottle until the child is able to do so independently. Bottles are never propped against something or left in a child's mouth while they are falling asleep or while they are sleeping.

Parents/guardians must provide any formula, breastmilk, bottles, and jarred baby food for their child. These items must be clearly labelled with their child's name. With written permission, foods from the centre's menu may also be pureed for serving to young infants.

## **Allergies and Dietary Restrictions**

Children with allergies related to food (as well as other allergies) are posted on the allergy list kept in each program's attendance binder, posted in each program area, and posted in the kitchen. Children with food restrictions are also listed on the allergy list for quick reference. Food restrictions may include food intolerances, family dietary choices, or religious observance.

Should a child have a special dietary or feeding arrangement and parents wish to provide alternatives or supplements from home, these alternatives or supplements must be pre-approved by the Director/Supervisor/Food Preparer to ensure that they will not compromise the health, safety, or well-being of other children within the centre.

Any child who may have special dietary or feeding arrangements must specify these as such in writing. Written instructions may include:

- Whether the parent will be providing all between-meal snacks for the child or if the child may choose a snack offered by the centre;
- Whether the parent will be providing an ingredient list to help ensure that allergens are not brought into the childcare centre;
- Whether the centre will still offer drinks, other than water, to the child (making drinking water available to children at all times);
- An arrangement if the child is still hungry after consuming the lunch from home; and
- A contingency arrangement if the lunch from home is forgotten.

### **Anaphylaxis Policy**

Anaphylaxis is a serious allergic reaction that can be life-threatening. It requires avoidance strategies and immediate response in the event of an emergency.

Before a child with an anaphylactic allergy is able to begin in the program at Mahmowenchike, the Supervisor will meet with the parent of a child to obtain information about any medical conditions, including whether the child is at risk of having or has anaphylaxis. For a child with an anaphylactic allergy, an individualized plan and emergency procedures will be developed for the child with anaphylaxis in consultation and collaboration with the child's parent/guardian and any regulated health professional involved in the child's care that the parent believes should be included in the consultation.

All individualized plans and emergency procedures will include a description of the symptoms of an anaphylactic reaction that are specific to the child and the procedures to be followed in the event of an allergic reaction or other medical emergency based on the severity of the child's symptoms.

The individualized plan and emergency procedures for each child will include information for those who are in direct contact with the child on a regular basis about the type of allergy, monitoring and avoidance strategies and appropriate treatment.

Individualized plans and emergency procedures will be reviewed annually with a parent of the child to ensure the information is current and up-to-date.

In order to reduce the risk of exposure to anaphylactic causative agents, the following strategies will be followed at all times by employees, students, and volunteers:

- We will not serve foods where their ingredients are not known.



- We will not serve foods with “may contain” warnings on the label in a room where there is a child who has an individualized plan and emergency procedures specifying those allergens.
- The cook will be aware of the known ingredients for all food provided. All ingredients labels will be reviewed before food is served to children to verify that causative agents are not served to children with anaphylactic allergies.
- In cases where a child has a food allergy and the meals and snacks provided by the centre cannot meet the child’s needs, the parents will be asked to supply snacks/meals for their child. All written instructions for diet provided by a parent will be implemented. Every effort will be made to accommodate families.
- All foods provided to the centre by parents must be labelled with the child’s full name and the date the food arrived at the childcare centre. Parents/guardians must also advise of all ingredients.
- Food from home will be supervised while eaten to ensure that food is not shared or exchanged.
- Parents who serve foods that contain allergens at home will be encouraged to ensure that their child has been rid of the allergens prior to attending the centre (e.g., brushing their teeth, washing their hands, etc.)
- Craft and sensory materials will not be used if they have allergens on the labels.
- Information will be shared with families regarding reducing the risk of exposure to known allergens and treatment of anaphylaxis.
- All individualized plans and emergency procedures will be kept up-to-date and that all staff, students, and volunteers are trained on the plans.
- The allergy list will be kept up-to-date and implemented.

Staff receive training on procedures to follow in the event of a child having an anaphylactic reaction, including how to recognize the signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis and administration of emergency allergy medication.

It is a parent/guardian’s responsibility to ensure their child attends the program with an epinephrine auto-injector. Epi-pens and other emergency medications 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. As with all medications, these medications must be provided to the staff in their original containers and be labelled with the child’s full name, the expiration date of the medication, and clear instructions for use.

### **Sleep Supervision**

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.

- Children under 12 months of age will be placed in individual cribs/cradles for sleep.
- Children between 12-18 months of age who receive childcare for six hours or more will be placed in individual cribs/cradles or on cots for sleep in accordance with any written instructions from a child's parent.
- Children who are 18 months of age or older but younger than 30 months who receive childcare for six hours or more will be placed on individual cots for sleep.
- Children 30 months of age or older but younger than 5 years who receive childcare for six hours or more will be placed on a cot for sleep or a rest period.

All children who are younger than 12 months of age will be placed on their backs to sleep unless other instructions are provided in writing by the child's physician.

Site Supervisors will consult with parents about their child(ren)'s sleeping arrangements at the time of enrolment and at any other appropriate time (e.g., when a child transitions to a new program or room or at the parents' request). Significant changes to a child's sleeping pattern or behaviours will be communicated to parents.

Staff are required to check on each child in the infant and toddler programs visually and physically every 15 minutes or more frequently as needed. These checks will be documented. This is done quietly and unobtrusively so it does not disturb the children's sleep.

When infants are in their cribs in the sleep room, they will be in 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.

### **Guidance Techniques**

The goal of child guidance is to teach the child safe, socially and developmentally appropriate skills and abilities to increase both self-control and self-esteem. To encourage self-control and skill acquisition, a positive environment is created by skilled staff who provide consistency, structure, and appropriate intervention strategies.

Disciplinary measures, through the use of child guidance strategies, are used to prevent unacceptable behaviour and avoid crisis situations.

The following Prohibited Practices policy has been formally adopted by Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre and will be strictly adhered to by all employees of the centre. This policy will be reviewed and signed upon employment and annually thereafter. Any contraventions to this policy will result in appropriate action being taken by the Supervisor, Executive Director, and/or Board of Directors.

1. Any form of corporal punishment is not permitted at any time. This includes:
  - a. Hitting,

- b. Spanking,
  - c. Pushing,
  - d. Shaking,
  - e. Grabbing,
  - f. Pinching,
  - g. Any form of physical abuse.
2. Staff will never physically restrain any child, such as by confining the child to a high chair, car seat, stroller, or other device for the purpose of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting himself, or someone else, and is only used as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent.
3. Locking the exits of the childcare centre for the purpose of confining the child or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision is not permitted unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the Emergency Management procedures.
4. Staff will not participate in the use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of derogatory language directed or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame, or frighten the child or undermine their self-respect, dignity, or self-worth.
5. Children will never be deprived of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing, or bedding.
6. Staff will never inflict bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.
7. Rest time must not be used as a punishment. A child will not be punished in any way for not sleeping during rest time, including the removal of bedding or any of the above listed actions.
8. Failure to use the toilet will never result in punishment.

All observations of mistreatment or suspected cases of abuse must be reported to the Supervisor immediately. It is the legal responsibility of the staff member to report their suspicions to the authorities.

Failure to comply with the Prohibited Practices policy of Mahmowenchike will result in action being taken against the perpetrator by review and documentation of the alleged incident.

In the case of a violation of the Prohibited Practices policy or behaviour that is deemed to endanger the safety of the children, staff, or property of Mahmowenchike, immediate termination will result.

### **Serious Occurrence**

It is the policy of Mahmowenchike to conduct a preliminary inquiry immediately following any serious occurrence and to report it in accordance with subsection 3.9, Serious Occurrences, *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*, O.Reg. 137/15.

According to the Ministry of Education, if there is a serious occurrence while a child is in the company of a staff member or on the premises of Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre, the following procedure must be followed.

The Program Advisor must be notified through the Child Care Licensing System (CCLS) within 24 hours of the Supervisor becoming aware of the incident.

### Categories

**Death** - the death of a child who received childcare at a childcare centre. For greater clarity, the death of a child must be reported as a serious occurrence where there may be a relationship between the child's death and the child's care in the licensed program (e.g., a child was unresponsive and not breathing while receiving childcare and the child was later pronounced dead by emergency medical staff; a child developed a high fever at the childcare centre and was sent home and the child later passed away; a child incurred fatal injuries from an accident on a field trip from the childcare centre).

**Abuse/Neglect or Allegation of Abuse/Neglect** - abuse, neglect, or an allegation of abuse or neglect of a child while receiving childcare at a childcare centre. This includes an allegation against any person who is on-site at the childcare centre premises and not limited to employees and childcare providers (e.g., a staff member observed another staff member forcefully grab a child; a staff member is observed using harsh/degrading language to a child; a staff observed a parent slap a school age child while on the playground).

**Life-Threatening Injury or Illness** - a life-threatening injury or life-threatening illness of a child who receives childcare at a childcare centre (e.g., injuries to the head, back, or neck resulting in unconsciousness or physical paralysis; anaphylactic reactions; E. Coli).

**Missing or Temporarily Unsupervised Child(ren)** - an incident where a child who is receiving childcare at a childcare centre goes missing or is temporarily unsupervised (e.g., a child was left alone outdoors and later located; a child left the childcare centre and walked home, the child was then greeted by the parent/guardian at home).

**Unplanned Disruption of Service** - an unplanned disruption of the normal operations of a childcare centre that poses a risk to the health, safety, or well-being of children receiving childcare at the childcare centre (e.g., a fire caused an emergency relocation or closure of the premises; there was a gas leak at the centre; there was a lockdown at the centre).

### Outdoor Play

All children enrolled at Mahmowenchike will enjoy playing outside while at the centre. Only in cases of severe inclement 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 are of the utmost importance to use; 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 30 months of age that is in attendance for six hours or more in a day is outdoors (weather permitting) for sleep or play, or both, for a period of up to 2 hours per day. Each child over 18 months of age and up to

and including 5 years of age, will play outdoors (weather permitting) for at least 2 hours each day.

It is not always possible for infant and toddler groups to go outside in the winter months due to the practical difficulties, i.e., deep snow, icy conditions, risk of frostbite, etc. Infant and toddler groups may not go outside when the temperature is -15°C and below including windchill during the winter months. Preschool and school age groups may not go outside when the temperature is -20°C and below including windchill during the winter months.

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

**These temperature cut-offs are intended to act as general guidelines. Depending on many factors, the educators will use their discretion in determining whether it is appropriate and safe to go outside.**

### **Appropriate Outdoor Apparel**

Children must be dressed appropriately for outdoor play.

During the winter months, boots, hats, mittens, neck warmers, and a complete snowsuit are recommended to 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 or mistaken for another child's items. Scarves and any long strings attached to mittens or jackets, for example, create a choking hazard and will not be used at the centre.

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

If a child arrives for the day without appropriate outdoor apparel, they 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 parents' responsibility.

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

### **Sun Safety**

Mahmowenchike purchases sunscreen for use by all children. In order to use the centre-provided sunscreen, parents are required to sign a permission form allowing staff to apply the sunscreen. If a child has skin sensitivities or there is a specific brand the family wishes to use on their child, the permission form must specify the brand name of the sunscreen to be applied and the family must supply a labelled bottle of the sunscreen for application. The labelling ensures the item will not be used by another child.

If a child arrives for the day when the program has already gone outside, it is strongly recommended that parents apply sunscreen before arrival at the centre or take them into the program to apply sunscreen prior to bringing the child outside. If the child's group has already gone outside, they may not be able to go back inside to apply sunscreen due to staffing or practical difficulties.

### **Field Trips and Excursions**

The centre may, from time to time, embark on field trips or excursions. In this case, parents will be notified well in advance and permission will be required from each child's parent or guardian prior to embarking on the journey. In the case that a child does not receive permission but the majority of the group will be going on the field trip and there are no additional staff available to stay behind and supervise on-site, care may not be offered.

Children may take the city bus or take the strollers or wagons (weather permitting).

The programs may also go on spontaneous walks in close proximity to the centre, including nature walks, for which a permission form will also be required.

### **Inclement Weather**

Mahmowenchike is concerned for the safety and well-being of the children, families, and staff. In case of severe weather, the policy will be as follows:

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 parent cannot be reached, the emergency number will be called. If the school boards determine that is not safe to open schools in the morning, then Mahmowenchike will also be closed for the day.

If weather conditions are deemed serious enough to force city road closures and, therefore, endanger the transportation of the children, emergency measures will be set up to accommodate children overnight.

If the severe weather occurs during school scheduled closures, such as the March Break, then closure will be decided by the Executive Director after listening to local weather and road condition broadcasts to determine the safety of travel.

Program staff will attempt to contact parents of children scheduled to attend in the morning before opening to notify them of closure or if the centre is already open, parents or emergency contacts will be called to pick up the children as soon as possible. Closure will also be posted on social media (Facebook, Instagram) and will be relayed by email where possible.

### **Emergency Management**

Mahmowenchike has extensive policies regarding Emergency Management. Staff are required to review and be aware of the policies in place for situations including, but not limited to, shelter in place, hold and secure, lockdown, bomb threats, disaster requiring evacuation, external environmental threats, tornado/tornado warning, and power outages.

In the case of an emergency, parents will be notified by phone or by email in accordance with the policies in place.

### **Power Outages**

In the case of a power outage in the building, programs will remain open provided that:

- The schools we are located within are remaining open,
- The programs have running water, and
- The temperature in the program areas is comfortable.

Mahmowenchike staff will ensure that closing the centre is the last resort as we acknowledge that closures can be inconvenient for families during the work or school day. Safety of the children and staff will be the highest priority.

### **Fire Safety**

Mahmowenchike practices fire drills on a regular basis. It is our policy that we practice fire drills with the schools we are situated within 3 times during the spring and 3 times during the fall in conjunction with the schools. Each location of Mahmowenchike will practice fire drills run by the Site Supervisor on a monthly basis.

Mahmowenchike has in-depth emergency management procedures including those to follow in case of a fire-related emergency.

### **Parent Feedback**

Mahmowenchike welcomes parent feedback at any time. At the end of each calendar year, specifically, a parent survey is distributed electronically for parents to submit voluntarily. This survey is used to gauge levels of satisfaction and whether or not Mahmowenchike is meeting its goals as a centre.

### **Duty to Report**

Under section 125 of the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017* (CYFSA), everyone has a responsibility to protect children from harm and have what is called a **Duty to Report** in the case of reasonable grounds to suspect one or more of the following could be taking place with respect to a child: physical harm, sexual harm, emotional harm, abandonment, acts of a criminal nature, and/or neglect.

Educators do not require certainty or probability that a child is in need of protection before reporting to the Children's Aid Society or Dilico. Failure to report under the CYFSA may also have consequences for members of the College of Early Childhood Educators under the *ECE Act* and the regulations of the College.

While every effort is made to build and maintain responsive and collaborative relationships with families, it's important to note that RECEs are not required to consult with a family prior to contacting a CAS, nor are they required to notify a family that a call has been placed. The Duty to Report is applicable to everyone that has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is in need or protection and is not exclusive to RECEs.

## Financial Information

### Childcare Fees

Current daily childcare fees are charged as follows:

| Age       | Ext day<br>9+ hrs | Full day<br>6-8 hrs | ¾ day<br>4-6 hrs | ½ day<br><4 hrs<br>(no lunch) | ½ day<br><4 hrs<br>(with lunch) | Before<br>school | After<br>school<br><2 hrs | Before<br>and after<br>school |
|-----------|-------------------|---------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Infant    | \$73.00           | \$68.00             |                  |                               |                                 |                  |                           |                               |
| Toddler   | \$58.00           | \$52.00             | \$45.00          | \$34.00                       | \$41.00                         |                  |                           |                               |
| Preschool | \$51.00           | \$46.00             | \$41.00          | \$30.00                       | \$36.00                         |                  |                           |                               |
| JK/SK     | \$45.00           | \$40.00             | \$36.00          | \$27.00                       | \$32.00                         | \$13.00          | \$13.00                   | \$26.00                       |
| Schoolage | \$41.00           | \$36.00             | \$33.00          | \$24.00                       | \$27.00                         | \$13.00          | \$13.00                   | \$26.00                       |

An extended day is 9 hours or more in a day.

A full day is 6 hours or more and up to just under 9 hours in a day.

A ¾ day is up to 6 hours ending no later than 3:00 PM.

A ½ day is up to 4 hours in the morning. We are not able to accommodate for ½ days in the afternoons due to the scheduled routine of the programs.

### Absences

Subsidized clients are granted up to a maximum of 30 absences per year for each child. These absent days are prorated based on enrolment schedule and start date within the year. Mahmowenchike will claim absent days for parents that are students during any breaks from school (March Break, Christmas Break). It is the parents' responsibility to make payment to Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre for any daily rate assigned by the TBDSSAB on these absent days. After the allotted absent days have been expended, it is the parents' responsibility to pay full fee for any absences. Requests may be made to the TBDSSAB to pay for additional absences required due to extraordinary circumstances must be submitted in writing and include the dates and reasons for absences (supporting documentation, such as medical documentation, is encouraged).

Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre is unable to offer unpaid absences to families paying full fee for childcare. It is the responsibility of the parents to pay for absences that take place on days their children are scheduled to attend.

### Late Fees

Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre's hours of operation are Monday to Friday from 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM. Children must be picked up in time to enable staff to close the facility and finish their shift by 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 may be asked to sign a form acknowledging this late fee. 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 pickups can result in the termination of childcare services. If you require a change to your schedule, contact your Child Care Worker if you are subsidized or speak to the Site Supervisor if you are paying full fee.

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

This policy also applies to early drop-offs.

### **Fee Payment**

Monthly invoices and statements for childcare fees are distributed electronically to families by the 10<sup>th</sup> each month for the previous month. Invoices are distributed to families paying full fees as well as families receiving childcare subsidy as a statement of the care used each month. Full payment of childcare fees is due by the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month, after which time a late fee of \$10.00 may be added.

Monthly invoices are emailed to parents from an unmonitored email address. If you have questions or concerns about your invoice, please contact the Executive Director.

If full payment is not received by the 30<sup>th</sup>, childcare services may be terminated or suspended until payment is made in full 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.

Mahmowenchike accepts cheque payments (to the order of **Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre**) or e-transfer payments. You can obtain the email address and security password from any staff member of Mahmowenchike upon request. We do not accept cash payments.

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

In the case of a split custody arrangement, it is the responsibility of the parents to split the fees and payments. We are able to split on a week-by-week schedule but unfortunately cannot split invoiced amounts by even halves.

### **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 who has an NSF cheque is required to pay their outstanding debt within 7 days. Payment may be made by certified cheque, money order, 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 due to insufficient funds during the time their child is enrolled at the centre, the Director will meet with that family 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.