



In order to support you best we appreciate your input. Please complete the Family survey and return it to office at your earliest convince.

Please give input into our policies and procedures updated every November. Please feel free to speak to your providers about attending any field trips or going into the day home to observe.

Odyssey Childcare

8:30am -4:30pm Mon-Fri

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Odyssey Childcare

Annual Parent Handbook

LEARN THROUGH PLAY

2018



We Provide quality care through our Early Childcare Educators

Our focus is to help develop the child as a whole person

In order to support you best we appreciate your input. Please complete a Family survey and return to the office at your earliest convenience

Table of Contents

Welcome!3.

What We Believe In...3.

Your Child is Our Focus4.

Goals4.

Development of the Whole Child5.

Back up Care.....5.

Roaming Sub.....5.

Closure Days.....6.

Illness.....7.

Our Providers (Early Childcare Educators).....8.

Child Guidance9.

Provider/Child Ratio.....9.

Hand washing.....9.

Your Child’s Health and Safety.....10.

Your Child’s health and Safety.....11.

Menu’s.....12.

Portable Records.....12.

Web Page.....13.

Activity Plans.....13.

Transportation Agreements.....14.

Accidents / Incidents14.

Emergency.....15.

Your Role as the Parent.....16.

A Little About What is Posted17.

Payments18.

Contract Obligations.....18.

Communication Reference.....19.

***Please see end page for contact information

For any emergency calls outside office hours, you may leave a message on voice mail, (this is checked often through out the evenings and weekends)

For questions on your account, subsidy, concerns, or for any resource you may want to obtain, please contact the office during office hours.

For Subsidy renewal or concerns, please contact the Alberta Works at 1-877-644-9992 or fax 381-5791. You may also go down to the office at 333-200 5th Ave South, Lethbridge, Alberta. T1J 4L1

If there are any reasons such as late arrival, absence, subbing information, child directed concerns or milestones, please contact your Provider. If necessary your provider will contact the office with this information. You may also contact the office if needed.

For concerns outside the Agency’s capabilities please contact SWACFSA Southwest Alberta Child and Family Services Authority @ 403-381-5316 or fax at 403-381-5791. Please contact the Agency prior to SWACFSA Alberta Child and Family Services Authority, to be sure the matter at hand is outside of our jurisdiction.

Child Abuse Hotline—1-800-387-5437 (KIDS)
Family Violence—403-310-1818 (toll free 24 hours)
Alberta Supports Contact Center—1-877-644-9992
Alberta Government Contact—403-310-0000

Payments

The Parent Portion of the fee, is due on the **1st of every month**. You will receive a monthly invoice with subsidy amounts and monthly contract amount. Also in writing how much you owe for your payment. You can use debit, MC/VISA, Cheque or Cash. We also accept email transfers. If you happen to be late (past the 10th of the month), there will be a \$50.00 late fee added to your balance. We regretfully need to enforce a termination policy pertaining to late payments. If we have not heard from the Parent by the 15th of the month, we will call default on the contract (you will no longer have childcare), and the file will be sent to collections. Payment arrangements are accepted, however strictly by the discretion of the Program Director. Please see contact info and office hours to access administration.

Contract Obligations

We believe every child is unique in his/her needs. That's why we give the first 30 days as a trial, for both Child (ren) and Provider. If for any reason within the first 30 days of contract either party feels it's not a good fit, we will work hard to find a better suited home for the child (ren). After the grace period we expect 30 days notice to any change in attendance, whether this is a holiday, or termination. If for some reason the notice to terminate is less than 30 days, the Parent is still responsible for the full contract amount.

***Please keep the office up to date on all personal information, phone numbers, address, subsidy amounts, etc.

Each contract is unique in regards to fees and dynamics. If any information changes on your contract, please make an appointment to make these changes, your contract fees may be affected. Thank you!

- Every Parent will be encouraged to take time selecting a Day Home. The Agency will strive to offer choices that provide as many similarities to the child's own atmosphere and community as possible.
- Children will be encouraged to make choices of their own as to preference of play. It is our intention that each day home have adequate play areas for the children to choose from, as well as make those choices a positive experience to enhance self esteem.
- We believe that 90% of nutrition will be consumed during a normal Day Home day and proper nutrition is imperative for a child's development and growth. The Agency will ensure that the Providers are trained in the proper nutrition requirements for the children in the Day Home.
- The Agency has an open door policy for both the Parents and the Providers, whom we encourage to call us if a concern arises. Should a dispute occur in the day home, the Coordinator will meet with all interested parties, in order to resolve any issue(s).

Goals:

- It is the Agency's belief that each child deserves the opportunity to develop as a whole individual. Our objective is to encourage emotional, social, physical, creative and intellectual growth.
- **Intellectual** growth will be challenged through the use of cognitive centers and activities, according to each child's developmental stage. Each week a cognitive activity will be offered targeting various aspects of the developmental area. The activities in this area could be sorting, observations, problem solving, math skills and communication skills. Each Day Home will have a cognitive area available which will offer opportunities for all age levels.
- **Physical growth**, which is an individual process, will be encouraged through the use of appropriate centers and monthly Activity Plans. Daily outings, weather permitting, will work to enhance large muscle growth. Each Provider will have a variety of equipment for children of all age groups to choose through out the day. The ratio of children to space will be closely monitored to ensure that there is adequate room for their development.

- **Social skills** will be positively developed by the Agency and Provider. Development and encouragement of communication will help the children to verbalize their emotions, as opposed to reacting to feelings. The Provider will assist children in learning the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behavior through various activities and redirection. Providers will learn how to effectively develop positive behavior in children and how to combat any negative situations.
- **Emotional development** will become a positive experience through a variety of activities that target emotions. The child will be encouraged to discuss emotions; what causes them and what reactions they cause. A creative atmosphere will enable the Provider to find learning opportunities. They will be able to use these opportunities in his/her ideal circumstance.
- The Agency will ensure Parent, Provider and Agency communication by daily journals, documenting not only custodial care but developmental care as well. At the end of each day these completed forms are signed by the Parent and the Provider submits them to the Agency for review.
- The Agency will create a monthly newsletter for the Providers and Parents, to help keep them updated and informed of community events.
- As potential Providers apply to open Day Homes with our Agency, we will ensure our high standards by closely monitoring our approval procedures.
- The agency has provider profiles on all providers if a parent would like to view their providers please contact the office and make an appointment.

Odyssey will provide a back up Provider if the following should occur:

1. Provider needs to close for illness
2. Provider books holidays in advance.

** In an excess emergency we may be unable to provide back up care, you will be offered a reimbursement. Your provider will ask you to sign a waiver form when she closes and you can choose to access the back up care or decline. Please enquire about our reimbursement policies.

All subbing is done through the office to ensure confidentiality and maintain ratio's.

You have the option of backup care, reimbursement on parent portion or allowing the provider to be paid for the days they are off. Reimbursements must be requested with the same month the provider is closed. This does not apply to provider holiday policies. **Whenever subbing is provided the parent must give permission in writing on the sub permission form.**

Among the documents already mentioned (Attendance Sheets and Closure days), the Providers will have a few other important documents posted on their bulletin board. This will include a menu, First Aid Certificate, Health and Safety Checklist, Universal Health Precautions, Daily Routine, Hours of Operation, Journal, Activity Plan (or Interest based Web Plan). You will also notice a Red Door sign in their window or bulletin board.

We admire the relationships our Providers have with the children. These documents help you to be involved with daily interactions. We have also found that accurate documentation of the children, helps us recognize milestones and concerns. This enables us to create appropriate planning to enhance the child's learning. After you have read the daily recordings in the journal, we ask that you initial each day. It helps us to ensure you are involved with your child's daily activities. On the menu, you will notice recordings that support our policy. Each child must be served four out of the four food groups for Breakfast/Lunch/Supper (which ever one your child is in attendance for), and three out of the four food groups for Snacks. If you bring in a snack, or meal for your child, it must follow Odyssey's Menu Standards. An alter to this policy may be a "Special Snack Day", where you must be cultural sensitive, and snack must support the children's nutrition.

If you are interested in accessing child development tools, feel free to sign them out at the office. Resource such as, Nipissing, Ages and Stages, and NAEYC Spotlight on Families. You are always welcome to attend any workshops we have with the Providers. Keep an eye out for the dates and topics on your monthly newsletters. We just ask that parents give us at least a week notice if they would like to attend to ensure space is available.

Your Role as the Parent:

Attendance: Please ensure that you are documenting arrival and departure times (as accurate as possible) on the attendance sheets provided by your caregiver. Your initials daily and signature weekly, are required to confirm these are the hours your child was in care.

Absences; it is your responsibility to contact your provider for any reason of absence. If your Provider is unavailable, you may contact the office and we will inform your provider.

Subsidy; if you have accessed subsidy you must sign the waiver that allows SWCFSA to speak with the agency about your account. You will then receive an expiry date from Subsidy as well as on your monthly invoice from Odyssey. If your subsidy is about to expire, you are obligated to make arrangements to reinstate your subsidy before it expires. You will be responsible for full fee in case of a subsidy short fall. You must inform subsidy of any extended days off (i.e. holidays) and any changes in living arrangements or income.

***Please ensure your child has all necessary amenities. This includes items to help your child feel comfortable during his/her day (e.g.. a set of warmer and cooler clothing). Your Provider will request supplies that may change from season to season (e.g.. sunscreen and hat in the summer). If your child is in diapers, your Provider will need an ample supply of diapers, and wipes. For infants **not** on solids, you must pack enough baby food and/or formula for your child’s daily needs. It is our policy that Providers teach hygiene with the children, thus your child(ren) will require a tooth brush, toothpaste, and a hairbrush.

***Please note that your Provider is not responsible for lost or damaged items, as well as any cleansing of soiled clothing. The soiled clothing will be placed in a bag for parent pick up.

Thank you for choosing our Agency. Your child is our number one priority!! It is our goal to provide quality learning experiences with our administrative supports and strong provider interactions. The purpose of this handbook is to become a reference for most of your potential questions. Keep in mind as you go through this handbook, we value your opinion and know that you may call us with further questions or suggestions.

What We Believe In...

- ***Our Mission** is to support health, nutrition and social well being, in an environment that respects and encourages growth of the “whole child”
- ***Our vision** is to offer the community, childcare that natures and supports each family as a unique and individual unit. By strongly recognizing the importance of best practice techniques, our dedicated Educators will embrace the opportunity for quality care by utilizing all resources available to them.
- ***The philosophy** of the Agency is to encourage development of the “whole child”. Each child, being a unique individual, requires opportunities to develop at their own rate in each area of growth. Keeping in mind, each step has a specific importance in developing the “whole child”.
- ***It is the Agency’s belief** that the Parent, in conjunction with the Provider and Agency, will strive to keep communication consistent between all three parties. Through this communication, each party will be able to effectively support and encourage the emotional, social, creative, physical and intellectual growth of each child.
- *The Agency will endeavor to recruit Providers who are committed to understanding child development and expanding their knowledge. We strongly believe that it is through the understanding of child development that optimum child care is facilitated. Any child expressing negative behavior will be redirected and positive behavior practices will be introduced. Early intervention is critical in any negative situation and positive redirection will be implemented when possible.

Closure Days

Page 6

***Please note that these designated days are holiday specific and are not banked and used at another time of the year. For example, the Remembrance Day holiday cannot be “saved” and used at Christmas.

*** These days are not included in your contract. Thus, there will be no reimbursements for designated closure days.

1. New Years Day ~	Monday, Jan. 1, 2018
2. Family Day ~	Monday, Feb. 19, 2018
3. Good Friday ~	Friday, Mar. 30, 2018
4. Easter Monday ~	Monday, April 2, 2018
5. Victoria Day ~	Monday, May 2, 2018
6. Canada Day ~	Sunday, July 1, 2018
(In Lieu of Canada Day)	Monday, July 2, 2018
7. Civic Holiday ~	Monday, Aug. 6, 2018
8. Labor Day ~	Monday, Sept. 3, 2018
9. Thanksgiving ~	Monday, Oct. 8, 2018
10. Remembrance Day~	Sunday, Nov. 11, 2018
(In lieu of Remem Day)	Monday, Nov 12, 2018
11. Christmas Eve	Office closed at noon
12. Christmas Day ~	Tuesday, Dec. 25, 2018
13. Boxing Day ~	Wednesday, Dec. 26, 2018
14. New Years Day ~	Tuesday, Jan. 2, 2019

EMERGENCY

Page 15

In an Emergency the Provider will:

- Follow all Standard Precautions – Preventing Blood Borne Infections (where applicable)
- Assess the situation (safety for all)
- ACT immediately
- GET HELP (Call appropriate emergency number)
- Call the Parent or Emergency contact if parent unavailable
- Release the child’s medical data to paramedic/doctor
- Call the Agency
- Make out an accident report in full and submit to the Agency ASAP
- Participate in an investigations conducted by the Agency and/or CFSA or other law enforcement agencies as required.

You should be informed in advance as to the whereabouts of your child in case of an emergency evacuation. All Parents should be issued an Evacuation Slip before the child commences care.

The Agency will attend immediately to all emergencies. When the coordinator is unavailable, another person will be available for this express purpose. The Coordinator or designate will take over the whole Day Home so that the Provider is free to go with the injured child to the hospital, if necessary, or just “be there” for support for the Provider until the “stress level” of the situation decreases. The emotional well being of the uninjured children is also a concern.

Transportation Agreements

Permission for the Provider to take the children on any outing or fieldtrip must be given in writing by the parents prior to any outing taking place. This is done on the off site permission forms. The Provider must ensure that the utmost safety measures are taken. Outings are preplanned and must be outlined on the off site permission form. The Agency requires an Off Site Permission Form be signed by you, for outings where transportation is required. These documents include destination, transportation and supervision arrangements. These documents will be brought in at months end.

***Please note if you are requiring an “on going” transportation, such, to and from school, the provider may do a form for up to four months at a time.

Accident / Incidents

An accident/incident report must be filled out for all injuries while the child is in attendance at the Day Home. The Provider will inform you and the Agency ASAP of the incident. You must view the document upon arrival, and sign the bottom.

Critical Incidents (as pertaining to Standard 10A of the Family Day home Manual), must be reported by the Provider to the agency as soon as possible after the emergency and medical assistance is obtained and parents have been notified.

Please visit www.child.aiberta.ca/home/documents/childcare/pdf_Info_Parents_using_regulated_child_care.pdf for the most current information on the illness standard from the government of Alberta.

The Provider has the right to refuse care to a child who is ill without a Doctor’s consent to attend. **NO MEDICATION MAY BE GIVEN BY THE PROVIDER WITHOUT WRITTEN AUTHORIZATION FROM THE PARENT AND THE AGENCY. This is excluding topical, over the counter rash cream.** Medication must come from the original container, and be administered according to the label. In the event of a Provider’s own child becoming ill, depending on the diagnosis, the parent will be given a choice of taking the child to a substitute Day Home or remaining in their own Day Home. When a child becomes ill in the Day Home, the parent will be called to pick up the child. The parent must sign the illness document which states that the child was picked up from the day home, the symptoms and the time. That parent may be asked to take the child to the doctor, in which case a Doctor’s Consent Form will be given to the parent to be filled out by the Doctor. A child who has been excluded from the Day Home due to illness may return when the Doctor Consent Form has been returned to the Provider and does not specify that the child should be excluded or 24 hours after



A Little About our Early Childcare Educators (AKA Providers)

We require a police check, C.Y.I.M (child welfare) check, medical, and three references prior to contracting. Each caregiver reviews Odyssey policies and agrees to comply with them prior to contract signing. We require they sign a letter of confidentiality to ensure that your family's privacy is respected. Providers that have their level one upon contract signing receive more enhancement dollars. For those who do not, Odyssey requires the Providers to obtain a minimum level one within their first year of contract. Other training is accessed through our memberships with SWADA, CCCF, NAEYC, and AFDA which supports the latest workshops, conferences and courses. Our Providers receive information on upcoming workshops and conferences from the office as well as numerous in-house classes. Once the contract is signed, the Providers have full access to our Lending Library, Activity plans, Center of Excellence memberships, along with internet access, and dozens of other resource to enhance the quality of care in their Day Home. We are happy to provide these services to you, if you should want them. Please check your monthly newsletters to learn of up coming events.

Please note that the Agency has your child's safety as their first priority. If we witness an unsafe situation or your Provider is not following Odyssey's policies and procedures, she will be immediately terminated, and you will be notified. This is a very uncommon situation, but we feel that the children always come first!



Web Page

Our web site is continually growing. We would like to point out a few key features:

1. Some Providers are still sending in their profiles to be featured on our web site. Please feel free to take a minute to view them.
2. Under the links tab at the bottom of the first screen we have different links available for anyone visiting the site. Please contact us if there is a link you would like to see added.
3. Our monthly newsletters and activity plans are posted on the website so you can see what your children may be working on during the day. We also post our monthly meeting minutes on the web site so the parents and community may see what we have been working on as an agency and workshops we have been holding for our providers.
4. You will find our policies and procedures on the website. Please feel free to read them and give any suggestions on them or email with questions if you have any. We update our policies and procedures every November please feel free to give any input you have and we will do our best to incorporate them. Updates will be posted on the websites every year.
5. We have a suggestion box on the website that is anonymous. Feel free to use it at any time. We also have one in the office.
6. We are currently trying to update our web page and make it easy to use. We have our updated forms on our webpage for easy access for parents and providers. If there is anything else you would like to see up there contact the agency.

Activity Plans

You will find the Activity Plan posted on the providers bulletin board with the monthly activities and outings for the children. If the Provider changes something they will write it on the calendar.

Menu's and Portable Records

Menu's at Day Home

You will find weekly menu's posted on your Providers bulletin board indicating what the children will be eating that day. In accordance with Standard 12 in the Family Day Home Standards Manual meals and snacks will be served at appropriate times, in sufficient quantity and according to each child's needs. The menu plan must show four out of four food groups for lunch and three out of four food groups for snacks. If a Parent brings in a snack or meal for their child, it must follow the Canada Food Guide, and Odyssey's menu Standards. This may not include a "Special snack day". If the snack or meal does not meet the requirements as set out by Odyssey and the Canada Food Guide the Provider will supplement the snack or meal to ensure it does.

Cultural Preferences—In a situation where there are cultural parameters the Provider and Agency will support the parents as long as the food falls into one of the Canada Food Guide sections.

Potable Records

As per Standard 3 in the Family Day Home Manual – Providers must maintain a complete/portable record for each child in care, including their own, which must be taken on all outings and must include:

- child's full name and date of birth;
- parent's full name, home address, work address, home telephone number and work telephone number;
- one emergency contact name, address and telephone numbers;
- relevant health information including medical condition(s) and immunization status.

This information will be kept in a backpack and taken on any outings with the Provider and children.

(As per Standard 9 of the Family Day Home Standards Manual) Providers must use a positive approach to child guidance. The approach is discussed with the child's parents. The child guidance methods used by the Provider are consistent with both the parent handbook and Agency policies and are explicitly communicated in a written statement to the:

- parents; and
 - children, when developmentally appropriate.
- Any child guidance action that is taken must be reasonable, given the circumstances and must never:
- inflict or threaten to inflict any form of physical punishment, verbal or physical degradation, or emotional deprivation;
 - deny or threaten to deny any basic necessity; or
 - use or permit the use of any form of abuse.

Provider / Child Ratio

Each Day Home is licensed through the Agency, which is licensed through SWACFSA (Southwest Alberta Child and Family Services Authority). It is mandated that a Day home Provider must never exceed 6 children in care at one time (this also includes their own children under the age of 13 years). The Provider cannot have more than two children under the age of two with a total of three children under the age of three.

Hand washing

Each Provider is expected to help the children learn about germs, and try to prevent disease in the Day Home from spreading. The Providers have been educated in the "Do Bugs Need Drugs" Daycare Program, and are implementing proper hand washing with your children. We encourage you to ask questions and value your input. Below is our policy on hand washing.

Hand washing with soap and water must be done;

- before and after food preparation
- after out door activities
- if you shall come in contact with any bodily fluids

Your Child's Health and Safety

Personal Hygiene

We strive to teach your children personal hygiene skills. We request that you provide personal grooming items for your children to have at day home. In addition to the regular items you may supply a toothbrush and toothpaste if you would like your provider to follow up on dental health in the day home. If you choose to have your child's teeth brushed without paste please let your provider know just to do it with water.

Allergies

Odyssey has a policy that states Providers must post all allergies in the home to ensure all adults are aware of them and the health of the children. Please ensure to make your Provider aware of any allergies your child may have. Please also make sure this is documented on the application for care as well as follow up with the Agency of any emerging health concerns.

Medication

Providers must be aware which (if any) children in their homes use emergency medications, where the medications are stored and how to administer them if necessary. If your child has had any medication or herbal remedies in the morning before going to day home you must put it in writing so the provider is aware of the medication and the reason. The Provider will monitor the child for any reaction. This form can be found on our website or in the Providers home. **NO medication may be given in the day home without prior authorization from the agency staff. Medication must be brought to the agency and the proper documentation will be filled out and sent with the parent for the provider.** When the authorization period on a medication has ended the Provider will ensure to return it to the parent and document on the form what day it was returned and parents must sign they have received it.

Continued

Ages and Stages

We have in the office the kit for Ages and Stages. All Providers and parents are welcome to utilize this tool. Providers have had a workshop on the Ages and Stages and the two office staff have completed the full days training. If you have questions or concerns or would like a copy for your child on the Ages and Stages please feel free to contact the office.

Daily Outings

Any time a provider leaves the confines of her yard with the children she will fill out an off site permission form for parents to sign prior to leaving the house or yard. Providers will discuss with children when going on a field trip the safety rules, where they are going, what to expect on the field trip, who they might see and who they may need to listen to during the field trip. This will also be discussed with any other adult going on the field trip and this discussion will happen prior to the field trip. Please see the transportation section for details on signing documents.

Miscellaneous

Children will only be released to parent approved adults over the age of sixteen. This should be written on the application for care and the parent will let the provider know if anyone different will be picking up the children and give a brief description. Anyone who the Provider has not met must produce photo ID before they are allowed to take the child(ren).

The Agency requires updated immunization records on all children in care. Please ensure these are submitted to the office. If you choose not to immunize please provide the Agency with a signed and dated letter in regard to this.

Providers and the Agency must have the most up to date information on the families so please ensure to contact us with this and we will update the appropriate forms.