Marathon
Children and Family
Centre

EarlyON
Child and Family Centre

Parent/Guardian
Information Handbook

The District of Thunder Bay
Social Services Administration Board

Welcome

Welcome to Marathon Children and Family Centre! This handbook is designed to assist parents/guardians in understanding the policies and procedures of the centre. Please feel free to contact the Executive Director at any time should you have questions or concerns.

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MISSION:

Marathon Children and Family Centre provides quality care and education in an environment where children learn through play. We strive to support families and caregivers in our community and the surrounding area.

PHILOSOPHY:

Marathon Children and Family Centre enriches the developmental level of each child by consistently meeting the individual needs of all children while also interactively engaging with them to formulate learning plans based on their interests.

Educators work together with children and their parents to create educational and stimulating environments which value the individuality of every family. We aim to assist children in every way possible to help them grow, learn and develop.

Natural Learning

Marathon Children and Family Centre is motivated by the Reggio Emilia Principles of learning. These principles are incorporated into our policies. All of our programs are founded upon an optimistic educational environment which includes a homelike atmosphere to entice comfort while also encouraging learning and development. All programs are specifically designed and revamped to meet the needs and interests of the children in order to ensure that all children are individually encouraged to reach their fullest potential. Creating environments based on the interests of the children allows them to learn through play. Play experiences involving science, art and technology along with direction and assistance from Early Childhood Educators stimulate certain characteristics within children which work to help children learn, grow and develop. Some of these stimulations include:

- inquisitiveness, creativity, independence and collaboration with various people including peers, educators and parents
- self-confidence and positive self-respect through allowing children to act as capable and competent individuals
- consideration and investigation of many different materials and their uses/purposes which offers children opportunities of exploration and interaction with a variety of medias
- consciousness of nature and appreciation of beauty in the sense of art, life, growth, light, order and the natural environment
- mindfulness of different perspectives and views through the use of transparency and light reflection in mirrors and various objects within the playrooms as well as through the various differing perspectives and ideas among children, educators, parents and visitors
- exploration when using resources in unanticipated ways and combining contrasting ideas
- communication abilities and linguistic advancement
- the 100 languages of children which refers to inspiring children to symbolize their ideas using the various media provided while also exploring their ideas in several ways through photographic/ pictorial arts, songs and melodies, play performances, calculating creation and more

Reggio Emilia Approach

Marathon Children and Family Centre is inspired by the Reggio Emilia Principles within our programs. This approach embraces the belief that children are our teachers and we learn what they would like to investigate and explore further through their ideas, thoughts and representations. We work in collaboration with the children, their parents, caregivers and the community to expand on these topics of interest to further their knowledge. Our environment acts as a third teacher and is set up for the children to explore open-ended materials, light, bringing the outside in, creative art materials, science materials, technology and many more opportunities to help children reach their fullest potential. Parents and caregivers are kept involved by daily communication and documentation boards in each room as well as in the entranceway. These boards contain many visual panels of photographs, artwork, words that the children are learning and much more.

Program Statement

Marathon Children and Family Centre takes great pride in following the Reggio Emilia Principles. We firmly believe that every child is a competent and capable individual. Our team strives to help each child reach their fullest potential through building play experiences based upon the interests of the children. We have broken down our values, goals and promises into sections in order to ensure such ideas and guarantees are clear and easier to understand.

Image of the Child

The Marathon Children and Family Centre is an early learning program inspired and guided by the Reggio Emilia approach to learning. Educators promote the growth and development of each child in a safe, positive, and rich learning environment. Children are viewed as competent, curious, full of knowledge, and interested in connecting with the world around them. Each child is unique, and our goal is to help children from infancy to thirteen years of age reach their fullest potential.

The Power of Documentation

The Reggio Emilia Approach to learning includes completing daily observations that are instrumental to the planning of play experiences for the children. Educators are deeply aware of the children's potential and construct all of their work and environmental observations of the children's experiences to respond appropriately. Educators meet weekly to deconstruct these observations following an agenda, and they work together to plan the setup of the environment and plan activities for provocation based around their hypothesis of the learning that is happening with the children. The children's thoughts and the progression of their thinking are made visible through displays and documentation boards that can be viewed daily by families and caregivers. This documentation draws parents and educators deeper into the experiences of the children and equally important, shows the children that their work is valued.

Collaboration and Interaction

Early learning does not happen in isolation but rather is a result of experiences with others. Collaboration and cooperation are intentional in our program and the entire system is designed to be alive, connected and in relationship. Children, educators and parents join to provide opportunities to help develop the children's natural curiosity, initiative and independence. Parents are invited to share ideas and resources as well as discussions about their child and are viewed as partners in the process. We welcome parents upon arrival, discuss their child's day and add their ideas to the programming, portfolios and documentation. Parents are also welcomed and encouraged to visit their children anytime during the day.

The Environment

Daily observations help the educators set up the environment based on the children's interests, skills and learning styles. The environment is considered the third teacher and the children can then engage in it with interest, challenge and enjoyment. Everything in the children's day is based on them: they have autonomy, are an active participant in their learning and are seen as having rights. The educator is there as a co-learner, scaffolder and role model.

The Hundred Languages of Children

The infinite number of ways that children can express, explore and connect with their thoughts, feelings and imaginings is known as the 100 languages of children. Educators provide a rich environment with a wide variety of open-ended materials that the children can investigate and use the space, materials and equipment in their own way. Children are also encouraged to make symbolic representations of their ideas through visual arts, music and manipulative toys.

Helping Children to Develop Self-Regulation

The environment is a living, changing system based on listening and responding to the needs of the children in the space. Therefore, the daily schedules involve providing purposeful opportunities for the children to develop self-regulation. This includes indoor/outdoor play, active play, rest and quiet times Children have a need to be active whether it be indoors or out, and educators ensure that these times are an extension of their learning with plenty of opportunities for creativity, discovery and mastery of skills. Children also have a need for quiet times and children who sleep have a space with a comfortable cot or crib and soothing music in a dimly lit room; children who do not sleep are provided with quietactivities in a calm environment that extend on their interests, skills and creativity. Educators read the cues of the children, follow their lead and provide the appropriate opportunity or need that builds responsive and respectful relationships.

Health, Safety and Nutrition Requirements

Marathon Children and Family Centre promotes health and safety, and nutrition requirements recommended by the Thunder Bay District Health Unit and the Child Care and Early Years Act. All staff members are required to follow all policies and procedures based around illness, cleaning and safety concerns. Children are provided with healthy food choices and beverages throughout the day and the Housekeeper provides a menu that follows Canada's Food Guide that is reviewed regularly by the Health Unit.

Developmentally Appropriate Expectations

Educators help guide children's behaviour with developmentally appropriate expectations. Care and education that is developmentally appropriate responds to the age, developmental level and uniqueness of each child. The goal is to help children develop self-regulation through role modelling and scaffolding*, and build their skills by providing increasingly challenging opportunities appropriate to their age. Educators use positive guidance techniques that are adapted to the actions and ages of the children and they review daily the Community Agreements of respect, listening and appreciation of one another with the children. The focus is on individual appropriateness, which refers to the uniqueness of each child growing at his or her own pattern and timing, as well as individual personality, learning style, culture and family background experiences.

Involvement of the Community

"It takes a village to raise a child", and we welcome and incorporate all community partners involved in our organization to be a part of our centre. Every single person that comes in contact with a child will have some degree of influence on them. Part of incorporating our community involves inviting people in from the community to share job skills, visiting public spaces such as parks and stores and involving students from Confederation College enrolled in the Early Childhood Education program. Our centre's location in Margaret Twomey Public School helps the children to make connections with the staff and students of the school and makes for a seamless transition to kindergarten.

Professional Development

Professional development is an important and ongoing process that helps educators to share, network and remain current in the field of early childhood education. It is an integral part of providing quality early learning and care. Educators attend annual workshops that are held outside of the community and participate in workshops that are led by professional facilitators who come to our centre.

*__Scaffolding__ is an approach to teaching where the educator supports student learning as they build up from things they've learned before until students can "stand on their own".

Evaluation of our Programs

Program development is also important to quality education. We evaluate our programs annually to ensure that we are meeting the expectations of our children and parents (relying on input including parent questionnaires), and meeting the requirements of the Ministry of Education and our local DSSAB. Program development is described in the professional learning resource, "How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years". http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/pedagogy.html. The document is based around four foundational conditions that are considered necessary to the learning and healthy development of all children.

The Four Foundations Include:

1 Belonging:

Building relationships, and feeling connected to community, is at the heart of everything we do.

2 Engagement:

Children are given opportunities to explore the world with body, mind and senses.

3 Well-being:

Children are nurtured as they develop a sense of identity, and learn to make healthy choices, both physically and emotionally.

4 Expression:

Children are seen as capable communicators who express themselves in many ways.

Centre Operation

The Executive Director oversees the day to day operations of all of the programs. A volunteer Board of Directors is made up of parents/guardians and community members who oversee the overall operations. Meetings are held on a quarterly basis or when necessary with the exception of July, August & December. An Annual General Meeting is conducted yearly at which time new Board members may be elected; all families are encouraged to attend. Marathon Children and Family Centre operates in compliance with the Child Care and Early Years Act, the Ministry of Education and all applicable building, health, fire regulations, etc. At least once per year a Program Advisor with the Ministry of Education will make an unannounced inspection to ensure that provincial standards are being met, issue and reissue licenses, investigate compliances and monitor operators who have difficulty meeting licensing standards. A detailed licensing inspection can be found at http://www.iaccess.gov.on.ca/LCCWWeb/childcare/search.xhtml.

Every Child Belongs

At the Marathon Children and Family Centre, every child belongs and is welcomed. We are committed to providing fully inclusive environments that support the health and well-being of every child in our care. For a child who has additional support needs, Resource Educator Consultation Services can be accessed through our centre from Children's Centre Thunder Bay.

www.childrenscentre.ca

Access and Equity

The Marathon Children and Family Centre is committed to the principles of equity. We ensure that children and families have equitable access to racially sensitive and culturally appropriate services. We believe the ethno-racial and linguistic diversity enriches and strengthens our community and surrounding area socially, culturally and economically and that racism creates barriers for children, families and communities. Marathon Children and Family Centre is committed to developing child care environments and programs that promote and respect the beliefs, values and practices of all.

Service Coordination in Child Care

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (DSSAB) as Service System Manager is responsible for the delivery of supporting children with various abilities and needs within the child care programs through effective and efficient use of resources.

The DSSAB provides supports and resources to families and their children through agreements with a number of agencies to provide enhanced services and supports to child care centres. The scope of the agreements includes service coordination, program observations, consultation regarding child development and children's mental health, parenting supports, intervention services, case management and other global services.

The agencies include but are not limited to Thunder Bay District Health Unit, North of Superior Counseling Programs, Children's Centre Thunder Bay (Child Care Support Services), Dilico Anishinabek Family Care, Children's Aid Society, Marathon Family Health Team and Preschool Speech and Language Program.

Upon registration parents/guardians will be asked to sign the consent form in the registration package indicating that they understand the child care centre works collaboratively with agencies and services listed above. However, any specific individualized services for a child will only be allowed with the parent/guardians verbal consent to Resource Consultant services through Children's Centre Thunder Bay (Child Care Support Services).

Child Care Support Services

Marathon Children Family Centre has access to a Resource Consultant/Social Worker from Children's Centre Thunder Bay (CCTB). The Resource Consultant (RC) works collaboratively with the educators to support all children's inclusion needs, providing care and educational programming for children under the direction of the Executive Director, ensuring optimal experiences and successful inclusion practices. Below is the process that we would follow should further support and/or resources be required.

1. **REFERRAL TO CHILD CARE SUPPORT SERVICES** – The Executive Director will meet with the family to discuss the involvement of the RC. With parental verbal consent, the Executive Director and family will complete referral to the Child Care Support Services.

2. **COMMENCE SUPPORT/SERVICE WITH PROGRAM AND FAMILY** – The RC will meet with the family to complete CCTB Consent for Service and make any necessary referrals to other services/agencies if required. The RC will obtain written authorization to obtain/release information from the family to contact any other services/agencies, if the child is already involved with other services.

3. **SERVICE COORDINATION** – The RC works in collaboration and partnership with the child, family, child care program and other service providers involved with the child.

4. **OBSERVATIONS AND SCREENING** – The RC observes the child in the program and completes screenings (if required) to determine the child's strengths and needs.

5. **DEVELOP AN EARLY LEARNING SUPPORT PLAN (ELSP)** – The family child care program and RC meet to develop goals based on the child's strengths and needs.

6. **EMBEDDING ELSP GOALS IN PROGRAM** – The Early Childhood Educators, with the support of the RC, embed the child's ELSP goals in the daily curriculum.

7. **MONITOR, EVALUATE, REASSESS** – Goals, progress and areas of need are monitored, evaluated and reassessed six months or sooner depending on the child's needs in partnership with the family, child care program and RC.

8. **UPDATE ELSP AS NEEDED** – Changes are made to the ELSP by the RC as goals are met or the child's needs change.

9. **DISCONTINUATION OF SERVICE** – Once goals are met or RC services are no longer required, services will be discontinued.

10. **TRANSITION TO SCHOOL** – The RC supports the child and family as the child transitions into the educational system.

Staff

Our team of Registered Early Childhood Educators, Educators in training and Assistant Educators are committed to providing an optimal early learning and care environment for all children. Our Housekeeper prepares nutritious snacks and lunches. Our menus are planned in accordance with Canada's Food Guide. The Housekeeper also has a Safe Food Handling Certificate. The kitchens are inspected regularly by the Thunder Bay District Health Unit. Our Bookkeeper updates finances on a monthly basis. Our Caretaker comes in daily to ensure the centre is cleaned. Staff attend staff meetings, participate in ongoing professional activities, submit Vulnerable Sector Criminal Reference Checks and are trained in Standard First Aid & CPR for infants, children and adults.

Ratios

Staff to child ratios are as follows:

Infant 1:3
Toddler 1:5
Preschool 1:8
Kindergarten 1:13
School Age 1:15

These ratios are the minimum standards set by the Child Care and Early Years Act.

Early Childhood Education Students

Marathon Children and Family Centre provides field placement opportunities for college students who are studying for their Early Childhood Education diploma and their Resource Teacher certificates. These students contribute significantly to our programs and to the education of the children. These students are supervised by the staff, are not counted into the ratios and are not left unsupervised with children. Students will gain practical experience and bring new ideas to the centre. All students will provide a current Vulnerable Sector Criminal Reference Check.

Safe Welcome Program & Security Cameras

We have a security system monitor and door stations in the centre. Our doors are kept locked at all times in which only entry is allowed per permission. We also have security cameras in conspicuous locations for the security and safety of all children, staff and visitors.

Registration

Priority will be given first to full time, and then part time followed lastly with monthly/flexible care. Families are required to register very first with the Child Care Registry. Once registered the Executive Director will connect with the family and share if a space is available. Once space becomes available, a tour/orientation will be setup. This allows families to ask any questions they may have and at this time a start date will be established. For children with severe allergies, medical issues or inclusion needs, action plans, meetings and/or appropriate documentation will be developed prior to the child's first day.

Waitlist Policy

Marathon Children and Family Centre enrols children from The District of Thunder Bay Child Care Registry One Application – OneHSN, a community waitlist. It is mandatory that all interested individuals register; there is no fee. Child care spaces will be offered when they become available based on the following criteria:

1. Family that desires to enrol the sibling of a child currently attending.
2. Full-time care requests.
3. Part-time care with set days. Every effort will be made to match families that have complementary schedules. For example, a family with Monday, Tuesday, Friday schedule matched with a family with Wednesday & Thursday schedule to try to ensure maximum use of available spaces.
4. Flexible/monthly schedules will only be offered in our Toddler/Preschool/School Age programs if space allows.
5. Individuals will be removed off the waitlist if they refuse a space or they have been contacted and the individual does not return messages after the allotted amount of time instructed.
6. Marathon Children and Family Centre is an inclusive Centre and discrimination during enrolment for any reason is not tolerated.
7. Children with special needs are welcomed and supported provided the program can maintain an appropriate and manageable balance for all participants.
8. The waitlist can be long and we cannot estimate when a child care space may be available.

Gradual Admission

It is recommended that a child become acquainted with the child care setting in a gradual way. Over the course of the child's first week at the centre, each day the child usually stays a little longer. This process helps to make the transition to the centre a more positive experience for both the parent and child. We encourage the parent/guardian to spend some time in the program prior to the first day. Staff will discuss suitable times for the program/staff, parent/guardian and child. A one month trial period will be established upon starting to ensure that both the child/family and the centre are a good fit. Children are encouraged to bring in a family photo to post on our family board for children to refer to throughout the day. They may also want to bring a favourite toy or stuffed animal as comfort items. We encourage parents/guardians to reassure their child and act secure and confident even if feeling apprehensive. This will help reassure the child when parents leave them at the centre. We ask you to say goodbye, even if you expect sadness and/or tears. Staff will assist in settling your child. Common practices are to wave goodbye at the window, sit on the rocking chair to read a book, etc. Every child is different; in collaboration with staff a routine will be established that may work best for each child. In the event we are unable to comfort a child after parents leave, we will contact the parents to discuss further strategies. This may include preparing for shorter visits.

Withdrawals

We require three weeks written notice if you plan to remove your child from the centre permanently. Should you fail to provide the required notice, you will be charged for three additional weeks of care after the child is withdrawn. All outstanding fees must be paid in full. Any debts will be pursued by Small Claims Court. All amounts owing must be paid prior to your child's re-entry in the child care system. To ensure children's success it is important to ensure their placement at the centre is appropriate. If it is determined the centre is not able to accommodate the child's needs, the centre will work in partnership with the family to ensure all appropriated supports have been explored and develop a transition plan for alternate child care if necessary.

Arrival/Departure

Children depend on regular routines for their own sense of security; therefore, it is recommended that families establish set drop-off and pickup times. Please advise staff if your child will be picked up earlier or later than usual. When you arrive, assist your child to remove outdoor clothing and footwear and put on indoor shoes. We ask parents/guardians to remove their outdoor shoes before entering our playrooms to help maintain a clean environment for children. Please notify staff that your child has arrived and take the opportunity to share events and/or relevant information of your child's day. It is imperative that parents ensure that the staff in the room are aware that the child has arrived or is leaving for the day. If a child does not arrive at the centre by 10:00 am and there has been no late arrival notification, a staff member will contact the parent/guardian by telephone as a follow-up. If no response is received from the parent/guardian by the child's registration form, followed by the police if they are unable to make contact to confirm the child's absence.

When you pick up your child ensure that a staff member is aware that they are leaving so attendance is marked accordingly. Children will only be released to the individuals indicated on the registration form unless otherwise notified. Parents/guardians provide within authorization in the centre's alternate pick up permission form if an individual who is not listed on the child's registration form is picking up. This individual must present the staff with photo ID that matches the name on the alternate pick up permission form in order for the child to be released to them. In the event that a child has not been picked up by their scheduled pick up time and no notification of a late pick up has been received, the staff will attempt to call the parent/guardian. Staff will contact the child's emergency contact as listed on their registration form. In the event that a child has not been picked up by the time the centre is closed which is 5:30 pm, the staff will make one last attempt to contact the parent/guardian, authorized pick up individual and/or emergency contact. If no response is heard by 6:00pm, then the staff must connect with CAS or Dilico. All children must be released to an authorized adult and under no circumstances will a child be released to walk home alone.

Driving Under the Influence: If a parent or designated person picking up is suspected to be under the influence of alcohol, drugs or if the person is in obvious ill health, staff will call a taxi, and/or your emergency contact listed on file to pick up the child. If the person leaves with the child, staff will call the police to report the incident. Our first responsibility is to advocate for the child and put their safety first.

Parking

Persons dropping off/picking up are permitted to park their vehicles in the designated front parking spaces or around the centre in the back designated parking spaces.

Statutory Holidays/Closures

Pending enrollment, Marathon Children and Family Centre will close during school holidays namely March Break, Summer Break and Christmas Break. Notice of closing will be given well in advance of these dates. Closures will be based on completed surveys to ensure the continuing viability of the centre.

During the school year, the centre may occasionally close to allow staff to attend professional development with other licensed child care programs in the District of Thunder Bay.

Should the school close due to unforeseen circumstances, the centre would also close, in the best interest of all those concerned. Short noticed closures will be reported to the radio station and parents will be contacted.

Fee Payment

All child care fees must be paid in advance. Failure to pay fees will result in the withdrawal of care. There will be a charge of $50.00 on all NSF pre-authorized payments payable immediately upon notification. Marathon Children and Family Centre is a non-profit organization and therefore all fees charged to families are used to cover the costs incurred in the program. Fees are set by the Board of Directors and may be reviewed semi-annually.

Marathon Children and Family Centre has enrolled in the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) system. The centre will charge base fees as per our fee schedule and non-base fees will still be charged for any late fees and NSF payments. Monthly receipts should be retained for income tax purposes.

Any deemed refunds will be either issued by cheque or deducted from the next payment the following month.

Child Absences

Please notify the centre if your child is away due to illness, etc. Care is non-refundable. Permanent cancellation of services or a change in work schedule will require three weeks' notice. All parents are responsible for paying the full fee should their child be absent.

Monthly/Flexible Schedules

Families must submit their monthly schedules on the website from September to August. Priority is given in order of:

1. **Full-Time**
2. **Part-Time**
3. **Monthly**

The centre cannot guarantee a space for monthly children to attend extra days however every effort is made to try to accommodate these sudden changes. Monthly schedule families should have a second plan in place in the event that the centre cannot accommodate sudden requests. Monthly families will be asked to bring in post-dated cheques based on their schedules and must be provided for the entire year. If additional days are required, payment must be received in advance otherwise a late fee will apply.

Late Pick Up

If you will be late to pick up your child, please notify the centre as soon as possible. In these circumstances, please be prepared to provide the centre with information about alternative arrangements you have made. If no arrangements have been made, the centre will attempt to reach the emergency contacts you have provided. If they cannot be reached, the centre, as a last resort, will contact a child protection agency, such as the Children's Aid Society or Dilico Anishinabek Family Care. All persons picking up are required to arrive to pick up no later than 5:25 p.m. to allow time to leave the centre by our closing time of 5:30 p.m. Any pick up after 5:30 p.m. is considered late and will be charged a fee of $50.00. Frequent late pickups will require a meeting with the Executive Director and may result in the termination of child care services.

Items from Home

All of your child's clothing, both for indoor and outdoor play, should be labelled with your child's name. Occasionally your child may require a complete change of clothing (e.g. toileting accident or wet spill), so please ensure that you place two full changes of clothing in your child's locker. Please note the centre is not responsible for any lost clothing and/or personal property. Please also ensure all children's clothing and belongings are labelled. Children are not permitted to bring toys from home unless specified by the program. We will attempt to keep children's items and possessions safe; however, Marathon Children and Family Centre is not responsible for lost or damaged items. The following is a list of items to bring:

INFANT, TODDLER & PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

- Indoor shoes
- 2 changes of clothing
- Bottles/Baby Food
- Full package of diapers
- 2 packages of wipes
- Creams/lotions
- Blanket/cuddly toy
- Soother
- Water bottle
- Backpack

KINDERGARTEN & SCHOOL AGE PROGRAM

- Indoor shoes
- Extra set of clothes
- Water bottle

Appropriate Seasonal Outdoor Wear

SPRING/FALL

- Lined jacket
- Hat
- Splash pants
- Rubber boots

WINTER

- Winter jacket/snow pants/snowsuit
- Winter boots
- 2 pairs of mitts
- Hat

SUMMER

- Sun hat
- Outdoor shoes with secure straps (flip flops & Crocs for children under the age of five is not recommended)
- Insect repellent
- Sunscreen

Refrain from sending children with mittens on strings or scarves as they pose a safety hazard on the playground. Learning through play can be a messy business. Dress your child in comfortable, seasonally appropriate clothing. Despite our best efforts, it is not always possible to keep clothing clean while children explore and learn through activities and mealtimes.

Outdoor Play

The Child Care and Early Years Act states that children who are in full days need to have two hours of outdoor play and children who attend after school are required to have one hour of outdoor play, weather permitting. Please ensure that adequate clothing for changing weather conditions is available, so that your child can comfortably participate in outdoor activities.

Sun Safety

Close attention is paid to daily ultra violet radiation (U.V.) ratings from May to September. Children should wear hats and are encouraged to wear U.V. protective sunglasses during outdoor times. Families are encouraged to apply sunscreen to their child when dropped off at the centre and before outdoor times educators will ensure to reapply throughout the day.

Smoke/Vape Free

Smoking/vaping in enclosed workplaces and public places is prohibited as stated by the Smoke-Free Ontario Act. This was put into place to shield workers and the public from the dangers of second-hand smoke. Smoking/vaping is prohibited by all, inside and outside in the playground areas of the centre regardless of whether children are present or not.

Field Trips

Local field trips are planned for the children to enhance their learning experiences. Parents/guardians are welcome to volunteer. Families will be asked to sign a consent form to allow their child to attend.

Rest/Quiet Time

As per the Child Care and Early Years Act children are required to engage in rest/quiet time. Children in our Infant program will nap whenever. Children in our Toddler & Preschool Programs are provided with a cot for rest time. All sheets and blankets are laundered weekly. In our Preschool Program, children will be provided with a quiet time. Children are not required to sleep; however, they have an opportunity to rest and regenerate their bodies and have individual quiet time. Staff will help children feel comfortable and relaxed at rest time. The environment is softly lit, quiet and calming music is played in the background. If your child has a soother, blanket or stuffed toy that would provide some comfort during rest time, we would encourage you to bring the item from home.

Meals/Nutrition

Our programs offer a variety of nutritious foods for lunch and snacks. Foods selected promote good health and give each child the opportunity to enjoy new foods as good eating habits are established. Menus incorporate the healthy eating guidelines of Canada's Food Guide. A four-week menu plan is posted for your information. Infants are fed according to their individual needs. If your infant is on expressed breast milk or formula, you will need to provide the prepared bottles. You will also be required to bring in baby food in its original container. Due to children with severe food allergies, you are asked not to bring any additional food into the centre. Marathon Children and Family Centre is a peanut, nut, egg and shellfish safe environment. This policy is in place to help ensure that children/staff in our centre are safe at all times. Anaphylaxis is a serious allergic reaction and can be life threatening. Parents should inform the centre of any food restrictions their child may have at the time of enrolment and continue to inform the centre when and if those restrictions change.

Anaphylactic Allergies

Upon a child's admission to the centre, the parent must supply a doctor's note stating the specifics of an allergy and provide an auto-injector EpiPen. In conjunction with the parent and physician, the Executive Director will develop an individual plan and emergency procedure, which will include a description of the child's allergy, monitoring and avoidance strategies, signs and symptoms of an anaphylactic allergy, and action to be taken by the staff in the event that a child has an anaphylactic reaction. This information, along with the child's photograph, will be posted for staff. To ensure the wellbeing of children who have anaphylactic reactions it is imperative that an EpiPen is available at the centre at all times. If a parent does not provide an EpiPen, or fails to replace an expired EpiPen, admission to the program will be denied. If a parent believes the child no longer requires an EpiPen, a doctor's note confirming this information will be required. School age children are able to carry their own EpiPen pending a health professional's approval.

Child Guidance

A variety of guidance techniques are used when dealing with children's behaviours. Guidance is not only used to stop inappropriate behavior but more importantly, it is helping children learn appropriate behaviours. The goals of guidance are to protect children from harming themselves, others or the environment, to help children gain control and self-discipline, to help children develop the skills to solve their own problems, to help children develop independence and high self-esteem, and to help children develop the skills to interact positively with others.

Redirection is a technique that is used to stop an inappropriate behaviour. For example, if a child is throwing blocks the staff would redirect the child to build with the blocks or give the child something to throw e.g. bean bags into a basket.

Natural Consequences allow children to experience the results of their own actions. A child will learn that their hands will become cold when they choose not to wear mittens. Allow the child to make the choice to put mittens on when they are cold.

Logical Consequences are reasonable, related to the behaviour and arranged in advance. The consequence needs to be fair and enforceable. Always follow through with the consequence or children will learn you do not mean what you say.

Active Listening involves giving the child your full attention, helping the child to describe the situation, identify and express their own feelings and acknowledge those feelings Acknowledging the child's feelings often reduces power struggles.

Negotiating and Problem Solving techniques work by involving the children to solve the problem. With young children it is the role of the staff to help by giving suggestions and guiding the process. Staff will help children identify the problem, encourage children to contribute ideas for solving the problem, assist the children in carrying out their solution and reinforce the process when the problem is solved. Guidance strategies will be used appropriate to the developmental age of the child.

Discipline Prohibited Practices

The following practices are not permitted in the program:

- corporal punishment of a child;
- physical restraint of a child, such as confining the child to a highchair, car seat, stroller or other device for the purposes of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing the child from hurting himself, herself or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer about to happen;
- locking the exits of the child care centre for the purpose of confining a child, or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the centre's emergency management policies and procedures;
- use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of offensive language directed at or used in the presences of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child or undermine his or her self-respect, dignity of self-worth;
- depriving a child of basic needs including food, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding; or
- inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

School Aged Children

It is not only required but also tremendously important that guardians contact the centre when their child(ren) will be absent on their scheduled day due to illness, extracurricular activities, etc. in order to ensure the safe arrival of all children. Children sent home from school due to illness, behavioural issues etc. are not allowed to attend the centre's after school program. Parents must also remember that although the centre works collaboratively with the schools, the centre is a separate organization and therefore direct communication is required when a child will be absent. Children involved in extracurricular activities after school can walk down to the centre once done the activities provided they attend Margret Twomey Public School. However, the centre must be aware of this and paperwork must be filled out. Children attending any other schools may not walk to the centre after participating in extracurricular activities after school. In this event, the family is responsible to make alternative arrangements.

Family Involvement and Volunteer Opportunities

Family involvement is strongly encouraged, and parents/guardians are welcome to spend time in the programs during the day. Throughout the year families will be invited to attend field trips with the children as well as various social events. Family members are welcome to come in and share special talents and/or interests with the children such as baking, carpentry, music, etc. Parents can also participate through verbal or written feedback and sharing information about their child's development. Parent participation is essential to children's success.

Serious Occurrence

Serious Occurrence could include serious injury to a child, fire or other disaster on site and a complaint about service standard. Serious Occurrences will be reported to the Ministry of Education and The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board within 24 hours which starts at the time centre staff first become aware of an incident and/or deem the incident to be a Serious Occurrence. Serious Occurrence Notification form must be posted in a visible area for ten days. The posting will give families information about the incident and outline follow-up actions taken and outcomes while respecting the privacy of the individuals involved. Longer term actions will also be included to help prevent similar incidents in the future, when applicable. For more information, please see the Executive Director.

Fire Drills, Emergency & Threat Response Procedures/ Evacuation Location

Posters and Fire Safety Plans illustrating Fire and Emergency procedures are posted in all playrooms behind the main entrance doors. Fire drills take place monthly. Threat Response Procedures include: lock down, shelter in place and hold and secure. In the event of an intruder in the building or on property, lock down drills are practiced twice yearly. A shelter in place has been decided upon in the event that staff and children need to evacuate the centre. If this occurs the staff and children will move to the Gendron Northshore Living Apartments. Marathon Children and Family Centre's designated evacuation location is 30 Chisholm Trail. Hold and Secure procedures are put into action when a threat is nearby to but not inside the building. Threat Response Procedures also need to be practiced throughout the year to ensure the safety of all staff and children during unexpected emergencies. The Lock down Safety Plan is also located behind the main entrance doors going into each playroom. Parents are encouraged to reinforce with their children, the importance of understanding the procedures and following staff direction. In the event of a lock down which was not a drill, the Executive Director or Acting Executive Director will contact all parents when it is safe to do so or a communication to parents will be sent home with each child at the conclusion of the day.

Accidents/Incidents and Injuries

First Aid kits and manuals are available in each program and are brought outdoors during playtimes. Minor injuries will be shared with families at pickup. In the event of a more severe accident, every effort will be made to contact the parent/guardian. If the parent/ guardian cannot be reached, the emergency contact person listed on the registration form will be contacted. The staff will perform first aid and seek medical attention if necessary. A child needing emergency medical care will be taken to the hospital via ambulance or taxi. A staff member will accompany the child. An accident/incident report form is completed for accidents/incidents or injuries. This form describes the nature and details of the accidents/incidents or injuries. Families will be asked to sign the form as acknowledgment of having been informed about the incident and a copy will be provided.

Illness Policy

Although some illness is inevitable in group care, efforts are made to minimize this by practicing good hygiene, disinfecting toys regularly and making daily health checks. All children in attendance must be able to participate in all areas of the program, including outdoor play. Marathon Children and Family Centre follow exclusion guidelines for communicable infection/disease as set out by the Thunder Bay District Health Unit. Children with the following symptoms should be sent home and may need to be examined by a health care provider prior to returning to the centre. If a child shows sign of any of the following symptoms he/she will be sent home and may need to see a health professional before returning to the centre:

UNUSUAL BEHAVIOUR - If child can no longer partake in normal activities due to illness. If child appears or preforms abnormally in the sense of unusual tiredness, irritability, inconsolable crying, confused, or lacking appetite.

RESPIRATORY SYMPTOMS - If child appears to be having difficulty breathing, is breathing unusually quick or has a severe cough. If after coughing child makes a shrill croupy/howling sound or if continuous coughing prevents child from lying comfortably.

VOMITING / DIARRHEA - If child vomits twice or more.

- If child has two or more unusually watery stools during a 24 hour period.
- If child vomits once and has one unusually watery stool during a 24 hour period.
- It is required that a child be symptom free for 48 hours prior to returning to the centre.

FEVER - If temperature reads 38°C or higher.

- this temperature is abnormally high and considered a concern especially if accompanied by other symptoms of illness.

EYE/NOSE DRAINAGE - If child's eyes or nose are discharging thick mucus or pus.

ITCHING - If child is steadily itching/scratching body or scalp.

RASHES - If child has sores with crusty, yellow or green discharge which are unable to be enclosed/covered by clothing or bandages.

- A child with a rash but no fever or abnormal behaviour can continue to attend the centre but may need to visit a health care professional.

UNUSUAL COLOUR - If child's eyes or skin are yellow (jaundice). If a child's urine is dark coloured. If child's stool is grey or white

Fact sheets are put up around the centre when there is verification of a communicable disease (eg. chicken pox) within the community. Head lice is not considered a communicable disease; however, because head lice can spread so easily through head to head contact or through contact of personal objects, children who are found to have head lice will be sent home for treatment and will not be allowed to return to the centre until receiving their second treatment for head lice on day seven, as eggs may still remain after the first treatment and must be nit free. Upon request, a comprehensive list of communicable illness and procedures are obtainable. Parents/guardians are required to have backup plans in order to accommodate any spontaneous needs due to illness. If a child does show sign of any of the listed symptoms the child will be removed from the playroom in an act to protect the health of others. If staffing allows, the child will be placed under the supervision of one staff in isolation until a parent arrives. Marathon Children and Family Centre is not able to provide care for children who become ill during school hours.

Infectious Diseases, Outbreaks and Pandemics

Infectious diseases are diseases that are transmitted from person – person. Some examples of infectious diseases that have the potential to cause an outbreak are salmonella, e-coli, influenza, etc. An outbreak is when there are significantly more cases of the same or similar illness amongst children and/or child care staff, or when 2 or more children in the same group are suffering from vomiting and/or diarrhea within a short time period. During these times children will be closely monitored for the following symptoms at arrival times and throughout the day:

- Fever 38˚C (101.4˚F), flushing pallor, listlessness
- Acute cold, nasal discharge, coughing
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Unusual spots or rashes
- Unusual behaviour such as irritability, fussiness, restlessness

In the event that a child becomes sick during the day, his/her parents/caregivers will be notified promptly and will be asked to take their child(ren) home. Whenever possible staff will remove the ill child from the other children in a safe and comfortable place where they can be properly supervised. The centre will post signs for parents/guardians to be made aware of exposure to illness. This sign will be posted on the main entrance doors to the centre. Staff will increase the sanitization of cots/cribs, toys, equipment, high touched surfaces and washrooms.

During a pandemic, child care staff as well as parents/guardians will be directed to check the Thunder Bay District Health Unit website for updates each day. The centre will post notices for families as to how many children are off sick and their symptoms each day.

Direction from the Thunder Bay District Health Unit will supersede any other plans or actions in regard to outbreaks and pandemics.

Immunization

All children attending a licensed child care facility are required to be immunized in accordance with the recommended immunization schedule for their age. This requirement is also stated within the Child Care and Early Years Act. Proof of immunization is mandatory before a child's first day. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in your child(ren) being suspended until the immunization record is in attendance or completed and presented to the Thunder Bay District Health Unit. Parents are also required to provide up-to-date immunization information to the centre so as to ensure the child's file is up-to-date on a regular basis.

If due to medical, religious or conscientious reasons an exemption for a vaccine(s) is needed or if further questions remain, please contact the Thunder Bay District Health Unit at (807) 229-1820.

Administration of Medication

As recommended by health care professionals, families must avoid the need for centre staff to administer their child's medication. Whenever possible an effort must be made for parents to give their child medication at home. Marathon Children and Family Centre is able to administer required prescribed medication as stated by the Child Care and Early Years Act. However, non-prescription medication will only be administered by staff when it has been recommended in writing by a doctor and the required paperwork has been filled out. Medication must be in the original container. It is vital parents fill out a medical dispensing form indicating the type of medication, reason, dosage and time to be given. Any changes in medication or medication instructions must be provided in writing. Medications will be stored in the centre's kitchen inside a locked container within a cupboard or refrigerator depending on what is required. EpiPens, asthma inhalers and emergency medication will be stored within the playrooms but out of reach of the children. Asthma inhalers are required to be on site. School age children are able to carry their own asthma inhalers pending a health professional's approval.

Photographs & Videotapes

Regular photographs and videotapes of the children are taken on a daily basis. Pictures of the children are posted in the programs and are displayed at special events. At times photos and videos may be used for public viewing in local papers, television, community events and our website. Consent to use these photos or videos are requested on the registration form.

Cell Phone Use

Marathon Children and Family Centre encourages face to face interactions, so please turn off cell phones to connect with your child and those around you.

Social Media Policy

Marathon Children and Family Centre parents/families who possess personal social media accounts such as Facebook, Twitter, etc. are expected to abide by the guidelines below. Posts by parents/families involving the following will not be acceptable and lawful action will take place if such posts occur.

- Any private/confidential organizational information
- Discriminatory/slanderous posts against staff, parents/families and children
- No photographs of children other than the caregiver's own child(ren)
- No photographs of staff

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

Personal information collected during the administration of children as well as child care records made up within the centre are collected under the legal authority of the Child Care and Early Years Act with the strict purpose of admission and bookkeeping processes.

Duty to Report

The Ontario Legislation obligates child care providers to report suspicions of child abuse and neglect. Every person in Ontario is expected under the Child and Family Services Act to make a report if he/she believes a child is in need of protection: 'A person who believes, on reasonable grounds, that a child is, or may be in need of protection shall forthwith report the belief and information, upon which it is based, to a society.' This compels caregivers to report any accounts of suspected child abuse on reasonable grounds immediately to a Children's Aid Society.

Conflict Resolution

Parents/caregivers have the opportunity to express their concerns and complaints to staff without fear of retribution. The parent's concerns are important and are a natural step in providing an inclusive environment which meets the needs of children and families. Building and maintaining positive relationships with parents is valued at our centre. The first line of communication for parents is with their child's classroom teacher. If the concern is not program related and cannot be handled by the child's classroom teacher, then the parent or staff member will take the concern to the Executive Director.

All concerns will be handled in the following manner:

1. If the concern is a matter solely concerning the parent whom has the concern, the Executive Director will handle it one-on-one with that parent within 3 business days.
2. If the concern is in regard to another parent or staff member, the Executive Director will decide whether or not that parent or staff member needs to be involved and shall act accordingly within 3 business days.
3. If the concern is in regard to more than one other parent or staff member, then the Executive Director will arrange for a special meeting with the persons involved, either individually or as a collective group, according to which will be most beneficial to that particular situation within 3 business days.
4. If the concern cannot be addressed by the Executive Director, then the Executive Director may take the concern to the Board Chair and the concern will be addressed following the same manner within 5 business days.
5. If the concern is not addressed to the parent's satisfaction, the Executive Director and the Board Chair may take the concern to the Board of Directors within 5 business days.

Workplace Respect

Marathon Children and Family Centre expects all employees, parent and other people who interact within the workplace to perform in a respectful manner. Failure to abide by this expectation may result in the withdrawal of care.

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