



www.thornhillchildcare.com

PARENT HANDBOOK

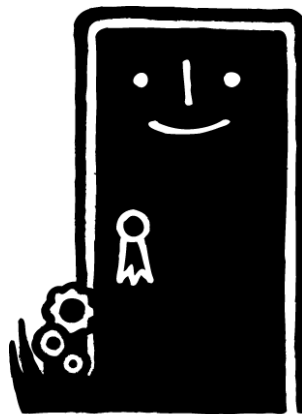
THORNHILL CHILD CARE SOCIETY FAMILY DAYHOME AGENCY

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**Alberta
Approved
Family
Day Homes**

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Thornhill Family Dayhomes. Thornhill Child Care Society was established on December 2nd, 1974. We are a non-profit Society, run by a volunteer Board of Directors composed of community residents, many of whom are parents who use either one of our child care centres or the day home program. The names of the current Board of Directors are posted on the main bulletin board at the agency office. This handbook was written to acquaint you with the policies and procedures of our program.

Thornhill Child Care Society is a family support service. Our programs are directed towards enhancing the development of children's sense of security, self-worth, self-respect, self-sufficiency and self-control. We believe that high quality child care should be available to all children; therefore we provide an integrated program. Resources are provided that assist us in meeting the needs of individual children

MISSION STATEMENT

Thornhill Child Care Society is a non-profit society that exists to provide a secure, caring, quality learning environment for infants through to school age children. Our focus is to provide developmentally appropriate programs that are accessible to all families.

VISION STATEMENT

TCCS will be a leader in the field of child care and early learning through professional development, partnerships and advocacy. We will develop and deliver flexible service options that respond to family and community needs. We will continue our commitment to being an environment where our children and families can be nurtured.

FAMILY DAY HOME EDUCATOR

Our day home consultants carefully choose a family day home educator after an application and screening process. This involves completing an application form, obtaining references, criminal record checks, and intervention record checks, as well as undergoing a minimum of two home screenings to determine whether the home meets our standards of care, safety and suitability. Educators are self-employed, running their own business. They are contracted through the agency to provide care in their homes and are responsible for setting their own fees within the guidelines of the affordability grant and operating hours. Our Educators must qualify as per Alberta Government Family Day Home Standards and agency policies, this includes obtaining a Level 1 early childhood educator certification. Each day home is visited at least once a month by a Consultant from our agency. These visits are generally unannounced and provide direction and support for each educator, in addition to ensuring that the quality of care is maintained. Educators must also be

certified in first aid.

The agency provides support, mentoring and coaching opportunities through in-home visits, role modelling, and workshops. This professional development enhances the quality of care that your child will receive in the home. We supply the educators with many resources including an equipment lending library. We issue a monthly newsletter which is always filled with important information, resources and upcoming events.

Day home educators can only have a maximum of 6 children, under the age of 13, *excluding their own child(ren)*, at any time. Educators are required to follow the Family Day Home Standards, set by Alberta Children's Services.

EDUCATOR PROFILE

At the time of enrollment, parents will have an opportunity to review a prospective educator's profile, which will detail information about the previous year's home visits, and any complaints or incidents which may have happened in the home. Currently enrolled parents can request to see a copy of this profile at any time.

MEMBERSHIP

All families using our services must be members of the Society. Membership fees in the amount of \$20.00 are due upon enrollment. This membership gives you the opportunity to vote at annual meetings as well as to be nominated to the Board of Directors. This fee helps to cover the costs of holding an Annual General Meeting, and having a yearly audit performed.

ONCE IN CARE

1. Discuss your child's progress on an ongoing basis with your educator.
2. If you have any concerns regarding any aspect of care, please either talk directly to your educator or call the agency immediately. Since parents go to the home on a daily basis, we would appreciate hearing about any hesitations or doubts as soon as possible.
3. Always discuss things like allergies, eating habits, favorite toys, sleep patterns, discipline, etc. with your day home educator.
4. Should you wish to change your days, or hours of care, arrangements need to be made with your educator. Written notice also needs to be provided to the agency office. A new fee agreement may need to be completed.
5. If you have any questions regarding payment, fees or subsidy, please call the agency office.

OFFICE HOURS

The main office is open from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday, except statutory holidays.

STATUTORY HOLIDAYS

We recognize all standard Statutory Holidays. You will receive a list of specific days at the beginning of each year. Typically, day home educators do not work on these holidays. If you need care on any of these days, and your educator indicates that she will be available for you, additional payment for that day may need to be made privately with the educator.

CARE HOURS AVAILABLE / LATE FEES

You will be provided with written confirmation of your day home educator's hours of care. Any care provided outside of these hours is a private arrangement between the parent and the educator.

Please accompany your child into the day home each morning. Always call if you are going to be delayed. If you are late dropping off or picking up your child/ren, please remember that this can be an inconvenience to your day home educator. Should you arrive late, after the day home operating hours have ended, your educator may charge you for the overtime period. Educators set their own late fees, which are payable directly to her. Whilst educators are dedicated, they also have family and other commitments, and appreciate your consideration in picking up on time.

FEES

As per our "Parent Agreement", **child care payments are due on the first working day of every month**. A \$30.00 late payment fee is applied to accounts not received in full by the 5th working day of the month. Failure to pay fees will result in suspension of child care and/or termination of care.

Our preferred method of payment is Preauthorized Debit (PAD). We can accept EFT (Electronic Funds Transfer), debit cards, or cash if a payment arrangement is required for special circumstances. A \$23.00 fee is charged on all NSF items.

CANADA-ALBERTA EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE AGREEMENT

The Federal and Provincial governments have entered into an agreement to make child care more affordable for families by providing operators with an Affordability Grant. This grant will apply to all families with children from infants to those who are not yet in Grade 1. Families do not need to apply for this grant, it will automatically be used to reduce the amount that you need to pay each month. Current Affordability Grant information can be found at the following link:

<https://www.alberta.ca/affordability-grants-for-child-care-programs>

SUPPLEMENTAL FEE

Programs are permitted to charge supplementary parent fees for services that are optional. For example, a supplemental fee may be charged for providing snacks and lunch, extended hours of care or specialized experiences for the children.

Declining optional services cannot be used to deny access to the program or justify the removal of any child from the program. Parents can stop the payment of supplemental fees by notifying in writing to their consultant and Educator.

PARENTS VACATION

The full monthly fee is payable regardless if your child is away due to vacation or illness. If your child attends 0 hours in a full calendar month, you are not eligible for the affordability grant. The Educator is entitled to the full fee; however, arrangements may be made directly with the Educator. Please advise your Educator and the agency prior to extended leave or holidays from your child's day home.

EDUCATOR VACATION

Should your educator be unavailable, it may be possible to arrange alternate care through another one of our day homes. If you require the agency's assistance to arrange alternate care, please call the day home office as soon as your educator informs you of dates that she is unavailable. Please keep in mind that depending on your requirements, the location will not always be as convenient as your regular day home. Should your Educator's closure impact your ability to reach your contracted hours, and you choose not to use Agency alternative care, your fees will be adjusted according to the Affordability Grant guidelines. **If the registered hours are unaffected by an Educator's closure there will be no reduction in your fees.**

ALTERNATE CARE / EMERGENCY CARE

In the event that your educator is sick, has an emergency etc., we ask that she contact you as soon as possible. Should you require care, please contact an educator on the Alternate Care list. The list is provided for you each month with your newsletter. If you cannot locate an alternate educator to care for your children, please contact the agency as soon as possible, and we will try to assist.

In the event that your educator needs to leave your child with an alternate caregiver for a short period of time (for example her husband), for things such as doctor/dentist appointments, the parent must complete an alternate care permission form. The alternate person is preapproved by the agency and have a criminal record check, be over 18 years of age, have provided references to the agency and hold a Level 1 Early Childhood Educator Certification.

RELEASE OF CHILD

At the time of registration, you will be asked to specify who will be picking up the child on a regular basis, and names of other individuals who have permission to pick up the child occasionally. Identification will be verified for these individuals prior to the release of the child. At no time will the educator release a child to someone whom she has not had prior permission from the parent. Parents will also be asked if there is any specific person who is not allowed access to the child. Depending on circumstances and in the case of custody issues, legal documentation such as restraining orders or court documents must be on file at the agency. We will take any and all necessary steps in order to ensure that all legal orders are followed.

In instances where a parent/guardian arrives to pick up their child and appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, there are direct implications for the safety of the child. Signs of being under the influence include slurred speech, staggering or swaying when walking, a strong odor of alcohol on their breath, loss of train of thought or not being able to follow normal conversation, dilated or extremely constricted pupils, etc. An educator who observes these signs will take the following steps in order to ensure that the child is going to be transported and cared for in a safe manner:

- Identify the concern to the parent and determine if they are driving.
- Assist the parent in finding alternate transportation and arranging for the emergency contact, or other adult designated by the parent, to pick up and care for the child.
- If the parent is resistant to obtaining alternate transportation and care for their child, the educator must then call the police (911) to report the situation.

Should a parent have more than one instance where this occurs, the educators are under a legal obligation to report the concern to Children's Services Child Intervention line.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION

In the event of fire, gas leaks or any other emergency that may close your day home, all children are evacuated to the emergency location. Please ensure that you have asked your educator for the location. Your educator is required to have their fire evacuation plan posted. Please make a point of reading this over. Fire drills/plans are to be conducted or discussed every month.

Should a situation require the day home to be closed for more than this one day, every attempt will be extended to make alternate care arrangements.

PROGRAMMING

Your educator will use the home environment to meet all of the developmental needs, including social, physical, intellectual, creative and emotional needs of each child in care. Stimulating, developmentally appropriate activities that are based on children's interests will be planned each day. Your child will have daily opportunities for outdoor play in a safe, stimulating, developmentally appropriate environment. Activities that reflect children's lives and incorporate multi-culturalism and diversity are planned. Activity plans are to be available for the parents to view.

TELEVISION AND TECHNOLOGY

Any use of television, DVD's and other types of technology (hand-held devices, computers, Play Stations, iPads, etc.) within the day home will be limited to no more than 30 minutes per day. Educators will ensure that all television and technology usage is intentional, developmentally appropriate, fits in with their program plan and has learning outcomes. Alternate activities are to be provided for children who do not wish to sit and watch television and for children under the age of 2.

WEATHER POLICY AND OUTDOOR CLOTHING REQUIREMENTS

Outdoor activities are a vital component of children's development and are part of your educator's daily programming. If your child is well enough to attend the day home then she/he is well enough to play outdoors. Parental requests to have children remain indoors cannot be accommodated.

Outdoor programming will take place during all seasons unless the temperature is below

-18°C. (-18°C air temperature or -18°C including the wind chill) This temperature reflects guidelines set by the Canadian Pediatric Society. Inclement weather such as heavy rain, storms, and health advisories, etc., may prevent this from occurring. Educators will take advantage of cooler parts of the day for activities when the temperature is very hot.

We request that parents provide the necessary clothing for outdoor play. This means cold weather gear, including snow pants, hats and mittens for winter and a sun hat, water bottle and sunscreen in the summer.

DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING

As an Early Learning and Child Care environment we recognize the importance of ensuring that children are meeting their developmental milestones. We will be using the Ages and Stages Questionnaires (agesandstages.com), which will help us to identify potential developmental concerns as early as possible. Should the questionnaire reveal any concerns, you will be notified and asked to complete a second screening. We will work in partnership with parents to support their child's on-going development.

CHILD GUIDANCE POLICY

It is the agency's intent to ensure that any child guidance technique will be age appropriate and positive. Please discuss with your educator any strategies that are effective with your child, as every attempt will be made to provide consistency while your child is at the day home. Methods must be consistent with our philosophy.

Discipline **will not include, under any circumstances** any physical punishment, hitting, spanking, shoving, or require a child to repeat inappropriate physical movements. Discipline will also not include any abusive language, emotional deprivation, physical degradation, loud and/or aggressive statements or time out. Children will not be confined, isolated nor physically restrained. Children will not be threatened to be denied, nor actually denied any form of basic necessities.

Educators use logical consequences for children to help them learn from their actions in a way that is respectful, educational and connected to their behavior. The goal is not to punish, but to teach responsibility and decision making.

- Positive reinforcement of desirable behavior(s) must be the predominant child guidance approach. Children tend to repeat those behaviors that are satisfying and rewarding.
- Educators will be pro-active in their guidance of children's behavior(s) by ensuring the environment meets the needs of the children, that the children understand the

expectations as they move through their day and that programming and communication is developmentally appropriate.

- Children will be reminded, when necessary, of appropriate boundaries, given choices whenever possible, and/or re-directed to other activities.
- Educators will use a positive approach to help children problem solve by listening to them and encouraging them to verbalize their feelings.
- When developmentally appropriate, educators will guide children through problem solving, giving them the words or actions to use to solve issues with other children.
- Educators will be consistent and firm in enforcing socially appropriate behaviors and interactions between children. They will also take into consideration the individuality of each child and choose the most effective methods of guiding children's behaviors.

In the event that there is a re-occurring concern regarding a child's behavior, it is important that the parent and the educator discuss the possible strategies to help work through the behaviors. The agency is also available to provide suggestions.

FOOD

For children who are in the day home for a full day, the educator will offer a nutritious morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack. Food offered to children in our programs must follow the Canada's Food Guide or the Alberta Nutrition Guidelines, this includes meals and snacks provided by parents. Please ask your educator where the menus are posted. Should your child have specific dietary requirements, you may be asked to supply those items.

It is the parent's responsibility to provide all baby food, and formula for bottles. Once your child is eating "table food", the day home educator will supply this.

PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of each parent to accompany his/her child to the day home each morning. This is an ideal time to exchange information regarding the evening/night. *Parents must inform the educator if their child will not be in attendance.*

The day home office and educator must also be informed of any changes such as new address, telephone numbers or emergency contact persons.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents will be consulted about decisions that relate to their child's care. It is important that the parent and educator work in partnership on issues such as child guidance, self-help skills, feeding, toileting, etc. Educators respect that parents are the child's primary

caregiver.

Parents can be involved in their child's care in variety of ways. The parent can contribute to a smooth transition to childcare by engaging in positive discussions regarding the day home with their child. If a child senses that you are uncomfortable with your care arrangement, this may cause distress or fear for your child. Another type of involvement is for parents to contribute to the day home in some capacity, whether it is by donating supplies or equipment, or accompanying your child on field trips or demonstrating a special skill, hobby or cultural celebration. Lastly, parents can volunteer and take part in decision-making and advisory roles. This involvement usually takes the form of attending the Annual General Meeting or being on the Board of Directors. You will be advised in advance of the AGM by the agency. Please contact the Executive Director for more information if you are interested in being on the Board of Directors.

Executive Director Sara Langille slinden@thornhillchildcare.com

ILLNESS POLICY

Parents play an important part in preventing the spread of illnesses in child care settings by keeping their child home while he or she is sick.

When your child becomes ill at the day home, your educator will contact you **to arrange for the immediate removal of your child** if he or she has any of the following symptoms:

- Vomiting, or diarrhea
- Fever (a temperature of greater than 38 degrees Celsius);
- A new and unexplained rash or cough; or
- Requiring greater care and attention than can be provided without compromising the care of the other children;

Once your child has been sent home, he or she will not be able to return until they have been **symptom-free for at least 24 hours** or your educator receives a note from your child's physician.

MEDICATION AND HERBAL REMEDIES

In the event that medications or herbal remedies are to be given to a child, the following guidelines must be followed: **Absolutely no medication of any kind whatsoever will be given under any circumstances without a "permission to administer medication" form being completed and signed by the parent.** This must indicate consent, the specific signs and symptoms under which the medication is to be administered, with the amounts and

times clearly stipulated in the directions. Educators have medication forms in their homes. The medication, in the original container, is to be provided by the parent, and is to be clearly identified as belonging to their child. The dosage of the medication also needs to be clearly marked on the consent form. Expired medication cannot be administered.

CLOTHING

Please make sure that your children have sufficient clothing for each day. Play clothes for inside and outdoors should always be available to your educator. Day home educators are not responsible for lost or damaged clothing, or the washing of soiled clothing.

Please supply extra changes of appropriate clothing for your infant/toddler, whose clothes may need to be changed more than once during the day. Parents are responsible for providing diapers, wipes, diaper creams and a non-porous change pad.

VISITS - INSPECTION

Consultants from the agency visit the educators on a monthly basis. These visits are generally unannounced. Our Alberta Children's Services Child Care Licensing officer also visits approximately 10% of our homes annually.

TERMINATION

All parents are required to provide and pay for two weeks notice of intent to terminate services with the day home agency. The paid two weeks enables the educator to attempt to place another child in the day home, and thus not interrupting her income. The parent is responsible for providing written notice to both the agency and the educator. In the event that no notice is provided, your account will still be charged the equivalent of two weeks care. Thornhill Child Care Society contracts the services of a collection agency to collect accounts that are in arrears.

The agency or the educator may terminate services by giving you two weeks written notice if it is felt that the child care arrangement is no longer beneficial. Termination may take effect immediately should the agency or educator feel that there is a threat to the safety of others.

CONCERNS

Within the day home: Day to day concerns should be addressed with your educator. If you have a concern regarding the overall program, or with an educator's approach, we ask that you call or e-mail your day home Consultant. Should this not prove satisfactory, we ask that you discuss the concern with the Executive Director. If you have a concern regarding a policy or procedure, and have gone through the appropriate channels, you can present your concern to the Board of Director's collectively, or to the Chairperson individually.

Externally: Concerns regarding non-compliances can be lodged to:

Childcare Connect

Phone: 1-844-644-5165

Email: JET.childcareconnect@gov.ab.ca

Complainant identity is not divulged. All complaints regarding non-compliance to the Standards will be investigated. Written complaints will be responded to in writing indicating whether the complaint was verified and that appropriate action was taken.

INVESTIGATIONS

Complaints or concerns may come from a parent or child, the Consultant, another educator, or a community member. One of the roles of a day home agency is to report concerns that seriously affect the health or safety of a child to [Childcare Connect](#). Serious incidents may include allegations of abuse, an injury requiring medical care or a lost child. An investigation may be conducted by childcare licencing or referred back to the agency. Incidents could result in a closure of a day home as a safety measure until an investigation is concluded. Thornhill's policy is to investigate all concerns and complaints referred back to the agency within a timely manner, through a home visit, conversations with parents or interview with the educator. Thornhill will assist childcare licencing with investigations as required and will support the Educator and follow-up as directed. At the conclusion of the investigation, we will communicate the outcome to the complainant and the parent of the child involved.

RESOURCES

Resources/information relating to child care can be found on the Government of Alberta website (<https://www.alberta.ca/child-care/>.) Your Day home Consultant can provide you with many resources related to child development and parenting.

Community Resources

- **211 Alberta**-Find programs and services in your community <https://ab.211.ca/>
- **Closer to Home Community Services**- offers a wide range of services designed to meet the unique needs of children, youth and families. (403)543-0550 <https://closerhome.com/>
- **Families Matter**-Offers programs and classes for parents/caregivers with children from prenatal to grandparenting. (403)205-5178 <https://www.familiesmatter.ca/faq/>
- **CIWA**-supports immigrant and refugee women, girls and their families. (403)444-1758 <https://www.ciwa-online.com/>
- **Children's Cottage Society**- Building strong children and safe nurturing families through prevention programs and support services. 24/7 Crisis Line: (403)233-CARE (2273) Main Office: (403)283-4200 <http://childrencottage.ab.ca/>

- **Miskanawah Community Services Association-** Miskanawah is a multi-service organization, offering programs for children, youth, families, and community. **(403)247-5003**
<https://miskanawah.ca/home>

Personal Information Protection Policy

Thornhill Child Care Society is committed to safeguarding the personal information entrusted to us by our clients. We manage your personal information in accordance with Alberta's *Personal Information Protection Act* and other applicable laws. This policy outlines the principles and practices we follow in protecting your personal information.

This policy applies to Thornhill Child Care Society, including Thornhill Family Dayhome Agency and Thornhill ECS. The policy also applies to any person providing services on our behalf.

What is personal information?

Personal information means information about an identifiable individual. This includes an individual's name, home address and phone number, date of birth, work place information, medical information, etc.

What personal information do we collect?

We collect only the personal information that we need for the purposes of providing services to our clients, and that is required by law, including personal information needed to:

- Enroll a child in one of our programs.
- Record lists of individuals who show interest in our program and wish to be on our waiting list.
- Issue forms and reports such as Accident/Incident reports, Medication Administration forms, Report Cards, Attendance sheets, Observations, etc.
- Ensure the medical well-being of a child including medical conditions and allergies as well as contact information in case of an emergency.
- Collect fees and ensure payment of fees.

We normally collect client information directly from the parents who use our service. We may collect your information from other persons with your consent or as authorized by law.

We inform our clients, before or at the time of collecting personal information, of the purposes for which we are collecting the information.

Consent

We ask for consent to collect, use or disclose personal information, except in specific circumstances where collection, use or disclosure without consent is authorized or required by law. We will assume your consent in cases where you volunteer information for an obvious purpose as in the case of registering your child in one of our programs.

In cases where we collected personal information before January 1, 2004, we assume your consent to use and where applicable disclosure for the purpose for which the information was collected.

We ask for your express consent for some purposes and may not be able to provide certain services if you are unwilling to provide consent to the collection, use, or disclosure of certain personal information. Where express consent is needed, we will ask clients to provide their consent in writing by signing a consent form. An example of this would be referrals to outside agencies or programs to assist a child with counseling, therapy, etc.

A client may withdraw consent to the use and disclosure of personal information at any time, unless the personal information is necessary for us to fulfill our legal obligations. We will respect your decision, but we may not be able to provide you with certain services if we do not have the necessary personal information.

We may collect, use or disclose personal information without consent only as authorized by law. For example, we may not request consent when the collection, use or disclosure is reasonable to collect a debt owed to our Society, when reporting suspected child abuse or neglect to authorities, or in an emergency that threatens life, health or safety.

How do we use and disclose personal information?

We use and disclose client personal information only for the purposes for which the information was collected, except as authorized by law. Some examples of the way we use and disclose information are:

- To provide child care
- To respond to medical and health emergencies or crisis situations
- To create displays using child's birth date, family, class or event pictures, etc.

- To report to regulatory bodies such as Child Care Licensing, Child and Family Service Authorities, and Calgary Health Region as required by law
- To give verbal reports of a child's day to a parent/guardian requesting information over the telephone
- To release children's first and last names to photographer

How do we safeguard personal information?

We make every reasonable effort to ensure that client information is accurate and complete. We rely on our clients to notify us if there is a change to their personal information. If you are aware of an error in our information about you, please let us know and we will correct it on request whenever possible. In some cases we may ask for a written request for correction.

We protect personal information in a manner appropriate for the sensitivity of the information. We make every reasonable effort to prevent any loss, misuse, disclosure or modification of personal information, as well as any unauthorized access to personal information. We use appropriate security measures when destroying personal information, including shredding paper records. We retain personal information only as long as is required for legal or business purposes.

Access to records containing personal information

Clients of Thornhill Child Care Society have a right of access to their own personal information in a record that is in our custody or under our control, subject to some exceptions. For example, we are required to refuse to provide access to information that would reveal personal information about another individual.

If we refuse a request in whole or in part, we will provide the reason for the refusal. In some cases where exceptions to access apply, we may withhold that information and provide you with the remainder of the record. You may make a request for access to your personal information by writing to The Executive Director. You must provide sufficient information to allow us to identify the information you are seeking.

You may request information about our use of your personal information and any disclosure of the information to persons outside of our Society. You may also request a correction of an error or omission in your personal information.

We will respond to your request within 45 calendar days, unless an extension is granted. We may charge a reasonable fee to provide information, but not to make a correction. We will advise you of any fee that may apply before beginning to process your request.

Questions and Complaints

If you have a question or concern about any collection, use or disclosure of personal information by Thornhill Child Care Society, or about a request for access to your own personal information, please contact the Executive Director at 274-2335. If you are not satisfied with the response you receive, you should contact the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Alberta:

Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Alberta

Suite 500, 640 – 5th Avenue, SW

Calgary, Alberta, T2P 3G4

E-mail: generalinfo@oipc.ab.ca

Phone: 297-2728

Web site: www.oipc.ab.ca

Thornhill Child Care Society Organizational Chart

