



Boys & Girls Club
of Cochrane & Area
A Good Place To Be



FAMILY DAY HOME AGENCY

Promoting Development Through Play

Parent Manual

The Play Days Family Day Home Agency Mission Statement:

Play Days seeks to support, develop and promote child care provision that reflects safe and positive environments, to nurture the growth, development, and well-being of all children who access a family day home through our agency.

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Introduction

Welcome to Play Days Family Day Home Agency (Play Days). We are pleased that you have chosen a provider from our agency for your child care. Play Days was established on April 1, 2007 under a contract with the Supported Child Care Program, Region 3 of the Child and Family Services. We are a non-profit organization run by a volunteer governance board under the umbrella of the Boys and Girls Club of Cochrane and Area (BGCCA). Our agency is a member in good standing of the Alberta Family Child Care Association, the Canadian Child Care Federation and the Alberta Association for the Accreditation of Early Learning and Care Services.

Play Days seeks to provide inclusive, individualized child care through a play based program. We have standards in place for health, safety, nutrition, child to provider ratios and supervision. We believe that professional child care is vital to healthy communities and therefore provide resources, support and training to our providers. We also believe that all families should have equal access to high quality, professional child care and will work with you to access government subsidy or alternative assistance if you require it.

This manual was written to familiarize parents with the procedures and policies of our program.

After reading this manual if you have any additional questions or concerns please contact us.

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Vision Statement

At Play Days our aim is to provide a child care program that enables children to reach their full potential through play-based experiences.

Program Philosophy

Play Days seeks to offer a safe and positive environment for each child to grow and develop their personalities and skills in a happy and caring environment.

Our agency recognizes that young children learn to be happy and successful through play based activities. A balanced program of interaction and the freedom to explore their own natural curiosity will allow each child the opportunity to challenge and develop their confidence, self-esteem and sense of self-worth in a family setting.

Family Day Home Provider

A family day home provider is a self-employed individual contracted to our agency to provide professional child care in their personal residence. Our agency carefully screens and selects our providers, obtaining criminal record checks, personal and medical references and performing safety checks on each home. Each provider is subject to an unannounced visit monthly to provide direction and support and ensure that best practices are maintained.

Providers must be certified in Standard First Aid and CPR; they must participate in 6 professional development training sessions and/or workshops as required by Play Days. This professional development enhances the quality of care your child(ren) will receive. Play Days supplies providers with resources such as a toy and equipment lending library, a resource library and administrative forms which enable them to offer your child the best quality of care.

Play Days family day home providers may have a maximum of 6 children under the age of 13, including their own at any one time. Of the 6 children, there can be no more than 2 children under the age of 2 and no more than 3 under the age of 3. They are required to adhere to the policies and procedures of the Play Days and the regulations set out by Calgary and Area Child and Family Services (CACFS), Accreditation of Early Learning and Care Services and the bylaws of the Town of Cochrane.

Types of Care

Full time care - a child in care for 4 or 5 full days per week is considered full time and the parent is required to pay a full time fee.

Part time care - a child in care for 1 to 3 days per week is considered part time and the parent is required to pay for all scheduled days of care.

Drop in care - a child in care for less than 1 day per week is considered drop in and pays a daily rate with no minimum fee required.

Statutory Holidays

Day home providers do not typically work on statutory holidays so if you require care on any of the following days it will be a private arrangement. The cost is to be paid to your provider in addition to your regular fees.

The following is a list of the statutory holidays observed in Alberta:

- New Year's Day
- Family Day
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- Victoria Day
- Canada Day
- Heritage Day
- Labour Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Remembrance Day
- Christmas Day
- Boxing Day

Hours of Service

Play Days day home providers will establish their own hours of operation, but will typically offer care Monday to Friday between the hours of 7:00 am to 6:00 pm. Individual providers may also offer extended hour or weekend care. You must determine the hours of care and appropriate drop off and pick up times with your provider when signing a contract. Your provider must be notified if you will be earlier or later than your specified times. Please note that your provider is under no obligation to wait for your arrival without adequate notice of the late arrival.

A late fee may also be applied if a parent exceeds their contracted hours of care. If this becomes a regular arrangement then the agreed Child Care Contract will be reviewed. However if it is an occasional incident then the provider will charge you directly for this time.

No provider may care for a child for more than 18 hours in any 24 hour period. It is recommended by CACFS that children are not in care more than 10 hours per day.

Fees

Child care fees will be invoiced for the prior month by the 5th of the following month, and are fees are due by the 8th of each month. .

Payment will be made by electronic funds transfer (EFT). You will receive an email of your invoice.

A \$25 insufficient funds fee will be charged to all accounts for returned EFT withdrawals. Fees not received within two months of invoice date will be reviewed at the discretion of the Executive Management Team of the BGCCA. Non-payment of fees may result in the discontinuation of a parents child care services. Please contact the Director of Operations regarding any financial concerns.

Providers offer full time, part time and drop in rates. You must determine your rate with your provider when signing a contract.

A 12% agency fee will be added each month to cover administration costs. (insurance, provider training, safety checks, licensing approvals, etc.).

You will be notified of any fee changes, with two billing months' notice given.

Subsidy

Since Play Days is a government regulated agency, subsidies are available to help offset the cost of child care for those families who meet the eligibility criteria. Parents are responsible for maintaining current subsidy and meeting all subsidy requirements. Any fees not covered by subsidy are the responsibility of the parent(s).

Due to FOIP (Freedom of Information and Privacy Act) regulations Play Days does not receive information regarding subsidies from the subsidy office. Therefore to ensure correct billing we ask that you provide our office with a copy of your subsidy authorization letter. If you do not or are unable to provide Play Days with this information, we will require full payments from you by the due dates and will reimburse you once we receive subsidy payments from the Government (usually 6-8 weeks following the billing month).

For more information about our policy please speak with the Play Days Coordinator. For more information on subsidy or to verify eligibility criteria please go to <http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/financial-support/15104.htm>. We are always available to discuss subsidy or alternative funding options with you.

Registration

Parents must fill out a registration application and pay a \$40 non-refundable registration fee to Play Days. This fee will be added to the parent's first invoice once they have found a day home to place their child in. It is a one-time fee per family, and will not be charged again if a client family has a period of absence, then returns to the agency. This money is used to offset administrative costs incurred in setting up accounts and files. After completing the online registration form, we ask you to also complete a child profile outlining eating habits, sleep patterns and likes and dislikes. These forms will be provided by the Play Days team.

After an initial collection of information, we will supply you with a current list of providers that will meet your requirements. Every effort is made at this time to appropriately match providers and families according to your child's needs. You will also have the opportunity to view an approved family day home Provider's Profile, which includes information about home visits, complaints received and any incidents that have occurred in the provider's home.

We encourage you to interview with as many of the providers on the list as possible to ensure you find the best match for your family.

Child Care Contracts

Once you have chosen your provider you will sign a contract, all of which come with a two week trial period which comes into effect upon commencement of care. This enables you to remove your child from care within the two week trial period with no further financial obligation to that provider. You may then transfer to another day home within the agency. The provider also may choose to terminate care at this time, again with no further obligation.

Following the two week trial period, the long term contract will be in effect. Please go over the contract carefully with your provider as it will determine your hours of care and fees. You or your provider may amend the contract at any time should your child care needs change, if both parties agree to the changes. Copies of the contract go to the provider, Play Days and to you.

Once in Care

Once in care you should be discussing your child(ren)'s progress openly with your provider. If you feel that your provider is not addressing your concerns adequately you may contact the Play Days staff who can assist you in approaching your provider.

In order to aid your provider with programming the daily activities and with your consent Play Days utilizes the Ages and Stages Screening Tool which allows us to track each child's development. Providers will share the information learned from the screens with the parent(s) and use the information for developmentally appropriate programming.

Your provider will keep you informed of menus, activities and newsletters via the bulletin board located in the home. There is also provider and agency information in the Play Days binder at the day home.

Please note that every provider has an open door policy. If for any reason you need to discuss issues or simply want to check in, please don't hesitate to contact your provider.

Child Attendance Records

Parents must fill out and initial exact time of drop-off and pick-up on their child's attendance records daily. At month end you must sign the totaled attendance sheet. These sheets are then returned to the agency and the information is submitted to the CACFS.

It is imperative that parent(s) sign the totaled attendance sheet at the end of the month. This will allow parent(s) to talk with providers about any concerns regarding monthly statements for child care before parent(s) are emailed their invoices.

Backup Care

As a registered and licensed day home agency, Play Days can offer alternate care to parents of children in one of our day homes in the following circumstances;

- Their usual provider is closed and away on vacation;
- Their usual provider has closed due to sickness of themselves or their own child(ren);
- There has been an outbreak of a contagious illness in the day home and the usual provider has been advised to close to disinfect the home, toys and equipment. (Play Days does reserve the right in this circumstance to not offer alternate care to prevent the spread of the illness to other day homes); or
- Their usual provider has had to close the day home and withdraw services for emergency reasons, (i.e. a fire, gas leak etc.).

This service is not guaranteed and depends on the availability of providers and spaces/ratios. It may not always be possible to offer alternate care if a suitable space is not available.

Expectations

Day home provider

It is expected that the day home provider will inform the parents of any closure and withdrawal of services giving as much notice as can be reasonably expected. The provider must inform the parent of the expected duration of closure, if known.

It is expected that the provider will then inform the agency of their upcoming closure and pass on the names of children who will be needing backup care, their ages and regular days and hours.

For the closure of a day home due to illness or an emergency, it is reasonable to expect that the provider will keep the parent(s) updated regularly in terms of the duration of the closure and, in regards to illness, will inform the parent(s) if it is a contagious illness. If the closure is last minute, the provider will contact the parent(s) and advise them to contact a member of the Play Days staff and supply contact details if necessary.

The provider must also inform a member of Play Days staff that they have had to close at short notice either by phone, text or email, including the reason for the closure and the duration.

It is not the responsibility of the provider to find alternate care. The provider may give parent(s) contact information of possible alternative care providers.

If time permits, it is expected that the day home provider will email the backup provider with useful information about the child(ren) such as nap times, favourite foods and activities so the backup provider can help the child to feel comfortable while at their home. The email can be obtained from a member of Play Days staff.

A backup care consent form needs to be signed by the parent(s) and kept in their child's file at the office. This is a licensing requirement. The backup care provider will ask parent(s) to sign this consent form when they arrive on the first morning of care.

Agency staff

It is expected that the Play Days will try to find alternate care for children within the network of Play Days day homes and communicate with and inform providers and parents of available back up providers and their contact details

The availability of spaces is dependent on ratios and ages and it may not always be possible to offer an alternate day home.

The Play Days staff is responsible for supplying the backup provider with the necessary information for having the child(ren) for backup care at their day home such as any medical conditions, allergies, health care numbers etc.

Parents

The parent(s) is expected to inform their provider or contact a member of Play Days staff to confirm their need for backup care at an alternate Play Days day home. At this

time they will need to communicate the number and ages of the children, the days and dates required and the time of drop off and collection.

The parent(s), if alternate care can be found, is then expected to communicate with the backup provider for their address and in agreeing to use their day home for backup care. If time permits, the parent(s) may wish to visit the alternate backup provider and their day home before the period of backup care begins. This will need to be arranged through the backup provider and the parent(s).

Confirming backup care

It is expected that the parent(s) will confirm their need for backup care with an alternate Play Days provider. The backup provider is not expected to guarantee the space if no verbal or written confirmation is received and may offer the space to another family if another request for backup care is received. If care is confirmed by the parent(s), and the child does not attend, the parent(s) will be invoiced by the backup provider for the day that their child was expected.

Recording and paying for backup care

Backup care is paid to the backup provider at the rate of the child(ren)'s usual provider. If the usual rate is a set fee a daily rate will be calculated by Play Days .

The backup care provider will record any care provided on a backup care timesheet that will be submitted to Play Days staff along with their usual timesheets on the last working day of the month.

The child(ren)'s usual provider will record on the child(ren)'s usual timesheet that the child used backup care by writing the abbreviation BA on the date/s the child was in backup care and adding a note to advise the Play Days finance department of this for invoicing purposes.

Parents are expected to sign both their child(ren)'s usual timesheet and the backup care timesheet to acknowledge this.

Parents will be invoiced in the usual way and make one payment. The Play Days finance department will then pay the usual provider and the backup provider accordingly from the parent's child care fees. This will show on the providers pay invoices only.

Cancelling backup care

Once backup care has been confirmed at an alternate Play Days day home the parent(s) is liable to pay for it unless 48 hours' notice is given to cancel care. Notice should be given directly to the backup care provider offering care.

If a child is expected at a day home for backup care and does not attend, the parent(s) will still be billed for the agreed backup care.

Last minute backup care

If a need for backup care arises last minute due to provider sickness or sickness of their own child(ren) or an emergency situation, it is expected that the parent(s) will contact a

member of agency staff to inform them of this. If this is out of office hours, parents are advised to call the Play Days staff's cell phone and not the office number.

The agency staff will then call providers to enquire about their availability and will communicate directly with the parent if alternate care can be found.

Again, the service is not guaranteed and is dependent on availability of spaces, ages and ratios. The provider can choose not to offer backup care if there is a possibility that the child(ren) have been exposed to the sickness/illness at their usual day home.

Parents will be invoiced in the same way for last minute backup care. Providers will record last minute backup care and be paid in the same way as set out above. Once a parent has verbally confirmed last minute backup care with an alternate provider they will be liable to pay for that day.

Backup care at a private day home

Play Days cannot offer care at a private day home that is not part of our network.

If a parent finds care at a private day home it is a separate agreement from the one they have with their Play Days provider and they are responsible for all arrangements, communication and paying of fees.

If a parent sends their child to a private day home their Play Days provider will note on their provider timesheet that they were closed and on the child's timesheet that no agency backup care was used with the abbreviation NB. A Play Days provider cannot bill a parent for these days and then use the money to pay for the backup care at a private day home.

Parent Vacations

Full time and part time parents are required to pay for all scheduled days of child care including absences due to illness and vacation. Parents taking extended vacation (one or more months) are required to give their provider a two week termination of care notice form. This will end your contract and should the provider have space available once you are ready to resume care a new contract must be signed. Alternative arrangements to this policy may be set up at your provider's discretion.

Provider Vacations

Providers will give a minimum of 2 weeks' notice to parents of vacation days. Backup care will be offered through an alternate provider. Parent fees will be refunded on your next invoice for provider vacation and days that the home is closed due to illness should you choose not to access backup care.

Emergency Evacuation

In the event of an emergency such as a fire or gas leak, that requires the evacuation of your day home the children will be taken to an alternate location. Please discuss the evacuation procedure with your provider when signing a contract.

The evacuation plan will be practiced monthly with the children. The evacuation plan and monthly fire drill record is available for viewing in your Play Days providers binder. Children will be transported in accordance with the Alberta Transportation and Utilities guidelines as outlined in the Motor Transport Act. For information see www.saferoads.com/childsafetyseats/pdf.

Nutrition

Nutritious foods according to the Canada Food Guide will be provided at all meal and snack times. Menus will be made available on your provider's bulletin board.

Providers must supplement meals and snacks when food supplied by parent(s) does not meet the Canada Food Guide Standards.

Formula, breast milk and baby food is to be supplied by the parent.

No beverages will be given to children while napping.

Illness

Sick child(ren) are the responsibility of their parent(s) and should not be taken to the day home. Should child(ren) become ill at the day home the provider will call the parent(s) or, if unable to reach the parent, alternate contact, to pick up their child(ren).

A child must be free of a fever exceeding 101° F or 38.5° C and symptoms of diarrhea or vomiting for at least 24 hours before returning to the day home.

Where a doctor confirms that your child has a communicable illness they must be excluded from care until such time as the doctor deems it safe to return (a doctor's note will be required).

If there is an outbreak of a contagious illness in a day home all parents will be notified and can choose to use alternate care until such time as they feel it safe to return.

All communicable illnesses must be reported to Play Days within 24 hours. If an individual with a communicable illness receives a physician's note that states they no longer pose a health risk to others, that person may return to the provider's residence.

Medication/Health Care

Medication will only be administered when a medication administration log is filled in and signed. Parental consent form is required to provide or allow health care. Prescription medication must be in its original, labeled container and must have dosage for the child. Over the counter medications and herbal remedies must also be in their original container and must have dosage instructions for the age or weight of the child. **Parents must give individual training to providers on all emergency medication and medical conditions. Medications will only be administered to the child the medication is prescribed for.**

Parents should inform their provider of all medications administered at home. This will enable the provider to watch for adverse reactions to medications.

Medication spoons or syringes must be supplied by the parent. Medications and vitamins in the day home must be kept under lock and key. Providers will return medication to parents at the end of each day.

Children who require immediate emergency medical services will be taken to the Alberta Children's Hospital by EMS (ambulance) or the parent of the child. The Play Days provider will NOT transport children who require emergency medical services.

Information Records

To ensure confidentiality Play Days staff and providers have signed confidentiality agreements. Parent files in the Play Days office will be stored in a locked unit and will only be accessed by eligible Play Days staff. CFS will have access to records upon request. Files in provider's homes are to be kept in the Play Days binder for access in case of an emergency. Records are kept for 7 years then shredded for disposal.

Please ensure all records are updated and maintained whenever necessary and given to either your provider or Play Days immediately.

Termination of Care

Two weeks written notice or two weeks child care fees in lieu for immediate withdrawal are required. No exceptions. A form is available if necessary from your provider. If for any reason your provider wishes to terminate the Child Care Contract, then they must also provide two weeks written notice to the parents.

Child Behavior Management Policy

Play Days providers will use a combination of preventative measures and intervention strategies to help children manage their behavior and express themselves both verbally and non-verbally. Our goal is for children to learn self-control and ensure that they do not injure themselves or others. Through modeling, supervision and positive

reinforcement providers can help prevent behavioral issues before they begin. However should an issue arise, a provider will intervene and redirect a child to a new activity. Children will also be encouraged to problem solve on their own using age appropriate methods.

No Play Days provider or agency staff may at any time: 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 physical restraint, confinement or isolation. No verbal or written consent to administer such punishment will be accepted by your provider or Play Days.

Please discuss your personal strategies with your provider to maintain consistency for your child.

Complaints and Grievances

Play Days and all the providers within our network have an open door policy. When an issue arises it should be dealt with immediately with your provider. If you are not satisfied with the action taken you should then contact the Play Days Coordinator. If we are unable to come to a satisfactory conclusion we will approach the Director of Operations of the BGCCA. At this time if you are still not satisfied with the support you have received you may contact our Early Learning and Child Care Specialist at the CACFS.

For after hours please call 403 605 5253

All complaints and grievances are followed-up by Play Days through a home visit or interview with the provider and at the conclusion of the investigation communicate the outcome to the complainant and the parent(s) of the child(ren) involved if they are not the complainant. All complaints are submitted to the CFS.

Release of children

Play Days providers may only release children to the child(ren)'s parent(s) or person(s) designated within the Child Care Contract. In the case of an emergency, a telephone call from the parent(s) authorizing the release of the child(ren) may be acceptable; however personal identification will be requested from the designate by the provider before the child(ren) is released.

If there are other situations such as restraining orders or sole custody agreements please inform your provider and provide the supporting documentation.

Transportation of Children

Children may be transported in the provider's vehicle, for the purpose of field trips or outings. The provider will transport children in car safety seats that are installed in accordance to the manufacturer's installation instructions and the Alberta Transportation and Utilities guidelines as outlined in the Motor Transport Act. For information see www.saferoads.com/childsafetyseats/pdf.

The provider will retain a minimum of **\$1,000,000** third party liability car insurance and notify their insurance company that they transport children within their day home.

The daily trips consent form covers outings within Cochrane however a separate field trip form must be filled out for outings outside of Cochrane town limits.

Programming

Providers offer a variety of activities, both provider-directed and child initiated, in the day home. Programming is flexible in order to accommodate the children's individual needs, and a balance of quiet and active types of play. Developmental needs including, social, physical, intellectual, creative and emotional needs are considered in programming.

It is the provider's role to facilitate and initiate developmentally appropriate activities and opportunities. They interact with the children and intervene when necessary, to enrich, extend, reinforce and clarify experiences. Outdoor play is vital in this programming and providers are encouraged to take the children out daily. Activity planners are posted on your provider's bulletin board.

In keeping with Play Days standards children may not watch more than 45 minutes of television per day and the programs chosen must be developmentally appropriate, unbiased, culturally sensitive and must not contain violence or sexually explicit material.

Computer and video games are not to be used by children in care. Trampolines are not to be used by children in care. Hot tubs or private pools are not to be used by children in care.

Clothing and Supplies

An adequate supply of diapers, personal hygiene materials, sun screen, hats, shoes and appropriate changes of clothing for each child must be left by the parent with the provider. Parents **must** ensure that the child is dressed appropriately for the changing weather.

Parents may also wish to bring a favorite blanket or toy for nap time.

Home Visits and Inspections

Play Days staff will monitor all active providers a minimum of six times per year (every two months) with both scheduled and unscheduled visits. These visits serve as a monitoring and support tool for our providers. At this time any issues can be addressed and resources that a provider may need can be distributed. Play Days will document all non-compliances by a provider and ensure that they are adequately addressed to ensure compliance with Ministry Standards. You will be notified of all documentation and follow up via email.

Play Days staff will also visit all active day homes every two months for the purpose of quality enhancement activities, for a total of 12 visits per year.

A CFS approved Home Safety Inspection checklist will also be conducted on each day home twice a year. You will be notified of all documentation and follow up via email.

If a day home chooses to operate extended hours, Play Days will do a home visit and/or monitoring visit during those hours. The agency will be available at these extended hours via emergency cell phone number (403 605 5253).

A representative of the CACFS will also visit 10% of Play Days day homes during their annual visitation.

Profile, Performance and Training

Play Days must create at least six opportunities each year to bring family day home providers together for training, consultation, information sharing, or problem solving. The providers must, in partnership with Play Days, develop and implement a written training plan for each provider. This must be signed by both provider and Play Days staff member. In addition, a provider profile will be completed for all prospective parents to review at the Play Days office. A performance assessment will be completed at least once a year for each approved provider. The assessment will include a review of the provider's history of compliance to standards, training and professional development, parent satisfaction, and history of complaints and incidents. This will be used to determine if the provider should maintain their approval status.

Policy Review

In an effort to constantly improve Play Days will review this manual on a regular basis. To aid us in this process parent, provider and staff input will be sought out. Staff, providers and parents will be informed of any changes via email.

This Parent Manual may be amended at any time.