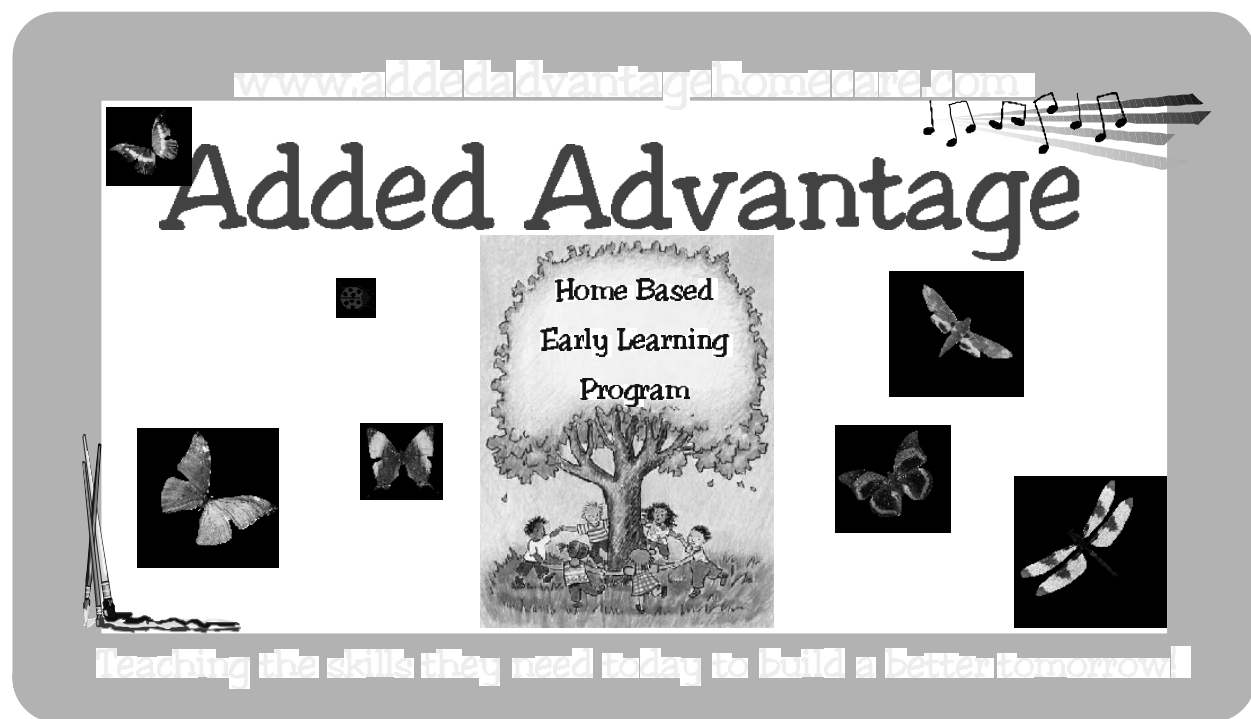


Family Guide to the



www.addedadvantagehomecare.com

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About the Added Advantage Home-based Early Learning Program

Mission Statement

My mission, as a Home based Early Learning program, is to combine the best of what I have learned over twenty years in licensed childcare with the flexibility, family focus and familiarity of a home environment. My home's play area environment has been specifically designed with children in mind providing the optimum learning environment for the development of the whole child, while meeting the daycare needs of today's busy family. Creating an environment and relationship where we, families and caregiver, work together to continuously achieve the best early learning experience for all children.

Philosophy

As an educator I strive to create a program that comes alive daily with the joy and magic of new discoveries and possibilities; a small community where people can make meaningful and positive connections that last a lifetime; where we are surrounded by beautiful materials and resources that push us to new places; where we are given the time we need to explore, discover and create personal masterpieces that enrich our souls; where all our works are seen as valuable and recognized by others as worthy of admiration.

An environment where there is an inert culture that supports continual growth for all who come through the doors, whether they are young or old; where all persons are seen as amazing, capable, and full of potential; where all persons feel supported to say or try anything; where every attempt made is celebrated and everyone knows they are safe to 'fail with dignity'; where the possibilities are endless and there is no box to think outside of; a place where each and everyone of us is valued for our expertise and ideas in the true spirit of collaboration.

As an educator I strive to create a community of hope – where we all see in ourselves that we have the power to move mountains to make our dreams come alive and settle for nothing short of astounding in each and every experience and interaction with our children, with our families and with each other.

A community, banding together, striving to generate new ideas, new attitudes and endless possibilities around building a future for our children, one that will ensure that each and every family in our communities begin their child's journey feeling supported, nurtured and excited and moves on to their next stage of life with a road map of inspiring memories to help them navigate this journey we call life with their best foot forward.

Curriculum Philosophy

My home-based program has a focus on providing children with positive, joyful early learning experiences in a loving stimulating environment. Through daily play experiences, the children will be involved in situations that will help them develop socially, emotionally, physically, creatively and intellectually.

The works of educators in Reggio Emilia, Italy inspires my program philosophy. Ground in belief that curriculum should be child-centered while strong in creative expression, building a sense of discovery in science and math, mastering creative thinking and problem solving, reflection on cause and effect of their theories about how the world works, and building strong social skills through working and learning as both an individual and from peers.

Children's accomplishments are tracked through close observation as children work through play throughout the day. Children's successes are documented through development of individual portfolios, made up of written notes, photo / video documentation, and samples of children's work. Portfolio's are on display for children to reflect on regularly and new additions are shared daily with families during arrival or departure.

Caring for infant and toddlers focuses on taking advantage of the 'teachable moment' as the children learn about the world and their environment through various care-orientated routines. Dressing, mealtime and diapering all offer many opportunities for social skills and language development. In addition planning many fun and exciting activities that involve sensory exploration through varied materials promotes development of the creative, cognitive mind and fosters physical development.

As children grow offering an increasingly sophisticated environment, rich in a variety of beautiful, open-ended real life materials enables children to learn through trial and error as they explore and develop their own theories about how their world works and discovering their relationships with the things in their everyday environment.

My environment is rich with explorations in

- Block play featuring, ramps, gullies and pathways for cars, balls and marbles.
- Dramatic role-playing in the house centre with costumes, dolls, house and work related materials.
- Language with access to wide topic of stories, books, flannel board and puppets.
- An art program that promotes exposure to mediums such as paint, wire, clay, drawing, collage, weaving and more.
- Music through exposure to both song and instruments
- Sensory exploration with water, sand and various other treats.
- Outdoors environment that promotes physical mastery with a love for nature, animals and gardening.
- Project work and investigations inspired by the work in Reggio Emilia Italy with a focus on social emotional development, fostering increased intellectual skills in math, science, nature and discovery, language, literacy and promoting whole motor development of the every child.

In addition, a portion of the program encompasses the Jolly Phonics program. This program is designed to increase early reading and writing skills in a fun playful manner that has a skills building focus through development of repetition, actions and humour.

Progress & Developmental Milestones

It is my aim that parents be involved in all aspects of their child's development through out the day (IE discussions, observations, newsletters, etc.). One of the advantages of a home-based environment is that I am here at both arrival and departure to answer any questions or concerns you may have about your child's development.

Each child's progress and developmental milestones will be monitored daily. To enhance daily monitoring and ensure I am meeting the children's individual needs, I also complete a semi-annual overview of your child's progress. Using a combination of daily observational notes combined with a developmental progress report to ensure that your child is on the right track to optimum early learning and, when the time arrives, well prepared for school.

Authentic Portfolios

An authentic portfolio is used by many early years educators to help with program planning and setting the stage for each child's individual learning style and needs to ensure the best foot forward into the school system.

It is a living document that chronicles your little ones early years development throughout their time in the program; their interests and explorations, their learning style, communication style, discoveries and peer interactions. As indicate above this is done through use of digital photography, video, written observations, developmental checklist screening and saving of varied work samples.

Portfolio development is not only an amazing tool for educators but also make a wonderful keepsake for children and parents. Each child enrolled in the program will receive an 'authentic portfolio' upon graduation from the program as a remembrance of their time with their friends at Added Advantage Home Based Early Learning Program.

Safety & Health Care Standards

I worked in the childcare field for over twenty years in several different fully licensed centres. I have a strong familiarity with the rules and regulations of the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Health Unit. My standards and practices strive to exceed these health and safety requirements with the added benefit of flexibility to adjust children's daily schedules and routines to meet the children's individual needs.

Hours of Operation

I offer care from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday year round. Before or after hours care can be arranged dependant on need. I observe the following public holidays:

- New Year's Day (January 1)
- Good Friday (Varied March/April)
- Victoria Day (Third Monday in May)
- Civic Holiday (First Monday in August)
- Thanksgiving (Second Monday October)
- Boxing Day (December 26)
- Family Day (third Monday in February)
- Easter Monday (Varied March / April)
- Canada Day (July 1)
- Labor Day (First Monday in September)
- Christmas Day (December 25)

** Additional closings include two weeks during the summer and Christmas break where we will be closed December 24th and reopening on the first Monday in January**

Registration Procedures

Once offered a space at the Added Advantage Home-based Early Learning program there is a two-week security deposit to secure your position until your desired start date. This is non-refundable but can be applied to your last two weeks of care with proper written notice of withdrawal. Written notice of permanent withdrawal must be given a minimum of 10 business days (2 weeks) in advance of termination. If proper notice is not received, your security deposit will be kept in lieu of notice.

Orientation

The orientation procedure takes about 30 minutes (provided a tour has been completed – tour takes about 20 minutes) during which we review the handbook and complete necessary forms.

Your child is encouraged to come for a minimum of two play visits prior to starting. However, the more visits the better for both child and parent ☺ Parents are required to stay in the building during this time. If ratio allows you may be able to leave the playroom to see how your little one will cope without your presence.

Fee Payment Policies

Program Fees & Vacation Policies

Program fees are reviewed annually and are subject to change. Any changes will be accompanied by a month's written notice.

Fees are due regardless of absenteeism / illness, inclement weather / acts of Nature beyond our control, public holidays. Unfortunately, part time families cannot make up absent days on another day. Fees are to be paid in advance of care in the amount according to your payment schedule.

The program is closed for vacation two weeks each year – a minimum of 60 days notice will accompany this planned vacation period. In lieu of a weekly fee increase in 2009 clients opted to allow for 'two weeks of paid vacation for the provider' therefore fees would be due for both these vacation closure weeks in all future years.

During Christmas break where we will be closed December 24th and reopening the first Monday in January there are no 'regular' fees collected during closure – although statutory holiday fees still apply for Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Years Day. In circumstances where any of these days fall on a Saturday or Sunday the 'paid holiday' would move to the Monday and Tuesday.

If families choose to take any additional vacation at other times of the year, fees would be due to secure your child's space.

Payment Options

Post dated cheques are strongly encouraged, as a late fee may be charged if payments are not received on time. Please record your child's name and the week of care being covered in the memo part of your cheque. Make cheques payable to Margaret Wake. Families whose fees are overdue will be required to provide payment before care can continue. There is a NSF charge of \$25.00 for all payments returned. After occurrence of an NSF cheque, you will be required to pay cash/money order or certified cheque or care may need to be suspended until your account is caught up.

If you are **paying in cash**, please **wait for your temporary receipt – you must keep this receipt for your records to compare against your official receipt.**

Tax Receipts

Except for cash payments, I do not issue weekly invoices or receipts. Billing and receiving is tracked in an Excel program for income tax purposes. Every New Year prior to the February 28th deadline a childcare tax receipt for the previous years fees will be available for income tax purposes. Parents must sign for them prior to release.

Withdrawal / Changes of Care Required

It is imperative to remember that any notice of withdrawal must be made in writing in order to apply your security deposit. Written notice must be received 10 business days (2 weeks) prior to your child's last day – please do not send notice electronically in case it gets lost on the World Wide Web. If you wish to drop days of care required you must notify me in writing 10 business days (2 weeks) prior to the time of effected the change. Additional days may be picked up as available at the current daily rate dependent on the availability of space.

I reserve the right to terminate services at any time if policies are not being followed or program fees are not paid.

Late Pick-up Policy

Please remember that I have a family of my own to care for after hours and children should be picked up prior to 5:30 p.m. Children still in attendance after this time will be charged \$5.00 within the first 5 minutes and a \$1.00/minute there after. Please note that this fee is per child not per family. Multiple children require multiple charges. A late form will be provided for parents to sign. Late fees are due ideally same day but no later than next scheduled payment date.

Please notify me immediately if you need to be late in an emergency, if a parent/guardian or designated emergency person has not called to make arrangements or picked up the child within an hour of closure Family and Children's Service will be contacted for assistance.

Custody Arrangements

If you are in a situation were both parents are not living under the same roof please ensure that you put in writing how you would like to handle making decisions regarding your child's best interests while in care. For example how you want to handle payment of fees, the sharing of information about your child, who receives the distribution of written information, and who can authorize the release of your child at departure time.

It is my recommendation that all separated/divorced parents provide a copy of the custody arrangement. I would be UNABLE TO ENFORCE any custodial parents requests WITHOUT legal documentation.

This copy should include the following.

- TITLE PAGE (this states who is involved),
- CUSTODY PORTION (this clarifies the agreed upon arrangements), and
- THE JUDGES SEAL & SIGNATURE (this confirms it has been reviewed by a court of law).

Parents need to work together to ensure that collectively that there is consistently one set of directions and they are presenting a united front as far as decisions or issues that affect your little ones participation in the program.

It is the responsibility of both parents to keep the lines of communication open. Unfortunately it is not my role, nor do I have proper counseling background, to mediate family disagreements. Should a family be in a situation where their inability to provide a united front while in the program, and in my opinion, this behaviour is affecting the well being of their own child or others within the program I may be required to discontinue services until such a time that 'family harmony' can be restored. Please see the 'Code of Conduct' section for details.

What to Expect upon Enrollment

The First Day

Due to their age and development some children often experience separation anxiety for the first little while. As mentioned frequent visits can help. You are encouraged to stay with your child as long as needed at the beginning of the day in order to reassure him/her and minimize fears until you and your child become more comfortable.

First Day Checklist

- All completed enrollment forms
- Complete change clothes x2 (more if your child is toilet training)
- Diapers & wipes (if still required)
- A child size blanket and a nap time cuddle toy familiar to home (optional)
- Slippers and outdoor footwear
- Family / Significant other photos
- Sunscreen – (between April – September)
- Knapsack or Tote bag clearly labeled

Arrival / Departure Procedure

Parents are requested to allow sufficient time during arrival and departure transitions to ease your child into or out of the program and allow for discussion time about their day. Children should always be escorted all the way into the house or backyard – **at no time are children to be left unattended anywhere on the premises.**

Release Procedures

If someone other than the regular legal parent/guardian is to be picking up your child please note that it is mandatory that I receive prior written & signed notice from a parent or guardian. There is space on your enrollment for to share potential alternative pick information.

Upon enrollment, you will also be asked to give me an emergency release password in writing as well. In the event that none of your regular written emergency contact persons can pick up I will accept verbal directions of release, provided that the parent/guardian on the phone gives the correct verbal password to me. If you are unable to provide the correct password the child will not be released. Please do not share your password with your emergency pick up persons it is strictly away for me to confirm I am speaking with a parent/guardian.

Child and Family Services stipulate anyone picking up your child must be 12 years of age or older. I will not release your child to anyone under the age of 12 years even if you request I do so.

All person picking up children, who are unfamiliar, will be required to provide photo ID that matches the name on the child's information form. Please advise people of this before they arrive. This is for the safety of your child. If the person is unable to show photo ID your child will not be released to them. Acceptable photo ID examples are a driver's license, health card, student ID card, age of majority, passport, etc. ID photo must match name given on the release form.

Supervision Procedures

Close supervision of the children is my utmost concern and it is important for parents to know that my goal is to be actively engaged and supporting learning through play with the children whenever possible. Every effort will be made to ensure that the children are within my line of vision and a quick arms reach whenever humanly possible. However as I am only one person there are times of the day when parents must be aware that my 'other senses' will be needed to supervise the children – such as the use of an infant monitor to listen that they are safely engaged in a quiet activity while I prepare or clean up from meals and snacks or when they are sleeping or resting in an adjacent area with music or stories after mid-day meal or that on occasion bathroom routines either for myself or the training children will require my attention while the other children are playing safely within ear shot nearby 😊

Also with working an 11 or 12 hour day it goes to say that I will occasionally need a moment to 'recharge my batteries' throughout the day...my little creative cubby is awesome for a short break time as I can safely sit back and have a cup of hot tea in there out of reach of tiny hands!

In addition when the children are engaged in the playroom and are not acquiring my assistance in their play I also take advantage of quiet times to work on the laptop to create the children's documentation for their portfolios, uploading new information to share with families on my website or look for new program ideas on childcare networking websites – work of this sort is always secondary to meeting the children's needs of course.

Children who are consistently exhibiting 'developmentally challenging behaviour' may be required to assist in the kitchen with meal preparations or quiet table activities or pass the needed supplies during diapering/washroom routines in order to ensure that they are close enough to me at all times to be supported in their needs while the others are able to engage in quiet activities.

Nutrition

Meals, Snacks and Beverages Provided

Healthy eating is an important part of every child's day. In the interest of developing a healthy attitude towards food and nutrition, I strongly believe in allowing children opportunities to help prepare meals, as age appropriate and interest dictates. Tasks can range from washing fruits or veggies, measuring and adding ingredients for baked goods, stirring dishes and eventually even helping with chopping. The ability to explore, touch, smell and hear new foods increases children's desires to taste new foods and develop a wide palette for increased nutritional value. It also increases self-help skills, pride in preparing a good meal and confidence to try new things. As five children underfoot in the kitchen can be a challenge to 'maintain the interest of all' the children take turn being the 'kitchen helper' on a daily basis while the others can engage in quiet activities or a few minutes of Treehouse in the adjacent room.

Our weekly menus are posted Friday for the upcoming week, have a focus on wholesome and nutritious snacks & meals and can accommodate any food allergies or restrictions your child may encounter and involve input for the children. Originally we followed a 'rotational' menu plan chosen solely by me - as it was easy for budgeting and shopping. However I have found that children tend to be willing to try more new foods when it is 'their idea' and in the interest of having the yummy foods I make end up in their tummy I have tweaked my approach.

At the end of each week the children and I will work on planning next weeks menu together! Using 'picture cards' to help them work with me to choose a balanced meal plan that inspires them to want to try the items they have chosen and put together. This is a great way to learn about nutrition as well as early literacy skills in writing our choices down. I will then post the upcoming menu on the website for parents to be able to plan their menus at home as well ... to avoid the same lunch and dinner incidents not that most kids mind having the same thing twice.

Close communication with parents is important to ensure that all the children's nutritional needs are met on a daily basis. Upon enrollment your child's current likes and dislikes in relation to foods will be integral in developing the groups weekly menus to ensure that there are favorite foods from all families represented. I always welcome new favorite family recipes.

Children are encouraged to try foods offered but never forced to eat. Children who choose not to eat are encouraged to stay at the table and keep us company - as often sitting and watching peers enjoying new and tasty foods helps children find the courage to expand their own palettes! Unfortunately I am not able to accommodate choosy eaters by cooking a 'separate' meal for them. Meals and snacks offer a wide variety of options of food groups and are served at regular and routine intervals in the house. It is my belief that a hungry child will eat something of what is being served - eventually - they will not starve themselves.

Birthdays and other Special Occasions

Your child's birthday is a very joyous occasion and deserves celebration! Children are always excited to share the celebration with their daycare friends – upcoming birthdays will be recorded on each family's monthly 'Events calendar'. Prior to the special day the birthday child will be able to select the nature of their birthday celebration from their special treat (cupcakes, cake, ice-cream sundae, etc.) to any special activities they would like the day to entail (within given financial parameters of course ☺). We will make and prepare the treat for celebration day. Parents are encouraged to come in and join in the fun if able.

Personal Belongings

Clothing

Your child is here to have fun and explore the environment, so I suggest avoiding wearing clothing that is of great importance just in case it gets stained. Your child should be dressed in clothing that is appropriate for physical activity and the weather. A second set of clothing should be kept in your child's bag in case of accidents - please check these clothes on a regular basis for fit/season. Also, I suggest that all clothing and personal items be labeled with your child's name if possible – in the event that families have duplicates.

For safety I suggest that all outdoor footwear be sturdy, supportive, and suitable for climbing. All footwear should have closed toes. Open toe sandals, clogs, and flip-flop thongs are prone to causing stubbing, scrapes and broken toes and although 'fashionable' are therefore not appropriate for active play. Slippers are requested for inside the house.

Preparing for the Weather:

- It is strongly recommended that parents send children the following items daily for each of the seasons:

Spring	Summer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Complete Change of indoor clothes x2 √ Slippers √ Outdoor Shoes – for outdoor play only √ Sunscreen √ Light and Warm Hat √ Windbreaker and Light Sweater √ Wind pants √ Rain boots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Complete Change of indoor clothes x2 √ Slippers √ Outdoor Shoes – for outdoor play only √ Sunscreen √ Hat that shades face & covers back neck √ Swimwear & Towel (in separate bag) √ Water shoes
Fall	Winter
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Complete Change of indoor clothes x2 √ Slippers √ Outdoor Shoes – for outdoor play only √ Light and Warm Hat √ Winter Coat and Windbreaker √ Snow pants & wind pants √ Winter or Rain boots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Complete Change of indoor clothes x2 √ Slippers √ Outdoor Shoes – for outdoor play only √ Warm hat that covers ears x2 √ Neck Warmer (no scarves they are a choking hazard) √ Winter coat √ Snow pants x2 √ Waterproof Mittens x2 √ Winter boots

Possessions

Children need to feel safe and secure in their environment and sometimes that means they may need a special toy and/or blanket etc. Please feel free to send in

- √ A clearly labeled quiet toy, blanket, soother. For safety reasons, infants/toddlers will not be allowed to have soothers and/or bottles during physically active playtime. I encourage children to be stationary when using these items, (I.E. my arms, a rocking chair, rest cot, highchair, etc.) to avoid any dental or choking accidents.
- √ Children are more than welcome to bring any special toys from home, provided that they fall within my 'positive choices' philosophy and are age appropriate for the children in the group.

Positive Choices

I want to foster a safe and positive learning environment. My philosophy is that words have power over actions. At no time shall guns or violent toys be brought into the house – if your child enjoys playing with these style toys please keep them for home or in the car. Remember safety first – children should not be sent with gum, cough drops, money, fragile objects, etc. I will assist you in explaining the reason behind these restrictions to your child. I appreciate your co-operation and understanding with this matter. If they sneak their way into the program they will be stored in a safe place and the child can pick up at the end of the day.

Soothers / Bottles

I do not provide soothers or bottles / bottle contents. Parents of infants are responsible to ensure that bottles and soothers sent from home are properly labeled to avoid any confusion.

Lost & Found

I have a fairly efficient memory for most things, however sometimes children's clothes all start to look alike to me 😊 Labeling is the best way to assist that misplaced items make it back to the proper owner. Unfortunately due to the size and delicacy of some home materials children choose to bring to the house I cannot be responsible for misplaced / broken home toys please keep that in mind when choosing to allow a child to bring items from home.

Washroom Routine

Each child will have access to the washroom and/or will be diapered regularly.

Diapering

Children not yet toilet trained will require an individual diaper pad (optional), any necessary diaper cream and diapers which shall be housed in a labeled container in the bathroom. Any cloth style diapers will be contained in a plastic bag in an individually labeled container to be taken home each evening by parents.

Due to the varied costs I cannot supply diapers - please ensure that your child has enough diapers on hand to make it through the day in a safe and hygienic manner. If I do not have enough diapering materials on hand to meet your child's needs you may need to be called at work to either arrange delivery of the required diapers.

Toilet Training

Children who are toilet training will need a supply of labeled training pants along with plastic pants or other containment item to 'hold in' any accidents. As well as a larger supply of clothing including extra socks and a second pair of shoes/slippers will be needed. It is important to keep clothing comfortable and easy for the child to remove independently. (Overalls, tights/leggings and multiple buttons can be frustrating at this stage). Toilet training is a partnership where communication on readiness and strategies used for support are key- I will work closely and consistently with you and your little one to ensure the training goes successfully and positively. All soiled training pants & clothes will be contained in a plastic bag in an individually labeled container to be taken home each evening by parents.

Health & Safety

Immunization

All children must be immunized prior to entry into the program or have an exemption form on file. Parents must complete and sign a medical form. Parents are responsible to keep me advised of all boosters after enrollment.

Communicable Illnesses

The benefit of a home-based program is that there is usually less exposure to illnesses due to the smaller number of children present. It also allows for more flexibility in attendance when children are feeling under the weather compared to licensed facilities.

Due to the flexible nature of our schedule and routines my general requirement for attendance when under the weather is that children need to be able to cope within the program, with minimal impact on the other children's enjoyment, in order to attend.

Children may not participate, and will be required to be temporarily removed, if any of the following diseases and/or symptoms develops:

- Vomiting **
- Fever that continues to increase / is not responding to medication
- Suspected Communicable Disease until seen by a Dr. and confirmed that further exclusion is not required
- Diarrhea **
- Unexplained Rash accompanied by fever

**** Require a minimum of 24 hours exclusion symptom free.**

Illness while in program

I will work together with parents in the daily monitoring of changes in each child's health. If a child becomes ill during the day, or is incapable of participating in the program, your child will be removed from interaction with others until you / emergency persons can be contacted, and arrangements can be made to take your child can be taken home ASAP.

Emergency Medical Care

Where a parent or emergency person cannot be contacted and the child's health and/or safety is felt to be at risk, he/she will be transported to the hospital via ambulance, at the parent/guardians expense, and attended to by a medical officer. The parent will be contacted as soon as possible and informed of where to meet the child.

Please make sure that your child's personal information is always kept up to date so that we will be able to reach you in an emergency.

Medication

If your little one is taking medication at home please inform me so that I can watch for side effects. I am willing to administer either prescription and non-prescription drugs to children, in accordance with the Day Nurseries Act legislation.

This requires that parents provide:

- ▣ All Medication, prescription or over the counter, in the original container clearly labeled with the child's name, name of the drug, the dosage, the date of purchase, expiration date and instruction for storage and administration of the drug.
- ▣ A medication authorization form, completed by parent/guardian, prior to administration including the dosage and times the drug is to be given; and the symptoms to administer for. Directions must match the bottle. I **will not** give medications based on verbal directions.

Medication is not to be left in the common areas / diaper bags or knapsacks. It must be stored in a locked cabinet out of reach of the children. Upon arrival or departure, please ask for assistance to store/retrieve your medication if required.

Safety Awareness

Safety shall be observed at all times by individuals entering my home. Safety is everyone's responsibility. A first aid kit containing a manual is available and accompanies all field trips and daily excursions. Accidents reports will be signed and witnessed by both a parent and myself before being filed, incidents involving children will also require a parent signature.

Safety Tidbits

Please remember the following rules and guidelines:

- Please do not leave your car running while you are dropping off or picking up your little one. Fumes are bad for the environment and for children who may be playing in our outdoor playground – in addition my neighbor has lung cancer and his air filter is beside our driveway.
- Children should always hold hands securely with the adult until safety into the house / car.
- If you are dropping off or picking up from the backyard please ensure that you close the gate securely.
- Accidents happen quickly. Never leave a child unattended in the car - even for a moment.
- Please ensure that until you have dropped your child off or once you have picked up your child that they remain with you at all times. Children should not wonder through the house, as not all areas are designed for children's access or contain toys/equipment age appropriate to younger children.
- Ensure that you do not store anything in your child's backpack / tote bag that may be dangerous to children. I.e. anything that is labeled keep out of reach of children (lotions, creams, medication, etc.) should be either kept at home, the car or in a secure area of the house such as the lock box or diaper bins. Do not keep lighters, matches or other hazardous materials in your child's bag.
- My house is a smoke free zone at all times regardless. However to abide by the city Bi-law of no smoking in a business/workplace please do not smoke in or around our playground or in the house itself.

Fire Drills

To ensure that the children, parents and myself are prepared in an emergency we will practice regular fire drills. All parents in the program at the time of a drill must participate in the drill and stay with the group exiting via the nearest emergency exit. An evacuation plan is located on each floor. All fire drills dates and details are recorded, available for inspection by fire marshal and kept on file for a minimum of two years.

Providing a Positive Learning Environment

The aim of my program is to assist children in learning self-discipline. This is done through positive reinforcement coupled with redirection techniques, role-modeling self-discipline, ensuring health and safety and teaching respect for people and property. Rules and expectations are clearly stated and appropriate to the child's age of development, so that they can understand and internalize the reasoning underlying various requirements.

Behaviour management is an important part of a child's learning experience and should be understood from this perspective. Positive language, concern for each child as an individual as well as timely intervention will hopefully create a warm and supportive environment for children to learn to solve their problems appropriately with all the people that they may encounter during their busy day.

Guiding Positive Behaviour

Young children are just beginning to actively assert their independence and wishes, not only with adults but with their peers as well. It is only natural that disagreements may arise quickly as each child struggles to gain more control over his/her environment. Everyone makes mistakes in judgment as we learn and grow and become productive members of society. I believe that it is important to learn positively through our mistakes. Children are disciplined in a positive manner and at a level that is appropriate to their actions and their ages in order to promote self-discipline. Thus ensuring everyone's health and safety while respecting the rights of others and maintaining equipment.

I use a lot of positive wording and praise. This is combined with re-direction if behaviour is socially unacceptable, either by encouraging the child to get involved with another activity or relocating them to another play area. I try to teach children that words have power over actions and encourage them to talk about their feelings as we resolve conflict through discussion. The children are also encouraged to show each other respect and affection. We encourage gentle hands, sharing and turn taking; respecting others choices', being friends, and comforting one another with hugs, etc.

The key to effect behaviour guidance is that the expectations and rules and consequences are as close at home and the program as possible – working together to find a solution that will work in both places is truly ideal for the social success of children.

Code of Conduct

All members of my home-based program are accountable to the Code of Conduct.

All will:

- √ Treat themselves and others with respect
- √ Be courteous, fair, kind and honest to others
- √ Be respectful of others and their belongings
- √ Listen to and respect others
- √ Play safely and respectfully and follow the rules of the playroom and backyard
- √ Use appropriate language with others
- √ Problem solve by talking and listening
- √ Act in a way that will facilitate a positive learning environment for all
- √ Help care for and respect all toys, equipment, books, environment, etc.

Inappropriate / Unacceptable behaviours will result in one or more of the following depending on age / severity of the incident / or previous incidents or patterns of behaviour.

- a) Verbal redirection and coaching on better choices
- b) Quiet time away from peers but within play area followed by a verbal plan for future when ready to discuss
- c) Written documentation of Incident / Parent Signed

If a child is experiencing a serious pattern of inappropriate & or physically dangerous behaviour a parent/caregiver conference with written action plan to successfully aid the child in managing the behaviour will occur, if all else has been tried and exhausted, I reserve the right to discharge a child. I reserve the right to terminate a contract, without notice, if the ADULTS in a family exhibit any of the above behaviors – inappropriate conflict resolution skills will not be tolerated...while children are learning - adults should've long mastered these skills!

Communication

A core benefit of home care is the personalized relationship that we can build, through daily communication during arrival and departure. You are always welcome and encouraged to participate in the program and visit your child in your free time – if you work close to the house feel free to stop by on your lunch break. If you need to call to touch base over the phone, I ask that you please call in during the children's scheduled rest time. This will help to ensure that your child is receiving my undivided attention during their waking hours. I also ask that families please keep me up to date on any changes to your child's life as they could affect behaviour at school and I can better support your little one when properly informed.

I prepare and distribute a monthly calendar of events / newsletter. It will keep families up to date on all aspects of the program. Parents are encouraged to participate whenever appropriate. Our newsletter will remind you of our annual family day where the children bring their family and friends to the house. Everyone is welcome!

Program Highlights – How you can help!

The monthly calendar and newsletter posted to the website each month outlines current 'collection' focus as far as creative materials as well as anything that we are working on in regards to projects or explorations of interest that parents might be able to help with.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

My goal is to help ensure a positive future for all our children. Please help is to fulfill this goal by bringing us your beautiful junk rather than sending it to the landfill. Feel free to enlist the help of coworkers, family and friends in gathering treasures for art time!

As a suggestion we could always use:

- Variety dull edged glass pieces, leftover mosaic pieces
- Shiny silver or copper pieces from the hardware store
- Unique stones or pebbles
- Small Branches, twigs, pussy willows, pine cones, moss, colorful leaves
- Potpourri / Dried flower pedals
- Collected Shells
- Colored gravel stones
- Household / Decorative glass gems
- Different colored children's marbles
- Any size Buttons
- Any size Beads (Anything with holes in can be used for lacing/beading even your old beaded car seat cover can be taken apart to re-make into something, old Xmas decorations added to a creation, etc)
- Odd Wood scraps & shapes
- Plastic Lids from bottles, juice box
- Metal Juice-can lids
- Clear plastic lids from food containers
- Old Fridge Magnets
- Old Crystal pieces from lamps, chandeliers, etc.
- Old Glittery Costume Jewelry
- Wine Corks
- Metal Bottle / Beer Caps
- Empty Spools of Thread
- Fabric and Lace of all textures
- Variety of textured Paper
- Shiny foil and cellophane used to wrap soaps, non-nut candies, etc is great for collage work
- Scraps from your own holiday craft projects
- Gift wrap rolls, poster roll containers
- Very large clear glass condiment jars (restaurant size pickle or hot pepper jars)
- Yarn, Gimp, Hemp, Ribbon

Field Trips & Off Site Activities

I love to take advantage of local community resources within walking distance to enhance the program. These excursions are spontaneous to foster the teachable moment. Additionally throughout the year, larger trips using the public transportation bus may be made to special places of interest – I will discuss these possibilities with parents prior to going. If you know a great place for us to visit in the area please let me know!

Privacy of Information

Collecting and Sharing of Information

All the personal information, along with the permission forms, obtained during the enrollment procedure are collected to ensure that the needs of your little one are met with the utmost care. Information collected on your family will be maintained in the strictest confidence. All information will be kept in an individual file in a secure filing cabinet. Personal information may be shared with a collection agency in the event of severely tardy fees.

Your family's personal information is not shared with outside third hand parties, outside community agencies, school boards, etc without written permission from a parent or guardian. Written consent is not required in the event of suspected abuse/child endangerment. Professionals are legally required to report these suspicions if they have a 'reasonable' concern that a child may be at risk.

Ensuring Accuracy

Parents are required to ensure that the information contained in your little ones files is up to date and accurate at all times. During the month of September, parents are required to review all their contact information and consent forms and medical history information to ensure that it reflects the current situation.

Retention of Records

I am required by tax legislation to keep all records for a period of at least 7 years. All personal records will therefore be kept in a secure storage area either until a time that:

- 1) The home-based business has not been in operation for a period of seven years.
- 2) The home-based business is still operating but a period of seven years has past since the records were obtained.

Disposing of Records

At such a time that the above criterion has been met the records will be shredded and disposed of in a confidential matter. If you have any questions about the collecting, storing or privacy of your child's personal information please feel free to speak me.

In Closing

A warm welcome to you from the Added Advantage Home Based Early Learning Program, a community of family and friends working together to provide long lasting memories and relationships for the children and ourselves. I look forward to getting to know you and your little one!

Sincerely;

Margaret Wake, RECE, ECE.C