

Rural Family Connections Inc.



RFC Home Childcare Services Parent Handbook

8243 Victoria Street

Metcalfe, Ontario

K0A 2P0

Phone: (613)-821-2899

E-mail: hcs@ruralfamilyconnections.ca

Website: www.ruralfamilyconnections.ca

Licensed by the Ministry of Education

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Mission Statement, Vision, and Core Values

Mission Statement:

Rural Family Connections supports families in the Ottawa area by providing accessible, integrated, and play-based early learning and childcare programs. Through this programming, we provide families with a safe, secure space to grow and flourish as a family and community. Through this programming, we strive to enhance healthy development for a healthy start in life and success in school.

Vision:

To provide resources for all families in an inclusive, encouraging, and supportive environment, one that fosters healthy development for a strong start in life. Our vision is a vibrant rural community with accessible services that benefit all children, their parents and caregivers.

Core Values:

- **Compassion:** We believe compassion, understanding and kindness are fundamental in establishing strong, healthy relationships with the families we support.
- **Transparency:** Open communication and honesty is paramount to building a solid relationship with our community.
- **Collaboration:** We believe a collaborative approach between families, staff and community partners ensures a family's ability to grow and thrive.
- **Inclusion:** We provide a welcoming atmosphere where families feel represented and respected in our community.
- **Advocacy:** We are a voice for families, our early learning staff and community.
- **Respect:** We value our differences as individuals and the importance of each of our contributions to the larger community.

Canada Wide Early Learning Child Care (CWELCC)

Rural Family Connections Childcare Services is *enrolled in the Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care Program (CWELCC)*. Funding will be provided to support Rural Family Connections Childcare Services to reduce parent fees for children under age six. Our base fees in the fee schedule reflect the CWELCC rate for children under 6 years of age. Rural Family Connections Childcare Services will follow any future reductions in parent fees as they are made available through CWELCC.

For more information, please visit; [New national child care system | City of Ottawa](#)

Licensed Home Childcare

Rural Family Connections Home Childcare is a community based family support service offering licensed home childcare under the Rural Family Connections umbrella. The demographics in the Ottawa area stretches north to Walkley Road, south to the southern edge of the city (Findlay Creek, Greely, Metcalfe area), west to the Rideau River and east to Hawthorne Road. We have dedicated and nurturing providers who provide care to infants and children aged two months to twelve years. We offer full and part-time care, before and after school care, early morning, evening, weekends, holidays, and overnight care. The hours and days available are determined by each home childcare provider.

Our aim is to offer each family a choice of providers that best meets the needs of each family. If we don't have a provider with availability in the neighbourhood of choice, we may be able to offer a home childcare on route to the parent's place of employment. Our Home Childcare Consultants conduct an intake interview followed by carefully selecting providers who best meet the needs of the family. Following the intake, arrangements will be made for the family to meet the potential providers. Once the childcare arrangements have been secured, the Home Childcare Consultants monitors the program and the development of each child in the home. The provider, parent, and Home Childcare Consultant form a partnership working together to ensure that high standards of safety, health, and child development are being met.

Program Statement

Rural Family Connections Home Childcare Services is one of three programs under the Rural Family Connections Umbrella. Our area covers Wards 10,16,18,20,21,22 in South Ottawa. We have dedicated and nurturing providers who provide care to infants and children aged two months to twelve years. We offer full and part-time care, before and after school care, early morning, evening, weekends, holidays and overnight care with each home childcare provider determining the hours and days available.

All programs under RFC use "How Does Learning Happen?" (HDLH) as a professional learning resource guide. The document is available on the Ministry of Education website and from the Home Child Care office. The home child care staff work with the understanding that "children are competent, capable of complex thinking, curious and rich in potential". Families are experts on their children and want the best for them. Rural Family Connections Home Childcare Services aims to offer each family a choice of providers that best meets the needs of each family. The Home Childcare Consultants collaborate with the team, providers, families as well as professional resources to assist the provider in creating engaging environments and experiences that foster every child's individual learning and development by;

- Embracing the well-being of the individual developmental needs of the whole child;*
- To encourage the child to engage in child-led and active exploration opportunities in a planned and inclusive learning environment;*
- Foster the belonging with positive relationships by maintaining communication;*
- Through expression, support continuous learning between staff, children, families and community partners.*

Our program strives to meet specific goals including but not limited to;

1-Promoting the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of the children

What you will see and hear in our program:

- Home childcare Providers provide nutritious balanced meals and snacks. They use Canada's Food Guide and other material supplied by the Home Childcare Agency as a resource. They provide a sample menu on their board (this board is accessible for the parents) and they record all snacks and meals in their daily log book. Water is offered to the child at any point during the day.
- All children registered provide a copy of their up to date immunization schedule and parents are provided with resource visits for immunization requirements in Ottawa if needed
- Children, Providers and Home Childcare Consultants practice a safe hand washing routine. We look to Public Health to offer "Living Healthy Workshops" for Childcare Providers. Information on sun safety, healthy snacks and increased outdoor play time is given to the providers through the provider handbook.
- Daily communication with parents on the health, safety and well-being of the children.
- Daily documentation on the children's health, safety and well-being in the providers daily logbooks.

2- Planning for and creating positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development will be supported and which is inclusive of all children, including children with individualized plans;

What you will see and hear in our program:

- Intake forms at the beginning of the registration process to give the team insight on matching the family with a provider that can meet their families needs, including but not limited to; language, culture, religion, accessibility, etc.
- Once the child care arrangements have been secured, the Home Childcare Consultant monitors the home and the development of each child in the home to ensure inclusivity of all children and that the program is meeting the needs of all children.
- The team meets to discuss any strategies that would benefit all children, including those with individualized plans. As a team we access the resources of Children's Integration Support Services, CISS to help us create an individualized plan when needed.
- The Providers present a variety of developmentally appropriate manipulatives and play materials to children that align with their interests, this develops a feeling of competence for all the children.
- Documentation in providers daily logbooks with observations made in relation to How Does Learning Happen?
- The Home Childcare Consultant assists the provider by observing the children playing and discussing the continuum of skills in the HDLH document.
- The provider, parent and Home Childcare Consultant form a partnership by working together to ensure that high standards of safety, health, and child development are being met including supporting parents with various first languages.

3- Incorporate indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play, rest and quiet time, into the day, and give consideration to the individual needs of the children receiving child care;

What you will see and hear in our program:

- Every day weather permitting, the children play outside (2 hours is recommended). This could include walks in the neighbourhood, visits to local parks and walks to the playgroup.
- The indoor program includes activities which vary from active to quiet focused time.
- A period of rest time; the length of time will vary with their age.
- Active communication with parents and Home Childcare Consultants
- Changes to daily schedules to meet the needs of children and/or their families
- Accommodations will be made for any child with individualized needs in accordance with the parent, provider and RFC Policies

4- Fostering the children's exploration, play and inquiry;

What you will see and hear in our program:

- RFC ensures that there are varied and sufficient resources in the provider's home and that these resources are easily accessed by the children. Many of the activities will be open ended (i.e. loose parts). We encourage the provider to be open to the children's ideas.
- The agency has access to many resources; through our toy lending library, donations and purchases.
- When possible, Home Childcare Consultants will donate resources that were donated to the agency which includes but are not limited to; manipulatives, gross motor, toilet training, loose parts, craft supplies, etc.
- We continue to offer information sessions that demonstrate how simple everyday things can be used to foster exploration, play and inquiry through our monthly newsletter and monthly visits with the Home Childcare Providers.

5- Providing child-initiated and adult-supported experiences;

What you will see and hear in our program:

- By providing resources such as glue, paint, markers, crayons, varied kinds of paper, and usable junk the child easily initiates an activity. There should be many kinds of building resources available.
- The provider has an opportunity to lead ideas through music and stories during circle time.
- Various field trips could be taken in the neighbourhood and playgroups could be visited.
- We offer info sessions and monthly newsletters that cover child-initiated and adult supported experiences.

6- Support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents, child care providers and staff;

What you will see and hear in our program:

- The Home Childcare Consultant finds opportunities to observe the children and their interactions with their peers and the provider. The Home Childcare Consultant and Provider take the time to reflect on these interactions pointing out the positive and perhaps offering some helpful ideas and/or strategies on how to encourage this positive communication.
- Notes are made in the provider and child files if there are any significant observations and communication with parents.
- Communication between the provider, children, families and Home Childcare Consultant.
- Matching families with a provider who speaks the same first language of the child and their family.

7- Encourage the children to interact and communicate in a positive way and support their ability to self-regulate;

What you will see and hear in our program:

- Activities that encourage sharing and child directed
- Through home visits, the Home Childcare Consultant models appropriate techniques and language
- We encourage and help set the program space up and provide resources for group activities.
- We encourage the provider to stand back and give the children a chance to work out problems through positive communication and self regulation.
- We promote the use of a private quiet area for those children who need this space.
- We model positive reinforcement in our interactions with the children. We plan group info sessions that cover this topic.
- We provide providers with monthly newsletters that highlight resources available

8- Foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children;

What you will see and hear in our program:

- The Home Childcare Consultant conducts an intake interview before the search for care begins and explains their role as a Home Childcare Consultant. This helps build a stronger relationship with the parents. The agency communicates with the parents regularly through emails and our parent portal as well as our website and social media pages.
- We encourage providers to find the best way to communicate with parents. This could be through pictures sent to the parents or a communication log written between provider and parent. Notes could also be written on their bulletin board for the parents to see.

9- Involve local community partners and allow those partners to support the children, their families and staff;

What you will see and hear in our program:

- Providers are encouraged to use community resources such as local parks, libraries, resource centres and playgroups
- As necessary, RFC will engage in a partnership with Children's Integrated Support Services (CISS) for in home observations and to provide families with their resources
- RFC Home Childcare engages with the other programs under the RFC umbrella- EarlyON Child and Family Centre and the Nursery School. This partnership allows for the sharing of resources, buying partnerships and sharing of staff knowledge/experience.

10- Support staff, home child care providers or others who interact with the children at a child care centre or home child care premises in relation to continuous professional learning; and

What you will see and hear in our program:

- The agency encourages Home Childcare Consultants, support staff and providers to attend workshops or info sessions whenever possible and we may cover the cost of replacement and registration should funding allow
- Providers and staff receive a monthly newsletter that always has a free upcoming workshop available

11- Document and review the impact of the strategies set out in clauses (1) to (10) on the children and families by;

What you will see and hear in our program:

- Home Childcare Consultants conducting monthly visits, quarterly safety inspections and annual home evaluations with the Home Childcare Provider.
- The Home Childcare Consultants document monthly visits as well as quarterly safety checks and follow up with non-compliances in a timely manner. Observations are made at these visits and are reviewed by the Home Childcare Manager to ensure the effectiveness of the program.
- Bi annual as well as Annual evaluations of the Home Childcare Staff.
- Home Childcare Providers daily logbook incorporates observations made of How Does Learning Happen on a daily basis. They also record observations that demonstrate how our agency goals are being met and how they are impacting the children and their families.

Review and Monitoring

The Home Childcare Agency uses observations during monthly home visits and quarterly safety inspections, team discussions and reflections, provider workshops, individual training sessions, the provider log books and a monthly newsletter to make sure the goals and approaches are being followed. If there are any contraventions of the policies and procedures or an occurrence of a prohibited practice; the team will meet, the Executive Director will conduct a direct conversation and/or the RFC board will be called to discuss the matter and decide on the next steps.

Home Childcare Consultants and support staff use the goals and methods in the PROGRAM STATEMENT as they discuss the case load (providers and children enrolled), new children waiting for care and new providers waiting to provide care to ensure;

1. Observation of Monthly visits-Resources providing information about programming, developmental milestones, etc.
2. Professional Development learning opportunities for both Home Childcare Consultants and Providers
3. Childcare equipment accessible for meal times, rest time, and strollers for outdoor walks.
4. Ongoing documentation- Rural Family Connections home childcare goals are being met in all childcare settings.
5. Communication and any parent concerns are being resolved in a timely manner.

All Providers, Home Childcare Consultants, and support staff sign the program statement annually or whenever there are significant changes made. All staff sign before employment begins. All parents are given a copy of or can download the Parent Handbook which includes the program statement before the first day of childcare.

Prohibited Practices as Legislated by the Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA)

Rural Family Connections Home Childcare prohibits the following practice when guiding children's behaviour:

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

Contravention of Prohibited Practices

All suspected infractions of the prohibited practices will be reviewed by the Home Childcare Consultant, the provider and any other person that may be involved (if applicable) in order to determine the appropriate follow up.

In some circumstances, contravention of prohibited practices may also involve Managers and the Executive Director. Failure to comply with prohibited practices may result in one or more of the following:

- Additional visits in order to support the provider and observe the home environment;
- A review of the Rural Family Connections Behaviour Guidance policy;
- Receiving a letter, outlining the contravention(s), which will be kept on file;
- Notify parents of the contravention(s) and possible removal of the child(ren);
- File a Serious Occurrence Report to the Ministry of Education (MEDU); and
- Home closure.

*Any contravention of this policy will result in an investigation and review by the Home Childcare Manager and Ministry of Education Program Advisor. Failure to comply shall constitute “just cause” for dismissal within the meaning of the contract of employment with Rural Family Connections.

The Process for Parents

Parents seeking home childcare are required to register on the City of Ottawa Child Care Registry and Waitlist (CCRAW)- OneHSN parent portal indicating their interest in RFC Home Childcare in one of the wards serviced by RFC: 10, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22. Parents may also follow up with our office directly at **613-821-2899**. Lastly, parents are encouraged to go to the website, www.ruralfamilyconnections.ca to read the Program Statement and Parent Handbook.

Ottawa Child Care Registry and Waitlist (CCRAW)- Applying for Licensed Home Childcare

Parents must register their child on the City of Ottawa Child Care Registry and Waitlist (CCRAW) at www.onehsn.com/ottawa.

Subsidy Funded Families

Subsidized care is funded by the City of Ottawa and the Province of Ontario. Parental contributions vary and are determined by the City. Once your subsidy is approved, it is your responsibility to inform the subsidy office of any changes in circumstances such as; salary, address, contact information etc.

Families receiving subsidized care are allotted 36 paid days away for every child in a full-time program each calendar year. This includes vacation days, sick days, and any other day where the child is absent from care. The number of days cannot be carried over into the next calendar year, and the days are pro-rated depending on when the child begins care. If your child exceeds 36 allowable days, you will be responsible for paying the full fee cost for all additional days missed. Parents are responsible for renewing their subsidy before it expires; otherwise, they will be responsible for paying the full fee (includes the CWELCC rebate) cost of childcare.

In the case of a medical issue wherein you require more than the allotted days away, the City may grant you some additional days. You will need to speak to your subsidy case manager to discuss this further. In cases of joint custody, each parent is entitled to the prorated amount of their custody arrangement (e.g. 50/50 – each parent is allowed 18 paid days away).

For more information regarding the City of Ottawa subsidy program, please visit their website at www.ottawa.ca.

Full Fee Paying Families

Parents will receive an invoice via email from Rural Family Connections by the 10th of each month indicating the amount owing along with the days of care for the month prior. Parents will be billed for every day that the Provider is available to provide care, this includes days when the child is sick, on vacation or absent for other reasons. Parents are required to pay for the Statutory holidays. A direct **Pre-Authorized Debit (PAD) payment** will be withdrawn from the account listed on the PAD on the 15th of the month for the total on the invoice. If payment does not go through a Non Sufficient Funds (NSF) charge of \$35 will be applied. If there are consistent payments that do not go through, a 10-day termination of care notice may be given. Should the situation arise where parent/guardian fees are unpaid, Rural Family Connections may forward these, overdue accounts and all pertinent personal information to a third party collection agency.

Full Fee Schedule

Base Fees Per Diem:

A1 rate: \$21.13 - Full day (up to 10 hrs) with one meal and 2 snacks (*5 years and under*)

A2 rate: \$44.72 - Full day (up to 10 hrs) with one meal and 2 snacks (*6 years and older*)

D1 rate: \$13.55 - Part day (up to 4 hrs) with snacks for school aged children
(before and after school- *5 years and under*)

D2 rate: \$20.27- Part day (up to 4 hrs) with snacks for school aged children
(before and after school- *6 years and older*)

Non Base Fees:

G rate- \$4.95 Additional fee will be included for the following reasons if childcare;

- More than 10hrs of care provided
- Starts before 6:30am
- Ends past 6pm and dinner is provided
- Ends past 7pm
- Requires weekends (2 overtime rates per child per day)
- Goes beyond the hours assigned in the fee schedule contracted as per the parent agreement

Statutory Holidays and Vacation

In keeping with City of Ottawa guidelines, providers are paid for the following holidays;

New Year's Day, Family Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Victoria Day, Canada Day, Civic Holiday, Labour Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas Day and Boxing Day for a total of 11 days per year.

If a Provider is available to work on a statutory holiday and your child requires care, the fee is a full day plus a full day less the administrative rate. Statutory holidays for part-time children (enrolled less than 5 days per week) the Provider may claim the day **ONLY** if the holiday falls on the day of the week that the child would have attended. During March break and Christmas break, if school-aged children do not attend daycare, the provider is paid a D rate for the days the children do not attend and a D rate for the holidays observed during that break. If the children attend for a full day, then the provider is paid an A rate. Parents are responsible for payment on the days their child attends care. Providers are paid on days even when your child does not attend; this includes days your child stays home due to illness or vacation. If your child attends care for a full day when the school buses are cancelled or on PD days, the full A rate is applied. Parents are not required to pay for the Provider's vacation days. Parents are also not required to take a vacation at the same time as the Provider. ***Should you wish to pay for your Provider's time off, the parent must confirm this request in writing to hcs@ruralfamilyconnections.ca***. When the Provider is not available to provide care, Rural Family Connections will attempt to find an alternate Provider. If alternative care cannot be arranged, you will not be billed for any day that the Provider was unavailable.

Termination of Care or Withdrawal from Care

Parents are required to provide **two weeks' written notice** before withdrawing their child from childcare. Parents need to inform their provider and send an email to hcs@ruralfamilyconnections.ca. Please note: two weeks without notice *will be paid by the parents* even if this notice is not given. The provider will make every effort to give one month's notice before terminating care. There are circumstances that will waive any notice or payment. For example, the care being provided is not following the regulations set out in the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, or the parents are not fulfilling their obligations as set out in the agreement or parent's responsibilities.

Policies

Access to Bodies of Water

All children registered in a home children affiliated with RFC Home Childcare are prohibited from using or having access to any standing body of water (e.g., pond, lake, etc.); or, recreational body of water (e.g., any type of above ground pool, in-ground pool, hot tub, whirlpool, wading pool, "kiddie" pool, etc.). RFC Home Childcare encourages the use of splash pads, sprinklers, hoses or water tables.

Accident/Incident Reporting

Should a child be injured (minor, major, or serious) or involved in an incident of concern during childcare hours, the childcare provider is required to complete an accident/incident report. This form will be given to the parent to review and to sign. A copy will be given to the parent and the Home Childcare Consultant for the child's childcare file.

Attendance and Departure

Attendance will be taken daily by the provider. The time of arrival and departure will be noted on the attendance sheet daily and the rate (e.g. A, D, S, ST, V,O) will be recorded on a daily invoice.

On the invoice, options are as follows:

- A: full day;
- D: before and after school;
- S: child was absent due to sickness;
- ST: statutory holiday;
- V: child was absent due to vacation; and
- O: Provider is closed and not available.

**The parent is required to view and sign the invoice at the end of the month. The provider is responsible for emailing the signed invoice to the office on the last day of each month.

Ensure that you are maintaining regular communication with your provider with any information pertaining to your children. Inform the provider if your child is going to be late/absent during the day and if you will be picking them up later than expected.

Please note: if you are late and have not informed your provider, your provider may not be home when you arrive as she and the other children may have already left for the park/playground.

Behaviour Guidance

When children are displaying inappropriate behaviours, they are redirected in a positive manner in order to assist the child with learning internal control/self regulation. Spanking and other forms of corporal punishment are prohibited. Parents and providers should maintain regular communication about any behavioural concerns that arise and utilize strategies to help the child foster a positive self image and a sense of belonging.

Young children benefit from an affirming approach that encourages positive interactions with other children and with adults, rather than from a negative or punitive approach to managing unwanted behaviour.

Illness Policy

There may be times when a child is too ill to attend childcare. The child may be too ill to participate in activities, contagious to others, or need more care and attention than the provider cannot provide without compromising the care of the other children. This can be a difficult issue and an important one to discuss before your child arrives at childcare. It is best practice to keep children home when they are sick, not only to aid in their recovery but for the sake of the other children in the group. It is important for parents to prepare for these situations by making alternate arrangements for care with a relative or close friend.

Children should be kept home if they have any of the following conditions:

- A temperature of 101 degrees Fahrenheit or 38.5 degrees Celsius
- Vomiting or excessive diarrhea
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye) with yellow or white discharge
- Impetigo, ringworm, or scabies
- Head lice or pinworms
- Chicken pox, hepatitis A, measles, German Measles, mumps, strep throat, tuberculosis, whooping cough
- An undiagnosed rash
- An acute cold, discolored ongoing nasal discharge or coughing
- Unusual irritability, fussiness, and restlessness

Children's symptoms must be improving, without fever reducing medication and no new symptoms over a **24 hour period**. In the case of vomiting and diarrhea, children must be symptom-free for **48 hours**.

In the event that a provider contacts the parent to request an early pick up due to any of the ailments listed above, parents must arrange for this as quickly as possible. If children are not picked up in a reasonable amount of time, the emergency contact person will be contacted.

In the meantime, the child that is ill is to be separated from other children while being within visual supervision. The symptoms of the illness must be noted in the daily log.

In the event of an outbreak, if the local public health department (OPH) issues guidelines pertaining to medical symptoms and screening protocol, the directives from the health unit will take precedence over the agency's illness policy.

Home Closure Policy

In the event that a childcare providers' home no longer meets the CCEYA standards and is unable to comply with Rural Family Connections Home childcare's policies and procedures, the provider's home will be closed with or without notice. Should this occur, we will prioritize finding you another childcare provider within our agency that meets your needs. If unsuccessful, we will refer you to another agency within the community.

Infants

Parents will complete an intake questionnaire allowing providers to want to learn as much as possible about the children prior to them beginning care. Parents will discuss their child's needs, development, sleep schedule, and any health concerns to ensure that their child will transition well into the new environment. Until the child is approximately one year of age and/or is able to eat the food that is served by the provider, it is the responsibility of the parents to provide bottles, formula, foods and drinks, labelled with the child's full name. If the child is under 12 months of age, parents will be required to complete the Feeding Instructions form, which is part of the registration package on the parent portal. It is the parent's responsibility to provide diapers, wipes, and extra clothing.

Medication Policy

A provider may administer non-prescription products including: sunscreen, lotion, lip balm, bug spray, hand sanitizer, as well as diaper creams that are not used for acute, symptomatic treatment by parent completing an authorization form that is part of the enrolment registration documents.

Administration of any drug or medication to a child receiving childcare at a home childcare must be stored in accordance with the instructions for storage on the label, administered in accordance with the instructions on the label, inaccessible at all times to children, and the provider is in charge of all drugs and medications brought into the home childcare.

Medication can only be administered to a child only where a parent of the child gives written authorization for the administration of the drug or medication and that included with the authorization is a schedule that sets out the times the drug or medication is to be given and amounts to be administered; and the drug or medication is administered to a child only from the original container as supplied by a pharmacist or the original package and that the container or package is clearly labelled with the child's full name, the name of the drug or medication, the dosage of the drug or medication, the date of purchase and expiration, if applicable, and instructions for storage and administration.

Where a child's individualized plan includes written authorization from a parent of a child to administer drugs and medication, and sets out all the information required in the medical authorization form (i.e. name of medication, dosage, schedule, signs and symptoms and parent signature), the medical authorization form is not required.

As certain medications, like asthma inhaler and epinephrine EpiPen, must be administered quickly in an emergency to be fully effective, providers are permitted to carry the asthma medication or emergency allergy medication (e.g., a school age child may carry their own asthma inhaler and/ or EpiPen in a pouch). Allowing school age children to carry their own emergency allergy EpiPen and asthma medications allows that these medications can be administered quickly when needed. No other medication may be carried by a child. If a child self-administers a medication (e.g., inhaler or epinephrine), licensees are required to keep a record of the self-administration and the time on a medication form and noted in the daily written log.

Home childcare providers should check that the parent’s written instructions match any instructions printed on the original container and that the medication is not expired. Confirming that the two sets of instructions match will prevent any confusion as to which instructions should be followed and so that the medication is administered correctly. If medication is to be administered on an “as needed” basis, the written instructions must clearly indicate the situations under which the medication should be given. This could include the physical symptoms that must be present, the behaviour the child must be exhibiting or the child’s temperature. Simply indicating “as needed” or “as required” is not sufficient.

Products and medications with Drug Identification Numbers (DIN- eight digit number assigned by Health Canada) with the exception of sunscreen, lotion, lip balm, bug spray, hand sanitizer, as well as diaper cream that is not used for acute, symptomatic treatment, require a *completed medication authorization form (available on the parent portal)* and *schedule of administration and applicable record keeping*. The requirements apply to a wide variety of items, including vitamins, medicated ointments, prescription medication and over-the-counter medication. Medication should be dispensed in a well-lit area and, where possible, it is preferable to remove a child from the activity area to administer medication in a quiet environment with the least possible interruption. Leftover medication or surplus of medication should be returned in the original container to a parent of the child or safely discarded with parental permission.

Life-Threatening Medical Conditions

During the intake process with a family, the Home Childcare Consultant will discuss if there are any life-threatening medical conditions that the provider needs to be made aware of. This must occur before the first day of childcare. There are additional forms that will need to be completed in order to ensure that a safety plan is in place and that you have the necessary information and signed consent in order to administer required medication. For children with Anaphylaxis, an emergency plan will need to be completed prior to any child beginning care. This plan will be posted in your home. If a child has a severe anaphylactic food allergy, parents may be required to provide all food and drinks for their child. This will be determined on a case by case basis. When a child has a severe allergy, the provider must ensure that parents of all children attending the specific daycare are informed of the life threatening allergy that exists. If a child is diagnosed with a medical condition after the first day of care, Rural Family Connections may request that the child remain at home until more information is received and an individual medical plan is completed.

Nutrition

Home childcare providers must plan menus in consultation with the parent of the child and Home Childcare Consultant. The menu that consists of two snacks and one lunch must meet the requirements set out in the Health Canada documents “Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide”, “Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide – First Nations, Inuit and Métis” or “Nutrition for Healthy Term Infants”. Providers are expected to offer a variety of healthy foods for meals and snacks to each child who is in care for 6 or more hours per day. Drinking water will be provided at all times. Each child under the age of one year is fed in accordance with written instructions from the parent. Regular conversations between providers and Home Childcare Consultants take place during monthly visits and quarterly inspections about the meals and snacks they are preparing and serving the children.

A sample menu will be posted visible to the parents. Daily snacks and meals are recorded in the daily log book. Copies of planned menus may be provided to the parent if requested. If there are special dietary instructions to be followed, the provider will be given a copy of these requirements and they will be discussed to ensure the provider is comfortable and understands the needs of the child. Food may be supplemented by the parent in the case of these special dietary needs. All food brought from home *must be clearly labelled with the full child’s name*. Parents must also advise the home childcare provider of all ingredients in food supplied by the parent or any ingredients to which children may be allergic.

Parent Issues and Concerns Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide a transparent process for parents/guardians, the Home Childcare Consultant and providers to use when parents/guardians bring forward issues and concerns. Parents are encouraged to take an active role in our Rural Family Connections and the Home Childcare Consultant to regularly discuss what their children are experiencing. RFC supports positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents/guardians, childcare providers, and Home Childcare Consultant. RFC values the importance of fostering the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents/guardians about the program and their children. RFC’s Home Childcare Consultants are available to engage parents/guardians in conversations and support a positive experience during every interaction.

Procedure for Issues & Concerns:

Nature of Issue or Concern	Steps for Parents/Guardian to report issue/concern	Steps for providers, Staff and/or Licensee in responding to issue/concern
Program-related E.g: schedule, toilet training, indoor/outdoor program activities, menus, etc	Raise the issue or concern to the home childcare provider directly OR the Home Childcare Consultant and/or Home Childcare Manager.	Address the issue/concern at the time it is raised OR arrange for a meeting with the parent/guardian at the earliest convenience for everyone.
General, Agency or Operations-Related E.g.: fees, placement, etc.	Raise the issue or concern to the Home Childcare Consultant and /or Home Childcare Manager.	Document the issue/concerns in detail, documentation should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the date/time the issue/concern was raised - the name of the person who received it - the name of the person reporting it - the details of the issue/concern, any steps taken to resolve.
Provider, Staff and/or Licensee Related E.g.: conduct of provider, childcare consultant, agency head office staff, etc.	Raise the issue or concern to the individual directly OR the Home Childcare Consultant and /or Home Childcare Manager OR Executive Director. All issues or concerns about the conduct of the provider or staff that puts a child's well-being at risk should be reported to the Executive Director as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.	Provide contact information for the appropriate person if the person being notified is unable to address the matter. Ensure investigation of the issue/concern is initiated by the party within one business day or as soon as reasonably possible. Provide a resolution or outcome to the parent/guardian who raised the issue/concern.
Related to Other Persons at the Home Premises	Raise the issue of concern to: The home childcare provider directly OR The childcare consultant, Home Childcare Manager and/or licensee. All issues or concerns about the conduct or other persons in a home childcare premises that put a child's health, safety and well-being at risk, should be reported to Executive Directors as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.	

Parent Issues and Concerns Policy - Continued

All issues and concerns raised by parents/guardians are taken seriously and will be addressed. Every effort will be made to address and resolve the issues and concerns to the satisfaction of all parties as quickly as possible. Issues/concerns may be brought forward verbally or in writing. Responses and outcomes will be provided verbally, or in writing upon request. The level of detail provided to the parent/guardian will respect and maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved.

An initial response to an issue or concern will be provided to parents/guardians within two business days. The individual who raised the issue/concern will be kept informed throughout the resolution process. Investigations of issues will be fair, impartial and respectful to all parties involved. Every issue and concern will be treated confidentially and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of parents/guardians, children, home childcare providers, other persons in the home childcare premises, staff, students and volunteers, except when information must be disclosed for legal reasons (e.g. to the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities or the Children's Aid Society).

Rural Family Connections Home Childcare maintains high standards for positive interaction, communication, and role modelling for children. Harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated from any party. If at any point a parent/guardian, home childcare provider and/or staff feels uncomfortable, threatened, abused or belittled, they may immediately end the conversation and report the situation to the home childcare agency head office.

Everyone, including members of the public and professionals working with children, is required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect. If a parent/guardian expresses concern that a child is being abused or neglected, the parent will be advised to contact the **local Children's Aid Society** directly. Persons who become aware of such concerns are also responsible for reporting this information to CAS as per the "Duty to Report" requirement under the Child and Family Services Act.

Where parents/guardians are not satisfied with the response or outcome of an issue or concern, they may escalate the issue or concern verbally or in writing to the Rural Family Connection Executive Director and / or Board of Directors. Issues/concerns related to compliance requirements set out in the Child Care and Early Years Act., 2014 and Ontario Regulation 137/15 must be reported to the Ministry of Education's Child Care Quality Assurance and Licensing Branch.

Issues/concerns may also be reported to other relevant regulatory bodies (e.g. local public health department, police department, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Labour, Fire Department, College of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario College of Teachers, College of Social Workers etc.) where appropriate.

Contacts:

RFC Home Childcare: 613-821-2899

Ministry of Education, Licensed Childcare help Desk; 1-877-510-5333 or childcare_ontario@ontario.ca

Home Childcare Consultant Responsibilities:

1. Conducts an intake interview with the family whenever possible;
2. Facilitate the match visit with the parents and potential providers whenever possible;
3. Arrange alternate care for families when it is available;
4. Visits each home at least monthly and conducts quarterly safety inspections unannounced;
5. Available for discussion with parents of providers by email, phone or personal visit;
6. Ensures all requirements stated in the Child Care and Early Years Act 2014 are being followed in the provider's home; and
7. Uses the goals and approaches in "How Does Learning Happen?" to assist providers in offering a program where all children can participate fully and engage with peers in a meaningful way.

Parent Responsibilities:

1. Make sure all information regarding their child(ren) is up to date and given to the provider and to their designated Home Childcare Consultant, including; contact phone numbers, home address, change in health conditions, immunization information, and up to date days and hours of care required;
2. Drop off and pick up their child/ren at the as listed on the childcare agreement;
3. Informs the provider if they will be late or keeping their child home due to sickness or vacation;
4. Two weeks' written notice is sent to the agency and provider if they are withdrawing their child from care;
5. Two weeks' written notice is sent to the agency and provider if vacation days are planned.
6. Signs the provider invoice on the last day of the month;
7. Reports any concerns or changes in health, development, behaviour, diet, or sleep patterns to the provider;
8. Provides any allergy concerns and a written authorized plan in the event of an anaphylactic reaction;
9. If medication is required, complete the medication authorization form. Medication is in the original container with the child's name labelled with dispensing and storage instructions;
10. Works with the Rural Family Connections and health care professionals to ensure an up-to-date individualized support plan is in place for children with special needs; and
11. Follows the pay procedure provided by Rural Family Connections or City of Ottawa Subsidy.

Home Childcare Provider Responsibilities:

1. Takes part in the match visit with the parent and childcare consultant;
2. Maintains a warm, loving, safe, clean home for each child;
3. Follow all sanitary practices;
4. Views the children as competent and capable, curious and rich in potential as set out in the goals and approaches in “How Does Learning Happen?”;
5. Provides a quality meal planning menu that includes two snacks and one lunch. Follows feeding instructions regarding infants and children with special dietary needs;
6. Offers quality age and developmentally appropriate programming routine that includes activities throughout the day;
7. Offers quiet time/sleep time appropriate to the child’s need and age;
8. Facilitates minimum of 2hrs of outdoor play every day (weather permitting);
9. Records the children’s attendance, completes provider invoice and obtains appropriate signature. Emails the monthly invoice to the office admin@ruralfamilyconnections.ca on the last day of every month;
10. Records necessary detail in the log book daily: food, outdoor play, sleep check, activities, etc.;
11. One month written notice, when possible, sent to the parents and agency if care is being terminated;
12. Two week’s written notice sent to the parent and agency if taking vacation time;
13. For sick days and unable to provide childcare, send as much notice as possible to the parent and to your Home Childcare Consultant;
14. If there are no children in care, all absent, advise your Home Childcare Consultant by email as soon as possible;
15. If medication is brought to childcare, a parent must complete the medication authorization form. Medication is in the original container with the child’s name labelled with dispensing and storage instructions;
16. Complete an incident / accident report when required, obtain a parent signature, provide a copy to the parent, and send a copy to your Home Childcare Consultant to keep a copy in the child’s file;
17. Report a serious occurrence as per policy and regulations;
18. Knowledge of all prohibited practices;
19. Maintains equipment in good repair. Equipment that is loaned to the provider is returned to Rural Family Connections when no longer required. All returned equipment MUST be cleaned and sanitized with the highest standard before being returned to RFC;
20. Completes a minimum of ten hours of professional development training (in-person, webinars, zoom, etc.) when provided by the agency or city wide;
21. Discuss any concerns about the child, the parents, the hours and days of care with your designated Home Childcare Consultant as soon as they arise;
22. Maintains supervision (visual contact) of the children at all times;
23. All policies and procedures as laid out in the Provider package are being followed; and
24. All household members and regular visitors 18 years of age and older residing in the home are aware of these policies and regulations.

Serious Occurrence Reporting

Home childcare providers are required to report any serious occurrences to our office immediately. The Rural Family Connection Home Childcare Manager will submit the serious occurrence to the Ministry of Education within the required time period (24 hrs). A Serious Occurrence notification form will be posted in the provider's home for 10 business days. Parents will be notified by the agency if the serious occurrence directly affects them.

Identifying a Serious Occurrence:

1. The death of a child who is receiving childcare at the home of a provider supported by a licensed home childcare agency.
2. Abuse, neglect or an allegation of abuse or neglect of a child while receiving childcare at a home childcare premises.
3. A life-threatening injury to or a life-threatening illness of a child who receives care at a home childcare premise.
4. An incident where a child who is receiving childcare at a home childcare premise goes missing or is temporarily unsupervised
5. An unplanned disruption of the normal operations of a childcare premises that poses a risk to the health, safety, or well-being of children receiving care at the home childcare premise.

Next Steps Response:

1. Providers must provide the child with immediate medical attention. This may include calling 911.
2. The provider must address any continuing risks to the health and safety of the child or others present based on their standard first aid qualifications.
3. Call a parent or guardian.
4. Notify Rural Family Connections 613-821-2899
5. Designated Home Childcare Consultant will assist in determining if the incident is a Serious Occurrence, if the Children's Aid Society needs to be contacted, or any other connections that need to be made. Home Childcare Consultant and Home Childcare Manager will also make sure that the rest of the group of children and/or adults are safe and in good care.

Report and Post:

Rural Family Connections Home Childcare Manager will report the serious occurrence to the Ministry of Education by logging into the Child Care Licensing System (CCLS) within 24 hours of becoming aware of the situation. If the CCLS system is not available, the Home Childcare Manager will contact the Ministry of Education Program Advisor. The serious occurrence notification will be completed and posted in an area that is visible to the parents for 10 business days. This serious occurrence notification will not include any identifying information and will be updated as new information is obtained.

Sleep and Supervision Policy

All sleep equipment is provided by Rural Family Connections. Infants under 18 months of age will have their own playpen including a fitted sheet. Children 18 months and older will have their own sleep mat / cot with a fitted sheet. Parents are not required to provide the sleep equipment, unless they are specialty items such as sleep sacks, blankets (over 18 months), and / or small stuffed animals. There may be exceptions to the sleep equipment policy that would include requests by the parents. Exception requests for alternate sleeping equipment arrangements need to provide the details in writing and/or obtain a medical note from a physician if necessary. The exception to this policy needs to be approved by the Home Childcare Consultant and Home Childcare Manager. The home childcare provider will perform at least one mandatory sleep check, then record the time in the daily log book. Visual checks of each sleeping child, looking for indicators of distress or unusual behaviours. The frequency of these checks will be determined based on the length of the rest time. The home childcare provider will ensure there is sufficient light in the sleeping area to conduct the visual sleep checks. The sleeping arrangements and routines will be discussed with the parent and reviewed by the Home Childcare Consultant during the intake registration process. Any changes to these arrangements, or difficulties in the sleeping patterns will be discussed with the parent and Home Childcare Consultant. The "Joint Statement on Safe Sleep" was referenced when writing the *Sleep and Supervision Policy*.

Smoke Free Policy

Rural Family Connections and home childcare providers are required to comply with the requirements under the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017 that includes;

- prohibit smoking tobacco and medicinal cannabis, and the use of electronic cigarettes in a place where home childcare is provided, whether or not the children are present.
- Every home must have a working smoke alarm on every level and outside all sleeping areas.
- Providers are required to post a fire evacuation plan.
- Fire drills with the children are recommended monthly and noted in the daily log book.

Outdoor Sun Safety Exposure Policy

- Infants under one year out to be kept out of direct sunlight (keep in shade, under a tree, an umbrella, or a canopy) to prevent skin damage and potential dehydration.
- Ensure Water is available at all times to keep hydrated, all water bottled labelled with the child's name.
- Follow the weather network UV readings each day to plan outdoor activities. The sun's UV rays are strongest between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. and it is also usually the hottest time of day. Minimize outdoor time during these hours.
- Encourage parents to supply a rimmed, breathable sun hat.
- Children must bring sunscreen lotion that is clearly labelled with the child's name. Authorization to use sunscreen lotion is included on the application consent registration form. Apply sunscreen lotion to areas that are most exposed; face, ears, neck, shoulders, back, knees, and the tops of their feet.
- The *Sun Safety Exposure Policy* was written based on resources completed by *Health Canada Sun Safety*.

Sun Safety Tips

- **Cover up.** When the UV Index is 3 or higher, protect your skin as much as possible. Wear light-coloured, long-sleeved shirts, pants, and a wide-brimmed hat made from breathable fabric..
- **Limit your time in the sun.** Keep out of the sun and heat between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. The UV index can be 3 or higher during those times. When your shadow is shorter than you, the sun is very strong. Look for places with lots of shade, like a park with big trees, umbrellas or gazebo tents.
- **Use sunscreen.** Put sunscreen lotion on when the UV index is 3 or higher. Use sunscreen lotion that reads “broad spectrum” and “water resistant” with an SPF of at least 60.
- **Drink plenty of cool liquids (especially water) before you feel thirsty.** If sunny days are also hot and humid, stay cool and hydrated to avoid heat illness. Dehydration (not having enough fluids in your body) is dangerous, and thirst is not a good indicator of dehydration.

Supervision of Volunteers and Students Policy

Rural Family Connections Home Childcare will ensure that every volunteer or student that is present in a home where childcare is taking place must be supervised by the provider at all times. The volunteer or student is not permitted to be alone with children. Volunteers and students cannot be a family member / relative living in the same home as the provider as this is a conflict of interest. Volunteers and students on placement must present their Police Vulnerable Sector Check clearance certificate (not more than 6 months old) before being onsite or interacting with the children. For University or College placement students, a copy of the immunization record and health assessment must be provided. All duties will be determined by the provider. The student or volunteer is responsible for completing any tasks or assignments that have been given. In the case of a placement student, the list of expectations will be given to the provider by the academic institute before the placement or visit begins. Volunteers and students on placement are not a regular occurrence with Rural Family Connections Home Childcare.

Transportation and Outings Policy

Providers are encouraged to take the children out in the community for increased exposure to a variety of play and social opportunities such as walks, parks, playgrounds, the library, and playgroups. In these situations, signed permission is not required as it is part of the regular childcare program routine. When providers use public transportation or their own vehicles to transport children on outings, parents will be required to complete *Transportation and / or Excursion forms*. Parents are not obligated to approve any excursion or method of transportation. The majority of our providers do not use transportation methods other than walking. Please discuss the routine outings with your potential provider during the intake process prior to childcare starting and after childcare has begun.

Safe Arrival and Dismissal Policy and Procedures

The purpose of the safe arrival and dismissal policy is to support the safe arrival and dismissal of children receiving care. This policy will provide home childcare Providers with a clear direction as to what steps are to be taken when a child does not arrive at the home childcare premises as expected, as well as procedures to follow to ensure the safe arrival and dismissal of children.

Accepting a child into care:

The Home Childcare Provider is responsible for signing children in on the **attendance record / timesheet** as children arrive at the home premises where care is provided. The Home Childcare Provider is responsible for ensuring **any communication from parents/guardians related to drop-off or absences is noted on the daily logbook.**

Where a child has not arrived in care as expected:

1. Where a child does not arrive at the home childcare premises and the parent/guardian has not communicated a change in drop-off or that the child will be absent (e.g., left a voice message or advised the Home Childcare Provider at pick-up) the Home Childcare Provider must:
 - contact the child's parent/guardian not later than one hour from the scheduled drop off time listed on the provider agreement in the child's registration package. Home Childcare Providers shall contact the child's parent/guardian at least once by phone/ text/ email based on the list of contact information on the child's emergency card.
 - If no response is received within one hour of the attempted communication to confirm the absence, the Home Childcare Provider must contact the Home Childcare Consultant/ Agency.
2. Once the child's absence has been confirmed, the Home Childcare Provider shall document the child's absence on the attendance/timesheet record and any additional information about the child's absence in the daily logbook.

Releasing a child from care:

The Home Childcare Provider shall only release the child to the child's parent/guardian or another individual that the parent/guardian has provided written authorization that the child may be released to.

Where the Home Childcare Provider does not know the individual picking up the child, the Home Childcare Provider must ask the parent/guardian/authorized individual for photo identification and confirm the individual's information against the parent/guardian/authorized individual's name on the child's file or written authorization provided by parent/guardian.

Where a child has not been picked up as expected:

1. Where a parent/guardian or authorized individual who was supposed to pick up a child from care and has not arrived by the scheduled pick-up time listed on the Provider agreement in the child's registration package, the Home Childcare Provider will contact the parent within 1 hour and shall ensure that the child is given a snack and activity, while they await their pick-up.
2. Next steps after one hour of scheduled pick-up time and the child is still in care, the Home Childcare Provider will advise their Home Childcare Consultant / Agency in writing or by phone and proceed to contact other individuals authorized to pick up the child listed on the child's emergency contact card.
3. Where the Home Childcare Provider is the person contacting the parent/guardian and they have been unable to reach the parent/guardian or authorized individual who was responsible for picking up the child after 2 hours of scheduled pick-up time, the Home Childcare Provider shall advise their Home Childcare Consultant / Agency and proceed to continue with the list of contact for authorized individuals listed on the child's emergency card.
4. Where the Home Childcare Provider is unable to reach the parent/guardian or any other authorized individual listed on the child's file (e.g., emergency contacts) by 3 hours after scheduled pick up time, the Home Childcare Provider shall proceed with contacting the local Children's Aid Society (CAS) 613-747-7800. The Home Childcare Provider shall follow CAS's direction with respect to next steps. The Home Childcare Provider shall also advise the Home Childcare Consultant / Agency emergency line.

Dismissing a child from care without supervision procedures:

The Home Childcare Provider will only release children from care to the parent/guardian or other authorized adult. Under no circumstances will children be released from care unsupervised/to walk home alone.

Additional Procedures:

If the child is being picked up by an individual not otherwise listed on the emergency contact card, the parents shall provide written authorization for the release of the child. The Home Childcare Provider must verify a photo ID of the individual at pick up prior to releasing the child from care.

**If you have any questions or concerns please contact the
office at 613-821-2899 or email hcs@ruralfamilyconnections.ca**