

Muskoka Family Focus School Age Programs

www.muskokafamilyfocus.com

(705)-645-3027

Gravenhurst Bracebridge Huntsville Emsdale



School Age Programs

Parent Handbook

Updated September 10, 2020

Huntsville Programs

Supervisor: (705) 644-1858

Pine Glen: (705) 783-0176
Emergency Shelter: Faith Baptist Church

Spruce Glen: (705) 783-0180
Emergency Shelter: Courtesy Auto Sales

Riverside: (705) 783-4566
Emergency Shelter: Green's Haulage

St. Mary's: (705) 786-6787
Emergency Shelter: Faith Baptist Church

Huntsville Public School (705) 787-5474
Emergency Shelter: Macs Milk (corner of Main St.)

Irwin Memorial Public School: (705) 349-2093
Emergency Shelter: Community Centre/Library

Watt Public School: (705) 349-1865
Emergency Shelter: Camp Rama (104 Fish Hatchery Rd.)

Evergreen Heights Education Centre in Emsdale: (phone number to be determined)
Emergency Shelter: Highlands Children's Centre (beside the school)

Bracebridge Programs

Supervisor: (705) 644-1520

MMOL: (705) 641-1269
Emergency Shelter: Food Basics Grocery Store

BPS: (705) 783-5139
Emergency Shelter: St. Joseph's Catholic Church

Gravenhurst Programs

Supervisor: (705) 641-0977

GPS: (705) 644-1143
Emergency Shelter: Oliver's Coffee

Beechgrove: (705) 644-3167
Emergency Shelter: Gravenhurst Children's Place

KP Manson Public School: (705) 644-1752
Emergency Shelter: Teresa Malone's Home (1145 Graham Rd Severn Bridge)

Program Statement:

Our Early Learning Centres and School Age Programs strive to provide a positive learning environment for your child to enhance his or her level of development through play experiences and the guidance of professionally trained Registered Early Childhood Educators (and assistants) who are members of and in good standing with the Ontario College of Early Childhood Educators. Staff, students and volunteers will review this program statement prior to interacting with the children and at least once annually and when this statement is modified.

We believe children are "competent, capable, curious and rich in potential".

Our Early Learning Centres use the *How Does Learning Happen, (HDLH) Ontario's Pedagogy for The Early Years - 2014*¹ as the document to guide programming and pedagogy²

For the children, their families and our staff, our program strategies are designed to foster physical, social, emotional, intellectual, creative and spiritual development by offering experiences that promote:

- a) Health, safety, nutrition and well-being;
- b) Curiosity, creativity, initiative and independence;
- c) Self-esteem, confidence and decision making capabilities;
- d) Respect for themselves, others and their environment;
- e) Encourage responsive feelings of friendship and consideration;
- f) Communication and interaction to foster positive responsive relationships;
- g) Self-regulation and co-operation;
- h) Inquiry based play through child initiated exploration and adult-support experiences;
- i) A well balanced daily schedule that includes active indoor and outdoor play as well as rest/quiet time that provides consideration to individual needs;
- j) Integration of children with challenging needs. Along with the assistance of various resource services in the community, we strive to meet the needs of all children.
- k) Document and review the impact of the strategies set out in (a) to (j) on the children and their families.

As stated in the *How Does Learning Happen?* document, "Learning and development happens within the context of relationships among children, families, educators and the environment." Our qualified staff, students and volunteers guide the early learning environment to promote the Four Foundations of *How Does Learning Happen?* These four foundations include: Belonging, Well-Being, Engagement and Expression. Our staff, students and volunteers use these foundations to provide a nurturing environment that creates a vision for all children's future potential. Our staff, students and volunteers are supported to participate in continuous professional learning. They are required to document and review the impact of the strategies as stated above on the children and their families. Our staff, students and volunteers are also monitored throughout the year to ensure that all components of this program statement are implemented in the operation of each program.

Our goal is to provide a secure and safe learning environment through enjoyable experiences for all children attending our program. We involve local community partners and allow those partners to support children, their families and our staff, students and volunteers.

Program Statement Goals Approaches

Health, Safety, Nutrition and Well Being (a) (g)

- Staff, students and volunteers create positive eating environments
- Staff, students and volunteers are responsive to children's cues
- Stimulating, safe environment available for intentional active play that supports individual children's abilities
- Challenging experiences in available that support varied abilities in order for children to practice self-regulation skills and work towards mastering a skill
- All meals, snacks and beverages must meet the recommendations in the Canada's Food Guide
- Child health check completed daily (on attendance)

¹The HDLH document can be found on the Min. of Ed. website: www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/HowLearningHappens.pdf

² Pedagogy - The method and practice of teaching, especially as an academic subject or theoretical concept.

- Safe, calming and nurturing environment
- Self-regulation and co-operative skills encouraged
- Children are dressed appropriately for the weather

Inquiry Play Based Programming (b) (h) (i) (k)

- Well balanced daily schedule
- Outdoor time (2 hrs) with activities offered OR indoor physical activity during inclement weather
- Indoor physical activity
- Creative opportunities available
- Diverse age appropriate books available
- Science/nature exploration available
- Music/language opportunities available
- Block play available
- Sensory experiences offered
- Dramatic play opportunities available
- Co-operative opportunities offered to children
- Area available for spiritual reflection ie: cozy tent
- Quiet/rest period offered with appropriate activities
- Program plans current and posted based on the interests of the children
- Various documentation is visible to support the pedagogical learning of all children

Interactions with Children (c) (e) (f) (j)

- Tone of voice is calm and nurturing to the children
- Genuine interest shown to each child
- Children are listened to and respected to help foster positive reciprocal relationships
- Children are supported with positive reinforcement to build self-esteem, self-confidence and to nurture decision making skills
- Children's emotions are recognized and responded to with empathy through responsive communication between educators and children
- Educators, students and volunteers at child's level role modelling and encouraging independence, curiosity, initiative and self-help skills through reciprocal age appropriate conversation
- Educators, students and volunteers communicate with children to identify feelings/emotions encouraging friendship and consideration of others ie: 'bucket filling' and inclusion of all
- Educators, students and volunteers encourage children to be respectful of others and themselves
- Frequent age appropriate verbal interaction with children to foster a sense of security
- Frequent appropriate physical contact with children
- Appropriate use of body and verbal language to foster positive communication and relationships
- Each child greeted (by name) and acknowledged
- Children encouraged to meet individual developmental goals
- Children with special needs are integrated including the development and implementation of Individual Program Plans (IPP)
- Focus is on children as opposed to the adults in the room

Interactions with Families and Our Community (f) (j) (k)

- Families are greeted daily by name in a friendly welcoming manner (eye contact)
- Family inquiries answered or redirected/referred
- Communication between educators, students, volunteers and families is respectful to foster positive relationships between the children, parents and educators
- Families are encouraged to participate in the program ie: scheduled visit, drop in, call, etc.
- Respect for individual differences, sensitivity to differing parenting styles, culture, etc...

Sanitary Practices (a)

- Staff, students and volunteers follow all recommendations by the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit
- Children helped to wash before eating, after toileting, outdoor play, and as needed
- Surfaces cleaned and disinfected as appropriate
- Equipment/toys cleaned and disinfected per policy
- Cots cleaned and disinfected, linens laundered at least weekly
- Children assisted/encouraged to use sanitary practices when using the toilet

Safety Practices (a)

- Children supervised AT ALL TIMES
- Cleaning supplies inaccessible to children
- Children sitting while eating or drinking

Environment (d) (g)

- Educators, students and volunteers use the environment as a 'third teacher' ie: children are involved in room set up
- Respect for the environment is woven into all activities throughout the day
- The environment is designed to accommodate varied children`s sensitivities and arousal states and to allow for a calm, focused, alert state as well
- Toys/equipment to promote all areas of development – inquiry play based learning
- Toys/equipment suitable to developmental levels

Food Handling (a)

- Allergies listed – staff, students and volunteers aware of allergies, list up to date
- Staff, students and volunteers sit with children during meal times and it is a friendly social time
- Good eating habits and manners encouraged
- Children are assisted when needed
- Children are encouraged to serve themselves
- Proper food eating techniques modelled (use of utensils, dishes, cups)
- Proper use of dishes ie: wet food must be on a plate or in bowl

Kitchen Maintenance and Duties (a)

- All meals, snacks and beverages must meet the recommendations in the Canada's Food Guide
- Culturally diverse options offered
- Individual food preparation opportunities offered to children ie: fruit sticks



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- Healthy meals and snacks are being prepared with as much 'homemade' food as possible ie: homemade granola bars
- Low fat, aspartame, trans fat and high sodium food are not included in our menus
- Homogenized milk is being served to children under 2 years of age
- Water is offered and available throughout the day
- Kitchen floor swept daily
- Cleaning and disinfecting happens regularly throughout the day
- Cleaning checklist is completed daily, weekly, etc.

Staff/Program Structure: The program is staffed by qualified personnel including Registered Early Childhood Educators and Assistants approved by the Ministry of Education.

Where there are enough children enrolled to warrant having the group separate into two groups we will offer a Full Day Kindergarten (FDK) program for students in JK up to Grade one. The Program Supervisor will notify you of this.

Hours of Operation: The **After School Program** operates daily until 6:00 p.m. throughout the school year. The **Before School Program**, (where available) operates daily from 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. The program does not operate on PA days, Christmas Break, March Break or Statutory Holidays. In Gravenhurst, Bracebridge and Huntsville we do operate a full day program during the summer months when there is sufficient enrolment.

Admission and Discharge: If you are interested in enrolling your child(ren) in the **Before or After School Program** please register in advance. You may speak to the program facilitator or call the Administration Office at 645-3027. There is an annual administration fee of \$30.00 per family. This payment is required at the time of registration. This will also be pro-rated for those who register after September). Registration is completed annually to update information. If care is required on an "as needed" basis, we require a minimum of 2-days notice otherwise schedules must be provided one week prior to the start of the new month. **Accounts are paid by preauthorized debit, online payments or interact payments only. Invoices will be emailed to your email address. In the event a payment is returned to us due to NSF, there will be a \$25.00 fee charged to your account. We reserve the right to discontinue care if payment is not received. You will not be billed for statutory holidays or any other days the school is closed. On inclement weather days, the program is open, therefore you will be billed.**

We require 2 weeks' notice in writing when withdrawing your child from the program. If 2 weeks is not given in writing, you will be billed for the 2 week notice period.

<u>After School Program</u>		<u>Before School Program</u>	
<u>TLDSB</u>	<u>SMCDSB</u>	<u>TLDSB</u>	<u>SMCDSB</u>
\$ 11.25	\$ 11.50 per day per child (Grade 1 and over)	\$ 7.25	\$ 7.50
\$ 11.75	\$ 12.25 per day per child (JK & SK)	\$ 7.75	\$ 8.00

NNDSB (after school only)

\$12.50 per day per child (Grade 1 and over)
 \$13.00 per day per child (JK & SK)

Financial Assistance: The District of Muskoka can provide financial assistance for families who are eligible. You may call the District Office Community Services department at 645-2412 or 1-800-461-4215 Monday through Friday and ask to speak to an intake worker.

Payment: All accounts are handled electronically. Invoices emailed and payments received by P.A.D., online or interact. Two weeks' notice is required when you terminate service. Parents are billed for days their children do not attend the program due to illness, vacation or for any other reason. Please ask the Facilitator for a pre-authorized debit form or call 705-645-3027 to have one emailed to you.

Wait List

Families will be placed on the wait list on the date they confirm they would like a space at the centre. The entry on the wait list will be dated and include information about the childcare needs of the family; name and birth date of child, days of care required, requested start date, name and contact information of parents and any other specific



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information the family wishes to include. The program supervisor maintains the waitlist and contacts parents regularly when it is known a space will be available. Families are contacted in order of the date they were placed on the waitlist and offered a space once available, in order of the date they were placed on the waitlist ie: the family who has been on the list the longest will be offered the first available space. Each time the supervisor contacts the family or attempts to contact the family, the date, time and method of contact will be noted on the wait list. The supervisor will keep accurate updated notes about the communication to strive to meet the needs of the family. There are no fees charged to families for adding their name to the waitlist. Families are asked to contact the program supervisor should they wish to be removed from the wait list or if they have any changes to the original information provided. If after 3 attempts to communicate with the family the supervisor does not receive a return phone call or e-mail, the family will be removed from the wait list. Families are able to confirm they are on the wait list by requesting to view (in the presence of the program supervisor) their spot on the list confirming the wait list is managed according to our policy with the correct dates in the order in which the family was placed on the waiting list without contravening confidentiality. Other family/children's names will not be visible to the inquiring family to maintain the privacy of all children listed on the wait list.

Inclement Weather: The closure of the program will be at the discretion of the Program Supervisor. **Please check our website at www.muskokafamilyfocus.com, our Facebook page or follow us on Twitter @MuskokaFamFocus, for updates as well as The Moose FM and Country 102 FM local radio stations. The program will operate on bus cancellation days unless otherwise stated per individual program. Families will be billed if an inclement weather day is a regularly scheduled day for your child(ren), UNLESS the school itself is deemed closed by the school board or if MFF closes the program.**

Arrival and Departure: To ensure the safe arrival of your child(ren), program staff will need to know in advance of any change in your child's schedule. If your child will not be attending the program due to illness or will be arriving late please inform the program facilitator by calling the number on the cover of this document. This is the facilitator's cellular phone, which has a message centre. Messages are checked at the beginning of the program and the phone is in use while the program is open. Your child will not be permitted to leave the program with anyone other than those documented on the release consent form UNLESS written permission is received or in an emergency, a telephone call may be acceptable. Anyone picking up your child must be 13 years or older. Staff will ask for identification from the person who is picking up the child. **The Facilitator of the program will call to confirm your child's absence or additional days of attendance.**

Pick Up Info: In the case of a separation between parents, both parents will need to agree to the authorized people on the pickup list. If legal court documents specify otherwise, then that is what will be followed. Any changes to the authorized pick up list must be in writing. Parents must provide us with any legal documents pertaining to their custody arrangements and provide updates as they happen. ****Due to Covid-19, parents are not permitted to enter the schools. Each program's pick up arrangement is site specific and will be communicated to you by the Program Supervisor or Educators.***

Fire Procedure: In order to prepare for a quick and safe departure from the building in the event of fire, a fire procedure is posted for your information and regular monthly fire drills are conducted.

Emergency Management Procedure: MFF&CP has emergency management procedures in place including: in the event this facility has to be vacated an emergency location has been established and is listed on the cover page of this document. All parents would be notified by phone as to a designated pick up spot in the case of an emergency. This information will also be posted on our Face Book page and our website and announced on the local radio station. **In the event of an emergency where our staff feel medical attention is necessary, 911 will be called.*

Nutrition: A nutritious snack will be provided for children attending the After School Program. An example of a snack may be: apples slices and yogurt dip.

Field Trips and Outdoor Time: On occasion our program may involve excursions away from the premises. You will be advised of any major outings and asked to sign a permission form allowing your child to participate. Children play outdoors for a minimum of 30 minutes every day, weather permitting.

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) – Customer Service Standard Policy: Muskoka Family Focus is in compliance with the AODA. We are committed to developing policies, practices and procedures that provide accessible quality services to its clients and their children. Services will be provided to clients with disabilities in a manner that promotes and respects dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity. MFF is dedicated

to ensuring all programs and services are accessible to clients and their children in accordance with Ontario Regulation 429.07 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.

Closing Time and Pick Up: If you are unable to pick up your child by 6:00 p.m. please authorize someone else to do so. No child will be released to a person not authorized **in writing** by you. Names of authorized people must be indicated on the Release Consent section of the registration form.

- The Program closes at 6:00 p.m. promptly and a **\$1.00 per minute fee will be charged to parents who are late**. This amount will be billed on your invoice. If this happens 3 times, we reserve the right to discontinue care.
- If you foresee being late, please call and let us know; perhaps some arrangements can be made.
- Try to be punctual; educators have families to get home to.
- If by 6:00 p.m. a parent has left no message, the emergency person named on your registration form will be called. If this person cannot make arrangements to pick up the child at once, the C.A.S. will be called to pick up the child at 6:30 p.m. The educators cannot be made responsible.
- Our educators will take the necessary action to protect the children in our care if there is suspicion the parent or person picking up the child is under the influence of alcohol or drugs including recreational marijuana. An alternate person will be contacted to pick up the child. CAS and or the OPP may also be contacted if co-operation is challenging or our educator(s) feel the child is in need of protection.

Prohibited Practices:

Muskoka Family Focus & Children's Place will not permit the following Prohibited Practices:

- a. Corporal punishment or restraint of a child by an employee, a student, a volunteer or by another child or group of children.
- b. Deliberate harsh or degrading measures that would humiliate, shame or frighten a child or undermine a child's self-respect, example: name calling, yelling or singling a child out in a negative way.
- c. 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 on as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent.
- d. Deprivation of a child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, clothing, bedding, sleep and toilet use.
- e. Locking or permitting to be locked without adult supervision for the purpose of confining a child, the exits of any building or structure where children are in attendance at any program operated by MFF&CP. *The exception to this section of the procedure is during an emergency when children could be confined to a room temporarily until the emergency is resolved as it relates to MFF&CP Emergency Management Plan. The use of a locked or lockable room or structure to confine or isolate a child, who has been separated from other children.
- f. Inflicting any bodily harm on children including, but not limited to making children eat or drink against their will.

Our program philosophy is to use positive verbal reinforcement to encourage respectful behaviour.

Children are encouraged to settle their own differences as much as possible to acquire problem-solving skills. The educators aim for a positive approach when handling any incident, and will redirect the child if the incident is of a minor nature.

If the incident is more involved, the child may be removed from the immediate area, but not from the total environment, with a brief explanation. He/she will sit by the side of the educator for a "cool down period" and then may return to the group with an understanding about his/her ability to interact and engage in a respectful and co-operative manner.

Only if the incident is of a severe nature, (e.g. tantrum, violent behaviour towards others) is the child removed from the playroom accompanied by a Facilitator. A Facilitator remains with the child adopting a limited speaking but supportive attitude until the child has calmed down and is no longer a possible threat to him/herself or other children, normally no longer than a few minutes. As a last resort, if inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour continues, the parents/guardians will receive written notice asking that the child (may) be asked to leave the Program.



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Supervision of Volunteers and Students

Muskoka Family Focus and Children's Place supports the ongoing learning for volunteers and students. Volunteers and students occasionally participate or complete placements at our programs. Volunteers and students are required to provide a vulnerable sector check and the following are adhered to:

- No child is supervised by a person under 18 years of age
- Volunteers and students will be supervised at all times by a MFF&CP employee
- Only employees will have unsupervised access to children
- Volunteers and students may not be counted in staffing ratios

Serious Occurrence Notifications: The safety and well being of our children in licensed childcare programs is our highest priority. Operators of licensed childcare centres work diligently to provide a safe, creative and nurturing environment for each child. In spite of all the best precautions, serious occurrences can sometimes take place.

The Ontario government has introduced a new policy that requires licensed childcare centres to post information about serious occurrences that happen at a centre or home location. To support increased transparency and access to information, a "Serious Occurrence Notification Form" must be posted at the centre or home location in a visible area for 10 days.

A serious occurrence could include: Serious injury to a child, fire or other disaster on site.

Licensed childcare centres are already required to report serious occurrences to the Ministry of Education, which is responsible for childcare licensing. This new policy requires childcare operators to post information in their facilities so that parents also have access to it.

Health and Safety: We are unable to administer prescription or non-prescription medication with the exception of asthma medication, Epi-pens or other medications for life threatening conditions.

If your child becomes ill during the day and the school has requested pick up, he/she may not attend the after school program that day. If your child arrives at the before/after school program and is ill, our facilitator(s) will strive to find a quiet, supervised spot (isolation) for him/her to rest and notify you for pick up. Occasionally when there is one facilitator at a program it becomes difficult to isolate, however we will do our best as per our guidelines provided by the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit. Children may not attend the program if they have a fever, diarrhea, vomiting, or any infectious illness. They may return to the program after they have been symptom free 24 hours.

****Our programs follow all Covid-19 related requirements from the Ministry of Education and the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit. Information is continuously being updated, we will do our best to share all information we have.***

Personal Belongings: Children may bring books, games or activities to our programs, at the discretion of the Facilitator. Please make sure they are clearly marked with their names, as we cannot be held responsible for lost or stolen items. ****Due to Covid-19, no personal items may be left at the program. Personal belongings must be taken home at the end of each day.***

Communication: The staff at the Before & After School Programs enjoy and appreciate the opportunity to communicate openly with the parents of the children they care for at the time of departure. Please allow adequate time for discussion. (Please note that the program closes at 6:00 p.m.) **Please advise the program facilitator in writing when there are any changes in information to your child's registration form.** It is to your child's benefit to keep our records up to date. If you have any suggestions or concerns, please feel free to discuss them with the program facilitator or call the Program Supervisor whose number is listed on the cover page of this document. Please keep this parent handbook for easy reference. Please advise your program facilitators if your child's needs change throughout the school year. For example: your child requires EA support. ****Due to Covid-19, we will not have the opportunity to communicate in person at the end of the day. Communication is very important to us so please use our program cell phone, e-mail and/or written notes to keep our communication open.***

Conflict Resolution for Parents

If a parent has a concern or complaint, this section outlines the procedure for the parent to follow. Muskoka Family Focus supports open discussions between our staff and families through a fair and transparent conflict resolution process. It is our goal to address all issues in a timely manner. Concerns and complaints received by employees, students or volunteers should be brought to the centre Supervisor's attention. The Supervisor will respond in writing



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or via e-mail to the initial concern and/or complaint within one week of it being received. The Supervisor will discuss with the Management Team the concern and/or complaint. An appropriate resolution will be determined. The suggested resolution will be communicated back to the complainant in writing or via e-mail. If the matter is not resolved, a written submission from the complainant may be made to the Management Team and a further investigation and discussion will take place. The Management Team will respond to the concern and/or complaint within one week of it being received. If deemed necessary by the Management Team, the concern and/or complaint will be forwarded to the Board of Directors where a resolution will be decided upon. The Management Team will then respond to the concern and/or complaint in writing or via e-mail with a final resolution.

Toilet Trained: Your child needs to be **fully** toilet trained in order to attend our School Aged Programs. If your child is registered on an "as needed" basis, we require a minimum of 48 hours advanced notice in order for your child to attend. In some programs, this may not be an option due to high enrollment.

Thank you for choosing Muskoka Family Focus and Children's Place to meet your child care needs.