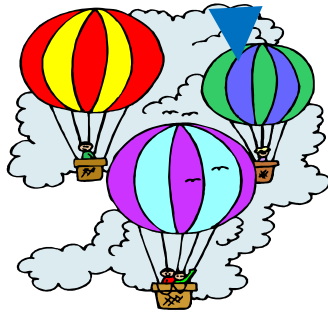




Please give input into our policies and procedures updated every November.

Please feel free to speak to your Educators about going into the program to observe and contributing ideas to support your child in the program.

Reach out to the Agency at anytime with questions or concerns.

Odyssey Childcare

8:30 am-4:30 pm Mon-Fri
245B 12A St. N
Lethbridge, Ab T1H 2J2
Phone 403-320-5437
Fax 403-320-7767
noreen-odyssey@shaw.ca
andrea-odyssey@shaw.ca
www.odysseychildcare.ca

Odyssey Childcare

Annual Parent Handbook

LEARN THROUGH PLAY

2026-2027



We Provide quality care through our Early Childcare Educators
Our focus is to help develop the child as a whole person, working as a collaborative team with the family.

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***Please see end page for contact information

For any emergency calls outside office hours, you may leave a message on voice mail, (this is checked often through out the evenings and weekends)

For questions on your account, subsidy, concerns, or for any resource you may want to obtain, please contact the office during office hours.

For Subsidy renewal or concerns, please contact the Alberta Works at 1-877-644-9992 or fax 381-5791. You may also go down to the office at 333-200 5th Ave South, Lethbridge, Alberta. T1J 4L1

If there are any reasons such as late arrival, absence, subbing information, child directed concerns or milestones, please contact your Educator. If necessary your Educator will contact the office with this information. You may also contact the office if needed.

For concerns outside the Agency's capabilities please contact Southwest Child and Family Services (Licensing) @ 403-381-5316 or fax at 403-381-5791. Please contact the Agency prior to Southwest Child and Family Services (Licensing), to be sure the matter at hand is outside of our jurisdiction.

Child Abuse Hotline—1-800-387-5437 (KIDS)
 Family Violence—403-310-1818 (toll free 24 hours)
 Alberta Supports Contact Center—1-877-644-9992 ext 2
 Alberta Government Contact—403-310-0000

The Parent Portion of the fee, is due on the **1st of every month**. You will receive a monthly invoice with subsidy amounts and monthly contract amount. Also in writing how much you owe for your payment. You can use debit, MC/VISA, Cheque or Cash. We also accept email transfers. If you happen to be late (past the 5th of the month), there will be a \$50.00 late fee added to your balance. We regretfully need to enforce a termination policy pertaining to late payments. If we have not heard from the Parent by the 10th of the month, we will call default on the contract (you will no longer have childcare), and the file will be sent to collections. Payment arrangements are accepted, however strictly by the discretion of the Program Director. Please see contact info and office hours to access administration.

Contract Obligations

We believe every child is unique in his/her needs. That's why we give the first 30 days as a trial, for both Child (ren) and Educator. If for any reason within the first 30 days of contract either party feels it's not a good fit, we will work hard to find a better suited home for the child (ren). After the grace period we expect 30 days notice to any change in attendance, whether this is a holiday, or termination. If for some reason the notice to terminate is less than 30 days, the Parent is still responsible for the full contract amount.

***Please keep the office up to date on all personal information, phone numbers, address, subsidy amounts, etc.

Each contract is unique in regards to fees and dynamics. If any information changes on your contract, please make an appointment to make these changes, your contract fees may be affected. Thank you!

- Every Parent will be encouraged to take time selecting a Day Home. The Agency will strive to offer choices that provide as many similarities to the child's own family and community as possible.
- Children will be encouraged to make choices of their own as to preference of play activities. It is our intention that each day home have adequate play opportunities for the children to choose from, as well as make those choices a positive experience to enhance self esteem.
- We believe that 90% of nutrition will be consumed during a normal Day Home day and proper nutrition is imperative for a child's development and growth. The Agency will ensure that the Educators are trained in the proper nutrition requirements for the children in the Day Home.
- The Agency has an open door policy for both the Parents and the Educators, whom we encourage to call us if a concern arises. Should a dispute occur in the day home, the Director will meet with all interested parties, in order to resolve any issue(s).

Goals:

- It is the Agency's belief that each child deserves the opportunity to develop as a whole individual. Our objective is to encourage emotional, social, physical, creative and intellectual growth through intentionally planned, self directed play experiences. These opportunities will be offered frequently throughout the day both in the in door and outdoor environment.
- **Intellectual** growth will be challenged through the use of cognitive centers and activities, according to each child's developmental stage. Each week a cognitive activity will be offered targeting various aspects of the developmental area. The activities in this area could be sorting, observations, problem solving, math skills and communication skills. Each Day Home will have a cognitive area available which will offer opportunities for all age levels.
- **Physical growth**, which is an individual process, will be encouraged through the use of appropriate centers and monthly Activity Plans. Daily outings, weather permitting, will work to enhance large muscle growth. Each Educator will have a variety of equipment for children of all age groups to choose through out the day. The ratio of children to space will be closely monitored to ensure that there is adequate room for their development.

- **Social skills** will be positively developed by the Agency and Educator. Development and encouragement of communication will help the children to verbalize their emotions, as opposed to reacting to feelings. The Educator will assist children in learning the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behavior through various activities and redirection. Educators will learn how to effectively develop positive behavior in children and how to combat any negative situations.
- **Emotional development** will become a positive experience through a variety of activities that target emotions. The child will be encouraged to discuss emotions; what causes them and what reactions they cause. A creative atmosphere will enable the Educator to find learning opportunities. They will be able to use these opportunities in his/her ideal circumstance.
- The Agency will ensure Parent, Educator and Agency communication by daily journaling, documenting not only custodial care but developmental care as well.
- The Agency will create a monthly newsletter for the Educators and emails to Parents, to help keep them updated and informed of community events.
- As potential Educators apply to open Day Homes with our Agency, we will ensure our high standards by closely monitoring our approval procedures.
- The agency has Educator profiles on all Educators if a parent would like to view their Educators please contact the office and make an appointment or view them on our website at odysseychildcare.ca

Odyssey will provide a back up Educator if the following should occur:

1. Educator needs to close for any reason** In an excess emergency we may be unable to provide back up care, you will be offered a reimbursement, possible if this situation occurs. Your Educator will ask you to sign a waiver form when she closes and you can choose to access the back up care or decline. For most subbing we usually do not offer reimbursement unless previously agreed upon between all three parties.

All subbing is done through the office to ensure confidentiality and maintain ratio's.

If a reimbursement is agreed upon it will be credited to the following month invoice. This does not apply to Educator holiday policies. **Whenever subbing is provided the parent must give permission in writing on the sub permission form.**

Among the documents already mentioned (Attendance Sheets and Closure days), the Educators will have a few other important documents posted on their bulletin board. This will include a menu, First Aid Certificate, Health and Safety Checklist, Universal Health Precautions, Daily Routine, Hours of Operation, Journal, Activity Plan (or Interest based Web Plan). You will also notice a Red Door sign in their window or bulletin board.

We admire the relationships our Educators have with the children. These documents help you to be involved with daily interactions. We have also found that accurate documentation of the children, helps us recognize milestones and concerns. This enables us to create appropriate planning to enhance the child's learning. After you have read the daily recordings in the journal, we ask that you initial each day. It helps us to ensure you are involved with your child's daily activities. On the menu, you will notice recordings that support our policy. Each child must be served four out of the four food groups for Breakfast/Lunch/Supper (which ever one your child is in attendance for), and three out of the four food groups for Snacks. If you bring in a snack, or meal for your child, it must follow Odyssey's Menu Standards. An alter to this policy may be a "Special Snack Day", where you must be cultural sensitive, and snack must support the children's nutrition.

If you are interested in accessing child development tools, feel free to sign them out at the office. Resource such as, Nipissing, Ages and Stages, and NAEYC Spotlight on Families. You are always welcome to attend any workshops we have with the Educators. Keep an eye out for the dates and topics in emails that will be sent out. We just ask that parents give us at least a week notice if they would like to attend to ensure space is available.

Your Role as the Parent:

Attendance: Please ensure that you are documenting arrival and departure times (as accurate as possible) on the attendance sheets provided by your caregiver. **Your initials daily and signature weekly, are required to confirm these are the hours your child was in care.**

Absences; it is your responsibility to contact your Educator for any reason of absence. If your Educator is unavailable, you may contact the office and we will inform your Educator.

Subsidy; if you have accessed subsidy you must sign the waiver that allows SWCFSA to speak with the agency about your account. You will then receive an expiry date from Subsidy as well as on your monthly invoice from Odyssey. If your subsidy is about to expire, you are obligated to make arrangements to reinstate your subsidy before it expires. You will be responsible for full fee in case of a subsidy short fall. You must inform subsidy of any extended days off (i.e. holidays) and any changes in living arrangements or income.

***Please ensure your child has all necessary amenities. This includes items to help your child feel comfortable during his/her day (e.g.. a set of warmer and cooler clothing). Your Educator will request supplies that may change from season to season (e.g.. sunscreen and hat in the summer). If your child is in diapers, your Educator will need an ample supply of diapers, and wipes. For infants **not** on solids, you must pack enough baby food and/or formula for your child's daily needs. It is our policy that Educators teach hygiene with the children, thus your child(ren) will require a tooth brush, toothpaste, and a hairbrush.

***Please note that your Educator is not responsible for lost or damaged items, as well as any cleansing of soiled clothing. The soiled clothing will be placed in a bag for parent pick up.

Thank you for choosing our Agency. Your Family is our number one priority!! It is our goal to provide quality learning experiences with our administrative supports and strong Educator interactions. The purpose of this handbook is to become a reference for most of your potential questions. Keep in mind as you go through this handbook, we value your opinion and know that you may call us with further questions or suggestions.

What We Believe In...

***Our Mission** is to support health, nutrition and social well being, in an environment that respects and encourages growth of the "whole child" while working collaboratively with the family to offer the best environment for the children in care.

***Our vision** is to offer the community, childcare that nurtures and supports each family as a unique and individual unit. By strongly recognizing the importance of best practice techniques, our dedicated Educators will embrace the opportunities for quality care by utilizing all resources available to them.

***The philosophy** of the Agency is to encourage development of the "whole child". Each child, being a unique individual, requires opportunities to develop at their own rate in each area of growth. Keeping in mind, each step has a specific importance in developing the "whole child".

***It is the Agency's belief** that the Parent, in conjunction with the Educator and Agency, will strive to keep communication consistent between all three parties. Through this communication, each party will be able to effectively support and encourage the emotional, social, creative, physical and intellectual growth of each child.

*The Agency will endeavor to recruit Educators who are committed to understanding child development and expanding their knowledge. We strongly believe that it is through the understanding of child development that optimum child care is facilitated. Any child expressing negative behavior will be redirected and positive behavior practices will be introduced. Early intervention is critical in any negative situation

Discrimination Policy

Odyssey Childcare strives to be a racist free organization. Expressions of discrimination or bias in any form will not be tolerated. Our goal is a climate of mutual respect and understanding in our family day homes and workplace. Odyssey Childcare recognizes and values the diverse racial and ethnocultural background of the community we support as well as our employees. We also acknowledge the barriers to employment, education as well as other social and economic opportunities experienced by racial and religious minorities. We are committed to eliminating these barriers. Odyssey Childcare does not tolerate prejudice, racism, discrimination or harassment of any kind in both the family day homes and the community. Our goal is to develop anti-racist values, attitudes and knowledge and practices among staff, Educators, families, volunteers. This will promote positive race and ethnic relations and to eliminate discrimination on the basis of culture, ethnicity, gender or religion. To achieve these goals Odyssey Childcare will ensure that all staff, Educators, families and volunteers will review the anti-racism policy and make a commitment to implement and promote the policy.

Harassment and Bullying Policy

Odyssey Childcare is committed to creating and maintaining a workplace environment which fosters mutual respect, integrity and professional conduct. This policy includes any inappropriate conduct or comment by a person towards a co-worker, parent, volunteer or member of the community. Bullying and harassment are often characterized through insulting, hurtful, hostile, vindictive, cruel or malicious behaviors which undermine, disrupt or negatively impact another's ability to do his or her job and results in a harmful work environment of the employee. Bullying may be the result of deliberate intention or not. Depending upon the severity and impact of the behavior, a single significant incident may constitute bullying, if it is found to be sufficiently offensive, threatening or intimidating. To determine whether or not bullying has occurred, each situation must be examined reasonably and objectively, based on its specific facts. Examples of conduct or comments which might constitute bullying and harassment include: ↳ verbal, written or physical threats and intimidation ↳ insulting or derogatory remarks, gestures or actions ↳ shouting, yelling ↳ swearing and calling someone derogatory names ↳ targeting an individual through persistent, unwarranted criticism ↳ public ridicule ↳ vandalizing personal belongings

In an Emergency the Educator will:

- Follow all Standard Precautions – Preventing Blood Borne Infections (where applicable)
- Assess the situation (safety for all)
- ACT immediately
- GET HELP (Call appropriate emergency number)
- Call the Parent or Emergency contact if parent unavailable
- Release the child's medical data to paramedic/doctor
- Call the Agency
- Make out an accident report in full and submit to the Agency ASAP
- Participate in an investigations conducted by the Agency and/or CFSA or other law enforcement agencies as required.

You should be informed in advance as to the whereabouts of your child in case of an emergency evacuation. All Parents should be issued an Evacuation Slip before the child commences care.

The Agency will attend immediately to all emergencies. When the coordinator is unavailable, another person will be available for this express purpose. The Coordinator or designate will take over the whole Day Home so that the Educator is free to go with the injured child to the hospital, if necessary, or just "be there" for support for the Educator until the "stress level" of the situation decreases. The emotional well being of the uninjured children is also a concern.

Transportation Agreements

Permission for the Educator to take the children on any outing or fieldtrip must be given in writing by the parents prior to any outing taking place. This is done on the off site permission forms. The Educator must ensure that the utmost safety measures are taken. Outings are preplanned and must be outlined on the off site permission form. The Agency requires an Off Site Permission Form be signed by you, for outings where transportation is required. These documents include destination, transportation and supervision arrangements. These documents will be brought in at month's end.

***Please note if you are requiring an "on going" transportation, such, to and from school, the Educator may do a form for up to four months at a time. For school transport it can

Accident / Incidents

An accident/incident report must be filled out for all injuries while the child is in attendance at the Day Home. The Educator will inform you and the Agency ASAP of the incident. You must view the document upon arrival, and sign the bottom.

Critical Incidents (as pertaining to Standard 10A of the Family Day home Manual), must be reported by the Educator to the agency as soon as possible after the emergency and medical assistance is obtained and parents have been notified.

↳ spreading malicious rumors, gossip or negative innuendo. Bullying or harassment would not include: ↳ the normal exercise of supervisory responsibilities, including performance reviews, direction, counseling and disciplinary action where necessary, provided they are conducted in a respectful, professional manner, in accordance with the Odyssey Childcare's policies and procedures; ↳ social interactions, jokes and bantering, which are mutually acceptable, provided the interactions are respectful and there is no negative impact for others in the work environment; and ↳ disagreements, misunderstandings, miscommunication and/or conflict situations, provided the behavior of the individuals involved remains professional and respectful. Bullying or harassing behavior will not be tolerated by Odyssey Childcare. Parents are encouraged to report any instances of bullying or harassment to the Director who will then take enforcement of corrective and/or disciplinary measures, where applicable.

WE WANT ALL CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES TO FEEL WELCOME, INCLUDED AND APPRECIATED IN OUR PROGRAM. WE UNDERSTAND THE TRUST YOU ARE PUTTING IN US TO ASSIST YOU IN RAISING YOUR CHILD. WE WILL STRIVE EVERYDAY TO PROVIDE THE BEST INTERACTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUR CHILD TO LEARN AND GROW!



Parent Involvement

Parent Involvement

Families, Educator and Agency will collaborate to support the development and success of the children in our program. We follow these guiding principles to support the partnership between families and staff: Families are unique. All families have strengths. Children and their families are part of a community. Families are experts about their children and are their first and most powerful influence. Parents have interests, roles and responsibilities in addition to their family duties. There are many ways for a family to be involved with a child's care. The child, family and day homes all benefit from sharing information. There are many ways for you to be involved: Talk to your child's Educator. Visit the day home. Spent time in the home when your child is in care. Go on field trips and community walks. Attend special events like open houses, curriculum family nights and seasonal events. Share your interests, skills and hobbies. Share your family's cultural background (for example – family traditions, special recipes, language). Sharing Information. We want you to know all about your child's experiences at the childcare day home.

We share information with families in many ways, including: At the Agency: Family Day homes: • Daily conversations • Message Board • Parent Board • Monthly e-bulletin • Daily routines posted in each day home • E-mails • Open Odyssey Facebook page • You are the expert on your child. Please let us know about any events, unusual circumstances or changes in your child's life that may affect his or her participation at the day home. Knowing this information helps staff to support your child. Please talk to your Educator or the Director anytime you have questions or concerns. We will ask you for your email address for billing and other important communication. We will not share your email address with anyone outside of Southwest Child and Family Services.

Web Page

Our web site is continually growing. We would like to point out a few key features:

1. Some Educators are still sending in their profiles to be featured on our web site. Please feel free to take a minute to view them.
2. Under the links tab at the bottom of the first screen we have different links available for anyone visiting the site. Please contact us if there is a link you would like to see added.
3. Our monthly activity plans are posted on the website so you can see what your children may be working on during the day. We also post our monthly meeting minutes on the web site so the parents and community may see what we have been working on as an agency and workshops we have been holding for our Educators.
4. You will find our policies and procedures on the website. Please feel free to read them and give any suggestions on them or email with questions if you have any. We update our policies and procedures every November please feel free to give any input you have and we will do our best to incorporate them. Updates will be posted on the websites every year.
5. We have a suggestion box on the website that is anonymous. Feel free to use it at any time. We also have one in the office.
6. We are constantly trying to update our web page and make it easy to use. We have our updated forms on our webpage for easy access for parents and Educators. If there is anything else you would like to see up there contact the agency.

Activity Plans

You will find the Activity Plan posted on the Educators bulletin board/available through an app, with the monthly activities and outings for the children. If the Educator changes something they

Menu's and Portable Records

Menu's at Day Home

You will find weekly menu's posted on your Educators bulletin board indicating what the children will be eating that day. In accordance with Standard 12 in the Family Day Home Standards Manual meals and snacks will be served at appropriate times, in sufficient quantity and according to each child's needs. The menu plan must show four out of four food groups for lunch and three out of four food groups for snacks. If a Parent brings in a snack or meal for their child, it must follow the Canada Food Guide, and Odyssey's menu Standards. This may not include a "Special snack day". If the snack or meal does not meet the requirements as set out by Odyssey and the Canada Food Guide the Educator will supplement the snack or meal to ensure it does.

Cultural Preferences—In a situation where there are cultural parameters the Educator and Agency will support the parents as long as the food falls into one of the Canada Food Guide sections.

Potable Records

As per Standard 3 in the Family Day Home Manual – Educators must maintain a complete/portable record for each child in care, including their own, which must be taken on all outings and must include:

- child's full name and date of birth;
- parent's full name, home address, work address, home telephone number and work telephone number;
- one emergency contact name, address and telephone numbers;
- relevant health information including medical condition(s) and immunization status.

This information will be kept in a backpack and taken on any outings with the Educator and children.

Parent Involvement

Every effort is made to work together with the families in all aspect of the development of the child (discipline, nutrition, attire etc.). If an occasion arises where the families beliefs may contradict Odyssey Childcare's policies and procedures, a meeting with the family, Educator and the Director will take place to discuss the concerns and if necessary create different strategies to accommodate the request of the family while meeting the policies and procedures of Odyssey Childcare. In situations where a compromise can't be reached to meet the needs of the family and the policies and procedures of the agency; the policy and procedures of Odyssey Childcare will be followed.

Parent must give written acknowledgement of the substitution arrangements made by Odyssey Childcare prior to the substitute care. The forms (Parent Acknowledgment of Alternate Care) will be at the Educator's homes and signed by the parent upon arrival. If time and arrangement allow the contracted Educator will submit the document prior to leaving for extended holidays or the parent may come into the office and sign the form.

Parents must be aware of where their children are at all times. Educators may not take the children off-site without written permission from the parent. An off-site permission form must be thoroughly completed by the Educator and signed by the parent BEFORE the child may participate in the off -site activity.

Odyssey will give parents information or refer them to community organizations or services when requested or needed.

Prior to every November in the parent newsletters the agency will discuss the upcoming renewal of the policies and procedures and ask for any input from families through email, website, coming into the office or phone calls.

Parents will be given a new copy of the parent handbook every January as well as a yearly survey asking for input. Parents are notified upon contract signing of the suggestion boxes in the office and on the website.

Closure Days

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***Please note that these designated days are holiday specific and are not banked and used at another time of the year. For example, the Remembrance Day holiday cannot be “saved” and used at Christmas.

*** These days are not included in your contract. Thus, there will be no reimbursements for designated closure days.

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. New Years Day ~ | Monday, Jan. 1, 2024 |
| 2. Family Day ~ | Monday, Feb. 19, 2024 |
| 3. Good Friday ~ | Friday, March 29, 2024 |
| 4. Easter Monday ~ | Monday, April 1, 2024 |
| 5. Victoria Day ~ | Monday, May 20, 2024 |
| 6. Canada Day ~ | Monday, July 1, 2024 |
| 7. Civic Holiday ~ | Monday, Aug. 5, 2024 |
| 8. Labor Day ~ | Monday, Sept. 2, 2024 |
| 9. Thanksgiving ~ | Monday, Oct. 14 2024 |
| 10. Remembrance Day~ | Monday, Nov. 11, 2024 |
| 11. Christmas Day | Wednesday Dec. 25, 2024 |
| 13. Boxing Day ~ | Thursday Dec 26, 2024 |
| 14. New Years Day ~ | Wednesday, Jan. 1, 2024 |

Welcome

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Continued

Ages and Stages

We have in the office the kit for Ages and Stages. All Educators and parents are welcome to utilize this tool. Educators have had a workshop on the Ages and Stages and the two office staff have completed the full days training. If you have questions or concerns or would like a copy for your child on the Ages and Stages please feel free to contact the office.

Daily Outings

Any time a Educator leaves the confines of her yard with the children she will fill out an off site permission form for parents to sign prior to leaving the house or yard. Educators will discuss with children when going on a field trip the safety rules, where they are going, what to expect on the field trip, who they might see and who they may need to listen to during the field trip. This will also be discussed with any other adult going on the field trip and this discussion will happen prior to the field trip. Please see the transportation section for details on signing documents.

Miscellaneous

Children will only be released to parent approved adults over the age of sixteen. This should be written on the application for care and the parent will let the Educator know if anyone different will be picking up the children and give a brief description. Anyone who the Educator has not met must produce photo ID before they are allowed to take the child(ren).

The Agency requires updated immunization records on all children in care. Please ensure these are submitted to the office. If you choose not to immunize please provide the Agency with a signed and dated letter in regard to this.

Educators and the Agency must have the most up to date information on the families so please ensure to contact us with this and we will update the appropriate forms.

Your Child's Health and Safety

Personal Hygiene

We strive to teach your children personal hygiene skills. We request that you provide personal grooming items for your children to have at day home. In addition to the regular items you may supply a toothbrush and toothpaste if you would like your Educator to follow up on dental health in the day home. If you choose to have your child's teeth brushed without paste please let your Educator know just to do it with water.

Allergies

Odyssey has a policy that states Educators must post all allergies in the home to ensure all adults are aware of them and the health of the children. Please ensure to make your Educator aware of any allergies your child may have. Please also make sure this is documented on the application for care as well as follow up with the Agency of any emerging health concerns.

Medication

Educators must be aware which (if any) children in their homes use emergency medications, where the medications are stored and how to administer them if necessary. If your child has had any medication or herbal remedies in the morning before going to day home you must put it in writing so the Educator is aware of the medication and the reason. The Educator will monitor the child for any reaction. This form can be found on our website or in the Educators home. **NO medication may be given in the day home without prior authorization from the agency staff. Medication must be brought to the agency and the proper documentation will be filled out and sent with the parent for the Educator.** When the authorization period on a medication has ended the Educator will ensure to return it to the parent and document on the form what day it was returned and parents must sign they have received it.

Illness

Please visit www.child.aiberta.ca/home/documents/childcare/pdf_Info_Parents_using_regulated_child_care.pdf for the most current information on the illness standard from the government of Alberta. The Educator has the right to refuse care to a child who is ill without a Doctor's consent to attend.

NO MEDICATION MAY BE GIVEN BY THE EDUCATOR WITHOUT WRITTEN AUTHORIZATION FROM THE PARENT AND THE AGENCY. This is excluding topical, over the counter

rash cream. Medication must come from the original container, and be administered according to the label. In the event of a Educator's own child becoming ill, depending on the diagnosis, the parent will be given a choice of taking the child to a substitute Day Home or remaining in their own Day Home. When a child becomes ill in the Day Home, the parent will be called to pick up the child. The parent must sign the illness document which states that the child was picked up from the day home, the symptoms and the time. That parent may be asked to take the child to the doctor, in which case a Doctor's Consent Form will be given to the parent to be filled out by the Doctor. A child who has been excluded from the Day Home due to illness may return when the Doctor Consent Form has been returned to the Educator and does not specify that the child should be excluded or 24 hours after symptoms are gone.

Pandemic Policy: Odyssey Childcare will **AT A MINIMUM** follow all guidance set forth by the appropriate levels of government. When making procedural decisions we take into consideration the guidance of all the agencies we report to. We also discuss the situation carefully with your day home Educator prior to deciding on what steps to take next. Every individual decision we make is done with what we believe to be the best for our Educators and families in care. As guidelines may constantly change our policy will remain fluid as well to accommodate changing guidelines and protocols.

A Little About our Early Childcare Educators (AKA Educators)

We require a police check, C.Y.I.M (child welfare) check, medical, and three references prior to contracting. Each caregiver reviews Odyssey policies and agrees to comply with them prior to contract signing. We require they sign a letter of confidentiality to ensure that your family's privacy is respected. Educators that have their level one upon contract signing receive more enhancement dollars. For those who do not, Odyssey requires the Educators to obtain a minimum level one within their first year of contract. Other training is accessed through our memberships with SWADA, CCCF, NAEYC, and AFDA which supports the latest workshops, conferences and courses. Our Educators receive information on upcoming workshops and conferences from the office as well as numerous in-house classes. Once the contract is signed, the Educators have full access to our Lending Library, Activity plans, Center of Excellence memberships, along with internet access, and dozens of other resource to enhance the quality of care in their Day Home. We are happy to provide these services to you, if you should want them. Please check your monthly newsletters to learn of up coming events.

Please note that the Agency has your child's safety as their first priority. If we witness an unsafe situation or your Educator is not following Odyssey's policies and procedures, she may be immediately terminated, and you will be notified. This is a very uncommon situation, but we feel that the children always come first!

(As per Standard 9 of the Family Day Home Standards Manual) Educators must use a positive approach to child guidance. The approach is discussed with the child's parents. The child guidance methods used by the Educator are consistent with both the parent handbook and Agency policies and are explicitly communicated in a written statement to the:

- parents; and
- children, when developmentally appropriate.

Any child guidance action that is taken must be reasonable, given the circumstances and must never:

- inflict or threaten to inflict any form of physical punishment, verbal or physical degradation, or emotional deprivation; deny or threaten to deny any basic necessity; or use or permit the use of any form of abuse.

Child/Educator Ratio Each Day Home is licensed through the Agency, which is licensed through SWACFSA (Southwest Alberta Child and Family Services Authority). It is mandated that a Day home Educator must never exceed 6 children plus their own in care at one time. With the new Childcare Act coming out this spring the ratio will change to not include their own children. The Educator cannot have more than two children under the age of two with a total of three children under the age of three.

Hand washing

Each Educator is expected to help the children learn about germs, and try to prevent disease in the Day Home from spreading. The Educators have been educated in the "Do Bugs Need Drugs" Daycare Program, and are implementing proper hand washing with your children. We encourage you to ask questions and value your input. Below is our policy on hand washing.

Hand washing with soap and water must be done;

- before and after food preparation
- after out door activities
- if you shall come in contact with any bodily fluids