



Parent Handbook



Welcome and Introduction

Welcome to our Family Home Day Care Agency. This parent handbook has been designed to provide you with information about our program and policies. Please read it and keep it for future reference. Having an open, two-way communication is important to our success in caring for and educating your child. If you have any questions, concerns, ideas, or comments regarding our program, agency staff, the care provider, please contact us.

There are many programs and items for loan available at our agency, you are welcome to drop in any time Monday – Friday from 8:30-3:00pm to browse at 10 Middle Road, Lawrencetown, NS.

Posted at our Agency you will find:

- License for the Agency
- Behaviour Guidance Policy
- Agency Parent Committee Members

Check It Out!

Care providers' homes are to have a parent bulletin board that must include:

- Day Care Act and Regulations website
- Parent Handbook
- Parent Committee Meeting Minutes
- Recent Inspection Report (if applicable)
- Behaviour Guidance Policy
- Current Menu

Agency Contact Information:

Agency Name: Family Matters Family Home Day Care Agency

Agency Owner: Family Matters: The Annapolis County Family Resource Centre

Agency Executive Director: Denise Naugler, Billie Jo Weir

Agency Consultant: Colleen Joduin

Address:

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Our Mission

To develop, coordinate, and deliver programs, services and support that are proven to promote the health and well-being of children by providing homes and care providers that put the needs of children first. This is done primarily by ensuring a safe, nurturing, family-like environment that allows each child to be supported in all areas of the development.

Family Matters Philosophy

Family Matters believes that children learn through playing and exploring their environment and are entitled to opportunities that support all areas of their development. Our programs nurture and support child development through appropriate activities that follow the principles of:

- Children first;
- Equity and accessibility;
- Community based;
- Strengthening and supporting families;
- Flexibility;
- Partnerships.

Area Served

Our agency currently serves the following areas (but is not limited to):

- Annapolis County;
- Surrounding areas (with consultation with agencies in nearby counties we will consider taking homes outside of our catchment area)

Grievance Policy

The agency and care providers welcome comments and/or suggestions to improve the quality of care for your child. When areas of concern arise related to a Family Home Day Care the problem should be brought to the attention of the agency and care provider, both of whom will be willing to hear your comments, suggestions or grievance and do their best to work through it.

This process will be done by contacting:

1. The Care Provider
2. The Agency
 - a. Consultant
 - b. Executive Directors
3. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Confidentiality Policy

Family Matters Family Home Day Care Agency follows the confidentiality policy of Family Matters: The Annapolis County Family Resource Centre. This policy applies to all employees, board members, care providers and volunteers. Any employee, board member, care provider, or volunteer found to be misusing, repeating, or otherwise conveying information to anyone except those who require the information on a need to know basis to carry out their responsibilities, shall be considered to have committed a serious breach of employment duties and responsibilities which may be considered just and reasonable cause for dismissal.

All information provided to the agency and care providers for registration and health purposes is confidential within the agency and Family Home Day Care setting. The only persons permitted to review the children's charts will be parent/guardians, agency staff, care providers and a representative of the Minister of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

Information will not be given out by the agency or care providers without written consent from parent/guardians. Family Matters Family Home Day Care Agency and its care providers will not verify a child's enrollment or discuss their behavior to anyone by telephone or in person, without parent/guardian consent.

To ensure that information is kept confidential, we strongly suggest that if you have any major concerns regarding your child to make an appointment with the agency executive directors or after hours with your care provider.

Care Provider

The care provider is approved under the license of the agency. Care providers can establish their own business name, contracts, and rates with the guidance and support of the consultant.

Care providers that are through a licensed agency, are offered and able to offer

- Free equipment, toys, resource books, story books, etc. are available to borrow
- PAID professional development
- Play groups
- Request visits by your consultant in your home for children's activities and to offer support
- Ability to take children who are on Government Subsidy
- And much more

Number and Ages of Children

Our agency serves children from birth to 12 years. Age and number of children in each Family Home Day Care depend on the care provider, insurance and environment.

By following the day care act and regulations each approved Family Home Day Care provider is permitted to care for a maximum of 7 children at a time, including their own children. Each Family Home Day Care is subject to the following restrictions:

(a) no more than 2 of the 7 children may be infants (0-17 months inclusive);

(b) no more than 3 of the 7 children may be toddlers or younger than toddlers (0-35 months inclusive).

If a care provider is only looking after school aged children, they may care for a maximum of 9 school age children at a time, including their own children.

If a care provider is looking after only infants, then the care provider may care for a maximum of 3 infants at a time, including their own infants.

Fee Structure

Fee payments:

Care providers set their own daily/monthly fees. It is the care providers responsibility to let parents/guardians know when fees are due and how they are payable.

Late Payments:

Care providers will set their own fee for late payment, depending on how many times a parent/guardian is late, they may ask for you to withdraw your child(ren).

Early Drop Off and/or Late Pick-Up Fee:

Our care providers strive to provide flexible childcare services. The daily/monthly fees are based on childcare being provided during individual providers hours of operation. If you require childcare services earlier or later in the day, please speak to your care provider. An additional fee will be charged for any additional hours of service as negotiated by the care provider and the parents/guardians.

Fees During Vacations:

Care providers are allowed a minimum of TWO weeks' vacation a year, unless stated differently from your care provider. It is the care providers responsibility to give parents/guardians time to find alternate care and discuss fees.

Hours of Operation

The agency provides services to care providers and parents Monday to Friday from 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM, and available by phone or email for emergencies after 4:00 PM

Family Home Day Care providers adopt their own hours of operations and may vary from home to home. Family Home Day Care providers are closed on all government holidays, unless otherwise started by your child's individual care provider.

Storm Day Policy

The agency office does close for winter storms/power outages. We determine closures based on school closures for each area. Closures are announced on local radio stations, as well as on the school web sites. Childcare fees are still in place when service is available. Family Home Day Cares may be open during these days. It is advised that you call your care provider to ensure they are operating. If you decide to keep your child at home, please call your care provider and leave a message. Family Home Day Cares will close if the Department of Highways recommends motorists stay off the roads due to severe/dangerous weather conditions and/or power outages. Childcare fees are payable when the agency/care provider is closed due to storms and power outages.

Holidays

Family Home Day Cares will be closed for the following holidays (unless otherwise started by your child's care provider):

- Christmas Day
- New Years Day
- Canada Day
- Good Friday
- Thanksgiving
- Remembrance Day
- Boxing Day
- Victoria Day
- Labour Day
- Heritage Day

If any designated holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, then the holiday will be observed on the Monday following.

Care Provider Absence

Care providers are entitled to take days off for appointments and illnesses. Care providers are required to give as much notice as possible when they will be absent and are encouraged to arrange alternate care arrangements or have a substitute available. However, it is recommended that parents arrange back up childcare for the event that a care provider is unable to secure alternate arrangements.

Child Attendance

Your Child's First Day:

The first day that a child attends the Family Home Day Care is a very important day for your child. Children who are introduced to a childcare setting with the help of their parent/s are better able to cope with their new situation. The introduction also helps to open lines of communication between parent/s and care provider, so that special information about the child can be shared. In addition, you and your child become familiar with the environment, care provider, the routine, and the activities at the Family Home Day Care.

We suggest the following ideas for your child's introduction to our family home day care:

- That you and your child visit the Family Home Day Care together prior to the first day.
- If taking the time off is not possible for you, we suggest bringing your child in early initially the first few mornings and spending that time together in the Family Home Day Care.

If this is your child's first childcare experience, you and your child may need some extra support during this transition. The care provider will assist you and your child through the transition and the agency consultant is also available for support.

Withdrawal:

We hope that your child/ren will be part of our family for many years, however we understand that children will leave care from time to time. If you plan to withdraw your child from the Family Home Day Care, the parent/guardian needs to comply with the withdraw policy your care provider has. If your care provider has no policy with the withdraw information, you are required to provide two weeks written notice.

Arrivals and Departures:

Arrival

- **Children are not to be left at the door or unsupervised.**
- You must bring your child into the home. His/her outerwear must be removed in the designated area
- Your child **must** be escorted into the home and greeted by a care provider. Their responsibility for your child does not begin until they are in the visual presence of the care provider.
- The person arriving with your child must sign the attendance sheet, noting the date and time of arrival. This allows us to see who is on the premises during fire drills and emergencies, and to keep accurate attendance records.

- For after school programs, the care provider will record these times upon the child's arrival (i.e. morning, lunch time, and after school).
- For infants and toddlers, on arrival please advise the care provider of any special circumstances that may affect your child's behaviour or well-being that day. These are noted in the daily records, which you are entitled to view.
- Please notify the care provider if your child will not be attending or will be late (please give an approximate time of arrival). If your child is going to be late, they must arrive at the family home by 11am. Children are not permitted to be dropped off during the lunch/rest period unless otherwise arranged by you and your child's care provider.

Departure

- Children must be picked up by the closing time designated by the care provider.
- If, due to unforeseen circumstances, you will be late picking up your child, you must call the care provider in advance. Note that a late pick-up fee, will be charged, unless previously agreed upon with the care provider.
- Parents of infants and toddlers should review the daily activities log to see if any unusual occurrences impacted their children during the day.
- Children must be picked up by an authorized parent or guardian. In the event that you are unable to pick up your child, you must notify the care provider in advance regarding who will be coming for your child, and an approximate pick-up time, that person needs to show ID. They must also be listed on the alternate pick-up list on your child's enrolment form, unless previously agreed upon with the care provider.
- The care provider will only release your child to those persons listed on the authorization form at the time of enrolment. *Please keep us updated with any changes to this authorization lists.*
- If you want someone not listed on the authorization form to pick up your child, you must inform us **in writing**. If this is not possible, we must be able to contact you for authorization, or we will not release the child to the person. ID must be presented upon pick up. They must also have an appropriate child safety seat to transport the child/ren.

Your Child's Needs

Our agency's programs are designed to encourage and facilitate active learning and development through exploration and play. To ensure that your child gets the most out of the program and is safe, comfortable and happy throughout the day, we have developed the following guidelines:

Your child will need the following personal items, which should be kept at the Family Home Day Care (and replaced with clean items when required):

- a small blanket
- pillow and sheet for rest period
- a toothbrush (discuss with provider)
- indoor shoes AND outdoor shoes
- a complete change of clothing (underwear, socks, pants, shirt, etc. - just in case!). ***If your child is potty training please send several changes of clothing, as accidents may occur during this training process.***

Your child’s possessions will be stored in a storage bin/locker marked with his/her name. The bin/locker will also contain notices, artwork, soiled clothing, etc. Check it daily so that you can ensure that you collect any items which need to be taken home, and to ensure that spare clothing and bedding are clean and in good condition.

If your child is being toilet-trained, you are responsible for providing diapers needed, and any special toileting supplies that your child needs (the care provider will keep you updated on your child’s diaper needs).

Your child may bring a safe, toy for rest period, such as a plush, stuffed toy, a doll, or a favorite nap time blanket.

Children should wear comfortable clothing so that they can participate in all aspects of the program, including various messy play activities. Please send your child in the appropriate outdoor clothing for the day. We try to go outside at least once a day, (i.e. at the playground, for walks, or field trips), and in all kinds of weather and you are responsible in ensuring that your child/ren has the appropriate clothing to keep them both comfortable and safe. Following are lists of seasonal outerwear that your child will require:

Everyday	Summer	Winter	Fall/Spring
- Change of clothing -Diapers(toddlers) - Wipes - Other items for diaper changing (if needed) - Inside sneakers or rubber bottom slippers - Jacket -Blanket - Teddy or comfort toy if needed	- Sun hat - Summer Jacket - Waterproof rain boots - Sneakers - Light sweater - Shorts - Pants	- Warm hat - Snowsuit - Warm boots - 2 pairs of mittens - Sweater -snow/splash Pants	- Sun Hat - Warm Hat - Jacket - Rain pants - Rain jacket -Waterproof rain boots - Mittens - Sneakers

All items of clothing should be clearly labeled with your child’s name or initials.

While every effort is made to protect your child's clothing and possessions from loss or damage, we cannot guarantee that this will not happen. Please check the Lost and Found box regularly.

Health Policies

At our Family Home Day Care, we are concerned about the health and safety of all children, staff and care providers. Staff and care providers are strict about enforcing health regulations. Infections can spread rapidly within a Family Home Day Care, so universal precautionary measures are taken at all times.

- Any temperature above what is considered normal, which is considered 37°C for FHDC**
- Cough, new or worsening cough**
- Breathing difficulties**
- Sore throat**
- Fatigue or lethargy**
- Children with any symptoms related to any communicable disease, including COVID-19 will be expected to have testing done and will not be able to return to care until they can provide a note, emails can now be sent to you by Public Health so please make this request if your child is tested to provide to your child care provider upon their return. Otherwise a doctor's note will be required and that can be complicated.**
- Children must now be symptom free for 48 hours before the can return to their family home day care.**
- Please respect your care provider and the children/families within their care and do not bring illnesses into the home. Giving your child medication to combat their symptoms in order to attend day care not only places everyone at risk but will result in disruptions to your day as you are called to pick up your child when symptoms return. Please keep sick children home.**
- Repeatedly disregarding the illness policy can result in termination of your child's care.**
- We will also be requiring care providers to do the same if they have symptoms so please try to secure back up childcare in advance of the event your care providers become ill.**

If a child becomes sick at the daycare, the parent/guardian will be called IMMEDIATELY to take their child home. If the care provider is unable to contact the parent, the care provider will contact the alternate emergency contact as listed on the emergency contact portion of the child's medical form and that person will be required to pick up your child IMMEDIATELY. Before the child returns to the family home a note from the doctor **may** be required stating that they child is healthy, not contagious, and may return to the daycare. Your child may be separated from the other children (under adult supervision) until parent (or authorized person) arrives.

A child should be home when he/she is ill. Weather permitting the children will be going outside at least once daily. If a child is well enough to be at a family home, he/she is well enough to play outside. If a child is absent due to illness, please notify the care provider before 8:30am and **report**

the child's symptoms. This will increase awareness to look for similar symptoms in other children and track communicable disease at the centre.

If a child may have been exposed to contagious conditions at the centre, parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified, without revealing names. They will also be provided with any information specific to their child's exposure whenever possible (Please note: This information is meant as a guide for parents and is in no way to be considered medical advice. Please call 811 or visit either your local clinic or Family Doctor with any concerns you may have.)

Every precaution will be taken by staff to protect children from food or materials that may cause reactions. Please inform staff of any allergies. It is crucial to keep staff current on any changes in medical information regarding allergies and treatments.

Care providers are only permitted to give medication to a child when authorized by a doctor or parent. Care providers will be observant every morning with each child, noting whether a child appears unhealthy (i.e. flushed, persistent cough, runny nose, red eyes, etc.).

Any accident which results in first-aid treatment by staff or further treatment will be recorded by staff in an accident report form. Reports will be viewed, discussed and signed by a staff member, parent, and consultant.

We have a 48 hour symptom free policy which means if your child is showing symptoms of being sick 48 hours before going to the family home they are not permitted to attend (i.e. throwing up or diarrhea the night before they were supposed to be attending the family home).

Nit Free Policy:

In Accordance with new health regulations that states:

Children with head lice should be treated and should attend school or childcare as usual. "No-nit" policies, which keep children with head lice away from childcare, aren't effective.

Here's why:

*Head lice are common among young children

*Head lice don't spread disease

*Cases of head lice are often misdiagnosed. To confirm a case of head lice, you need to find live lice

*Children may have head lice for several weeks with no symptoms Children with head lice should be treated and should avoid head-to-head contact with other children until the lice are gone. Childcare programs should let families know when there is a case of head lice and provide information about diagnosis and treatment.

Medication Policy

The care providers are only permitted to give medication authorized by a doctor or a parent.

All medication must be in the **original** container, with a readable label.

You will be asked to complete an authorization form for each new medication (or provide a written letter of consent), stating your child's name, date, nature of and reason for the drug, complete instructions on administration and dosage, and any special instructions.

Over the counter medication will not be given by the care provider unless written instructions are received from the parent or the child's doctor. These instructions are to include your child's name, date, nature of and reason for the drug, complete instructions on administration and dosage, any special instructions, and the parent's or doctor's signature. The care provider may have a medication form for you.

Please send measuring utensils along with your child's medication.

All medications are to be given directly to care provider, and for safety reasons must not be left with child's spare clothing and bedding in the cubby area.

It is recommended that a child who has been prescribed an antibiotic take it for 24 hours before returning to the family home day care.

HIV and AIDS Policies

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus), the virus that leads to AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome), is not transmitted through everyday contact. No confirmed cases of transmission through casual contact or biting have been reported. HIV is transmitted from one person to another by sperm, vaginal secretions, breast milk, blood, and from mother to child during pregnancy.

HIV is considered a disability, and by law discrimination on the basis of disability is illegal. Parents have no obligation to tell the agency or the care provider if they are aware that their child is HIV-positive. If such information is disclosed to a member of the agency staff or care provider, s/he has an ethical obligation to keep the information confidential.

Universal precautions adapted by the family home day care include:

Those who work at our agency or are associated with the agency as care providers, help control the spread of infections by practicing proper hygiene and universal precautions. Children, care providers, agency staff, and volunteers:

- Wash their hands thoroughly with warm water and soap before meals, after toileting before and after administering first aid, and throughout the day as required.
- Dishes, eating surfaces and diapering areas are sanitized after each use
- Toys are checked for breakage daily and sanitized at least twice each week.
- Floors are cleaned daily, as required throughout the day.

- The laundry, kitchen and bathrooms are maintained in a clean and organized manner.
- Hands are washed immediately after exposure to blood, and all other bodily secretions
- All cuts are covered with a sterile bandage until healed
- Disposable latex gloves are worn by staff treating open cuts
- Blood-soiled surfaces are disinfected with bleach, which kills HIV
- Laundry stained with blood and other bodily secretions is washed separately in hot, soapy water
- Materials stained with blood and other bodily secretions are placed in sealed garbage bags and discarded in a lined, covered plastic container.

Safety Procedures:

- The agency inspects all of the Family Home Day Care on an annual basis to ensure that the premises are safe.
- The agency and each Family Home Day Care have an emergency evacuation plan and practice fire safety procedures and carry out monthly fire drills, the time, date, and number of children participating are recorded.
- All agency staff and care providers have been trained in First Aid and Infant CPR and are required to keep their training up to date.
- Please inform your care provider of any changes to your address, place of work, telephone numbers, and authorization list, and injuries that your child receives outside the program.

Accident Reports

Care providers are required to complete an accident report form for any accident which requires first-aid treatment by care provider. It will be signed by the care provider who administered treatment and the parent, then placed in the child's file. Parent(s) are to be informed of the injury at an appropriate time (depending on the extent of the injury), maintaining confidentiality of any concerned parties.

Emergency Evacuation

In the event that a Family Home Day Care has to be evacuated due to fire or other emergency and the home is not fit for immediate habitation, the parents or an authorized person will be contacted immediately and expected to pick up your child **immediately** at the designated emergency location.

Nutritional Information

The care provider's menus are developed with the assistance of the Canada Food Guide. Our care providers offer balanced and varied menus that utilize nutritious foods and account for health and allergy requirements. The care provider must plan meals in advance and must post menus, they must also be signed and dated by the person responsible for menu development to confirm it is compliant with the Food and Beverage Criteria. Substitutions are recorded with a date and are kept on file.

Care providers offer a nutritious morning and afternoon snack. For children who stay over lunch hour, a full lunch is provided which includes 1/3 of the daily nutrient requirement for the children. If your child requires supplements or special foods due to a medical condition, a care provider will do what he/she is able to. You may be responsible for supplying the extra food or supplement. The care provider eats with the children to help model appropriate eating behaviors and positive food habits. The care provider does not force children to eat, or withhold favourite foods for inappropriate behaviors, but will encourage children through positive modeling and reinforcement to try new or other foods.

In accordance with Regulation (4.4) Staff and care providers allow infants to explore their food, feed themselves and respond to hunger and fullness cues.

When childcare facilities purchase or receive donations of food or beverages from an outside source, such as a caterer or parent, the food must be from an establishment permitted by the Department of Agriculture and comply with the Food and Beverage Nutrient Criteria. The licensee must ensure that the product includes a list of ingredients and any special food preparation, storage or serving instructions are clearly labeled.

Rest Period

Infants sleep according to their own individual schedule. For children under school age, a rest period is a part of the day's schedule. During rest period, all children under school age are required to rest on their mats for one half hour. This includes children who do not sleep. After this half an hour, any children that are not sleeping may engage in quiet activities until the rest of the children wake up.

Policy on Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

As per the protocols outlined by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development for the prevention and reporting of child abuse, agency staff and the care provider are legally required to report cases of suspected child abuse. If there is an allegation of an abuse brought against a care provider, it will be the responsibility of the consultant to notify the department. The department will advise on the closure of the provider during the investigation.

Behavior Guidance Policy

- The agency has a written behavior guidance policy with respect to permitted and prohibited behaviour guidance practices. The policy applies to all agency staff, volunteers and care providers and is provided in the appendices of this manual for your information.
- Care providers, staff, and volunteers are required to follow the guidelines at all times.
- A copy of the behaviour guidance policy is posted on the parent bulletin board in the Family Day Care Home and is also posted at the agency facilities.
- The written behaviour guidance policy must be reviewed with the parents of each child when they are first enrolled in the family home day care program and a regular basis.

No operator shall permit:

1. Corporal punishment, including but not limited to the following:

- Striking a child directly or with any physical object
- Shaking, shoving, spanking or other forms of aggressive physical contact
- Requiring or forcing a child to repeat physical movements

2. Harsh, humiliating, belittling or degrading responses of any form, including verbal, emotional or physical.

3. Confinement of, or isolation of a child or children.

4. Deprive a child of basic needs including food, shelter or bedding, withdrawal of food. Care providers do not offer food to reinforce positive behaviors. Do not withhold food as a consequence for inappropriate behaviors. Food is not used as a reward for completing a task or finishing a meal (e.g. Dessert will not be withheld if the child does not finish the main meal).

Staff will design an environment that will encourage positive attitudes and behaviors in children. They will provide age appropriate equipment that will support active, creative play and problem solving.

The following guidance techniques will be used:

Praise

Praising children who are following the rules encourages them to repeat the behaviour.

Redirection

Assisting a child to replace inappropriate behaviour with an appropriate behaviour demonstrates respect for the child and teaches the child expectations. Care providers who are observing consistent inappropriate behaviors should document details on the behaviors to ensure that other factors are not encouraging the undesired behaviour (i.e.: environment, program, and medical/physical).

Communication

Verbal:

Care provider explains why inappropriate behaviour is not acceptable. Discipline statements are expressed in a way that is positive and guides the child as to what is acceptable and appropriate. Comments are made about the behaviour not the child.

Environmental

The environment communicates many things to the child and can greatly influence the child's behaviour. In considering the behaviour, the care provider should examine the environmental factors and what it communicates to the child. Such factors to be considered (but not exclusively) are materials provided, space and layout, and the program.

Supported Consequences:

In extreme cases, where all other guidance techniques are ineffective, the care provider may need to use supported consequences. This may consist of limiting or removing materials. This should only be done after a clear, calm and consistent explanation of the appropriate use of materials has been offered to the child and is ineffective.

The other supported consequence that may be used is a removal of the child from the situation. This is only to be used in extreme cases where a child is putting the safety of other children (i.e. hitting, biting) or themselves at risk. This will consist of the care provider removing the child from the situation, while still trying to keep the child in close physical proximity to the care provider. When the child has regained control of their behaviour, they will be transitioned back to their chosen activity.

Critical Issues Notification

When critical issues arise, which could impact the way the Family Home Day Care is run or managed, the agency must provide notice in writing to parents. In particular, the agency must notify the parents if any of the following occur:

- (a) The approval of a care provider or a Family Home Day Care they manage is or will be revoked;
- (b) A Family Home Day Care or agency is closed or sold;
 - Notice of a closure or sale under (b) above must be given at least 2 weeks before the date of the closure or sale. This must be posted in a conspicuous location in the family day care home.
- (c) Conditions are imposed upon the agency's license or any written information about the agency's license or program has been given to the agency by the Director;
- (d) The police or an agency established under the *Children and Family Services Act*

are investigating a matter involving a care provider or other person associated with the Family Home Day Care, unless the police or the agency established under the *Children and Family Services Act* directs otherwise.

Any notices under this section must be in writing and must be sent by registered mail to the last known address of a person who is required to be notified.

Parent Involvement and Communication

The agency is extremely interested in having parents involved in the Family Home Day Care program. Communication with parents and receiving feedback from parents are keys to our success. The agency will communicate with parents through the care provider and when required, directly by regular mail and email, where possible.

Playgroups

Family Matters holds playgroups weekly throughout the county, and Family Home Day Care will be welcome to these playgroups. In addition, the Consultant will hold a monthly playgroup at the agency office location for care providers. Please ask your care provider to provide you with a Family Matters calendar for up to date information on what is happening at Family Matters.

Parent Advisory Committee

Another method for communicating with parents is the parent advisory committee. Each agency must establish a parent advisory committee to provide a forum for parents to have input into, and receive notice of, any matters of interest or concern to the parents. The parent advisory committee is also a body that will be used by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to communicate through the agency with the parents, if there are issues with the agency's license. This communication will come from the Director of Early Childhood Development Services. If you are interested in being a parent representative of the parent advisory committee, please let us know.

Breastfeeding Policy

Approved by the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission

Under the Human Rights Act women are protected from discrimination and harassment because of sex, which includes pregnancy, and family status, which means being in a parent-child relationship. In Nova Scotia it is illegal to discriminate because a woman is or was pregnant, because she may become pregnant or because she has had a baby. This includes a woman's right to breast-feed her child.

- (1) *The Human Rights Act prohibits discrimination in the area of "the provision of or access to services and facilities". Women have the right to breast-feed a child in public areas, including restaurants, retail stores and shopping centres, theatres and so forth. Women should not be prevented from nursing a child in a public area, nor asked to move to another area that is more "discreet".*

- (2) *The Human Rights Act prohibits discrimination in the area of employment against women who are breast-feeding. Employers have a duty to accommodate employees who are breastfeeding. This duty is limited only if the accommodation would create an undue hardship. Accommodation could include allowing the employee to have the baby brought into the workplace by a caregiver for feeding and arranging a quiet place to breast-feed. This onus is on the employer to show an undue hardship if a request for accommodation related to breastfeeding is refused.*
- (3) *The Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission will accept complaints of discrimination based on sex and/or family status related to breastfeeding and will deal with them in accordance with the above policies.*

Family Matters Family Home Day Care Agency and Care Providers look forward to Learning and Growing with You and your Child/ren