

Mother Nature's
Preschool Inc.
Elm Street
Parent Handbook



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Framework

Mission

At Mother Nature's Preschool it is our mission to enhance your child's learning and provide you and your child the best possible care.

Childcare Philosophy

Mother Nature's Preschool is based on the "Learning through play" philosophy. We believe that children learn by doing. In a warm and nurturing environment, the children have the opportunity to explore, examine, ask questions, interact socially with other children and have fun. The program encompasses the areas of social, physical, intellectual, creative, and emotional development. Each of these key areas is advanced at the individual child's own rate and developmental stage. Realistic expectations are set with the aim of developing self-discipline and the safety and respect for others. Cultural diversity is respected. Cultural diversity is incorporated into all areas of our program. We believe that the Early Childhood Professional's role is to provide support and encouragement by setting up an enriched, safe, and stimulating environment, in order to maximize the potential of each child. Additionally, our priority is to provide a stable foundation for children, as well as a support system for families. "Teachable Moments" take place frequently and the children are given choices to gain a sense of independence. Creative self-expression and growth through play are valued.

Code of Ethics

Standards of ethical behavior in early childhood care and education are based on commitment to the following core values that are deeply rooted in the history of the field of Early Childhood Care and Education. We have made a commitment to:

- 1) Appreciate childhood as a unique and valuable stage of the human life cycle
- 2) Base our work on knowledge of how children develop and learn
- 3) Appreciate and support the bond between the child and family
- 4) Recognize that children are best understood and supported in the context of family, culture, community, and society
- 5) Respect the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of each individual (child, family member, and colleague)
- 6) Respect diversity in children, families, and colleagues
- 7) Recognize that children and adults achieve their full potential in the context of relationships that are based on trust and respect.

Parent Responsibilities

The following items are the responsibility of the parents/ guardians:

- 1) Complete an application form and have a personal admission interview prior to admission into the program.
- 2) Update all pertinent information including address, phone numbers, and place of employment.
- 3) Sign child in and out upon arrival and departure.

- 4) Notify staff of changes in child's attendance.
- 5) Please send a complete extra set of clothing for the child, as the children are active in various activities throughout the day that may result in spills. Additionally, please send the child in **play clothes**. Some of our activities can be messy and it is easier on both children and staff if they do not need to worry about getting good clothes dirty.
- 6) Children must have indoor shoes or hard soled slippers at all times in case of fire drills.
- 7) It is the parent/ guardian's responsibility to ensure that all subsidy forms are completed prior to the child starting at the center.
- 8) Pay the Daycare bill no later than the 10th of each month. (Acceptations may be made for parents whose paydays may not align with our time frame.)
- 9) Outdoor play is a key part of our program. Therefore, it is important to send your child the appropriate clothing for the weather. For outdoor play your child will need the following:

SPRING

A warm spring jacket

Mittens for cooler days

A hat or hood on jacket

Rubber boots

WINTER

Snow pants

A toque Scarf

2 pairs of mittens

A pair of winter boots

SUMMER

A sweater or light jacket

Sandals or runners (no flip-flops please)

A sun hat

FALL

A warm fall jacket

Mittens for cooler days

A hat or hood on jacket

Please Label Everything with Your Child's Name.

Operating Policies

Hours of Operation

The centre is licensed to open Monday- Friday from 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM. Our morning preschool program runs from 8:30 AM- 11:30 AM. The afternoon program runs from 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM. As these hours are the program hours you will be billed hourly for your contracted hours, regardless of if your child attends or not. The Daycare Full Time hours of operation are from 8:00AM-5:00PM. Any hours before or after these times will be billed at a rate of \$20/ hour. Parents are required to pay for all contracted hours, even when your child is away due to vacations. If you do not want to pay for these contracted hours, you have the option of terminating the contract while your child will be away, but there is no guarantee that their spot will still be available when you return.

Holidays

The centre will be closed for all statutory holidays. We follow the public school systems closure for Christmas break, however we remain open for both the February and Easter breaks. Summer programming will be scheduled in coordination with school maintenance.

Unexpected Closures

In the event of unexpected closures such as acts of nature (i.e. floods) staff will call parents to pick up their child(ren). It will be the parent's responsibility to listen to public service announcements (i.e. radio, social media, Chat TV) for information on school re-opening.

Child Pick Up Policy

Adults who are authorized on the Registration Form may pick up the child. Written arrangements are required if there is a change to be made. "Call ins" by the parent or guardian for pick up changes is acceptable pending the alternate adult has photo ID.

Confidentiality Policy

This Centre will ensure that all matters concerning the Childcare and its users will remain confidential at all times.

PROCEDURE

The only persons permitted to see the children's records are the parents/legal guardians, childcare staff and the licensing body. Each child's personal file containing enrolment form, developmental records, and other information are to be stored in a manner, so that they are not accessible to unauthorized people. Information regarding a child's enrolment or personal details is not to be given to others without written consent from the parent/guardian. Parents need to know that information shared with a staff member will remain confidential and staff must respect this. Staff members are trusted to maintain confidentiality, and to use information gained with the utmost discretion. The names of children who may have caused injury to other children while at the Centre are not to be disclosed to parents, or anyone other than the staff members at the Centre. The name of any child who has an Infectious Disease will not be disclosed to other

parents unless this child's parents/guardian requests it. Staff members are not to discuss any financial details of families using the Centre with persons other than the parent/guardian who is responsible for paying the child's fees. If information regarding the financial status or any other matter relating to the child needs to be discussed with them, and they do not collect the child personally, a letter should be sent or they should be contacted by phone. Verbal messages regarding these matters will not be given to friends, neighbors or relatives who may be collecting the child.

Arrivals and Departures

Parents/guardians are encouraged to be on time for scheduled arrival and departures, so that we can ensure adequate staff is in place.

Parents/guardians must sign their child in and out of the program in the Sign In/Sign Out book at the entrance. You must sign in as soon as you arrive on the premises and out when you leave the building. This is for insurance purposes. If your child is not signed in/out in this manner, legally, insurance will not cover your child in case of an accident.

Late Arrivals Policy

At Mother Nature's Preschool children's hours are contracted. We require written notice or a phone call prior to schedule hours if child is not attending or will be late. Due to our programming, we often are away from school premises during the day. Irregular drop off times will not be accepted due to child/staff ratios. If you arrive and your child's class is away from the school you have the option of driving them to the location, taking your child home or staying with your child in the classroom until they return.

Late Pick Up Policy

If a child is not picked up by 6:00pm the following procedure will follow.

- Call parent or guardian at listed phone numbers.
- Call emergency contact person if unable to reach parent or guardian.
- Call authorized persons on child's registration form if unable to contact parent, guardian or emergency contact person.
- Call the Director.
- When unable to reach any contacts on the child's registration form. Medicine Hat Police Service shall be contacted. Alberta Children Services may be contacted if it is deemed necessary. The child shall remain in the care of the staff until either the Police Service or Alberta Children Services removes the child.
- All information must be documented signed and filed.
- Lock up the school.

Tuition Policy

Our policy is that tuition is prepaid. This means you pay according to your child's schedule of attendance at our rates at the start of each month. Our director and office administrator review

these rates annually. This does not mean that rates increase annually, only that we review and decide if tuition is sufficient to meet our needs. Parents and Guardians will be notified before new tuition rates go into effect. Currently our rates are posted on our Parent Boards.

Subsidy

We accept subsidized parents and are fully supportive of the subsidy program. Each family's subsidy application must be completed and accepted prior to their child attending at our centre. Subsidy is full responsibility of the parent/family. Personal information needs to be updated and current with Alberta Children and Family services. If your subsidy is suspended, or cancelled you will be responsible for your full tuition. Our contracts ensure quality care for the children attending our center. Parents must maintain your contracted schedules with us regardless of your subsidy situation. In order for us to properly meet our standards we need appropriate schedules and sufficient time to make any changes concerning attendance. If subsidy has attendance requirements, these requirements must also be maintained. If attendance is not maintained, you will be invoiced the difference for your contracted fee. Our staff at the centre will assist in any way possible with expiry and information change reminders, or answer questions you might have.

Termination Policy

It is the policy of Mother Nature's Preschool to request two weeks written notice by parents terminating their use of Mother Nature's Preschool. If the notice is not provided, the Preschool reserves the right to bill the parents for two weeks.

The preschool reserves the right to refuse service if at our discretion it is deemed to be in the best interest of the child or the program.

The preschool reserves the right to refuse service if payment is in arrears past 30 days.

Annual Program Review Policy

Mother Nature's Preschool will evaluate our program on a continuous basis through parent surveys and staff feedback. Information gained from current research and government regulations will be maintained.

- Annual parent year-end conferences – parents are asked to review Policy and Procedures manual that is provided online on Mother Nature's Preschool website.
- Parent suggestion box – located at the parents sign-in area.
- Parent surveys – are conducted once a year.
- Current research in regard to best practices will be incorporated as well as community resources.
- All policies and procedures at Mother Nature's Preschool will be reviewed on an annual basis no later than June of every year.

Accessibility to Children's Files

The children's files are kept in the administrative office in a locked filing cabinet. Only staff has access to these records in order to preserve confidentiality.

Child Fee Policy

Mother Nature's Preschools policy is as follows:

Fees will be paid by post-dated cheques in September for the beginning of each month. We also have a debit machine and we accept cash and e-transfers. There is a \$40.00 charge for N.S.F. cheques. All fees are to be paid by the 10th day of each month. The Full-Time fee is \$825 per month (3yrs and up) \$875 per month (19months-3yrs) and \$725 for Kindergarten (if they do not attend before 8:30 AM) Mother Nature's Preschool part time fee is \$8.50 per hour for a minimum of 3 hours per day.

Preschool fees are considered past due on the 30th of each month and your child will not be allowed to return to the program until the fee is paid. There is a \$20 per month late charge accrued for each remaining month the bill goes unpaid.

Income Tax receipts will be issued at year-end.

Safety Policies

Safety Policy

We strive to ensure all children are safe from accidents; unfortunately, we cannot avoid all of them. Should a child be injured at the center, our teachers are required to fill out an accident / incident report stating what happened and what treatment was issued. This is given to the parents that day and they must sign the form ensuring they read and understood the accident/incident. This ensures that parents, staff and the director are aware of the accident/incident.

First Aid kits are available in every room out of the children's reach. First Aid kits will be checked bi-annually (time change). Our First Aid kits contain a flashlight and our emergency contact information for each child and staff. One out of every two staff is to have First Aid Certification. Mother Nature's Preschool will pay half of the fee for recertification of first aid.

In an emergency situation, contact with parents will be made. If immediate medical attention is required the child will be taken to emergency at the Medicine Hat hospital. Each parent will be asked to sign a form giving permission for such an event prior to enrolment. In the event of an emergency that requires professional medical care, the parents of the child will be notified immediately by phone of the situation.

Accident/ Critical Incident/ Illness Policy

The preschool reserves the right to engage emergency medical assistance for any child left in its care when such assistance is deemed necessary. The expense of the required assistance is to be borne solely by the parents or guardian of the child.

In the case of an accident, critical incident or serious illness involving a child, Mother Nature's Preschool must notify the child's parents by telephone. Medical attention will be provided.

Staff will assess the situation and administer first aid if possible. Parents will be asked to come and pick up their child. Mother Nature's Preschool reserves the right to call an ambulance if child needs to go to the hospital.

When staff is requested to take the child, the child and staff will take a taxi and go to emergency at the hospital.

Ambulance will be called if child is badly injured and impossible to move.

A critical incident report must be filled out and reported to the local CFSA.

Appropriate Response to Critical Incident Policy

1. Where, in the opinion of an employee, an ill or injured student must be transported to a medical facility, the employee is authorized to select from the following transport modes:
 - (a) transport by a parent/legal guardian of the student
 - (b) transport in a vehicle owned by a properly certified ambulance service
2. Reasonable effort must first be made to secure transport for the ill or injured student by the parent or legal guardian.

If time and circumstances permit, the parent or legal guardian should be requested to requisition ambulance services, if such service is deemed necessary.

Only in circumstances where the above actions are impractical or impossible should the employee of the district initiate other courses of action sanctioned by this policy.

3. Where transport occurs by means of a properly certified ambulance service the parent shall assume all financial responsibility for this service.

In the event of a critical incident if the parent or other emergency contact is not available a staff member will sign the child out of the facility.

Unintentional Injury or Accident

In the event that your child is injured the following procedures will take place:

- 1) Staff will assess the situation and give First Aid if possible.
- 2) If it is necessary to take the child to the hospital, the parent/guardian will be informed, and given the choice of taking their child themselves or having a staff take the child. If a staff member needs to take the child, a taxi will be called and the staff member that witnessed the incident will accompany the child to the hospital.
- 3) Upon arriving back at the center, the staff member will complete an accident report that the parent will sign.
- 4) Minor incidents such as: cuts, scrapes, bumps will also be reported and an accident report will be completed.

- 5) If a child is badly injured and impossible to move, the paramedics will be called for assistance.
- 6) Incident or Critical Incident Form will be filled out.

Emergency Care Policy

In the event of an emergency, the center will first try to contact the parent. If the child requires immediate medical attention, they will be taken to emergency at the Medicine Hat Hospital by ambulance. Included in our registration package parents will be asked to sign authorization for emergency treatment. One out of every two staff is required to have a valid First Aid Certificate and CPR.

Building Safety

On occasion Mother Nature's Preschool Inc may have to evacuate the building due to a safety concern. Examples of building safety issues are the plumbing backing up, electricity or water being out or off etc. If this happens, the situation is assessed and parents/guardians will be notified immediately to pick up their children.

Fire Safety Policy

Our center posts emergency evacuation diagrams and procedures. The center is also equipped with fire alarms and fire extinguishers. Staff will be participating with the School District #76 in a monthly fire drill with the children, weather permitting. Alternately Mother Nature's Preschool will be completing their own fire drills as well. All of our first aid kits are in our portable bags so that they can be grabbed in the event of emergency or even taken along on outings or drills. In the event of acts of nature we will contact the local authorities and radio stations to ensure the situation is an emergency. We will contact parents for pick up and if caught in any of these situations we will try to ensure the safety of the children by any means possible. All staff are required to be on site until children are evacuated safely. Parents will be asked to rely on local media for updates.

Lockdown Policy

Mother Nature's Preschool is housed in a public school. Our policy is to follow the mandate set out by School District #76. Lockdown Procedure will be practised during the school year. Mother Nature's Preschool staff will ensure children are kept calm and content during the drill.

Lockdown Procedure

*P.A. announces a lockdown procedure. All children and staff must enter a classroom and lock the doors.

*Children will be moved to designated safe area where quiet activities will be provided (books, puzzles, and snacks).

*Silence will be maintained until P.A. announces, "All Clear".

Parents are notified of all practice fire drills and lock downs by posted notices by the sign in/out area and the classroom doors.

Emergency Evacuation Policy

Our evacuation plan diagrams are displayed within our classrooms. Each staff member will assist in escorting and confirming all the children get to safety. Staff will be designated a role prior to emergencies or drills. These responsibilities are as follows, attendance, supervision, actively keeping the children calm, comforting any that are scared, carrying infants and grabbing the first aid kit. During a drill children will be escorted out of the building via the nearest safest exit and proceed to the south school playground by bridge street. A green sign is held up when attendance has been taken and all of the children and staff are accounted for. A red sign is held up if someone is missing. In the event of a real emergency, an outside wait longer than ten minutes or inclement weather our staff will walk and or carry all students to Christ the King Church (if in little playground), 1101 Queen St. SE, or the Bingo Hall (if in big playground), 602 Clay Ave, SE. Our emergency procedure is posted.

Emergency Evacuation Procedure

*Upon discovering an emergency situation, the employee shall notify the director concerning the emergency and its location. The director will alert the fire department.

*Upon hearing the fire alarm, all staff shall calmly organize the children and line up at the nearest, safest exit. (Staff member nearest the main entrance will pick up the sign/out book, portable emergency information and first aid kit.)

*All children and staff will exit the building via the nearest, safest exit door and proceed to the south school playground.

The Director will be the last to leave the building doing a quick search of all rooms in use by the preschool (bathroom and kitchen).

* Attendance will be taken immediately. A green sign is held up when everyone has been accounted for a red sign is held up if someone is missing.

* If the outside wait is longer than (ten) 10 minutes, or in inclement weather, the children and staff will proceed to:

Christ the King Church (if in little playground)

1101 Queen St SE

Medicine Hat, AB Phone: (403)504-0123

Or

Bingo Hall (if in big playground)

602 Clay Ave. S.E.

Medicine Hat, AB. Phone: (403)527-9274

* Parents/emergency contact will be notified.

*Random fire drills will take place. Alternate exits will be used so that children & staff become

familiar with all routes. These drills will be posted above the sign in/out book to inform parents that a drill has taken place that day so they may discuss it with their child as a follow up.

Drugs and Alcohol Policy

No child will be allowed to leave the center with an authorized person if the staff suspects that person is under the influence of drugs or alcohol. If this occurs, the director is informed immediately and another guardian or emergency contact will be located to pick up the child. The incident will be documented in the child's file and if the offence is repeated local authorities will be contacted. If the parent or guardian becomes abusive or threatening the staff will remove themselves from the situation and contact the city police and director of Mother Nature's Preschool.

Smoking Policy

Our center has a strict no smoking policy. There is no smoking in the building or in our outdoor play space or at any time while providing care to the children attending our center. Smoking is only permitted outside, off of Elm Street school property.

Suspected Child Abuse Policy

If staff suspects child abuse or neglect they are mandated by law to report any suspected abuse to local authorities. The center follows the guidelines set out in the "Protocols for Handling Child Abuse and Neglect in Child Care Services".

First Aid Staff Requirements

One out of every two staff at the center are required to have First Aid training and to keep their certification current.

Cold Weather and Sun Safety Policies

In the case of extreme cold weather, the daycare will close only when the elementary school we are located in closes.

Outdoor play is essential to a child's development and is part of our daily program. Children will be expected to have suitable clothing and be in suitable health to participate in outdoor play.

In cold weather, the amount of time the children spend outdoors is reduced. Children are kept indoors on days when the temperature is extremely cold (-14 with no wind-chill). We ensure that all children are dressed in the proper protective clothing.

In the summer months when we are outside it is our policy to seek shade whenever possible and provide the children with an adequate amount of fluid to stay hydrated. We try to avoid outdoor activities during the hours of 11:00 AM- 2:00 PM. Mother Nature's Preschools policy is to apply sunscreen and bug spray to all the children before going outside unless the child has allergies. Mother Nature's Preschool will provide sunscreen and bug spray for a \$5.00 fee. Mother Nature's Preschool requires parents to sign a sunscreen/bug spray permission form. The children all will wear hats outdoors.

Health Policies

Health Care Policy

Mother Nature's Preschool requires written consent by the parent to administer medication. Health care provided is in the nature of first aid.

Communicable Disease Policy

Mother Nature's Preschools policy is to post any communicable disease that children have been exposed to. The notice must be posted by the parent sign in/out area. Mother Nature's Preschool will provide additional information on request for parent.

Children that have a communicable disease (Communicable Disease Regulation AR238/85) must be removed from the school and remain off the premises until free of symptoms.

Sick Children Policy and Procedure

If your child is sick (severe cough, diarrhea, vomiting, temperature of 101 F or 38.3 C), please keep him/her at home. Your child should not return to school for 24 hours after starting medication or being symptom free in the case of a virus that does not require medication.

In the event that your child becomes sick at preschool, the following procedures will take place:

- 1) The parent or emergency contact person will be notified and expected to take the child from preschool and make alternate arrangements for the child's care.
- 2) While waiting for the parent/guardian or emergency contact's arrival the child will be placed on a mat in a quiet area, and a staff member will supervise him/her.
- 3) Communicable diseases that children have been exposed to will be posted in the sign in/out area. In the instance of communicable diseases, the center will follow the guidelines set out by the Public Health Unit.
- 4) Follow the regulations set out by Human Services
(<http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/documents/healthy-child-care-brochure.pdf>)

Administration of Medication, Over the Counter and Herbal Remedies Policies

Mother Nature's Preschool must have the written consent of the child's parent or guardian before medication, over the counter or herbal remedies (i.e. creams and ointments) can be administered. The staff will administer medication, over the counter and herbal remedies only after the child has been given at least one dose 8 (eight) hours before attending the center. After administering medication staff will observe the child closely for any signs of an allergic reaction. Parents must inform staff in writing of when the child last received the medication prior to arriving at the center. A medication form for administering the medicine, over the counter or herbal remedies must be completed by the child's parent or guardian. These medication forms must have the parent and child's name, date, name of medication, ailment of child, duration of medication and instruction on proper dosage. Medication prescribed by a doctor must be in the original container and clearly labeled with:

*Child's name.

- *Name of drug and dosage.
- *Date of purchase.
- *Instructions for storage.

All medication, over the counter or herbal remedies will be stored in a locked Medicine Box. The Medicine Box is labeled and housed in the kitchen.

NOTE: Parents can ask for the medication to be split between two containers at the pharmacy so that you do not risk losing the medication in transporting it to and from the school.

Once the authorization for medication has expired it must be returned to the parent. Over the counter medication must be in original container and appropriate for the child's age.

NOTE: Only staff with First Aid certification will be able to administer any medications.

If any children are enrolled who require emergency medications (i.e. Puffers, EpiPen's) all staff will know where these medications are stored and how to administer them. Staff will be responsible for administering **only** over the counter medications, prescriptions and herbal remedies.

Medication for emergencies such as "EpiPen" may be kept in emergency bag in classroom for easy access. The emergency bag in each classroom is hung out of reach of children. This bag is taken on walks, field trips and fire drills.

Special Conditions

All previous medical needs or conditions must be disclosed at time of registration. Mother Nature's Preschool reserves the right to refuse enrollment to children with severe medical needs. This will be left to the discretion of the director; if we as a staff cannot meet the medical needs of the child.

Hand Washing and Hand Sanitizer Policy

We strongly believe that hand washing is important to maintain good health for children and staff. We wash hands (or sanitize at minimum):

- After diapering a child
- After going to the toilet or toileting a child
- Before preparing food or eating
- Before feeding an infant or child
- After caring for an ill child
- After contact with nasal secretions (wiping noses)
- Before and after applying a bandage or other first aid
- After cleaning up any body fluid (blood, mucus, vomit)
- After cleaning or sanitizing
- Before applying medication or ointments
- After handling chemicals after removing disposable or household gloves

- After handling pets or animals; as well as cage cleaning
- After removing boots or shoes
- When hands are visibly dirty for any other reason

Hand sanitizer is kept out of reach of children and is recommended after wiping noses or removing contaminated toys or materials. Hand washing is always preferred over sanitizer. Children may use sanitizer under direct adult supervision.

Proper technique for hand washing is:

- Wet hands before putting soap on them and leave the water running. By doing this, less soap gets stuck in the pores and there will be less chance of irritation.
- Vigorously rub hands for 10 seconds when washing them; this friction removes germs.
- Wash all surfaces, including the backs of hands and fingers
- Rinse hands under running water for 10 seconds
- Dry hands with a towel
- Turn off taps with the towel if possible, if elbow taps are unavailable.
- Throw disposable towel away or cloth towel in laundry hamper.
- Use hand lotion after washing, skin cracks and irritations are not only uncomfortable they also trap germs.

Caregivers and parents are responsible for teaching good hygiene. Children should be taught how to care for their personal needs in a relaxed, friendly and fun way, without being rushed or hassled. Children learn a great deal by example, so it is essential that caregivers develop good hand washing habits and teach them to the children.

Nutrition Policies

Nutrition Policy

The Government Daycare Regulations state the following:

- 1) 2-3 food groups from the Canada Food Guide for snack.
- 2) 4 food groups from the Canada Food Guide for lunch.
- 3) At least 2 servings of dairy products are served daily.

Snack is provided in the morning and again in the afternoon. Lunch is at 11:45pm. Our menu follows the Alberta Nutrition Guidelines to ensure proper serving size as well as meeting the nutrition needs of the children. The menu will be posted by the sign in/out book for parent/guardian's information. A hot lunch will be provided for all children who attend full time.

Snack will be served in a family group setting. Staff will sit with the children for supervision and assist children where needed.

Food allergies will be posted in the classroom, as well as in the kitchen area.

Water is available on an ongoing basis throughout the day.

Dietary restrictions will be accommodated when feasible (i.e. dairy).

Extreme cases parents will be asked to provide a lunch and/or snack for their child.

WE ARE AN ALLERGY SENSITIVE FACILITY

Manner of Feeding Policy

Snack and lunch will be served in a family group setting. During which time there will be child sized serving dishes and utensils.

Children are encouraged to feed themselves.

Children are to remain seated while eating and drinking.

While children are sleeping they are not provided beverages. If they are to have a drink prior to sleeping they will be given it prior to lying down. If they are to have a bottle they will be held by a care provider.

Safe Food Handling

Our facility is inspected by the health inspector throughout the year, to ensure that the facility is meeting all regulations. Staff who are responsible for food storage and preparation have completed a Food Sanitation and Hygiene Certification course. Food handling procedures ensure that hot foods are kept hot; cold foods are kept cold at all times. Food preparation and serving utensils are sanitized after each use.

Guidance Policies

Child Guidance Policy

Mother Nature's Guidance Policy is communicated through our Parent Handbook and Staff Handbook. Child guidance methods utilized in the program are communicated to parents, other care providers and children when developmentally appropriate.

Guidance is the process by which children are guided and encouraged to act in appropriate ways. Appropriate behavior management methods serve to guide children's behavior while protecting and enhancing their self-esteem. Guiding children's behavior is an important part of the primary staff member's role and one that takes place continually throughout the day. Inappropriate behavior will be handled kindly, but firmly. The following methods will be used to guide children's behavior:

A) Quiet Talk: Using eye to eye contact, speak calmly to a child, allowing him/her to explain to you why he/she is doing the inappropriate action. You explain why the action is not desirable and explain the correct way, which results in a positive solution.

B) Redirect or Distract: a younger child with a new toy or activity. By encouraging the child in a different activity it may resolve behavior problems. If redirection, explain to the child why he/she must change to a different play area: emphasize that the **ACTION** was not correct, that the child is **NOT** bad.

C) Offer a Choice: of appropriate alternative activities to child and help him/her get interested and settled into a new activity.

NOTE: If a child is extremely upset, remove him/her from the situation until the child is calmer. Then carry through with the appropriate behavior. For extreme behaviors, Mother Nature's Preschool will access supports in the community (ex. CHADS, Children's Mental Health).

At no time is corporal punishment an appropriate method for guiding children's behavior. Other discipline methods that are not acceptable include harsh or degrading measures that humiliate or undermine a child's self-respect. (Ex. isolating a child or withholding food, shelter, clothing or bedding).

Daily Care Policies

Open Door Policy

Parents/guardians are free to visit the center at any time, without prior notice. Parents/guardians are encouraged to join us for field trips, and any other special days we may have throughout the year.

Inclusion Policy

Inclusion: means to include, embrace, involve, to count among.

Every child is a unique individual and has the right to attend an Early Childhood Program.

Initial Intake Visit: Parents will be provided with a tour of our facility. The registration package includes application form and parent handbook.

Throughout the school year parents will have the opportunity to review their child's progress through parent conferences. We strive for open communication throughout the school year through newsletters, and connecting daily with our parents.

Mother Nature's Preschool strives to find ways to include all children and remove barriers that prevent children from actively participating in our program. During our daily schedule children will be given the opportunity to participate in all activities. We will make the necessary modifications when required to allow all children to be successful. Within our program we work with various outside agencies to provide support for children and families.

Outside agencies and Educational Assistants must strive to incorporate children's I.P.P. goals within the classroom environment whenever possible. Short segments of break out times are acceptable for testing and for work on individual I.P.P. goals. These sessions are to be no longer than 30 minutes in length

Diapering Policy and Procedure

Parents or guardians are required to bring disposable diapers, diapering ointment, and powder for their child. Staff will notify parents when the supply is low and needs to be replenished. Diapering ointment and powders require a signed medication form. Only primary staff will be

diapering children. All children still in diapers will be changed as needed.

Staff has a written procedure that must be followed with policies to:

- *Washing hands before and after changing children.
- *Wearing gloves for bowel movements changes.
- *Wearing gloves to administer creams.
- *Sanitizing change table before and after use.
- *Disposing of gloves, soiled diapers and garbage in closed containers.

Children are required to wash their hands as well after diaper changes. Paper towel used by children and staff after washing hands is discarded.

Toilet Training Policy

Toileting is never forced only encouraged. When children aged 18 months to 30 months show interest and signs that they are ready we make every effort with their parent's permission to encourage toilet training. Expressive communication and awareness of the act is necessary before beginning. To prepare the children we will show them how to sit, get off and flush the toilet. We will also talk about toilet paper and show them correct hand washing. When the child shows signs of readiness, willingness and interest we will take the next steps. We will give the children praise and encouragement along the way for each successful task they complete. We understand that accidents happen and do not make a big deal out of them. Older children in the middle of toilet training are consistently reminded and encouraged to go to the bathroom. Potties are sanitized after each use.

Toys from Home Policy

Toys from home are not conducive to cooperative play, as toys may get misplaced or broken. On occasion, a child may bring a toy to ease the transition from home to school. It may be necessary for the staff to put the toy away if it becomes too much of a distraction for the children. We will occasionally have special show and tell days for children to share their special treasures with the class.

Personal Care Policy

Mother Nature's Preschool supplies bedding and sleeping mats. Parents are able to bring personal sleeping items (blanket or comfort item) or personal care items such as hair brush, comb and toothbrush. Each child that brings their own personal item needs to be clearly labeled with child's name. Bed linens are washed weekly. Soiled linens are stored in a closed laundry basket in the kitchen area.

Staff and Child Ratio

Mother Nature's Preschool is family grouping. We are licensed for 19 months to five years. At all times, we will meet the licensing standards with primary staff members following the guidelines for maximum group size.

With respect to minimum staffing and general supervision, Mother Nature's Preschool will ensure that during opening and closing hours a primary staff will be left with no more than 4 children.

Mother Nature's Preschool ensures that all staff is certified and maintains staff to child ratios required for program capacity.

The following chart reflects the minimum standards in Alberta for awake children staff to child ratio:

19months – 3 years: 1:6

3years - 4.5years: 1:8

4.5 years and older: 1:10

Sleep Ratio

Mother Nature's Preschool has a designated sleep time from 12:30 pm to 2:00 pm. This is for only those children who require a nap. Accommodations are arranged in designated classroom with individual sleeping mats. In addition, Mother Nature's Preschool ensures while children are sleeping the following requirements are met. We will meet government regulations and maintain child staff ratio for mixed age grouping (ages 19 months to five years) at all times.

The following chart reflects the minimum standards in Alberta for sleeping children staff to child ratio:

19months – 3 years: 1:12

3 years – 4.5 years: 1:16

4.5 years and older: 1:20

Transitions

Transitions in both rooms will be facilitated by warnings, visual reminders and songs.

Nap/Rest Policy

Nap and rest time occurs daily after lunch. The children that require a nap will be provided a sleeping mat. Please feel free to bring a blanket for nap time from home. The children that no longer require naps have a quiet time after lunch. The children sit and do quiet activities like looking at books or putting together puzzles.

Adult/Child Interaction Policy

To foster positive adult/child interactions the staff will:

- 1) Show respect and the need for individuality in each child regardless of religion / culture / background / sex.
- 2) Give children space to explore their own boundaries and develop to their full potential
- 3) Greet each child individually so they feel, as a separate person, they are special.
- 4) Take time to listen to all children
- 5) Offer a warm / friendly and safe environment for children to develop and enjoy.
- 6) Discipline in a positive manner (see discipline policy) & at the appropriate level
- 7) Staff uses role modeling to demonstrate appropriate behavior.
- 8) Staff makes sure to communicate positively to individuals as well as in group situations
- 9) The child's family background is accepted by staff and where appropriate, activities / lessons are planned to incorporate differences / similarities for each child to experience.
- 10) Staff encourage sharing of ideas between children and between children and staff.

Computer Usage Policy

The computer is limited to 15-20 min per child per on selected days. Software will be limited to age appropriate educational tools. This software will be strictly used for educational purposes. This will help to develop fine motor skills, hand eye coordination, cognitive (thinking) skills and promote the computer in this day and age.

TV and Video Viewing Policy

On occasion, the children will watch videos selected and previewed by the preschool staff. The video will be developmentally appropriate. Children who do not wish to watch will be offered an alternate activity.

TV is not to be used as an alternative for programming.

Diversity and Cultural Sensitivity Policy

In the childcare setting we promote diversity by accepting the differences amongst us. We promote equality by respecting children's identity on both a cultural and personal level where there is equal access of opportunity and no barriers to enabling children to develop to their full potential. We do this by:

- 1) Supporting children's identity & sense of belonging
- 2) Supporting children to become comfortable with difference

- 3) Fostering each child's critical thinking about bias
- 4) Empowering children to stand up for themselves and others in the face of bias

Child Assessment Policy

As part of accreditation standards, we are required to complete developmental checklists for every child. In the event of developmental concerns we will ask to make a referral to early intervention services.

Communication Policies

Communication Policy

Mother Nature's Preschool Inc. strives to maintain open communication with families. We do this through various verbal and written means. Staff meet and greet parents/guardians, converse with parent/guardian about their child(rens) day, yearly parent teacher conferences, newsletters, communication books, and parent display boards

Grievance/Conflict Resolution Policy

Parents concerns and expectations will be taken seriously. In the event that a parent/ guardian has a complaint the complaint should be addressed to the staff in the child's room and if a satisfactory solution is not found, the parent/ guardian will approach the director, either verbally or in written form with the concern. The director will work to ensure that a resolution is reached.

In the event of a serious concern parents/guardians are more than welcome to contact the Children and Youth Services Daycare Licensing Officer at the following:

Daycare Programs- South Region

#102-346 3rd Street SE

Medicine Hat AB T1A 0G7

Phone: (403) 529-3183

All complaints will be strictly confidential at the parents' request or complaints may be given anonymously. All complaints will be investigated, and all written complaints will be answered.

Involvement of Children and Families in Planning

We are beginning to use emergent curriculum rather than theme based learning. This allows the children to be more involved in the planning. In addition, parent suggestions are always welcome.

Out of Center Policies

Field Trip Policy

Any field trip outside of the local area will be planned well in advance. New parent consent forms will be signed if parents have not signed the form. We will encourage parents and

community volunteers to assist us. We will be visiting such places as the Library, Esplanade, Police Point Park, city trails and any other suggested sites that encourage the children to learn about their community.

*For the purpose of extended learning and enjoyment, field trips will be planned throughout the year. The children will be under supervision at all times. Parents are asked to sign a field trip permission form for each outing. Verbal consent for permission given by parents or guardian will be accepted.

*Staff is responsible for the children to and from the field trip location unless otherwise notified. Parents are welcome to accompany their child on field trips. Parents or volunteers are never to be left alone with the children in any circumstance i.e. cannot take children to bathroom. Siblings may be able to attend but are the responsibility of the parent. Prior arrangements must be made with staff.

*Safety rules will be reviewed with children and their chaperones prior to each field trip.

*Staff will prepare children for field trips by explaining where they are going, what will happen, whom they will see, and who they need to listen to.

*When on a field trip we will ensure we have enough staff to exceed minimum staff child ratios as outlined in childcare regulations.

*We will make every effort to access public transportation for any outings outside of walking distance from Mother Nature's Preschool. Staff at MNP will not be transporting children to and from the center in personal vehicles.

Walks and Parks Policy

Upon registration parents will sign a permission form for walking field trips in and around our community (i.e. Strathcona Park). During all instances, we are not within preschool property, we maintain higher ratios, or additional adult supervision. A cell phone is required by staff during these outings. Walking adventures are scouted by a lead teacher for hazardous debris and children are closely monitored between a lead staff and another staff. Children are always maintained between the two staff members with additional staff or volunteers assisting in the middle. Parks are checked and cleared of hazardous debris upon arrival. Staff will maintain closer proximities to children. Children on playground equipment are attended directly. Swings are only permitted for children able to seat themselves and their peers are encouraged to push them. Children are not permitted to climb fences or structures not of climbing purposes.

Off-Site Activities Policy

Mother Nature's Preschool Policy is to have parents sign a consent form that meets the following criteria:

*In the parent application, there is a consent area for field trips. These trips are in the immediate neighbourhood.

* For all other excursions Parents are required to complete a Field Trip form. The form includes the following information:

- *Where, When and How we are transporting the children.
- *Departure and arrival back at the school.
- *Appropriate Dress Required.
- *Supervision of Children
- *Parent Volunteers
- *Date and parent signature

Parent Resources

The following are some of the resources that may be displayed periodically by the sign in/out book.

- 1) Choosing a Daycare
- 2) Contagious Diseases in Daycare
- 3) Nursery School Licensing Manual
- 4) Nutrition and Food Services Manual
- 5) CSA Standards for Play Spaces
- 6) More Ways to Say Goodbye
- 7) Library Lending
- 8) Community workshops to be posted
- 9) Website – www.mothernaturespreschool.ca

If you require different resources the staff will be able to assist you in finding what you are looking for.

Alberta Child Care Accreditation Standards

Standard 1: Positive, supportive relationships and enriched physical and emotional environments foster children's well-being and development.

Standard 2: Program planning and practices support every child's optimal development in an inclusive early learning and care environment that incorporates the value and importance of play.

Standard 3: Relationships with families are supportive and respectful.

Standard 4: Child care programs create a supportive work environment to maintain a qualified team of child care professionals and assist them in providing high quality child care services through its philosophy, policies, procedures, and practices.

Standard 5: Child care programs collaborate with community organizations and services to respond to the needs of children and families they serve.

Standard 6: Continuous quality improvement is demonstrated through ongoing self-monitoring and evaluation processes.

QEP and Program Evaluation Policy

The program uses feedback from children, staff, family and the community to review its performance. This process includes family/staff surveys to allow their input into the program. Staff and families work together as a team and share knowledge to improve the performance of the program. This feedback will be used in creating a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). The QEP will be used to create short term, intermediate, and long-term goals within the program. Timelines are achievable, and completion dates are recorded. Goals and action plans reflect the resources available and circumstances impacting the program. Staff meetings will be used to check in on and record the progress on the QEP goals. Bi-annually the program will review the entire QEP with the management and staff, and record any changes made. Annually the program will complete the Annual Report and submit it to AELCS.

Policies and procedures are updated regularly based on new information on Best Practices, as well as licensing and accreditation requirements. Policies and procedures are also reviewed yearly with management and staff. The date of any review or revision will be noted on each handbook. Job descriptions will also be reviewed with the management and staff yearly or as necessary to ensure alignments with achieving quality enhancement plans and program upgrades.