

A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

Footsteps Family Centre was established in 1993 and is operated by a volunteer Board of Directors. Board members are elected at the Annual General Meeting in March of each year by the members of this organization. The membership is comprised of parents and interested individuals within this community that are committed to the well being of all children.

Monthly Board meetings are held to ensure the effective and efficient provision of the highest quality care and service to all children and their families.

We believe that it does take a whole community to raise a child. Your support, suggestions, comments and questions are encouraged and valued. Together we can and will make a difference.

As a Board, we welcome you and your family to this Centre.

Sincerely

Chair of the Board

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

CLOTHING AND POSSESSIONS

Children should wear washable play clothes to the centre. A second set of clothing for your child should be kept at the centre to be used when necessary. All clothing and shoes should be labelled to avoid losing articles. Clothing which your child can remove and replace easily is recommended as this encourages self-help skills and independence.

Appropriate outdoor clothing is required, as the children will be participating in outdoor play daily. (I.e., splash pants and boots for rainy weather, snowsuits, mitts, neck tubes and hats for winter). Please note that for safety reasons we request that no strings be attached to any article of clothing. We request that indoor shoes or slippers be left at the centre. This is especially important in case of a fire drill, as the children must exit the building.

We appreciate the fact the children like to bring familiar items from home to help them feel more comfortable in the program. Therefore, to help avoid the loss of personal items, please **label them**.

During the warmer months, Footsteps Family Centre provides appropriate sunscreen protection for all children. We willingly accept donations of "Ombrelle" sunscreen/or monetary contributions to help with this expense

ITEMS TO BRING FROM HOME

- ~blanket/stuff toy
- ~complete change of clothes (shirt, sweater, pants, underwear, and socks)
- ~appropriate outdoor clothing
- ~pull-ups/diapers/wipes
- ~indoor shoes or slippers (footwear must have rubber soles)

DAILY OPERATIONS

SAFE ARRIVAL AND SAFE PICK-UP

Young children are dependent of regular routines for their own sense of security. Footsteps Family Centre recommends that established hours of pick-up and drop-off be adopted. When a child (ren) arrives, the parent(s)/guardian(s) Must notify a staff member of the child=s presence. When picking up your child, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must inform the staff that the child is leaving. The above procedure is essential for the safety of all children. Unless otherwise arranged, children will not be released to any person other than those specified on the admission forms. **If a child will be absent from a program parents must communicate the child's absence before 10:00 AM** Should a child not arrive on a scheduled day before 10:00 AM educators will call and send email messages to parents and emergency contacts for information. **If unable to determine the whereabouts of the child within a reasonable amount of time the Centre's Director will be notified and resume contact attempts, next steps will be to notify the local police to report.** Any person delegated by the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be required to show identification when picking up the child to indicate such a person is indeed the delegate. Children will not be permitted to leave the Centre to walk home alone.

Footsteps Family Centre is open from 7:30 am - 5:30 pm Any children picked up after closing times will receive a late fee charge. Hours determined by Executive Director, TBDSSAB, to subsidy clients will be enforced.

If in the staff=s opinion, the pick-up person (parent/guardian or delegate) is not capable of caring for the child (ren) (e.g., intoxicated, incoherent), the staff will offer to call a taxi and contact the designate person(s) listed in the child=s file. If the pick-up person still insists on taking the child(ren) with them then the staff person will notify the proper authorities (i.e., Director, Designate, Police and Children=s Aid).

The staff who makes that decision will write up an incident report to be included in the child=s file, make a note of the incident in the daily journal, and call the Director and advise her/him of the situation.

FIELD TRIPS

Children learn from actual experiences. Therefore, we place a high priority on outings. On the enrollment form, you were asked to sign an area for spontaneous walks close to the centre. This would include walks around the neighbourhood as well as nature walks.

When trips are planned to special places of interest, parents will be asked to sign a consent form, giving information of the destination, date, and times of departure and arrival. If you are interested in attending our field trips, please provide the centre a copy of clear criminal reference check vulnerable sector (current within 6 months) approx. one week prior to the field trip.

DAYS AND HOURS OF OPERATION

The centre will be opened from Monday to Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. The following statutory holidays will be observed:

New Year's Day	Family Day
Civic Holiday	
Good Friday	Labour Day
Easter Monday	Thanksgiving Day
Victoria Day	Christmas Day
Canada Day	Boxing Day

Emergency Management

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear direction for staff and licensees to follow to deal with emergency situations. The procedures set out steps for staff to follow to support the safety and well-being of everyone involved.

Clear policies and procedures will support all individuals to manage responses and responsibilities during an emergency, resulting in the safest outcomes possible.

Policy

Staff will follow the emergency response procedures outlined in this document by following these three phases:

1. Immediate Emergency Response;
2. Next Steps during an Emergency; and
3. Recovery.

Staff will ensure that children are kept safe, are accounted for and are supervised at all times during an emergency situation.

For situations that require evacuation of the child care centre, the **meeting place** to gather immediately will be located at: Crossing Guard Post - County Blvd.

If it is deemed 'unsafe to return' to the child care centre, the **evacuation site** to proceed

to is located at: Suomi Koto, 527 County Blvd.,

Note: all directions given by emergency services personnel will be followed under all circumstances, including directions to evacuate to locations different than those listed above.

For any emergency situations involving a child with an individualized medical plan in place, the procedures in the child's individualized plan will be followed and,

If any emergency situations happen that are not described in this document, Executive Director/Designate will provide direction to staff for the immediate response and next steps. Staff will follow the direction given.

Communication to Parents:

Upon arrival to the emergency evacuation site, Director/Designate/Program Staff will notify parents/guardians of the emergency situation, evacuation and the location to pick up their children.

- Footsteps - OLOC school site, Suomi Koto, 527 County Blvd.

If any emergency situations result in a serious occurrence, the serious occurrence policy and procedures will also be followed.

All emergency situations will be documented in detail by, Executive Director/Designate/Program Staff in the daily written record.

Additional Policy Statements

Regular monthly fire drills will be carried out for staff/children training purposes. In addition to fall/spring school fire drills. Lock down and Evacuation drills will follow the schools

SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN

Children attending Footsteps Family Centre are supervised by qualified Registered Early Childhood Educators and/or individuals 18 years of age or older who is otherwise approved by a director. All employees, students and volunteers of Footsteps Family Centre are required to submit Criminal Reference Check - Vulnerable Sector Check.

Volunteers and students are not permitted to supervise children or be alone with children at any time.

ACCIDENTS

Unfortunately, accidents can and do happen even with adult supervision. Should a child receive any injury (i.e. when ice needs to be applied to a wound) while in attendance at Footsteps Family Centre, an accident report will be written up and the parent will be notified. The parent, staff member involved and the Executive Director will sign this report. One copy will be kept in the child's file, second copy will be given to parent. Should the accident or injury be deemed beyond standard first aid, staff will call 911 & the parent/emergency contact. If an accident happens and a child is physically injured, their recovery might have financial costs. The financial costs of an accident might be ambulance fees, casts, crutches, physiotherapy or emergency dental care. It is the parents' responsibility to pay the necessary expenses that are not already covered under a government health insurance plan and or the parent's employer group benefits plan. For parents wishing to purchase accident insurance or for more information please visit www.insuremykids.com or call 1-800-463-5437

Parent Issues and Concerns Policy and Procedures

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a transparent process for parents/guardians, the child care licensee and staff to use when parents/guardians bring forward issues/concerns.

Definitions

Licensee: The individual or agency licensed by the Ministry of Education responsible for the operation and management of each child care centre it operates (i.e. the operator).

Staff: Individual employed by the licensee (e.g. program room staff)

Policy

General

Parents/guardians are encouraged to take an active role in our child care centre and regularly discuss what their child(ren) are experiencing with our program. As supported by our program statement, we support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents/guardians, child care providers and staff, and foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents/guardians about the program and their children. Our staff are available to engage parents/guardians in conversations and support a positive experience during every interaction.

All issues and concerns raised by parents/guardians are taken seriously by Footsteps Family Centre and will be addressed. Every effort will be made to address and resolve issues and concerns to the satisfaction of all parties and as quickly as possible.

Issues/concerns may be brought forward verbally or in writing. Responses and outcomes

will be provided verbally, or in writing upon request. The level of detail provided to the parent/guardian will respect and maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved.

An initial response to an issue or concern will be provided to parents/guardians within 1-2 business day(s). The person who raised the issue/concern will be kept informed throughout the resolution process.

Investigations of issues and concerns will be fair, impartial and respectful to parties involved.

Confidentiality

Every issue and concern will be treated confidentially and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of parents/guardians, children, staff, students and volunteers, except when information must be disclosed for legal reasons (e.g. to the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities or a Children's Aid Society).

Conduct

Our centre maintains high standards for positive interaction, communication and role-modeling for children. Harassment and discrimination will therefore not be tolerated from any party.

If at any point a parent/guardian, provider or staff feels uncomfortable, threatened, abused or belittled, they may immediately end the conversation and report the situation to the supervisor and/or licensee.

Concerns about the Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a child

Everyone, including members of the public and professionals who work closely with children, are required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.

If a parent/guardian expresses concerns that a child is being abused or neglected, the parent will be advised to contact the [local Children's Aid Society](#) (CAS) directly.

Persons who become aware of such concerns are also responsible for reporting this information to CAS as per the "Duty to Report" requirement under the *Child and Family Services Act*.

For more information, visit

<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childrensaidthereportingabuse/index.aspx>

ADMISSIONS AND WITHDRAWALS

ADMISSION AND WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Clients wishing to apply to Footsteps Family Centre are to create an account on the One list registry/waitlist www.thunderbaychildcare.ca

Footsteps Family Centre will give priority to those on the onelist waitlist registry as follows:

1) Staff 2) Siblings of children already attending 3) Fulltime 4) Part time

Prior to enrollment, a tour of the Centre will be arranged to familiarize the family with the staff, the surroundings and our policies, as well as complete the required registration & contract forms.

REMOVAL OF CHILD FROM CENTRE

Should the child's behavior problems be deemed to be beyond the expertise of the centre staff, pose a risk to safety to him or herself or infringe upon the rights of another child to participate in a safe and secure childcare environment, recommendations will be made in writing to the parent (s) /guardian to withdraw the child from the daycare and seek services with appropriate agencies within the community. The parent will be given two weeks' notice of 2 weeks to make alternate arrangements. Please be aware that if a child's behavior issues are deemed unsafe for themselves, or other children, or staff persons, parents will be asked to find alternate arrangements immediately.

PROHIBITED PRACTISES

Footsteps Family Centre shall not permit...

- a) Corporal punishment of a child.
- b) Physical restraint, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting himself, herself or someone else and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent.
- c) Locking of the exits of the child care centre for the purpose of confining the child, or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency.
- d) Use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child what would humiliate, shame or frighten the child or undermine his or her self-respect, dignity or self-worth.
- e) Depriving the child basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding; or
- f) Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

Footsteps Family Centre recognizes each child=s individual feelings and actions. Support and time will be allowed to let each child express his/her emotions and moods in a positive manner. Positive measures are used in order to help a child learn to deal with all emotions in an appropriate manner. The goal of discipline is to teach the child safe, socially and developmentally appropriate skills and abilities to increase both self-control and skill acquisition. A positive environment is created by skilled staff who provide consistency, structure and appropriate intervention strategies. Disciplinary measures, through the use of behavior management strategies are used to prevent unacceptable behavior and avoid crisis situations. When the need arises, children will be disciplined in a positive manner, at a level that is appropriate to their ages and developmental stages.

Acceptable Behaviour Management Strategies:

1. Clear expectations
2. Choices
3. Redirection
4. Planned ignoring
5. Caring gestures
6. Humour
7. Hurdle helping
8. Removal of triggering object
9. Limits
10. Controls
11. Logical consequences
12. Natural consequences
13. Time away

MISSION STATEMENT / PHILOSOPHY

MISSION STATEMENT

Footsteps Family Centre encourages learning through play in an environment that is secure, stimulating and promotes the wholistic development of each child. Our centre strives to reach common goals through partnership with the family, the school and community.

PHILOSOPHY

CHILDREN: Our belief is that every child is unique with individual needs and abilities. Our program is designed to foster the development of each child so that they can learn to live in harmony with themselves, others and the world.

FAMILIES: Our centre is committed to building partnerships with the parents to provide an extension of the family unit. Parents are encouraged to engage in and become active participants in their child=s day at the centre. We believe open communication and daily contact will provide our families with the trusting environment and relationship they seek.

STAFF: The staff members have chosen their work because of a belief in the importance of the task, suitability of their skills and education as well as the strong commitment to the healthy development of children.

NUTRITION / REST TIME

NUTRITION

Footsteps Family Centre is a NUT/SCENT-SENSITIVE centre.

This means that there will not be any peanut or nut products allowed in the centre. We ask that any children attending our program do not bring peanut or nut products into the centre. Please refrain from sending your child into the centre with any food from home. We have children enrolled that are anaphylactic (fatal allergy) to nuts/scents and their derivatives.

A nutritious mid-day meal, morning and afternoon snacks, will be provided for the children. Individual and special dietary needs including allergies and sensitivities will be posted in the kitchen and both play room serving areas. Weekly menu plans will be posted for the current and following week. Menus are planned with respect to the Canada Food Guide requirements. We welcome menu ideas that are special to your child's family or background.

REST TIME

Footsteps provides a supervised two-hour rest period after lunch for children attending the centre full day. At this time, the children lie down on cots in a darkened room with soothing lullaby music played. This is a time for the children to sleep or take part in restful activities (i.e. puzzles, books, etc.). Please feel free to send a favorite blanket and /or stuff animal to help your child rest. Children are monitored to ensure safe sleep by sleep room supervisors. Documentation is logged in 15-minute intervals.

Children unable to fall asleep following a $\frac{1}{2}$ hour period are welcome to quiet rest activities such as books, puzzles & fidget toys.

Children who are awake after one hour of rest will have the opportunity to participate in quiet table top activities.

*Educators are required by licensing regulations to ensure a child's individual needs are met therefore are not permitted to keep a child from falling asleep.

PROGRAM STATEMENT

Footsteps Family Centre is committed to working toward the four foundations of learning:
Belonging, Well-being, Engagement and Expression.

These foundations, or ways of being, are a vision for all children's future potential and view of what they should experience each and every day. Regardless of age, ability, culture, language, geography or setting. noted in "How does Learning Happen" Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years ...

- **Belonging** ~ refers to a sense of connectedness to others, an individuals' experiences of being valued, of forming relationships with others and making contributions as part of a group, a community, the natural world.
- **Well-being** ~ address' the importance of physical and mental health and wellness. It incorporates capacities such as self-care, sense of self, and self-regulation skills.
- **Engagement** ~ suggests a state of being involved and focused. When children are able to explore the world around them with natural curiosity and exuberance, they are fully engaged. Through play inquiry experience the children develop skills such as problem solving, creative thinking and innovating, which are essential for learning and success in school and beyond
- **Expression** ~ or communication (to be heard, as well as to listen) may take many different forms. Through their bodies, words, and use of materials, children develop capacities for increasingly complex communication. Opportunities to explore materials support creativity, problem solving and mathematical behaviours. Language rich environments support growing communication skills, which are foundational for literacy.

For the Children; Footsteps strives...

- ~ to provide a safe, nurturing environment enabling all children to gain trust in themselves and others, to enhance their self-esteem and to form positive relationships with others.
- ~ to recognize and celebrate the similarities and differences among all children
- ~ to support and respond to the child=s sense of curiosity and innate need to explore.
- ~ to value the interrelatedness and wholistic process of development.
- ~ to provide numerous opportunities for play so that children can gain an understanding of their world and the people around them.
- ~ to enhance self-help skills and provide experiences for children to develop self-regulation,

independence and problem-solving skills,

- ~ to encourage creativity with emphasis being placed on the learning process rather than the end result.
- ~ to provide environments and experiences to engage children in active, creative and meaningful exploration, play and inquiry.

For the Families:

- ~ to build a strong foundation of trust, and a relationship of respect with all families.
- ~ to enhance the parent-child-teacher relationship with open, honest, and positive communication.
- ~ to value all families and encourage each of their unique contributions to the centre.
- ~ to assist families to connect with local community partners and allow these partners to support them in various ways. For example: Children's Centre Thunder Bay; offers a variety of programming for children (0-18 years of age) educational workshops, counselling services, & George Jeffrey Treatment centre; offers Occupational therapy, Physiotherapy, & speech and language therapy services just to name a few.

For the staff:

- ~ to create safe work environments which offer opportunity for professional growth, lifelong learning which in turn supports positive and responsive interactions among children, parents, and co-workers.

For the School and the Community:

- ~ to work in partnership with the school to enhance the care and education of all children, Footsteps provides before and after school needs.
- ~ to foster and encourage belonging within the community; currently ...Biwaase'aa Cultural Learning Program is available here at Our Lady of Charity School and operates alongside Footsteps after school program in the school's gymnasium.

TBCDSB has partnered with Biwaase'aa to run cultural learning programs in our schools. Biwaase'aa is a culturally designed program that provides Aboriginal youth aged 7 to 13 years and their families with a fun opportunity to participate in programs which contribute to their cultural, mental, physical, and emotional well-being.

FEES / AGES OF CHILDREN

FEES / PAYMENTS

Families will be invoiced monthly. Payment in full will be due by the 20th of each month following the distribution of invoices. Statement of accounts are also provided. E transfer information will be provided upon starting date. Payments are encouraged to be by etransfer, cash/cheque payments are to be given to a staff member and a receipt issued at the time of payment.

Should your child's last name be different than your own, please indicate in the memo section of your E transfer.

N.S.F. cheques will have a \$25.00 charged attached.

In keeping accurate accounts, please pay the exact amount of invoice including cents.

Footsteps will process any refund or credit by cheque.

Please contact the office within 3-5 business days following receipt of your invoice to report any discrepancies. Inquiries past 30 days will be subject to a \$35.00 administration fee.

Accounts overdue are subject to suspension. Families will not be provided reminders.

Parents will be provided annual income tax receipts by the end of February each calendar year.

LATE CHARGES

Footsteps Family Centre is open from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Any child(ren) picked up after 5:30 p.m. (6:00) at rural sites will receive a late charge.

Late pick of child fee will be as follows:	5:31 p.m. - 5:45 p.m. - late fee of \$15.00
	5:46 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. - late fee of \$25.00
	6:00 p.m. - and on - late fee charge of \$40.00

Where attempts to call parents and emergency contacts for pick up continues past 30 min staff are instructed to call Children's Aid Society for assistance.

AGES OF CHILDREN

Footsteps Family Centre OLOC site is licensed to accommodate 41 full time children ages 12 months -4 years of age.

ABSENT DAYS/SICK DAYS/VACTION DAYS

There are no fee waived absent/sick days or vacation periods for children who attend the Centre. Parents are charged their daily rate stated on their contract form. Footsteps does not charge for any days the Centre is closed.

HEALTH / MEDICATION

HEALTH AND ILLNESS

The Child Care and Early Years Act stipulates that prior to admission, each child 12 months-4 years of age must be immunized as recommended by the local Medical Officer or Health. Parents of children who object to immunization due to religious/conscience or medical reasons must complete a standardized ministry approved form. Medical exemption forms must be completed by a doctor or nurse practitioner.

Regulations require daily outdoor play for each child. In light of such regulations, it is the Centre policy that for a child too ill during the day, temporary care will be provided until the parent(s)/guardian(s) are contacted and the child is taken home.

If a child shows any of the following symptoms, he/she cannot attend Footsteps Family Centre until the symptoms have disappeared, 24 hours is the exclusion period. If your child comes in contact with any of these conditions, please inform a staff member.

- ~ cold symptoms that hinder regular activity (i.e. coloured discharge from nose)
- ~ ear ache
- ~ discharge from eyes or ears
- ~ repeated diarrhea or vomiting (diarrhea - two bouts in one day)
- ~ Unexplained rash
- ~ Swollen neck glands
- ~ fever above 38 C or 100.4 F
- ~ Head lice (nits are removed fully)

A child must remain home if diagnosed with any contagious diseases such as:

Measles
Chicken Pox
Impetigo

Mumps
Roseola
Pink Eye

A doctor=s note may be required to confirm the child is no longer contagious and is ready to return to a group child-care setting.

Unfortunately, payments cannot be refunded for children who are ill as a space is being held for them. Please call the centre if your child is ill and will not be attending on his/her scheduled day.

DRUG ADMINISTRATION

Footsteps Family Centre will administer both prescription and non-prescription medication to children in accordance with provincial legislation.

The legislation requires that parents provide:

- i) Written authorization form, including dosage, reason for taking the medication and time medication is to be administered.
- ii) The medication must be in the original container, clearly labeled with the child=s name, name of medication, the dosage, the date of purchase, and instructions for storage and administration.
- iii) Parents must give all medication to a staff person, who will place it in a locked medication box.

Should you have further questions please feel free to contact the office at 807 767-1958 ext.5 to speak to the Centre's Director.

