



Dear families,

Choosing someone to care for your child is an important decision, and I sincerely appreciate the trust you place in me. My goal is to provide a warm, comfortable home where children feel safe to learn, play, create, build friendships, and grow. As a parent, I understand the value of a positive relationship between families and caregivers. Open communication, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to your child's well-being help make daycare a happy and successful experience. There is a lot of information in this Handbook, so please keep it handy and check periodically so we can all stay on the same page!

About Me

I have more than ten years of experience caring for young children, in addition to raising my own children and operating my home daycare. I also previously worked as an overnight camp counsellor, leading crafts, swimming, canoeing, sports, and outdoor education. My experience includes supporting children with ADHD, autism, epilepsy, Down syndrome, homesickness, behavioural challenges, and speech or motor delays.

I maintain a clear vulnerable-sector check and current First Aid and CPR certification, including infant and child CPR. As an independent unlicensed provider, I care for no more than five children at one time, with no more than three younger than two. My own children are over the age at which they count toward this limit.

Our Home and Our Days

The daycare operates from my bungalow in Stoneybrook. Children have dedicated play and nap space in the full, finished basement, along with a fenced backyard and large front yard. Toys and materials are rotated regularly and include books, music, crafts, Montessori-inspired materials, and open-ended toys.

We spend time outside in most weather, walking through the neighbourhood and visiting nearby parks, fields, and natural spaces. At home, children often garden, pick apples from our tree, raise monarch butterflies, climb, play in the snow, or dance in the rain!

Indoor time may include stories, free play, music, crafts, sensory activities, and baking. As a classically trained musician and singer, I regularly use guitar, piano, movement, and songs in our routines and learning.

We follow a comfortable daily rhythm, however we are in no rush around here! One rest period is offered at approximately 12:30 p.m. and is capped at 2 hours. We are generally screen-free, however we may occasionally watch a short, age-appropriate program during severe weather or may have a special movie day. Screen time is strictly pre-approved by all parents in advance.

Children may need time to become comfortable in a new setting (I usually account for two or three weeks of time to adjust). Please tell me about your child's routines, preferences, comfort items, and sleep needs. A familiar sleep sack, blanket, stuffed animal, or favourite book can make a huge difference in the ease of their transition!

Daycare spaces, toys, and frequently touched surfaces are cleaned regularly and disinfected as needed. I favour fragrance-free and lower-toxicity products whenever they are appropriate and effective.

Meals and Snacks

Children receive lunch and two or three snacks each day. Meals consist primarily of homemade foods, fruits, vegetables, and age-appropriate options. I home-bake most of our baked goods to avoid preservatives and children are always welcome to help! Baby-led feeding principles are used where developmentally appropriate to encourage independence and experience with different textures. I do not follow a fixed weekly menu. Families may provide an approved alternative when a dietary need cannot be accommodated through the regular meal.

Allergy awareness: Please do not send food containing peanuts or tree nuts. Because care takes place in a family home, a completely allergen-free environment cannot be guaranteed.

Hours and Scheduled Closures

Regular hours are Monday to Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Care outside these hours is often available, but must be arranged in advance and is subject to availability.

2026 date	Closure	Payment Required
January 1	New Year's Day	Yes
February 16	Family Day	Yes
April 3 & 6th	Good Friday & Easter Monday	Yes
May 18	Victoria Day	Yes
August 10-14	Summer vacation	No fees charged
September 7	Labour Day	Yes
September 10	Appointment day	Yes - paid personal day
October 12	Thanksgiving	Yes
December 24-25	Christmas closure	No fees charged

I may take up to five paid personal days per calendar year for illness, appointments, or emergencies. Personal days are separate from paid holiday closures. Families will receive as much notice as reasonably possible.

Because a home daycare does not have replacement staff, every family must maintain a reliable backup-care plan for unexpected closures. Please note that when your children are eventually in school, they will have approximately 30 days off throughout the year, not including summer holidays! I do my very best to schedule multiple appointments on one day or on my own vacation time, but illness and additional appointments do arise.

Home Access and Enrollment Requirement

Please Note: Because the daycare operates from my private family residence, I maintain a strict personal-safety boundary arising from previous adverse experiences: I cannot receive male parents, guardians, or other male caregivers at the daycare property.

My daycare is intended to provide children with a calm, consistent, and nurturing home environment. Over time, it has also become a particularly meaningful space for mothers and children whose lives have been affected by family instability, separation, or abuse. Maintaining a strong sense of privacy and safety within my home is therefore central to how the daycare operates.

Families must arrange tours, meetings, drop-offs, and pickups through a mother or another authorized woman. Each family must maintain a reliable authorized female alternate for unexpected situations. I am willing to discuss reasonable adjustments to arrival or departure times on occasion to help families meet this requirement.

I am sincerely grateful for families respecting this boundary. It does not affect how children's male family members are represented within our daycare. Where applicable, we happily celebrate fathers and other important men through family activities, stories, and everyday conversation. Every child's family is discussed positively and sensitively according to their individual circumstances.

I recognize and appreciate that this model will not suit every household. The restriction is a firm safety boundary and should be considered carefully before applying for care.

Fees at a Glance

Care option	Rate
Full-time care - five days per week	\$45 per day
Part-time care - fewer than five fixed days per week	\$55 per day
School-calendar care (March break, Christmas, summer off)	\$55 per day
Extended daycare time before or after regular hours	\$8 per hour
Evening, weekend, or waking overnight care	\$10 per hour
Sleeping overnight hours	\$5 per hour

Daily fees include lunch, snacks, activities, and craft materials. The full daily fee applies regardless of arrival or departure time.

Part-time families reserve fixed days. A day may be exchanged only with advance approval and available space. Extended time is rounded to the nearest half-hour, billed on the next payment, and charged according to the time reserved even if the child arrives late or leaves early.

* Complete payment, deposit, absence, and withdrawal terms appear in the Childcare Contract.

Family Absence Days

Each family receives payment-free absence days that may be used for illness, vacation, appointments, or any day of your choosing. The amount is equal to one contracted week per year. For example, a child attending five days per week receives five days per year, while a child attending three days per week receives three.

Days may be used before **or** after an absence. Their use is completely optional; families may pay the regular fee and save them for another time if they choose to do so. Adjustments are made on the current or following payment, as appropriate. Unused days expire December 31 and do not carry forward. Once they are used, regular fees apply to all further absences.

Arrival and Departure

Consistent arrival and departure times help our day run smoothly. Please notify me as soon as possible of a delay or schedule change. Late pickups more than 30 minutes after 5:30 pm without prior approval are charged \$5 for each additional 15-minute period beginning at 5:30 pm.

Health and Illness

Children must be vaccinated or following an age-appropriate vaccination schedule established with their healthcare provider.

Children must remain home when they:

- Have a fever, vomiting, diarrhea, a worsening or persistent cough, a suspected eye infection, an unexplained rash, or other potentially contagious symptoms
- Appear unusually lethargic, uncomfortable, or in pain
- Require fever- or pain-reducing medication to participate comfortably
- Cannot participate fully in the regular routine, including outdoor play

If symptoms develop during care, an authorized person must arrange prompt pickup. Children may generally return after being symptom-free without medication for at least 24 hours. A healthcare provider or public-health direction may require a longer exclusion period or medical clearance, depending on the illness.

Families must communicate openly about symptoms, diagnoses, medication, and possible exposure to contagious illness. If my own child is mildly unwell, they will rest separately; if I cannot provide safe care, the daycare will close. The healthier we all are, the more consistently we can enjoy this space and our time together!

Medication is administered by me only with written parental authorization and a physician's note. Medication must be in its original labelled container with clear instructions.

What to Bring

Please send a daycare bag containing:

- Diapers or pull-ups and wipes
- A water bottle
- Two complete changes of clothing (don't forget socks!)
- Weather-appropriate outdoor clothing
- One comfort item for rest time, if needed

Check the bag regularly and replenish supplies as needed. Other toys should remain at home to avoid conflict, damage, or loss.

Outdoor Clothing

Spring and fall: Raincoat, splash pants or rainsuit, rain boots, sweater, hat, and layers.

Summer: Running shoes or secure sport sandals, sun hat, sunscreen, and a bathing suit when requested.

Winter: Warm water-resistant snowsuit or coat and snow pants, insulated mittens, a hat with ear coverage, and warm socks.

Flip-flops are not suitable for daycare play, so please consider using “sport sandals” or other shoes that can be put on as independently as possible (no laces!). Please send comfortable and elastic-waist clothing that may become wet, dirty, or stained. We consider dirt under our nails and paint on our clothes as signs of a wonderful day!

Diapers and Toilet Learning

Diapers are checked and changed approximately every two hours, before and after rest, and whenever obviously needed. Most children use at least three or four diapers each day, so please pack accordingly.

I will work with families to support toilet learning consistently. Please continue using pull-ups at daycare until your child has been accident-free in pull-ups at home for at least two weeks. Easy-to-remove elastic-waist clothing is strongly encouraged to make changes easier.

Positive Behaviour Guidance

Children are guided through clear expectations, patience, consistency, age-appropriate explanations, redirection, and positive reinforcement. Instructions are simple and direct so children understand what is expected.

When a child is overwhelmed or repeatedly behaving unsafely, they may have a brief, supervised break from the activity to calm and talk before returning to the group.

Young children (especially first/only children) are still learning to share, communicate, and regulate emotions, so conflict is expected. Persistent concerns will be discussed with the family so we can work together. If behaviour creates an ongoing serious safety or operational concern, the childcare arrangement may need to end.

Our Basic House Rules

- We sit while eating.
- We keep our hands and bodies safe.
- We use kind words and manners.
- We take turns and do not snatch.
- We help clean up.
- We respect private family rooms.

Active Play, Injuries, and Incidents

Children are encouraged to build confidence and physical skills through age-appropriate running, climbing, balancing, gardening, and playground play. Although children are supervised and reasonable precautions are taken, minor bumps, scrapes, and bruises are a normal possibility during active play.

Significant accidents, injuries, and behavioural incidents are documented. Minor concerns may be discussed at pickup; urgent concerns are communicated immediately.

Photos and Communication

With written parental permission, photographs may be taken to document activities and share updates with families. Parents must not post or distribute an image containing another daycare child without that child's parent or guardian's explicit permission. Photo consent may be withdrawn in writing.

Families are welcome and encouraged to contact me for an update during the day. I will respond when it is safe and practical to do so.

Additional Care

Families may inquire about occasional evening, weekend, overnight, or emergency care. Additional care is never guaranteed and must be confirmed in advance based on availability.

When Care May End

Occasionally, a childcare placement may not be the right fit despite everyone's best efforts. When possible, I will communicate concerns, work with the family, and allow reasonable time for improvement or transition. I must prioritize the safety and well-being of all daycare children and my household. Care may end without notice when continuing the arrangement is unsafe or no longer reasonably manageable.

* Complete termination terms appear in the contract.

Handbook Updates

Families ordinarily receive at least 14 days' written notice of general handbook updates. Changes required urgently for health, safety, legal compliance, or emergencies may take effect sooner. Material changes to fees, paid closures, contracted hours, deposits, or termination terms are handled through the childcare contract with at least 30 days' written notice. Policies, scheduled days off, and more are typically updated on a yearly basis.

Thank you so much for trusting me to be part of your child's early years. Please keep this handbook accessible and ask whenever you need clarification. I look forward to building a respectful, comfortable, and happy relationship with your family.

With many thanks,
Andrea