

# Welcome



Parent Handbook  
Revised 2023

**Our Vision:** to help our families achieve the best possible outcomes through the use of a two-generation, one-future approach by delivering integrated, evidence-based programs and services.

**Our Mission:** To provide a safe and nurturing environment for children and parents so they may overcome barriers, explore opportunities and achieve their full potential.

**Our Values:** Accountability, Collaboration, Compassion, Dignity, and Ingenuity, are at the core of how we deliver our services.

### Dear Parents and Caregivers,

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you and your child/children to Abigail's Learning Centre. This handbook presents all of the policies of the Centre concerning you and your child/children. If there are any policies that you want to know more about, please do not hesitate to ask.

Abigail's Learning Centre Inc. is a registered, not-for-profit charitable agency governed by a Board of Directors. Abigail's blueprint for action is unique to Hastings and Prince Edward County, helping parents pursue skills and complete higher levels of education to improve their economic security and stability, while simultaneously ensuring their children are on a path from the earliest age to engage in lifelong learning, be healthier and have solid social/emotional skills.

We pair adult education and training pathways with child care and transportation. Abigail's provides integrated community-based programs and services that meet the complex needs of individuals and families. In this way, we break the cycle of poverty and trauma and build lasting resilience.

When a family comes to Abigail's, we meet and go through a Resilience Checklist. It's a tool that helps you to know what supports we can offer; it can create discussions of what your family goals are; what other support services you may be interested in connecting with; and what steps come first. The checklist provides us with a "map" based on your goals and demonstrates how effective that support is over time. This helps us to deliver customized, integrated care plans for each individual.

Abigail's Child Care Centre has adopted the "How Does Learning Happen? – Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years" (2014) as the document to lead us in programming and pedagogy. This document, being grounded in research, provides a foundation for Educators to provide a safe and stimulating environment for the children in the care of Abigail's. At Abigail's, we believe that children are competent and capable, curious, and rich in potential. Focusing on the four foundations of "How Does Learning Happen?" – Belonging, Well-being, Engagement and Expression, the principles of the ELECT document and the focus of Think, Feel, Act, we will ensure optimal learning and healthy development throughout all aspects of our programs.

At Abigail's, we continually strive to make our centre a fun and supportive learning environment that promises cooperation and respect for others. Our experienced staff provides surroundings that contribute to healthy growth and development while enhancing your child's self-esteem. We are an all-inclusive Centre.

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## Supports and Services

We focus on:

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ECONOMICS</b></p> <p>Housing/Living Conditions Income/Financial Literacy Literacy, Education Levels, Job Skills Food Access &amp; Nutrition</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL</b></p> <p>Meaningful Relationships Natural Supports &amp; Family Relations Executive Functioning &amp; Self-Regulation Legal Supports</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>HEALTH</b></p> <p>Physical Health Mental Health Addictions &amp; Substance Use Access to Health Care</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>DEVELOPMENTAL</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Early Years Development</p>

## Abigail’s Parent Program (Family and Child Enhancement Program)

### GET YOUR GRADE 12 DIPLOMA/ PLAN FOR YOUR FUTURE/ SKILLS TRAINING

On-site we provide an Alternative Adult Learning Facility offered in partnership with Quinte Adult Education and Loyalist College. Learn employability skills, develop a portfolio and prepare for your future.

### ATTEND PARENTING CLASSES

We offer a multitude of FREE parent education programs, classes and activities that help build positive skills. Come visit us to learn more about the programs or call 613-961-1884

Parent programs include:

- Triple P (Positive Parenting Program)
- Nurturing Parenting Program
- Family STRONG
- Babies & Beyond
- Thriving Women Group
- Fathers Matter
- Financial Literacy Skills
- Cooking with the Basic Shelf
- Upskills for Employment
- AND more, come visit to learn more

## Community Partnerships

Abigail's is fortunate to work with so many great agencies. Community partnerships are an important aspect of Abigail's. This means, from time to time, you will see other professionals supporting our programs.

## Abigail's Licensed Childcare Program

Abigail's Childcare Program is licensed by the Ministry of Education. We are licensed for 77 children (20 infants, 25 toddlers, 32 preschoolers). We provide care Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily, year-round. We provide both full day and half day programs.

Our [Program Statement](#) provides a framework that guides programming and pedagogy. Abigail's team holds a deep regard of children as competent, capable, curious and rich in potential, and uses the foundations of How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years, guide the design of children's environments, experiences and interactions.

Please see [Appendix 1](#) to read our entire Program Statement, which reflects:

## Our Philosophy

- To enhance children's optimal early development and learning
- To create a base for children to succeed in the education system & throughout their lives
- To support responsive parenting and care giving including safe environment & good nutrition for children
- To link families with other professional services with relevant programs for children and families
- To encourage and support the growth and development of parents/caregivers

## Our Guiding Principles

In order to achieve our purpose, the programs are based on the following guiding principles:

- Abigail's is both parent and child oriented
- Abigail's will provide a safe and nurturing environment for infants (0-18 mo.), toddlers (18 mo. – 2 ½ yrs.) and preschoolers (2 ½ - 5 yrs.) enabling them to engage in play-based problem solving and learning with others
- We provide programs that support families in all aspects of child development
- We provide parenting activities that will enhance the child's early learning and optimal development in their home environment
- We will make every effort to provide appropriate support and expertise to allow all children to participate
- We will link families with community professional supports, which are in keeping with their respective needs of choice

## Hours

Open Monday to Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. year round

### Centre Closed on the following Days:

New Year's Day

Family Day

Good Friday

Easter Monday

Victoria Day

Canada Day

Civic Day

Labor Day

Thanksgiving Day

And closed for 1 week between Christmas and New Years

**Emergency Closure** - The Board of Director's reserves the right to close the centre when there are severe weather warnings and alerts that may hinder the safety of families travelling to and from the child care centre and the safety of the staff. This closure will be communicated to parents in the following ways:

1. A telephone call to your home.
2. In the event the Centre must close early you will be contacted by telephone to come as soon as possible to pick up your child.
3. In the event of an evacuation from the Centre the staff will take the children to an alternate site: Family Space Early Years Centre located at 100 Station Street, Belleville. Parents will receive a telephone call with instructions for pick up.

**Notice Required** - Two weeks' notice is required when: scheduling vacation days; taking a break in service; or a permanent withdrawal of a child from the centre. In these cases, should notice not be provided, it will result in fees in lieu of notice. Note - Any request to increase your child's attendance will be accommodated as space becomes available.

**Arrival and Departure** - All children are encouraged to arrive by 10:00 a.m. and attend regularly, except in cases of illness or vacation. This assists in planning activities, meals, sleep times, etc. and gives the child the reassurance of a regular routine. If you will be later than usual in picking up your child, please inform the Centre. Often a child expects a parent at the routine time and when the parent is late it may create anxiety.

**Signing In and Signing Out** - Parents are required to sign their child in/out with initials and the time of day on the attendance sheet provided for each group. The centre has a legal responsibility to release the child into the care of a responsible and capable person. The Centre wishes to make it clear that its responsibility for your children commences at the time they are signed in and ends when they are signed out.

## Health and Safety – Access - Separation or Divorce

Where custody of a child is granted pursuant to the terms of a separation agreement or a decree of divorce, the custodial parent shall provide proof, satisfactory to the Director, and in that event the custodial parent shall have sole access to the child. The noncustodial parent shall have access to the child only when Abigail's Centre has received the written consent of the custodial parent. When there is physical separation of the parents and there is no legal documentation, as described above, the parent with whom the child is living is said to have defacto custody. When there is defacto custody, either parent shall be granted access to the child.

## Photos

On occasion educators use an iPad and/or take photos of the children while at play during the day (i.e. Birthdays, special days, first and last days of enrollment) to create learning stories that are posted in the child's room. The staff will display photographs within the Centre and on our social media website with your permission. A permission form for these occasions is signed when parents accept a spot at Abigail's. Permission will be requested for any special events other than mentioned above.

## Sun Screen & Sun Protective Wear

Permission is with signed parental consent, as we provide sun protect sun screen lotion with minimum SPF rating of 50. Lotion will be applied to each child, ½ hour before each outdoor activity. We also ask you to supply a labeled sun hat.

## Permission for Spontaneous Walks

Abigail's staff regularly takes the children on spontaneous walks off the Day Care Centre property. We require signed permission to allow us to do this.

## Parking and Traffic Safety

Drive carefully and slowly in the parking lot. Please do not leave your child/children unattended in your vehicle. We want to ensure your child/children are safe. Turn your vehicle off when you bring your child into the center and take your keys out of the ignition.

Ontario law requires children to be buckled in appropriate car seats according to their weight. The label on the car seat should read "Complies with Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 213.1".

NEVER place a car seat in front of an active air bag  
AND  
NEVER leave a child unattended in a car.

## Application and Admission

### Registration

When you are offered a space for your child you will be given a registration package that includes medical and family information forms. These forms must be completed prior to your child starting care.

### Collection of Personal Information and Confidentiality

We collected personal information necessary in order to complete the application process. It is kept confidential and only the employees who need to know the information to perform their duties have access it. The information is kept for a minimum of two years.

All employees, students, volunteers and community partners sign an oath of confidentiality.

### Fee Assistance

You may qualify for fee assistance from the County in which you live. We will provide you the necessary contact information to apply for fee assistance.

### Required Information

**When your child is in our care, we ask that you keep your information up-to-date.**

### Telephone and Email

Please provide a current phone number and an email address.

### Emergency Contacts

In the event we are unable to reach you, provide an emergency contact person's name, address and telephone number. Please inform the emergency contact person that they have been listed as a contact and if they have not been to Abigail's, they will be required to show photo identification when picking up a child.

### Immunizations

Please provide your child's up-to-date immunization records. We will make a file copy and scan it to the Health Unit for approval.

### Permission to Release your Child

Should you require anyone else, other than those identified as an Emergency Contact on the form, you must provide written permission. Again, we will require that person to produce photo identification.



## Admission

Upon acceptance of a position in the Centre, parents are required to complete and return the:

- a) Registration Package
- b) Child Immunization (returned from the Health Unit giving approval for entry)
- c) Proof of Subsidy Approval from the County you reside in **or** one week's regular full fee payment prior to care received.

## Orientation

You are encouraged to schedule visit time(s) before your official starting date.

In order to maintain child staff ratio, you are required to remain on the premise throughout your visit. This will enable your child and you to become familiar with the staff and the program before you actually need to leave him/her alone.

Once your child is officially enrolled in the program, gradually increasing the number of hours your child is in attendance may aid in their transition to the child care centre.

Parents are welcome to visit the Centre at any time and feel free to call as many times as you need. We understand.

Educators, Program Managers and the Executive Director are interested in your child's progress and will be happy to talk with you.

## Waiting Lists and Priority for Intake

Should there be a waiting list, understand there is no fee for families placing their name on the wait list.

- First priority is given to the children of Abigail's staff
- Second priority is given to siblings of children already in the Centre. The sibling waiting list will have priority over children on the no sibling waiting list.
- Third priority is given to children of members of the community at large applying for a full-time or part-time spot.
- Note there are several variables involved in determining when a space becomes available – the age of the child, the time the family is looking for care and the specific age the child care centre is searching to fill. Every attempt will be made to reassure the family about their place on the list. Program Managers will spend the time to explain the variables to the families and give them an approximate placement on the list.

## Fee Rates

**Full Day** is considered your work/school schedule plus travel to and from centre

**Half Day with Lunch** is from anytime between 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

**Social Medical Referrals** are anytime between 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

(Included: Abigail's supplies diapers and wipes for the children during their time in the child care centre)

### Fee Rates (cont'd)

INFANTS (Birth to 18 months)	Full-Day	\$77.00
	Half-Day with Lunch	\$50.00
TODDLERS (18 months to 2 ½ years)	Full-Day	\$57.00
	Half-Day with Lunch	\$45.00
PRESCHOOLERS (2 ½ -5 years)	Full-Day	\$55.00
	Half-Day with Lunch	\$40.00

### Payment of Monthly Child Care Fees

Abigail's requires the payment of all fees, including your parent contributions related to any fee subsidy agreement in advance; on the first business day of each month.

Payments are accepted through e-Transfer to [info@abigailscentre.ca](mailto:info@abigailscentre.ca) , in cash or cheque. Post-dated cheques are accepted.

### NSF Cheques

In the event your child care payment, made by personal cheque, is returned NSF, you are responsible to make a replacement payment with cash or money order, including any bank charges.

### Late Fees

Late pick-up fees must be charged when your child is not picked-up at their scheduled pick-up time. These fees are used to pay overtime wages. Late fees are as follows and are to be paid in full before the next month of care begins:

- Up to 10 minutes late \$10.00
- 11 to 20 minutes late \$20.00
- 21 to 30 minutes late \$30.00

Please notify us if you are going to be late. This will not waive the late fee, however, it will give staff the opportunity to prepare your child for your late arrival.

### Receipts for Tax Purposes

Receipts for tax purposes are issued by the end of February for the preceding year, upon request only.

### Termination for Payment Default

Failure to make your child care fee payments puts you at risk of having your child care terminated.

## Policies

### Inclusivity Policy

Abigail's is committed to providing high quality, inclusive programs and practices that respond to the individual needs of every child. We know that children need to feel valued, feel safe, have peers and feel that they belong. At Abigail's, we provide safe caring environments where all children have the opportunities to participate with their peers in activities that promote their emotional, physical, social and intellectual growth and development. We foster each child's sense of belonging and feelings of self-worth through respectful and supportive relationships among staff, children, their families and the community. Our staff work in partnership with parents, specialized services and other community supports to meet the individual needs of the children and their families. By working together with parents and resource agencies, we ensure the strategies are implemented to reduce or eliminate barriers and effectively support each child's unique needs. The Educators, the Administration and the Board of Directors support the program.

### Behaviour Management Policy

Positive reinforcement is used (For example- acknowledgement of positive behaviour). The Centre plans for activities in which the child can succeed and which promote the child's feeling of well-being, sense of belonging, engagement and expression. This provides the child with a positive alternative to "unacceptable behaviour". When positive reinforcement does not work the child will be redirected to a more appropriate activity. Children are encouraged and supported to use language to solve problems and to practice negotiating skills in order to promote a sense of fair play.

### Prohibited Behaviour Management Policy

Abigail's prohibits corporal punishment and other harmful disciplinary practices to protect the emotional and physical well-being of children. These practices are never permitted and the use of such practices could and will result in immediate dismissal. Young children benefit from an affirming approach that encourages positive interactions with other children and with adults, rather than from a negative or punitive approach to managing unwanted behaviour.

The Child Care and Early Years Act., 2014- Ontario Regulation 137/15 48 states: No licensee shall permit, with respect to a child receiving care at a child care centre it operates or at a premise where it oversees the provision of child care:

- Physical restraint of children, including but not limited to confining to high chair, car seat, stroller or other device for the purposes of discipline or in lieu of supervision, 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;
- Depriving the child of basic needs including food, shelter, clothing or bedding;
- Locking the exits of the child care centre or home care premises 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 and is required as part of the licensee's emergency management policies and procedures
- Use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child or undermine his or her self-respect, dignity or self-worth;
- Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

### Healthy Eating Policy

Abigail's promotes healthy eating by providing nutritious and safe foods in a supportive environment, by role modeling healthy eating behaviours, by including healthy foods in creative play and teaching activities for children and by engaging, supporting and educating parents and child care staff. Kitchen Staff are required to maintain certification of the Food Handler Certification program which is renewable every 5 years. The Cooks are responsible for implementing menus following the Canada's Food Guide. A copy of Canada's Food Guide is posted in the kitchen and also on the Parent Information Board next to our menus.

Menu planning is a collaborated effort of the management team, the kitchen team and the educators. Our menus are based on a 5-week rotation in the winter and 5-week in the summer. Copies of the menu are available upon request. Our menus are planned to include a variety of new and familiar healthy appealing foods. Abigail's is inspected by the Public Health Inspector several times a year. These are impromptu visits and if there are any concerns or suggestions they are dealt with immediately.

### Safe Sleep Policy Infant Sleep Supervision

Each infant is assigned their own individual crib. Should the infant need to share a cot with another part-time infant, the crib will be cleaned and disinfected between uses and a clean fresh sheet will be provided. Every infant under 12 months of age is placed for sleep in a manner consistent with the recommendations set out in the document entitled "Joint Statement on Safe Sleep: Preventing Sudden Infant Deaths in Canada" published by the Public Health Agency of Canada, as amended from time to time, unless the child's physician recommends otherwise in writing. Infants under 12 months of age will be placed on their backs to sleep.

### Safe Sleep Room/Area Checks

- Physical checks are performed every 10 minutes and are documented on a Sleep Check Chart.
- A physical check includes moving to the crib and visually seeing the rise and fall of an infant's chest to indicate breathing. A body temperature check includes a hand lightly placed on or just above an infant's forehead to determine the possible presence of a fever.

### Toddler and Preschool Sleep Supervision

Toddler and preschool programs are required to offer a rest, sleep or quiet time that does not exceed two hours. Young children benefit from periods of quiet relaxation to balance their active play. Each child is assigned their own individual cot. Should the child need to share a cot with another part-time child, the cot will be cleaned and disinfected between uses and a clean fresh sheet will be provided. The need for rest and sleep varies at different ages and even among children of the same age. The need for actual sleep and the need to simply rest will equally be respected.

Parents will be consulted about their child's rest/sleep requirements at the time of enrollment, whenever there is a developmental move to another group or any time upon parental request and their contributions will be respected. Educators will communicate with families about any noted significant changes in the child's sleeping patterns or behaviours during sleep through daily contact with the families.

### Safe Sleep Room/Area Checks

- Physical checks of the sleep room are performed every 15 minutes and are documented on a sleep chart posted within the room.
- A physical check includes moving around the sleep room to each individual cot and visually seeing the rise and fall of children's chest to indicate breathing. It also includes noting any significant changes in the child's regular sleeping patterns or behaviours.

### Clothing and Footwear

The most important considerations for clothing are ease of laundering, comfort and suitability for the season. All clothing must be labeled. Please make sure your child has:

- A complete change of clothing.

- Shoes are preferable to slippers.
- Parents are to provide indoor and outdoor footwear.
- Appropriate clothing should be available to suit the season.
  - All clothing must be labeled
  - Your child requires appropriate footwear, this includes running shoes, shoes with slip resistant soles, sandals must have a strap across the top of the foot and an ankle strap, croc style shoes must have the strap worn around the ankle. Note: Flip Flops are not permitted for safety reasons.

### Infant & Toddler Groups

Abigail's provides both diapers and wipes. We ask parents with children in the Infant and Toddler area to supply labeled diaper cream when required.

### In the Event of Illness

If your child is ill, keep him or her at home and inform us that the child will not be coming in that day. Please inform your child's educator of the type of illness.

When children are ill with any communicable disease general information will be made available.

This will help to keep parents informed. If your child becomes ill, or is injured at the Centre, you will be notified to attend immediately. If your child is not well enough to be outdoors, please keep him or her at home.

### Symptoms of Ill Health and Head Lice

In order to prevent the spread of illness, we ask parents to keep their children home when displaying symptoms of ill health.

The following is a list of symptoms of ill health:

- Communicable Diseases
- Fever of 38C/100.4F or greater
- Vomiting/Diarrhea (2 times in 3 to 4 hours) out of daycare for 48 hours since last episode

- Undiagnosed Rash/Skin Condition
- Nasal or Eye Discharge (yellow/greenish/red brown mucus)
- Lethargic and Irritable
- Persistent Pain
- Cough (frequent bout 3-5 times per hour, especially is choking or vomiting)
- Head Lice/Eggs (staff conduct regular checks. We ask parents to do the same)

If your child begins displaying any of the symptoms listed above, he/she will be isolated from the other children in a supervised area. The Child Care Manager or Designate will contact you or your emergency contact and request you pick the child up.

We will provide you with a Fact Sheet from the Health Unit where available to better understand the child's illness.

Your child will be re-admitted when the symptoms of ill health have ceased for 24 hours, excluding diarrhea and/or vomiting.

Depending on the illness, a physician note may be required.

Should your child's illness be confirmed by a physician as communicable disease, your child will need to be kept home according to the exclusion period established by Hastings Prince Edward Health Unit.

### Diarrhea Policy

Parents are notified if two or more episodes of diarrhea occur. Children are to be excluded from the centre until symptom free for at least 48 hours from the last episode of diarrhea.

### Supervision of Volunteers and Students

Abigail's welcomes both volunteers and placement students into the various programs offered in our programs. We believe it is a valuable part in gaining experience in a caring environment. Volunteers and students also play an important role in supporting staff in the daily program operations.

Volunteers and students will be always supervised by an employee and never permitted to be alone with any child or group of children who receive child care. Volunteers and students will not be counted in staff to child ratios.

Abigail's ensures: that all applicable policies, procedures and individual plans are reviewed by volunteers/students before they begin, and annual thereafter, or when changes occur; that they have been trained on individual plans; that a vulnerable sector police check and annual offence declarations are on file, in accordance with the centre's reference check policy and procedures and Ontario Regulation 137/15.;and that both the employer and student/volunteer follow all requirements regarding roles and responsibilities.

## Medication

### Prescription Medication

We recognize that on occasion children will require doctor prescribed medication. When you are unavailable to give the medication to your child, a designated staff will document and administer their prescribed medication. Medication must be in the **original container** bearing your child's name, dates, times and method of administration. All medication is locked.

### Non-Prescription Medication (Over the Counter Medication)

We do not administer over the counter medication to children unless prescribed by the child's physician.

- All medication will be stored in a locked box located in the program or in the refrigerator
- It will be the parent's responsibility to give written instructions to the Centre.
- The medication must be in the original container with the child's name, the name of the drug or medication, the dosage of the drug or medication and with written instructions for storage and administration outlined by the attending physician.
- The Administrative staff and the educator's directly working with the child will be informed of the proper procedure for administering the medication. Only the Administrative staff and the educator's working directly with the child will administer the medication.
- At the time the medication is administered, the details will be documented in a log book located in the appropriate office.

### Medical Emergencies

If your child requires medical attention or hospital care, you will be notified and you are expected to attend to your child immediately. All parents hereby authorize the Centre and its employees to arrange such transportation, and to administer such first aid or assistance as they in their sole discretion deem necessary or advisable under the circumstances, pending the arrival of medical assistance or arrival at the hospital, as the case may be. Parents are responsible for any fees charged by the ambulance.

### Anaphylactic Policy

Anaphylaxis is a serious allergic reaction and can be life threatening. The allergy may be related to food, insect stings, medicine, latex etc. The anaphylaxis policy is intended to help support the needs of a child with a severe allergy and provide information on anaphylaxis and awareness to parents, staff, students and visitors at the day care centre. The provision aligns with Sabrina's Law, 2005 legislation which came into effect on January 1, 2006, requiring all district school boards and school authorities in Ontario to develop an anaphylactic policy. Educators will carry the auto-injector (epi-pen) in a sealed pouch for direct access in the case of an emergency. The Centre will endeavor to be an allergy safe environment. Training will be provided to the Program Manager or the Executive Director by the parent/guardian of the child regarding the proper procedures to be followed in the event their child may have an anaphylactic reaction including how to recognize the signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis and the medication. The child's individual plan must be signed by their parent/guardian and Doctor. If you have any concerns regarding your child's allergies

and/or diet, please contact your Program Manager or the Executive Director. The Centre wants to ensure that all children are protected against their food allergies. Please ensure that your child/children do not bring food into the Centre.

### Impaired Driving Policy

The educators follow specific procedures should a parent or any authorized person appear to be under the influence of drugs, including alcohol, when arriving to pick up a child. Educators are instructed to request that the person take a cab or call a family member or friend to come and get them and the child. If the person does not observe this request, the police will be called for assistance.

### Child Abuse Policy

All educators at Abigail's are trained to recognize signs of child abuse. As outlined in the Child and Family Services Act, educators are obligated by law to report such circumstances. Children have the right to be understood, loved and respected within the framework of a caring family and community. If abuse is suspected, the staff will make every effort to speak with the parent, then together consult with the Director and the Children's Aid Society. If the CAS considers the situation to be abusive, they will follow-up with the family; the Director will then notify the Ministry of Education.

### Smoking policy

Smoking is prohibited on the day care property.

### Safe Water /Drinking Policy

According to Ontario Regulation 173/03 all schools, private schools and day nurseries must flush their plumbing for lead on at least a weekly basis. Flushing ensures that stale water that may contain higher lead levels is not consumed. To flush the system, open the cold water tap at the fixtures where water is commonly taken for drinking or food preparation, and allow the water to run for a minimum of 5 minutes.

The requirement includes:

- flushing the system before the facility opens every day of the week
- Allowing flushing to continue until the water temperature stabilizes; a minimum of five minutes.
- Recording the date, time and name of person who performed the flushing and retaining the records for 6 years.

### Fire Safety Plan

A copy of the Fire Safety Plan is located at the entrance of each building. Each staff member is familiar with these procedures. Fire drill instructions for moving the children safely and quickly out of each specific room and out of the building are included. Escape routes are posted in each room. Fire drills are conducted at least once per month and are an opportunity to teach the children about fire safety.



## Parent Issues and Concerns Policy and Procedures

The purpose of this policy is to provide a transparent process for parents/guardians, educators, the Program Manager and the Executive Director to use when parents/guardians bring forward issues/concerns.

**General** - Parents/guardians are encouraged to take an active role in our child care centre and regularly discuss what their child/children are experiencing within our program. As supported by our program statement, we support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents/guardians, educators, staff, Program Managers and the Executive Director and foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents/guardians about the program and their children. Our educators 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 Abigail's 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 24 hours. Should an investigation be deemed necessary by the management team, a follow up response will be within 3 business days or as reasonably possible thereafter. The person who raised the issue/concern will be 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 (i.e. to the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities or 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 Program Manager and/or the Executive Director.

### Complaint Procedure:

NATURE OF CONCERN	STEPS FOR PARENT/GUARDIAN	STEPS FOR STAFF/LICENSEE
1. If it is program related:	Raise the concern to Staff, Manager or Executive Director	Address the issue Or

<p>(For example: schedule, toilet training, feeding, activities)</p> <p>2. If it is Operations related:</p> <p>(For example: fees, staffing, menus, hours of operation)</p> <p>3. If it is Staff, Management, Students/Volunteer related</p>	<p>All issues or concerns about the conduct of staff, management etc. that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the childcare Manager as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.</p>	<p>Arrange a meeting with parents within 2 days</p> <p>Document details of concern. Include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Details of Concern</li> <li>2. Date &amp; Time Notified</li> <li>3. Name of Parent/Guardian</li> <li>4. Name of Person who received</li> <li>5. Steps to Resolve or information given or referral</li> <li>6. When complete, list outcome</li> <li>7. Should there be a delay, give reason for the delay in writing</li> </ol> <p>Ensure the investigation of the issue/concern is initiated by the appropriate party within 2 business days or as soon as reasonably possible thereafter. Document reasons for the delay in writing.</p> <p>Provide a resolution or outcome to the parent/guardian who raised the issue/concern.</p>
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### Escalation of Issues or Concerns

Where parents/guardians are not satisfied with the response or outcome of an issue or concern, they may escalate the issue or concern verbally or in writing.

Abigail's Board of Directors reserves the rights to terminate care and programming should a concern of harassment, threats or discrimination be deemed unresolvable. Ministry of Labour states all employees have the right to a safe workplace. **Issue/concerns related to compliance with requirements set out in the Child Care and Early Years Act., 2014 and Ontario Regulation 137/15 should be reported to the Ministry of Education's Child Care Quality Assurance and Licensing Branch.**

Contacts:

Director	Stephanie Hutchinson	613-961-1884	<a href="mailto:shutchinson@abigailscentre.ca">shutchinson@abigailscentre.ca</a>
Office Administrator	Susan Wall	613-961-1884	<a href="mailto:info@abigailscentre.ca">info@abigailscentre.ca</a>
Childcare Manager	Jocelyn Offord	613-961-1884	<a href="mailto:jofford@abigailscentre.ca">jofford@abigailscentre.ca</a>
Parent Program Manager	Cathy Vanner	613-961-1884	<a href="mailto:cvanner@abigailscentre.ca">cvanner@abigailscentre.ca</a>

Ministry of Education, Licensed Child Care Help Desk: 1-877-510-5333 or [childcare\\_ontario@ontario.ca](mailto:childcare_ontario@ontario.ca)

### Serious Occurrences

All licensed child care programs are responsible for delivering services that promote the health, safety and wellbeing of the children in their care.

Serious occurrence reporting is one of many tools that provide licensed child care programs with an effective means of monitoring the appropriateness and quality of service delivery.

If a serious occurrence occurs the Executive Director or designate must notify and submit a written report to the Program advisor (Ministry of Education) within 24 hours of the time the incident is considered serious.

When a serious occurrence happens a Notification form will be posted in the front foyer beside our license. It will remain posted for 10 days. This form will be updated as the operator takes additional actions or investigations are completed.

### Types of Serious Occurrences

- The death of a child who receives child care at a home child care premises or a child care centre
- Abuse, neglect or an allegation of abuse or neglect of a child while receiving child care at a home child care premises or a child care centre
- A life-threatening injury or a life-threatening illness of a child who receives child care at a home child care premises or a child care centre.
- An incident where a child who is receiving child care at a home child care premises or a child care centre goes missing.
- An unplanned disruption of the normal operations of a home child care premises or a child care centre that poses a risk to the health, safety or well-being of children who are receiving child care at a home child care premises or a child care centre. (Fire, flood, gas leak, detection of carbon monoxide, outbreak, lockdown, other emergency relocation or temporary closure).

No Identifying information will be included in the Serious Occurrence Notification Form.

### Contractual Obligation of Parents

As a prerequisite to admission of your child to Abigail's, all parents must sign the attached contract agreeing to abide by and be legally bound by the policies set out by Abigail's Learning Centre Inc., as contained in the Parent Handbook and in accordance with any changes enacted by the Board of Directors.

### Records and Forms

A file is maintained for each child that contains such things as address, telephone number, e-mail address, emergency contact numbers, and pertinent medical data such as immunization records that help us to provide care and protection for your child. Your help in keeping these records current is important to us so if there is a change in any of these, please let us know.

In cases of allergies or special dietary needs please submit, in writing, from your physician, information outlining these concerns. Also inform us of any changes to your child's medical condition.

### CRIMINAL REFERENCE CHECK/ VULNERABLE SECTOR SCREENING (O. Reg. 137/15)

Criminal reference checking is a precautionary measure designed to ensure that individuals applying for a position at Abigail's do not have a record of criminal convictions for crimes that

would make them unsuitable for positions of trust. Such checks assist the centre in attempting to ensure the wellbeing and safety for the children whose care we have been entrusted with.

Every employee, student or volunteer working on site must submit a Vulnerable Sector Check prior to employment/placement. Vulnerable Sector check must be prepared no earlier than six months before the day it is obtained by Abigail's.

Any other person who provides child care or other services to a child other than employees, students or volunteers working on site at Abigail's must submit a Vulnerable Sector Check, an Attestation from their Employer or an Offence.

### Declaration

It is the applicant's responsibility to apply for, through their local police office, and pay for the cost of the reference check.

Termination of the relationship would be considered if a positive reference check is received. A positive criminal reference check does not necessarily preclude employment. The nature of and circumstances surrounding the charges and convictions would be considered. Positive reference checks would be reviewed by the Executive Director who would then present a recommendation to the Board of Directors for a final decision.

A new vulnerable sector check must be completed on or before every fifth anniversary after the date of the most recent vulnerable sector check. An offence declaration must be completed in every calendar year except the year in which a vulnerable sector check is completed. Each offence declaration shall be current within 15 days of the anniversary date of the previous vulnerable sector check or offence declaration and shall address the period since the most recent offence declaration or vulnerable sector check. All information is kept in confidence in staff's file in a secure cabinet.

If an employee, student, volunteer has a break in employment for more than 6 months a new vulnerable sector check must be completed. No person is required to obtain or provide a vulnerable sector check or offence declaration who is under 18 years of age.

### EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Abigail's has an Emergency Management Policy and Procedures document. 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. 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. Families will be notified of any emergency situation directly by telephone.

## Program Statement

Here at Abigail's Learning Centre we follow –

Healthy and nutritional foods are offered three times as day, as the educators recognize the importance of diet for good health and learning. Where we are responsive to the cues for hunger, while being respectful of the families' diversity and uniqueness. Many policies have been put in place to ensure the safest and healthiest environment for children and families.

Where educators and support workers are valued for their vision, their delight in children, for having a commitment to families, their skills, heart, knowledge and ability to play and learn. Where parents are valued for their strengths, their commitment to greater education, work, home and community and their dreams for their children.

Our environment offers a feeling of security, predictable schedule, a sense of calm, so children can have quiet and personal space to deal effectively with stressors if needed. Our environment offers opportunities for children to explore and interact and discover new things about themselves, others and the world around them.

Every child is an active engaged learner who explores the world with their body, mind and sense. We set the stage for play based on the children's interest, using open ended materials. Our educators make room and time for play while also being inclusive with everyone's needs and abilities.

A wide variety of opportunities and experiences both indoor and outdoors are offered that are indicated by the children's likes and interests that are also built on with further materials brought in by the staff to optimize the learning environment. As an agency we provide many programs and resources to our families and others to eliminate barriers in their everyday lives.

Where the indoor and outdoor environment and experiences spark curiosity, invites investigation and provides challenges that are responsive to individual capabilities to help children to extend the boundaries of learning. The importance for children to also have rest and quiet time is also observed by educators and is given to children on a daily basis. The environment during this time is very calm, soothing and relaxing. Music is played and the staff offer a gentle helping hand for the children who like to sleep. The educators take great pride in knowing the children in their care well so they can provide the best quality care to them.

Parents and children are greeted warmly upon arrival and staff always show interest in the children's night/ morning so we can support our children and parents appropriately. Educators are always able to relay to parents how their child's day was while in their care. Parents are offered support and resources by staff when necessary or ask for by parents.

Staff are involved with community partners on a regular basis. Some of those partners include Family Space, Children's Mental Health, and Children's Treatment Centre, as well as a many other agencies. The children have opportunity to visit with community professionals as well, such as dental hygienists, firefighters and therapy dogs. Staff also take the time to enhance these experiences for the children.

Professional lifelong learning is a high priority among educators within our agency. We are encouraged to attend workshops and conferences related to our continuing developing field so our educators can provide the best quality care possible.

Within our centre our childcare programs document our learning on our program boards that we use daily while observing our children. The staff are also taking pictures to create learning stories for the children and families to see what the children in care are learning and how they are learning it.

Appendix 1

**RESILIENCY CHECKLIST:**

Below is a list of services and supports Abigail's can help families with. Check off those that you would like to learn more about or have help with:

- Housing & Living Conditions
- Income & Finances
- Literacy, Education, Job Skills & Training
- Food Access & Nutrition
  
- Meaningful Activities
- Natural Supports & Family Relations
- Executive Functioning & Self Regulation
- Legal & Justice
  
- Physical Health
- Mental Health
- Substance Use & Addiction
- Access to Health Care
  
- Early Years Development (0-5 years of age)

Abigail's is a multi-service agency, working in partnership with many other community support services. We aim to remove barriers for families, so they can reach their greatest potential.

We look forward to investing in our community's future!

**CWELCC ANNOUNCEMENT**

I am pleased to share with you that Abigail’s Learning Centre has enrolled in the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) System between the Province of Ontario and the Government of Canada.

We believe that child care provides a strong foundation for early childhood development and well-being of children while parents work, further their education, or take time to and we are committed to providing child care services that meet the needs of your children and families. Participating in the CWELCC System will help us continue to provide high quality child care that is accessible, affordable, inclusive and sustainable.

As a first step, we will be reducing child care base fees by 25% to:

**Effective October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022**

<b>Child Care Program</b>	<b>Full Day Rate</b>	<b>Half Day Rate</b>
Infant	\$57.75	\$37.50
Toddler	\$47.25	\$33.75
Preschool	\$41.25	\$30.00

As a second step, we will be reducing child care fees by another 37% to:

**Effective December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022**

<b>Child Care Program</b>	<b>Full Day Rate</b>	<b>Half Day Rate</b>
Infant	\$36.38	\$23.63
Toddler	\$26.93	\$21.26
Preschool	\$25.99	\$18.90

The Ontario child care fee subsidy program will continue to be available for eligible families. As we move forward, we will continue to communicate more details to you. If you would like more information about the CWELCC System, please visit <https://www.ontario.ca/page/canada-ontario-early-years-and-child-care-agreement>.

I want to personally thank all of you for your patience as we have worked through this process required for reducing child care fees. If you have any questions, please contact us at 613-961-1184 or [shutchinson@abigailscentre.ca](mailto:shutchinson@abigailscentre.ca).

Sincerely,

Stephanie Hutchinson

Executive Director

Abigail’s Learning Centre

Appendix 2

Anaphylactic Policy Addition

39. (1) Every licensee shall ensure that each child care centre it operates and each premises where it oversees the provision of home child care has an anaphylactic policy that includes the following:

1. A strategy to reduce the risk of exposure to anaphylactic causative agents.
2. A communication plan for the dissemination of information on life-threatening allergies, including anaphylactic allergies.
3. Development of an individual plan, with input from a parent of the child and the child's physician, for each child with an anaphylactic allergy that includes emergency procedures in respect of the child.
4. Training on procedures to be followed in the event of a child having an anaphylactic reaction.

(2) The anaphylactic policy, the individual plan for a child with anaphylaxis and the emergency procedures in respect of the child shall be reviewed as follows:

1. By all employees, before they begin their employment.
2. By volunteers and students who will be providing temporary care for or supervision of children at the child care centre, before they begin providing that care or supervision.
3. By the home child care provider of a home child care premises, before the child is placed at that premises.
4. By volunteers and students who will be providing temporary care for or supervision of children at a home child care premises, before they begin providing that care or supervision.
5. By persons who are ordinarily residents of a home child care premises, or who are regularly at the premises, before the child is placed at that premises.
6. By each person described in paragraphs 1 to 5, at least annually after the first review and at any other time when substantive changes are made to the policy, plan or procedure.

(3) In this section,

“anaphylaxis” means a severe systemic allergic reaction which can be fatal, resulting in circulatory collapse or shock, and “anaphylactic” has a corresponding meaning.



### Strategies to Reduce the Risk of Exposure to Anaphylactic Allergens

The following strategies to reduce the risk of exposure to anaphylactic causative agents must be followed at all times by employees, students and volunteers at the child care centre.

- Do not serve foods where its ingredients are not known.
- Do not serve items with 'may contain' warnings on the label in a room where there is a child who has an individualized plan and emergency procedures specifying those allergens.
- Ask the caterer or cook to provide the known ingredients for all food provided. The ingredients will be reviewed before food is served to children to verify that causative agents are not served to children with anaphylactic allergies.
- In cases where a child has food allergies and the meals and snacks provided by the child care centre cannot meet the child's needs, ask the child's parent to supply snacks/meals for their child. All written instructions for diet provided by a parent will be implemented. This needs to be discussed with the Childcare Manager or Executive Director.
- Ensure that parents label food brought to the child care centre with the child's full name and the date the food arrived at the child care centre, and that parents advise of all ingredients.
- Where food is provided from home for children, ensure that appropriate supervision of children is maintained so that food is not shared or exchanged.
- Encourage parents who serve foods containing allergens at home to ensure their child has been rid of the allergens prior to attending the child care centre (e.g. by thoroughly washing hands, brushing teeth, etc.)
- Do not use craft/sensory materials and toys that have known allergens on the labels.
- Share information about anaphylaxis, strategies to reduce the risk of exposure to known allergens and treatment with all families enrolled in the child care centre.
- Make sure each child's individual plan and emergency procedure are kept-up-to-date and that all staff, students, and volunteers are trained on the plans.
- Refer to the allergy list and ensure that it is up to date and implemented.
- Update staff, students, and volunteers when changes to a child's allergies, signs and symptoms, and treatment occur and review all updates to individualized plans and emergency procedures.
- Update families when changes to allergies occur while maintaining the confidentiality of children.
- Update or revise and implement the strategies in this policy depending on the allergies of children enrolled at the child care centre.



# HOW DO I QUALIFY FOR CHILDCARE SUBSIDY ?

## INFORMATION FOR PARENTS APPLYING FOR CHILDCARE SUBSIDY

To qualify, you must live in Hastings County, be involved in

one of the following approved activities:

- Be working full or part time
- Be attending school
- Have a Parent or Child's Special Needs Referral
- Receive Ontario Works (with a referral from your Caseworker)

And met the financial criteria determined at your initial appointment with a

Child Care Caseworker

### What is the Process to Apply for Child Care Subsidy?

To apply for subsidy, first decide which licensed child care program you would like your child(ren) to attend that is located in Hastings County. Please click on [Find a Program Near You!](#) This button is located on the main page.

Contact the licensed child care program to confirm there is space available for your child(ren).

Once you have confirmed your space, contact the Hastings County Intake Access Centre at 613-771-9630 or 1-866-414-0300 to schedule an appointment to complete the application process.

### How Much Will I Have To Pay for Child Care?

A Child Care Caseworker will complete an "Income Test" using you and /or your spouses previous years income as determined by your Notice of Assessment or Canada Child Tax Benefit Statement.

The amount you pay is the Parent Contribution and is paid directly to the child care provider each month.



### What is the Next Step?

After eligibility has been determined by your caseworker:

We send an approval letter to the childcare program informing them when your child(ren) can start and what your monthly parent contribution amount will be.

You enroll your child(ren) at the childcare program

We ask that you keep us informed of any changes in your circumstances. Our staff will review your information every six months, and a full review will be completed annually.