



# Parent Handbook

Mahmowenchike Family  
Development Centre

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Mahmowenchike maintains a comprehensive set of operational policies and procedures that govern all aspects of our programs. Families are welcome to request a copy of any policy at any time by speaking with their Site Supervisor or contacting the Executive Director.

#### **Guiding Resources**

[Ministry of Education's Child Care Licensing Manual](#)  
[Thunder Bay District Health Unit's Child Care Operators Guidance](#)  
[Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014](#)  
[How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years](#)  
[College of Early Childhood Educators' Code of Ethics & Standards of Practice](#)  
[The District of Thunder Bay Child Care Registry \(OneList\)](#)  
[The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board \(TBDSSAB\)](#)

## Introduction

Boozhoo, and welcome to Mahmowenchike!

We are so happy you're here.

Mahmowenchike is an Ojibwe word meaning "working together," and that really is who we are. For over 30 years, we've been part of the Thunder Bay community, and our Indigenous roots shape everything about how we show up for the children and families in our care.

What I can tell you about our little community is that nothing we do is accidental. Every decision, big or small, is made thoughtfully, carefully, and with your child at the centre of it. We don't measure ourselves against the minimum standards of licensed childcare; we ask ourselves how we can do better than that, every single time. We are made up of a team of qualified, dedicated educators who genuinely love this work, and it shows.

We're proud of what we've built here, and we work hard every day to protect it.

This handbook will give you a sense of how we operate and what you can expect from us. If you ever have questions that aren't answered here, please don't hesitate to reach out to your Site Supervisor or our head office – we're always happy to help.

Welcome to the Mahmowenchike family. We're so glad you're part of it.



**Joy Vanasse**  
Executive Director

## Program Statement

Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre strives to be a place for children of all backgrounds to come together and be regarded as people who are viewed as **competent, capable, curious** and **rich in potential**. It is important to us that all children are included regardless of where they came from, what they look like, or who they are. All children, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, are exposed to the Anishinaabe traditions, language, and values within the existing curriculum based on the interests, needs, and goals of the individual children within our programs. We strive to foster positive Indigenous identities in the children in our programs while gaining knowledge of Indigenous traditions, including smudging ceremonies, use of the Indigenous languages, discussion and implementation of the Seven Grandfather Teachings, and the use of storytelling in our programs.

We ensure that every child in our programs experiences a sense of **belonging**, cultivating strong, authentic, and caring relationships with the educators, staff, and each other. We create positive learning environments and plans for experiences which support each and every child's learning and development. We include local community partners, parents, educators, and Elders into our programs to support our growth as a centre and to incorporate a greater sense of community.

We support children in developing a sense of **well-being** by nurturing children's healthy development, encouraging children to make informed, healthy choices for themselves, and supporting them in their growth. We encourage the making of healthy food choices, offering a variety of meals on a four-week menu rotation which is posted and available for parents to see at any time. We encourage risk-taking in a safe environment, supporting children's well-being and safety. We are dedicated to ensuring the safety of all children in both our indoor and outdoor environments through vigilant supervision and secure, well-maintained play areas. We provide a calming environment for rest periods that meet each child's individual needs for sleep and allow for a smooth transition from play to rest time. We promoted family well-being and self-reliance.

We foster a sense of **engagement** within our programs by providing experiences that encourage children to engage with each other as well as the environment in meaningful exploration, asking questions and seeking answers that support their curiosity and inquiry. We provide child-initiated, adult-supported learning experiences. We provide indoor and outdoor learning experiences, recognizing the benefits and importance of outdoor play for children's growth and development. We provide experiences that encourage active play and quiet play, giving consideration to the individual needs of the children. We encourage the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents about the program and their child.

We allow for each child's **expression** of their thoughts, ideas, and feelings in their own unique ways. We support positive interactions between children, families, and staff and the children are encouraged to interact and communicate with the world around them in a positive way, supporting their ability to self-regulate.

Our educators are encouraged to be heavily involved in continuous professional learning, attending professional development workshops, seeking further learning on topics relevant

to early childhood education and child development, and attending the Early Years Institute held in Thunder Bay each year.

This program statement is reviewed annually to determine their impact on our services and program quality.

## About Us

### Our Organization

Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre is a charitable non-profit childcare centre in Thunder Bay, Ontario. We currently have three locations in **St. Vincent, St. Ann, and St. Elizabeth** schools. Our Head Office is located within St. Vincent school.

Our core purpose is to help children, families, and the community thrive and grow by providing reliable, nurturing and culturally centered holistic childcare. For more on our Mission and our Vision, as well as our *Strategic Plan (2023-2028)*, please visit our website at [www.mahmowenchike.ca/about-us](http://www.mahmowenchike.ca/about-us).

### Board of Directors

Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors who provide oversight and strategic direction for our organization. Their work keeps us accountable to our goals and ensures that everything we do is moving us forward – always in the best interest of the children and families we serve.

### Staff

Mahmowenchike is led by a small, dedicated leadership team who are deeply committed to this organization and the families we serve.

**Joy Vanasse** has been part of the Mahmowenchike family since 2011, starting as an educator on the floor and working her way into the Executive Director role in 2018. She brings a hands-on, reflective approach to leadership and is never too far away.

**Kate Pickett** has been with Mahmowenchike since 2016 and leads our St. Ann location. As Lead Supervisor, she also works across all three sites to support consistency and quality in everything we do.

**Ana Suarez** has been with Mahmowenchike since 2006 and brings nearly two decades of experience to her role leading our St. Vincent location. Families in her care are in very good hands.

**Melanie Wiese** leads our St. Elizabeth location and brings over 16 years of childcare experience with her, including a real specialty in school-age programming. She is warm, welcoming, and a wonderful presence for families at that site.

Our programs are staffed by qualified, caring educators who are passionate about the work they do. The vast majority of our regular educators hold a diploma in Early Childhood Education and are registered with the College of Early Childhood Educators – something we

are really proud of, and something that sets us apart in the childcare community. We also employ support staff and casual educators with a range of backgrounds, and we are committed to providing ongoing training and professional development to everyone on our team.

Our kitchen team keeps our kids well-fed and nourished every day. Our Head Childcare Chef, based at St. Vincent, prepares lunch for both our St. Vincent and St. Ann locations daily. Our St. Ann location also has an Assistant Food Preparer on site. Both are required to maintain their Safe Food Handling certification.

### **Students and Volunteers**

Mahmowenchike is proud to welcome students from Confederation College, Oshki-Pimache-O-Win Education and Training Institute, and occasionally high school students completing co-op placements. We also welcome volunteers into our programs from time to time, including parent volunteers and community members.

Students and volunteers enrich our programs, and we are glad to support their learning, but we want families to know that their presence never compromises the safety or supervision of children in our care. Students and volunteers are supervised by a Mahmowenchike employee at all times, are never permitted to be alone with any child or group of children, and are never counted in our staff-to-child ratios.

Before interacting with children, all students and volunteers are oriented to our policies, procedures, and any individual plans relevant to the children in our care.

Our full policies and procedures related to students and volunteers are available upon request.

### **Resource Consulting**

Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre works with Resource Consultants employed by Children's Centre Thunder Bay (CCTB). Resource Consultants are a wonderful support – both for our educators and for families – and we are grateful to have them as part of our circle of care.

CCTB staff visit our programs regularly to observe and provide general recommendations and resources to support the whole group. This might include information about child development, understanding behaviour, or general program strategies. This type of general consultation is not specific to any individual child.

If your child could benefit from more individualized support, we will always reach out to you directly to talk about your child's needs and how we can help. With your consent, a Resource Consultant may conduct observations, perform developmental screenings, coordinate services, and offer guidance tailored specifically to your child and your family.

We want to be really clear: **you don't have to wait to be referred.** If you have any questions or concerns about your child's development, or just want some extra support, you can request the involvement of a Resource Consultant yourself at any time by reaching out to your Site

Supervisor. That's exactly what this resource is here for, and there is no wrong reason to ask.

Our current Resource Consultants are:

- **St. Vincent:** Jenn Letowski
- **St. Ann:** Krystle Hald
- **St. Elizabeth:** Tracey Dowling

## **Our Programs**

Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre offers care for children from birth to 12 years across our three locations. Each of our programs is thoughtfully staffed and designed to meet the developmental needs of the children in our care – from our tiniest infants all the way through to our school-age kids. Below you'll find an overview of what we offer and where.

### ***Infant Program (St. Vincent only)***

Our infant program welcomes children from birth to 18 months. We are licensed for 6 infants and maintain a ratio of 1 educator to every 3 children, ensuring your baby receives the attentive, nurturing care they need during this important stage.

### ***Toddler Program (St. Vincent & St. Ann)***

Our toddler programs serve children aged 18 months to 2½ years, with 10 licensed spaces and 2 educators at each location. Children younger than 18 months who are showing signs of developmental readiness may be considered based on a 20% mix of licensed capacity. The staff-to-child ratio is 1 educator to every 5 children.

### ***Preschool Program (St. Vincent & St. Ann)***

Our preschool programs serve children aged 2½ to 4 years, with 16 licensed spaces and 2 educators at each location. Children younger than 2½ who are demonstrating developmental readiness may be considered based on a 20% mix of licensed capacity. The staff-to-child ratio is 1 educator to every 8 children.

### ***Before & After School Program (all three locations)***

We offer before and after school care at all three of our locations, as well as PD day, March Break, and summer programming at St. Vincent and St. Ann. St. Elizabeth does not operate on PD days, March Break, or during the summer, but limited spaces may be available at our other locations on those days.

The staff-to-child ratio for school-aged children is 1 educator to every 15 children. PD day, March Break, and summer care is offered on a limited, first come, first served basis. See **page 13** for more information about this enrolment process.

Location	Before School	After School	Schools Served
St. Vincent	15 children 1 educator	30 children 2 educators	St. Vincent St. Francis
St. Ann	15 children 1 educator	30 children 2 educators	St. Ann St. Martin Westmount
St. Elizabeth	30 children 2 educators	30 children 2 educators	St. Elizabeth Kingsway Park

**Hours of Operation**

All three Mahmowenchike locations are open Monday through Friday, 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM.

**Observed Holidays**

Mahmowenchike is closed on the following holidays each year:

- |                |                        |
|----------------|------------------------|
| New Year’s Day | Civic Holiday (August) |
| Family Day     | Labour Day             |
| Good Friday    | Thanksgiving Day       |
| Easter Monday  | Christmas Day          |
| Victoria Day   | Boxing Day             |
| Canada Day     |                        |

In addition, Mahmowenchike closes annually in alignment with the Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board over the Christmas and New Year holiday period. Specific dates follow the TBCDSB school calendar, which is made publicly available on their [website](#).

**Professional Development**

Mahmowenchike closes periodically throughout the year for designated Professional Development days. We are committed to the ongoing growth and learning of our team, and these days are an important part of that.

Families will always be given ample notice of upcoming PD day closures so you have plenty of time to make alternate arrangements. Some of our PD days typically fall during the last week of August, though exact dates vary from year to year.

**Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care System (CWELCC)**

Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre is proud to be enrolled in the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) System. CWELCC is a federal initiative designed to support quality, accessible, affordable, and inclusive licensed child care for families across Canada. For families with children under the age of six, this means significantly reduced child care fees.

For a full breakdown of how CWELCC affects our fees, please see [Appendix A](#).

## Getting Started

### Waitlist & Enrolment

Mahmowenchike operates at full capacity and maintains a waitlist for all programs. There is no fee to be placed on the waitlist.

### Getting on the Waitlist

Families interested in enrolling their child can add them to our waitlist through OneList at [www.thunderbaychildcare.ca](http://www.thunderbaychildcare.ca). Children are placed in chronological order based on the date and time of application.

### How Priority Works

When a space becomes available, priority is given first to children of Mahmowenchike employees, and then to siblings of children currently enrolled at Mahmowenchike. Remaining spaces are offered to families in chronological order, with full-time spaces filled before part-time.

We encourage families to add siblings to the waitlist as early as possible, as priority is determined by application date. **If you are an existing Mahmowenchike family adding a sibling to the waitlist, please also notify your Site Supervisor or our Executive Director directly at [intake@mahmowenchike.ca](mailto:intake@mahmowenchike.ca).** We are not automatically notified when a sibling is added through OneList, and this is the only way we can ensure your family receives the priority you're entitled to. Please note that sibling priority does not guarantee a space as we do operate at full capacity and spaces are limited.

### When Space Becomes Available

When a space opens that may be a good fit for your family, you will be contacted by our Executive Director to discuss your child care needs. You will have 3 business days to accept or decline the offer. Please keep your contact information up to date, as we may be unable to hold a space if we can't reach you.

### The Enrolment Process

Once a space is confirmed, you'll be connected with the relevant Site Supervisor to complete the enrolment process. This includes a tour of the centre, an opportunity to meet the educators, a review of key policies, and completion of your Registration Package. Where possible, we schedule transition visits before your child's first day because we find it makes a real difference for children and families.

### Inclusivity & Individual Needs

Mahmowenchike is an inclusive child care centre that welcomes children of all abilities. Every child is unique, and we work hard to ensure that everyone can fully and safely participate in our programs. We encourage families to share any additional needs or accommodations their child may require so we can work together to create the best possible experience from day one.

For questions about your child's position on the waitlist, please contact us at [intake@mahmowenchike.ca](mailto:intake@mahmowenchike.ca).

Our full Waitlist & Enrolment Policy is included in [Appendix B](#).

### **Registration Package**

A completed Registration Package is required for every child prior to their first day in the program. We also require an updated Registration Package for any child returning to care after a gap of one year or more. If less than a year has elapsed, a family may simply initial their existing package to confirm that all information remains current and accurate.

**Please ensure all fields are completed.** If a field does not apply to your family, please write "N/A" rather than leaving it blank – this helps us confirm that nothing has been missed and that your child's file is complete.

Each Registration Package includes:

- Child's full name, date of birth, sex, and home address
- Parent/guardian contact numbers
- Parent/guardian email addresses
- Medical information, including your child's primary physician and their contact information (if a family does not have a family doctor, there is a space to indicate that instead)
- Allergy information
- Any specific dietary, exercise, or sleep instructions, in detail
- Emergency contact list and authorized pick-up list
- Any additional information that may be helpful for our educators to know

### **Emergency Contacts**

We ask that all families complete the emergency contact section of the Registration Package. We understand that not every family has an additional contact available, particularly families who are new to our community. If you do not have an emergency contact to provide, please indicate "Parents Only" in this section so we know the field was not missed. Our team will work with you to ensure your family is supported.

### **Immunizations**

A current immunization record must be provided for each child enrolled in our Infant, Toddler, or Preschool programs prior to their start date. Immunization records are not required for school-aged children, as these are maintained by their school.

### **Safe Arrival & Dismissal**

The safety of your child at drop off and pick up is something we take seriously. Below is what you need to know about how we manage arrival and dismissal at Mahmowenchike:

#### **Drop Off**

When you arrive, please check your child in with the educator in the room. Our educators will greet you and your child and may ask about how their morning has been or if there are any

changes to the pick-up plan for the day. Please always let us know in advance if someone other than the usual parent or guardian will be picking up – a Lillio message, phone call, or written note are all fine.

### ***Pick Up***

We will only release your child to their parent or guardian, or to an individual you have provided written authorization for on your child's Pick-Up List. Please keep your Pick-Up List up to date – if someone isn't on it, we cannot release your child to them without prior written authorization from you. We may ask for photo identification if we are not familiar with the person picking up, so please ensure authorized individuals carry ID.

### ***If Your Child Isn't Coming In***

Please let us know by 10:00 AM if your child will not be attending that day. If we haven't heard from you and your child hasn't arrived, we will reach out to confirm their whereabouts. If we are unable to reach you, we will follow our Safe Arrival procedures, which may include contacting your emergency contacts.

### ***Late Pick Ups***

Our centre closes at 5:30 PM and we ask that all children are picked up on time. Our educators are dedicated to your children all day long. At 5:30, their shift ends and their own responsibilities begin, including in many cases picking up their own children. We ask that you please be mindful of this.

If you know you are running late, please contact us as soon as possible so we can let your child know and make sure they are comfortable while they wait. If your child has not been picked up by closing time, we will attempt to reach you and your authorized contacts. In the event we are unable to reach anyone by 6:00 PM, we are required to contact the Children's Aid Society or Dilico Anishinabek Family Care for direction.

### ***Independent Dismissal for School Aged Children***

With written parental authorization, children aged 10 and older may be released from care without supervision. If you wish to arrange this, please speak with your Site Supervisor.

### ***Holding Spaces***

Due to the extremely high demand for childcare in Thunder Bay, Mahmowenchike is unable to hold spaces unoccupied. As a CWELCC-enrolled centre, we are also bound by funder requirements that do not permit spaces to be held vacant.

In genuine exceptional circumstances, such as a serious medical situation, please reach out to the Executive Director directly to discuss your options. These situations are considered on a case-by-case basis.

In the case of a prolonged absence without explanation or prior contact, care may be terminated with two weeks' notice.

If you know your child will be absent for an extended period, please let your Site Supervisor or the Executive Director know as soon as possible.

### **Withdrawal**

If you need to withdraw your child from the program, we require two weeks' written notice. If less than two weeks' notice is provided, fees may be charged for the remainder of that two-week period.

### **Schedules of Care**

When you enrol at Mahmowenchike, your schedule of care will be established in conversation with your Site Supervisor. Please know that schedules are not just administrative – they are used to plan educator staffing and ensure that Ministry of Education ratios are met at all times. For this reason, it is important that your schedule is accurate and that drop-off and pick-up times are followed consistently.

### **Subsidized Families**

For families receiving a childcare subsidy, approved hours of care are determined in conversation with your Child Care Worker at TBDSSAB, yourself, and your Site Supervisor. While the DSSAB assigns the hours they will subsidize, those hours must also be approved by your Site Supervisor to ensure we can accommodate them within our program.

### **Families Paying Full Fee**

Your schedule will be established in conversation with your Site Supervisor based on your needs. As with all families, consistent drop-off and pick-up times are required so we can plan appropriately for staffing and ratios.

### **Childcare Fee Subsidy**

If you are applying for childcare fee subsidy, please let us know at the time of enrolment. We will submit a Confirmation of Space to the Thunder Bay District Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) on your behalf, after which the DSSAB will contact you directly to schedule an assessment to determine your eligibility. You will need to provide your Notice of Assessment to the DSSAB as part of this process.

If you would like your child to begin care before your assessment date, you are welcome to do so, however, you will be required to sign a Finance Contract acknowledging that if you do not qualify for subsidy, you will be responsible for the full childcare fees for the days of care used.

If you have questions about the subsidy process at any time, please don't hesitate to reach out – we are happy to help guide you through it.

### **Summer Care, March Break, & PD Day Enrolment**

Please note that the following information applies to school aged children only. Our Infant, Toddler, and Preschool programs operate without interruption through the summer, March Break, and PD days.

### **Summer Care**

Summer care for school aged children is offered at our St. Vincent and St. Ann locations only. Our St. Elizabeth location does not operate during the summer, and St. Elizabeth families are welcome to request summer care at either of our other two locations.

Please be aware that summer care spaces are limited. During the school year, we accommodate up to 90 school-age children across our three locations, and during the summer, that number reduces to 60 across two locations, so spaces fill quickly.

After March Break each year, we will send a Summer Care survey via Google Forms to all enrolled school aged families. This survey is typically due by mid-April and responses are processed on a first come, first served basis, with full-time requests prioritized before part-time. Following the survey period, any remaining spaces will be offered to siblings of currently enrolled families and then to families on our waitlist. Flex spaces are generally not offered during the summer.

If you have a school aged child who will need summer care, please ensure your email address is up-to-date and watch for this survey so you can respond promptly – spaces are not guaranteed and we cannot accommodate late requests once spaces are filled.

### **March Break**

The process for March Break care mirrors our Summer Care process. Following our January holiday closure, a March Break survey will be sent to all enrolled school aged families. As with summer care, spaces are limited and offered on a first come, first served basis, with full-time requests prioritized.

### **PD Day Care**

At the beginning of each school year, families are asked to complete a PD Day sign-up survey indicating whether they wish to enrol for PD day care for the full school year.

There are two options:

- **Full year enrolment:** Families who sign up for PD day care will have a guaranteed space for every PD day throughout the school year. Please note that fees apply for all enrolled PD days regardless of attendance, unless a formal withdrawal is submitted for the remainder of the year.
- **No enrolment:** Families who do not sign up at the start of the year are not guaranteed PD day care. Individual PD day requests may be submitted but are accommodated based on availability only and cannot be guaranteed.

### **Kindergarten Enrolment**

If your child is graduating from our Preschool program and heading to Junior Kindergarten, congratulations – it's such an exciting milestone! We want to make sure you have the information you need to plan ahead for their care.

### ***Before & After School Care for Graduating Preschoolers***

We are not able to guarantee before and after school spaces for all graduating preschool children. Our school aged programs have licensing requirements that limit the proportion of kindergarten-aged children we can accommodate, and with many preschoolers transitioning to JK each year, spaces fill quickly.

When filling kindergarten spaces in our before and after school programs, priority is given in the following order: families who used before and after school care the previous school year, graduating children attending the schools we are located in, graduating children attending other schools (subject to bussing availability), and finally, families on our external waitlist.

Due to the number of factors involved, including confirming returning families from the previous school year, we are typically unable to confirm spaces for September until mid-summer. We know this can make planning difficult and we appreciate your patience. The earlier you let us know you're interested, the better positioned we are to accommodate you.

**Please let your Site Supervisor know as early as possible if you will need before and after school care for your graduating preschooler.** We will typically begin sending out emails seeking this information in October of the previous year.

### ***Preschool Care into September***

Please also be aware that preschool enrolment for graduating children is guaranteed only until **August 31st**. Because kindergarten programs typically have a staggered entry in September, we are not always able to accommodate preschool-aged children past that date.

If you think you may need care into September, please speak with your Site Supervisor as soon as possible so we can determine whether we are able to accommodate your child during that transition period.

### ***What to Bring***

Here's what your child will need at the centre. We recommend keeping a permanent supply of the basics here so you're never caught short on a busy morning!

#### **Infants**

- A supply of diapers, wipes, and diaper cream (if used)
- Two extra changes of clothes
- Indoor soft or hard-soled shoes (if walking)
- Appropriate outdoor apparel
- A labelled can of formula and clean labelled bottles (we ask that formula not be pre-mixed at home prior to arrival)
- Breastmilk in bottles (if required)
- Infant cereal and/or baby food (if required)
- Extra pacifiers (if used)

#### **Toddlers**

- A supply of diapers, wipes, and diaper cream (if used)

- Two extra changes of clothes
- Indoor shoes or slippers
- Appropriate outdoor apparel
- A reusable water bottle

### **Preschoolers**

- Diapers, wipes, and diaper cream (if used)
- Two extra changes of clothes
- Indoor shoes or slippers
- Appropriate outdoor apparel
- A reusable water bottle

### **Before & After School**

- An extra change of clothes (kept in their backpack)
- Indoor shoes or slippers
- Appropriate outdoor apparel
- A reusable water bottle (for full day care)

### ***A Note on Appropriate Footwear***

For safety during active indoor and outdoor play, children should wear secure, closed-toe shoes with a back strap or heel support. Shoes that fit well and stay firmly on the foot help children move safely while running, climbing, and participating in daily activities.

While clog-style shoes (such as Crocs or similar styles) are not prohibited, they are discouraged as they may increase the risk of tripping or slipping during active play.

### ***A Note on Personal Belongings***

We ask that children leave personal toys and belongings at home where possible. We know it can be hard to say no to a favourite toy, but we want to avoid anything getting lost, damaged, or causing conflict in the program. If your child does bring something from home, it will be stored safely in their backpack or locker and will not be used during program time.

### **Pacifiers and Bottles**

Mahmowenchike does not permit pacifiers or bottles in our Toddler, Preschool, or School Age programs. While pacifiers and bottles can be beneficial for infants, continued use beyond 18 months can impact dental development, increase the risk of ear infections, and present safety concerns in a group setting.

When your child is in our Infant program, our educators will gently begin supporting the transition away from pacifiers and bottles at around 12-15 months, depending on your child's readiness. You will always be informed before any changes to your child's routine begin, and we encourage families to work toward consistency at home as well – it makes the transition so much easier for little ones.

For toddlers, pacifiers may be permitted on a child's cot during sleep time only, at the discretion of the Site Supervisor.

If your child has a medical or developmental reason that may require an exception to this policy, please speak with your Site Supervisor. We are always willing to have that conversation and work together on a plan that supports your child's needs.

### **Allergies & Outside Food**

Mahmowenchike is currently a nut-free and fish-free centre. We ask that families refrain from bringing any nut or fish products into the centre at any time.

Outside food is not permitted at the centre. If you have a specific circumstance that requires an exception, please speak with your Site Supervisor or our Head Childcare Chef in advance – exceptions are considered on a case-by-case basis only.

Please be aware that at any given time, additional allergies may be present in our programs, including but not limited to eggs, dairy, and pet dander. Families will be notified of any allergies that require accommodation in their child's program.

### **Birthday Celebrations**

We love celebrating your child's birthday and will always make the day feel special in the program!

Due to the varying food allergies present in our centre at any given time, we are unable to accept outside birthday treats. Our team will find other meaningful ways to mark the occasion with your child.

If you are considering bringing anything to the centre to mark your child's birthday, such as decorations, balloons, or otherwise, please speak with your Site Supervisor or educators first. We want to make sure everything is safe for all children in the program, as we may have latex allergies present and some items can pose a choking hazard for younger children. We are always happy to help you find a way to make the day special within those parameters!

If you would like to share birthday invitations with other families, we ask that you please bring physical copies to the centre to be placed in backpacks or posted in the room as we are not able to distribute invitations through Lillio. As our primary communication tool for care-related updates, using Lillio for personal messages can cause important information to get lost in the shuffle, and we never want families to miss something that matters.

## At the Centre

### Code of Conduct

Mahmowenchike is a place where children, families, and staff should all feel safe, respected, and valued. The following expectations apply to everyone in our centre: parents, guardians, visitors, staff, and management alike.

### Respect & Conduct

We ask that all individuals in our centre treat every person – child, family member, or staff – with dignity and respect. The following will not be tolerated under any circumstances:

- Profanity, racial slurs, or discriminatory language
- Yelling, threats, or intimidating behaviour toward any person
- Physical, emotional, or verbal abuse of any kind
- Bullying behaviours in any form

Any violation of these expectations will result in corrective action. Depending on the severity, this may include a formal warning, suspension of care, or immediate and permanent termination of childcare. All incidents will be documented and, where appropriate, reported to the relevant authorities.

We understand that parenting is stressful and emotions can run high – we are always willing to have difficult conversations in a calm and respectful setting. Our door is open, but the safety and wellbeing of our staff and children is non-negotiable.

### Professional Boundaries

Our educators are dedicated professionals who care deeply about the children and families they serve. In order to protect the integrity of those relationships, and to ensure our educators feel supported in maintaining appropriate boundaries, we ask that families be aware of the following:

- **Social Media:** Families are discouraged from sending friend or follow requests to educators on personal social media platforms. Our educators are not obligated to accept, and we ask that families respect their decision if they decline. Mahmowenchike can be followed on our official social media pages for updates and celebrations from the centre.
- **Babysitting & Private Arrangements:** We are occasionally asked whether educators are available to babysit or enter into other private arrangements with families outside of the centre. We ask that families refrain from making these requests. Dual relationships, where an educator serves both as a childcare professional and in a private capacity for the same family, create professional boundary concerns that can affect the care relationship. These arrangements are generally not permitted under our policies.
- **Gifts:** We know that families sometimes want to express gratitude to the educators who care for their children and that sentiment is truly appreciated. Our staff are permitted to accept modest gifts of up to \$50 in value (such as homemade items,

small tokens of appreciation, or gift cards). Cash gifts and extravagant gifts are not accepted. Please know that any gift received will not influence the care your child receives: every child and family is treated equally, always.

Gifts from staff to families are given equitably and with supervisor approval, so please don't be offended if an educator declines to give or accept something outside of these parameters – they are simply following our guidelines.

- **Other Requests:** Our educators are here in a professional capacity and may occasionally need to decline requests that fall outside of that role – whether that's personal favours, rides, or other situations that blur professional lines. We ask that families respect these boundaries with understanding. These guidelines exist not to create distance, but to protect the relationships that matter most: the ones happening every day in our programs.

### **Dropping Off**

When dropping off your child, please ensure you check in directly with an educator before leaving the room. This is essential as educators need to know your child is present and in their care before you go.

Our drop-off cut-off time is 10:00 AM. After this time, staffing adjustments are made based on who is present. If you have not called ahead and arrive after 10:00 AM, we may be unable to accept your child for the day. If you know you will be late, please contact the centre in advance and we will do our best to accommodate you.

Consistent drop-off times also benefit your child as routine and predictability help children feel secure and ready to engage in the program each day.

Where possible, we ask that families avoid drop-off and pick-up during rest time, which typically runs from 12:00 PM to 2:00 PM in our Infant, Toddler, and Preschool programs, to avoid disrupting sleeping children.

### **Picking Up**

When picking up your child, please make sure you notify an educator directly before leaving with them. If an educator does not see a child leave with a parent or authorized individual, that child may be recorded as missing, so this step is really important.

For information Late Pick Ups, please see [Appendix A](#).

### **Challenging Behaviours**

At Mahmowenchike, we are committed to inclusive, responsive, and nurturing care for every child. We recognize that all children are unique, and that some children may go through periods where their behaviour presents challenges in a group setting. Our approach is always to lead with curiosity, focus on each child's strengths, and work collaboratively with families to find solutions – not to give up on a child.

When challenging behaviour is observed, our educators will initiate an open conversation with the family. Together with the Site Supervisor and, where appropriate, our Resource Consultant (with parental consent), we will work to identify strategies and supports that help the child thrive. This might include adjusting the child's schedule, trying new strategies suggested by the RC or outside agencies, or exploring whether a different Mahmowenchike location might be a better fit for the child's needs.

We want to be honest with families: in rare circumstances where a child's behaviour poses a serious and ongoing risk to the safety of other children or staff, and where all strategies and supports have been exhausted, we may need to recommend that a family seek care in a setting better equipped to meet their child's needs. This is always a last resort and always a collaborative conversation and should never come as a surprise. The final decision rests with the Executive Director.

### **A Note on Biting**

Biting is a normal part of development for many young children, and it is something we see from time to time in our programs. Children bite for many reasons: limited language skills, overstimulation, teething, sensory needs, or simply curiosity about cause and effect. We know it can be upsetting for everyone involved, including both families.

When biting occurs, our educators respond with consistency and compassion. We maintain open communication with the families of all children involved and implement strategies to reduce the likelihood of further incidents, such as smaller group splits, identifying triggers, redirection, and the use of teething rings or chewelry where appropriate.

Mahmowenchike does not terminate care for a child due to biting. It is a developmental behaviour, and our job is to support children through it.

### **Parental Involvement**

At Mahmowenchike, families are not just welcome, they are an essential part of what makes our programs great. Our philosophy is built on the idea of working together: children, families, educators, and community, all in it together.

Throughout the year, we organize a variety of planned and spontaneous events and opportunities for families to get involved from celebrations and special visits to field trips and cultural activities. We love seeing familiar faces in our programs and we encourage you to say yes when opportunities arise!

If you are interested in volunteering or joining us for an event or field trip, please speak with your Site Supervisor in advance so we can plan accordingly and make sure your visit is a great experience for everyone.

### **Parent Issues and Concerns**

We want every family to feel comfortable raising questions, concerns, or feedback with us at any time. Open communication is at the heart of what we do, and we genuinely want to hear from you, whether things are going well or not. Our staff are always available to engage in conversation, and we are committed to supporting a positive experience in every interaction.

### ***Raising a Concern***

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

Issues and concerns may be brought forward verbally or in writing. If you would like a written response or outcome, please let us know. You will receive an initial response within 3 business days, and you will be kept informed throughout the resolution process.

### ***Confidentiality***

Every concern is treated confidentially. We will make every effort to protect the privacy of all parties – parents, children, staff, students, and volunteers – throughout the process, except where disclosure is required by law (for example, to the Ministry of Education, the College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement, or a Children's Aid Society).

### ***Conduct***

We hold ourselves to high standards of communication and conduct, and harassment or discrimination will not be tolerated from any party. If at any point you feel uncomfortable, threatened, abused, or belittled during any interaction at our centre, you are encouraged to end the conversation and report the situation to your Site Supervisor or the Executive Director.

### ***Concerns about the Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a Child***

Everyone, including members of the public and professionals who work with children, is required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect directly to the Children's Aid Society (CAS). This is a personal legal obligation under the Duty to Report requirement of the Child and Family Services Act and cannot be delegated to another person or organization.

If you have concerns about something you have witnessed or experienced at our centre, we also encourage you to speak with your Site Supervisor or the Executive Director. We take all concerns seriously and will respond promptly. However, please do not let a conversation with us delay or replace your report to CAS, as both can and should happen.

*Our full Parent Issues & Concerns Policy is included in [Appendix C](#).*

## **Health and Safety**

### ***Confidentiality***

At Mahmowenchike, the privacy of every child, family, and staff member is something we take seriously. All staff, students, and volunteers are required to sign an Oath of Confidentiality before working with us, and we maintain strict practices throughout the day to protect the personal information of everyone in our care.

What this means for you as a family is that your child's information and anything shared with us about your family will never be disclosed to others without your consent, except where required by law. It also means that we extend the same courtesy to other families, so please know that we will never share information about other children or families with you.

If you ever have questions about how your information is collected, used, or stored, please don't hesitate to reach out to your Site Supervisor or the Executive Director.

### Illness and Exclusion

Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre will use the following guidelines from the Thunder Bay District Health Unit's [Symptoms That Might Suggest Illness](#) document, as well as the TBDHU's [Common Childhood Illnesses Guide](#) which contains fact sheets for various commonly seen illnesses.

Certain symptoms in children may suggest a child is ill with a communicable illness or disease.

Children who have the following symptoms will be sent home from child care and will not be able to return until:

- 1) They no longer meet the exclusion criteria found in the updated *Common Childhood Illnesses Manual* (TBDHU.com/CCI)
- 2) A health care provider has examined them and determined they can return and they no longer meet the exclusion criteria referenced above

Children are assessed individually, with consideration being given to what each child's "normal" looks like.

If a child displays the symptoms below while at the centre, the Site Supervisor or staff member will contact the parent/guardian so that child may be picked up from the centre as soon as possible. If we are unable to reach the parent/guardian, the designated emergency contacts will be notified to pick up the child.

Unusual behaviour	If illness prevents participation in normal activities; if the child looks or acts differently, is unusually tired, difficult to wake, irritable, inconsolable, pale, confused, or lacking appetite
Respiratory symptoms	If breathing is difficult or rapid; severe cough; if child makes a high-pitched croupy or whooping sound after coughing OR if child is unable to lie comfortably due to a continuous cough
Vomiting	If one episode of vomiting <b>along with</b> another symptom or unusual behaviour (for example, the child is not able to participate in normal activities)  If two or more episodes of vomiting within a 24-hour period (staff will monitor for gastrointestinal outbreak as well at this point).  <b>Exclusion for vomiting requires the child to be 48 hours vomit-free before returning to care.</b>

Diarrhea	<p>If one episode of unformed or watery stool <b>along with</b> another symptom or unusual behaviour (for example, the child is not able to participate in normal activities)</p> <p>Note: care will be taken to rule out non-infectious causes of these symptoms such as new medications, use of laxatives or other non-infectious diseases. Where a known non-infectious cause has been identified, staff and the Site Supervisor will use their professional judgment to assess whether the child is able to fully participate in all daily activities and whether the situation can be practically and hygienically managed within the program. If the volume or frequency of symptoms cannot be reasonably contained or managed in a group care setting, the child will be excluded regardless of cause.</p> <p>If two or more episodes of unformed or watery stool within a 24-hour period (staff will monitor for gastrointestinal outbreak as well at this point)</p> <p><b>Exclusion for diarrhea requires the child to be 48 hours from a normal stool to return to care.</b></p>
Fever	<p>If axillary (e.g., under the armpit) temperature reaches 38 °C or higher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This high temperature is a concern especially if accompanied by other symptoms such as vomiting, sore throat, diarrhea, headache, stiff neck, rash, or change in behavior</li> <li>• Please note: Axillary temperature can be 0.5° to 1° lower than oral temperature and this should be taken into consideration when checking for fever. We consider the manufacturer’s direction for individual thermometer models and brands when confirming this.</li> </ul> <p><b>Exclusion for fever requires the child to be 24 hours fever-free without the use of fever-reducing medications to return to care.</b></p>
Eye/nose drainage	<p>If thick mucus or pus is draining from the eye or nose</p>
Itching	<p>If child experiences persistent itching/scratching of body or scalp</p>
Rashes	<p>If child has sores with crusty, yellow or green drainage which cannot be covered by clothing or bandages.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children who have a rash but no fever or change in behaviour can continue at child care, although, they may need to be seen by a physician.</li> </ul>
Unusual colour	<p>Some of the changes you notice could be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eyes or skin are yellow (jaundice)</li> <li>• Urine is dark or tea coloured</li> <li>• Stool is grey, white, or black</li> </ul>

Where a communicable illness has already been identified within a program, the Site Supervisor and Executive Director may use their professional judgment to make reasonable determinations about a child's return to care without requiring a physician's note, provided the child meets all other return-to-care criteria (fever-free, able to fully participate in all daily activities, etc.). This discretion will be exercised on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the Executive Director.

If the child is diagnosed with a contagious illness, he or she cannot attend Mahmowenchike until the child is no longer contagious, 24-hours fever-free (**without the use of fever-reducing medications**), 48-hours diarrhea- and vomit-free, and is able to take part in all normal daily activities. We will refer to the Common Childhood Illnesses Manual, however, if a note from a

health care provided is obtained, the assessment and exclusion guidance outlined will be honoured.

Parents may be requested to provide a medical note to confirm the illness and their child's return to the centre in some instances. Some common childhood illnesses which are covered in the *Common Childhood Illnesses Manual* are:

<b>Chickenpox</b>	<b>Impetigo</b>
<b>COVID-19</b>	<b>Molluscum Contagiosum</b>
<b>Fifth Disease (Slapped Cheek)</b>	<b>Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis)</b>
<b>Flu (influenza)</b>	<b>Pinworms</b>
<b>Gastrointestinal Illness</b>	<b>Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)</b>
<b>Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease</b>	<b>Strep Infections (Strep Throat/Scarlet Fever)</b>

It is the responsibility of our centre to exclude a child from attending if this measure is necessary to control the spread of disease. Decisions to send a child home due to illness are made in consultation with the Site Supervisor and are based on the exclusion criteria set out by the Thunder Bay District Health Unit.

Sending a child home is never our goal, and we understand the very real impact it has on families: arranging last-minute alternate care, missing work, and managing a sick child is genuinely hard. Our aim is always to keep children in care where it is safe to do so. At the same time, we have a responsibility to protect the health of every child and staff member in our programs, and there are times when exclusion is necessary to do that. When that happens, we will always be transparent about why and we will follow the exclusion criteria set out by the Thunder Bay District Health Unit.

If you have concerns about an exclusion decision, please reach out to your Site Supervisor or the Executive Director directly.

### **Medication Administration**

Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre is committed to the safe and accurate administration of medications to children in our care. All medication administration is governed by Ontario Regulation 137/15 and our internal Medication Administration Policy.

For the purposes of this policy, medications refer to any product with a Drug Identification Number (DIN), with the exception of non-prescription topical products such as sunscreen, lotion, lip balm, bug spray, hand sanitizer, and diaper cream that are not being used for acute, symptomatic treatment.

Mahmowenchike will administer two categories of medication:

- Prescription medications intended for acute, symptomatic treatment
- Over-the-counter medications intended for acute, symptomatic treatment

Wherever possible, families are encouraged to administer medications at home if doing so does not interfere with the child's treatment schedule.

Mahmowenchike does not administer fever-reducing medications (such as Tylenol or Advil) as a general practice. The administration of fever-reducing medication does not meet the threshold for a child to remain in care. In alignment with our illness and exclusion policies, a child with a fever must still be picked up regardless of whether medication has been administered, as fever-reducing medications can mask symptoms and do not address the underlying cause.

An exception may be made where the administration of fever-reducing medication is outlined in a child's Individual Health Needs Plan or Medical Plan – for example, in the case of a child who is prone to febrile seizures. In these circumstances, administration will follow the child's individualized plan and parental authorization.

### **Parental Authorization**

No medication will be administered without prior written parental authorization. Authorization is provided by completing a Medication Administration Form, available from your Site Supervisor. The following requirements apply:

- Over-the-counter medications intended for acute, symptomatic treatment (such as Tylenol, Advil, or Benadryl) require both a completed Medication Administration Form and a doctor's note
- Medications to be administered on an as-needed basis require a doctor's note outlining the observable signs and symptoms warranting administration and the appropriate dosage, in addition to the Medication Administration Form
- Non-prescription topical products (such as sunscreen, medicated diaper cream, bug spray, lotion, and lip balm) require a completed Non-Prescription Medication Administration Form with parental signature
- Medication Administration Forms are reviewed with families regularly to ensure dosage information remains current and accurate

Please note that Mahmowenchike does not administer Orajel or any similar oral pain relief gel due to associated health and safety risks.

### **Medication Requirements**

All medications brought to the centre must meet the following requirements:

- Medications must be in their **original container** as supplied by a pharmacist or in their original packaging
- Containers must be clearly labelled with the child's full name, the name of the medication, dosage, storage and administration instructions, expiry date, and for prescription medications, the date of purchase
- The information on the label must match the completed Medication Administration Form in its entirety

Medications that do not meet these requirements will not be accepted or administered until all requirements are satisfied.

### **Children with Ongoing or Complex Medical Needs**

Where a child has ongoing or complex medical needs that fall outside of acute, symptomatic treatment (such as daily medications, specialized delivery methods, or other individualized health requirements), an Individual Health Needs Plan will be developed in collaboration with the family, the child's healthcare provider, and relevant support staff prior to the child's start date. Families are asked to disclose these needs to their Site Supervisor or the Executive Director as early as possible in the enrolment process.

### **Emergency Medications**

Emergency medications, including epinephrine auto-injectors and asthma inhalers, are never stored in a locked location. They are kept accessible to all staff at all times while remaining out of reach of children, including during outdoor play and off-site activities. All staff are informed of the location of each child's emergency medication.

### **Medication Errors**

In the event of a medication error, including administration to the wrong child or administration of an incorrect dose, the parent or guardian will be notified immediately. All label instructions will be followed, and emergency services will be contacted where indicated. All medication errors are documented and reported in accordance with regulatory requirements.

### **Nutrition**

At Mahmowenchike, we believe that mealtimes are about more than just food; they are an opportunity for children to develop independence, try new things, and share in a warm, relaxed experience together. Our menu is thoughtfully planned to be nutritious, varied, and genuinely appealing, and all meals and snacks meet the recommendations of the latest Canada Food Guide. Our menus are reviewed by the Thunder Bay District Health Unit and rotate on a four-to-five-week seasonal cycle to keep things fresh and interesting.

We know that children, especially school aged children, can have strong opinions about food, and we respect that! Our educators will always encourage children to try new foods and will never force or pressure a child to eat. That said, we are not able to adjust our menu for individual preferences, and we appreciate families reinforcing this at home. If your child hasn't eaten well during the day, that information will always be communicated to you at pick-up.

During full day programming, including PD days, March Break, and summer care, we implement special menus that are designed with school aged children's preferences in mind, so there's always something to look forward to on those days.

### **Meal & Snack Schedule**

- Morning snack: 9:00 AM
- Lunch: 11:30 AM
- Afternoon snack: 2:30-3:30 PM (based on children's readiness)

Milk and water are offered at every meal. Water is available to all children throughout the day, including outdoors and between mealtimes.

Our menus are posted in each program area and on Lillio for easy reference.

### **Our Approach to Mealtimes**

We take a relaxed, family-style approach to meals: educators sit at the table with the children, share the same meal where possible, and create an environment where children feel comfortable and unhurried. Children are encouraged to practice self-help skills like pouring their own drinks and serving themselves, building independence and confidence alongside good nutrition.

Food is never used as a reward, and the removal or withholding of food or drink as a consequence is strictly prohibited.

### **Infants Under One Year**

Children under one year of age are fed in accordance with written instructions from their parent or guardian. A food checklist is completed for every child under one year of age to determine how they will be fed. Food checklists are also completed for children aged 12–18 months, however children over 12 months will be introduced to the centre's menu unless written instructions from the parent indicate otherwise.

Families are responsible for providing formula, breastmilk, bottles, and baby food for their infant, all clearly labelled with the child's name. With written permission, foods from the centre's menu may also be pureed for younger infants.

Bottles are never given to infants while lying down. Children under one year of age are held at a 45-degree angle or greater during feeding, and a staff member always holds the bottle until the child is able to do so independently. Bottles are never propped or left in a child's mouth while sleeping or falling asleep.

### **Allergies & Dietary Restrictions**

All food allergies and dietary restrictions, including food intolerances, family dietary choices, and religious observance, are taken seriously and treated with equal care. Allergy information is posted in each program area, in the attendance binder, and in the kitchen, and is updated as needed to ensure accuracy at all times.

Where a child has a special dietary or feeding arrangement and a family wishes to provide alternatives or supplements from home, these must be pre-approved by the Site Supervisor or Head Childcare Chef to ensure they do not compromise the safety of other children in the program. All special dietary arrangements must be documented in writing and may include:

- Whether the parent will provide all between-meal snacks or whether the child may choose from the centre's offerings
- Whether the parent will provide an ingredient list to help prevent allergens from entering the centre

- Whether the centre will offer drinks other than water to the child
- An arrangement for if the child is still hungry after consuming a meal from home
- A contingency plan for if the food from home is forgotten

## **Anaphylactic Allergies**

Anaphylaxis is a serious, potentially life-threatening allergic reaction that requires careful avoidance strategies and immediate response. At Mahmowenchike, the safety of children with anaphylactic allergies is a top priority and we take our responsibilities in this area very seriously.

### **Before Your Child Starts**

If your child has an anaphylactic allergy, please disclose this to your Site Supervisor as early as possible in the enrolment process. Before your child begins in the program, we will meet with you to discuss your child's specific needs and develop an Individualized Plan and Emergency Procedures in collaboration with you and any healthcare professionals involved in your child's care. This plan will detail your child's specific symptoms, avoidance strategies, and the steps to be taken in the event of a reaction.

Individualized plans are reviewed annually and any time there are changes to your child's allergies, symptoms, or treatment. We ask that families notify us immediately if any changes occur between reviews.

### **Your Responsibilities**

It is the parent or guardian's responsibility to ensure their child arrives at the centre each day with their epinephrine auto-injector. Epi-pens and other emergency medications must be provided to staff in their original container, clearly labelled with the child's full name, expiry date, and instructions for use. Expired medications will not be administered.

If your child's allergy means they are exposed to causative agents at home, for example, through foods eaten at home, we ask that you take steps to reduce the risk of exposure at the centre, such as ensuring your child washes their hands and brushes their teeth before arriving.

### **Food From Home**

Where a child's allergies cannot be accommodated by our menu, families may be asked to provide meals and snacks from home. All food provided from home must be labelled with the child's full name and the date it arrived at the centre, and parents must provide a full ingredient list. Food brought from home is supervised at all times to ensure it is not shared with other children.

### **Our Commitment**

All staff, students, and volunteers receive training on how to recognize the signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis and how to administer emergency allergy medication. This training is repeated annually and any time a child's individualized plan changes. Every child's emergency medication is kept accessible to staff at all times, never locked away, and accompanies the child on all field trips and off-site activities.

Our full Anaphylactic Allergies Policy is included in [Appendix D](#).

## Sleep Supervision

At Mahmowenchike, we believe that adequate rest is essential to children's health and development. Rest time is treated with care in our programs, and we do our best to create a calm, comfortable experience for every child, adapting our routines to each child's individual needs as much as possible.

## Sleep Arrangements

- Children under 12 months are placed in individual cribs for sleep
- Children 12-18 months who receive care for six hours or more are placed in individual cribs or on cots, in accordance with written instructions from the parent
- Children 18 months to 2 ½ years who receive care for six hours or more are placed on individual cots for sleep
- Children 2 ½ years to the time they go to kindergarten who receive care for six hours or more are placed on a cot for sleep or a rest period

## Safe Sleep for Infants

We are required under the *Child Care and Early Years Act* to place all children under 12 months on their backs to sleep, consistent with the *Joint Statement on Safe Sleep: Preventing Sudden Infant Deaths in Canada*. The only exception is where a child's physician has provided written instructions recommending otherwise.

Please note that once an infant is able to roll from their back to their stomach or side independently, they do not need to be repositioned if they roll during sleep, however they will always be placed on their backs to start.

Mahmowenchike provides sleep sacks for all infants and as such, blankets are not permitted in cribs. We also ask that stuffed animals, pillows, bumper pads, and other comfort items not be placed in cribs, as these can pose a suffocation risk. We know it can be hard to hear, but these guidelines exist to keep your baby as safe as possible while they sleep in our care.

Infants who fall asleep in strollers, bouncers, swings, or car seats will be moved to their crib as soon as possible.

## Sleep Checks & Supervision

Staff conduct visual and physical checks on all children in the infant and toddler programs every 15 minutes or more frequently as needed. These checks are documented and are carried out quietly so as not to disturb sleeping children.

When infants are in the sleep room, they are in the sight and hearing of staff at all times. An audio-visual baby monitor is stationed in the sleep room and is able to pan and view all cribs. The monitor is checked daily to confirm it is functioning, however it does not replace direct visual checks, which are always completed in addition.

Your Site Supervisor will discuss your child's sleeping arrangements with you at enrolment and whenever your child transitions to a new program. Any significant changes to your child's sleep patterns or behaviours will always be communicated to you.

### **Accepting Children into Care**

Please note that Mahmowenchike will not accept a child into care while they are asleep. When a child arrives at the centre, our educators need to be able to directly observe and assess the child's wellbeing before accepting them into care. Accepting a sleeping child makes this assessment impossible and could delay the identification of a medical emergency.

We understand this may occasionally be inconvenient, particularly for infants who have fallen asleep on the way to the centre, but this is a non-negotiable safety requirement. Please ensure your child is awake and alert at drop-off.

### **Guidance Techniques & Prohibited Practices**

At Mahmowenchike, we believe that guiding children's behaviour is about helping children develop self-regulation, confidence, and social skills through warm, consistent, and responsive relationships. Our educators are trained in positive guidance strategies rooted in the Circle of Security framework, which recognizes that children's behaviour is a form of communication and that children thrive when they feel safe, seen, and supported.

### **Prohibited Practices**

The following practices are strictly prohibited at Mahmowenchike at all times, by all staff, students, volunteers, and third-party service providers in all situations: on premises, on field trips, and at any off-site activity. These prohibitions are set out in Section 48 of the *Child Care and Early Years Act* and are non-negotiable:

- Any form of corporal punishment, including hitting, spanking, pushing, shaking, grabbing, or pinching
- Physical restraint of a child for the purpose of discipline or in lieu of supervision, except where necessary to prevent imminent harm to the child or others and only until the risk is no longer present
- Locking exits or confining a child in a room or area without adult supervision, except during an emergency as part of our Emergency Management procedures
- Use of harsh, degrading, or derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame, or frighten them or undermine their self-worth
- Depriving a child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing, or bedding
- Inflicting bodily harm on a child, including forcing a child to eat or drink against their will
- Using rest time as a punishment or punishing a child in any way for not sleeping during rest time
- Punishing a child for toileting accidents

Any contravention of these prohibitions will result in immediate action up to and including termination of employment. Violations that endanger the safety of children will be reported in accordance with our Serious Occurrence reporting obligations.

### **Our Approach to Positive Guidance**

When children's behaviour presents challenges, our educators respond with curiosity and compassion, seeking to understand the need behind the behaviour rather than simply reacting to it. We use a range of positive guidance strategies including redirection, clear and consistent expectations, natural and logical consequences, and collaborative problem-solving with families. We never use punishment, shame, or fear as tools for managing behaviour.

If you ever have questions about how a situation involving your child was handled, please don't hesitate to speak with your Site Supervisor.

### **Serious Occurrence**

A serious occurrence is any incident that poses a significant risk to the health, safety, or wellbeing of a child in our care. Mahmowenchike is required under the *Child Care and Early Years Act* to report serious occurrences to the Ministry of Education's Program Advisor within 24 hours of becoming aware of the incident.

Serious occurrences include:

- The death of a child who received childcare at our centre
- Abuse, neglect, or an allegation of abuse or neglect of a child while in our care
- A life-threatening injury or illness of a child in our care
- A missing or temporarily unsupervised child
- An unplanned disruption to our operations that poses a risk to children's health, safety, or well-being (such as a fire, gas leak, or lockdown)

If your child is involved in a serious occurrence, you will be notified directly and promptly. A written notice will also be posted at the centre within 24 hours of the occurrence being reported, in accordance with Ministry requirements.

We take our reporting obligations seriously. Transparency and accountability are fundamental to the trust families place in us.

For more information on serious occurrence reporting requirements, please visit the [Ministry of Education's guidance](#).

### **Outdoor Play**

At Mahmowenchike, outdoor play is a fundamental part of how children learn, grow, and connect with the natural world, and it is deeply aligned with our Indigenous values and commitment to land-based learning. We prioritize getting children outside every single day, and we actively encourage our educators to exceed the minimum outdoor play requirements set out by the *Child Care and Early Years Act* wherever possible.

As required by the CCEYA, children in full day programs spend a minimum of two hours outdoors each day, and children in before and after school programs spend a minimum of 30 minutes outdoors on instructional days. We believe outdoor time is so valuable that we encourage our teams to aim beyond these minimums, where we can.

### **When We Stay Inside**

We will only keep children indoors when weather conditions make it genuinely unsafe to go outside. Our general guidelines are:

- Infant and toddler groups remain indoors when temperatures (including windchill) fall below  $-15^{\circ}\text{C}$
- Preschool and school age groups remain indoors when temperatures (including windchill) fall below  $-20^{\circ}\text{C}$
- All groups remain indoors when the humidex exceeds  $30^{\circ}\text{C}$  in summer

These are guidelines, not hard rules, and our educators use their professional judgment based on conditions on the ground. When temperatures are borderline, we may still go outside for a shorter period rather than staying in entirely, because we believe fresh air matters even on the tough days.

### **Dressing for the Weather**

Children must arrive dressed appropriately for outdoor play every day. This is a shared responsibility between families and the centre.

*Winter:* A complete snowsuit, boots, hat, mittens, and neck warmer are required. Please label all items with your child's name to avoid mix-ups. Please note that scarves and clothing with long strings are not permitted at the centre due to choking hazards, but mitten clips are a great alternative!

*Summer:* A wide-brimmed hat is required. Sunscreen will be applied by staff before going outside.

If your child arrives without appropriate outdoor apparel, you may be asked to return with suitable clothing before your child can be left at the centre. We know that's inconvenient, but we want every child to be able to participate fully in outdoor time, and we can't safely send a child outside without the right gear. Mahmowenchike does not accept responsibility for lost or damaged clothing items.

### **Sunscreen**

Mahmowenchike provides sunscreen for all children. Before we can apply it, we ask that parents complete a Sunscreen Permission Form. If your child has skin sensitivities or you prefer a specific brand, please provide a labelled bottle and indicate the brand name on the permission form.

If your child arrives after the group has already gone outside, we recommend applying sunscreen before drop-off so they can join their group right away.

### **Field Trips & Excursions**

At Mahmowenchike, we believe that learning extends beyond our walls. From time to time, our programs may embark on planned field trips or neighbourhood excursions as an extension of our programming and curriculum.

#### ***Neighbourhood Excursions***

Neighbourhood excursions are walks or outings within the immediate area that do not require transportation, such as nature walks or visits to nearby green spaces. A general permission form for neighbourhood excursions is signed at the time of registration, so you won't need to sign a new form each time. You will always be notified in advance when your child's group is heading out.

#### ***Field Trips***

Planned field trips that take place outside of the immediate neighbourhood or require transportation require individual signed consent from a parent or guardian prior to departure. You will always be notified well in advance and consent forms will include details about the purpose, destination, transportation method, and any relevant safety considerations.

Please note that if a consent form has not been returned and the majority of the group is attending a field trip with no staff available to remain on-site, care may not be available that day.

#### ***Safety on All Off-Site Activities***

Whether on a field trip or a neighbourhood excursion, the safety of your child is our top priority. Staff-to-child ratios are maintained and exceeded where possible, emergency medications and contact information always accompany the group, and head counts are conducted regularly throughout. In the event of an emergency off-site, parents will be contacted as soon as the situation allows.

#### ***Playground Spaces & Supervision***

Our Infant, Toddler, and Preschool programs have designated fenced-in outdoor play spaces that meet Ministry of Education licensing requirements. On occasion, these groups may play in the school field space outside of their regular designated area. When this occurs, additional supervision precautions are in place, including increased head counts, strategic staff positioning to ensure full visibility of all children, and gate checks. No more than one age group will be outside of their designated fenced-in space at a time.

Our School Age programs use the school field as their regular outdoor play space. Staff position themselves strategically to ensure all areas are visible and supervised at all times.

Regardless of location, staff-to-child ratios are maintained at all times during outdoor play and there is no reduction in ratios outdoors for any period of time. Our playgrounds and

outdoor spaces are inspected daily before use and on a monthly and annual basis to identify and address any hazards.

### **Closures Due to Inclement Weather**

The safety of our children, families, and staff is always our first priority. While we make every effort to remain open, there are circumstances where closure is necessary.

#### **When We Close**

- If the Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board closes schools during operating hours, parents will be contacted to arrange pick-up as soon as possible. If we are unable to reach you, your emergency contact will be called.
- If schools do not open in the morning due to severe weather, Mahmowenchike will also be closed for the day.
- During scheduled school closures such as March Break, the Executive Director will make the call on whether to open or remain open based on local weather and road condition updates.
- In the rare event that city road closures make transportation unsafe, emergency measures will be implemented to accommodate children if necessary.

#### **How We'll Let You Know**

Closure notifications will be sent via Lillio as early as possible. Updates will also be posted on our Facebook page. We recommend ensuring your Lillio notifications are enabled so you don't miss an important update.

We recognize that closures are disruptive, especially during work hours, and we don't take them lightly. They will only occur when the safety of children and staff requires it.

### **Emergency Management**

Mahmowenchike has comprehensive Emergency Management policies and procedures in place to ensure the safety of children and staff in any emergency situation. Staff are required to review and be familiar with procedures for a range of scenarios including, but not limited to, shelter in place, hold and secure, lockdown, bomb threats, evacuation, external environmental threats, tornado warnings, and power outages.

#### **How You'll Be Notified**

In the event of an emergency, parents and guardians will be notified by phone or email as soon as the situation allows. Please ensure your contact information is always current so we can reach you quickly when it matters most.

#### **Power Outages**

In the event of a power outage, Mahmowenchike will remain open provided that the school we are located in remains open, we have access to running water, and program areas remain at a comfortable temperature. Closure is always a last resort. We understand how disruptive it is for families during the work or school day, and the safety of children and staff will always guide that decision.

## **Fire Safety**

Fire drills are practiced monthly at each location, as well as three times each fall and spring in conjunction with the schools we are situated within. Regular practice ensures that children and staff are prepared and calm in the event of a real emergency.

## **Parent Feedback**

Your feedback matters to us! We want to know what we're doing well and where we can do better, and we welcome your thoughts at any time throughout the year. If something is on your mind, please don't hesitate to reach out to your Site Supervisor or the Executive Director directly.

Each year, we also distribute an annual parent satisfaction survey electronically. This survey is voluntary and confidential, and it plays an important role in helping us evaluate whether we are meeting our goals and living up to our values as a centre. We encourage all families to participate when it comes around. Your voice shapes how we grow.

## **Cultural Feedback**

At Mahmowenchike, our cultural programming is informed by teachings and guidance we have received from various Knowledge Keepers and community members over the years, and we are deeply grateful for those contributions. We recognize that cultural learning is an ongoing journey and that there is always more to learn and more ways to grow.

If you have cultural knowledge, traditions, or perspectives you would like to share with us, or feedback on how we are honouring our cultural roots, we welcome that conversation with open arms and an open heart. Please reach out to your Site Supervisor or the Executive Director. We are always listening.

## **Duty to Report**

At Mahmowenchike, our relationships with families are built on trust, respect, and a genuine commitment to the wellbeing of every child in our care. We do not take lightly what we are about to share, and we want to be transparent with you about one of our legal obligations.

Under section 125 of the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017 (CYFSA)*, every person in Ontario has a legal Duty to Report if they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child may be experiencing physical harm, sexual harm, emotional harm, neglect, abandonment, or acts of a criminal nature. This duty applies to everyone, not just our staff, and it cannot be delegated or ignored.

Our staff do not require certainty before making a report. Reasonable suspicion is the threshold set by law. Staff are not required to consult with or notify a family before a report is made to the Children's Aid Society or Dilico Anishinabek, and we cannot discourage or prevent an individual from making a report if they believe it is warranted. A report made by an individual does not necessarily reflect the position of Mahmowenchike as an organization.

If you have any questions about this, please don't hesitate to speak with your Site Supervisor or the Executive Director.

## Financial Information

### Child Care Fees

See Appendix A – Fees for our fee chart.

### Absences

Subsidized clients are granted up to a maximum of 30 absences per year for each child. These absent days are prorated based on enrolment schedule and start date within the year. Mahmowenchike will claim absent days for parents that are students during any breaks from school (March Break, Christmas Break). It is the parents' responsibility to make payment to Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre for any daily rate assigned by the TBDSSAB on these absent days. After the allotted absent days have been expended, it is the parents' responsibility to pay full fee for any absences. Requests may be made to the TBDSSAB to pay for additional absences required due to extraordinary circumstances must be submitted in writing and include the dates and reasons for absences (supporting documentation, such as medical documentation, is encouraged).

Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre is unable to offer unpaid absences to families paying full fee for childcare. It is the responsibility of the parents to pay for absences that take place on days their children are scheduled to attend.

### Fee Payment

#### Payment Schedule

Monthly invoices and statements for childcare fees are distributed electronically to families by the 10<sup>th</sup> each month for the previous month. Invoices are distributed to families paying full fees as well as families receiving childcare subsidy as a statement of the care used each month. Full payment of childcare fees is due by the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month, after which time a late fee of \$10.00 may be added.

Monthly invoices are emailed to parents from an unmonitored email address. If you have questions or concerns about your invoice, please contact the Executive Director.

If full payment is not received by the 30<sup>th</sup>, childcare services may be terminated or suspended until payment is made in full or a payment plan has been approved by the Director. Once a payment plan has been established, a missed payment will result in the termination of childcare services.

#### Accepted Methods of Payment

Mahmowenchike accepts cheque payments made payable to **Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre**.

Cheque payments can be mailed or dropped in the mailbox of our main location in St. Vincent school at any time. This mailbox is locked and secure and can only be accessed by designated staff members of Mahmowenchike.

We also accept e-transfer payments.

E-transfer payments can be sent to [payments@mahmowenchike.ca](mailto:payments@mahmowenchike.ca) with the security password **mahmow1** for depositing.

We do not accept cash payments.

Families and children who attend the centre prior to completion of their application and approval for childcare subsidy may be required to pay the full fee amount until results of their subsidy application are received.

In the case of a split custody arrangement, it is the responsibility of the parents to split the fees and payments. We are able to split on a week-by-week schedule but unfortunately cannot split invoiced amounts by even halves.

### **Refunds of Overpayments**

In the case that an overpayment of a balance is submitted, refunds may be processed by cheque at the parent's written request.

### **Annual Receipts**

Each February, an Annual Receipt will be generated for every family reflecting all childcare fees paid during the prior tax year. This receipt can be used as an official childcare receipt for income tax purposes.

Annual receipts are distributed by email and paper copies can be requested. If you misplace your receipt and need another copy, or if you have questions or concerns about the information on your receipt, please contact the Executive Director at [office@mahmowenchike.ca](mailto:office@mahmowenchike.ca) and we will be happy to help.

## Appendix A

### Base Fees

Effective January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025

Age Category	Extended Day	Full Day	3/4 Day	1/2 Day	1/2 Day with Lunch	Before School	After School	Before & After School
	9+ hours	6+ hours Up to 9 hours	4+ hours Up to 6 hours	Up to 4 hours	Up to 4 hours Lunch included	< 2 hours	< 2 hours	
Infant	\$73.00	\$68.00						
Base fee	\$22.00	\$22.00						
Toddler	\$58.00	\$52.00	\$45.00	\$34.00	\$41.00			
Base fee	\$22.00	\$22.00	\$21.26	\$16.07	\$19.37			
Preschool	\$51.00	\$46.00	\$41.00	\$30.00	\$36.00			
Base fee	\$22.00	\$21.74	\$19.37	\$14.18	\$17.01			
Kindergarten (up to age 6)	\$47.00	\$41.00	\$37.00	\$28.00	\$33.00	\$14.00	\$14.00	\$28.00
Base fee	\$22.00	\$19.37	\$17.48	\$13.23	\$15.59	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$13.23
School Age	\$42.00	\$37.00	\$34.00	\$25.00	\$28.00	\$14.00	\$14.00	\$28.00

Base fees reflect the CWELCC reduced rates.

### Non-Base Fees

#### NSF Cheques

A service charge of \$20.00 will be applied to any cheque which is returned from the bank due to insufficient funds. This service charge will be added to the outstanding charges.

Any parent who has an NSF cheque is required to pay their outstanding debt within 7 days. Payment may be made by certified cheque, money order, e-transfer, or by reissuing a new cheque. If payment is not received within the allotted time period, childcare services will be terminated.

If a family has 2 cheques which are returned from the bank due to insufficient funds during the time their child is enrolled at the centre, the Director will meet with that family to review their situation. If cheques are returned on more than 2 occasions, childcare may be terminated.

Parents are advised to consult with the Director about any problems they may have regarding their financial situation.

## **Late Fees & Pick Up**

Mahmowenchike is open Monday to Friday from 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM. All children must be picked up by 5:30 PM, when our educators' shifts end.

We ask that families aim to arrive by 5:20 PM where possible – not because we close at 5:20, but because those last ten minutes matter. It gives your child time to get dressed and ready, allows for any end-of-day conversations with educators, and ensures a smooth and unhurried departure for everyone. Our educators are dedicated to your children all day long, and at 5:30 their shift ends and their own responsibilities begin.

## **Late Pick Up Fees**

Parents arriving after 5:30 PM will be given notice that further occurrences will result in a late fee. Late fees are charged at a rate of \$25.00 per child for the first 15 minutes, and \$5.00 per child for each additional 5 minutes thereafter. You will be informed of any late fee on the day it occurs and may be asked to sign a form acknowledging it. Late fees are applied to your next bill.

Late fees also apply to parents arriving after their child's scheduled pick-up time, for both subsidized and full fee families. Our staffing is planned around the schedules families provide us and when a child stays beyond their scheduled time unexpectedly, it can affect ratios and keep educators beyond their planned hours. If your schedule has changed, please let us know as soon as possible so we can plan accordingly.

Please note that late fees are not covered by the DSSAB subsidy agreement and are the sole responsibility of the parent or guardian.

Frequent late pick-ups may result in termination of childcare services. If you need a schedule change, please contact your Child Care Worker if you are subsidized, or speak with your Site Supervisor if you are paying full fee.

## **If You Are Running Very Late**

If you have not picked up your child by their scheduled pick-up time and have not contacted us to let us know your situation and estimated arrival time, we will begin attempting to reach you. If we are unable to reach you within 30 minutes of your child's scheduled pick-up time, we will begin contacting your emergency contacts.

If we are unable to reach you or any of your emergency contacts and your child has not been picked up by 6:00 PM, we are required to contact the Children's Aid Society or Dilico Anishinabek Family Care for direction.

If you are running late, please give us a call.

## **Administrative Fees**

It is a family's responsibility to track invoices, statements, and applied payments on a monthly basis. Any discrepancies noted on the invoice or statement must be reported within 7 days of the emailed date. In the case that a family is requesting additional copies, reports,

or breakdowns of account activity above the regular invoices and statements communicated monthly via email, an administrative fee of \$25.00 may apply.

## Appendix B

### 6.5 Waitlist & Enrolment Policy

This policy and the procedures within provide for waitlists to be administered in a transparent manner. It supports the availability of information about the waitlist for prospective parents in a way that maintains the privacy and confidentiality of children. The procedures provide steps that will be followed to place children on the waitlist, offer admission, and provide parents with information about their child's position on the waitlist. This policy is intended to fulfill the obligations set out under Ontario Regulation 137/15 for a child care centre that maintains a waitlist to have related policies and procedures.

#### 6.5.1 General Procedures

- Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre will strive to accommodate all requests for the registration of a child at the child care centre.
- Where the maximum capacity of a program has been reached and spaces are unavailable for new children to be enrolled, the waitlist procedures set out below will be followed.
- No fee will be charged to parents for placing a child on the waitlist.

#### 6.5.2 Waitlist Procedure

1. Parents/guardians will be required to place their child(ren) on the OneList at [www.thunderbaychildcare.ca](http://www.thunderbaychildcare.ca). They will be placed on the waitlist in chronological order, based on the date and time that the application was submitted.
2. When space becomes available in a program, priority will be given based on the following criteria:
  - a. Priority will be given to a family that wishes to enroll a sibling of a child currently attending a program at either site of Mahmowenchike.
    - i. Families are responsible for adding any siblings to the waitlist as priority order will be determined based on application date on the waitlist.
    - ii. Families should also note that while priority is given, since our centre operates at full capacity, this does not guarantee space.
  - b. Priority may be given to children of employees of Mahmowenchike.
3. Once these children have been placed, other children on the waiting list based on the following criteria:
  - a. Priority will be given to a family requiring a full-time space.
  - b. If there are no requests for full-time care, Supervisors will offer part-time care to families with set schedules.
    - i. Every effort will be made to match families that have complementary schedules (e.g., a family wishing to enroll their child on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays will be matched with a family wishing to enroll their child on Wednesdays and Fridays). This will ensure

maximum use of the available spaces.

- c. Flex care will only be offered if no full-time or part-time clients are available.
  - d. Flex care clients will be given a space on the understanding that if the space is needed for another family with a set schedule, they may be given two weeks' notice that the space is no longer available.
  - e. We will not provide for more than one flex space per program as the financial loss is too great.
4. Parents of children on the waitlist will be contacted occasionally to determine if their waitlist applications are up to date and are still considered accurate (if they still require care, if their schedule is still the same, if they require removal from the list).
  5. The Executive Director will be the contact person for parents who wish to inquire about the status of their child's placement on the waitlist at [intake@mahmowenchike.ca](mailto:intake@mahmowenchike.ca).
  6. The Executive Director will respond to parent inquiries and provide the child's current position on the list.
  7. The waitlist will be maintained in a manner that protects the privacy and confidentiality of the children and families on the list and therefore only the child's position on the waitlist will be provided to parents.
  8. Names of other children or families and/or their placement on the waitlist will not be shared with other individuals.

Applications will be removed from the waitlist if:

- A space is refused three times.
- No response is received within 3 business days of receiving an offer.
- No response is received by the given deadline to a phone call message or email inquiring about care needs (typically 5 business days).

Mahmowenchike is an inclusive child care centre that welcomes children of all abilities. We recognize that every child is unique, and we strive to provide individualized support to ensure that everyone can thrive in the program. To best support children's experiences, we encourage families to share any additional needs or accommodations their child may require. This allows us to work together to create a safe and supportive environment.

Our priority is ensuring that every child feels a true sense of belonging and is able to fully and safely participate in our program within the scope of our practice.

A parent wishing to enroll a child who is next on the waitlist will be contacted to schedule a tour of the facility. Please note that tours of the facility and meetings with the Site Supervisor are available **by appointment only**.

When a tour is scheduled, families are expected to arrive at that time and should they arrive late, they will be considered to have missed the appointment and will need to reschedule.

Should a prospective family miss an appointment with the Site Supervisor twice consecutively, the space may be offered to the next family on the waitlist.

The tour of the facility will allow the parent/guardian the opportunity to ask questions, see the programs, and meet the educators. After the tour, the family will be contacted with an offer of space, after which time they will have 3 business days to accept or decline.

### **6.5.3 Enrolment Procedure**

The Site Supervisors and the Executive Director will work collaboratively to identify upcoming and existing vacancies in enrolment. The following steps will be taken to fill vacancies and enroll new children from the waitlist:

1. The next family on the waitlist will be contacted by the Executive Director as part of an intake process to determine their child care needs:
  - a. What days of week care will be required,
  - b. What hours of care will be required daily,
  - c. How many children in the family require care and their ages/dates of birth,
  - d. When care would be required to start, and
  - e. Any other pertinent information.
2. If it is determined that our vacant space would be a good fit for the next family on the waitlist, the Executive Director will confirm space availability. The family will be given 3 business days to accept or decline the space. If no response is received by that point, the child(ren) will be removed from the waitlist and the Executive Director will move on.
3. If a space is accepted, the Executive Director will determine if the family will be applying for child care fee subsidy through TBDSSAB and will facilitate that process, submitting paperwork to the centre's Child Care Worker. If the family is not applying for subsidized child care, the Finance Contract will be completed with the Supervisor as part of the remainder of the enrolment process.
4. Once space is confirmed and initial paperwork is completed for subsidy, the family will be forwarded to the Site Supervisor of the appropriate location to finish the enrolment process.
5. A tour will be scheduled for the family to come to the child care centre and ask any questions and discuss any further information needed, if the family desires. This can also be done by telephone or email if the family prefers.

A tour of the facility will generally consist of:

- a. The administration of the Registration Package (if it is preferred in paper form rather than email),
- b. A tour of the physical child care facility,
- c. An introduction to the regular program educator(s), where possible,
- d. A discussion about any potential concerns,

- e. An opportunity to ask any questions they may have, and
  - f. Key policies are briefly reviewed verbally with the family and the family is directed to our online Parent Handbook for further information:
    - i. Withdrawal,
    - ii. Centre closures,
    - iii. Vacations,
    - iv. Arrival/departure,
    - v. Attendance,
    - vi. Nutrition,
    - vii. Medication administration,
    - viii. Resource Consultant services,
    - ix. Illness.
6. Following the tour, the program educators are consulted about the child – are there any immediate concerns and will allowing this child to start put the program above their manageable mix? Did the parent have any concerns that need to be addressed? Are there any support needs or was there a need for Resource Consultant involvement?
  7. A second and third visit will be scheduled where it is possible. It is recognized that there are families that require care on an immediate basis or are unable to coordinate visits prior to starting (i.e., moving into town and starting work on a tight schedule, coming into a kinship arrangement, etc.) Visits are not a requirement for enrolment but are preferred where arrangement is a possibility.
  8. Families will be permitted to start in the program prior to their subsidy assessment date on the understanding that if they do not qualify for subsidized child care, they will be responsible for the child care fees. The DSSAB can backdate subsidy to the beginning of the month provided that they start during the same month that their assessment date takes place.

**Information collected from parent/guardian prior to child starting in program:**

- Updated immunization record
- Completed Registration Package
- Medication forms for any ongoing medications
- Letter of Approval
- **If the child has allergies**, detailed written information and instructions
- Any existing medical conditions or needs we should be aware of
- Special requests or accommodations needed for the child (for example, dietary needs, supports, etc.)

## Appendix C

### 3.2 Parent Issues & Concerns Policy

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

Parents/guardians are encouraged to take an active role in our child care centre and regularly discuss what their child(ren) are experiencing within 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 Mahmowenchike 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 3 business days. 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.

#### 3.2.1 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).

#### 3.2.2 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 Director.

### **3.2.3 Concerns about Suspected Abuse/Neglect of a Child**

Everyone, including members of the public and professionals who work closely with children, is 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*.

## Appendix D

### 2.13 Anaphylactic Allergies Policy

Anaphylaxis is a serious allergic reaction that can be life-threatening. It requires avoidance strategies and immediate response in the event of an emergency. These policies and procedures are intended to help meet the needs and save the lives of children with severe allergies and provide relevant and important information on anaphylaxis to parents, staff, students, volunteers, and visitors at the child care centre.

This policy is intended to fulfill the obligations set out under Ontario Regulation 137/15 for an anaphylactic policy for child care centres. The requirements set out in this policy align with Sabrina's Law, 2005.

#### 2.13.1 Individualized Plans and Emergency Procedures

- Before attending the child care centre, the Supervisor will meet with the parent of a child to obtain information about any medical conditions, including whether the child is at risk of having or has anaphylaxis.
- Before a child attends the child care centre or upon discovering that a child has an anaphylactic allergy, an individualized plan and emergency procedures will be developed for each child with anaphylaxis in consultation and collaboration with the child's parent, and any regulated health professional involved in the child's care that the parent believes should be included in the consultation.
- All individualized plans and emergency procedures will include a description of the symptoms of an anaphylactic reaction that are specific to the child and the procedures to be followed in the event of an allergic reaction or other medical emergency based on the severity of the child's symptoms.
- The individualized plan and emergency procedures for each child will include information for those who are in direct contact with the child on a regular basis about the type of allergy, monitoring and avoidance strategies and appropriate treatment.
- All individualized plans and emergency procedures will be made readily accessible at all times to all staff, students, and volunteers at the child care centre and will be kept in the Allergies and Medical Conditions binder in the staff room, posted in the kitchen, and in the attendance binder of the program the child attends daily.
- All individualized plans and emergency procedures will be reviewed with a parent of the child annually to ensure the information is current and up to date. Parents will be expected to alert staff to changes that need to be made to their plan as they arise.
- Every child's epinephrine auto-injector must be carried everywhere the child goes.
- In the case that a child has received written parent authorization to self-administer their epi-pen, this will be noted on the **Anaphylactic Allergy Plan**. A Medication Administration Form will be kept on-site as well to note the date and time of the administration as well as noting that it was administered in the logbook for the program.

#### 2.13.2 Risk-Reduction Strategies

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 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, the parents will be asked to supply snacks/meals for their child. All written instructions for diet provided by a parent will be implemented. Every effort will be made to accommodate families.
- 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.
- Staff must never share food that is brought from home with children, regardless of whether the ingredients are known or not. All food that is served to children should be food purchased by the centre and contained within the menu. In the case that there are foods that are being served outside of the menu (for example, trying a new fruit as a sensory experience), written permission must be obtained from parents prior to children trying that food.
- 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.
- Make sure each child’s individual plan and emergency procedures 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 all children.
- Update or revise and implement the strategies in this policy depending on the allergies of the children enrolled at the child care centre.

### **2.13.3 Communication Plan**

The following is our communication plan for sharing information on life-threatening and anaphylactic allergies with staff, students, volunteers, parents, and families.

- Our centre will have a “no outside food” policy to reduce the risk of allergens entering the centre.

- Parents and families will be informed about the main allergens at our centre (nuts and fish) upon enrolment and will be informed about other allergens as determined to be necessary.
- A list of children's allergies including food and other causative agents will be posted in all cooking and serving areas, in each play activity room, and made available in any other area where children may be present.
- Each child with an anaphylactic allergy will have an individualized plan and emergency procedures that detail signs and symptoms specific to the child describing how to identify that they are having an allergic reaction and what to do if they experience a reaction.
- Each child's individualized plan and emergency procedures will be made available and accessible wherever the child may be present while receiving child care.
- The food preparers and any individual collecting groceries on behalf of the child care centre and/or other food handling staff will be informed of all the allergies at the child care centre, including those of children, staff, students, and volunteers. An updated list of allergies will be provided to the cook as soon as new allergies are identified. The Supervisor will communicate with the cook about which foods are not to be used in food prepared for the child care centre and will work together on food substitutions to be provided.
- The child care centre will communicate with the Ministry of Education by reporting Serious Occurrences where an anaphylactic reaction occurs in accordance with the established Serious Occurrence policy and procedures.
- This communication plan will be continually reviewed to ensure it is meeting the needs of the child care centre and that it is effectively achieving its intended result.

#### **2.13.4 Drug and Medication Requirements**

- Where drugs or medications will need to be administered to a child in response to an allergic reaction, the Administration of Drugs & Medications policy will be followed including the completion of a parental authorization form to administer drugs or medications.
- Emergency allergy medications (e.g., oral allergy medications, puffers, and epinephrine auto-injectors) will be allowed to remain unlocked or carried by children with parental authorization so that they can be administered quickly when needed.
- It is the parent's responsibility to ensure their child attends the program with an epinephrine auto-injector. Epi-pens and other emergency medications must be provided to the centre's staff prior to the start of their child(ren)'s participation in any of the programs being offered at the Mahmowenchike Family Development Centre. As with all medications, these medications must be provided to staff in the original container labelled with the following information:
  - The child's full name
  - Expiration date of the medication
  - Clear instructions for use

#### **2.13.5 Training**

- The Executive Director will ensure that the supervisor/designate and/or all staff, students, and volunteers receive training from a parent of a child with anaphylaxis on

the procedures to follow in the event of a child having an anaphylactic reaction, including how to recognize the signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis and administer emergency allergy medication.

- Where only the supervisor/designate has been trained by a parent, the supervisor/designate will ensure training is provided to all other staff, students, and volunteers at the child care centre.
- Training will be repeated annually, and any time there are changes to any child's individualized plan and emergency procedures.
- A written record of training for staff, students, and volunteers on procedures to be followed for each child who has an anaphylactic allergy will be kept, including the names of individuals who have not yet been trained. This will ensure that training is tracked and follow-up is completed where an individual has missed or not received training.

#### **2.13.6 Confidentiality**

Information about a child's allergies and medical needs will be treated confidentially and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of the child, except when information must be disclosed for the purpose of implementing the procedures in this policy and for legal reasons (e.g., to the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities, or a Children's Aid Society).