

Arkenstone Day Home Agency

Parent Handbook | 2025



Hello!

We're thrilled to have you and your child join our community. At Arkenstone, we pride ourselves on creating a warm and welcoming environment that feels like a home away from home. Our mission is simple yet profound: we establish loving, affordable, and quality day homes that affirm linguistic and cultural heritage. We understand the importance of preserving and celebrating the unique backgrounds and traditions of each child and family we serve.

At Arkenstone, we believe that every child deserves to feel safe, loved, and supported. Our day homes are more than just places for childcare—they're nurturing spaces where children can learn, grow, and thrive while staying connected to their roots.

Thank you for entrusting us with the care and education of your child. We're excited to embark on this journey with you, creating lasting memories and fostering a sense of belonging for your family. Welcome to the Arkenstone family!

- *Arkenstone Team*

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About Our Agency

Office Hours and Closures

Our agency staff are available from Monday to Friday, 8:15 am to 4:30 pm. Please book a meeting time before visiting our office as there may not always be someone available. Please note that our office and day homes are closed for all statutory holidays and during the Christmas holidays, from Christmas Eve until after New Year's Day. Statutory holidays include New Year's Day/Family Day/Good Friday/Easter Monday/Victoria Day/Canada Day/Civic Holiday (1 Day)/Labour Day/Thanksgiving Day/Remembrance Day/Christmas Day/Boxing Day.

Philosophy

We believe:

1) Each child is a unique and valuable individual.

Each child has a unique timetable for development; we should neither force nor prevent a child's development and learning but should nurture and encourage the developmental process at its own rate. Each child is valuable, they should be respected and accepted unconditionally, regardless of ethnic background or origin, culture, socio-economic status or physical or mental challenges.

2) Relationships are essential for child development.

Through relationships, children learn how to think, understand, communicate, behave, express emotions and develop social skills. The quality of the relationships between educators, children, and families characterizes the early childhood community experience for children and enhances and extends children's learning experiences.

3) Individual attention and the intimacy of a home setting are significant to a child's development.

Individual attention instills a message of loving and security in interactions with children. It also helps stimulate creative skills and imagination in children. Home setting provides a safe and nurturing home environment that allows children to get inclusive and personalized care that is tailored to their needs.

4) Early childhood curriculum and best practices are research-based.

Research-based curriculum and practice approaches establish the foundation of what children are expected to know, do and understand through their educational experiences. Educators are flexible in selecting research-based curriculum/practice approaches according to their philosophy and embed them in children's daily experiences.

5) Listening, cooperation and flexibility lead to success.

We don't require educators to use only one program/approach, as program perspectives are not exclusive – early learning can incorporate elements of different approaches to meet the needs of children and families.

Agency Policies

Agency Monitoring Policy

We are committed to monitoring and supporting day homes to ensure they provide a positive environment for children. Our staff conduct regular visits to inspect various aspects of day homes, including

- physical facility, including indoor and outdoor space, toys, furnishings, and equipment;
- program performance, including supervision of children, activities, daily routine, and child guidance practices;
- safety, health, and emergency provisions;
- home environment, including the influence of other children or adults who may be in the home while children are in care; and
- development and behavior of children in the family day home program, including interactions between children and between child and educator.

Agency Confidentiality Policy

At Arkenstone, we prioritize the privacy of our families. Personal information is considered confidential and is not disclosed without explicit consent from parents/guardians. To ensure confidentiality, the following measures are in place:

- All records are kept confidential and stored in a digital encrypted cloud.
- Educators are obligated to maintain confidentiality during and after their tenure.
- Any unauthorized disclosure of confidential or privileged information is a serious violation and may lead to disciplinary measures, including termination of educator's contract.

Parent Involvement Policy

We encourage open communication and collaboration between parents and educators for the best interest of the child.

Parents are involved in decisions relating to child care:

- giving permissions for outings and medication administration
- ensuring information the agency and day home has on file is accurate, including telephone numbers, addresses, emergency contact persons and numbers
- ensuring that the legally responsible caregiver picks up their children. Children are not released to any other persons without verbal or written consent.
- providing necessities for the child (diapers, wipes, diaper cream, change of clothes, comfort items, etc.)

Parents can be involved in activities to complement the curriculum:

- sharing cultural heritage
- sharing special talents and knowledge
- volunteering in special events

Parents can be involved in evaluations to assure program quality:

- filling out an annual evaluation survey
- meeting with agency staff or the educator to offer feedback

Fees and Attendance

Fees

Fees are due on the 1st business day of each month, with a grace period to the 5th business day of the month. Late payments will be subject to a late fee of 1% of the outstanding balance per day per child after the 5th business day of the month.

Subsidy

Families who qualify can apply for subsidies from the Government of Alberta, which will be deducted from their monthly program fees. However, it's important to note that subsidies are subject to proration if you attend fewer hours than required. For instance, if you register for full-time care but only attend 70 hours, you'll be responsible for any outstanding program fees resulting from the proration.

Attendance

Fees are applicable regardless of children's absences, illness, or vacation. Full-time registered children will be charged at full-time rates, while part-time registered children will be charged based on their contracted days, including statutory holidays and Christmas holidays.

Release of Child

Children can only be picked up by adults who are listed as authorized on the registration form by the child's legal guardian. During registration, parents were required to provide a list of authorized individuals. Any updates to this list must be submitted in writing. Educators are not permitted to release a child to anyone not listed on the authorized list without written consent from the legal guardian.

Late Pick Up

In the event that a parent arrives later than their contracted hours for pick-up, the educator reserves the right to charge a late fee. This late fee will be paid directly to the educator.

Back up Care

To ensure continuity of care, we strive to offer uninterrupted backup childcare services if the regular educator is unavailable. Families will be promptly informed if their educator is not available and will be provided with a backup option.

- When educators are unavailable for less than one day (e.g., due to a dental appointment), In-Home Backup Care Educators will be utilized. These may include qualified alternate educators residing in the same residence as the educator, such as a spouse.
- In cases where educators are unavailable for more than one day (e.g., due to sick leave, emergencies, or vacations), families will be offered an alternative day home within the agency.

- In rare instances where backup educators and day homes are unavailable, parents will be responsible for arranging alternate care for their children. During the educator's absence, parents will receive a prorated credit unless otherwise stated in the three-party agreement.

Withdrawal

We offer a trial period of one month. Either the educator or parent/guardian may terminate contracts at any time and for any reason, without prior notice during this trial period. If termination occurs after the trial period, a written notice of two (2) weeks is required, or an equivalent payment for two (2) weeks in lieu of notice.

Health and Safety

Nutrition

For day homes that provide meals and snacks, educators are responsible for offering options that align with Canadian food guidelines. It is essential for parents to communicate any food allergies or dietary restrictions to the Educator.

- Meals and snacks are served at appropriate times and in adequate quantities, ensuring:
- Compliance with nutritional requirements outlined in the food guide recognized by Health Canada or Alberta Health. This includes offering a variety of foods, including seasonal fruits and vegetables.
- Cultural and developmental appropriateness for the children.
- Flexibility to make substitutions to accommodate special dietary needs of children.
- Parents of infants are required to supply infant food, which must be labelled with the infant's name.
- The weekly menu is visibly posted in the day home. Copies of the menu are available upon request.

Illness

Children should not be brought to the day home if they exhibit any of the following symptoms:

- Vomiting
- Fever
- Diarrhea

- New, unexplained rash or cough

Educators will assess a child if they display any of these symptoms. If an educator suspects that a child is showing signs of illness, they must ensure that the child's parent arranges for their immediate removal from the program premises. The child may only return to the program premises once the educator is confident that the child no longer poses a health risk to others.

Acceptable evidence for the child's return includes being symptom-free for 24 hours or, if symptoms persist, providing a doctor's note approving their attendance in a child care setting. Additionally, a family day home program must be temporarily closed if an educator's own child exhibits symptoms that meet the criteria described above.

Immunization

It's important that children receive their immunizations according to the recommended schedule provided by the Public Health Agency of Canada. This ensures they have the best possible immunity against preventable diseases throughout their childhood. Some vaccines require booster doses to maintain effectiveness. Educators will communicate with parents if they believe a child may have been exposed to any communicable diseases listed as risks.

Administration of Medication

Medication, including prescription and non-prescription drugs, emergency medications and herbal remedies, can be administered only when:

- written parental consent is given, including how and when to administer emergency medication;
- medication is in its original container; and
- medication is administered according to the label directions.

In case of emergency, educators are authorized to take necessary actions as per 911 instructions.

Pets

If the educator has pets in their home or other animals on their property, the following rules apply:

- Litter boxes and food dishes for pets must be kept clean.
- Children are not allowed access to animal/pet foods or waste.
- Interaction between children and pets must be supervised by the educator to prevent risks of animal scratches or bites.

- Pets must have up-to-date vaccinations.

Child Care Program

Supervision and Ratio Policy

Number and Ages of Children

Educators may accommodate a maximum of six children 0-12 years old including the educator's own children.

A maximum of three children may be 36 months or younger. (3 yrs. old)

A maximum of two children may be 24 months or younger. (2 yrs. old)

Child Supervision

Children receive developmentally appropriate supervision by the educator at all times.

Children up to 19 months old

- within the educator's sight at all times, unless the children are napping, in which case, an infant monitor must be used

Children from 20 months to 4 years

- not allowed to use outdoor play space without supervision
- must be within hearing distance of the educator at all times
- educator physically checks every 3-5 minutes
- when children are napping, an infant monitor may be used

Children from 5 years to 8 years

- may use outdoor play space without supervision if they are within sight of the educator (e.g. through a window)
- educator physically checks every 5-10 minutes

Children from 9 years to 12 years

- may be allowed more freedom within the residence and in the educator's private outdoor play space

- educator must know where children are at all times
- educator physically checks frequently, considering what is age appropriate and developmentally appropriate for the children being cared for

Child Guidance

Educators are committed to encouraging positive behavior and implementing behavior guidelines to create a secure environment.

The Agency has the following child guidance policies:

- No child will be labeled, humiliated, verbally assaulted or corporally punished.
- Educators model positive guidance strategies that encourage the development of self-regulation, problem-solving and peer-to-peer interactions.
- Educators consistently use developmentally-appropriate strategies when redirecting children.
- Educators are aware of the individual personalities of the children under their care and can anticipate and prevent potential situations.
- Educators are encouraged to discuss guidance techniques with parents. It will help create consistency if parents and educators practice the same techniques.

Media, Technology, and Screen Use Policy

Day homes will utilize media, technology, and screen time solely for programming purposes. Therefore, the content displayed on technology or media devices must align with the day's programming and be incorporated into the educator's activities. Children under two years old in day homes will not have access to any media material.

Thank You!

Congratulations on reaching the end of the Arkenstone parent handbook! We understand that absorbing all this information can be overwhelming, so please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or concerns—or if you need clarification on any of our policies.

Please know that we are always open to making improvements and adjustments to better serve our families. As such, we reserve the right to make amendments to this handbook at any time. Rest assured, if any changes are made, we will promptly send you a copy highlighting those revisions.