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## **FAMILY HANDBOOK**

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**Rural Roots Children's Centre  
Nor'wester View School Site 1946A Mountain Rd. P7J 1C8  
(807)475-7644  
rroots@tbaytel.net**

**Holy Family School Site 2075 Rosslyn Rd.  
(807)620-4048**

# All enrolment/office related questions and mailing to Nor'wester View Site

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# Introduction

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Welcome to Rural Roots Children's Centre! This handbook was designed to assist parents/guardians in understanding the policies and procedures of the centre. Please feel free to contact the Executive Director at any time should you have any questions or concerns.

## Program Statement

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Rural Roots Children's Centre is a non-profit licensed child care centre dedicated to supporting children and families by providing high quality childcare in a safe, caring and nurturing environment.

In order to promote the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of children staff will strive to demonstrate healthy lifestyle choices by trying new foods, modelling proper handwashing techniques, showing empathy and compassion towards others. Meals are planned in accordance with the Canada's Food Guide and reviewed annually by a dietitian at the Thunder Bay District Health Unit. Families also have the opportunity to contribute to the menu by sharing favourite recipes. To build on their self-help skills during meal times children are given the opportunity to serve themselves. The day is balanced by providing adequate outdoor time. Playgrounds checks are conducted daily to ensure space is safe for all to enjoy. Staff will make every effort to monitor children upon arrival into the program and do a visual and/or verbal "check in" as a way to determine their health and well-being.

Staff support positive and responsive interactions by welcoming families to set up a tour to view the centre. Home visits for our toddler and preschool children are offered in order to start the foundation to building a trusting relationship. To continue to build and strengthen relationships, daily communication at drop off/pick up time is encouraged to get to know children and families on a more personal level. Families are also encouraged to call and speak with staff to check up on how their child is doing; especially in the event of a difficult drop off. We welcome family photos to display in our environment to give the children a sense of belonging. Monthly staff meetings allow staff to all get together and to converse, share stories and work together in a communities of practice setting.

Children are encouraged to interact and communicate in a positive way and support their ability to self-regulate. Staff support the children by physical, verbal and/or visual cues to transition through the day. Environment is arranged in a way to allow children to choose between educator lead or self-directed, individual or group. As well as adequate space and material. Thought provoking questions are asked to encourage independent thinking and allow children to problem solve.

To foster exploration, play and inquiry staff are required to observe and document children's play. Documentation is brought into weekly team meetings at which time discussions are had in order to guide learning experiences and environment. Items and rooms are set up to give children freedom to explore at their own individual pace. Educators act as co-learners asking questions and working together to answer questions instead of providing the answers. Finding out the children's knowledge; what do you know? What do you want to know?

Child initiated and adult supported experiences are done by Educators by following and expanding on child's play. Documentation should show what children may be interested in and planning for the day/week will be based on observations both formal and informal. Daily schedules will be flexible to accommodate both individual and group learning styles.

Educators plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development will be supported. Children will be engaged by having play items, furniture, photos etc. at their level. How Does Learning Happen? Document is a guide that is used daily. Resources such as Think Feel Act, ELECT, Child Development a Primer and others will be used as reference tools.

The daily schedule, flow of the day, is flexible to allow for indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play, rest and quiet time to give consideration for individual needs whenever possible. Educators will follow children's verbal and non-verbal cues to meet their social, emotional and physical well-being.

On-going communication with the parents and families is integral in our work we do with children each day. We engage parents through daily conversations to make connections and include discussion in our day to day happenings. Daily documentation sheets are posted to share experiences. A questionnaire/survey is distributed annually as a way for families to participate, contribute and evaluate to offer feedback for future learning. Families are welcomed to spend time in the program with their child either one on one or sharing special skills.

Rural Roots partners each year with Confederation College for students to attend our programs for the field placements. Children Centre Thunder Bay employees the Resource Teacher that is assigned to our centre as well as provides staff and families with children's mental health information & workshops. The Health Unit offers also offers training on the health, safety and well-being of children and adults. Information about events and/or workshops, are displayed on our parent information boards, included in monthly newsletters or electronically delivered.

Staff are encouraged to attend workshops and training as a part of their continuous professional learning. As professional development opportunities arise posters are posted for anyone interested to attend. A working group for Registered Early Childhood Educators has been formed to work collaboratively on the Continuous Learning Portfolio.

Rural Roots Children's Center will ensure that all staff, students and volunteers review and sign the program statement prior to interacting with children, when modified and at minimum annually. Monthly staff meetings will incorporate reflective practice as a way to measure standards, quality and to assist with understanding the statement. Feedback will be utilized when updated program statement.

# How We Operate

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The Executive Director oversees the day to day operations of all program locations. A volunteer Board of Directors made up of parents/guardians & community members oversees the overall operations. Meetings are held monthly with the exception of July & August. An Annual General Meeting is conducted yearly at which time new Board members are elected; all families are encouraged to attend.

Rural Roots Children's Centre operates in compliance with:

- The Child Care Early Years Act
- The Ministry of Education
- All applicable building, health, fire regulations etc.

At least once per year a Program Advisor with the Ministry of Education will make an unannounced inspection of all licensed childcare programs to ensure that:

- Provincial standards are being met
- Issue and reissue licences
- Investigate compliances
- Monitor operators who have difficulty meeting licensing standards

A detailed licensing inspection can be found at: [www.iaccess.gov.on.ca/LCCWeb/childcare/search.xhtml](http://www.iaccess.gov.on.ca/LCCWeb/childcare/search.xhtml)

## Service Coordination in Child Care

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The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (DSSAB) – as Service System Manager is responsible for the delivery of special needs services within the child care programs through effective and efficient use of resources.

The DSSAB provides supports and resources to families and their children through agreements with a number of agencies to provide enhanced services and supports to the Child Care Centres. The scope of the agreements includes service coordination, program observations, consultation regarding child development and children's mental health, parenting supports, intervention services, case management, and other global services.

The agencies include (but not limited to)

- Thunder Bay District Health Unit
- Children's Centre Thunder Bay
- Dilico Anishinabek Family Centre
- Children's Aid Society
- George Jeffrey's Children's Centre
- Preschool Communication Services

Upon registration parents/guardians will be asked to sign the general application form indicating that they understand the child care centre work collaboratively with agencies and service as listed above. However, any specific individualized services for a child will only be allowed with the parents/guardians signed authorization consenting to Resource Teacher services through the Special Needs Resources Program through Children's Centre Thunder Bay

## Locations, Contact Information & Hours of Operation

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### **Nor'wester View School Site**

Full Day childcare, Before/After School childcare  
18 months – 13yrs  
Hours of Operation: 7am – 6pm  
1946A Mountain Rd. P7J 1C8  
(807)475-7644

### **Holy Family School**

Before & After School Care (relocates to Nor'wester View Location for March Break and summer)  
Hours of Operation: 7:30 am - 9 am & 3 pm – 6 pm  
2075 Rosslyn Rd. P7K 1H7  
(807)620-4048

All locations will be closed:

- 2 - 3 days the last week of August for fall program preparations, professional development and training
- 1 day during the school year to allow staff to attend professional development with other licensed childcare programs in the District of Thunder Bay; sufficient notice will provided
- **2 weeks at Christmas (based on school board calendar)**
- the following holidays:
  - Family Day
  - Good Friday
  - Easter Monday
  - Victoria Day
  - Canada Day
  - Civic Holiday
  - Labour Day
  - Thanksgiving Day

**We are open for the March Break & Summer however a survey will be sent out to all families to indicate the care required during those times.**

# Waitlist Policy

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Rural Roots Children’s Centre enrolls children from The District of Thunder Bay Child Care Registry community waitlist. It is mandatory that all interested individuals register; there is no fee.

Childcare spaces will be offered when they become available based on the following criteria:

1. Family that desires to enroll the sibling of a child currently attending.
2. Full-time care requests.
3. Part-time care with set days. Every effort will be made to match families that have complementary schedules. For example, family with Monday, Tuesday, Friday schedule matched with Wednesday & Thursday schedule to try to ensure maximum use of available spaces.
4. Individuals will be removed off the waitlist if they refuse a space or they have been contacted and the individual does not return messages after the allotted amount of time instructed.
5. Rural Roots is an inclusive Centre and discrimination during enrolment for any reason is not tolerated.
6. Children with special needs are accommodated providing the program will not exceed their manageable mix.
7. Children are enrolled whether or not they are subsidized and we make every effort to keep this information confidential.
8. The waitlist can be long and we cannot estimate when a childcare space may be available.

## Staff

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Our team of Registered Early Childhood Educators, Educators in Training and Educator’s Assistants are committed to providing an optimal early learning and care environment for all children. Staff attend monthly staff meetings, participate in ongoing Professional Development, submit Criminal Reference Check Vulnerable Sector and are trained in Standard First Aid CPR Adult, Infant, and Child.

Our Food Preparer prepares nutritious snacks and lunches. The Food Preparer plans the menus in accordance with the Canada’s Food Guide, Quality Assurance Tools and also has a Safe Food Handling Certificate. All kitchens are inspected regularly by The Thunder Bay District Health Unit.

## Ratios

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Staff to child ratios are as follows:

Toddler - 1:5

Preschool - 1:8

Kindergarten - 1:13

School-Age - 1:15

These ratios are the minimum standards set by the Child Care Early Years Act. Rural Roots recognizes that at times children/program needs requires extra staffing to maintain high quality programs. These times of need are identified by the Executive Director in partnership with program staff.

# Early Childhood Education Students

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Rural Roots provides field placement opportunities for college students who are studying for their Early Childhood Education diploma and their Resource Teacher certificates. These students contribute significantly to our program and to the education of your children. These students are supervised by Rural Roots staff, are not counted into the ratios and are not left unsupervised with children. Students will gain practical experience and bring new ideas to the centre. All students will provide a current Criminal Reference Check Vulnerable Sector (completed within the current school year).

## Registration/Admission

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Priority will be given to:

1. Full time
2. Part time

A Centre tour will be arranged for families if they are interested in Rural Roots for childcare needs. Once a space becomes available the Executive Director/Designate will contact the family & schedule a formal tour/orientation. This allows families to ask any questions they may have and at this time a start date will be established. Families are encouraged to discuss with the staff opportunities for visits to the program prior to the child's first day if possible. Home visits are strongly recommended for all new children to our Toddler and Preschool programs. This will assist in beginning to build trusting relationships. For children with severe allergies, medical issues or special needs action plans, meetings and/or appropriate documentation will be developed prior to the child's first day. We require a \$50 deposit per child. Deposits will be held until the child (ren) first day. Deposit will be applied to your first invoice.

## Withdrawal

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Written notice of permanent withdrawal must be given to the Executive Director two (2) weeks prior to an anticipated withdrawal. If notice is not received, the family will be charged for program fees for 2 weeks after the withdrawal of their child.

## Family Involvement and Volunteer Opportunities

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Family involvement is strongly encouraged and parents/guardians are welcome to spend time in the program during the day. Throughout the year families will be invited to attend field trips with the children as well as various social events. Family members are welcomed to come in and share special talents and/or interests with the children for example

baking, carpentry, music etc. Volunteers are supervised by Rural Roots staff, are not counted into the ratios and are not left unsupervised with children. Volunteers may be required to submit Criminal Reference Check Vulnerable Sector. Rural Roots is continuously looking for individuals to sit on our Board of Directors, if you are interested please contact the Executive Director.

## Special Needs Resourcing Program

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Rural Roots Child Centre has access to a Resource Consultant from Children's Centre Thunder Bay (CCTB). The Resource Teacher (RT) facilitates the inclusion of children with special needs, and provides care and educational programming for children under the direction of the Executive Director/Supervisor ensuring optimal experiences and successful inclusion practices.

Below is the process that we would follow should further support and/or resources be required.

1. **REFERRAL TO SPECIAL NEEDS RESOURCES PROGRAM** - The Executive Director will meet with the family to discuss the involvement of a RC. With parental consent, the Executive Director and family will complete referral to Special Needs Resources Program.
2. **COMMENCE SUPPORT/SERVICE WITH PROGRAM AND FAMILY** - The Resource Consultant will meet with the family to complete CCTB Consent for Service and make any necessary referrals to other services/agencies if required. The RC will obtain written authorization to obtain/release information from the family to contact any other services/agencies, if child is already involved with other services.
3. **SERVICE COORDINATION** - The RC works in collaboration and partnership with the child, family, child care program and other service providers involved with child.
4. **OBSERVATIONS AND SCREENING** – RC observes the child in the program and completes screenings to determine the child's strengths and needs.
5. **DEVELOP AN INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATIONAL PLAN (IEP)** - The family, child care program and RC meet to develop goals based on the child's strengths and needs.
6. **EMBEDDING IEP GOALS IN PROGRAM** – The Early Childhood Educators, with the support of the RC, embed the child's IEP goals into the daily curriculum.
7. **MONITOR~EVALUATE~REASSESS** – Goals, progress and areas of need are monitored, evaluated and reassessed every 6 months or sooner depending on the child's needs in partnership with family, child care program and RC.
8. **UPDATE IEP AS NEEDED** – Changes are made to IEP by the RC as goals are met or the child's needs change.
9. **DISCONTINUATION OF SERVICE**- Once goals are met or RC services are no longer required, services would be discontinued.
10. **TRANSITION TO SCHOOL**- RC supports the child and family as the child transitions into the educational system.

## Curriculum Planning

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### Emergent Curriculum

Emergent curriculum is based on the child's interest and relies on the Educator's knowledge of developmentally appropriate practice. This type of programming requires observation, documentation, creative brainstorming and flexibility. Once the educators see an interest "emerging", children and educators brainstorm ways to study the topic in depth. Curriculum will be posted and documented in program rooms. Documentation that is posted for viewing

includes: photographs, written observations, skills learned and curriculum objectives. Webbing and documentation set out these activities for groups and individual needs, promoting:

1. Gross and fine motor skills
2. Language skills
3. Cognitive development
4. Social development
5. Emotional development
6. Active and quiet play

Each month the centre will provide a newsletter highlighting special events, resources, individual program synopsis etc. Families can receive their newsletters via email upon request.

## How Does Learning Happen?

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**How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years** is a professional learning resource for those working in child care and child and family programs. It supports pedagogy and program development in early years settings that is shaped by views about children, the role of educators and families, and the relationships among them. It builds on foundational knowledge about children and is grounded in new research and leading-edge practice from around the world.

**How Does Learning Happen?** Inspires critical reflection and discussion among those who work with children and their families in early years settings. It includes goals for children, expectations for programs and questions for reflection that provide a starting point for thinking about the types of environments, experiences, and interactions that bring out the best in children, families and educators. It will help to strengthen the quality of early years programs and services across Ontario as we explore together, how learning happens.

[www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/HowLearningHappens.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/HowLearningHappens.pdf)

## Getting Started and Adjusting to Group Care

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Separation anxiety for both the child and family member is common. Rural Roots is dedicated to supporting families through this process. It is very important to us that your child's experience is positive. The following information will help make the transition to the Centre more successful.

For children registered in our Toddler and Preschool programs home visits are strongly encouraged. This visit begins the building of trusting relationships between the family and staff. Integration into care is recommended. We encourage the parent/guardian to spend some time in the program prior to the first day. Staff will discuss suitable times for the program/staff, parent/guardian and child. Children are encouraged to bring in a family photo to post on our family board for children to refer to throughout the day. They may also want to bring a favourite toy or stuffed animal as comfort items. We encourage parents/guardians to reassure their child and act secure and confident even if you feel apprehensive. This will help reassure your child when you leave them at the centre. We ask you to say goodbye, even if you expect sadness and/or tears. Staff will assist in settling your child. Common practices at Rural Roots are to wave goodbye at the window, sit on the couch to read a book etc. Every child is different, in collaboration with the staff a routine will be established that may work best for your child. In the event we are unable to comfort your child after you

leave we will contact you to discuss further strategies. This may include preparing for shorter visits. Resources to help with separation anxiety are available. Please ask your child’s Educator or Executive Director for more information.

## Arrival & Pick Up

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Children depend on regular routines for their own sense of security; therefore it is recommended that families establish set drop off & pick up times. Please informed staff if your child will be picked up earlier or later than usual. When you arrive, assist your child to remove outdoor clothing and footwear and put on indoor shoes. Also, notify staff that they have arrived and take the opportunity to share events and/or relevant information of your child’s day.

When you pick up your child ensure that a staff member is aware that they are leaving so attendance is marked accordingly. Children will only be released to the individuals indicated on the registration package unless otherwise notified.

### Driving Under the Influence

If a parent or designated person picking up is suspected to be under the influence of alcohol, drugs or if the person is in obvious ill health, staff will call a taxi and or your emergency contact listed on file to pick up the child.

If the person leaves with the child, staff will call the police to report the incident. Our first responsibility is to advocate for the child and put their safety first.

## Parking – Nor’wester View Location

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Persons dropping off/picking up may park their vehicle in the roundabout or in our designated lot. For the health & safety of all adults and children our pick-up & drop off area and lot are designated no idling zones. Please turn off your ignitions.

## What to Bring

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Children may bring belongings from home. Toys that encourage aggressive/violent play (e.g. war toys, guns etc.) as well as **electronic devices are not permitted in the programs**. We will attempt to keep children’s items and possessions safe; however Rural Roots is not responsible for lost or damaged items. The following is a list of items to bring:

<b>Toddler &amp; Preschool Program</b>	<b>Kindergarten &amp; School-Age Programs</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Inside shoes	<input type="checkbox"/> Inside shoes
<input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 extra set of clothes	<input type="checkbox"/> Extra set of clothes
<input type="checkbox"/> Diapers/wipes	
<input type="checkbox"/> Creams/lotions	
<input type="checkbox"/> Blanket/cuddly toy	
<input type="checkbox"/> Bottle/soother	

**Please ensure all children’s clothing and belongings are labelled**

## APPROPRIATE SEASONAL OUTDOOR WEAR

WINTER	SPRING/FALL	SUMMER
<input type="checkbox"/> Winter jacket/snow pants/snowsuit	<input type="checkbox"/> Lined jacket	<input type="checkbox"/> Sun hat
<input type="checkbox"/> Winter boots	<input type="checkbox"/> Hat	<input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor shoes with secure straps (flip flops & Crocs for children under the age of 5 is not recommended)
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 pairs of mitts	<input type="checkbox"/> Splash pants	
<input type="checkbox"/> Hat	<input type="checkbox"/> Rubber boots	

**Please ensure all children's clothing and belongings are labelled**

\*\*\*Refrain from sending children with mittens on strings or scarves as they pose a safety hazard on the playground. \*\*\*

**Learning through play can be a messy business. Dress your child in comfortable, seasonally appropriate clothing. Despite our best efforts it is not always possible to keep clothing clean while children explore and learn through activities and meal times.**

## Nutrition

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We believe the foods served in our program must meet children's nutritional needs to support normal growth and development. We also have a responsibility to provide an environment that promotes positive attitudes toward food and healthy eating habits.

Meals should be served at regular meal times and provide nutrients necessary for growth and development. Educators can create contexts to support children's health and well-being by providing healthy meals and snacks and establishing positive eating environments that are responsive to children's cues of hunger and fullness.

Proper hydration is important for children, particularly during hot summer months, and water suitable for drinking will be available at all times, including between snacks and mealtimes.

All nutrition requirements are subject to section 44 O. Reg. 137/15 which provides that parents may identify special dietary and feeding arrangement for their children. These special arrangements must be provided in writing to the licensee and the licensee must ensure that they are carried out.

### Dietary Needs Policy

To ensure clear responsibility and procedures are being adhered to by parents for the health and safety of all children in the environment.

In the event that a child has a special dietary needs, outside food and drink products may be brought into the Centre for the following reasons:

1. Allergy

2. Sensitivity
3. Ethnic/Religion
4. Exceptions as approved by Food Preparer and Executive Director

Rural Roots will make every effort for the Food Preparer to meet with the parent of the child to work together to ensure a child is adequately nourished.

The following items may need to be purchased by the family:

1. Dairy products e.g. milk, cheese, yogurt etc.
2. Gluten free products e.g. pasta, crackers etc.

A child that has food products brought into the centre will have a designated space in the cupboard, fridge and/or freezer.

Products brought into the centre must be peanut, nut, and flax free. And must be in the original packaging.

Homemade products such as muffins, cookies etc., must be delivered in a labelled resealable bag or container identifying the contents.

Any item brought in must be clearly labelled with the child's name and be directly delivered to the Food Preparer or other staff.

If the product is thought to be unsafe for any reason, it will be returned home.

## Allergies & Anaphylaxis

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### **RURAL ROOTS IS A PEANUT, NUT, AND FLAX SAFE ENVIRONMENT.**

A list of children's allergies is posted in food preparation, eating and activity areas.

If a child is on a special diet, a meeting between the family and food preparer is necessary prior to the child's first day to ensure that all dietary needs are met.

Anaphylaxis is a serious allergic reaction and can be life threatening. The allergy may be related to food, insect stings, medicine, latex, exercise etc. This policy is in place to help ensure that children/staff in our Centre are safe at all times. While it is impossible to create a risk-free environment, we take the important steps to minimize potentially fatal reactions.

- The family will inform the Executive Director/Designate that their child is anaphylactic prior to the child starting.
- The Executive Director/Designate will meet with the family and go through necessary forms, training etc.
- A photo and anaphylactic allergy information will be posted on the allergy list.
- Detailed information and description of child's allergy will be kept on file in the office and in the program attendance binder.
- The family will provide Rural Roots Children's Centre with 2 Epi-Pens prior to enrolment. Depending on the age of the child 1 Epi-Pen will be worn on the child. Other Epi-Pens will be in a labelled fanny pack and attached to the program attendance binder.
- All staff are required to have Epi-Pen training upon employment and annually thereafter.

On special occasions when food is brought from home please connect with the Food Preparer to ensure products are safe and guidelines are adhered to.

## Rest/Quiet Time

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As per the Child Care Early Years Act all children are required to engage in “quiet/rest time”. Children in our Toddler and Preschool programs are provided with a cot for rest time. All sheets are laundered daily, blankets are laundered weekly. Children are not required to sleep however they have an opportunity to rest and regenerate their bodies and have individual quiet time. Staff will help children feel comfortable and relaxed at rest time. The environment is softly lit, quiet and calming music is played in the background. If your child has a bottle, soother, blanket or stuffed toy that would provide some comfort during rest time we encourage you to bring the item from home. Children 44 months and up in care for a full day are not required to rest however a quiet time is provided by dimming the light and quiet activities are provided. Family requests can also be made in writing regarding sleep arrangements.

## Outdoor Play Experiences

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As outlined in the Child Care Early Years Act, children in attendance for 6 hours or more are required to have at least 2 hours of outdoor time (weather permitting). Outdoor planning web is posted in each program. Activities are planned to enhance the child’s creative, motor and social skills. Staff will inspect the playground and equipment daily for potential hazards. Playgrounds are also inspected annually by a Certified Playground Inspector.

## Sun Safety

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From May to September close attention is paid to daily ultra violet radiation (U.V.) ratings. When possible, outdoor times will be scheduled before 11:00 a.m. and after 3:00 p.m. Children should wear hats and are encouraged to wear U.V. protective sunglasses during outdoor times. Should your child not have a hat, a clean hat will be loaned for the day then laundered. Sunscreen is provided to families at a cost or families may bring their own labelled sunscreen from home.

## Centre Events

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A variety of special events are planned throughout the year. All families are welcomed to attend. The goal of these special events is to provide families the opportunities to network with staff and other families from the centre.

# Field Trips

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Local field trips are fun for the children and enhance their learning experience. Throughout the year field trips will be planned for the children; parents/guardians are welcomed to volunteer. Families will be asked to sign a consent form to allow their child to attend. All off site activities are adequately supervised. Throughout the year staff will often take children on walks around our community to explore our beautiful natural environment. Consent for these walks is requested on the registration package.

# Fair Start

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Rural Roots supports the Fair Start process. Fair Start is a program that screens children between 18 months and four years of age in the areas of speech and language skills, motor abilities and social development. Screening will help you decide whether there are any areas of your child's development that may need extra attention. A letter will be sent home requesting permission for the screening to take place.

# Photographs & Videotape

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Regular photographs and videotaping of the children happen on a daily basis at all locations. Pictures of the children are posted in the programs and are displayed at special events.

At times photos and videos may be used for public viewing in local papers, television or community events. Consent to use these photos or videos is requested on the registration package.

# Serious Occurrence

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The following is a definition of serious occurrences as stated in the Child Care Early Years Act (CCEYA):

1. The **death of a child** who receives child care at the child care centre.
2. **Abuse, neglect or an allegation of abuse or neglect** of a child while receiving child care at the child care centre.
3. A **life-threatening injury to or a life-threatening illness** of a child who receives child care at the child care centre.
4. An incident where a child who is receiving child care at the child care centre goes **missing or is temporarily unsupervised**.
5. An **unplanned disruption of the normal operations** of a childcare centre that poses a risk to health, safety or well-being of children receiving care at the child care centre.

Serious Occurrence will be reported to the Ministry of Education within 24 hours. Twenty-four hours starts at the time when Rural Roots staff members first become aware of an incident and/or deems the incident to be a Serious Occurrence. A Serious Notification Form must be posted in a visible area for 10 days. The posting will give families information about the incident and outline follow-up actions taken and the outcomes while respecting the privacy of the individuals involved. For more information please see the Executive Director.

# Injuries and Accidents

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First-Aid kits and manuals are available at each location and are brought outdoors during playtimes. In the event of an accident, every effort will be made to contact the parent/guardian. If the parent/guardian cannot be reached, the emergency contact person listed on the registration package will be contacted. The staff will perform first-aid and seek medical attention if necessary. A child needing emergency medical care will be taken to the hospital via ambulance or taxi. A staff member will accompany the child. An accident report form is completed for accidents or injuries. This form describes the nature and details of the accidents or injuries. Families will be asked to sign the form as acknowledgement of having been informed about the incident and a copy will be provided. If an accident/injury requires medical treatment it is deemed to be a Serious Occurrence and will be reported to the Ministry of Education.

# Fire Drills, Emergency & Threat Response Procedures

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Fire and Emergency procedures are posted in all program. Fire drills are practiced monthly.

Threat response procedures are initiated when a high risk incident involving weapons, hazardous chemical spill, severe weather warnings, intruders etc. occur on the property or there are circumstances in the vicinity of Rural Roots Children's Centre locations that could endanger the lives and/or safety of the children and/or staff.

Three threat response procedures have been introduced:

**Shelter in Place** will be initiated in the event of a possible environmental danger in the neighbourhood. Some of these dangers can include a chemical spill in the area, smoke or fire in the vicinity or extreme weather conditions.

**Hold and Secure** will be initiated when the threat is proximate to, but not inside of the building. It poses no immediate danger to children or staff unless they leave the building. Some examples can include police activity on the grounds, a crime in progress and police are searching for an offender in the neighbourhood.

**Lockdown** is initiated when danger is present in the school site and the safety of children and staff is threatened. An example of this can include an attacker in the building or on the property or grounds.

In order for all children and staff to become familiar with expectations during a threat to safety at the Centre we will practice threat response procedures throughout the year. During the drills signs will be posted on entrance doors and doors may be locked. Two lockdown drills will be practiced each year.

# Evacuation Locations

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Rural Roots Children's Centre – Nor'wester View Site evacuation location is South Neebing Community Centre 1841 Mountain Rd. (475-4622)

Before and After School Program – Holy Family School site evacuation location is Holy Family Church 2055 Rosslyn Rd. (473-9722)

# Conflict Resolution with Families

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## Purpose

The purpose of having a conflict resolution policy is to establish lines of communication.

Parents/families have the opportunity to express their concerns and complaints to staff without fear of retribution. The parent's concerns are important and are a natural step in providing an inclusive environment which meets the needs of children and families. Building and maintaining positive relationships with parents is valued at our centre.

This policy is to support open communication between staff and parents. Communication is essential in preventing and resolving conflict. Parents and staff who openly communicate with one another regarding the care of their child(ren) can potentially avoid dissatisfaction with services.

Families are composed of individuals who are competent and capable, curious, and rich in experience. Families love their children and want the best for them. Families are experts on their children. They are the first and most powerful influence on children's learning, development, health, and well-being. Families bring diverse social, cultural, and linguistic perspectives. Families should feel that they belong, are valuable contributors to their children's learning, and deserve to be engaged in a meaningful way. (HDLH)

Fostering good relationships with children and their families is the single most important priority for educators in early years programs. The ability to establish constructive relationships with children and families is a requirement for Registered Early Childhood Educators in Ontario, as set out in the College of Early Childhood Educators Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice. (CECE 2011)

## Procedure

All concerns will be addressed in a professional manner and kept confidential, documented and filed.

1. If the parent/family has an issue or concern, they should discuss the matter directly with the staff involved immediately. Issues should be resolved within 3 days of the complaint.
2. If the parent/family is not satisfied with the outcome, then the matter should be directed to the Executive Director/Designate. At that time a formal meeting time will be arranged to include staff and parent/family within 3 days.
3. An investigation of the facts may be needed to seek further clarification, which may or may not involve an outside agency, i.e. Dilico, CAS, Ministry of Education etc.
4. Meeting times will be arranged to accommodate the family.
5. Notes will be taken to ensure clarity and direction to resolve the conflict.
6. Once the issue or concern has been dealt with appropriately and the parent/family feels satisfied with the outcome, the matter will be seen as resolved and closed.
7. If the parent/family is not satisfied with the matter it will be brought forward to the Board of Directors.
8. Further meetings may be required before the conflict is determined to be resolved to everyone's satisfaction.

# Illness Policy

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Although some illness is inevitable in group care, efforts are made to minimize this by practicing good hygiene, disinfecting toys regularly and making daily health checks. All children in attendance must be able to participate in all areas of the program, including outdoor play.

Rural Roots follows exclusion guidelines for communicable infection/disease as set out by the Thunder Bay District Health Unit.

Children with the following symptoms should be sent home and may need to be examined by a health care provider prior to returning to the centre:

Unusual Behaviour	If illness prevents participation in normal activities. If child looks or acts differently, is unusually tired, difficult to wake, irritable, inconsolable crying, 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 continuous cough.
Vomiting	If two or more episodes of vomiting within 24 hour period. Child must be symptom free for 48 hours before returning to Centre.
Diarrhea	If two or more abnormally loose stools within a 24 hour period. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observe child for other symptoms such as fever, abdominal pain or vomiting.</li> <li>Child must be symptom free for 48 hours before returning to Centre.</li> </ul>
Fever	If axillary (e.g. under the armpit) temperature reaches 38C or higher. <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 behaviour.</li> </ul>
Eye/Nose Drainage	If thick mucus or pus is draining from the eye or nose.
Itching	If child experiences persistent itching/scratching of body or scalp.
Rashes	If child has sores with crusty, yellow or green drainage which cannot be covered by clothing or bandages. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children who have a rash but no fever or change in behaviour can continue in school or daycare, although they may need to be seen by a physician.</li> </ul>
Unusual Colour	Some of the changes you may notice could be: <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 or white.</li> </ul>

Fact sheets are posted in the centre when there is confirmation of a communicable disease (e.g. chicken pox).

Head lice is not considered a communicable disease. Head lice can be transmitted through head to head contact with an infected person or through contact with personal objects (e.g., combs, hats, etc.). In order to minimize the spread of head lice in the child care centre, children who are found to have head lice will be sent home for treatment and will not be allowed to return until they are nit free.

Please ensure you have back-up plans to accommodate any such spontaneous child care needs. The child will be removed from the program to protect the health of others. They will be placed in isolation under the supervision of a staff until a family member arrives (if staffing allows).

Rural Roots is not able to care for children who may become ill while attending school.

A complete list of communicable illness and procedures are available upon request.

# Immunization

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Under the Child Care Early Years Act, all children attending a licensed child care must be immunized according to the recommended immunization schedule for their age. Proof must be provided prior to your child's first day.

If an Exemption for a vaccine(s) is required for medical, religious or conscientious reasons or if you have any question The Thunder Bay District Health Unit at (807) 625-8346, (807)625-8810 or toll free 1-888-294-6630.

Failure to comply with this may result in your child(ren) being suspended until the immunization record is submitted or completed and submitted to the Thunder Bay District Health Unit.

# Administration of Medication

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Families are encouraged to give their child medication at home whenever possible. In accordance with the Child Care Early Years Act, Rural Roots is able to administer prescribed and non-prescribed medication. Medication needs to be in the original container and labelled with the child's full name. Parents/guardians will be required to fill out a medical dispensing form indicating type of medication, reason, dosage and time to be given. Medications will be stored in locked storage boxes in the kitchen either in the refrigerator or designated cupboard, as required. EPI-PENS, asthma and emergency medication will be kept in programs, out of the reach of children.

# Prohibited Practices

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Rural Roots Children's Centre forbids corporal punishment and other harmful disciplinary practices to protect the emotional and physical well-being of children. These practices are never permitted.

- Corporal punishment
- Physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a high chair, car seat, stroller or other device for the purpose of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting himself, herself or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent;
- Locking the exits of the child care centre premises for the purpose of confining the child, or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the licensee's emergency management policies and procedures;
- Use of harsh or degrading measures or threat or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child or undermine his or her self-respect, dignity or self-worth;

- Depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding; or
- Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

Young children benefit from an affirming approach that encourages positive interactions with other children and with adults, rather from a negative or punitive approach to managing unwanted behaviour.

Research from diverse fields of study show that children who attend programs where they experience warm, supportive relationships are happier, less anxious and more motivated to learn than those who do not.

Experiencing positive relationships in early childhood also has significant long term impacts on physical and mental health, and success in school and beyond.

## Payment and Financial Policies

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Invoices for childcare are provided for the periods from September to December and from January to June. July, August and March break will be billed separately.

Upon receipt of your invoices, we ask that you submit post-dated cheques dated for the first business Monday of the month. Interac e-transfer is also available as a payment option; due on the first business Monday of each month as well. You will be emailed necessary information for this option. There will be a charge of \$20.00 on all NSF cheques payable prior to the following month's payment.

Cheques must mailed or dropped off at the Nor'wester View location and be hand delivered to Executive Director, Accounting Clerk or placed in the locked box located directly outside the office.

In the event your account is past due by 30 days, we reserve the right to send a letter stating that childcare services will be terminated immediately. Childcare services may be reinstated, depending on space availability, once payment has been received or a written payment plan has been agreed upon.

Rural Roots is a non-profit Centre and therefore all fees charged to families are used to cover the costs incurred in the program. Fees are set by the Board of Directors and reviewed semi-annually. From time to time you may be asked for assistance in keeping these costs down. For example, we accept donations of items such as recyclables for arts/crafts or toys/equipment you no longer use.

**Monthly receipts should be retained for income tax purposes**

## Schedule

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Families must commit to a full-time or part time schedule. Full – time is Monday to Friday. Part-time is considered to be set days with a minimum of 2 days per week. Every effort will be made to match families that have complimentary schedules. For example, a family with a Monday, Tuesday, Friday schedule matched with a Wednesday and Thursday schedule to try to ensure maximum use of space.

# Late Pickup Policy

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Parents/guardians must make every effort to contact the center in the event of a late pick up. All persons picking up are required to arrive to pick up no later than 5:55 p.m. to allow time to leave the centre by our closing time of 6:00 p.m. Please remember that a late fee of \$25 is applied to you if you are picking up your child over your designated hours. i.e. your drop off is 8:00 and your pick up time is 4:55(Full day under 9 hours) and you arrive at 5:00: from 4:56-5:14 \$25; 5:15-5:30= \$25, etc. Any pick up after 6:00 p.m. is considered late and a fee of \$25 will be charged for every 15 minutes past 6:00 p.m. i.e. 6:01-6:15 \$25; 6:16-6:30 \$25, etc. (late fees will not be covered by subsidy agreements). If the child is not picked up by 6:00 p.m. staff will attempt to reach parent/guardian by calling all numbers listed on file. By 6:30 p.m. if no contact has been made with any persons listed on file, Children's Aid Society or Dilico Anishinabek Family Care will be contacted. Frequent late pickups will require a meeting with the Executive Director and may result in the termination of child care services.

# Absences and Vacation

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As of March 26, 2017, the Board of Directors made some changes to the Absences/Vacation Policy. (Revised 09/ 08/17)

Families that use our program full-time, Monday to Friday, you will receive 10 vacation days per child per school year (September- June). Part- time families will receive 5 vacation days per child per school year. One month notice in writing is required for fees to be waved. Vacation days will be pro-rated based on start date. Subsidized families will follow the Thunder Bay District Social Services Administration Boards absent allotment days.

Please notify the Centre/program if your child is away due to illness etc. If your child is ill/absent for 5 consecutive days or less, fees are non-refundable/transferable. If your child is absent for more than 5 consecutive days and a Doctor's note is provided for the absent days, fees will be partially reimbursed.

Invoices will be adjusted or credits will be given for absences or vacation days with 1 month's written notification.

# March Break/Summer

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A survey will be sent out in January for parents to fill out if they need care during March break. Summer and fall surveys will go out in March. For March break and summer options families have the option to decline childcare or choose days for children to attend.

# Snow/Emergency Closure

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In the event that Nor'wester View or Holy Family School is closed due to snow/weather conditions or an emergency situation Rural Roots will also be closed. Closures will also be announced on the radio. Families will be credited for that day. If there is a mid-day closure, Rural Roots will close. Families will be notified to come pickup their child(ren) as soon as possible. After school children scheduled for that day will come to Rural Roots (Nor'wester View location) and will need to be picked up as well. Please ensure the school is aware of your emergency arrangements. Parents/guardians will not be credited for mid-day closures

# School-Age Site –Nor'wester View and Holy Family School Site

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In order to ensure the safe arrival of all children, it is extremely important that in the event that your child(ren) will be absent on their scheduled day due to illness, extracurricular activities etc. that the program is contacted.

If a child does not arrive on a scheduled day families will be called.

**Nor'wester View School site 475-7644**

**Holy Family School Site – 620-4048 and leave voicemail message.**

Although we work alongside School Boards we are separate organizations and therefore require direct communication from families.

# School-Aged Children

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Children who have been sent home from school for reasons of illness, behaviours, etc. are not permitted to attend our After School Programs.

# Social Media Policy

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Rural Roots Children's Centre parents/families that maintain personal social media pages i.e. Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter etc. are expected to comply with the guidelines set out within this policy. Posts involving the following will not be tolerated and will subject the individual to discipline.

- Any private/confidential organizational information
- Discriminatory statement regarding staff, parents/families and children.
- Defamatory statements regarding staff, parents/families and children.
- No photographs of children that attend Rural Roots, other than your own will be posted.
- No photographs of staff will be posted.

# Parent Fees – September 2018

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<b>PROGRAM</b>	<b>FEE</b>
TODDLER FULL DAY PROGRAM (UNDER 9 HRS)	\$43
TODDLER EXTENDED DAY (9HRS AND OVER)	\$45
PRESCHOOL FULL DAY PROGRAM (UNDER 9 HRS)	\$41
PRECHOOL EXTENDED DAY (9HRS AND OVER)	\$43
BEFORE SCHOOL PROGRAM	\$11
AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM	\$13
KINDERGARTEN FULL DAY PROGRAM	\$39
KINDERGARTEN EXTENDED DAY (9HRS AND OVER)	\$41
SCHOOL-AGE FULL DAY PROGRAM (GRADE 1 AND UP)	\$37
SCHOOL-AGE EXTENDED DAY (9HRS AND OVER)	\$39
LATE FEE	\$25