



## Section 8

# Daily Program Requirements





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This section looks at regulations related to the actual early childhood program that children experience while at the centre or family day home. It describes things that operators must include in the daily program, such as:

- variety – to support the development of the whole child
- activities that develop language and literacy
- culturally-appropriate activities
- outdoor play
- physical activity
- the use of community facilities
- rest periods
- ensuring that children with additional needs and different abilities can participate in the daily program

It also provides recommendations on regular communication with parents about children's well-being and participation in the early childhood program.

# 8

**21**

Every operator shall establish a daily program for children attending the child day care facility that:

- (a) facilitates and stimulates the intellectual, physical, emotional and social development of the children;
- (b) is appropriate to the developmental level of the children;
- (c) as much as possible, includes activities to encourage language development; and
- (d) as much as possible, reflects the cultural and ethnic backgrounds of the children.

## Regulation 21

**The Daily Program****Why**

- To set expectations for operators about the quality of the daily program for children in their care

**What it means**

- The operator must develop a written daily program (or schedule) that takes into account all of the factors shown in the shaded box:
  - the development of the whole child,
  - activities that are appropriate for the development levels of all children in the program, including children with different abilities,
  - activities that specifically target the development of language and literacy (possibly in more than one language),
  - activities that reflect the cultural and ethnic backgrounds of the children in the program.
- Daily program does not mean that the schedule is the same every day. Some parts of the schedule will be the same, such as lunch and snack times, and rest time. Other parts of the schedule will change regularly or periodically – for example field trips, special celebrations, guests, show and tell, etc.

## How

- Develop a daily program with activities that:
  - meet the requirements of the shaded box,
  - clearly support the written program goals and objectives that were included with the *Application for a License*,
  - are based on the philosophy of learning through play.
- Choose culturally- and developmentally-appropriate practices and play-based activities for young children. Ask the Regional Early Childhood Officer for suggestions and advice if needed.
- Include parents and older children in planning activities.
- If you have a child with different abilities or with additional needs get information on the child's abilities so that you can adapt the daily program to the child's needs and level of development.
- Ensure that the daily program encourages and allows children to make their own choices about play activities at least 50% of the time.
- Include a variety of activities in the daily program – individual, small group, large group, indoor, outdoor, active, messy, quiet, gross motor, and fine motor.
- Incorporate outdoor play, physical activity, rest periods and the use of community facilities into the program.
- Use weekly or monthly themes (such as arctic animals or weather) to develop and enhance the daily program.
- Arrange furnishings and equipment so that they support the daily program – for example activity or learning centres that target language and literacy development.
- Involve parents. They can support the daily program in many ways including helping with outings, sharing a skill, interest or hobby, telling stories to support language development, sharing cultural traditions, and much more.
- Regularly review and revise the daily program as needed.

**22**

Every operator shall provide daily outdoor play activities for each child unless

- (a) outdoor play is prohibited by the child's parent or guardian or the health care professional providing health care to the child; or
- (b) the weather is inclement.

## Regulation 22

**Daily Outdoor Play****Why**

- To ensure that children have daily outdoor play in a safe environment

**What it means**

- The daily program must include outdoor play unless the child cannot participate due to chronic health concerns, weather is bad, or there is wildlife or other warnings.

**How**

- Contact the appropriate government department prior to outdoor play activities if there are concerns about possible wildlife or other environmental warnings, such as smoke.
- If outdoor play is cancelled because of weather, but the weather improves later in the day, try to adjust the schedule so that children have their outdoor play time.
- Provide information to parents to explain the outdoor program, when outdoor play will not be possible, and what children will do instead.
- If outdoor play has to be cancelled replace it with activities that promote physical activity and gross motor skills, to the extent possible.
- Ask parents to provide seasonal clothing (such as neck warmer, hat and mitts, raincoat, sunhat, etc.)
- Don't forget the sunscreen and children's insect repellent provided by parents if needed.
- If outdoor play takes place away from the facility:
  - take a first aid kit and emergency contact information with you,
  - take emergency medication,
  - make sure children use the washroom before going to the play area.
- Cold weather and darkness are not reasons for eliminating outdoor play. Develop a policy for your facility with temperature guidelines. For example if the temperature is below -30 degrees Celsius with the wind chill for infants and -35 degrees Celsius with the wind chill for preschoolers, the children will not have outdoor play activities.

## Recommended

An operator shall ensure that each child attending the child day care facility is provided with the opportunity to participate in activities that promote physical fitness for at least 30 minutes each day.

### Recommendation

## Daily Physical Activity

### Why

- To promote physical fitness
- To establish daily physical activity as a routine part of a healthy lifestyle

### What it means

- The daily program shall include at least 30 minutes of physical activity that promotes physical fitness.

### How

- Don't rely on outdoor play to meet the requirements of this regulation. (Children might choose to play in the sandbox, for example.) Plan an activity or activities that target physical fitness.
- Make it fun. Choose age-appropriate active games, for example.
- Use a variety of settings – indoor, outdoor, community facilities.
- Provide information to parents to explain the fitness component of the program.

## 23

Every operator shall post a schedule of programs and activities in a conspicuous place in the child day care facility.

### Regulation 23

## Post the Daily Program

### Why

- To ensure that staff, children, and parents are aware of daily activities at the child care facility

### What it means

- The daily program must be posted on the information board or other area where anyone entering the facility can easily see it.

### How

- Post the daily program on the information board or other conspicuous area. Make sure you include special events, holidays, celebrations and field trips.
- Encourage parents and children to check the information board and daily program on a regular basis.
- Highlight changes to the daily program and post as needed.
- Include the names of staff members with each activity on the daily program, as a way to inform parents of who is working with their child.
- Use newsletters and other communication tools to help explain the daily program to all staff and parents.

## 24

Where a child with special needs attends a child day care facility, the operator shall, as far as possible, ensure that the child is integrated into the daily program.

### Regulation 24

## Child with Special Needs

### Why

- To include all children in all aspects of the daily program, including learning and play activities

### What it means

- Children with different abilities and/or additional needs should be included in all activities.
- The operator must modify or remove physical barriers that may limit the inclusion of a child with different abilities and/or additional needs.



- The operator must modify the daily program as necessary.
- The operator must obtain any specialized equipment needed for the child to participate in the daily program, or ask the parent to provide the required equipment.

### **How**

- The key to success for a child with different abilities and/or additional needs in an early childhood program is regular meetings and communication with the parent of the child – starting with planning how the facility and program need to be modified to accommodate the needs of the child, and whether or not there are implications for staffing and/or staff training.
- Inform yourself about a child's specific condition or different abilities. Consult and work with health professionals, parents and others if necessary, to learn how to best support the needs of the child.
- Remove any physical barriers. This might require renovations to the facility.
- You may have to hire or train staff as necessitated by an individual child's different abilities and/or additional needs.
- Modify the daily program to reflect the requirements of a child with different abilities and/or additional needs. The goal should be to have the child participate as much as possible in any given activity, with as much independence as possible. The idea is to treat the child as "only as special as necessary."
- As done with all children observe and document the activities and experiences of a child with different abilities and/or additional needs and communicate these to the parent or guardian. Note socialization with others, activities performed well, areas of interest and independence, areas of frustration or concern, and activities, equipment or facility modifications required to promote inclusion.
- Provide staff, children and parents with information that encourages understanding and support of:
  - children with different abilities and/or different needs generally, and
  - the specific condition(s) of any children with different abilities and/or additional needs attending the facility.

**25**

An operator may use local community services to enhance the quality of programs and services in the child day care facility.

## Regulation 25

**Using Community Facilities and Services****Why**

- To enhance the daily program and experiences of children
- To integrate the child care facility into the community at large

**What it means**

- The daily program must include regular use of community facilities and services, as much as possible.

**How**

- Use of a variety of community facilities and services on a regular basis: the library, museum, skating rink, parks, schools, seniors centre, friendship centre, churches and multi-cultural associations.
- Check the local recreation guide and radio or media announcements for programs or events that may be appropriate, such as preschool story time, or visiting preschool authors.
- Check the local TV station and community bulletin boards for appropriate events.
- Visit some facilities and services occasionally, such as the fire hall, airport or welcome back to the sun celebrations.
- Visit seniors/Elders or arrange for them to visit the facility.
- After a field trip, discuss the experience, answering any questions that children may have about the place they visited.
- Send a thank you letter or create thank you cards and send them to the host.
- Develop written procedures outlining safety precautions for visits away from the child care facility. Include these in the parent information handbook.
- Give each parent written information about specific excursions at least two days prior to the outing. Include date, time, location, purpose of the excursion, transportation arrangements, time expected back at the facility and a contact number – either the number at the location, or your cell phone number if applicable.
- Make sure transportation complies with your written transportation policy required.
- If any parent did not give permission to take a child on an excursion make sure there is an alternate activity for the child at the facility and that the parent is aware of that activity. (Remember, children cannot be left alone with only a volunteer. A staff person must be able to see and supervise the volunteer.)

## Recommended

An operator of a centre day care facility shall require a primary staff person to communicate regularly with the parent of each child attending the facility in respect of the child's well-being and participation in the daily program.

### Recommendation

## Regular Communication with Parents

### Why

- To ensure regular parent communication regarding children's well-being, and their participation in the early childhood program

### What it means

- The operator must designate a staff person(s) to communicate with parents on a regular basis about children's well-being and program participation. For a Family Day Home, this is the operator.
- Designated staff must initiate direct communication with parents, even if parents don't ask.

### How

- Develop procedures outlining:
  - which staff member(s) will speak with parents,
  - when they will communicate with parents about children's well-being and program participation,
  - when they should speak to parents in private – for example if there are concerns,
  - how they should communicate with any given parent – do some need an interpreter? Do some need only verbal communication? (If parents don't understand what you said or wrote then you haven't communicated with them.)
- Include these procedures as part of staff orientation and monitor staff to ensure it is happening.
- Include these procedures in the parent handbook so that parents know what to expect.
- On a daily basis:
  - make staff available to parents and at arrival and departure times to communicate one or two positive things that happened that day,
  - keep daily log sheets to record all daily activities for infants and discuss these with parents.
- Several times a year:
  - use the daily program, newsletters or other documents that explain the program as a way to focus and support communication with parents about a child's participation and progress,
  - communicate with parents about a variety of areas including socialization with others, activities performed well, areas of interest and independence, areas of frustration or concern.

## Recommended

An operator shall ensure, to the extent possible, that each child attending the child day care facility who is under 18 months of age is provided with periods of rest during the day in accordance with a schedule provided to the operator by the child's parent.

### Recommendation

## Rest for Infants

### Why

- To ensure that infants get enough rest
- To ensure that an infant's rest schedule is similar to what it is at home

### What it means

- The operator must ask each infant's parent for a rest schedule showing when the infant rests at home.
- The operator must follow the schedule as close as possible.
- If a parent does not provide a rest schedule, the operator should use professional judgment and knowledge of the infant to determine appropriate rest periods.

### How

- Ask parents to provide a schedule indicating the sleeping/resting routine of their infant.
- Create a daily schedule for each infant's sleeping/resting times.
- Make sure all staff, parents and volunteers are aware of the sleeping/napping schedules in the program.
- Develop clear procedures for sleeping areas and sleeping routines.
- Include procedures to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS):
  - place the infant on his or her back, on a firm mattress,
  - do not use pillows or place stuffed toys or other materials near the infant, which might cause rebreathing of stale air,
  - keep room temperature comfortable but not too warm – being too warm may cause the infant to go into a deeper sleep.
- Post sleeping procedures and include them in the parent handbook, so that parents and staff are aware of sleeping arrangements and expectations.
- Meet the requirements of all other regulations related to rest and supervision.

## Recommended

An operator shall ensure that each child attending a full day child day care facility who is between 18 months of age and six years is provided each day in the early afternoon with a period of time during which the child may sleep, rest or engage in quiet activities.

### Recommendation

## Rest for Older Children

### Why

- To ensure that older children have a quiet time during the day
- To allow flexibility of quiet time activities to meet individual children's needs

### What it means

- This applies to full-time day care facilities and family day homes
- The daily schedule must include a quiet time in the early afternoon, typically after lunch, for children between 18 months and five years of age.
- Children may sleep, rest or engage in quiet activities, depending on their individual needs.

### How

- Develop clear procedures for sleeping areas and sleeping routines.
- Post those procedures and include them in the parent handbook, so that parents and staff are aware of sleeping arrangements and expectations.
- Include a quiet time in the daily schedule – usually after lunch.
- Consult with parents to determine the appropriate quiet time activity for each child – sleeping, resting or quiet activities.
- Let children sleep for a maximum of two hours unless the parent has requested that the child sleep more.
- Let children move to a quiet activity after an hour of rest, if they choose. Teach children to move quietly from the sleeping/resting area to the quiet play area so they do not disturb other children.
- Have a variety of quiet activities for children to choose from if they don't sleep or rest.
- Meet the requirements of all other regulations related to rest and supervision.

