

# Sarah's Day Home For Little Explorers

## Program Information



# Welcome to Sarah's Day Home for Little Explorers

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## Hello and welcome!

Thank you for your interest in Sarah's Day Home for Little Explorers

Sarah's Day Home for Little Explorers is an established dayhome that has been in operation since 2018 and is located in Stillwater Lake, Nova Scotia, Canada (previously located in Middle Sackville, Nova Scotia). In February 2022, Sarah's Dayhome for Little Explorers became approved by the Giant Steps Children's Centre - Family Home Day Care Agency.

Sarah's Day Home for Little Explorers provides small group care for children aged 6 months to school age in a safe, nurturing, home environment. The program is nature, emergent, and play based. Here they can learn and grow physically, emotionally, creatively, intellectually, and socially at their own pace.

**This document is intended to provide specific program information to families. Please refer to the Family Home Child Care - Parent Handbook for detailed information about our program and policies.**

# About Sarah's Day Home for Little Explorers

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## About Sarah:

Sarah (she/her) was born and lived most of her life in rural Nova Scotia. She found her passion of working with children while being involved in teaching Sunday school at church. After graduating high school, Sarah moved to Halifax to attend the Child and Youth Studies program at Mount Saint Vincent University, which she completed in 2010. The program included practicums with daycare administration, Nova Scotia Early Intervention, and Public Health - Healthy Beginnings.

Sarah began working in child care centres in 2006 as a summer student and has worked at various licenced centres since in various roles, including classroom teacher, Centre Designate and Assistant Director. She completed Daycare Administration training in 2016, and has participated in many professional development opportunities including workshops on loose parts and nature play.

In 2018, Sarah decided to leave her position as Assistant Director at a licenced centre she had worked at for 6 years to start her own home based care program.



Sarah and Matthew have been married since 2007, and have a son and daughter (twins) born in 2015.

Sarah maintains a level 3 classification from the Nova Scotia Department of Early Childhood Education, has up to date first aid training and professional development.

Sarah and Matthew both have current Criminal Record Checks, and Child Abuse Registry Checks (with Vulnerable Sector) completed, and have been fully vaccinated against COVID19.

## About the Program:

### Philosophy

Sarah's Day Home for Little Explorers is committed to creating a welcoming, safe, warm, stimulating and loving environment for all children. Here they can learn and grow physically, emotionally, creatively, intellectually, and socially at their own pace.

The program is play based and emergent as learning opportunities come out through children's play and interests. All areas of the children's development will be supported through developmentally appropriate activities. The daily program includes free play, outdoor play, small group, art exploration, sensory activities, songs and stories.



At Sarah's Day Home for Little Explorers, we follow children's natural interests and curiosities and treat those as a sounding board for more in depth exploration and learning opportunities. We believe children are capable, as we promote children taking initiative and being responsible, kind, and caring. We believe that time outside and time in nature is invaluable for children's learning and well being.

We support school readiness by supporting children's self-help skills, language skills, social skills, and cognitive skills through play based and nature learning.

## Daily Schedule and Programming

During every day the children will have ample opportunities for play with various types of materials, such as pretend play, fine motor play, gross motor play, loose parts play, art, construction play, etc.

To maintain a calm and engaging environment, a small but sufficient amount of toys are available for play every day and those toys are put away and swapped for new toys frequently. Open ended, loose parts, and wooden toys are preferred and are always available for play. Toys are developmentally appropriate, and are openly presented at the child's level.

During free play older children will have the opportunity for open ended art at all times - including markers, scissors, paper and glue. Children are allowed to have the freedom to make and create whatever they like!

Provocations and invitations will be presented based on the children's interests.

We have outdoor play at least twice a day except for times of extreme incimate weather.

Since the program is emergent and play based, this is reflected in our daily schedule. No two days are exactly the same! Our flexible schedule is the following:

7:30am – 9:30am ----- Free Play

9:30 am – 10:00am ---- Snack

10:00am – 11:00am ---- Outside

11:00am – 11:30am -----Songs and Stories

11:30am – 12:00pm ---- Lunch

12:00pm – 2:00pm ----- Nap/Quiet Time

2:00pm – 3:00m ----- Free Play

3:00pm – 3:30pm ----- Snack

3:30pm – 5:00pm ----- Outside Play

5:00pm – 5:30pm ----- Table Toys

# Outdoor Play

The centre emphasizes the importance of outdoor play for all children in attendance. Whenever possible, outdoor play will take place in the morning and in the afternoon.

Some weather exceptions to outdoor play are as follows:

- When there is a thunder/lightning warning
- When there is an active wind warning
- When the weather is below -15
- Heavy rainfall during a time where there is cold temperatures
- When the temperature is above 35
- When the UV index is very high

Parents/Guardians are required to bring weather appropriate outdoor gear for their child every day.



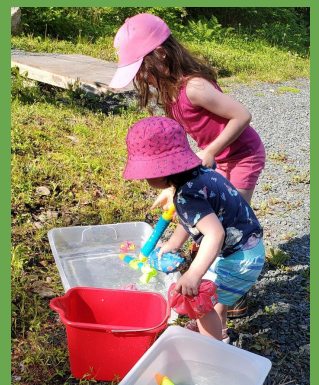
## Items Needed in the Spring/Fall

- Summer Hat
- Winter hat
- Sneakers
- Rain boots
- Rain Jacket/Rain suit
- Windbreaker/Jacket
- Warm Jacket
- Light Gloves/mittens
- Sunscreen
- Bug Spray



## Items Needed in the Summer

- Summer Hat
- Sunscreen
- Bug Spray
- Extra clothes (for water play)
- Sneakers
- Closed toed sandals



## Items Needed in the winter

- Winter Hat
- Nylon mittens (2 pairs preferred)
- Winter Jacket
- Snow Pants/Snow Suit
- Winter Boots
- Neck Warmer/Scarf
- Rain Suit (Optional - to go over snow suit for extra waterproof layer)





# The Environment

Sarah's Day Home for Little Explorers strives to be mindful about our impact on the environment, and to help guide children's connection to nature and how to care for it.

The centre is equipped with solar panels which helps generate some of our electricity and has heat pumps to help with efficiency.



We are currently working on a vegetable garden that we hope will produce lots of yummy things!.

Children are taught about recycling and composting.

We often reuse materials like boxes and packing materials as loose parts for children's play, or to have available for crafts.

## Loose Parts Play

Loose parts are items with no defined purpose. They can be found in nature, or purchased. They can be combined or used alone.

Loose parts play stimulates children's creativity, problem solving and imagination. Children often play with loose parts socially as they play and make stories around the loose parts they choose to play with. They are truly open ended materials with infinite possibilities!



## Snacks and Meals

Children sit together to eat, as meal times are also important social opportunities. Children are encouraged to feed themselves and clean up their dishes and compost as needed when they're done (depending on their age and ability). Children will be supported in their own natural appetites, and will be able to choose what and how much they would like to eat at meals and snacks.

Two healthy snacks and a healthy lunch will be provided by the centre daily and follow the Canada Food Guide. There is a 3 week rotating menu that will be given to parents upon enrollment, and is also posted on the centre's parent information board.

An example of snacks offered at the centre in the morning and afternoon:



Any food allergies or dietary concerns will be adhered to strictly. Parents of children with dietary concerns/allergies may be required to provide supplemental food and/or drinks for their child (ie, milk/almond milk.)

### NOTE:

The children will not be given peanut products as part of the centre provided snacks.



## Outings/Transportation

We will use walking, metro transit busses and private transportation to go on centre outings.

I have a safe, reliable and fully insured van that will be used to transport the children on outings when walking or public transport is not available or feasible. I will provide appropriate car seats (purchased by me and not second hand) for each child and proper car seat safety will be maintained at all times including extended rear facing, and the use of a 5 point harness forward facing seat as long as possible.

Outings will include things like parks, playgrounds, museums, or other trips that will extend the learning and play opportunities for the children.

We are very fortunate to have many trails and playgrounds within our community!



## Behaviour Guidance Policy

Sarah's Day Home follows the Behaviour Guidance Policy under the Giant Steps Family Home Agency.

Young children need the experience of interacting with other children on a consistent basis. Learning how to share and cooperate with others is an ongoing process, which develops social, and problem-solving skills. Guidance techniques are implemental in such a way to help each child develop self-control and responsibility of their actions.

Sarah's Day Home for Little Explorers provides guidance and support by setting clear consistent limits in a positive way. Through redirection, offering choices and modeling inappropriate behaviours will be minimized. Certain situations may require the use of physical contact to guide behaviour, for example, holding a child to prevent harmful behaviour. In addition a 'time-away' from an area or activity may be required, where the child will be given a quiet area to play.

## Diapering and Potty Training Policy

If your child is in diapers, they will be changed as needed throughout the day. It is the parent's responsibility to supply adequate diapers, wipes, and bum cream for their child. If cloth diapers are preferred, the parent must bring the diapers and a wet bag. Soiled diapers are sent home at pick-up daily.

Sarah's Dayhome for Little Explorers supports your efforts of potty training at home and follows your direction through the day here. When your child does start potty training, we ask that you provide extra clothing (3-4 changes of clothes) and remove soiled clothing from cubby daily.

The key signs of readiness for potty training include:

- The child is able to pull down and up their pants and underwear/pull-ups on their own with little or no assistance.
- The child is able to communicate to you when they need to go to the bathroom
- The child's diaper is dry after nap times and for long periods of the day
- The child is able to hold their bowels and bladder until they get to the potty once they realize that they need to go

## Health and Safety

Sarah's Day Home for Little Explorers follows the health policies outlined in the Family Home Child Care Parent Handbook, and follows all current government guidelines in regards to health and safety protocols for child care centres. All adults in the home are fully vaccinated against COVID19.

The centre toys, furniture and equipment are disinfected as required, using approved disinfectants (approved by Canada Health).

The daycare space is continuously monitored for harmful Radon levels and there is a mitigation system installed to keep those levels low. The centre has 2 HEPA air purifiers to help clean and circulate the air.

The centre door is always locked for safety, and the property is monitored by security cameras.



# Enrollment Information

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## Enrollment Fee

The enrollment fee for Sarah's Day Home for Little Explorers is \$35 a day per child.

The centre can accept children in the Subsidy Program. Enrollment fees will be reduced as per the Canada Wide Child Care Agreement in regards to approved Family Child Care Centres.

All day homes under the Giant Steps Family Home Agency require a \$50.00 Annual Registration Fee which is paid September 1st each year to help providers cover costs of extra expenditures throughout the year.

## Payment Procedures

Payment in the form of post dated cheques or email money transfer is preferred. All Fees must be paid by the first day for the current month of service, unless otherwise agreed upon before enrollment begins.

A \$20 charge will be applied to your account if a payment is not received by 5:30pm on the first day of the month (unless alternative payment arrangements have been made). There will be an additional \$10 charge for each day thereafter until payment is made. Late payments or Non-sufficient funds (NSF) cheques could result in disruption of services

Monthly invoices will reflect payments received for the year, and a tax receipt will be given yearly.

## Hours of Operation

Sarah's Day Home for Little Explorers is open from 7:30am to 5:30pm, Monday to Friday.

Extended hours are not available at this time.

## Attendance

Children are signed in and out upon their arrival and departure. I ask that if your child is not going to attend care as per usual that you inform the centre no later than 9am the day of. This will help with planning activities for the day.

If your child is not attending due to illness, please inform the centre of any symptoms or illnesses the child has.

## Holiday Closures

The centre will be closed on New Year's Day, Family Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Natal Day, Victoria Day, Canada Day, Labor Day, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, Thanksgiving, Remembrance Day, Christmas Eve (Close at 2pm), Christmas Day, Boxing Day, and New Years Eve (close at 2pm). If the holiday falls on a weekend day the centre will be closed the following Monday. Fees are still incurred for these days.

Families are required to pay 10 days per calendar year for the day home providers vacation. Vacation days/centre closures are approximately 1 week around the Christmas holidays and approximately 1 week in the summer. In January there will be a list of closure dates for the year which will be sent out to parents. Any changes or additional vacation days will be given with advanced notice.

## Storm Closures

In circumstances of inclement weather, Sarah's Day Home for Little Explorers **will be closed if HRM schools are closed**. Fees for those days will still be required. Sarah's Dayhome for Little Explorers will also follow HRM storm protocols in regards to delayed openings or early closures due to inclement weather when appropriate. If there is no school on a day of inclement weather then Sarah will decide if the centre will remain open or closed, and will do so by 6am the day of.

In circumstances of power outage of more than 3 hours, the centre will be closed.

## Sarah's Absent Policy

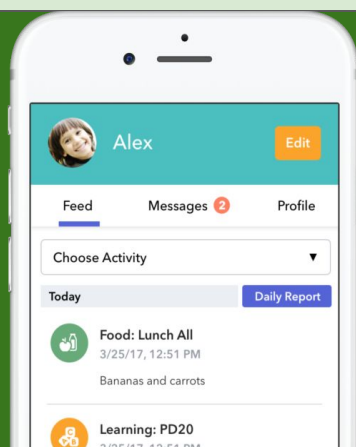
In the event that Sarah becomes ill or has a family emergency and is unable to provide care, a trusted and educated substitute teacher will be called in. If a substitute is unable to fill in, the centre will have to close until Sarah is able to find a substitute or is able to return to the centre. Please make sure back up care is available for your child. Families are required to pay for up to 3 sick day closures per calendar year.

## Photographs and Videos

With permission, I would like to take pictures or videos during the days of our activities and outings for in-home use and to be posted on Brightwheel. Photos for promotional use will not include any of the children's faces or names and may be posted on the website or social media accounts. Photos will be watermarked to ensure they are not used by a third party.

## Digital Reporting

Daily forms, photos, and other updates will be available via Brightwheel. Brightwheel can be accessed online through a browser, or through a mobile app on Apple or Android devices. An invitation to join Brightwheel will be sent to you by email once your child is entered into the program that will allow you to see your child's daily updates throughout the day. There is also a message feature through the app, so feel free to message me on there if needed. Parent notices may also be posted there as well.



You can find more information about Brightwheel at:

[www.mybrightwheel.com](http://www.mybrightwheel.com)



# Contact Information

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## Centre Address

49 Nottingham Drive, Stillwater Lake, NS

## Centre Phone

902-877-5400

## Centre Email

[sarahskinner@sarahslittleexplorers.ca](mailto:sarahskinner@sarahslittleexplorers.ca)

## Centre Website

[www.sarahslittleexplorers.ca](http://www.sarahslittleexplorers.ca)