

Southside  
**Mothers**  
Day Out

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**Parent Handbook**

Revised September 2003



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## **1 General Information**

### **1.1 Contact information**

Southside Mothers Day Out (SSMDO)

(Located in Old Strathcona)

Edmonton, Alberta

414-6899

(During program hours, calls will often be answered by the answering machine and returned later).

Door Lock Combination:

(Please write in the current combo that is provided to members).

Website: [www.ssmdo.strathcona.org](http://www.ssmdo.strathcona.org)

### **1.2 Introduction**

Southside Mothers Day Out is a parents' co-operative with professional staff that provides a safe, nurturing "learn through play" program for children one day per week. While children are at SSMDO, parents are free to pursue other activities, knowing that their child or children are well cared for. Each day, there is a maximum of 18 children, ranging in age from 12 months to 5 years, in a mixed-age setting. Note that children DO NOT have to be toilet-trained and that there is a supervised sleep-room for children who still nap in the afternoon.

SSMDO is registered as a nonprofit society. A copy of the SSMDO by-laws can be viewed on-line at our web-site or can be requested from the Secretary of the Board of Directors.

At SSMDO, we believe strongly in the parents' co-operative basis of our program. This means that, although we have excellent, professional, paid staff, the program is run by parents like you. The Board of Directors (also called the Executive) is composed of parent volunteers who are elected by the members. Each day, there is a duty parent helping with the operations of the program. As well, there are countless jobs, large and small, some officially "parent tasks", others not, that are done by parents. **THIS IS OUR PROGRAM AND IT IS WHAT WE MAKE IT.**

### **1.3 Program times & dates**

SSMDO operates Monday to Friday from 9:30 AM to 3:20 PM, with each child registered for one day per week. The program is divided into three terms (fall, winter, spring) for a total of 38 weeks. For the current term dates and holidays, please refer to the cover page of your copy of the members' phone list. Note that this phone list is intended to be used only for contacting other members on SSMDO matters (e.g., to arrange to switch duty days, as discussed later in Section 7.1.3). It is NOT to be used for solicitation or any other purpose.

### **1.4 Program philosophy**

The program's philosophy is based on the belief that children learn best in a child-centered environment, supported by caring adults. Our aim is to promote growth and development of the

whole child by considering each child's social, physical, intellectual, creative, emotional, and self-esteem needs. We believe that children are naturally motivated to make sense of their world and that the primary vehicle in their quest for knowledge is play. Children need to be active participants and have the freedom to experiment and self-teach in a discovery-oriented environment.

Based upon this “learning through play” philosophy, staff aim to meet the developmental needs of the children and promote a positive attitude toward learning by:

- structuring the program to allow for uninterrupted free-play time;
- providing open-ended activities that encourage children to choose materials that stimulate their interest;
- interacting, extending, reinforcing, clarifying, and sharing experiences with children;
- organizing and introducing learning centres and resources that foster children's curiosity and desire to learn; and,
- evaluating the effectiveness of the learning environment.

## **1.5 Staff and children**

The Director is the senior staff person who supervises the Teacher and any other staff. Both the Director and the Teacher have minimum qualifications of Early Childhood Development Diploma Level III (or equivalence), as well as current first aid training. At various times, SSMDO also has students from Grant MacEwan Community College's Early Childhood diploma program doing field work placements.

A maximum of 18 children are supervised by at least 3 adults (Director, Teacher, duty parent), for a maximum adult to child ratio of 1:6. The children range in age from 12 months to 5 years. The age groupings are:

- infants (between 12 and 18 months old)  
Note that infants must be walking to be eligible to attend SSMDO.
- toddler (19 months to 35 months old)
- preschool (3 years to 5 years old)  
Note that children who are eligible to attend kindergarten (i.e., turning five years old by February 28 of the calendar year of registration) are not eligible to attend SSMDO.

On any given day, there can be a maximum of 2 infants present. Various combinations of toddlers and preschoolers can be accommodated to a maximum of eighteen children. The maximum number of children 3 and under (i.e., infants and toddlers combined) is 11.

During naptime, either the Director or the Teacher remains in the sleep-room. The only people permitted to do diaper changes or toileting, other than a child's parent, are staff - the Director or Teacher.

## **2 What to Bring**

### **2.1 Lunch/afternoon snack**

You are responsible for providing your child with a nutritious cold lunch, including a drink, and an afternoon snack. Note that the lunchroom has a fridge to keep lunches cool but no microwave

for warming them. Please pack both the lunch and snack in a sturdy lunch kit/bag (one that will fit easily into the fridge with up to twenty other lunch boxes!). A list of snack and lunch suggestions is provided in Appendix 1 of this Handbook. Label your child's lunch box and all the containers in it, including lids.

**No nuts or nut products are allowed on SSMDO premises.** In addition to peanuts and all other nuts and peanut butter, this restriction includes coconut and sesame seeds and any products containing these ingredients. The restriction also applies to products that may contain trace amounts of peanuts/nut residues. It is extremely important to **read the ingredient listing on labels**. Also, ensure that any home baking sent for your child's lunch or snack is nut-free. For more information, see Section 9.1 of this Handbook.

## 2.2 Drink cup

The snack and drink at morning break are provided by the duty parent, however, your child must bring an empty drink cup (labelled with their name) for morning snack. This cup is in addition to the full drink that you send to go with their lunch.

## 2.3 Naptime items

SSMDO has a sleep-room, which has both cribs and cots, for children who nap in the afternoon. All children who nap must bring their own blanket and crib sheet (a fitted crib sheet fits the cot mattress, too). A pillow and/or soft sleep toy (as well as a soother, if used) may be sent. All the sleep items should be kept in a separate, labelled bag, i.e., a different bag than that used for diapers or extra clothes (see Section 2.4). All items must be labelled with the child's name.

## 2.4 Clothing

**Children should wear "old" or "play" clothes to SSMDO.** We believe children learn by actively experiencing their environment. This is usually accomplished through the use of their senses – "hands on learning". Translation - we often engage in messy learning activities that are even messier when several children are involved at the same time. We use non-toxic, washable paints and materials and we try to have the children wear paint-shirts, however, **clothing can become stained**.

We try to keep the SSMDO facility quite warm in the winter. Short-sleeved shirts are good for playing at the water table - no wet and drippy sleeves within five minutes of arrival!

Children should be dressed in clothing that is appropriate for physical activity and for the weather. The children go outside to play in the playground every day except in very cold or wet weather. When the temperature is minus 15 degrees Celsius or below, the children do not go outside to play.

In warm weather, please put sunscreen on your child before bringing them to SSMDO. If your child is to wear a sunhat outside or if they must use a certain type of sunscreen (for reapplication later in the day), please label the hat and sunscreen bottle clearly and advise the staff.

Your child must bring a labelled bag with a complete second set of clothing (including underwear and socks) in case they get wet or REALLY dirty. Include a plastic shopping bag for

wet or soiled clothing. All clothing, both what is worn and the second set, should be labelled. If your child is still in diapers, the change of clothes can be included in their diaper bag.

## 2.5 Diapers

For children who wear diapers, bring a labelled bag with diaper necessities. Send disposable diapers only as health regulations do not allow SSMDO to use cloth diapers. Please provide at least four diapers, plus diaper wipes, each day.

Children who wear disposable training pants (e.g., Pull-Ups) should also have a sufficient number of extra pairs.

## 2.6 Indoor shoes

Children need to wear rubber-soled or nonskid shoes. Slippers are not appropriate due to safety considerations (e.g., fire drill). If your child arrives wearing boots for the weather outside, please remember to bring inside shoes.

## 2.7 Toys from home

We discourage children from bringing toys from home because they often get lost or broken. (SSMDO assumes no responsibility for lost or broken toys.) Also, children are just learning about the concept of sharing. It is one thing for a child to share SSMDO toys but quite another to share their own special toys. The one exception to this “no toys from home” guideline is a soft sleep toy which should remain in the sleep-room for use during naptime.

## 2.8 Label, label, label

**Label ALL of your child's clothing and articles with his/her first name (and last name initial, if necessary).** To assist staff and duty parents, it is vital that everything be labelled: bags, lunch box, containers, lids, drinking cups, crib sheet, blanket, pillow, soother, sleep toy, jacket, mitts, hat, boots, shoes, clothes, etc. Use indelible ink and redo it every two months or so.

SSMDO assumes no responsibility for loss or damage to your child's personal property.

# 3 The Program Day

## 3.1 Parking and entrances

The SSMDO entrance is on 84 Ave. Strathcona Baptist Church administration has asked that SSMDO members NOT use the Church hallway doors (which open onto 84 Ave beside our entrance in front and onto the parking lot behind) as entrance or exit points. Please always use the door which is marked “SSMDO”.

There are a few parking spaces in front of the Church on 84 Ave. There is also a parking lot behind the Church, on the south side of the building. From the parking lot, walk down the alley along the west side of the building to access the SSMDO entrance, which is located on 84 Avenue (on the north side of the building). If you have older children, please use the parking lot so that parents with babies and very young children can use the spaces on 84 Avenue. Also, when it is your duty day, please park in the parking lot behind the building.

DO NOT park in the alley or in the two “reserved” spaces beside the Church door on the parking lot side of the building.

Bicycle parking is limited to the street signs on 84 Avenue in front of the building.

### **3.2 Arrival**

SSMDO is open from 9:30 AM to 3:20 PM. As the SSMDO daily schedule is quite “loose”, you have flexibility in what time you drop your child off (as long as it is after 9:30 AM) and in what time you pick them up (as long as you leave by 3:20 PM).

**Children can not be left at the facility before 9:30 AM.** If you arrive prior to 9:30 AM, you are welcome to go into the sleep-room to read with your child until opening time. The coatroom door to the sleep-room is open at this time for this reason. You must stay with your child until they can be signed in at 9:30 AM. It is important that parents and children not enter the main program area before 9:30 AM as this is the staff’s time to prepare art and other activities for the day.

### **3.3 What to do to set your child up for the day upon arriving at SSMDO**

#### **3.3.1 Outerwear**

Each child is assigned a hook in the coatroom, immediately down the stairs from the SSMDO exterior entrance. The hook is labelled with a simple shape that the child can recognize, along with the child's name and day. The child will use "their" hook on their program days throughout the year to hang coats, hats, etc. Boots can be placed on the ground or in the cubbyholes below the hooks.

If your child is visiting on an extra day (i.e., not their regular registered day), use the "hippo" hook and cubby.

When it is snowy or wet outside, parents are asked to remove their boots or shoes at the coatroom entrance. This keeps the main program area much cleaner, which you will appreciate when it is your turn to be duty parent.

#### **3.3.2 Clothing/diaper bags**

Cubbyholes inside the entrance gate are labelled with the same symbols as the hooks in the coatroom. Children who are toilet-trained store their bags containing extra clothes, a plastic bag for wet clothes, etc. here.

Bags for children who are still in diapers or who are in the process of toilet training should be hung in the bathroom. The bags should contain diapers/wipes or training pants, an extra set of clothes (all labelled, of course), and a plastic bag for wet clothes. The hooks in the bathroom are not specifically assigned to children so just hang the bag on a free hook or share a hook with another bag, if necessary.

**3.3.3 Lunch bag/drink cup**

Put your child's lunch bag in the refrigerator in the lunchroom. Put the extra drink cup for morning snack on the tray on top of the refrigerator. (If you arrive closer to snack-time, the tray may already be on the food preparation counter).

**3.3.4 Naptime items**

If your child will be napping in the afternoon, you must prepare a bed or crib in the sleep-room. Choose a crib or cot and put the fitted crib sheet on the mattress. Place the blanket, pillow, and soft toy, if it's necessary, on the crib or cot. Put the bag that contained the naptime items under the crib or cot. (All the items, of course, must be labelled). To ease the naptime transition, you may want to have your child help you set their bed up.

At the end of the day, your child's sleep bag (filled with his sleep stuff) will be put in the coatroom, outside the sleep-room door, for you to pick up.

If your child uses a soother, please place it by the sign-in binder on the front desk in the lunchroom. It must be labelled, of course!

**3.3.5 Sign-in**

Make sure to sign your child in for the day in the sign-in binder, which is located on the front desk in the lunchroom. Add any extra information, such as contact numbers for the day or instructions regarding naptime or toilet training.

Find your child's nametag on the front desk and pin it on the back of their shirt. Red tags are for children in diapers, green tags are for children who are toilet trained, and yellow tags are for children who are in the process of toilet training.

**3.3.6 Good-bye**

Don't forget a kiss and good-bye! Enjoy your day!

**3.4 Daily "Schedule"**

At SSMDO, a daily "schedule" is followed in a general way. However, we are quite flexible in order to respond to the children and their special interests or projects each day. Each day, parents can view the program highlights which are detailed on the program board, located in the hallway near the lunchroom. The daily routine is included as Appendix 2 of this Handbook.

As children arrive, they can choose from a number of activity stations set up in the lunchroom. These stations often include: craft projects, playdough, painting, water table, and sand table. Once most of the children have arrived and been greeted, at around 10 AM, the playroom is opened. Children are then free to choose either to continue with their activities in the lunchroom or to go to the playroom for unstructured play. The playroom contains various toys, e.g., train and block sets, plastic animals, Barbies. There is also a playhouse there that is often set up to match a theme (e.g., castle, vet clinic, fire station).

The duty parent sets out the food and drink on the tables and high chairs in the lunchroom for morning snack around 10:30 AM. Staff then tell children that snack is available and those who want a snack come and wash their hands at the sink in the lunchroom.

After snack time, it's circle time (sharing ideas, songs, fingerplays). Then it's time to run around in:

- the playground, weather permitting,
- the car-room (located in the east section of the Church basement, accessed off the coatroom),  
or
- the gymnasium (located directly above the SSMDO space, on the main floor of the Church).

After some loud and energetic fun, there's a story for older children while the younger ones start preparing for lunch. Everyone goes to the lunchroom for lunch, which the duty parent has set out.

After lunch, children who nap are settled into their cribs or cots in the sleep-room under staff supervision. Children who do not nap go to the playroom. This is when more enhanced activities for the older children take place.

As the napping children wake up, they are escorted to join the fun in the playroom or to the lunchroom for snack, depending on the time. At around 3 PM, the duty parent sets out the afternoon snack from the children's lunch kits. The children then eat their snacks while awaiting their parents.

### **3.5 Toileting**

Toileting (changing diapers for infants, taking older children to the bathroom) is done after snack (about 10:45 AM), after lunch (about 12:45 PM), as well as after nap, if necessary. If a diaper is noticeably smelly at some other time, a diaper change is also done. While in the lunchroom or playroom, older, toilet-trained children can go to the bathroom on their own when they need to. If a child who is toilet training indicates that they have to use the toilet or if a toilet-trained child has to use the toilet while playing outside, in the car-room or in the gym, a staff person will take them to the bathroom.

The only people permitted to do toileting are the Director or Teacher. Of course, while you're on-site at the SSMDO facility, you can also undertake these responsibilities for your own child, if you choose to.

### **3.6 Programming**

Because children only attend SSMDO once day a week, themes often extend longer than one week. To allow the children to fully explore activities, staff follow the lead of the children in determining when to add, end, or extend an experience. As a result there tends to be some overlap from one week to the next.

Most activities are presented in an open-ended manner. Therefore, the younger children and the older children can interact with most of the same materials, yet come away from their experience with very different results. Staff redirect infants to ensure that they have opportunities to play

and interact with the materials in a manner that is safe and fosters learning for them. The older children are encouraged to be watchful and to ask for intervention if the infants are not behaving properly – e.g., dumping sand out of the sand table, drinking water from the water table, breaking up the train tracks.

### 3.7 Sign-out and Departure

**Children and parents must leave the main program area by 3:20 PM.** Plan to arrive at least by 3:10 PM to allow time for collecting your child's possessions, saying good-byes, etc. Of course, once you have exited the gate, you can take more time in the coatroom to dress your child in their outerwear and finish chatting with other parents. By leaving the main program area on time, you enable the staff to have time to assess the day and plan ahead which, in turn, results in a more enriched program for our children.

In preparing to leave, please be sure to:

- Pick up your child's clothing or diaper bag, either in the child's cubbyhole near the entrance gate or hanging in the bathroom;
- Pick up your child's lunch kit, which should be on one of the lunch tables.
- Check for any handouts or other materials for parents at the front desk in the lunchroom (e.g., newsletter, information sheets, children's craft creations);
- Remove your child's nametag and put it back on the front desk, if it has not already been done.
- **Sign your child out** in the sign-in binder on the front desk.
- Pick up the bag with naptime items in it. It will be packed and waiting for you in the coatroom (i.e., OUTSIDE the sleep-room door, in the coatroom)
- Gather up all your child's outerwear at their hook and cubbyhole in the coatroom.

Periodically, check the file box outside the entrance gate. Children's artwork is filed by day for parents to take home. Also, there is a lost-and-found located immediately at the bottom of the stairs when you first enter SSMDO from outside.

As noted earlier, it is fine to pick your child up early from SSMDO if you'd like to (ensuring that they are signed out properly).

**Unless otherwise arranged, children will not be released to any person other than those specified on the registration form.** Parents must advise staff of any alternate arrangements.

### 3.8 Late departures

As noted in Section 3.7 of this Handbook, it is important that parents and children leave the main program area by 3:20 PM. We realize that unexpected delays do occur on occasion. However, frequently arriving at 3:20 PM or later to pick up your child is a concern and will be addressed as follows:

1. Staff will give the parent a verbal warning.
2. If the problem continues, staff will notify the President and a written notice will be sent to the parent. The warning notice will advise that the next time the child is picked up late, the

parent will either be charged the equivalent of the daily fee or their child will be unable to attend their following scheduled day.

## **4 Discipline of children**

When necessary, children are disciplined in order to promote self-control, to ensure health and safety for themselves and others, to learn to respect others' rights, and to maintain equipment. They are disciplined in a positive manner at a level that is appropriate to their actions and their ages. SSMDO's discipline policy is posted on the information board in the coatroom for parents to review. It outlines the methods staff use to guide children's behaviour. Under no circumstances is corporal punishment, abusive language, ridicule, harsh, humiliating, or frightening treatment permitted.

When the appropriate measures (as determined from the "Guide to Programming in Day Care Centres" by Alberta Family and Social Services, Winter 1993) have been consistently applied and have failed to produce a change in a child's behaviour to the satisfaction of staff, the Director will meet with the parent. The situation will be discussed and both parties will agree to a mutually agreeable course of action. (If necessary, assistance can be sought from an outside referral agency.)

Where there is no evidence that the measures taken are having the desired effect and there is concern for the health and safety of the child, or that of another child or the group of children, the parent will be asked to remove the child from the program. The final decision to withdraw services will be made jointly by the Director and the President or her designate from the Board. The Board will advise the parent in writing of the decision.

## **5 Fees**

### **5.1 Registration Fee**

The SSMDO registration fee is \$30 per family per year. Note that the registration fee remains the same no matter what time of the year a member joins the society. The registration fee is nonrefundable and nontransferable. (As noted in the introduction of this Handbook, SSMDO is a registered nonprofit society; our registration fee is the SSMDO membership dues).

A child is officially registered when:

- the registration forms are completed and signed;
- payment for the registration fee is submitted; and,
- payment for the deposit is submitted (discussed in Section 5.2 below).

If you are continuing in the program, registration for the following year starts in April of the current year. Again, the forms must be completed and signed, and a cheque to cover registration and deposit submitted. A single cheque can be used to cover both the registration fee and deposit(s). Please mark in the "memo" section of the cheque what it is for - registration fee and deposit(s) for which child or children. Using the "memo" section for all cheques greatly assists SSMDO in tracking revenue streams and ensuring accurate financial statements.

To secure a spot on a desired day for the following year, continuing members should complete these registration requirements by May 15 of the current year.

Members must inform the Registrars of any changes to the registration form (e.g., change of address or phone number). Parents must also advise the staff so that the information in the sign-in binder can be updated.

## 5.2 Deposit

A deposit cheque equal to four weeks' program fees is required upon registration. Given that the program fee is \$20 per child per day, the deposit is \$80 per child. The deposit amount is equal to the 4 weeks notice that is required to withdraw from SSMDO (see Section 5.5 below). Note that the deposit cheque is cashed at the time of registration and the amount is then deducted from the total program fees on the third term invoice provided that no penalty deductions have to be made.

There is a \$40 penalty deducted from the deposit cheque for EACH duty day not completed or parent task not fulfilled within a reasonable enrollment period. The following example illustrates such a situation. A family starts SSMDO at the beginning of September, completes a duty day in November, and is scheduled for a parent task in January. Unexpectedly, the family has to move from Edmonton at the end of December and gives (appropriate) notice to withdraw from SSMDO. The family does not arrange a different, earlier parent task to replace the one originally committed to so \$40 is deducted from their deposit for not having fulfilled a parent task.

Parent responsibilities are discussed in detail in Section 7 of this Handbook.

## 5.3 Program fees

Program fees are \$20 per child per day. Fees are billed on a per term basis. Payment for each term is required at the start of that term (i.e., the beginning of September, January and April). Under special circumstances and with the agreement of the Registrars, arrangements can be made to submit program fees for the term up to the end of the first month of the term. Please always use the "memo" section of cheques to identify what is being paid for (e.g., term fees for which child or children).

## 5.4 NSF cheques

Any non-sufficient funds (NSF) cheque given to SSMDO will result in a \$25 penalty fee to the member.

## 5.5 Withdrawal

**One month's written notice must be given to the Registrars to cancel registration and withdraw from the program. If you fail to provide this written notice, you will lose your deposit.** The withdrawal notice form is included as Appendix 3.

**If you are leaving SSMDO between terms** (e.g., your child will not be returning after the Christmas break), **one month's notice is still required.** The child is considered registered for the full program year unless the Registrars have received notice indicating otherwise.

## 6 Membership

To participate in SSMDO, parents are required to become members of the society and to pay a membership/registration fee. This is explained more fully in Section 5.1. There are two types of membership: active and associate.

### 6.1 Active Membership

Active membership means there is a child (or children) participating in the childcare program. Active membership requires specific duties to be performed by a parent. These responsibilities include:

1. Working **duty days** - the equivalent of **one day per term per child** in the program. The one exception to this is that, if the program is sufficiently full, those members who serve on the Board of Directors are not required to work duty days. This is in recognition of the significant time commitment required by Board positions.
2. Completing a **parent task**. There are a wide variety of parent task positions (e.g., phoning coordinators, cleaning bee workers, general meeting coordinator) so there should be something to appeal to everyone. The sooner you volunteer for a parent task after you register, the more you'll have to choose from.
3. Attending all 3 **general meetings** (usually held in early September, early January, and early April).

Failure to fulfill the requirements of active membership may result in termination of membership.

For more information on parent responsibilities, see Section 7 of this Handbook.

### 6.2 Associate membership

Parents who do not have a child currently participating in SSMDO but who would like to “keep a foot in the door” can become an associate member of the society by paying the registration fee. The only requirement is that the child has completed one full term in the program. Members who withdraw before completing a full term are not eligible for associate membership. However, they have the option of returning to the waiting list (if there is one) in their original place.

Associate membership enables you to use SSMDO as a drop-in centre when space allows, at the regular daily rate. In theory, your child could attend up to 6 \_ days per month. However, with enrolled children taking most of the spaces and getting preference for attending extra days (as explained in Section 8.1), this situation is unlikely. There is no requirement to work duty days or complete a parent task as an associate member. As an associate member, you are welcome to attend general meetings and planned social events. Associate membership also gives you preference on a waiting list if you wish to rejoin the program.

### **6.3 Working parents**

The intent of SSMDO is to support parents who do not work outside the home or who work part-time. SSMDO is not a day-care service to support parents working full-time. Because SSMDO is a parents' co-operative, it is vital that parents be available to actively participate, including working the required duty days.

### **6.4 Placement of children**

Every effort is made to assign a child to the day of the week preferred by the parent. However, this very much depends on overall demand for the program, demand for each day of the week, and the ages of the children assigned to each day (see Section 1.5 for more information on age groupings).

### **6.5 Waiting list**

If the program is full, a waiting list will be kept. Vacancies are filled as follows:

1. Siblings of children currently in the program.
2. Children of associate members.
3. Other children on the waiting list, in order of placement on the list, in accordance with age categories.

### **6.6 Termination of care**

Section 4 addresses termination of care as a result of a child's ongoing disruptive or destructive behaviour.

On the recommendation of staff, the Board of Directors may ask a parent to withdraw their child from SSMDO if the child does not appear to be benefiting from the experience. On rare occasions, even after a period of time, a child may continue to feel extreme distress at being separated from their parent. Such action would only take place after ongoing discussion and in consultation with the child's parent.

## **7 Parent Responsibilities**

### **7.1 Duty days**

#### **7.1.1 Assigned duty days**

Parents are required to act as duty parents throughout the program year according to the number of children they have participating in the program. This is usually one day per child per term on the same registered day the child attends. Note that there are two modifications to this rule:

- in certain circumstances (e.g., the first term is longer than the others), you may be required to work more than one duty day in a term for a child. However, over the course of the year, you will only have to work the equivalent of one duty day per child per term. So, for example, if you have one child in the program and you work two duty days in the first term, you will only have to work one additional duty day for the rest of the year.
- In special circumstances (e.g., low enrolment on a certain day), you may be asked to work a duty day on a weekday other than the one your child normally attends. For example, your

child may attend Wednesdays but you could be asked to work a Monday. In this case, you would be able to bring your child/ren with you on the duty day you work, as well as on their regular day that week.

The Vice-President is responsible for drafting and maintaining the roster of duty days. A sign-up sheet for parents to request a date they prefer is generally posted in advance of the start of a new term. The roster is completed at the beginning of each new term and is then available on or before the first scheduled day of each term.

For their duty day, the duty parent arrives by 9 AM and stays the entire day, leaving by 4 PM. To ensure that child/adult ratios are met, you are required to remain on site for the duration of the day. Accordingly, it is recommended that you bring a bag lunch, which can be eaten in the staff office during your lunch-break.

The duty parent is required to bring a number of supplies with them, including snack and juice for 18 children. In accordance with health regulations, please bring snack food and drink in the original, unopened packaging (e.g., sealed block of cheese, TetraPak of juice). Fruits and vegetables should be brought in whole and uncut. Given the potential for allergic reactions and other health concerns, home baking is not allowed for the group snack in the morning. A complete list of what to bring for your duty day is found in Appendix 4 of this Handbook.

When you arrive at the centre, you will be given a list of duties with a schedule for the day. The duties vary for each day of the week. In general, they include: cleaning, preparing morning snack, setting lunch and snacks out, and cleaning up afterwards, and assisting with supervision of the children. You are encouraged to interact with the children and offer support to the staff during busy or active periods like lunch time and gym/outdoor time. As well, if there are new parents there on your duty day, please help them in becoming familiar with the program and routines.

It is absolutely VITAL that parents perform their duty days. By regulation, SSMDO is required to have certain adult to child ratios and the program CAN NOT operate without the duty parent. If there is no duty parent, the whole program must close for the day and all the parents must come to take their children home immediately.

If you have additional children (e.g., a nursing baby) who are not in the program, you are able to bring them with you on your duty day.

It is expected that the required duty days will be worked by a parent. In certain circumstances, arrangements can be made in advance to have an alternate (e.g., grandparent) work a duty day.

### **7.1.2 Back-up duty days**

In addition to the day you are scheduled to work as duty parent, you are also “on call” on your registered day the week prior in case the assigned parent suddenly gets sick or has an emergency. For example, if you are scheduled to be the duty parent on Wednesday, the 8<sup>th</sup> of the month, you are the back-up duty parent for Wednesday, the 1<sup>st</sup>. If you get called as back-up, you would then work their day (the 1<sup>st</sup> in this example) and they would work the next week that was originally

assigned to you (the 8<sup>th</sup> in this example). The duty parent who was originally assigned the day is responsible for notifying the Vice President of the change to the duty day roster.

To be able to take over as back-up duty parent in an emergency, you should be prepared on your back-up duty day with required supplies and a nonperishable snack and drink. On your back-up duty day, do not leave the SSMDO premises after signing your child in until the duty parent has arrived.

Note that this is **for use in emergencies only**. If you know in advance that you can not work a certain duty day, it is your responsibility to find another parent to switch with in advance. This is discussed further in the following section.

### **7.1.3 Switching duty days**

If you are unable to work your assigned duty day, you are responsible for finding another parent to agree to switch days. The easiest way to do this is to look at the duty roster and start checking with parents assigned duty days on your day of the week later in the schedule.

Once a switch is arranged, you must notify the Vice President so the duty roster (and the phoning coordinator) can then be updated.

## **7.2 Parent tasks**

Along with duty days responsibilities outlined above, parents must also sign up for one parent task per year. You are required to undertake only ONE parent task, no matter how many children you have in the program. There are lots of tasks available, varying in the time commitment, location of the work, and skills required (e.g., a cleaning bee is one evening at the SSMDO facility, phoning co-ordinators for each day do short bits of phone work over the course of the year from home). A list of the parent tasks can be found at the SSMDO web-site. A sign-up sheet for parent tasks is organized by the Parent Task Coordinator (one of the Board members) for the start of the program year.

## **7.3 General meetings**

As set out in the SSMDO by-laws, members are required to attend general meetings. Attendance is required for three reasons:

- a) To communicate any necessary information (e.g., programming, policy, financial) to the members,
- b) To enable members to raise and discuss any issues of concern, and
- c) To ensure that "quorum" is reached for any voting (not less than 1/3 of total membership) on any issues requiring a vote.

If a member of the society is not able to attend a general meeting, they must be represented by another family member at that meeting. In exceptional circumstances where no family representative can attend a meeting, the Vice-President must be notified.

If there is a specific topic you would like formally discussed or a motion you would like to introduce at a general meeting, please advise the President at least two weeks before the meeting.

## **7.4 Fundraising**

Fundraising has been an important source of revenue for SSMDO. There is currently no required minimum amount that each family must fundraise. However, there are usually several different fundraising opportunities during the program year with the hope that one or more will be a good fit for each family. We strongly encourage all families to get involved with fundraising to ensure more funds and a better program for all.

## **7.5 Program / policy concerns**

If you wish to express any concerns about SSMDO, please do not hesitate to contact either the President of the Board of Directors or the Director (paid staff person). An issue can also be raised at a general meeting.

Generally, if the issue is about policy, contact the President who can then raise the issue to the entire Board, if necessary. If the concern is related to a programming issue, the Director (paid staff person) should be the initial contact. If the problem is not resolved at that level, then contact the President.

## **7.6 Social events**

Each year, there are a few social events planned which are completely optional. These social events provide an opportunity for members to get to know each other and talk to the staff outside of program hours. They're great fun so please try to attend!

## **7.7 Ghost parents**

A ghost parent acts as a substitute teacher in the event that one of our teachers is absent (e.g., due to illness or a medical appointment). You sign up to be available as a ghost parent for a certain day of the week (e.g., Thursdays) which may or may not be your regular SSMDO day. If you are called in as ghost parent, your child or children will receive an extra day of SSMDO free of charge. Of course, on your day as ghost parent, you are able to bring your child or children with you. The ghost parent sign-up sheet is kept by staff at the front desk. Note that signing up to be a ghost parent is a completely voluntary.

# **8 Extra program days**

## **8.1 Children attending extra program days**

According to the licensing rules under which SSMDO operates, a registered child can attend the program up to 6 \_ days per month. This means, in addition to your child's regular day each week, they could attend another 2 \_ days per month.

Being able to send your child for an extra day depends, of course, on the availability of a suitable spot. If you are interested in a specific day, there are two ways to access extra days:

1. Depending on the current enrolment situation, there will be a sign-up sheet for extra days on the front desk near the sign-in binder. This sign-up sheet indicates how many empty spots are available on each day, for the next period of time, in each category (baby,

toddler and preschooler). If there is a spot available on a day you'd like your child to attend, write their name down for that date on the sign-up sheet.

2. If the day you'd like to access is not on the sign-up sheet already (i.e., it is farther in the future) or if enrolment is too full to warrant a sign-up sheet, flip ahead in the sign-in binder to the date in question. Then write your child's name at the top right of the page under "Requests for Openings".

Even though you've put your name down for a "Request for Opening" in the sign-in binder or on the extra days sign-up sheet, you still require confirmation of an opening for the day in question. You are not guaranteed a spot until staff confirm it with you.

Payment for an extra day is due on that day. The regular daily rate applies. Make a cheque out to SSMDO, marking in the "memo" section that it is for an extra day for which child. Put the cheque in the mailbox for the Treasurer outside the entry gate. Receipts for payments of extra days are sent out by the Treasurer at the end of every term.

## 8.2 Children's absences

If you know that your child will not be attending SSMDO a certain day in the future (e.g., due to holidays), please flip ahead in the sign-in binder to the day that will be missed and note her name under "Children Not Attending" at the top left hand side of the page. Also, if your child is sick and can not attend on her regular day, please phone and let staff know as soon as possible (you can leave a message on the answering machine any time). There may be a child waiting for a spot on that day and, of course, this benefits the program with extra income. (Note that you do not receive any payment if another child accesses your child's spot when they are away).

If your child misses a regular day due to illness or holiday, you can NOT bring them on another day of the week to "make it up". Administratively, this is much too difficult to juggle while SSMDO is also trying to fill any empty spots with new paying children or children paying to attend an extra day.

## 9 Food

### 9.1 Food restrictions for all children

For the safety of all the children in the program, some who have severe allergies, there are some restrictions on the kinds of food allowed at SSMDO. These restrictions apply to what can be sent with children for their lunch and snacks, as well as the kind of snacks and treats that parents may bring on their duty days or for birthday celebrations.

**No nuts or nut products are allowed on SSMDO premises.** In addition to all peanuts and other nuts and peanut butter, this restriction includes coconut and sesame seeds and any products containing these ingredients. The restriction also applies to products that may contain trace amounts of peanuts or nut residues. It is extremely important to **read the ingredient listing on labels**. You may be surprised what products contain the peanut/nut residue warning! In addition, we have found it is advisable to check the label on the food item itself and not just the ingredient list on the outer packaging (e.g., the wrapper on the individual fruit bar, as well as the box that contained the dozen bars).

Most granola bars are not acceptable. If providing a granola bar, send it with the original packaging including the complete ingredient list. Ensure that any home baking sent for your own child's lunch or snack is nut-free.

Many commercially prepared baked goods may be contaminated with traces of peanuts or other nuts. Regretfully, this means that doughnut holes ("Timbits") and other doughnut products are not allowed.

## **9.2 For children with food allergies or special diets**

Depending upon the severity and type of allergy and/or special diet, the food restrictions for a specific child are handled in one of two ways:

- 1) The duty parent is made aware of the need and provides an appropriate or alternative morning snack.
- 2) The child's parent provides an alternative morning snack for the child.

A list of the children with food allergies on each day and what their allergies are is maintained by staff and posted in the lunchroom near the fridge.

## **9.3 Unsafe foods**

To guard against choking accidents, the following foods are prohibited at SSMDO:

- marshmallows
- seeds (e.g., pumpkin, sunflower)
- anything with a toothpick or skewer
- hard candies
- caramels and toffee
- potato chips and Cheezies
- popcorn
- gum

Other foods must be cut into pieces to reduce the risk of choking:

- whole grapes - sliced length-wise
- whole carrots or baby carrots - sliced length-wise
- fruit with pits – fruit cut up and pit removed
- hot dogs, sausages, pepperoni sticks – cut in half length-wise

## **9.4 Unhealthy foods**

To promote healthy eating, we ask that you not send candy-type food for lunch or snack. This includes chips, Cheezies, chocolate bars, candies, and pop.

## **9.5 Birthday celebrations**

Celebrating your child's birthday at SSMDO is completely optional. Birthdays are celebrated during snack in the afternoon. Staff make a "Happy Birthday Hat" for the birthday child to wear and everyone sings the "Happy Birthday" song.

Please consult with staff if you wish to bring a birthday snack (for up to 18 children plus staff). No home-baked goodies are allowed. Prepackaged (plain) Rice Krispie Squares and Chapman's ice cream are two suggestions. Unfortunately, cake or cupcakes are not allowed as birthday snacks. The last half-hour of the day is one of the busiest times at SSMDO and we want to avoid spending it madly rushing about trying to contain cake crumbs and clean up children before home time.

## 10 Health

### 10.1 Sick children

Sick children should be kept at home. Children are too sick to attend SSMDO if they have any of the following symptoms:

- Fever of 38 degrees Celsius or higher
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- An obviously infected nasal discharge (thick or coloured, especially green or reddish brown)
- A persistent cough
- Red, swollen eyes
- Persistent pain
- An *undiagnosed* rash or skin condition
- A communicable disease

**Please notify SSMDO if your child contracts a communicable disease.** (Staff will then notify other parents, if necessary).

If your child has a **cold**, the following need to be taken into consideration before your child attends:

- Discharge from their nose must be clear and manageable in a group care setting. (That is, how often does their nose need to be wiped?)
- Coughing and sneezing must have subsided. (That is, how frequent is it? How deep is the cough? How prolonged?)
- Would you want your child to be exposed to another child displaying early to middle stages of a cold?

If your child is too ill to participate in the regularly scheduled activities, then he is too sick to attend SSMDO. If you hesitate about sending your child, she is probably too ill to come. In this way, all children receive the benefit of the healthiest environment possible. Keep in mind that young children are susceptible to a number of "bugs", especially in group care, and that one sick child in the program can create havoc for a large number of families.

If your child should become ill while at the program, staff will call you at the numbers listed on the registration form to come and pick him up. The staff will make the decision to call you based on the best interests of both your child and the other children in the program. For this reason and for true emergencies, it is important that your phone numbers and the alternate emergency contact information be kept up to date.

## **10.2 Medications**

### **10.2.1 Non-prescription medicines**

**Staff area not allowed to administer non-prescription medicines.** This means that staff CAN NOT administer Vaseline, diaper-rash prevention or treatment creams, Orajel, Tylenol, etc. to a child unless a Doctor has written a “prescription” for it and a medical authorization form is completed by the parent. The prescription needs to be on hand.

### **10.2.2 Prescription medicines**

Prescription medications can be administered to children if the following conditions are met:

- A medical authorization form is completed by the parent, listing date, name of child, prescribing doctor, name of medicine, dosage, and time(s) to be given.
- **Medicine is provided in its original container**, with the original labelling.
- Staff are informed by the parent. Only paid staff with child first aid training may administer medication.
- Medication must be stored in a locked container at SSMDO. This can be refrigerated, if required. DO NOT leave medicine in your child's bags.

## **10.3 Accidents**

If your child has a minor accident while at SSMDO, staff will comfort the child and provide first aid treatment. If necessary, staff will call you to discuss whether you want to come and take your child for professional medical treatment. Otherwise, staff will advise the parent at the end of the day.

If your child has an accident that requires immediate medical attention, an ambulance will be called. A staff person will go with the child in the ambulance, taking the child’s information sheet. Staff will contact you as soon as possible. Any expenses incurred for treatment, including ambulance fees, are the responsibility of the parent.

Within 24 hours of an incident or accident taking place, the staff involved will complete an incident/accident form, the Director will sign it, and the President will be notified. The parent will be asked to review and sign the report. After the President signs the report, it will be placed in the child's file.

## **10.4 Emergency information**

A detailed health information form for each child is kept in the facility. This sheet must be completed before a child can be left at SSMDO. Medical information, emergency numbers, allergies, etc. are to be listed. If information changes during the year (e.g., contact information, allergies diagnosed), make the changes on the form, initial them, and advise staff verbally, if necessary.

An authorization form must also be completed for each child. It is attached to the emergency information form. The duty parent must complete forms for any nonregistered siblings, i.e., a child who is not registered in the program but comes with a parent on a duty day.

## 10.5 Emergency evacuation

Please refer to evacuation procedures as posted by facility exits. Monthly fire drills are held.

In case of a real fire or other emergency, children will be evacuated to Knox Evangelical Free Church, which is located at 8403 - 104 Street (phone 432 – 7220). As this location is close, staff would walk with the children to the building. Parents would then be called to pick up their children.

## 11 Monitoring children

### 11.1 In-class

The staff in charge of the sign-in book is to be aware at all times of the number of children in attendance during the day. They inform other staff of the number of children and account for any changes throughout the day. In addition, the number of children on site is posted on a chart in the main program area.

A head count is done before the children leave for the playground, gym, or car-room, when they arrive at the destination, and before the children leave the area. If a child needs to use the bathroom when outside of the enclosed program area, the child is accompanied by a staff member.

A staff member is the last adult to leave an area. This person is responsible for ensuring that all the children have been accounted for and for conducting a final search of the area before exiting.

### 11.2 Field trip

It must be noted that SSMDO field trips are very rare. If, however, a field trip is undertaken, there will be one adult for every four children. The children will be grouped and assigned to a specific adult and given a colour tag that matches the adult. The assigned adult will be responsible for all children wearing their co-ordinating colour.

When leaving the premises, the SSMDO staff will take a supply backpack with them containing;

- 1) All the children's information sheets, including health records;
- 2) First aid kit;
- 3) A cell phone or adequate coins for a pay phone;
- 4) A list of children in attendance on the field trip; and,
- 5) Assorted supplies (e.g., Kleenex, sunscreen, extra hats, mitts, etc., as the weather dictates).

Information on the specific details of the field trip, including a map of the route to be taken and estimated times of arrival, departure and return, as well as the cell phone number (if used), will be left with any adults staying at the facility.

The children's nametags are taken off before departing SSMDO for a field trip. This is done so that strangers can not use a child's name to try to lure them away.

# Appendix 1

## Snack and Lunch Suggestions

### Duty Day Snack Suggestions

**Drink** 2 litres of juice (e.g., apple, orange)

**Snack** e.g. cheese & crackers, bagels & cream cheese, bread sticks & yogurt, fruit (e.g., apples, bananas, melons, berries), veggies (e.g., celery or carrot sticks), yogurt tubes, raisins

Please bring the food and drink in the original, unopened packaging (e.g., sealed block of cheese, TetraPak of juice).

Fruits and vegetables should be brought in whole and uncut.

Home baking is not allowed for the group snack.

Please provide enough for 18 children, one drink and two helpings of snack each.

### Lunch Suggestions

**Sandwiches** tuna, salmon, luncheon meat, cheese, Cheese-Whiz, bagel slices with cream cheese and jam or sliced strawberries, mini pitas with tuna or egg salad or broccoli-slaw

**Deli stuff** sliced ham or garlic sausage, ham rolled up, pepperoni stick (cut in half lengthwise), sliced olives, hard boiled egg, buttered whole wheat bread, cheese slices

**Crackers** graham crackers, Goldfish Crackers, wheat thins, rice cakes

**Leftovers** pancakes, French toast, pizza, sausage or hot dog (cut in half lengthwise), hamburger pieces, chicken nuggets, chunks of roasted chicken, cold pasta with parmesan cheese, perogies, rice or California cones

**Veggies** baby carrots or thin carrot sticks, cucumber wedges or slices, sweet pepper strips, small broccoli or cauliflower florets, dip for veggies (e.g., ranch, dill or humus)

**Fruit** mandarin orange wedges, watermelon chunks, plum halves (pit removed), cantaloupe or honeydew melon pieces, grapes (sliced lengthwise), small apple, banana, berries, avocado, real fruit leather, dried cranberries or apricots, prunes, raisins, Yogurt or Minigo (send a spoon with the child's name on it)

**Baking** (**NO NUTS**) muffins, cookies, Rice Krispie or puffed wheat squares

**NO NUTS OR NUT PRODUCTS ARE ALLOWED AT SSMDO.** This includes peanuts, peanut butter, other nuts, coconut, and sesame seeds. Products that may contain trace amounts of peanuts or nut residues are also prohibited. **Carefully read the ingredient listing on all labels.**

Please do not send candy, chips, Cheezies, popcorn, marshmallows, gum or pop for lunch or snack. Also not allowed: anything with a toothpick or skewer, and seeds (e.g., sunflower, pumpkin).

## Appendix 2 SSMDO Daily “Schedule”

9:30 AM	SSMDO officially opens	
9:30 – 10:00 AM	Free play in lunchroom	All centers open – sand table, water table, craft project, painting, playclay
10:00 AM	Playroom opens	Toys, playhouse, books available
10:00 – 10:45 AM	Free play continues in both lunchroom and playroom	
10:30 – 10:45 AM	Snack available in lunchroom	
10:45 – 11:00 AM	Clean-up & toileting	Activity centres & toys tidied. Diapers changed and older children taken to bathroom.
11:00 – 11:10 AM	Circle time	Sharing ideas, songs, fingerplays, stories
11:10 – 11:45 AM	Active play	In playground (weather permitting) or gym or car-room
11:45 AM – Noon	Circle time	Sharing ideas, songs, fingerplays, stories
Noon – 12:30 PM	Lunch	
12:30 – 1:00 PM	Quiet play in lunchroom & toileting	
1:00 – 2:45 PM	Supervised naptime in sleep-room for children who nap. Free play for other children.	More enhanced activities for older children undertaken in playroom, playground, car-room or gym
2:45 – 3:00 PM	Wake-up, toileting & clean-up of afternoon play	
3:00 – 3:15 PM	Snacks available in lunchroom	Puzzles & books available until close
3:15 – 3:20 PM	SSMDO closes	

Note that this daily “schedule” is followed in a general way. SSMDO is quite flexible in order to respond to the children and their special interests or projects each day.



## Appendix 3 SSMDO Withdrawal Form

### Notice of Withdrawal from Southside Mother's Day Out

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Please accept on this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 200\_\_ (date), official notification that I, \_\_\_\_\_ (parent's name), will be withdrawing my child, \_\_\_\_\_ (child's name), from Southside Mother's Day Out. My child attends on \_\_\_\_\_ (day of the week child attends), and his/her last day of attendance will be \_\_\_\_\_ (date).

I have completed and/or am scheduled for the following duty days and parent task(s):

**Duty Days:**

Date Scheduled	Completed	Not Completed

**Parent Task:**

Date Scheduled	Specific Task	Completed	Not Completed

**Comments and/or other outstanding commitments to SSMDO:**

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My forwarding address is: (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

This will confirm my official notification to withdraw my child from SSMDO.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Parent's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

**Optional Information:**

- |   | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> |
|---|------------|-----------|
| • Would you like to remain as an associate member of SSMDO?                               | ___        | ___       |
| • Why have you chosen to withdraw your child from SSMDO?                                  |            |           |
| _____   |            |           |
| _____   |            |           |
| _____   |            |           |
| • Please provide any comments and/or suggestions that you feel would improve the program. |            |           |
| _____   |            |           |
| _____   |            |           |
| _____   |            |           |
| _____   |            |           |

## **Appendix 4 SSMDO Duty Day Checklist**

### **Duty Day Times**

Please arrive just prior to 9:00 AM so that you are prepared to start right at 9:00 AM.  
Plan on staying until 4:00 PM.

### **What to Bring**

**Juice** (two 1-litre TetraPaks)

**Snack** (for 18 children, 2 servings each)

- See Appendix 1 of the Parent Handbook or ask staff for duty day snack suggestions.
- Please bring the food and drink in the original, unopened packaging (e.g., sealed block of cheese, TetraPak of juice).
- Fruits and vegetables should be brought in whole and uncut.
- Home baking is not allowed for the group snack.

**Paper napkins**

**Extra cups** (in case anyone forgets to bring theirs)

**Roll of paper towel** (for children to use to dry their hands after washing them)

**2 wiping rags**

**Your own lunch**

**Smiles & patience**