



PARENT HANDBOOK

Makonsag Aboriginal Head Start Inc.

A Preschool Program for Aboriginal Children

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Daily Prayer

Chi-meegwetch Creator, for the water *[make wave-like motions with hand]*

And food that we eat *[put hands to mouth as if you were eating]*

Chi-meegwetch Creator, for the ways you gave my people *[palms facing down and move both hands outward]*

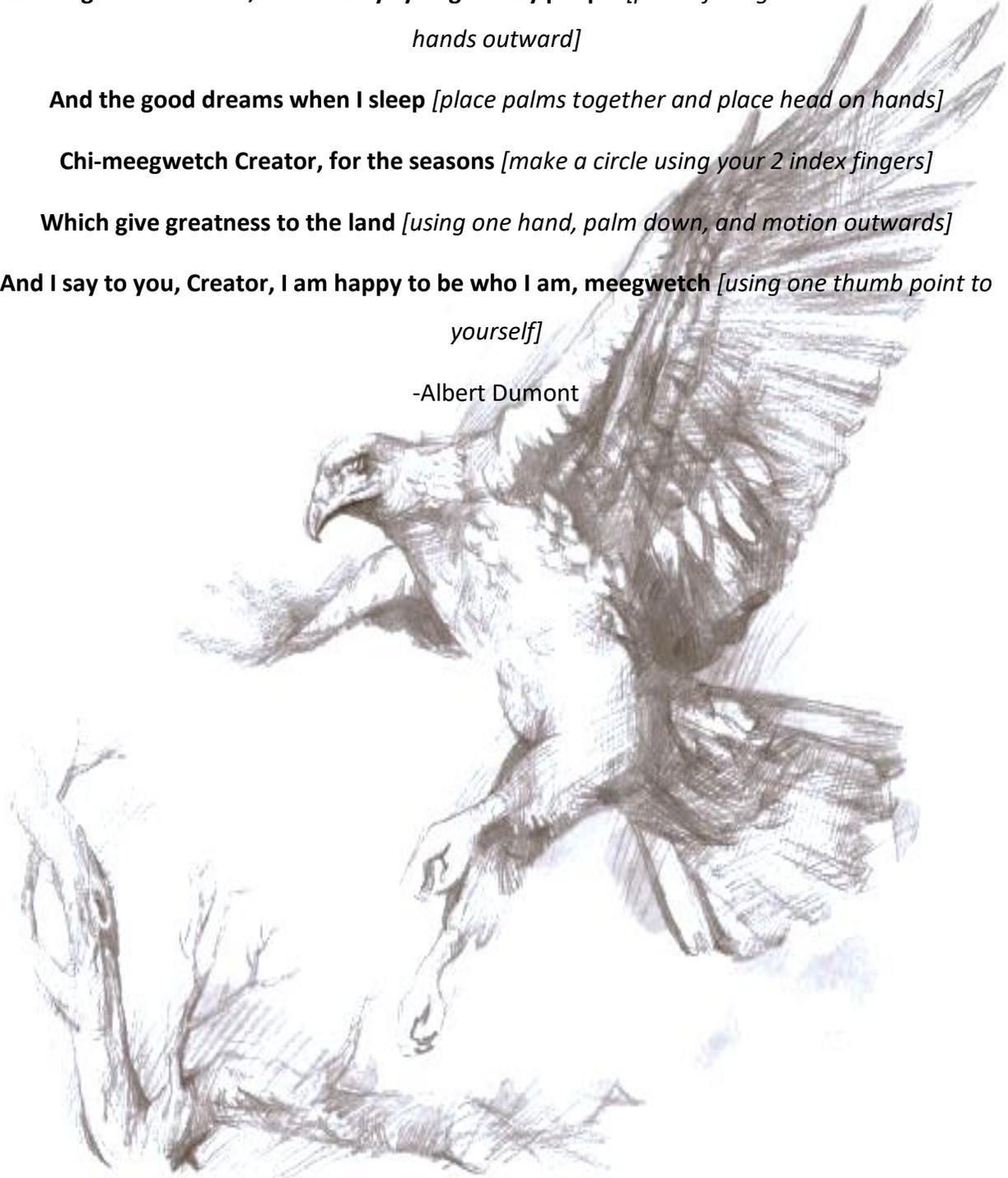
And the good dreams when I sleep *[place palms together and place head on hands]*

Chi-meegwetch Creator, for the seasons *[make a circle using your 2 index fingers]*

Which give greatness to the land *[using one hand, palm down, and motion outwards]*

And I say to you, Creator, I am happy to be who I am, meegwetch *[using one thumb point to yourself]*

-Albert Dumont



Greetings Parents and Caregivers!

Makonsag Aboriginal Head Start welcomes you and your child.

Our preschool provides a unique, culturally-enriched learning environment that supports the spiritual, emotional, intellectual and physical growth for Aboriginal children in Ottawa.

Our aim is to empower and encourage Aboriginal parents/caregivers as primary teachers through traditional and cultural parenting. Your involvement is a vital component of our program and we need your participation!

The purpose of this Parent Handbook is to inform about your and our responsibilities as outlined in the policies and procedures.

We encourage you to ask staff any questions you may have. We believe that open and ongoing communication between us will give your child the best possible experience with Makonsag.

Meegwetch,

Makonsag Aboriginal Head Start Staff



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WELCOME TO MAKONSAG ABORIGINAL HEAD START

Introduction

Makonsag Aboriginal Head Start originally opened its doors to Indigenous preschool children in 1997 as the Ottawa Aboriginal Head Start program. We are funded through the Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities (AHSUNC) through the Public Health Agency of Canada. Makonsag Aboriginal Head Start is licensed as a child care centre by the Ministry of Education through the Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA).

Mission Statement

Makonsag's purpose is to provide an Aboriginal preschool that fosters cultural awareness and early learning to ensure that Aboriginal children and their families have positive lifelong experiences and satisfaction as members of families and Aboriginal communities.

Program Statement

This statement sets forth our Program Goals and Approaches to plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences that support the learning and development of the children attending our program. We view each child as a gift from the Creator who are viewed as competent, curious and capable of complex thinking. Our children will have opportunities to gain knowledge and experience of how to live a good life. They will acquire this knowledge by watching, listening and doing, and adults, staff and family members, are responsible for encouraging and guiding them in these activities. Our program promotes inquiry based learning by reflecting on the interests and ideas of the children as well as the Educators. Our Early Childhood Educators plan the environment to guide the children's learning, enhance their knowledge, and meet their individual developmental needs while ensuring that children and families have a sense of:

- Belonging
- Well-being
- Engagement
- Expression

These are the four foundations identified in 'How Does Learning Happen?' Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years. For more information, visit: www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/pedagogy.html

Makonsag Aboriginal Head Start Philosophy

- Respond to the needs of Ottawa’s Aboriginal children by holistically nourishing their bodies, minds and spirits.
- Reinforce the Aboriginal world view, critical history, spiritual beliefs, languages, economies, cultures, extended families, methods for social and cultural development and approaches to health and wellness;
- Base the curriculum and instruction on individual and family needs to reflect and complement each child's development age;
- Provide opportunities for families to identify positive contributions to their Aboriginal heritage to world cultures;
- Assist Aboriginal families to recognize that Early Childhood Education is relevant to their present and future roles as family and community members;
- Foster our Aboriginal parents’ interest in participating in their child's education;
- Strengthen our children to succeed in both Aboriginal and mainstream societies.

Commitment to Continuous Professional Learning

Makonsag is committed to supporting access to learning, development and training opportunities for staff to develop skills to reach their highest potential in their role to support their interactions with children, families, and community members. Learning and growth is the basis of high-quality programs to continuously improve and create contexts that are meaningful for the children and families they serve. A continuous learning working environment will provide on-going development through discussion and review of the most current research and tools. Makonsag will use Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years’ ‘How Does Learning Happen?’ and AHS guiding principles to support Educators and early learning staff.

Makonsag provides and encourages attendance at many different professional development opportunities such as community workshops, seminars, and courses in order to upgrade their skills, and develop new areas of expertise. As per CCEYA regulations Makonsag must document and review strategies, to ensure we are meeting the needs of the children and families within our care. To meet this requirement, we will:

- Circulate a bi-annual parent survey, to all families whose children are enrolled
- Bi-annually at Team meetings, strategies will be reviewed and documented by staff
- Cook will meet with staff regularly to get the children’s feedback.

ABORIGINAL HEAD START PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Education: To prepare Aboriginal children for entry into the mainstream school system.

Objectives:

- Offer culturally relevant activities for preschool children
- Provide stimulation for a child's development
- Offer a wide variety of developmentally appropriate play materials for preschool children
- Develop an understanding of self as an Aboriginal person
- Encourage child development which enhances each child's strengths by:
 - Recognizing the life responsibilities of children; building trust; fostering independence,
 - Setting consistent limits and realistic expectations; supporting the values of trust, respect, sharing, caring and honesty; supporting and respecting the home language and culture of each in ways that support the child's health and well being
- Support Aboriginal languages' development and one of the official languages
- Increase awareness of making good choices
- Stimulate a natural sense of curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and support lifelong learning
- Support emerging cognitive development (i.e.: reading, numbers, shapes, colors, etc.), through the use of material and activities according to the developmental level of the individual
- Increase awareness of personal, home and community safety
- Provide a welcoming environment that supports and enhances Aboriginal culture, language and connection to Mother Earth
- Provide a balanced daily program and child directed activities, including individual, small group and large group activities
- Develop a system that allows for routines and transitions to occur in a timely, predictable and unrushed manner according to each child's need
- Promote an Aboriginal perspective of history
- Assist parents in navigating the public education system

Culture/Language: To promote the retention of Aboriginal cultures and languages that suit all our preschoolers and their families.

Objectives:

- Increase/encourage the use of the Aboriginal languages
- Increase knowledge of traditional ways
- Instill a sense of grounding in Aboriginal cultures
- Develop appreciation of other cultures
- Offer parent resources that are reflective of Aboriginal cultures
- Offer culturally relevant activities for children; accumulate children's books and introduce play material which reflect and promote Aboriginal cultures and language

Parent/Caregivers Involvement: To include parents/caregivers in all aspect of the program, including the planning, development, implementation and evaluation.

Objectives:

- Provide a non-threatening setting which supports Aboriginal parents

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- Provide socializing opportunities for parents and children – i.e. Cultural Feast nights
 - Foster mutual support, encouragement and network building amongst parents
 - Provide educational information to enhance the parent and child's growth and development
 - Promote a sense of belonging and community building
 - Reduce stress on families and increase coping skills
 - Encourage full participation in the program
 - Foster a sense of trust with families
 - Encourage parents to participate on parent council, regional committees and sub-committees
 - Encourage parents to become volunteers and classroom assistants

Social Support: To provide advice, support and information to parents/caregivers.

Objectives:

- Provide educational information to enhance the parent and the child's growth and development
- Provide access to resources which enhance child and parent growth and development
- Provide referral services
- Increase collaboration with various community and government organizations

Health Promotion: To provide and model healthy lifestyle choices for Aboriginal parents/caregivers and children.

Objectives:

- Promote healthy parenting and nurturing skills for pre-school children
- Foster respect, acceptance and tolerance of self and others
- Develop body awareness and respect for one's body
- Model and increase awareness of healthy lifestyle habits and choices
- Develop skills in stress management
- Model and develop healthy oral and general hygiene habits
- Increase knowledge and skills in First Aid and CPR
- Facilitate referral services to other health professionals

Nutrition: To encourage healthy eating habits using a variety of nutritional foods including traditional foods.

Objectives:

- Instill respect for one's body
- Make healthy menu and recipe ideas accessible
- Support the need and desire for traditional foods
- Raise awareness of nutritional components of a variety of foods (healthy and unhealthy)
- Develop healthy hygiene habits i.e. hand washing, tooth brushing
- Promotes Canada's Food Guide- First Nations, Inuit, and Metis

ENROLLMENT

Waiting List Policy

As per Ontario Regulation 137/15 the Makonsag waiting list policy outlines how the order in which children on the waiting list are offered admission is determined.

Procedures

Families are required to complete a Makonsag application form either online or providing a paper copy. The application form is entered into the Makonsag database, including the date the application was completed.

There are no charges or fees associated with the Makonsag application or waiting list process.

Selection Criteria

- Children of Aboriginal decent
- Children who are enrolled in the program have priority to attend the following year
- Once the program spaces are filled, parents/caregivers may place their child(ren) on a waiting list
- Makonsag Aboriginal Head Start program prioritizes children and families who have expressed high needs, and is not first come first served
- Children must be between 2.5 - 6 years to be considered for enrollment to the pre-school program
- Children with special needs are encouraged to participate in the program, however, Makonsag can only accommodate children with special needs if appropriate resources can be secured

How spaces are filled:

Once children meet the necessary criteria, spaces will be filled based on returning children, and expressed high needs. Spaces are then filled based on the order of the earliest completed

application. The exception is that priority is given to siblings of children currently attending. To ensure we are providing a family with the best early learning and care experience as possible, a conversation will occur to ensure we can meet a child's needs and the parents' expectations before a space is confirmed.

Information to parents or guardians of the position of a child on the list:

When requested by a parent, the Program Coordinator will provide the parent with where they are at on our waiting list as accurately as possible while maintaining the privacy of all families.

Parents are to make their request directly to the Program Coordinator who will provide the parent with verbal or email confirmation of where their child is on the waiting list. If the parent requires additional information or there are changes to their circumstances that would impact their application, they can advise the Program Coordinator.

The Program Coordinator will bring any concerns or additional questions regarding the waiting list to the attention of the Executive Director.

Enrollment

Once your child has been selected for enrollment, a member of the Makonsag Team will meet with parents/caregivers to complete enrollment forms and review the Program Handbook. During the enrollment process, families will be required to have their child's up to date immunization record.

Parent/Caregiver Orientation

Parent/caregiver orientation will be provided for new and returning parents.

Classroom Visit

Before a child begins at Makonsag, parents/caregivers are invited to visit the classroom and meet Makonsag staff. During the visit, children will be encouraged to explore the play materials to familiarize themselves with the classroom. At this time parents/caregivers will have an opportunity to address any questions they may have.

Child Enters Program

When children first attend the program, parents/caregivers are required to stay with their children in the classroom for the first day to ease the adjustment period. Parents/caregivers are asked to note any changes in their child's behaviour at home and teachers will make special efforts to observe new child(ren). During the initial period (first 6 weeks), communication between the Makonsag staff and parents/caregivers is very important to ensure the successful integration of a child.

Day 1: Child visits the with parents/caregivers (no drop offs)

Day 2: Child spends morning in program and picked up before lunch

Day 3: Child stays for lunch (if doing well may also stay for nap)

Day 4: Child stays for full day if doing well

Individual Family Program Plans (IFPP)

Makonsag is committed to families enrolled in the program. Makonsag has developed Individual Family Program Plans (IFPP) that incorporates the six program components (see page 2 for detailed component breakdown). The goal of the IFPP is to develop a realistic work plan for the year together with each family, based on building family strengths. This will enable Makonsag to better assist each family in meeting their identified needs and goals.

Relevant information gathered will be shared with appropriate staff members so that we can maintain a holistic team approach. The IFPP will be monitored by the Program Coordinator/Manager, throughout the year through regular contact with each family. Contact will occur by telephone, email, at drop/off and pick ups.

Clothing and Possessions

Children are required to have 2 full changes of clothing – socks, underwear, pants and a shirt and a pair of indoor shoes (Velcro straps with a rubber sole work best) to be kept at Makonsag. Each child will have a cubby to keep their belongings. All clothing and belongings **must be labeled** with the child's name. Makonsag is **NOT** responsible lost children's items. Children must be dressed appropriately for the weather, as outdoor activities may still be planned regardless of the weather (boots, raincoats, snow pants, etc. are required based on outdoor conditions).

Communication

Most announcements and/or communication will be done in person or via email. Occasionally, other information will be sent home for you to read. Makonsag will also keep you up to date with a monthly calendar of events and information.

If at any time you need to contact Makonsag please do so by calling **613-724-5844** or by email at **info@makonsag.ca**

Family Involvement

ALL FAMILIES are encouraged to contribute to the work of Makonsag. There are three primary reasons for this:

1. Your involvement makes Makonsag a part of your child's family community.
2. Volunteering can provide family members with new skills and experiences.
3. Aboriginal Head Start is a culturally based program, therefore your involvement helps to ensure your family and traditions are included in activities and contributes to the overall program and teachings.

Field Trips

Field trips will be planned for the children throughout the school year. Daily, a walking field trip will be planned to a neighbourhood park or other destination. Makonsag Staff and volunteers will ensure each child's safety and well-being during field trip.

Staff will complete attendance upon arrival and departure from a field trip. Consistent head counts will be completed to ensure all children will remain in a designated area. At times we may use public transit for field trips. There is a 1:4 ratio for field trips further than 2km and we encourage parents to join with their children when possible.

Code of Conduct

Makonsag strives to create and maintain a safe, healthy and positive setting that fosters children's social, emotional, intellectual, spiritual and physical development and that respects their dignity and their contributions. To ensure that this goal is met, the following behaviours by staff, parents, caregivers, volunteers, students and visitors will not be tolerated while participating in Makonsag activities:

- Aggressive behaviour
- Violence of any kind
- Possession or the presence of weapons or replicas
- Harmful, threatening or actual acts of violence or unlawful acts
- Verbal abuse in any form, including swearing
- The presence of any intruder or any activity which places the safety of the children, staff or visitors at risk
- The possession of alcohol, illegal drugs or unauthorized prescription drugs

Confidentiality

Information collected from parents/caregivers is for use of the Makonsag staff only. Information is kept in confidence and only released with the consent of the parent/caregiver. All children's files are maintained in a locked cabinet and only removed or reviewed by Makonsag Staff. Parents/caregivers have access to their child's record.

PROGRAM HOURS AND DAYS OF OPERATION

Makonsag operates Monday to Thursday 9:00 am to 2:30pm throughout September to June.

The Makonsag pre-school is closed each Friday to allow staff to participate in program planning, professional development and community outreach activities.

Makonsag will be closed for the following holidays:

- Labour Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day
- Boxing Day
- New Year's Day
- Family Day
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- Victoria Day

The Makonsag Overbrook program does not operate during designated days set annually by the Ottawa Carleton District School Board.

- March Break
- Christmas holiday closure
- July and August

Daily Program Schedule

9:00	- Drop-off, toileting and breakfast
9:30	- Indoor Free Play
10:00	- Outdoor play (weather permitting)
11:30	- Circle time
11:45	- Toileting, hand washing and lunch
12:15	- Tooth brushing/toileting
12:30	- Sleep time/quiet activities
2:00	- Toileting and handwashing
2:15	- Snack time
2:30	- Pick up

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE POLICY

1. Punctual arrival at the program is encouraged at all times. This will minimize the disruption in the schedule; thereby increasing the advantages and benefits the program offers the children. However, if a parent knows that they are going to be late dropping off or picking up a child, a telephone call is required.
2. Children are only permitted to leave the premises with an adult or caregiver/sibling of 14+ years of age who is listed on the Permission to Release form. Under no circumstances will the child be released unless program staff is notified in advance that an alternative person is picking a child up -- the person must provide identification. It is requested for you to call 24 hrs in advance unless there is an emergency.
3. When a child is brought to the classroom, it is required that the parent/caregiver bring their child to a teacher upon arrival. Under no circumstances are children to be left unattended at the front door or hallway.
4. Teaching or other staff are not available to supervise children before or after programming hours. Drop off is between 9:00am and 9:15am and pick up is between 2:15 and 2:30pm.

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5. Emergency pickup of a child can only be done by persons noted on registration form as an alternate authorized person.
 6. If drop-off and pick-up are consistently late a meeting will be scheduled with the parents/guardian of the child and an Individual Family Program Plan will be created in order for Makonsag to best support the family.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. Parents/caregivers are asked to inform the staff in advance if they are going on away and children will not be in attendance.
2. Makonsag staff must be informed any day that a child will not be attending the program. It is the responsibility of the parent/caregiver to call the school to report a child's absence.
3. Makonsag Aboriginal Head Start requires regular attendance of children registered in the program. If regular attendance is an issue, an Individual Family Program Plan will be created in order for determine how best to support the family.

DISCHARGE POLICY

1. Removal from the program is at the request of parents. Makonsag respectfully requests as much notice as possible.
2. Removal from the program for any other reason requires authorization of the Makonsag Executive Director and each case will be looked at individually. The decision must be made in the best interest of the child, family and program.

HEALTH POLICIES

Immunization

Under the Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA), children who attend the Makonsag Aboriginal Head Start must have up-to-date immunization. Before admission into the program, the child must be immunized as recommended by the City of Ottawa Health Department. Parents/caregivers who wish to be exempt from the immunization requirements must provide a signed statement of conscience/religious belief form. This information is forwarded to the City of Ottawa and is kept in the child's file. Children cannot attend Makonsag programming without their immunization documentation as per these requirements.

Sick Children

If your child comes into contact with any communicable disease (including ones that they are not vaccinated against, i.e. influenza, etc.) please notify program staff. Children who are ill and might spread the illness to other children will be removed from the program until they are no longer contagious. Parents/caregivers may be required to present a medical certificate to verify their child's health.

A child should not be brought to the program if they have:

- Pink eye (eye is red with yellow discharge)
- Rashes that you cannot identify or have not been seen by a doctor
- Impetigo (red pimples-like blisters on the skin)
- Severe cold, sneezing and running nose (if the mucus is thick, green or reddish brown in colour)
- Bronchitis, pneumonia or coughing (can be contagious if symptoms are continuous)
- Head lice
- Strep throat (until well enough to participate and has been treated with antibiotics for 48 hours)
- Any other communicable disease i.e. influenza
- FEVER: Fever is a sign of underlying illness, not an illness itself. How a child acts is the best indicator as to how they are feeling. If your child is showing signs of irritability, listlessness, drowsiness, or not able to fully participate in the program, the parents/caregivers will be contacted to pick them up. Parents/caregivers will be kept fully informed as their child's fever

progresses. Children are required to be picked up immediately if they have a **fever of 38 degrees Celsius** and will have to stay home until they are **24 hours fever free**.

- Vomiting and/or Diarrhea: If a child has one episode of diarrhea/vomiting while at school, the staff will watch for other signs of illness and notify parents/caregivers of the situation. If other signs of illness are present, the parents/caregivers will be notified to come pickup their child. If a child has more than one episode of diarrhea or vomiting during the day, the child will be separated from their group and the parents/caregivers will be contacted to pick up their child. Parents/caregivers are required to keep their child at home until they have not had an episode for 24hrs. **Please do not give your child Tylenol and bring them to Makonsag as they are contagious and we do not want to infect other children or staff.**

According to regulations set forth by the City of Ottawa (Health), parents/caregivers are required to bring a doctor's note verifying treatment and wellness before returning to school for the following illnesses: impetigo, scabies, pink eye, strep throat and whooping cough.

In order to reduce the spread of infections please keep your child home if they are unwell and not able to fully participate in the program (inside/outside activities).

If a child is sent to Makonsag with any of the above conditions, the parent/caregiver will be notified to come and take the child home. If a child becomes ill during the day, temporary care will be provided until the parent/caregiver can be contacted. This policy is in place strictly for the health of all children and staff in the program.

Medication Administration

If a child is taking a new medication for the first time, it is required that they have taken the medication for 24 hours prior to taking it at Makonsag. Any medications to be administered to children while at Makonsag will only be administered with the written approval of the parent/caregiver. Any non-prescription medication will not be administered unless a doctor has given written consent. The child's physician must complete a "Non-Prescription Medication Administration Form" to be submitted to Makonsag by the parent/caregiver.

If a child is taking prescription medication it must be in its pharmacy container bearing the physician's name, the child's name, drug name, date of issue, dosage and the instructions for administration and storage.

Prior to any medication administration, a "Prescription Medication Administration Form" must be filled out by the parent/caregiver that specifies the dosage and times the drug is to be given.

HIV/AIDS

Children that are infected with HIV or have AIDS have the right to attend the Makonsag Aboriginal Head Start Program without discrimination, unless they have medical, developmental or behavioural condition which would increase the risk of HIV transmission to others.

Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B is a virus that causes inflammation of the liver, including acute illness and chronic liver disease. Hepatitis B is found in blood, saliva and sexual secretions and can be transmitted to another individual through any of these body fluids. There have been rare, documented transmissions or outbreaks of hepatitis B in preschool settings. A vaccination does exist for this virus, but physicians will often charge for it. Some local community Health Centers will complete the vaccination free of charge. It is the policy of the program that:

1. Because of the small, but real risk of infection within the preschool setting, it is recommended, but not required that all children be immunized against Hepatitis B.
2. All staff will be tested against hepatitis B. It is recommended that all staff be immunized against Hepatitis B, however it is not required.
3. No child or staff infected with the virus will be denied participation in the program.
4. Universal precautions will be followed at all times to minimize the risk of transmission.
5. The City of Ottawa (health) is contacted to provide direction if a “broken skin” incident occurs.
6. Confidentiality is ensured for those parents of children, staff who have disclosed information regarding Hepatitis B infection.

Sanitation Procedures

Makonsag Aboriginal Head Start implements thorough sanitation procedures in accordance with the regulations and recommendations from the City of Ottawa Health Department. Sanitation policies and procedures include hand washing, room cleaning and sanitization, toy cleaning and sanitization, universal precautions and kitchen and food handling procedures.

Head Lice Policy

If a child is found to have head lice, he or she will be sent home with information for their parents/caregivers so treatment can begin immediately. Makonsag will check all children in the program and any other children who may have had contact with this group. Makonsag will keep all parents/caregivers informed if head lice is found in their program.

Children must be treated as per the information sent home with an approved product and all nits must be removed prior to readmission to the program.

Sun Safety

Parents/caregivers are required to provide hats for outdoor play. Makonsag will provide a sunscreen of SPF 30 or higher which will be applied before any outdoor activity. Parents/caregivers can opt to send their own sunscreen. Parents/Caregivers will be asked to sign a sun screen authorization form which will allow for application of sunscreen by staff.

Nutrition

All meals and snacks served at Makonsag Aboriginal Head Start are nutritious, promote variety and support traditional Aboriginal foods. The menu will follow Canada's Food Guide and will be complemented with the Aboriginal Canada Food Guide and follow the regulations under the Child Care and Early Years Act. Children will receive the following:

- Breakfast: A nutritious breakfast will be available to children upon arrival. Examples of breakfast might include hot cereal, toast, bannock, milk and fruit.
- Lunch: A nutritious lunch will be prepared. The program cook will provide a wide variety of hot/cold lunch menus.
- Snack: A healthy afternoon snack will be offered. Snacks might consist of cheese, bannock, crackers, fruit, vegetables and muffins.

Please note: Makonsag is a **Nut Free** environment and as such asks that **no outside food** be sent with students. All events are to be kept **Nut Free**.

Rest Time Policy

As the Makonsag Overbrook program operates for less than 6 hours per day, children will not be required to sleep or rest but may do so based on individual needs. Each child will be designated their own personal mat, sheet, and blanket, which will be cleaned weekly. As a comfort item, a child may bring a sleep toy/blanket to be used during rest time. To insure that the toy/blanket is always available to the child, this item is to be left in the child's personal locker (cubby) for the duration of the child's enrolment at Makonsag.

Staff, Parent, Caregiver and Volunteer Smoking

No smoking by anyone will be permitted on the premises or during any outdoor activity/field trip that involves the children. Staff, volunteers and parents/caregivers are permitted to smoke outside in a designated area and when children **NOT** are present.

SAFETY POLICIES

Fire Safety

The staff and children of Makonsag practice fire safety and evacuation drills on a monthly basis. For most drills a bell is used to indicate the alarm. Makonsag staff, volunteers and students must review the evacuation procedures at the start of their employment and then annually after that.

Criminal Reference Checks

It is the policy of Makonsag Aboriginal Head Start that all staff and volunteers have criminal reference checks conducted before they can participate in the program. The program will not be responsible for covering the costs of these reference checks for staff or students. Makonsag can provide a letter that will waive the fee for volunteers. Everyone will be responsible for obtaining his or her own checks from an Ottawa Police Station or to apply online.

Completed criminal reference checks from staff must be presented to the Executive Director before they can have direct involvement with the children.

Regular volunteers/visitors in the program (i.e. having direct contact with children) must have a completed criminal reference check prior to involvement with the children. Resource people or special guests for the day are not required to submit a criminal reference check because they will be under the direct supervision of the teachers. At no time will children be left unattended/unsupervised with a volunteer or placement student.

Supervision of Placement Student and Volunteers

Volunteers and placement students must not have unsupervised access to the children at any time. Volunteers and placement students may not be counted into the staffing ratio. No child can be supervised by a person under 18 years of age. Resource people or special guests attending the

program will be under the direct supervision of the teachers. At no time, will children be left unattended/unsupervised with special guests.

Allergies

Makonsag is a **NUT FREE facility**. Children's special dietary needs and allergies will be posted in the food preparation and eating area and in the classroom. Menus will be posted for the current and following week and up-dates noted if needed. **Outside food is not permitted into Makonsag.**

Emergency Procedures/Serious Occurrence

As per the Ministry of Education's requirements in the Child Care and Early Years Act, Makonsag has an Emergency Management Policy. If an emergency situation requires us to vacate the building, our emergency evacuation site is 1200 St. Laurent Blvd. at the ***St. Laurent Shopping Centre, specifically lower level near entrance 5 and the security office.***

Upon arrival at the emergency evacuation site, staff will notify parents/guardians of the emergency situation, evacuation and the location to pick up their children.

All staff are trained in infant/child CPR and First Aid. If a child is injured while attending the program, the following procedures will be followed:

- Immediate first aid is applied as required;
- If a child requires further medical attention 911 is called.
- The parent/caregiver is notified immediately by a staff person or soon after an incident.
- The parent's/caregiver's emergency contact is notified if parent/caregiver cannot be reached;
- The child and any necessary information about the child are taken by ambulance with a staff member.
- The Supervisor completes a serious occurrence report.
- The situation is examined and discussed by staff to prevent further injuries.

All serious occurrences as defined by the Child Care and Early Years Act will be reported to the Ministry of Education within 24 hours, and to the Makonsag Board of Directors immediately. Serious occurrences are defined as:

- (a) the death of a child who received child care at Makonsag;

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- (b) abuse, neglect or an allegation of abuse or neglect of a child while receiving child care at Makonsag;
 - (c) a life-threatening injury to or a life-threatening illness of a child who receives child care at Makonsag;
 - (d) an incident where a child who is receiving child care at Makonsag goes missing or is temporarily unsupervised;
 - (e) an unplanned disruption of the normal operations of Makonsag that poses a risk to the health, safety or well-being of the children.

The Ministry of Education has developed specific guidelines for reporting procedures for serious occurrences. These guidelines will be followed at all times. In addition, following a serious occurrence, a staff meeting will be held to follow up the incident. Incident and accident forms will be completed, debriefing with children, parents/caregivers and staff will be planned if necessary and a review of the policies and procedures will be done to ensure the prevention of a similar occurrence in the future.

A serious occurrence notification form will be posted for a minimum of 10 business days when there is serious occurrence at Makonsag. Notifications forms can be found at the entrance of Makonsag. The serious occurrence notification form will be updated for another 10 business days if any additional information is provided to the form. Notification forms will be kept on site for a minimum of three years.

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

The staff of Makonsag Aboriginal Head Start is legally required by the Ontario Child and Family Services Act to report any suspected child abuse if the children are in their care. This law is in place to ensure the safety and protection of all children. If a staff has reason to believe that any physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect has occurred, the following steps will be taken:

1. Any evidence or situations are documented.
2. The staff takes his/her concerns to the Executive Director immediately.
3. Makonsag Staff may make a consulting call to the Children's Aid Society to get feedback about whether the situation needs to be reported. At this point the information remains anonymous and hypothetical.
4. If the intake worker advises Makonsag Staff that the incident should be reported, then it is his/her legal obligation to ensure that this is done.

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5. The staff making the call may remain anonymous unless there are court proceedings and client records that may be subpoenaed.
 6. It is the responsibility of the Children's Aid Society to decide whether further investigation is required and to do so if needed.
 7. Makonsag staff want to work with families through this process whenever possible. It is understood that parenting is stressful and difficult. The staff wish to be a source of support rather than alienation. It is hoped that the staff will be part of the solution and be able to help whenever needed.

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT/CHILD GUIDANCE POLICY

Philosophy

The primary objective of Makonsag Aboriginal Head Start is to have a Behaviour Management/Child Guidance Policy that is preventive and empowering in its approach. Makonsag strives to promote an environment that is pro-active rather than reactive with respect to child guidance. Makonsag believes that children have certain needs for their development. These needs include:

- Love and affection;
- Feeling that they belong;
- Approval for things well done;
- Care and protection;
- Knowing what is expected of them;
- An opportunity to do things for themselves;
- Constructive playthings and a place to play;
- A chance to solve problems and to learn to think clearly; and
- Acceptance regardless of their behaviour.

Makonsag Aboriginal Head Start believes that there are steps to follow when guiding children's behaviour. They are the principals of child guidance, positive reinforcement, redirection, choices, and choices with consequences. Every effort will be taken to maintain a positive intervention with students.

Prohibited Practices

Subsection 6.9 – Prohibited Practices Ontario Regulation 137/15

48 No licensee shall permit, with respect to a child receiving child care at a child care centre it operates or at a premises it oversees the provision of child care,

- (a) corporal punishment of the child;
- (b) physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a high chair, car seat, stroller or other device for the purpose of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting himself, herself or someone else and is used only as a last resort, and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent.
- (c) locking the exits of the child care centre or home child care premises for the purpose of confining the child or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the licensee's emergency management policies and procedures;
- (d) use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate shame or frighten the child or undermine his or her self-respect, dignity or self-worth;
- (e) depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, toilet use, clothing or bedding; or
- (f) inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

Policy Review and Reporting Protocol

The Behaviour Management/Child Guidance Policy will be reviewed annually with the Makonsag Board, parents/caregivers and staff. A written record of each review of the policy will be maintained and retained for at least two years.

Makonsag Aboriginal Head Start Behaviour Management/Child Guidance Policy must be read by parents/caregivers, placement students and volunteers who participate in the program. This will occur before they begin their work at Makonsag. All parents, caregivers, volunteers, and placement students are required to sign a form by which they agree to abide by the Makonsag Behaviour Management/Child Guidance Policy.

Contravention of Policy

Behaviour management practices of staff, parent/caregiver volunteers, student placements and volunteers will be monitored in the following manner. Any incident where the policy has been breached will be brought to the attention of the Executive Director as soon as possible after the alleged incident. A Behaviour Management/Guidance Incident Form will be filled out. The

Executive Director will meet with the individual(s) to review the situation and inform them of what action(s) will be taken to rectify the matter. In the case of a contravention occurring by the Executive Director, the matter will be brought to the attention of the Board of Directors.

Violation of this policy will be considered a dismissal “with cause”.

Aggressive Behaviour

The definition of aggressive behaviour will be as follows: “Any behaviour demonstrated by a child that could cause pain or injury to oneself or another person”. Behaviours considered inappropriate or aggressive are:

Spitting	Yelling/screaming
Biting	Profanity (swearing)
Hair pulling	Threatening others with objects or self
Pinching	Kicking
Punching	Scratching

If a child is behaving in a disruptive manner (such as hitting, kicking, biting, throwing, things, defying or running away) every effort should be made to understand the reasons for the child's behaviour.

Should a child enrolled in Makonsag display aggressive behaviour that cannot be managed using the child guidance strategies discussed earlier, additional support will be provided.

- Independent Activity: If a child is unable to remain in the group they will be given a quiet activity to work on independently.
- Notifying Parents/Caregivers: The parents/caregivers will be notified by phone to inform them of the incident.
- Documentation: The incident will be documented in log book or depending on severity, on an incident report.

Assessments

If the Makonsag Staff have any concerns about a child's development at any point during the school year a referral to another agency may be recommended. Makonsag staff will work closely with a family who has been referred to another agency for a formal assessment of their child's development

Parent Issues and Concerns Policy

Makonsag recognizes and supports the parent's and family's role as children's primary teachers. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to take an active role in our program and regularly discuss what their child(ren) are experiencing at Makonsag. As supported by our program statement, we support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents/guardians, educators and staff and foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents/guardians about the program and their children. Our staff are available to engage parents/guardians in conversations and support a positive experience during every interaction.

All issues and concerns raised by parents/guardians are taken seriously by Makonsag staff and will be addressed. Every effort will be made to address and resolve issues and concerns to the satisfaction of all parties and as quickly as possible.

Issues/concerns may be brought forward verbally or in writing. Responses and outcomes will be provided verbally, or in writing upon request. The level of detail provided to the parent/guardian will respect and maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved.

An initial response to an issue or concern will be provided to parents/guardians within 5 business days. The person who raised the issue/concern will be kept informed throughout the resolution process.

Investigations of issues and concerns will be fair, impartial and respectful to parties involved.

Every issue and concern will be treated confidentially and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of parents/guardians, children, staff, students and volunteers, except when information must be disclosed for legal reasons (e.g. Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities or the Children's Aid Society.)

Our centre maintains high standards for positive interaction, communication and role-modelling for children. Harassment and discrimination will therefore not be tolerated from any party.

If at any point a parent/guardian or staff feel uncomfortable, threatened, abused, or belittled, they may immediately end the conversation and report the situation to the supervisor and/or the executive director.

Additional Information

If you find that our handbook has not answered your questions, or if you have any comments or questions regarding the information provided, please do not hesitate to contact Makonsag directly to clarify anything outlined in our handbook and answer any and all questions you may have regarding Makonsag Aboriginal Head Start.