



for the Parents

Southgate Medallion Family Day Homes
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Announcements and Upcoming Events

- Holiday Reminder**
- Labour Day, Monday, September 7th
 - Thanksgiving Day, Monday, October 12th

SMFDH office is closed on all holidays.

- Workshop**
- Fire Safety Workshop, Saturday, October 24th @ Erminskin Neighbourhood Centre 3058-106 Street, 10 am to 12 noon

What would you like to see in the newsletter? Are there issues you would like to have discussed or do you have a comment or a parenting tip? Our goal is to make the parent newsletter useful to parents. We would love to have your input. Contact Joyce via email, phone or fax.

Meet the Agency Staff



Mariam Hunter is the new Consultant in the agency. With her educational background—Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Bachelor of Science in Family Studies—and her experience as a provider with the agency she comes highly qualified for the work.

Mariam has 2 children of her own, a 7 year-old son and a 4 year-old daughter as well as a teenage special needs foster daughter. She states, “I am excited to work with the agency, the providers, the families and all the children to establish the best care possible for those children.”

Goodbye to Barb Petrunia—Consultant

Although Barb is no longer a consultant with the agency, we are happy she is still with us but in a new role as a provider. Many thanks to Barb for her warm, caring presence and respectful perspectives in discussions and agency meetings. We know the children in her day home will benefit from Barb’s warmth and care.

“It has been my pleasure over the past three years to visit day homes as a consultant. I have appreciated the providers’ high level of commitment, patience, dedication and love for the children. This guidance and security for children is an irreplaceable service.”

Agency Notes

1. **School’s in!** Please update the information on your child’s school year with your provider. Include details of how your child will travel to and from school.
2. **Resource Package:** All providers with school age children in care are receiving a resource package this month to enhance care for this age group. What are your school age child’s interests? Let the provider know.
3. **Attendance Forms:** Parents are asked to sign the attendance form at the beginning of the month and initial each day their child is in care.
4. **Parent Advisory Board:** If you would be willing to be part of the Parent Advisory Board call Sarah at the office. The purpose of this board is to collect parent input and perspectives around various aspects of the program. The term is September to June.

Public Health Guidance for Child Care Programs

The agency is developing a plan to help providers identify ILI (influenza-like-illness) and to implement measures to limit transmission of illness. This is in response to Public Health Agency of Canada recommendations.

Southgate Medallion Tribute

Unconditional Parenting by Alfie Kohn

Of course, we all love our children unconditionally. We may even think that as long as we love our children enough things will work out. It doesn't matter that we yelled at them this morning when we lost our temper because we love them and they know that.

Alice Miller, a psychoanalyst, observed that it is possible to love a child "passionately—but not in the way they need to be loved." If that is so, the relevant question isn't just whether or how much we love our kids but it also matters *how* we love them.

The book *Unconditional Parenting* by Alfie Kohn looks at what it really means to love children unconditionally and what that means for our children. The newsletter for the next few months will summarize parts of the book. The book can be purchased at any good book store or can be borrowed from the Edmonton Public Library. It is a good read.

"Abigail went through a tough time a few months after her fourth birthday, which may have been related to the arrival of a rival. She became more resistant to requests, more likely to sound nasty, scream, stamp her feet. Ordinary rituals and transitions quickly escalated into a battle of wills. One evening, . . . she promised to get right into the bath after dinner. She failed to do so—and then, when reminded of that promise, she shrieked



loudly enough to wake her baby brother. When asked to be quieter, she yelled again.

"So here's the question: Once things calmed down, should (the parents) have proceeded with the normal evening routine of snuggling with her and reading a story together? The conditional approach to parenting says no: That would be rewarding her unacceptable behaviour. . . Those activities should be suspended, and she should be informed, gently but firmly, why that "consequence" was being imposed."

This "conditional" approach may seem familiar to what a lot of parenting books advise. (For the parent it can be satisfying on some level because they are annoyed at the child's actions.) Unconditional parenting which is not a fancy term for letting kids do whatever they want, means that once the storm has passed the parent take time to teach, to reflect with the child which can happen after the parents snuggle and read a story with the child. Whatever lesson a parent wishes to impart is far more likely

to be learned if she knows that the parent's love for her is undimmed by how she acts.

Conditional parenting tends to an "awfully sour view of children. . . It assumes that, given half a chance, kids will take advantage of us. Give 'em an inch, they'll take a mile. . . It is based on the deeply cynical belief that accepting kids for who they are just frees them to be bad because, well, that's who they are."

Unconditional parenting says that we ought to be looking at the whole child, not just at behaviours; that we shouldn't assume the worst about children's inclinations. If for example it turned out that Abigail was really being defiant because she's worried about the parents paying so much attention to her baby brother then the parent's should deal with that, not merely try to stamp out the way she's expressing her fear. It is about working with children to help them grow into decent people and good decision-makers.

	Unconditional	Conditional
Focus	Whole child (including reasons, thoughts,	Behaviour
View of Human Nature	Positive or balanced	Negative
View of Parental Love	A gift	A privilege to be earned
Strategies	"Working with" (Problem solving)	"Doing to" (Control via rewards and