



Engagement, Care, & Support

This service guide contains important information concerning approaches and procedures pertaining to the care of your child and family. Any information provided is for my records only and will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified by the family.

My Personal Philosophy

When it comes to this work, apart from a passion for the topics, I've been able to see on a very small scale what my support could do for families – just by being present in their lives. The reality for many parents is that there's a major gap in services. It can be difficult to find individuals who fill all the areas of support often needed by young families. Areas such as compassionate support, freedom without guilt, trust built in an equal relationship, working to improve parent's sense of self-efficacy, or suggestions based on an understanding of the family's values and needs.

Research has shown the incredible importance of the first 3 years of life, and their lifelong impact, yet this gap exists.

My work aims to affect lasting change; to shape healthy and happy parents, infants, and family dynamics. I can be a source of freedom and hope for parents, while helping their children build early, predictable, and trusting relationships with non-kin. A substantial amount of research and practical application goes into every interaction I have with your child and any advice or recommendations I may provide. My role is not to tell you how to parent or which way is “the right way” — because the truth is, there isn't one way. My role is to work with you to determine how my knowledge and experience can support your family and its unique needs.

My Approach & Expectations

I am here to be your child's teacher, caregiver and advocate, as well as a member of your team in the wellbeing, growth, and development of your child.

My Approach & Expectations (cont'd)

Open communication and collaboration:

Our relationship dynamic is so important and open communication helps us work together as a team in the best interest of your child(ren).

Provider Expectation:

I will strive to keep the lines of communication open and welcome dialogue about how to best help your child, family, and constructive feedback.

I will provide frequent updates on your child's progress and problems as they present themselves in my care.

I should fully understand the expectations of how your child will be cared for and will honour your decisions on matters such as discipline, screen time and toilet training. I will strive to keep as much consistency as possible for your child.

I will provide context and resources to situations I have education and background in, pertaining to development and care, rooted in empirical research and knowledge.

Family Expectation:

Communicate clearly how you expect your child to be cared for, providing updates on problems and progress.

Provide information about your child's routine, activities, and preferences.

Detail important rules and expectations including discipline, screen time, and toilet training.

Communicate clearly, respectfully, and immediately if a concern or issue arises.

Commitment to Growth & Learning

Provider Expectation:

I will present your child(ren) with the opportunity to learn at their own pace in a safe environment and with a growth mindset.

I will attempt to gain as much continuing education, training, and personal development as possible; as well as staying up to date on the latest relevant research and theories. This is my profession and my passion, and I take it very seriously— constantly striving to improve my skills and knowledge.

Mindful of Personal Approach

I am committed to working collaboratively with families to find what works for them. That being said, I will always act in the best interest of the child's physical and mental wellbeing and safety, according to established and accepted guidelines for care based on empirical research.

Feeding and nutrition

- I will support breast/chest/body/tube feeding, bottle feeding, and/or formula feeding (exclusively for the first 6 months) and extending to whenever appropriate for the family's needs and wishes.
- I will support the introduction of purees or solids after 6 months, using the approach of Baby-led Weaning if requested (or whatever approach is working for you)
- I will always follow nutrition guidelines and provide your children with balanced meals and snacks based on parental request and/or food availability.
- I will strive to make eating and meal-times enjoyable and opportunities for education and/or connection.
- I will not feed your child any foods you have not approved of.
- I will not withhold food from your child if/when they are hungry; I will not use any shame based language around foods or eating.

Diapering and toileting

- I will support the use of disposable and/or cloth diapering, and/or the use of elimination communication.
- I will support the introduction and availability of the 'potty' from birth onward.
- I will regularly check to see if your child's diaper is soiled (I will always verbally state what and why I am doing this) and change it immediately.
- I will appropriately respond to toileting accidents in a calm and respectful manner, and never use shame-based or coercive language.
- I will always verbally praise proper toilet use (non-verbal positive reinforcement, ex: reward, will only be used if requested by parents as part of toilet training/learning).

Sleep

- I will always support whatever sleep strategies work for your child and family, so long as they do not put your child's wellbeing at risk.
- I will aim to keep sleep routine and associations consistent.
- I will hold, baby-wear, or supportively assist your infant in falling asleep.
- I will always utilize video monitors or be within earshot of the sleeping child.
- I will assist in sleep struggles at any age and for any sleeping arrangement (including co sleeping, so long as established guidelines are followed: <https://cosleeping.nd.edu/safe-co-sleeping-guidelines/>).
- I will assist in developmentally appropriate, attachment-based sleep interventions (never including unsupported crying).
- I am available to assist with sleep transitions as well (ex: co-sleeping to independent sleeping) by request; this is a **separate service**.

Activities and engagement

- I will always provide a variety of age and developmentally appropriate activities and tasks to engage your child in, both structured and free-play.
- I will structure activities and tasks to scaffold your child's learning and development.

Activities and engagement (cont'd)

- I **will** always provide activities that aim to support multiple and varied areas of development, including: gross motor, fine motor, communication/language, sensory, social-emotional, imaginative play, art and creation, music and movement, and daily living tasks (ex. cleaning up).
- I **will not** allow screen time for children under age 2, unless requested by parents.
- I **will** use instances of screen time as a point of connection and skill-building, if/when it occurs with any child.
- I **can** create developmental support plans with specified goals and activities for your infant or child in mind. This is by request and is considered a **separate service**.
- I **will never** allow your child to engage in an activity that is inappropriate (developmentally or otherwise) or jeopardizes their safety/wellbeing in any way.

Supervision and responsiveness

- I **will** always acknowledge and respond to your child's statements/questions/requests in an appropriate manner (some things may be intentionally ignored and re-directed more appropriately, but never entirely unacknowledged).
- I **will** never leave your infant or child unsupervised, not visible, not within earshot, or with access to items/areas that may be dangerous or not kid-friendly.
- I **will** always respond to your infant's cries immediately and appropriately, offering comfort and soothing as well.
- I **will never** leave your infant or child to cry alone or unsupported.

Discipline

My approach to discipline is rooted in research around infant and early childhood mental health - primarily secure attachment, emotion regulation, and the integration of these to impact brain development and skill building. Key researchers and discipline philosophies include neuroscientist Dr. Dan Siegel (Whole Brain Child, No Drama Discipline) and Dr. Becky Bailey, founder of Conscious Discipline.

- I **will** always strive to keep existing and working discipline strategies consistent in my care, this includes guiding language the child is familiar with.
- I **will** consistently praise and encourage helpful behaviours or the development of skills (for example, sharing, turn taking, impulse control, etc.)
- I **will** give guidance around rules and expectations immediately and consistently, with the goal of developmentally appropriate skill-building opportunities.
- I **will** always strive to use instances of challenging behaviours or big feelings as a chance for connection, holding space for emotions, co-regulating, and supportive problem solving.
- I **will never** tell your child to stop crying, label emotions as good/bad, or stifle emotional expression.
- I **will never** 'punish' your child or leave them unattended as punishment (ex: "time out")
- I **will never** restrict your child's movement unless it is for the safety of themselves, another child, or myself. In these instances, I will calmly and gently hold your child's arms by their side and clearly state that I am doing so so that they don't hurt their body or someone else's, and continue to help them regulate.
- I **will never** physically touch a child as a means of discipline (ex: hitting, spanking, shaking, holding down) - even if requested by the parent or family.
- I **am** available for challenging behaviour and emotion coaching consulting and support by request; this is a **separate service**.



Family notes:

Feeding & nutrition: _____

Diapering & toileting: _____

Sleep: _____

Activities & engagement: _____

Supervision & responsiveness: _____



Family notes:

Discipline: _____

Language & communication: _____

Health history, medications, & allergies: _____

Questions & clarifications for Allie: _____



Full Service List

Services to provide families with freedom, support, & knowledge.

Engagement & Care

New Parent Support

Perinatal Mental Health Support

NICU & Post-NICU Support

Support in Transitions (feeding, sleep, routine, family)

Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Assessment & Support

Developmental Assessment & Support

Behavioural Assessment & Support

Knowledge & Resource Consultation

Family Dynamics, Co-parenting, & Communication

Support & Advocacy in Healthcare/Medical Settings

NEW Support & Knowledge Subscriptions

For more information about my services, please visit my website.



F.A.Q.

Are you a nanny or babysitter?

For many years I classified my role as a nanny and/or babysitter. Once establishing my educational foundation, those titles no longer seemed fitting for the type, variety, and quality of services I provide to families. You may notice that my services do not include 'nannying' or 'babysitting' however I do provide engagement and care for both infants and young children. This engagement and care is of high quality with a constant focus on your child's mental health and healthy development, including interactions and activities to support this.

What is your scope of practice?

As an Infant Mental Health Specialist, it is important for me to clearly outline my scope of practice and what I am and am not able to provide. As of April 2020, as an IMH Specialist, I am able to provide basic assessment and screening for developmental, behavioural, and/or mental health concerns. This assessment is NOT a diagnostic tool, nor can I diagnose any disorders or provide 'treatment'. I am not trained or certified as a psychologist, psychotherapist, or psychiatrist. As an IMH Specialist, I am trained and able to provide support around: identifying areas of concern; monitoring progress and concerns; supporting areas of development and attachment (of concern or not); addressing challenging behaviours (not classified as disordered); healthy family dynamics; and counselling and communication services (not psychotherapy).

Who are your services for?

My services are for any family, parent, caregiver, infant, child, or combination! The age range I typically work with is newborn to age 4 (if you have an infant or toddler as well as an older child, I can still support your family). I aim to be inclusive and take steps to actively establish safe spaces in the homes and connections I enter into.

I accept clients of all races, cultures, genders, sexual orientations, socioeconomic status, family dynamics and backgrounds. My work supports families in whatever form they come in. That being said, I may not be the best individual to provide support to every family – I am a white, cis, able-bodied presenting, bisexual individual in a heteronormative relationship. I am learning and cultivating awareness on how to be a better service provider to all individuals and families and actively work to acknowledge my privileges, prejudices, and biases.

Are your rates flexible?

My rates are based on my many years of experience and extensive knowledge gained from relevant academia. That being said, I do provide sliding scale pricing for those who cannot afford my services otherwise – finances should not be a barrier to getting your family or child the support it needs.

For more FAQ, please visit my website.