



# Ultimate School Agers (USA) - Covid-19 – HOPE Location - Parent Handbook

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## Response to COVID-19

Ultimate School Agers is dedicated to protecting the health and safety of your children, our staff, families, and the community. We are closely monitoring COVID-19 and base our response and actions on recommendations from Durham Region Public Health, the Ministry of Health, Health Canada and additional relevant authorities. While Infection, Prevention and Control (IPAC) has always been an integral part of our childcare center, we have adapted and enhanced our policies and procedures in response to COVID-19, to mitigate risk and ensure the health and safety of all.

The following practices will be in place:

- Staff will complete a self-assessment prior to each shift and will complete a full screening again prior to entry
- All staff will be required to wear a medical grade mask and face shield.
- School Age children will be required to wear masks whenever physical distancing cannot be practiced, while in our care (outside, they may remove their masks as long as physical distancing of 2 metres is respected).
- All children will be required to wear a face covering when on our bus, (see busing policy for more details)
- A screening area will be set up outside the front door of the center
- Children will be screened before entering the childcare center and monitored throughout the day for COVID-19 related symptoms
- Children will be excluded from care if they develop any symptoms related to COVID-19
- Policies and procedures have been developed specific to COVID-19 to increase the health and safety of children, staff and families
- Staff will monitor children to ensure social distancing and IPAC practices are prioritized
- Staff have received thorough enhanced infection prevention and control, and health and safety training
- Training will be frequently updated and provided to ensure best practices and consistency
- Only one entrance/exit will be used to ensure effective screening practices
- Regular communication on health and safety and infection, prevention and control practices will be shared with families for use at the childcare center and at home
- Procedures will be updated and revised regularly to ensure best practices in accordance with Public Health authorities and the Ministry of Education.
- Masks and shields are to be worn at all times when in the centre or when children are within six feet (2m)
- Staff are scheduled based on times of children arrival and departure to reduce the risk of cross contamination.
- The Ministry of Education and Durham Region Health Department will be notified of any child that is sent for a test for Covid-19 or a positive COVID test result that we are made aware of, by parent.
- In the event that a sibling or parent of child in our care requires a Covid-19 test, the child in our care should be excluded from our program until familial test results are returned, negative.

As well as any and all policies and procedures that are outlined by the Ministry of Education, Durham Region Health Department, Region of Durham and any other regulatory body for the Early Years in Ontario.



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## Program Guidelines: During Covid-19

### Ages

Ultimate School-Agers (USA) school aged program is licensed for ages 2.5 years-12 years.

### Full Day Care

USA will be providing full day care for all children

### Transportation/Trips

Until otherwise indicated by Durham Region Health Department and the Ministry of Education, we will be unable to attend any activities outside of the centre.

### Hours of Operation

USA is open from 7 AM – 5:30 PM, Monday through Friday. Our 5:30 PM closing needs to be respected and should you pick your child up past the 5:30 PM closing you will be required to cover charges associated with staffing. Failure to respect closing time will result in the removal of your child from the program.

**Drop off will be a 15 (fifteen) min window and pick up will be a 5 (five) minute window**

### Programs

We offer a plethora of choices for children: physical activities, a wide range of creative activities, STEM based learning and Land-based activities. These areas will change according to children's interests and programming while still meeting all Ministry Regional and Health department requirements.

### Fees

Please note the following:

- There is three (3) days per week required for registration.
- Payment is due PRIOR to the period your child is enrolled, prepaid a minimum of 2 weeks
- Normal Payment amounts must cover a minimum of 2 weeks and be in groups of weeks – for example payment for 4 weeks versus payment by 1 month.
- See the FEE TABLE for more details on school year fees (summer holiday fees are released separately and change from year to year depending on program offerings)
- You are able of pay via e-transfer (EMT a.k.a. email money transfer), cash or cheque. Failure to pay your fees on time will result in denial of care, and in the interest of fairness to all parents, without exceptions.



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## Admission

Admission is completed for new children based on a wait list. Ultimate School-Agers is open on an availability basis to all families. Medical and registration forms must be completed and signed off by supervisor before the child starts the program or is placed on our wait list. There will be no cost for a family to add their child to USA's wait list. A parent may contact USA's Supervisor to enquire as to their spot on our wait list and will be maintained in complete confidentiality by Ultimate School-Agers.

## PRIORITIES FOR ADMISSION FOR CHILD CARE- During Covid-19

Until further notice, Ultimate School-Agers will run out of our Hope Fellowship location ONLY - 1685 Bloor Street, Courtice.

- Due to emergency measures with regards to how many children can be in a group, we will only have approximately 1/2 the available spaces as before, therefore we cannot guarantee any spots and will apply a screening criteria to help as many families urgently in need care while maintaining control of our space
- At this time, parents/guardians will be grouped as follows:
  1. Frontline and emergency workers first
  2. Parents/Guardians working outside the home
  3. Parents/Guardians working at home
  4. Families that were with us prior to closing but not in one of the groups above
  5. Newly enrolled children
  6. The Supervisor in consultation with the Director has the right to reassess admission priorities in special or individual circumstances

Children currently enrolled with Ultimate School Agers have priority.

## Toilet Training

We do not have the facilities to support School-Age children who are not toilet trained. Your child needs to be toilet trained to be in our School-Age program. Diaper changing is available in our preschool program.

## Food

Full day care will include two snacks and lunch. Our menu is posted on a four-week rotation and covers 60% of Canadas food guide.



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## Electronics Policy

The purpose of this section is to outline Ultimate School-Agers' (USA) policy toward handling electronic devices in our program. Common devices that fall into this category are cell phones, portable gaming devices, recorders, tablets, laptops and personal media players. Please note that the above is not to be considered a full and exhaustive list of all devices covered under the policy.

- BYOD (Bring Your Own Device): BYOD, not in effect during Covid-19 the following will apply.
- No devices will be allowed to come into the center from home
- Children will be given the opportunity to use our devices for 1 hour after lunch in what is quiet time.
  - All games and activities found on these devices will be rated “E” for everyone.
- Children are unable to share or watch others play on devices.
  - Ultimate School Agers staff has the final right of refusal if children are not following through with device use.
- **If you prefer your child not to use any of our devices, please inform staff promptly upon arrival.**
- Electronic media is only used by staff and children to extend the child’s topic of interest.
- For example, if children are interested in butterflies, staff may use an electronic device to further their research.
- Multimedia is used to enhance learning. Staff and children use technology to experience, experiment, design and create.
- For example, children are taught how to make movies or children learning about coding.
- School Age children may use electronic devices to record their own learning.
- For example, School Age children may take a picture of an event or situation and record what is happening in the picture.

## Volunteering

Until information received from the Ministry of Education and/or Durham Region Health Department changes, there will be no outside visitors allowed.

## Absenteeism

**Should you child be away from our center on a scheduled day (due to sickness, last minute changes) you must call us directly, however, you are still required to pay for a scheduled day even if your child is away.**

## Respect of Staff, Handbook policies and integration in the program

USA will make all reasonable efforts to help your child fully integrate into the program including a staged approach. A refusal of service (cancellation of contract) will be authorized by the Director as a last resort in instances where if the following policies are not followed.

Ultimate School-Agers- 1685 Bloor St. Courtice, ON - [www.ultimateschoolagers.com](http://www.ultimateschoolagers.com)- Tel: 289-685-2343

Revised: (Temporary) Sept 27, 2020, KB, GC



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Those reasons are:

- The child does not adapt to his or her environment within a reasonable time period.
- The child requires more attention than the other children in his or her group, thereby depriving the other children of the care that they need.
- The parent does not make an effort to pick up his or her child when the child is sick, or the parent brings the child to the Centre knowing the child is sick (noncompliance with the health protocol.)
- The parent regularly makes late payments or submits cheques with insufficient funds. The policy stipulates that in the case of unpaid fees, a written notice must be sent, followed by a warning letter, and then by a final notice cancelling the child's registration at the Centre.
- If you are late for your drop-off/ Pick-up time more than 1x in a week.
- Refusal to respect the program handbook rules, policies and procedures.
- Actions deemed prejudicial to USA's staff or to the children in its care.
- Physical or verbal violence towards a member of the staff, a child, other parents or any other person on site (immediate termination).

## Space Requirements

All spaces within the childcare program must be occupied by a child and cannot be reserved.

## Wait List

Families are required to complete the Application Package to be placed on the wait list. Should a family be offered a space with Ultimate School-Agers but are unable to take it at that time, there is the option to either resume a spot at the end of the wait list or to be removed from the wait list. Families presently enrolled must refer to the internal wait list for enrollment changes or sibling enrollment. There will be no charge for parents to add their name to the waitlist.

Complete confidentiality will be maintained if parents are seeking to see where they are on the waitlist and the status can be checked by sending an email to [supervisor@ultimateschoolagers.com](mailto:supervisor@ultimateschoolagers.com)

## Enrollment

We are committed to providing a range of programs for preschool and School Agers. When the enrollment level in a program is no longer financially viable, the program will be monitored for a three-month period. During this time, if the enrollment level does not rectify itself, parents will be given four weeks' notice of program cancellation.





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## Immunization

The Durham Region Health Department requires all schools to keep a record of immunizations. USA, is responsible for preschool immunization records and will require a copy of your child's before enrolment.

## Withdrawal from program by parent or guardian

Should you need to withdraw your child from the program you need to give a minimum of two weeks' notice. USA thanks you for choosing us to provide care for your most precious belonging, you child!

## Tax Receipts

Tax receipts will be available for pick up at our site on an annual basis. These receipts will be issued by end of January of the following year.

## Sunscreen/Bug Repellent

Because our summer program will feature a lot of outside time it is essential your child wear sunscreen/ Bug Repellent and a hat. You must provide sunscreen/ Bug Repellent clearly labeled with your child's name, that is to stay at the center in your child's individual Bin/Cubby. Please ensure your sunscreen is a waterproof sunscreen with an SPF of no less than 30 that offers protection from UVA and UVB rays.

## Child Participation in the Program

The program is planned by trained Registered Early Childhood Educators to incorporate a variety of activities to meet the physical, creative, intellectual and emotional needs of the children. If children are unable to participate in or have access to all facets of the program, parents should discuss this with the Centre Supervisor at admission, if special consideration is to be given. Any special consideration to be made will be confirmed in writing by the Centre Supervisor.

## Spare Clothing

USA recognizes that there are times when children may need a change of clothing. You know your child best. Feel free to send a change of clothing for your child. Please place in a sealed bag clearly labeled with your child's name.



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## Smoking

USA is a smoke free facility and no person is allowed to smoke or hold a lit cigarette or smoking/vaping product on our premises.

## School Closure

In the event of a School Closure, Ultimate School-Agers, if able, will offer full PA day childcare to school-aged children.

## Communication

Our primary goal is to provide a wonderful atmosphere for your child but our secondary and equally important goal is to have open communication with you, the parent. All the staff will be open to communicating with you regarding any comments, questions or concerns you may have and we ask that you provide the same openness with us if we need to talk to you. Please remember that we will not be able to talk to you when you drop off or pick up your child because parents will be unable to enter the center. We still however feel daily contact is valuable so please let us know the best way to communicate with you daily. Text, email, phone We ask that you speak with your child's classroom teacher first with any concerns you may have. If you are still having concerns or require more conversation on your concern a meeting will be set up with your child's classroom teacher and the supervisor. If necessary, the director will be called in to deal with any on-going concerns. If your concerns are with staff or the supervisor, please feel free to contact the director immediately.

## Sickness/ Daily Screening

**Drop-Off Procedure:** To ensure health and safety as well as stringent infection prevention and control practices, we will meet your child at the designated time, in front of the door at the entrance to the centre. At this time, our staff will greet you and health screen your child. With a reminder that nothing comes into the centre from home, clothing, sunscreen, back packs and hats are the exception. We understand that this may be unsettling; however, this step will ensure that the childcare setting remains free of infection.

**Pick-up:** We will have your child ready for pick-up at the designated time at the front entrance of the center. assist with physical distancing. Please share instructions and/or custody arrangements with the supervisor concerning pick up or access to your child and ensure we are notified of any changes. We may confirm identity by requesting government issued identification.

**Staff will deny entry to any child, or staff who has any of the following symptoms as outlined Ministry of Health's COVID-19 website.**



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- Fever (temperature of 37.8°C or greater)
- New or worsening cough
- Shortness of breath (dyspnea)
- Sore throat
- Difficulty swallowing
- New olfactory or taste disorder(s)
- Nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain
- Runny nose, or nasal congestion
- Unexplained fatigue/malaise/myalgias
- Delirium (acutely altered mental status and inattention)
- Unexplained or increased number of falls
- Acute functional decline Version
- Chills
- Headaches
- Croup
- Conjunctivitis
- Multisystem inflammatory vasculitis in children
  - Presentation may include persistent fever, abdominal pain, conjunctivitis, gastrointestinal symptoms (nausea, vomiting and diarrhea) and rash
- Unexplained tachycardia, including age specific tachycardia for children
- Decrease in blood pressure
- Unexplained hypoxia

**Unless otherwise explained in writing by a medical professional.**

The staff will also ask generic questions asking how the child's night was and if anything, unusual may have happened.

Screeener will take appropriate precautions when screening, including maintaining a distance of at least 2 metres (6 feet) wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) (i.e. surgical mask, lab coat, gloves, face shield).

### **When Your Child is Sick:**

Staff will complete a basic health check and screening to ensure your child is asymptomatic when they arrive.

Your child will also be monitored throughout the day.

If your child is showing ill symptoms at home (e.g. sore throat, stomach-ache, headache, cough, lethargy, change in appetite or any of the other symptoms listed on our screening list) your child should not attend care and should remain home. Please call the center and we will contact Durham Health and offer you next steps at that time.



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If your child becomes sick at the center, they will be separated in an isolation room and supervised by one of our staff members. We will notify you to pick up your child. If your child requires immediate medical attention, your child will be taken to the hospital by ambulance and examined by a legally qualified medical practitioner.

If you or your child are being managed by Durham Region Public Health, (e.g., confirmed cases of COVID-19, household contacts of cases) follow instructions from DRH to determine when to return to the facility.

### Medication

USA will only administer prescription medication. All medication needs to be clearly marked with the child's name, doctor's name, the medicine's name, dosage, date of issue and expiry date. We will not accept medicine that is in a container other than the initial prescription container. We also will not administer non-prescription medicines such as Tylenol or Advil unless prescribed by a medical Doctor, in its original package and a note accompanies it. If we feel your child requires these medicines, we will inform you and ask you to take your child home.

### Allergies

We are a nut free program. Please ensure your child does not bring any foods to our program. If your child handles food with nuts before coming to USA please have them wash their face and hands thoroughly. We thank you for your understanding concerning allergies.

### Head Lice

We have a strict no nit policy. Should we find any nits or lice on your child they will be sent home immediately and not allowed to return until a staff member inspects their hair to ensure there is no trace of any lice and/or nits. After a case of head lice has been reported we will examine each child for lice and/or nits and inform the parents. If you do find lice and/or nits on your child, please inform us immediately.

### Late Pick up Fees

The staff of USA understands there are times when you may be delayed. We ask that you respect that the staff have lives outside of USA, therefore if you pick your child up after 5:45 pm (without prior approval) you will be charged a late fee. See the Fees Table for more details.



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## Holidays

USA will be closed for the following holidays: New Year's Day, Family Day, Good Friday, Victoria Day, Canada Day, Civic Holiday, Labour Day, Thanksgiving, and the FULL Christmas week. Everyone is asked to pay partial fees on these days regardless of your scheduled day - see the Fees Table for details. You are not required to pay for Canada Day or Civic Holiday. You are required to pay a family fee, not per child, for Christmas, Boxing Day, and New Year's Day – see the Fees Table for details. You are entitled to take two weeks' vacation during the school year at – see Fees Table for details. Should you take beyond the two weeks then full payment must be made. **You are required to give us two weeks written notice if you are using vacation days.**

## Photographs

There may be occasions when USA or a news photographer may take pictures of your child. USA puts your safety first and we will not allow any photographs of your child to leave our location unless we have your permission.

## Emergency Management Policies and Procedures

Ultimate School Agers has Emergency management Policies and Procedures in place for the health and safety of all. You can request a detailed copy from staff should you wish to review these in detail. Courtice Community Centre is the emergency evacuation Centre for USA. If a situation arises forcing us to leave USA we will evacuate to Courtice Community Centre. Once we have arrived safely there and know the children are in a safe location, we will notify you at your work number via cell phone for you to pick your child up immediately. If your work number is not available, we will then continue through your list of contacts, until we reach someone to pick up your child/ren.

## Accident Reports

Even though the children are under constant supervision accidents can happen.

- For a minor injury staff at USA will administer first aid and fill out an accident report the parents will be asked to review and sign.
- If the accident is a little more serious staff will call the parent and together, we can decide on the medical attention
- A serious injury will require immediate medical attention and you will be notified immediately.
- All Serious Occurrences will be reported to the Ministry of Education and be posted for 10 days.



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## Prohibited Practices

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

- Corporal punishment of the child
- Physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a high chair, car seat, stroller or other device for the purposes 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.
- Locking the exits of the childcare center 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.
  
- 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;
- Depriving the child of basic needs including, food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding;
- Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will

## Parents Issues and Concerns

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a transparent process for parents/guardians, the childcare licensee and staff to use when parents/guardians bring forward issues/concerns.

### Definitions

Licensee: The individual or agency licensed by the Ministry of Education responsible for the operation and management of each childcare center it operates (i.e. the operator).

Staff: Individual employed by the licensee (e.g. program room staff).

### Policy

Parents/guardians are encouraged to take an active role in our childcare center and regularly discuss what their child(ren) are experiencing with our program. As supported by our program statement, we support



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positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents/guardians, childcare providers, 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 Ultimate School-Agers 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 1 business day. 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.

### Confidentiality

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. to the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities or a Children's Aid Society).

### Conduct

Our center maintains high standards for positive interaction, communication and role-modeling for children. Harassment and discrimination will therefore not be tolerated from any party. This is always maintained by a group of internal staff policies and constant review of the supervisor and director to ensure adherence.

If at any point a parent/guardian, provider or staff feels uncomfortable, threatened, abused, or belittled, they may immediately end the conversation and report the situation to the supervisor. Furthermore, the parent/guardian has the option to escalate further to the director if they have a concern the issue has not been dealt with appropriately.



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A copy of the memo below will be given to every new parent.

## Memo:

Family Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Website: [www.ultimateschoolagers.com](http://www.ultimateschoolagers.com)

Family UID # \_\_\_\_\_

Payment questions:

Step 1) Check the parent handbook located under "Our Programs & Signup" Section of our website ([www.ultimateschoolagers.com](http://www.ultimateschoolagers.com))

Step 2) Check out the FEES QUERY tool under "Parent Resources" Section of our website and use you UID number for a total and daily breakdown of fees

Step 3) Email Garreth at [director@ultimateschoolagers.com](mailto:director@ultimateschoolagers.com)

Classroom/child concerns:

Step 1) Talk to your child's teacher

Note: School Agers Staff Names 6 and under Staff Names

Step 2) Email or call Kim (RECE Supervisor) - [supervisor@ultimateschoolagers.com](mailto:supervisor@ultimateschoolagers.com) or 289-685-2343

Step 3) Email Garreth (Director) - [director@ultimateschoolagers.com](mailto:director@ultimateschoolagers.com)

## Concerns about the Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a child

Everyone, including members of the public and professionals who work closely with children, is required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.

If a parent/guardian expresses concerns that a child is being abused or neglected, the parent will be advised to contact the local Children's Aid Society (CAS) directly.

1320 Airport Blvd  
Oshawa, Ontario  
L1H 7K4  
Phone: 905-433-1551  
Fax: 905-433-0603

Persons who become aware of such concerns are also responsible for reporting this information to CAS as per the "Duty to Report" requirement under the Child and Family Services Act. For more information, visit <http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childrensaidthereportingabuse/index.aspx>

## Escalation of Issues or Concerns

Where parents/guardians are not satisfied with the response or outcome of an issue or concern, they may escalate the issue or concern verbally or in writing to the Site Supervisor either, verbally or in writing at





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supervisor@ultimateschoolagers.com. A parent may also escalate an issue to the site director at director@ultimateschoolagers.com but only after discussing the matter with the supervisor to ensure proper communication protocol is followed and address the matter in a timelier manner. Issues/concerns related to compliance with requirements set out in the Child Care and Early Years Act., 2014 and Ontario Regulation 137/15 should be reported to the Ministry of Education's Child Care Quality Assurance and Licensing Branch. Issues/concerns may also be reported to other relevant regulatory bodies (e.g. local public health department, police department, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Labour, fire department, College of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario College of Teachers, College of Social Workers etc.) where appropriate.

### Contacts:

Durham Children's Aid Society: 905-433-1551

Durham Region Health Department: 905-668-7711

The Regional Municipality of Durham

Social Services Department

Children's Services Division: 905-666-6238

Ministry of Education, Licensed Child Care Help Desk: 1-877-510-5333 or [childcare\\_ontario@ontario.ca](mailto:childcare_ontario@ontario.ca)

**Serious Occurrence Notification Postings:** The Ministry of Education has implemented a revised Serious Occurrence Policy. It is mandated that all centers post a Serious Occurrence Notification Poster stating a Serious Occurrence has occurred. This notification will state our name, the date posted, the date of occurrence, the type of occurrence, a description of the occurrence, the action taken by us, any updates and a signature.

## Custody

USA needs to be informed upon enrolment if any custody arrangements have been made regarding your child. If after enrolment the child's situation changes resulting in a change of custody, we need to be informed immediately. USA needs to have a copy of the Court Orders of Custody Arrangements. USA wants to ensure the safety of your children so if the non-custodial parent will be picking the child up, we need a written form signed by all parties involved prior to pick up. Any contravention to the court order will require police assistance.

## Parent Involvement

Although at this time, we are unable to admit anyone into our center we would still welcome your involvement in any way you would feel comfortable. Post to our Facebook page, say hello or share ideas. Send us emails, texts. Want to plan a zoom get together or show the children where you work through any of the platforms, let us know, we can make it happen.



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## Our Mission

Ultimate School-Agers (USA) understands how short childhood is, and for this reason we strive to make an environment that is carefree and fun for children. We believe in a pro-active problem-solving approach, thus giving parents the peace of mind that they so deserve.

USA also believes that every child is a unique individual that is competent, capable, curious, and rich in potential. By recognizing children as capable and curious, we are able to deliver programs and services that value and build on their strengths and abilities, because they grow up in families with diverse social, cultural and linguistic perspectives. We are committed to working with children, their families, and other educators to create a high-quality early learning and care environment that takes a strength-based approach to learning and development where children, parents and educators are co-learners. All our knowledge and experience as educators combined with parental knowledge of their child provides a dynamic environment for the child.

“How does learning happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years (2014)” will be the document at the forefront of creating and maintaining our programs. Using the common framework articulated within the document, we strive to support the children to achieve the following goals and will meet the expectations for programs building on the four foundations for healthy growth and development:

| FOUNDATIONS       | GOALS FOR CHILDREN   | EXPECTATIONS FOR PROGRAMS  |
|-------------------|--|--|
| <b>Belonging</b>  | Every child has a sense of belonging when he or she is connected to others and contributes to their world. | Early childhood programs cultivate authentic, caring relationships and connections to create a sense of belonging among and between children, adults, and the world around them. |
| <b>Well-Being</b> | Every child is developing a sense of self, health, and well-being.   | Early childhood programs nurture children’s healthy development and support their growing sense of self.   |
| <b>Engagement</b> | Every child is an active and engaged learner who explores the world with body, mind, and senses.           | Early childhood programs provide environments and experiences to engage children in active, creative, and meaningful exploration, play, and inquiry.                             |
| <b>Expression</b> | Every child is a capable communicator who expresses himself or herself in many ways.                       | Early childhood programs foster communication and expression in all forms.   |

## Our Overarching Strategies

Our staff has incorporated the Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT) principles, along with the provincial pedagogy for early learning, to strengthen the quality of our programs and ensure high-quality experiences that promote the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of children. All staff bring to the program different experiences and strengths making a wonderful team atmosphere. Sharing their wealth of knowledge and working collaboratively, our team will plan for and create a positive early learning environment that will accomplish the following.

- 1) Promotes the health, safety and well-being of young children, families and educators.

You will see:



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- Staff wearing face masks and shields
- Well organized environments, with lots of materials that are easily accessible to the children.
- Following Canada's Food Guide, our menu is carefully selected to reflect healthy choices.
- Children and staff washing their hands frequently throughout the day to promote good hygiene and to prevent the spread of illness.
- Water is available to the children throughout the day.
- At meals, the educators communicate with children, where possible, offering conversation and guidance.
- Children serve themselves and are encouraged but never forced to try new foods.
- Gross motor play is offered in our rooms and outside daily; children are encouraged to use their entire bodies to explore the world.
- Positive language that emphasizes accomplishments and efforts.
- Each room is cleaned throughout operating hours. With a thorough clean at the end of the day.
- Educators follow the health and safety guidelines set out by the Ministry of Education and the Durham Region Health Department.

Additionally, choices between rest and a balance between active and more reflective play are offered on a daily basis. These choices are offered to support positive interactions and assist with healthy development.

### 2) Support positive and responsive interactions between educators, children, and families.

You will see:

- During the process to enroll your child at our center, the Supervisor will provide you with a link to a video tour of the facility, introduce you and your child to the Educators and compile information about your child's specific needs likes and dislikes, via online meeting. This will allow staff to build an understanding of your child's individual needs.
- Our Parent Handbook provides the operational details of our programs, hours of operations, fees and payment processes, and outlines our operational policies so families know what to expect when they choose our services.
- It is our job as Educators to provide an atmosphere that makes children feel as though they belong.
- Ranging from a quick unexpected smile, a friendly wave, asking about their day past, present and future, asking them what they would like to do. Offering them a plethora of choices affords them the opportunity to explore while deciding what they would like to do. Providing a place, they feel they have ownership of and can take pride in.
- Educators use appropriate voices and make all attempts to communicate at the child's level for face-to-face interactions.
- Parents and Educators talking together, sharing information about each child. Strategies to Support and Strengthen Positive Interactions
- Positive interactions are encouraged and supported by the development of enriched environments where all children belong and where there are a wide range of interesting, intriguing, and developmentally appropriate activities options to engage children. Educators are practitioners whose knowledge and understanding of the individual and child development supports positive behaviours on the part of children, educators, and families. The focus on the positive is a key component of our affirming approach.
- Questions educators ask themselves:



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- How do I engage with children in a way that builds on their strengths as opposed to identifying what they are doing “wrong”?
- Am I learning too? How do I respond when a child asks me something I don’t know? Do I redirect the child to something else or do I respond: “Let’s find out together!”
- Am I realizing that play is something children do that is intentional and inquiry based; a way for children to express themselves in multiple ways?
- Am I having fun? Is at least part of each day filled with a shared sense of joy that is a wonder of new learning for me and the children with whom I engage? What are the clues that demonstrate that I am engaged and interested in what I am doing?
- Have I planned and created an environment that can be viewed as the “third teacher”?
- Supporting Children to Manage their Behaviour
- Children benefit socially, emotionally, and physically from our approach. Educators focus on helping the child understand their emotions and provide support to help each child learn to regulate their behaviour
- Expectations for children are clearly and positively stated.
- Children are offered choices when decisions need to be made.
- Behaviour Management techniques are appropriate to the developmental level of the child.
- Different approaches will depend on different situations and individual children. Staff are expected to implement a variety of strategies, for example.
  - o To act as a mediator to help children resolve their problems
  - o To explain why certain behaviours may not be the better choices
  - o To make a choice for the child or offer choices of alternative actions.
  - o To assist the child in making another choice of activities within the room or yard area
  - o To use positive verbal and non-verbal reminders towards positive behaviours

The following are unacceptable behaviour management strategies and are not permitted at any time under any circumstances.

- Corporal Punishment
- Harsh or degrading measures that may undermine a child’s self-respect and self-esteem.
- Depriving a child of basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing, or bedding; and
- Confining a child by locking the exits of the center or using a locked or lockable space to separate the child from other children.

Any use of prohibited practices will result in immediate dismissal of staff. Should the staff behaviour warrant further action, the Children’s Aid Society will be contacted, and their recommendations will be followed. The College of Early Childhood Educator’s will be informed as well as the parents. USA will also file a serious occurrence report and submit to MEDU within 24 hours. According to MEDU the incident will be posted in a conspicuous place for 10 days. Any instructed follow up will also be posted.

- 3) Encourage and enable children to interact and communicate in a myriad of ways with each other, with educators and with their communities.

You will see many ways for children to communicate their ideas, thoughts and feelings including:

- Painting, drawing, modeling with single use clay and other creative materials in individual use bins



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- Telling or writing stories;
- Singing; when space permits
- Digital/Computer (unplugged) Technology
- STEM activities
- Dancing;
- Talking with Educators;
- Building with blocks and other building materials;
- Conducting experiments; and
- Solving problems.

4) Foster exploration and inquiry that is play based. Evidence from diverse fields of study tells us that when children are playing, they are learning.

You will see:

- Children making sense of the world around them through play.
- Play that is supported by caring adults in environments with materials, space and time that encourage complex thinking and aid children to gain essential skills. These skills include creative problem-solving, learning to get along with others, coping with challenges, overcoming obstacles, and learning to focus their attention. These are foundational activities that promote the development of literacy, numeracy and other important life skills.

### Supporting Healthy Development and Learning

Each child's specific strengths, needs and developmental goals are identified. Educators set goals through individual attention, inquiry play-based learning activities, and positive learning environments in which each child's learning and development is supported. Educator's focus on children's social, emotional, physical, creative, and cognitive development in a holistic way. This approach will be strengthened by:

- Preparing the environment to foster learning and development.
- Building on the children's ideas, questions and theories as observed in play.
- A collaborative approach that incorporates discussion amongst team members about how to support deeper exploration; and
- Inviting and engaging others into a continuing process of program development including parents, the children themselves and other community partners including but not limited to educators within the school system.

Children learn through exploration, play, and inquiry with the educators as co-learners. Educators have thoughtful conversations with children, which encourages to interact and communicate in a positive way, and promotes their ability to self-regulate. We use the Nipissing District Developmental Screen, children's portfolios, learning stories, pictures and other pedagogical documentation of children's activities to study, interpret, make visible, and help inform children's learning and development, as well as the overall program.

5) Provide both child initiated and adult supported experiences to foster development.

You will see:

- Weekly program plans posted with a variety of Educator planned activities that will be added throughout the week as the children expand on activities or move forward in new directions.



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- All attempts are made to limit the number of transitions during the day; children do not spend a lot of time lining up or waiting for activities to take place.
- Times when the child takes the lead in planning the activity and times when the educator builds on observation to develop and implement activities that support each child to stretch his/her abilities.

6) Provide opportunities for a range of experiences that support each child's development.

You will see:

- Children actively engaged in activities.
- Children and staff are smiling, laughing and having fun; playing and learning together.
- Educators observing and making documentation about children to build experiences
- Educators discussing the documentation with the children.
- A focus on learning through play with educators encouraging and supporting questions, answers and problem solving on the part of the children.

7) Incorporate a range of different experience modalities including indoor and outdoor play, active play, quiet play, rest and quiet time considering the individual needs of the children.

You will see:

- Well stocked shelves with toys and creative materials available to the children.
- Quiet comfortable spaces for reading or quiet individual activities or rest.
- Children engaged in a range of different activities throughout the day.
- Children taking the lead; actively shaping their play.
- Educators and children listen and learn from each other.
- Educators encouraging children to explore nature, through land-based activities, and their natural environments. (More than 1 acre of outdoor space, Vegetable gardens and forest space)
- Outdoor activities offered daily.
- We offer children a daily choice of active activities.

8) Foster engagement of and ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children.

You will see:

- Educators seek out opportunities to talk to parents about their children's needs.
- Opportunities for parents and educators to share ideas about how best to support each child.
- Accident/Incident reports completed if a child has an accident for providing information.
- Notes posted as reminders for parents about upcoming activities.
- Posted Calendar to remind children and parents of special program clubs/activities.
- Parent area upon entering that has information that offers daily written communication.

### Parents as Partners

Educators foster engagement and ongoing communications with families regarding the program and their children. We strive to build positive and responsive relationships with children and their families. We recognize and value each family for their unique strengths, perspectives, and contributions to our program. Families are encouraged to participate in our childcare activities- allowing us to partner with families in supporting the development of healthy, happy, capable, and competent children.





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A strong, respectful, and equitable relationship with parents is key to our ability to fully engage as co-learners with the children and with their families. To this end, we seek out opportunities to engage parents in a way that meets their needs and build on strengths while respecting the challenges that face young families including long commutes, time pressures and the busyness inherent in raising a family. Strategies include but are not limited to:

- Working with parents to accommodate their need for flexible childcare needs
- Informal discussions daily
- Posted documentation of activities, interactions, and engagement
- Sharing resources and materials about community supports and activities
- Inviting parent participation in the development of curriculum; to share cultural and family experiences
- Questionnaires

### Key ideas and messages we share with parents:

- Our program is play and inquiry based because research tells us that this is the way children learn best.
- A play-based program provides the kind of opportunities that children need to be fully engaged and to learn how to express themselves many ways. We will be sharing our learning with and about your children in many ways.
- What do you think is important that I know about your child to support his/her well-being?
- These are our goals for your child/ren and this is what we will be doing with your child to support the achievement of these goals, (outline the program expectations).
- How can we support your engagement with our program so that you feel that you belong? What works for you, your schedule, and your family?

9) Actively engage with community partners and provide opportunities for the children and families to develop close connections with a range of community supports.

You will see:

- Planned online excursions to community services and programs.
- Use of community services as a resource and support to family and staff.
- Invitations to community partners to provide knowledge through interactive activities

10) Strengthen the capacity of educators to collaborate effectively with children, families and their colleagues through the provision of ongoing opportunities for continuous professional learning.

- Staff encouraged and supported to attend professional development.
- Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECE's) are required by their membership in the College of Early Childhood Educators to commit to their own ongoing professional learning
- New ideas and strategies to support children's development introduced throughout the program; and
- Materials and research shared with parents.

### Continuous Professional Learning for Educators

Our Centre supports educators and others who interact with children, to continuously self-reflect, have discussions, foster on-going collaboration, and engage in continuous professional learning, to provide the best possible learning environment for children. Staff are provided with many mandatory health and safety related training, such as Standard First Aid and infant child CPR, Occupational Health and Safety



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Training, in addition,

- Staff are encouraged to participate in on-going education
- Staff have scheduled planning time
- Staff meet to share ideas and information and to develop programs
- RECE's participate in the CECE Continuous Professional Learning Program

11) Use many languages to document and review the experiences of the children and the educators to:

- Provide an ongoing record of development.
- Provide tools to enable educators to reflect on impact of their activities and strategies.
- You will see:
  - Documentation posted that tells and shows you what the children are doing.
  - Different methods of recording observations about what the children are accomplishing

### A commitment to Continuous Improvement

All new staff, students and volunteers are required to review the program statement prior to interaction with children in our care, and any time the program statement is updated. All staff are required to review the program statement on a bi-annual basis.





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## Parent Signatures

- While every effort is made to ensure that your child will receive the best possible care, there are times when unfortunate situations arise. As a result, you hereby waive, release, discharge and hold harmless Ultimate School-Agers and all persons associated with them from any and all responsibilities or liabilities in injuries and damages resulting from your child’s participation in any activities or use of equipment and facilities.
- I allow my child to occasionally visit local playgrounds around the neighborhood, including, but not limited to soccer field and community garden, with supervision.
- In the event my child will be away from USA program and does NOT require a scheduled pick up from school I will call USA no later than 2PM and inform them of my child’s absence.
- I am aware that is not required of me to provide my child’s health card number.
- I will allow USA to apply sunscreen/ bug repellent to my child if deemed necessary.
- I have read and understand the attached program statement.

Child(ren)’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

**By signing this form, you acknowledge to have read and agree to abide by the handbook.**

**NOTE: Signing and acknowledging on our Electronic Form Submission is considered equivalent to a printed and signed version of this document.**