

PARENT HANDBOOK



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WHAT IS REACHING FOR RAINBOWS?

Although we are licensed by the Ministry of Education,
Reaching for Rainbows is not a child care centre.

Each year we bring together up to 30 girls who are recommended to us because of their vulnerability.
These girls are 6 to 9 years old and they all come from Prince Edward County.

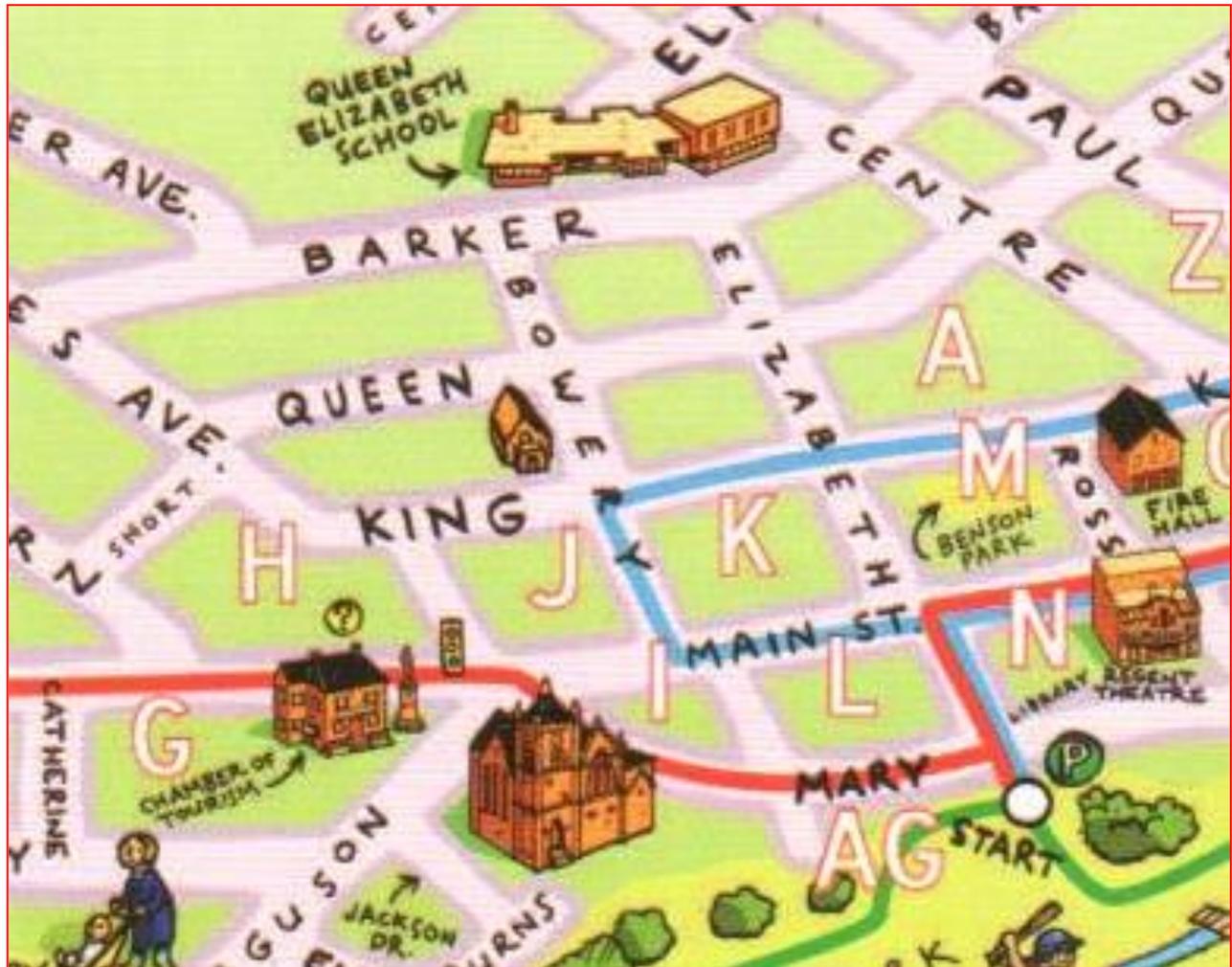
Recommendations are made by Queen Elizabeth Public School, St. Gregory Catholic School,
Community Living, Children's Aid, Children's Mental Health and sometimes by parents.
We do not maintain waiting lists for children. We have a capacity for 30 children in the program.
Once that capacity has been filled, our roster is set for the year.

Once a child joins Reaching for Rainbows, she can stay with us for four years, during which time,
she will discover, through play, how capable, powerful and talented she is.



WHERE ARE WE LOCATED?

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church
31 King Street
Picton, Ontario
K0K 2T0
(613) 476-5653



WHEN ARE WE OPEN?



Monday to Wednesday from 2:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Reaching for Rainbows offers a program for younger girls, ages 6 to 7, and to older girls, ages 8 to 9. The younger girls attend on Tuesdays and Wednesdays and the older girls on Mondays. You will be advised in plenty of time as to which days of the week your child will attend.

Reaching for Rainbows will open on the first Monday in October and close on the last day of May.

The program follows its own calendar which will be provided to you. When the buses aren't running or the schools are closed, Reaching for Rainbows is also closed.



HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

IT'S



Reaching for Rainbows is supported by donations from individuals and community groups that are committed to the healthy development of the children of Prince Edward County.

WHO'S IN CHARGE?

Reaching for Rainbows is overseen by a Program Director and an Assistant Program Director, both of whom have either an Early Childhood Education Diploma or the equivalent.

Both are also qualified in CPR and First Aid.

They are helped by a team of Volunteers and backed by a Steering Committee.



HOW DOES YOUR CHILD GET STARTED?

Please fill out the paperwork in this folder. It is a requirement of the Ministry of Education. Once you've finished filling out the paperwork, please return it to the person who gave it to you.

We know filling out forms isn't fun and can sometimes be overwhelming. If you'd like someone to lend you a hand with this job, just ask the person who gave you this package.



WHAT SHOULD YOUR CHILD WEAR?

At Reaching for Rainbows, the girls do things like dance, play badminton and build stuff on the floor.

If they're wearing frilly dresses and flip-flops, it cramps their style.

Jeans, shorts and t-shirts are the best kind of attire.

Every girl should have a pair of sneakers to wear at Reaching for Rainbows.

The girls will don these sneakers when they arrive and leave them on the rack when they go.



HOW WILL YOUR CHILD GET TO REACHING FOR RAINBOWS?

Separate buses will pick up the girls from Queen Elizabeth Public School and from St. Gregory's Catholic School at about 2:30 p.m. and drive them to the playroom where they will be met outside by one of our staff.



WHAT HAPPENS AT 5:00 O'CLOCK?

For safety's sake, the doors to the playroom are locked.
At 5:00 p.m., ring the bell and someone will come up and open the door for you.

Please ensure that the Program Director knows that you are leaving with your child.



HOUSEKEEPING STUFF



Attendance

If your child will be absent from Reaching for Rainbows, you must call the Program Director or leave a message giving your name, the child's name, the date and time of your call and a brief description of your child's illness. This will ensure we're aware that your child is in safe hands. A phone and text number for the Program Director will be provided when Rainbows opens in October.

Bad Weather Policy

When the buses aren't running and/or the schools are closed, Reaching for Rainbows is also not running. Rainbows will also be closed when temperatures are extreme; i.e., temperatures below -25°C or a wind chill factor of -28° or greater.

At the beginning of the year, you will be invited to an Inaugural Information Session and one of the things that will be discussed is how to find out when the buses aren't running. Triboard, the company that ferries your child from her school to Reaching for Rainbows provides an alert system that will email you when buses are cancelled. The web address to set up these alerts is www.triboard.ca. Once on the site, click on Delays & Cancellations and then Sign Up for Delays & Cancellations.

Field Trips

On occasion, the Rainbow girls will be going on field trips, along with the Program Director, her Staff and Volunteers. A notice will be sent home in advance of each excursion, letting you know the location, date and time. When you register your child with Reaching for Rainbows, you will sign a Consent Form. This form gives permission for your child to go on field trips with our team.

Supervision

Volunteers and students are supervised by an employee at all times. These personnel are not permitted to be alone with any child.

Snacks

Every day the girls will be served a nutritious snack while they're at Reaching for Rainbows. Snacks will include foods from each of the four food groups and will vary depending on what's in season.

EMERGENCY & MEDICAL STUFF



Sick Children

If your child is not well enough to fully participate in the Reaching for Rainbows program, she should be home in bed. Sick children will be readmitted to the program once they are free of symptoms for a 24-hour period. Communicable diseases may require a longer period of exclusion as directed by the Ministry of Health.

Head Lice

You must notify the Program Director immediately if your child has head lice. Your child will not be permitted to attend the program until 24 hours after treatment and the infestation has been cleared.

Administration of Medication

Only emergency medications will be administered at Reaching for Rainbows. These medications include anaphylaxis and allergy medications. You must ensure that the Program Director is aware of any medical conditions and work with her to complete forms for management of these conditions.

Serious Occurrences

Serious occurrences can sometimes happen despite the best precautions. The Ontario Government requires all licensed child care programs to post a notice of any serious occurrence. Such a notice will give you information about the incident and outline follow-up actions taken by the Advisory Committee and Reaching for Rainbows. Serious occurrences include the following incidents.

- 1) Death of A Child
- 2) Alleged Abuse or Neglect
- 3) Life-threatening Injury or Illness
- 4) Missing or Temporarily Unsupervised Child
- 5) Unplanned Disruption of Normal Operations That Pose A Risk to the Health, Safety or Well-Being of the Children

MORE EMERGENCY & MEDICAL STUFF

Emergency Procedures

If an emergency occurs at Reaching for Rainbows, this is what we do.

- 1) We have strict policies and procedures in place to make sure that all children are quickly and safely removed from the building and that emergency services are contacted immediately.
- 2) Staff and volunteers will escort the children to 51 Bowery Street, which is next door to the playroom, and remain with them to ensure that they are safe and well supervised.
- 3) As soon as the children are secure, staff and volunteers will begin calling parents, guardians, and, where necessary, emergency contact personnel to advise them of the emergency and request their immediate attendance at 51 Bowery Street.
- 4) Staff and volunteers will remain with the children until parents, guardians or emergency contact personnel arrive at 51 Bowery Street to pick them up.
- 5) Parents and guardians will be advised by phone, email or text once the emergency has been resolved and all repairs, if any, have been completed. At that point, all parents, guardians, staff, volunteers and children will be invited to a debriefing meeting. At that time, anyone who has suffered injury or distress as a result of this emergency will be put in touch with the appropriate agencies by the Program Manager.
- 6) Any repairs required to resume normal operations will be undertaken in as timely a manner as is possible.

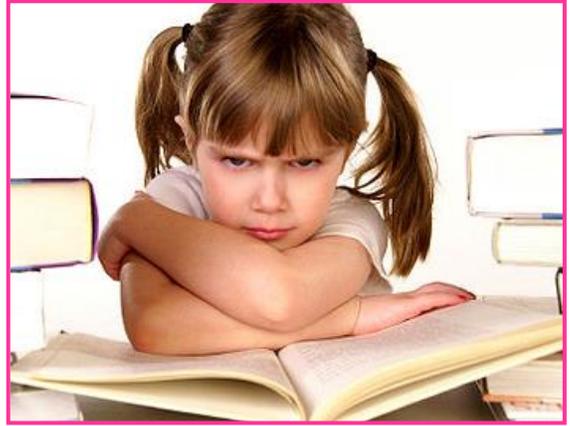


BEHAVIOUR STUFF FOR CHILDREN

Managing Behaviour

Our goal at Reaching for Rainbows is to provide a safe and happy environment. When a child needs guidance, here's how we'll manage it.

- 1) Guidance will be positive and consistent.
- 2) Guidance will be implemented as soon as possible after the inappropriate behaviour.
- 3) Guidance will be appropriate to the child's level of development.
- 4) Guidance will be related to an inappropriate behaviour.
- 5) Guidance will be designed to assist the child to learn appropriate behaviour.
- 6) Guidance will be discussed with a parent(s) if a difficult situation arises with a child.



Conflicts are incredibly normal when young children play together. At Reaching for Rainbows, we will use these conflicts as opportunities to develop sensitivity to others and to resolve problems in a calm and reasonable way.

Discharge Policy

So, what if all of those tactics don't work and behavioural issues just keep showing up? We will practically go to the ends of the earth not to lose one of our girls. We will work with the children and their parents or guardians to try and resolve problems. In addition, with the parents' or guardian's permission, we will call in advisors from Community Living to assist us. However, if a child continues to behave in a manner that jeopardizes the safety and respect that are the keynotes of our program, we will advise the parent or guardian, if possible, in person that the child can no longer attend and follow up with written confirmation by letter or email.



BEHAVIOUR STUFF FOR ADULTS

The following practices will not be tolerated at Reaching for Rainbows. Staff and volunteers must confirm that these practices are not allowed and do not occur in the program.

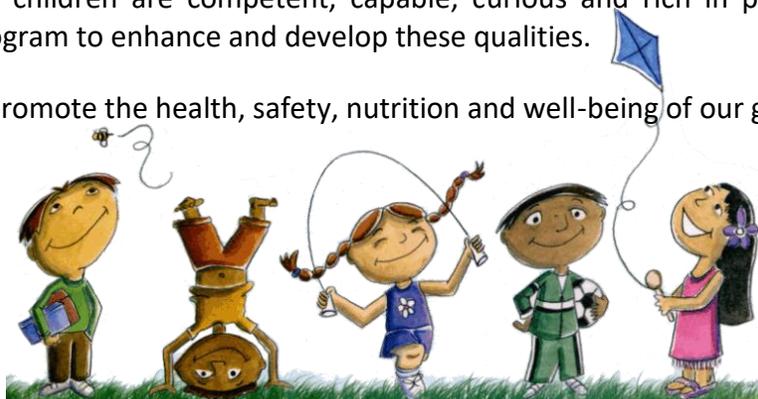
- 1) Corporal punishment, which may include, but not be limited to, hitting, spanking, slapping or pinching.
- 2) Physical restraint of a child, including but not limited to, confining a child to a chair or car seat, etc., for discipline or in lieu of supervision unless to prevent self-harm, harm to others and only until the risk of harm or injury is no longer imminent.
- 3) Locking the exits for the purpose of confining a child, or confining the area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency or is part of emergency management policies and procedures.
- 4) Using harsh or degrading measures, or threats, or derogatory language directed at, or used, in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child or undermine her self-respect, dignity or self-worth.
- 5) Depriving a child of basic needs, including food, drink, shelter, sleep, use of the toilet use, clothing or bedding.
- 6) Inflicting any bodily harm on children, including making children eat or drink against their will.

If there is any breach of these rules, the persons involved will be immediately escorted out of the building, the incident will be recorded and the information given to the Steering Committee for appropriate follow-up via established Serious Occurrence Procedures.

OUR OUTLOOK

Our goal is to always accentuate the positive and the following info outlines how we do it.

- 1) We believe that children are competent, capable, curious and rich in potential and we have designed our program to enhance and develop these qualities.
- 2) We are here to promote the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of our girls.



MORE ABOUT OUR OUTLOOK

- 3) We support positive and responsive interactions among our girls, parents, child care providers, staff and volunteers.
- 4) We encourage the girls to interact and communicate in a positive way and we support their ability to self-regulate.
- 5) We foster the girl's exploration, play and inquiry.
- 6) We provide child-initiated and adult-supported experiences.
- 7) We plan for, and create, positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development is supported.
- 8) We offer indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play and quiet times, giving consideration to the individual needs of the children in our care.



- 9) We foster engagement in and ongoing communication with parents and guardians about the program and their children.
- 10) We involve local community partners and allow these partners to support our girls, their families and our staff and volunteers.
- 11) We give support to our staff, volunteers, child care providers and others who interact with the children with regard to professional learning.
- 12) We document and review the impact of all of these strategies on the girls and their families.
- 13) We require that all our staff and volunteers review our policies and procedures prior to working with our girls, whenever our strategies change and also annually.
- 14) We monitor our staff and volunteers to ensure that they are adhering to our policies and procedures through daily observation, staff reviews, policy review requirements and training.

HOW WE PRACTICE OUR OUTLOOK

To ensure that our outlook is implemented in the playroom, the following practical approaches are taken with respect to items 1) to 14) above.

- 1) We design programming based on the Ministry of Education's handbook on "How Learning Happens". Each activity or project we introduce to the girls is developed to scaffold their learning to a higher level, to encourage self-regulation and initiative and to tickle their curiosity.
- 2) On each day of the program, we provide the girls with a nutritious snack which, over the week, touches all the food groups needed to help the girls grow strong and healthy.



Further, we follow the guidelines outlined in both our Health Policy and our Sanitary Practices Policy. The girls are taught how to properly wash their hands and they are required to do so frequently when they are in the playroom. We clean, sanitize and disinfect materials, equipment and surfaces daily, weekly, monthly and annually and maintain a record of same.

We adhere to the protocols surrounding treatment of minor injuries and illnesses and also to the requirements for storage, administration and record-keeping of medications provided for children by their parents or guardians.

- 3) We surround our girls with caring adults who, through conversation, play and role-modeling, encourage, nurture and build the self-esteem of every child who comes under our wing.
- 4) All the people who connect with one another at Reaching for Rainbows are supported in different ways. Our staff and volunteers take every opportunity to talk with parents as they are picking up their children at the end of the day. Parents have been given the phone numbers and email addresses of our staff so that they can contact them whenever they have a question or concern. Twice a year, we host a dinner for the girls and their families, staff, volunteers and partners of the program.

Volunteers and staff are regularly invited to attend both training sessions and social events to encourage a team outlook and to provide forums for discussion.

- 5) At Reaching for Rainbows we have a mantra – safety and respect. Every child is taught this mantra when she joins the program. When the girls disregard these touchstones, a simple reminder of the mantra quickly brings an end to any inappropriate behaviour.
- 6) Our program is totally play-based, following the interests of the girls and encouraging them to step outside their comfort zones by offering them activities and projects that are exciting and tantalizing.

MORE ABOUT HOW WE PRACTICE OUR OUTLOOK

- 7) As mentioned, our programming follows the girls' interests; however, the job of our staff and volunteers is to sit down with the girls and play along with them. This provides opportunities for our adults to make suggestions and expand activities beyond the basics.
- 8) Our playroom is set up to expose our girls to a host of different experiences. We have an art centre, craft centre, home centre, library and quiet area, music centre, games and puzzles centre, writing centre, gym equipment and a centre which changes on a regular basis (i.e., store, science experiments) to give even greater breadth to our programming.



- 9) Weather permitting, we try to get outside every day and we have a small storage room full of outdoor equipment. Indoors, along with quiet activities, we also offer an exercycle, jumping balls, yoga and gymkhana equipment and Twister.
- 10) As mentioned in 4), above, we make a habit of talking and interacting with parents whenever possible and we make ourselves available when they want to have a conversation.
- 11) We connect with a number of community agencies, such as, Children's Mental Health and the Children's Aid Society, but we have particularly close ties with Community Living. Those of our girls who are on Community Living's client list enjoy visits from this organization's Resource Consultants and we are the lucky recipients of regular reports from this source. In addition, we frequently invite the Consultants to assist us with training sessions and call upon them when we recognize that a child or a family could use their expertise.
- 12) We offer our staff the opportunity to request grant money for educational purposes through Prince Edward, Lennox and Addington Social Services. We also provide regular training tutorials through Community Living, or by bringing in outside experts, or through simple discussion sessions run by members of the Steering Committee.

HOW WE ENSURE THAT WE KEEP OUR PROMISES

Keeping An Eye on Compliance and Contravention

We monitor the implementation of our strategies and ensure the absence of prohibited practices through observation and review. Our Daily Log is used to record volunteer non-compliances with the policies and procedures of the program while staff are monitored via three-month and year-end reviews. Any contraventions are dealt with as per the instructions in our Policy for Monitoring Compliance and Contravention.

Required Reading

Our staff and volunteers are required to read our Policy Binder before having any interaction with the girls. They must also review this binder on an annual basis and whenever any changes are made, signing off on our Policies and Procedures Review and Sign-Off Form in each instance to demonstrate compliance with the policies and procedures therein.

We require that all new staff and volunteers review our Program Statement prior to interacting with the girls and every time the statement is modified.

Document, Document, Document

We document and review the impact of our strategies on our girls and our parents through creating individual plans for each child and storing them in the Child Profile Binder so that we can easily reference them.



PARENT ISSUES AND CONCERNS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a transparent process for parents or guardians, staff and volunteers to use when you bring forward issues or concerns.

General

As parents or guardians, you are encouraged to take an active role in Reaching for Rainbows and regularly discuss with staff what your child(ren) are experiencing in the program. As outlined in our Program Statement, we support positive and responsive interactions amongst our girls, their parents or guardians, staff and volunteers. We also foster engagement and ongoing communication with you about your children and the program.

All issues and concerns that you raise are taken seriously by Reaching for Rainbows 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 or concerns may be brought forward verbally or in writing. Responses and outcomes will be provided verbally or, upon request, in writing. The level of detail provided to you will respect and maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved.

An initial response to an issue or concern will be provided to parents or guardians within three (3) business days. The person who raised the issue or concern will be kept informed throughout the resolution process.

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

Confidentiality

Every issue and concern will be treated confidentially and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of parents or guardians, staff 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 Children's Aid Society).

Conduct

Reaching for Rainbows maintains high standards for positive interaction, communication and role-modeling for our girls. Harassment and discrimination will therefore not be tolerated from any party.

If at any point you, a staff member or a volunteer feels uncomfortable, threatened, abused or belittled, you may immediately end a conversation and report the situation to the Program Manager at reachingrainbows@hotmail.com.

MORE ABOUT PARENT ISSUES AND CONCERNS

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 or guardian expresses concerns that a child is being abused or neglected, the parent or guardian will be advised to contact Highland Shores Children's Aid Society directly at (613) 476-7957. Persons who become aware of such concerns are also responsible for reporting this information to the Children's Aid Society as per the "Duty to Report" requirement under the Child and Family Services Act.

For more information about suspected abuse or neglect, please use the following link.

<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childrensaid/reportingabuse/index.aspx>

Escalation of Issues or Concerns

Where parents or 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 Program Manager of Reaching for Rainbows at reachingrainbows@hotmail.com.

Issues or concerns related to compliance with requirements set out in the Child Care and Early Years Act 2014 and Ontario Regulation 137/15 must be reported to the Ministry of Education's Child Care Quality Assurance and Licensing Branch.

Issues or concerns may also be reported to other relevant regulatory bodies (e.g. Hastings & Prince Edward Counties Public Health Unit, Ontario Provincial Police, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Labour, Prince Edward County Fire Service, College of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario College of Teachers, College of Social Workers) where appropriate.

Contacts

If you wish to contact another regulatory body, here are some addresses and numbers to assist you.

Ministry of Education Licensed Child Care Help Desk	childcare_ontario@ontario.ca (877) 510-5333
Hastings & Prince Edward Counties Public Health Unit	(613) 966-5500
Ontario Provincial Police	(888) 310-1122
Prince Edward County Fire Service	(613) 476-2602
Prince Edward, Lennox & Addington Social Services	(888) 354-0114

Issue or Concern	Here's How You Report Your Issue or Concern	Here's How Reaching for Rainbows Will Respond
Program Related	Raise the issue or concern directly with the Program Director.	<p>We will address the issue or concern at the time it is raised or arrange to meet with you within three (3) business days.</p> <p>We will document your issues or concerns in detail.</p> <p>Our documentation will include the following details.</p> <p>The date and time the issue or concern was received.</p> <p>The name of the person who received the issue or concern.</p> <p>The name of the person reporting the issue or concern.</p> <p>The details of the issue or concern and any steps taken to resolve the issue or concern and/or information given to you regarding next steps or referral.</p> <p>If we are unable to address your issue or concern, we will put you in touch with someone who can.</p> <p>We will ensure that the investigation of your issue or concern is initiated by the appropriate party within three (3) business days or as soon as possible. We will document in writing reasons for any delays.</p> <p>We will provide a resolution or outcome to the person who raised the issue or concern.</p>
General or Operations Related	Raise your issue or concern directly with the Program Director or Program Manager.	We will follow the steps outlined above.

Issue or Concern	Here's How You Report Your Issue or Concern	Here's How Reaching for Rainbows Will Respond
Staff Related	<p>Raise your issue or concern directly with the staff member or contact the Program Manager.</p> <p>All issues or concerns about the conduct of a staff member that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the Program Manager as soon as you become aware of the situation.</p>	<p>We will follow the steps outlined above.</p>
Volunteer Related	<p>Raise the issue or concern with the Program Director and/or the Volunteer Coordinator.</p> <p>All issues or concerns about the conduct of a volunteer that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the Program Manager as soon as you become aware of the situation.</p>	<p>We will follow the steps outlined above.</p>

