



The Tree House

MEMBER HANDBOOK

Keweenaw Family Resource Center
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Keweenaw Family Resource Center receives funding from a variety of sources including the Michigan Department of Education, BHK Child Development Board, Copper Country Intermediate School District, Michigan Children's Trust Fund, Superior Child Abuse Prevention Council, Canterbury House/EACW, Copper Country United Way, Portage Health, Trinity Episcopal Church, Copper Country Kiwanis, local businesses, service organizations, and individual donations.

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Families,

Welcome to the Tree House! This is an exciting time for all! We are happy you are here today and hope you have a wonderful time. This is a new and exciting project for the Keweenaw Family Resource Center. We want to meet the needs of families with young children in our area, but please bear with us, as this is a new endeavor and it will take us sometime to address all the requests we have had. We will have the opportunity to host private field trips and special events in the near future. Also, we hope to make our meeting room available to a variety of groups, but this all takes time and planning. Our primary focus is on getting our doors open so children and families can come in and play. We welcome your suggestions and ideas and, as with all new endeavors, I am sure there are some kinks we will need to work out as time goes on. Families are welcome to use the J.P. Fitzzy's Hideaway Room for a snack. Please be mindful to clean up after yourself. This is a shared area. Remember, this is an active playtime and your child(ren) require adult supervision at all times.

Have fun,
Cathy Benda

A BRIEF HISTORY

The mission of the Keweenaw Family Resource Center is to support, strengthen and enrich family life in the Keweenaw Peninsula. Our programs include playgroups and home and hospital visitation for new mothers, with a focus on families with children from birth through 4 years. We also welcome expectant mothers.

Mommy, Daddy and Me was developed from the chance meeting of two women, Pat Wood and Margaret Sottile. Pat was new to the community and wanted to work with young children. As a member of Trinity Episcopal Church, Margaret knew that the church wished to start a community outreach program. A needs assessment showed few services were available to families with children from birth through 4 years. The first playgroup called *Trinity Drop In Center* opened its doors in April 1991. This successful outreach program developed into the independent non-profit 501(c)3 organization now known as the Keweenaw Family Resource Center.

In 2009, the idea of The Tree House was presented to KFRC as an indoor playground and exploration center for children ages 0-4 and their families. Director, Cathy Benda worked with staff and dozens of community volunteers to design the space and plan operations. The KFRC is run by a Board of Directors consisting of volunteers from the community.

AGE LIMITS

Programs are designed for children from birth through 4 years of age. A child's 5th birthday is the cut off date. **Please do not bring school age children (including kindergartners).** This includes the Tree House. Our programs are not equipped to provide a positive experience for the older child. We simply do not have age appropriate toys or spaces for them as our focus is on infants, toddlers and young preschoolers.

REGISTRATION and MEMBERSHIP

All families must register to use The Tree House and off-site playgroups. Membership fees are payable in full at the time of registration. No refunds or exchanges. There are several membership options for The Tree House.

\$200/year/family

\$150/academic year/family – The academic year runs Sept. 1st – May 31st

\$80/semester/family – Semesters run Sept. 1st – January 15th or January 15th – May 31st

\$50/Summer Session/family – Summer Session runs June 1st – Aug. 31st

\$20/month/family

\$5/day/family

Monthly memberships may be purchased any day of the month (although the beginning of the month is preferred) and will run 30 days. Memberships are awarded by children in a family, thus if you bring a child without a membership that child will be charged an entrance fee for that day and is required to have a signed waiver on file. An application for a reduced fee may be submitted to the Executive Director. Portage Health is an official partner of the **Tree House**. Portage Health Employees may purchase a membership at a 20% reduction in price. Enrollment and participation in BHK and KFRC home visiting programs includes membership to The Tree House.

Membership includes open play times and all on-site Mommy, Daddy and Me playgroups. Membership does not guarantee entrance to the Tree House if capacity has been reached.(see page 3 for capacity limits) The KFRC accepts cash and personal checks made out to KFRC (please note there will be a \$30 fee for returned checks).

HOURS OF OPERATION (see attached schedule)

The Tree House will be closed on the following holidays: Thanksgiving, Friday after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Years Eve, New Years Day, Memorial Day, July 4th, and Labor Day.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (subject to change without notice)

To make your playtime fun and safe please observe the following rules:

- ◆ Sign in when you arrive and register if you have not already.
- ◆ Every child needs to have a waiver signed by their legal guardian..
- ◆ Help us welcome newcomers. It can be intimidating to join a new group. Each of us comes looking for a few friendly faces.
- ◆ Every child must be attended by a caregiver at all times. Explanation/Clarification: We are not a licensed daycare and our liability insurance is based upon the premise that parents/caregivers accompany their children at all times. Furthermore, the intent of the program is to provide a safe and enjoyable place for parents and children to play together. Older siblings/babysitters over 16 years of age may accompany a child.
- ◆ Please encourage your child to share toys and take turns. We know this is not always easy but it is the parent's responsibility to promote cooperation.
- ◆ Please leave your child's personal toys at home or in the car. This will make the "sharing" part a bit easier.
- ◆ Weapon play (guns, swords), while popular, is inappropriate in our setting. Please redirect your child to another activity.
- ◆ Be respectful of all children. It is the job of caregivers to stop undesirable behavior immediately. Hitting, biting, kicking, screaming, repeatedly taking toys away from other children and name calling (by adults or children) are behaviors that should be stopped.
- ◆ Use a pleasant but firm (no nonsense) tone of voice with the child displaying inappropriate behavior. Do not shout across the room. Move to the child and get down to their level to speak to them.
- ◆ Every child has bad days. If your child is having a difficult time, we urge you to use the quiet areas (book centers, puzzles) to sit with him/her and remind the child of the safety rules. If this is not helpful, please take your child home and return on a day when he or she is feeling better.

- ◆ Please remember that you are responsible for supervising your own child. If you notice that your child is not in the area please make a point to find him/her. Don't assume that someone else is watching your child for you.
- ◆ Parents and caregivers are expected to be respectful of other parents, staff, and volunteers at all times. Respect is a quality that should be instilled in all children, and the most effective way of doing this is by setting a good example. If an adult is showing disrespect and the situation becomes unpleasant, please alert the staff on site.
- ◆ If you have any questions or suggestions please feel free to talk with one of the coordinators. We welcome feedback.
- ◆ Alcohol is prohibited at the Tree House.
- ◆ Smoking and tobacco products are prohibited at the Tree House
- ◆ Families are welcome to use the J.P. Fitzzy's Hideaway Room for a snack. Please be mindful to clean up after yourself. This is a shared space.
- ◆ Please do not bring food or snacks that are not to share during program hours. During Open Play hours, parents are welcome to bring a small snack for their child. All food must stay in the designated food areas. Tree Nuts and peanuts (including peanut butter), are prohibited.
- ◆ Shoes of any kind are prohibited in the play areas of the Tree House. We request that all visitors wear socks or slippers.
- ◆ Please do not come early. Doors will open on time and not before. Please leave on time.

SNOW DAYS / LATE STARTS / CLOSINGS

KFRC and The Tree House follow the Houghton County School closings for snow related closing and late starts. If the public schools are closed or have an early dismissal due to inclement weather, all programs will be closed. A late start will result in our morning program and open play hours being cancelled and an early dismissal will mean our afternoon and evening hours will be cancelled. Please turn into your local radio station or our website for cancellations.

STOP SIGN PROCEDURES

- ◆ Based on space available and in keeping with best practices for early childhood experiences, each site has been assigned a limit on the number of children attending. The STOP Sign will be posted at the entrance to the site when they are full. The numbers for each site are as follow:
 - Trinity Episcopal Church Playgroup in Houghton on Mondays: 14 children
 - Gloria Dei Church in Hancock on Fridays: 12 children
 - Lake Linden High School on Thursdays: 8 children
 - The Tree House Red Ridge Plaza: 20-25 children
 - Horizons School in Mohawk: 10 children
- ◆ KFRC staff reserves the right to put the STOP sign up at any time during the playgroup; before or after the limit is reached.
- ◆ We understand the disappointment you and your child might feel when met by the stop sign. However, limiting attendance ensures that parents and children will have an enjoyable experience, one which adheres to "best practices."

HEALTH POLICY

Everyone loves to come to play, but **please keep your child home if he has a fever, diarrhea, flu, yellow/green drippy nose, has been on antibiotics for less than 24 hours, has conjunctivitis (pink eye) or any other contagious disease.** KFRC staff reserves the right to ask those presenting symptoms to leave.

Health Department regulations require a separate area for diapering children. Please use the diapering area set up in the restroom. Dispose of diapers in the trash can provided. Always wash hands after diapering.

OPEN PLAY

The Tree House will hold Open Play sessions. There will be no formalized programming during this time. Play is unstructured. Parents are not to leave their children unattended. While staff is on site, staff is not available at this time to hold your child while you are otherwise engaged. STOP sign rules are still enforced during this time. Staff will alert families 15 minutes to the closing of Open Play. This would be an appropriate time to help your child pick up any toys that have been spread around the play space. Please leave The Tree House as you find it. Staff has a limited time to clean the play space for the next session so please try to adhere to the time schedule when leaving.

MOMMY, DADDY AND ME PLAYGROUPS

What is a session like?

Activities are provided for the parent and child to interact with each other while having the opportunity to make new friends. The schedule includes free play, circle time, snack time, exploration time and clean up. Parents are expected to move through the play centers, circle times and activities with their child.

Playgroups will take place at The Tree House and at several off site locations. Your Tree House membership includes all playgroups hosted on-site. Off-site locations do not require a Tree House membership but families will be asked to register. There is no cost to register; however, a fee of \$3 per family is suggested for each playgroup visit. Coupon books may be purchased from the playgroup coordinators or the KFRC office staff. Each coupon book costs \$40.00 for 20 coupons, a great savings. One coupon is good for family attendance at one playgroup, with no expiration date. Families enrolled in the home visiting portion of KFRC will receive a free coupon book.

- **Circle Time**

Parents are expected to participate with their child in the circle. Do not worry if your child does not want to join in. She may be the type of child who does not plunge into a situation until she has appraised it. Watching is also a form of participation! Eventually she will feel comfortable joining in, especially if she has seen you participating.

- **Exploration Time**

This portion of *Mommy, Daddy and Me* will simply be for exploring a "process" such as finger-painting, ripping newspaper or dripping colored water.

Occasionally, we will focus on more "product" oriented projects such as holiday crafts. We know that activity time sometimes seems more trouble than it's worth--that your child might get messy etc. Keep in mind that kids love to experiment with "messes" using various materials--this is how they learn! Also remember that we try to set up all activities with a minimum of mess that work for you and your child.

- **Snack time**

KFRC will provide a snack at each playgroup and story hour for the children. The Tree House has food zone and food free zones. Please adhere to the areas.

Please do not bring food, drinks, candy or gum from home to give your child at playgroup. *If your child has food allergies and is unable to eat the snack provided by KFRC, please notify the playgroup coordinator so that special arrangements can be made.*

- **Clean Up Time**

Cleaning up is a lifelong learning experience. All parents and children are expected to help during clean up time at the end of the morning. Toys should be neatly placed in their respective baskets/bins.

- **Invitations**

We are busy with children's activities and creating an environment of acceptance for everyone who attends our program. Please do not bring party invitations, fundraisers, solicitations, etc. during designated KFRC programs as this distracts from our main purpose. Trading names, phone numbers and addresses with each other and mailing or phoning invitations is a better way to handle this.

PLAYTIME IN THE PARK

During the months of June, July, August and September, Playtime in the Park will replace Mommy, Daddy and Me sessions. This program is free to all families but a registration form similar to the Mommy, Daddy and Me form will be required. Playtime meets on Wednesdays and alternates local parks including Chassell Park, Lake Linden Park, Centennial Park and Hancock Beach. A small snack and activity will be provided. All families are welcomed.

OTHER PROGRAMS

KFRC may host a myriad of formal programs including but not limited to: Music and Movement Classes, Tummy Time, One and Two and Me and You, Interactive Literacy Activities, Kid Fit and Creative Play. These classes may require an extra fee to participate.

MEDICAL AND CONTACT INFORMATION

It is the sole responsibility of the member to ensure that KFRC has correct and current contact information for purposes of billing, medical emergencies, or non-medical emergency contacts for any other special reason. The member shall promptly notify KFRC if there has been any change in mailing address, telephone number, email address, billing information, medical information, authorized caregivers, and emergency contact information. All members are required to complete the membership application and include all such relevant medical and contact information.

REVOCAION OF MEMBERSHIP

Failure to observe the policies and procedures of KFRC may, in KFRC's sole discretion, result in termination of membership without refund. KFRC also reserves the right to revoke a membership, or an extension of membership, at any time for any reason allowable under the law.

ASSUMPTION OF RISK, RELEASE, WAIVER AND INDEMNIFICATION

The Undersigned hereby acknowledges, agrees, and accepts the risk of injury and illness inherent in any physical activity and/or program, including particularly, the programs offered by *The Keweenaw Family Resource Center*. Such risks may include but are not limited to falling, bumping, risks from abrasions, scrapes, cuts, burns, broken, sprained or bruised limbs, as well as risks from the actions or omissions of others.

The Undersigned assumes all risk of personal injury and property damage for the Undersigned and all children under the care of the Undersigned.

The Undersigned recognizes that it is impossible to guard against every possible harm or danger to persons or property and therefore, the Undersigned agrees to hold the KFRC, its Board Members, employees, agents, independent contractors, and other guests, harmless from and against any and all liability and agrees to pay for the defense (including reasonably attorney's fees, expert witness fees, and court costs), of any suit filed against KFRC as a result of the Undersigned's actions and the actions of the children under the care of the Undersigned when the Undersigned or the children under the care of the Undersigned are on KFRC premises. The Undersigned acknowledges that it is the responsibility of the Undersigned to monitor the activities of the children under the care of the Undersigned when such children are on KFRC premises.

I have read the KFRC handbook and agree to abide by said policies and procedures.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name and Address (please print):

The Undersigned expressly agrees that *KFRC* may use photos taken of the Undersigned, Undersigned's children, and caregivers for archival and publicity purposes.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Staff Name: _____

Date: _____

Staff Signature: _____