Cook’s School Day Care Inc

2015 Satisfaction Survey Results
Many thanks are extended to all who take the time to respectfully offer feedback about our service. We truly appreciate and need input to guide us in continuing to strive to offer Northumberland County’s first choice for early leaning and child care!

Every comment and suggestion we receive are always given the attention and consideration of our team. Changes made to enhance our service are based on many criteria including, and most-importantly, listening to what our clients have to say.

Again, thank-you for helping us to operate an outstanding service.

Response to Survey Comments

Comments below are based on the results of this survey. Information from our most recent strategic planning exercises and outcomes are also included for your information.

A summary of the survey is provided to the families, board and staff via hard copy on display at the entrances to our facility as well as email (if desired), posted to our Facebook page, and posted to our website news section. The summary addresses all areas where constructive feedback has been offered.

The County of Northumberland requires a summary of our annual survey as well. The County is not provided the identities of the people who have completed surveys.

Unless a respondent has chosen to remain anonymous, each person who submits a survey is contacted to follow up on comments made.

Steps taken and/or recommended to improve the effectiveness of and/or efficiency of the services.

Menus: In response to survey comments:

- Menus are reviewed on an ongoing basis and minimally twice per year prior to beginning the “summer” menu (June and October) and the “winter” menu (October to June). The menu has been reviewed by the HKPR District Health Unit dietician and our program advisor during the licensing visits.

- An abundance of fresh seasonal fruit is already incorporated in the menu; the cost of organic fruit is prohibitive. Prepared fruit cups are only used occasionally on excursions where we are providing a picnic lunch.

- Most of the juices, especially in summer, have already been replaced by water because we provide a large quantity of fruit. Unless obtained from
Food4All\footnote{Food4All - A County-supported food distribution location for not-for profit, charitable organizations for which we pay a minimal annual membership and receive an abundance of our grocery products. A significant cost savings for Cook’s.}, we do not serve prepared juices. The juices (typically apple and orange) are a natural concentrate product to which we add the water to prepare as needed.

- Sugar products are closely monitored and we will continue to do so to ensure that the children are not receiving excessive amounts from our menu.
- Hot dogs will never be served more than once every 5 weeks during our summer menu rotation.
- Menus are provided in the parent handbooks, posted on our website, posted in every classroom, in the kitchen, in the office and in the foyers. The postings within the centre have a directional arrow that points to current menu week. We will continue to ensure that parents are directed to this information and that the information is fully visible to all.

**Satisfaction Surveys for Children**

In response to a survey comment, other local early learning and child care programs were contacted to determine if any had a survey in place for the children to complete. Two programs responded saying they did not. As a result of online searching, a survey was developed and distributed to all children enrolled with Cook’s the week of March 9. A copy is attached and has been shared with the two responding programs as well. It seems the children are enjoying the opportunity to share their thoughts (mostly in pictorial form). Although very nice to receive, many of the change requests and suggestions involve items or activities not suitable or unattainable for this type of program (example: field trip to Hawaii). On the positive side, we have received some good menu suggestions. Awaiting further submissions.

**Invoices**

In response to the parent suggesting that invoices be emailed prior to payment transactions being completed - payments are calculated directly from the schedules and change to schedule forms that every parent must complete and sign off on that permits Cook’s to complete the pre-authorized payment transaction process. Parents are given a copy of the fee guide upon enrollment and any time a fee change is made. Parents are informed about the dates for which every pre-authorized transaction will occur and the period for which transactions apply. Every parent is encouraged to contact the office via phone, email or personal visit if confirmation of the payment amount is required prior to the transaction occurring.
COOK’S SCHOOL DAY CARE INC 2015 SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS

Combined Special Event for Children and Families

In the survey, one parent suggested doing a show or something involving the children and parents. The families have not been informed yet - the board is planning an event for the children and families. May be combined with our 30th anniversary celebration this fall. Exciting details to come...may be looking for volunteers!

How Friendship and Lifelong Learning are Promoted

In the survey, an anonymous respondent indicated that it is not clear how friendship and lifelong learning are promoted.

Within our stated philosophy, the number one goal for the children is, “To provide opportunities for being with other children in a setting conducive to the development of wholesome social relationships”. Our philosophy is available on our website and in our parent handbooks. The supervisors speak to the importance of healthy social relationships during the application process with the families. It is noted that play-based learning allows for uninterrupted opportunities for children to socialize, explore, experience and learn together.

Our parent handbooks and our website provide a detailed outline of teaching methods used in support of the children learning through play. By offering the opportunities to learn based on interests, we promote life-long learning. Our commitment to and the benefits of play-based learning are brought to the attention of and reinforced with the families by the supervisors during the initial interview with the families.

Supervisors and staff will continue to share the importance accomplishing our mission during interactions with families.

Toys for Older Children

In 2014, significant funds were provided by the County of Northumberland to enhance and support play-based learning in our home and centre-based programs. Cook’s constantly evaluates our program supplies to ensure a number of key elements are in place including, but not limited to:

- The items continue to meet health and safety standards.
- The items continue to offer the intended play and learning value.
- The quantity of items is suited to the number of children enrolled.

Because the need for toys for older children has been cited by a home child care client, our inventory is being reviewed immediately by the ECE Consultant/Home Visitor. Appropriate steps will be taken in a timely manner following the review.
Factors impacting on the effectiveness of delivery of the services.

- Supporting the staff’s commitment and professionalism is costly but necessary. Approved training hours are paid at staff’s current salary level. Salary increases are a priority but the organization must be cautious to ensure that any salary increase expenses can be supported. It is our aim to be competitive with or more desirable than other local programs.

- Recruitment of home child care providers is an ongoing challenge. Always trying to determine new methods to attract suitable applicants. The high occurrence of private care in the area is significant.

- Enrollment is unpredictable; therefore revenue is unpredictable. The expansion to Gummow PS is now having a further effect on our after school program enrollment.

- Board of Directors – recruitment of new members and retention. Generally, busy lives keep people with young children from volunteering – simply do not have the time (or energy) to add on another commitment. Regardless, without board members, we cannot operate as a not-for-profit corporation – serious!

- Fundraising revenues have dropped dramatically because the area is saturated with many organizations and agencies competing for the same dollars (United Way, schools, other not-for-profits and charities). People are being selective because every cause cannot be supported. Always trying to think outside the box regarding fundraising ventures that will attract support.

- Bingo fundraisers (our most lucrative event) has experienced a decline in profits. Obtaining volunteers is a constant challenge. The regulations of the lottery corporation regarding having information for all volunteers for the organization on file and current at all times is a challenge – families (the volunteers for our organization) come and go much more frequently than other charities. The information must be updated very frequently – quite time-consuming. Securing regular volunteers is difficult to impossible.

- Training - access to affordable and quality training for staff (although much improved with the new professional development coordinator) continues to be a challenge. Many events of interest are offered at a distance. Covering staff participating in training is a challenge for two reasons: the cost and supply staff are not always available.

- Our building – the costs relating to owning an older century building are always concerning relating to general upkeep but also with trying to ensure it meets current accessibility standards. The incorporation of a lift
from 1st to 2nd floor is being considered for the near future if the installation and maintenance costs can be supported.

- Interior furnishings for adults is on the radar when funds are available. The first priority for spending is the children and associated program costs. The office furniture must be given serious consideration because the long-term impacts can and will affect the users if the setup is not ergonomically suited to the individuals.

- Our merger costs and the costs incurred during the investigation and development phase for our proposed addition have been significant. We are not yet aware of the actual project costs and have already spent a substantial amount of money on architect, engineer, and municipal costs.

- The cost for “mandatory” health and safety training for supervisors and worker representatives is prohibitive. We could essentially pay the cost for one worker and the worker may leave the organization. The cost to cover the training for one and especially all potential representatives is out of reach.

Relative Success of Meeting Targeted Objectives

The strategic planning processes leading to the blending of our two centre-based programs were intense over two years. All possible outcomes and scenarios were given serious consideration to lead to the decision that best supported moving forward as a more financially viable organization. Contracting an outside consultant allowed for a new perspective that was not hampered by the emotion of hard decisions.

Cook’s is committed to ongoing strategic planning and setting attainable goals that support our continued success. Our most recent targeted objective to become more financially stable is proof that we make every effort to plan, explore opportunities and meet our goals.

Lessons Learned and Progress in Delivering the Services

- Success comes from making sound informed decisions – which are sometimes very difficult.

- Giving serious consideration and responding to all feedback received, including the suggestions and comments collected from surveys, is proof that Cook’s is open and approachable to the needs of the clients. Appropriate and progressive change happens when the organization welcomes and is receptive to input.