

Ramoth House

Programs

Adapted March 2021

Ramoth House

Stepping Stones to Independence

Introduction

The programs at Ramoth House are designed to assist you in learning how to parent well. While exploring the realities of parenting, some women choose to consider adoption as the best plan for their child's future, other women choose to parent with the support of their parents or grandparents and some others choose to parent independently. No matter what future plans you make for you and your baby, the skills you develop while at Ramoth House will guide you along the path to healthy, independent living as both a parent and an individual.

Goals of the Stepping Stones Program are:

1. To assist you in learning basic life skills
2. To help you develop a healthy life style
3. To teach you how to parent safely
4. To assist you in becoming self-motivated

The activities at Ramoth House are focused on helping you learn new skills and enhance the skills you already possess. These are some of the "stepping stones" you will learn about while at Ramoth House:

- bathing your baby
- feeding and changing your baby
- helping your baby grow
- keeping your baby safe
- self-care
- money management
- cooking
- home management
- personal development

To help you prepare to move from a supervised program to independent living, you will grow in your ability to manage your home, your self-care, and your relationships all while safely parenting your child. As you work cooperatively with the program and demonstrate safe parenting choices, you will gain increasing independence. In the beginning, all parenting activities are supervised. Supervision is gradually decreased as you demonstrate safe parenting choices. The ultimate goal is for you to parent your child without direct supervision. When you reach this stage, you will be ready to begin planning your move to independent living.

Becoming a new parent can be an overwhelming experience; a tiny, precious person is now depending on you for everything in life. There is so much to learn during the first few days, weeks, and months of parenthood. Please remember that every parent needs to learn how to care for a baby, not just you. In the beginning, you may need extra support so remember that the staff are here to assist you as you learn. Knowing when to ask for help is an important part of parenting and **EVERY** parent needs help sometimes.

I. Money Management

To help you learn to budget your money we will teach you how to prepare and follow a monthly budget and how to menu plan and grocery shop on a budget. You'll learn money saving tips and how to protect yourself financially. You will need to provide for your personal needs and for the needs of your baby (diapers, wipes, diaper cream, clothes etc.) while living at Ramoth House. You will also be required to provide formula and bottles for your child if you choose not to use the brand provided by Ramoth House. If you lose or damage the bottles replacing them is your responsibility. You will have the opportunity to earn "Ramoth Bucks" in your parenting and money management classes and shop in the Ramoth Store during scheduled shopping days as another way to help you save money.

II. Education and Employment

If you are pregnant and have not completed high school you will be encouraged to study toward a High School Diploma or GED. Options for study include full time school attendance or correspondence courses. While participating in home study, you should be completing a minimum of 10 hours per week.

In order to build self esteem and acquire work experience, you will be expected to complete a minimum of 10 hours per week of volunteer work in the community if you are not attending school, working part-time, or parenting.

III. Self Care

Life as a mother is very busy and you will find that it takes some planning to fit in time to care for yourself. It is important that you remember to take time to care for you. Take time to rest, to walk, to care for your personal hygiene, and to tend to your emotional needs.

- Good self-care includes: regular hand washing, brushing your teeth after meals, washing and combing your hair each day, applying deodorant each morning, dressing in clean clothes, and showering daily.
- If your sleep is frequently interrupted by night feeds, nap when your baby naps.
- Sleep when your baby sleeps mid-evening to get some extra rest rather than staying up.

A STEPPING STONES HINT

To fit a shower in each day, head for the shower while your baby is still asleep in the crib!

Ramoth House gift to you:

For two weeks, directly following the birth of your child, housekeeping will be limited to: infant care, laundry, and bedroom cleaning. You will also not be expected to participate in the preparation of supper meals during this time period. Housekeeping and meal preparation will be gradually added at the discretion of the staff.

IV. Child Care

Healthy parenting takes commitment and planning. While progressing towards parenting independence, you will learn about many topics including:

- safety
- infant nutrition
- diapering and clothing your baby
- bathing your baby
- infant stimulation: play time, tummy time and development
- social and emotional development (attachment)

As you begin to meet the expectations addressed in this section, you will advance through the levels of supervision until you require the least amount of supervision possible demonstrating your independence. While at Ramoth House you will be required to complete a Child Care Activity Chart (a daily diary of the care you provide for your baby).

1. Feeding Issues

The Child Care Activity Chart will assist you in monitoring your child's health and feeding patterns. Your feedings and bottle preparation (if not breastfeeding) will be observed by staff. The amount of supervision will decrease as you consistently demonstrate safety and awareness of your child's needs. This decision will also be based on your child's health, recommendations from other agencies (if involved), and progress of developing routines.

A STEPPING STONES HINT

When feeding your baby, make sure that you hold your child in a safe and cuddly position. Use this time to talk to, look at and stroke your baby's face as feeding is a very special opportunity to bond with your baby!

2. Safety Awareness

1. Your baby should be cradled in your arms when going up & down stairs. A shoulder hold is not as safe while on the stairs.
2. You should provide good head and neck support when carrying, holding and lifting your baby.
3. Your baby should never be left unattended on high surfaces.
4. You should always use a proper, safety approved car seat when travelling with your baby.
5. You should never place your baby near the stove or food prep area.
6. You should never yell, raise your voice or swear around your baby.
7. You should speak to staff immediately if you feel frustrated or angry with your baby.
8. Your baby should never be on or in your bed with you.
9. Your cell phone shouldn't distract you from safely engaging and supervising your baby.

3. Sleep Routine

The development of a sleep routine is important for your baby starting around three months of age. We advise you to take your sleepy baby upstairs to bed after the mid-evening feed. While a desire to remain downstairs to socialize or watch tv is understandable, it is recommended that you place the need of your child ahead of your desires. When responsibility and safety awareness have been consistently demonstrated, you may earn the privilege of leaving your sleeping baby in the crib while returning downstairs and listening using the house monitoring system.

4. Diapering

It is important for you to change your baby's diaper frequently. We recommend that you change your baby's diaper at least at each feed and before bed time. Remember that your baby is to be changed in designated areas only: laundry room change table or bathroom changing areas (during bath time only). A change pad must be placed on the surface of each changing area. Diaper changes will be supervised by staff. The amount of supervision will decrease as you consistently demonstrate safety and awareness of your child's needs.

A STEPPING STONE HINT

Never leave your baby unattended when changing not even for a brief moment. Gather all supplies before placing your baby on the changing surface. Think safety first!

5. Bathing

Bathing your baby will be done with staff supervision. As you demonstrate confidence and safety awareness in bathing, supervision will begin to decrease. Infant baths will take place during the day on bath days. Please note that a baby really does not need to be bathed daily. Bathing of babies ages 0-3 months will be done in the bathroom on the counter in the infant bath tub. Bathing of older babies will be done in the regular bath tub using a bath rest. Only one bath can take place at a time and happens on a regular schedule. The bathroom door needs to remain open during infant baths.

6. Stimulation & Equipment

Regular daily interaction with your baby is extremely important for the development of your child's body and brain. Your baby needs you to look at, touch, and talk to him/her often!! To help you learn to include this interaction as part of your daily routine, Ramoth House makes the following recommendations:

1. Provide your baby with tummy time 4 - 6 times a day gradually increasing in length of time to 10 - 15 minutes per session. Before starting tummy time activities, talk with the Director of Programming for instructions.

2. Provide your baby with play time, on the floor, several times a day. Make sure to use toys and books.

3. Change your baby's position frequently (e.g. from play pen to infant seat to high chair etc.) Cuddle your baby close to you often.

4. Equipment will be offered for use according to the growth and development of each infant. The statements below are offered as a guideline for equipment use. Equipment should be used sparingly:

- Babies under 2 months should not be in car/infant seats for more than 20-minute periods up to 3 times a day. A baby should not be left in the car/infant seat unattended. Please don't use the infant seater for carrying your baby
- Place baby in the crib or play pen when not cuddling, feeding or playing.
- Exercise saucers and swings are not used Ramoth House due to a lack of adequate space.

A STEPPING STONE HINT

Maintaining a healthy daily routine will help your child feel safe and secure.

V. Home Management Routines

Home Management includes both laundry and housekeeping. Learning to manage your home while meeting your child's needs and tending to appointments and other relationships can be quite challenging. While at Ramoth House, you will participate in the following activities to assist you along the pathway of learning the skills necessary to successfully manage your future home:

1. Laundry

Having clean clothes for yourself and your child is a daily requirement. You are responsible to do your laundry on your assigned laundry days. There are directions to guide you on how to sort your laundry into appropriate loads posted on the wall in the laundry room. When planning your laundry day try and anticipate possible interruptions (e.g. dr. appointment, feeds) that may prevent the completion of your laundry. If scheduling problems arise, discuss the issue with the Home Manager and arrange for an alternative plan.

2. Housekeeping

While at Ramoth House you will not have to do house cleaning alone. All duties are assigned weekly and shared by residents. In order to keep Ramoth House safe and tidy, there are a few activities that require attention at specific times. Learning to function within these schedules will help you establish some new habits/routines that will assist you in managing your own home in a safe and hygienic manner. The ultimate goal is that you will complete housekeeping tasks thoroughly and without prompting.

A STEPPING STONES HINT

**A messy house can make you feel overwhelmed.
Try living by the motto: don't put it down, put it away!**

3. Your bedroom

We expect that you keep your bedroom tidy and organized, as an untidy room can be a fire hazard. To help you establish this daily habit, we will assess your bedroom daily and score it from 0-10. The goal is for you to score a 10 on a regular basis. Assessments will take place no earlier than 12 pm Monday - Saturday. When assessing your bedroom, we will consider the following: general tidiness, safety hazards, bed made neatly, all clothes away neatly in drawers and/or closet, items on floor, wet towels hung to dry, are dirty clothes in the laundry basket, garbage can empty, storage shelf neat and tidy.

Before going away for an overnight, you are expected to leave your bedroom clean and organized, with the garbage should be emptied and wet towels hung to dry.

VI: Fully Nourished Program - Building Healthy Bodies and Minds

1. Meal Preparation

Finding the time to prepare healthy meals while parenting can be a challenge. While at Ramoth House, you will have the benefit of shared meal preparation during your child's most demanding months. You will be responsible to prepare a minimum of one supper each week based on the menu. Healthy eating habits are essential to a healthy lifestyle. Your child will learn to eat in healthy ways by watching you!

2. Baking

The baking program is an opportunity for you to learn new skills in a one-on-one setting. Baking can be a great way to deal with stress, enjoy yourself, and build self-confidence, while learning more about safe food handling, hygiene, nutrition, and hospitality while you make delicious treats.

Ramoth House

Home Management Program

1. Housekeeping Routines and Expectations

In order to manage housekeeping activities and still meet your baby's need for feeding, diapering and attention, the major housekeeping activities are spread throughout the week. The entrance, bathrooms and kitchen are maintained daily. When your baby spits up, you are responsible to promptly and thoroughly clean the area. Job assignment lists are posted in the kitchen and change on a weekly basis. Concerns about the assignments can be reviewed with the Home Manager.

The ultimate goal of Ramoth's housekeeping activities and schedule is that you will develop skill and confidence in managing your own home. The program is designed to help you develop self-motivation and while you do, we help by providing some external motivation.

The External Motivation

Staff monitor the completion of housekeeping duties and will complete a checklist throughout the day and at 7 pm. If housekeeping duties are not completed according to the posted expectations and/or by 7 p.m., you will receive a "not-complete" (n/c).

Three "not completes" in one week will result in an extra chore the next week. When asked to fully complete a task that has not been done according to the posted expectations, you are required to do so before going to bed for the night.

The Routine:

1. Weekly bedroom cleaning is completed on Mondays between 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.
2. Upstairs weekly cleaning of shared spaces is completed on Mondays between 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
3. Weekly cleaning of your downstairs storage spaces and playpen are completed on Wednesdays between 8 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
4. Downstairs weekly cleaning of shared spaces is completed on Fridays between 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
5. Parenting residents will share the responsibility of emptying the diaper pail, and sanitizing the change table and diaper pail. This task will be completed twice daily at 1:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

You are responsible to ask Staff to check your completed work as soon as it is completed and no later than the listed time. Failure to make this request can result in an n/c.

2. Avoiding Clutter

Clutter can become a safety hazard so general tidiness is expected of everyone. Remember that learning to manage your stuff now helps you keep your own home safe later! Please make sure that all of your things are cleaned up and put away when you are done with them and before you leave the residence (see list below). You are expected to put away all baby toys, equipment and bottles when not in use and to ensure these items are not sitting in high traffic areas.

Storage Spaces:

Storage space is provided in four separate areas on the main floor. Please keep storage areas tidy at all times. To help you learn where to put what, we give you the following guidelines:

1. **Study room cupboard:** school books, binders, books, file box, receiving blankets, tummy time blanket, playpen extra quilt & sheet, infant clothes, toys, a cell phone and headphones
2. **Shelf under change table in laundry room:** diaper rash cream, wipes, change pad, diapers, spare outfit, soiled baby items stored in bag and baby lotion
3. **White shelf in laundry room:** diaper bag – total of 2 bags, blankets for stroller
4. **Hooks on the laundry room wall:** infant hat/coat/snowsuit
5. **Porch:** one coat and three pair of shoes/boots per person.
6. **Kitchen shelf:** extra bottles, bibs, face cloths, receiving blankets

We strongly advise that all wallets, money, and valuables be stored in your locked box or bedroom.

3. Laundry Routines and Expectations

1. There are two daily laundry time slots: 8:30 am - 4 pm & 4 pm - 10 pm. Your laundry should be washed, dried, folded and in your bedroom by the end of your time slot.
2. Once you have started your laundry, it needs to be completed ASAP to allow for use by another resident or staff.
3. Since laundry isn't just about you and your baby's clothing, Ramoth House recommends that:
 - You wash all linens (towels, crib & play pen sheets, receiving blankets, quilts, tummy time blankets) for your baby once a week or more if soiled (spit up, etc.).
 - You change and wash your bed sheets once a week.
 - You wash your personal towels and face cloths at least once a week.

Do not wash the heavy blankets and the bed spread that are on your bed. This means that you should not be lying on those items when you sleep since they cannot be washed frequently. Hint: sleep between your sheets!

4. Meal Preparation Expectations

Everyone has different abilities and experience when it comes to meal preparation. In the beginning, staff will help you read a recipe and teach you cooking techniques, while assisting you in following hygienic expectations. Supervision will gradually decrease as you demonstrate an ability to follow a menu plan, recipe, and hygienic expectations.

1. We encourage you to have 3 nutritionally-balanced meals a day at the posted meal times. If you miss a meal, snack times are scheduled to help hold you over until the next meal. Snack guidelines are posted in the kitchen.
 2. You will be responsible to prepare a minimum of one supper meal each week. The number of assigned meal preparations is dependent on the number of residents (less residents equals more assigned meals). Menu plans are prepared by staff and must be followed. When it's your night to cook, you are also expected to set the table.
 3. When you are on supper meal preparation you must be at Ramoth House and in the kitchen by 4 pm. You are expected to remain in the House until supper is completed. It is your responsibility to check the menu for special instructions because there may be times that the meal you are cooking needs to be started before 4 p.m.
- d) You need to advise Staff by noon if you will be away for supper. If it is your night for meal prep or dishes, you need to be here for those responsibilities unless approval has been given by the Director of Programming.

Purchasing Snacks/Food

If you are purchasing food (e.g. a slice of pizza), you need to eat it before returning to Ramoth House.

Snack food you purchase needs to be stored in your room in the sealed container provided for you. Using this container is important to prevent attracting bugs or mice. Snack food you purchase is to be eaten in your room.

You may have one small bottle or canned drink (500ml) in the fridge.

You cannot leave your drinks/food sitting on the counter.

You cannot store personal food items in the freezer.