



Program of Care Guide Step One

**A guide to the program supports designed to assist you on
your path to independence.**

Introduction

Welcome to the Ramoth House Program of Care. Whatever circumstance have brought you to Ramoth House, by engaging in the program, you are demonstrating that you are a brave woman and a committed parent. We are cheering you on as you begin a new chapter in your life.

The programs at Ramoth House are designed to assist you in learning how to parent well; we call this *discovering your parenting potential*. While exploring the realities of parenting, some women choose to parent independently, some choose to parent with the support of family, while others chose adoption as the best plan for their child's future. No matter what plan 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. At Ramoth, we like to call this path your *stepping stones to independence*.

On this path to independence, we will:

- Assist you in learning basic life skills.
- Help you develop a healthier life style.
- Teach you about child care routines and parenting safely.
- Assist you in growing more self-motivated.

To help you prepare to move from a supervised program to independent living, you will need to 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 directly supervised by Staff. Supervision gradually decreases as you progress through the program and demonstrate safe parenting choices. The goal is for you to parent your child without direct supervision.

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, it is normal to 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. 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 your basic needs. 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 daily, washing and combing your hair each day, applying deodorant each morning, dressing in clean clothes, and showering regularly. D
- In the early days after birth, 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. Housekeeping and meal preparation will be gradually added at the discretion of the Director of Programming.

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.

To assist in building self esteem and to 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. **For those who have already given birth, focus on education and employment begins in the Ramoth Program of Care Step Two.**

III. Money Management Classes

The Ramoth Program of Care Money Management classes are taught by the Director of Programming in both individual and group classes. You will be offered two private money management sessions a month as well as 4 group sessions a month.

These classes focus on learning and applying basic budgeting techniques to everyday living. Time is given to learning about the value of savings, how to follow your budget, how to menu plan and grocery shop, how to manage unexpected expenses and how to get back on track when you make mistakes. You'll learn money saving tips and how to protect yourself financially. You will learn experientially as you do online banking, complete your taxes, prepare, and manage your budget and receive benefits from Ontario Works or ODSP.

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. Ramoth will provide your formula and Playtex bottles. If you choose not to use the bottles brand provided by Ramoth House, you will need to purchase your own. 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 to use in the Ramoth Store as another way to help you save money. The type of items in the store varies based on the donations received.

IV. Parenting Education Classes

The Parenting Education classes are taught by the Director of Programming. These classes are offered to the clients in group and individual sessions, using a combination of demonstrations, reading, written work, video series, and play/teach models. There are two private parenting classes offered a month as well as four group classes.

Healthy attachment development is encouraged through education using the "Simple Gifts" series from the Infant Mental Health Promotion of the Hospital of Sick Children and practical guidance from all Ramoth House Staff.

The Director of Programming offers additional supportive education opportunities on infant development and stimulation through the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) assessments as well as the Comfort, Play and Teach materials. Each client receives demonstrations and instruction related to the age and developmental stage of their child.

V. Parenting Skill Development

Healthy parenting takes commitment and planning. While progressing towards parenting independence, you will learn about many topics including: infant nutrition, safety awareness, diapering, clothing, and bathing your baby, infant stimulation: play time, tummy time and development as well as social and emotional development.

1. Feeding Issues

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). 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 decreases over the course of the program.

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

Here are some tips that you will take to help you keep your baby safe:

- Your baby should be cradled in your arms when going up & down stairs. A shoulder hold is not as safe while on the stairs.
- You should provide good head and neck support when carrying, holding, and lifting your baby.
- Your baby should never be left unattended on high surfaces.
- You should always use a proper, safety approved car seat when travelling with your baby.
- You should never place your baby near the stove or food prep area.
- You should never yell, raise your voice, or swear around your baby.
- You should speak to staff immediately if you feel frustrated or angry with your baby.
- Your baby should never be on or in your bed with you.
- 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 over the course of the program 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 moment.
Gather all supplies before placing your baby on the changing surface.
Think safety first!**

5. Bathing

Education and support are provided by the Day Support Staff for infant bathing on an individual basis three times a week. 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 for infant stimulation:

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

Ramoth House makes the following recommendations for equipment use:

- Change your baby's position frequently (from play pen to infant seat to high chair etc.)
- 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 seat 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.
When a baby feels safe and secure,
it is often easier to understand and manage their needs.**

VI. Home Management Program and Routines

You will learn the basics of safe, home management by participating in a variety of tasks such as doing laundry, cooking meals, daily chores, etc. The Ramoth House orientation process introduces you to these initial skills through demonstrations and supportive instruction. The ongoing daily home management activities support you in developing routines that will later assist you in creating a safe home environment for your family. These routines also help you to learn to manage a home while meeting your child's needs, tending to appointments and other relationships. This can be quite a challenging balance to learn so the Ramoth staff will provide ongoing supervision and mentoring as you learn.

Here is how home management works at Ramoth House:

1. Laundry Routines and Expectations

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 Director of Programming and arrange for an alternative plan.

- 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.
- Once you have started your laundry, it needs to be completed ASAP to allow for use by another resident or staff.
- Since laundry isn't just about you and your baby's clothing, Ramoth House recommends that:
 - You wash all linens (towels, crib & playpen 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.

A STEPPING STONES HINT

**The heavy blankets and the bed spread on your bed can not be washed frequently so, you should not be sleeping with them next to your skin.
Sleep between your sheets!**

2. Your bedroom

We expect that your bedroom will be kept tidy and organized, as an untidy room can be a fire and safety 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 - Friday. 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, no items on floor, wet towels hung to dry, dirty clothes in the laundry basket, garbage can empty, storage shelf neat and tidy.

STEPPING STONES HINT

When going away for an overnight, leaving your bedroom clean and organized, garbage emptied, and wet towels hung to dry will help demonstrate your growing motivation to manage your spaces well. How you maintain your bedroom is an indication of how you will maintain your home in the future.

3. Housekeeping Routines and Expectations

While at Ramoth House you will not have to do house cleaning alone. All duties are shared by residents and are spread throughout the day so that you can still meet your baby's needs for feeding, diapering and play. 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. Job assignment lists are posted in the kitchen and change on a weekly basis. Concerns about the assignments can be reviewed with the Director of Programming.

It is our hope that you will quickly develop internal motivation to complete your home management tasks thoroughly and in a timing manner. To support you while you develop your self-motivation, Ramoth provides some external motivation:

The External Motivation

- Staff monitor the completion of housekeeping duties and will complete a checklist at designated times. If housekeeping duties are not completed according to the posted expectations and/or on time, 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 7:00 p.m.

The Routine:

- The entrance, bathrooms and kitchen are maintained daily.
- When your baby spits up, you are responsible to clean the area promptly and thoroughly.
- Monday 8:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.: bedroom cleaning and shared spaces upstairs
- Wednesdays 8 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.: downstairs storage spaces and playpens
- Fridays between 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.: shared spaces downstairs
- 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.

4. Storage Space and 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! There are designated storage areas listed below, so make certain that you return your belongings to the correct space before you leave the residence or when not in use. Baby toys and equipment should never be set in high traffic areas and must be put away when not in use.

Storage spaces are to be always kept tidy. To help you learn where to put what, follow these guidelines:

- **Study room cupboard:** school books, binders, books, file box, receiving blankets, tummy time blanket, extra quilt and sheet, infant clothes, toys, cell phone, headphones, laptop provided by Ramoth.
- **Shelf under change table in laundry room:** diaper rash cream, wipes, change pads, diapers, spare outfits, soiled baby items stored in a bag, baby lotion.
- **White shelf in laundry room:** 1- 2 diaper bags, blankets for stroller.
- **Hooks on the laundry room wall:** infant hat, coat, snowsuit.
- **Porch:** one coat and three pair of shoes/boots per person.
- **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.

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!**

5. 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 the hygienic expectations. Supervision will gradually decrease as you demonstrate an ability to follow a menu plan, recipe, and hygienic expectations.

- We encourage you to have 3 nutritionally balanced meals a day at the posted meal times. Healthy eating habits are essential to a healthy lifestyle. Your child will learn to eat in healthy ways by watching you!
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

If you purchase your own food or snacks you will:

- eat foods like pizza, subs, ice cream, store bought perishable food etc. **before returning to Ramoth House.**
- snack food needs to be stored and eaten in your room. A sealed container will be provided for you to prevent attracting bugs or mice.
- have only one small bottle or canned drink (500ml) in the fridge.
- not leave your drinks/food sitting on the counter.
- not store personal food items in the freezer.

6. 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.

VII. Managing Your Plan

The Director of Programming will provide you with support through mentoring and accountability as she coaches you towards the fulfilling your growth plan using three different formats: General Meetings, Stepping Stones Meetings, and Personal Development Workshops. The emphasis in these meetings is to maintain your focus on progressing toward independence while helping you to celebrate your successes and process the life areas that present challenges.

General Meetings: a required, 30-minute weekly session in which you and the Director of Programming address the complaints, challenges, changes, or celebrations that have surfaced over the course of the week.

Stepping Stones Meetings: a 45-minute bi-monthly session that provides you with a snap shot of your current world and your growth in it. It is an opportunity to paint a picture of where you are and dream about where you want to be. We celebrate strengths and successes, set goals, and create plans to address areas where you are stuck. You are encouraged to set goals and explore skill development in 12 areas of life: parenting, daycare services, education, employment, community contributions, money management, personal development, communication skills, positive relationships, hobbies and recreation, home management and the future.

Personal Development Workshops: Regular workshops are offered on a weekly basis and are optional for you to attend. The Director of Programming will encourage you to focus on yourself and your personal growth. Topics such as emotional awareness, coping skills, self-esteem, communication skills, positive relationships, hobbies, decision making, problem solving, and socialization skills will be explored in these workshops. You will be encouraged to seek out professional support as needs are identified.

VIII. Program Schedules and Timeline

Program Timeline

You can enter the residential program at any time during your pregnancy or within 9 months of their child's birth. It takes a minimum of six months to complete the basic program and twelve months to complete the graduate level program. Eligibility for the program ends when your child is 12 months or walking.

Supervision of child care activities begins at Level 1 and progresses to Level 5 on the schedule listed below. Case conferences with your social worker should occur monthly. The timeline for exit planning is also listed below.

Month One	Case Conference
Month Two	ASQ, Case Conference, Supervision Level: 2
Month Three	Case Conference, discuss/option for exit plan
Month Four	ASQ, Case Conference, Supervision Level: 3
Month Five	Case Conference
Month Six	ASQ, 1 st Interview for Step 2 OR Step 3 Discussions, Supervision Level: 4
Month Seven	Case Conference, 2 nd Interview for Step 2 OR Step 3 Discussions
Month Eight	Case Conference, Supervision Level: 5
Month Nine	ASQ, Case Conference
Month Ten	Case Conference
Month Eleven	Case Conference, Orientation for Step 2
Month Twelve	ASQ, Case Conference, Move to Step 2 OR Step 3

RAMOTH HOUSE DAILY SCHEDULE

6:00	showers and breakfast may begin
8:30	kitchen will be closed for cleanup
8:30 – 8:50	mealtime housekeeping assignments completed
9:00	dressed for the day daily activities begin (school, work, meetings, etc.)
10:00 – 10:15	kitchen open for snack & coffee break
11:45	lunch preparation & lunch
12:00	bedroom cleanliness assessment may begin
12:30	kitchen will be closed for cleanup
12:30 - 12:50	mealtime housekeeping assignments completed
3:00 – 3:15	kitchen open for snack & coffee break
4:00	meal preparation (unless menu/staff indicate otherwise) laundry time slot #1 completed & in bedroom
5:30	supper
6:15	kitchen will be closed for cleanup
6:15 – 7:00	mealtime housekeeping assignments completed
7:00	daily housekeeping assignments completed & staff check
8:30 – 9:30	kitchen open for snack & coffee break
10:00	laundry time slot # 2 completed & in bedroom

Ramoth House Formula Preparation Schedule
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6:00 a.m. - 7:30 a.m.	formula prep time slot #1
8:50 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.	formula prep time slot #2
10:15 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.	formula prep time slot #3
12:50 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.	formula prep time slot #4
2:30 p.m. - 4:00p.m.	formula prep time slot #5
7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.	formula prep time slot #6

Ramoth House Weekly Activity Schedule
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Monday

8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. upstairs weekly cleaning
9:00 a.m. – 2:45 p.m. scheduled infant baths
10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. general client meetings
8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. weekly bedroom cleaning

Tuesday

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. individual parenting education meetings
2:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. group parenting education class

Wednesday

9:00 a.m. – 2:45 p.m. scheduled infant baths
8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. baby-related and storage space cleaning
9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. optional workshops (baking, sewing, exercise)
a good day to book appointments (medical, counseling, etc.)

Thursday

9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. steppingstones progress meetings
9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. individual money management meetings
2:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. group money management class

Friday

8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. downstairs weekly cleaning
9:00 a.m. – 2:45 p.m. scheduled infant baths