

# Ramoth House

## **Programs**

Adapted September 2020



# 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 chose to consider adoption as the best plan for their child's future. Other women chose to parent with the support of their parents or grandparents while still others chose to parent independently. No matter what future plans you make for you and your baby, the skills you will 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 geared to teach you new skills or to enhance the skills you all ready possess. The following topics 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

In order to move from a supervised program to independent living, you will need to demonstrate an ability to manage your home, your self-care and your relationships 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 safe parenting choices are consistently demonstrated. 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 is here to assist you as you learn. Knowing when to ask for help is an important part of parenting.

## **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 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 should you choose not to use the brands provided by Ramoth House, if you lose or damage the bottles or if you are irresponsible with formula. You will be given the opportunity to earn “Ramoth Bucks” in your parenting and budgeting classes and shop in the Ramoth Store twice a month 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 directed to study towards a High School Diploma or the High School Equivalency Test. 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. 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 and 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 after you shower, 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 shower while your baby is still asleep in the crib!**

#### **Ramoth House gift to you:**

For a period of 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 need to 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.

### 1. Feeding issues

In order to assist you in monitoring your child's health and to be aware of your child's feeding patterns, you will complete the Child Care Activity Chart. Your feedings and your 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

- a) Your baby should be cradled in your arms when going up & down stairs. A shoulder hold is not as safe while on the stairs.
- b) You should provide good head and neck support when carrying, holding and lifting your baby.
- c) Your baby should never be left unattended on high surfaces.
- d) You should always use a proper, safety approved car seat when travelling with your baby.
- e) You should never place your baby near the stove or food prep area.
- f) You should never yell, raise your voice or swear around your baby.
- g) You should speak to staff immediately if you feel frustrated or angry with your baby.
- h) Note the safety issues addressed in the general guidelines.

### 3. Sleep Routine

The development of a sleep routine is important for a baby starting around three months of age. Mothers are advised to take sleepy babies upstairs to bed after the mid evening fed. While a desire to remain downstairs to socialize or watch television is understandable, it is recommended that a mother place the need of her child before her personal desires. When responsibility and safety awareness has been consistently demonstrated over a period of time, a resident may have the privilege of leaving a sleeping child in the upstairs crib while returning downstairs and listening via 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 1st!**

### 5. Bathing

Bathing of babies 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. On bath days, it will be your responsibility to arrange a time for your child's bath to occur within your scheduled time slot.

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 as Staff cannot effectively supervise more than one bath at a time. The bathroom door needs to remain open during the infant bath.

### 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:

**a) 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.

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

c) 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.

d) 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. A baby should not be carried more than a few steps while in the infant seat.
- Place baby in the crib or play pen when not cuddling, feeding or playing.
- Exercise saucers and swings are not used at 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: 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 reality. You are responsible to do your laundry on your assigned laundry day. 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 week/day try and anticipate possible interruptions (i.e. dr. appointment, feeds) that may prevent the completion of your laundry. If scheduling problems arise, discuss the issue with the Home Manager & arrange for an alternate plan.

### **2. Housekeeping**

While at Ramoth House you will not have to carry the burden of housekeeping 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 recommend that you keep your bedroom tidy and organized. 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, is the bed made neatly, are all clothes away neatly in drawers and/or closet, are there items on floor, are wet towels hung to dry, are dirty clothes in the laundry basket, is the garbage can emptied when full, is your storage shelf neat and tidy.

Before going away for an overnight you are expected to leave your bedroom clean and organized. 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 also 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. Healthy eating habits are essential to a healthy lifestyle. You will not be successful in teaching your child to eat healthy if you have not learned to do so yourself.

### **2. Baking**

The baking program gives each of our residents the opportunity to develop one on one relationship skills while being educated on the basics of the culinary arts. Each resident will be given the opportunity to sign up for baking throughout the month. Residents will be able to choose recipes based on the availability of items in the home and the baked snack or dessert will be shared with others in the home. This is a great way to learn new skills and gain self-confidence.

# 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 we spread the major housekeeping activities over the course of the week. The entrance, bathrooms and kitchen are maintained daily. Parenting residents are responsible to promptly and thoroughly clean areas on which their baby spits up. Job assignment lists are posted in the kitchen and change on a weekly basis. Concerns about the assignments are to be reviewed with the Home Manager.

The ultimate goal is that you will learn to complete housekeeping tasks thoroughly and without prompting and feel confident in managing your own home. However, sometimes an external motivation is required to encourage residents to participate in the housekeeping schedule. It is important for you to learn to self-motivate but until you do...

### **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 "non-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 to the posted expectations, you are expected to do so before retiring for the night. If you choose not to complete the task correctly before retiring for the night, an additional n/c could be given.

### **The Routine:**

1. Weekly bedroom cleaning (dusting, vacuuming, ect.) is completed on Monday between 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.
2. Upstairs weekly cleaning of shared spaces is completed on Monday between 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
3. Weekly cleaning of all downstairs storage spaces are completed on Wednesday between 8 a.m. – 2 p.m.
4. Downstairs weekly cleaning of shared spaces is completed on Friday between 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
5. Parenting residents will share the responsibility of sanitizing the downstairs change table and downstairs diaper pail. This task will be completed every evening by 7 p.m. The downstairs diaper pail will be emptied daily at 1 p.m. and then again by 7 pm.

**You are responsible to ask Staff to check your completed work as soon as it is completed and no later than 2 p.m. Failure to make this request can result in an n/c**

## 2. Avoiding Clutter

Clutter can become a safety hazard therefore general tidiness is expected of everyone. Remember 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). Parenting residents 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:

- a) **Study room cupboard:** school books, binders, books, receiving blankets, tummy time blanket, playpen extra quilt & sheet, infant clothes, toys, small camera (1), and cellphone (1)
- b) **Shelf under change table in laundry room:** diaper rash cream, Vaseline, wipes, change pad, diapers, spare outfit, soiled baby items stored in bag and baby lotion
- c) **White shelf in laundry room:** diaper bag – total of 2 bags (neatly stored), blankets for stroller (folded neatly).
- d) **Hooks on the laundry room wall:** one hook per infant to hang infant hat/coat.
- e) **Porch:** one coat and three pair of shoes/boots per person.
- f) **Kitchen shelf:** extra bottles, bibs, face cloths, receiving blankets

**We strongly advise that all wallets, money and valuables be stored in your locked 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. In order to assist you in learning how to include linens in your laundry routine, Ramoth House recommends that:
  - All linens (towels, crib & play pen sheets, receiving blankets, quilts, tummy time blankets) for your baby are washed 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.

- a) 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.
- b) 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 Ramoth House Staff and must be followed. Meal assignments are for supper but may be extended to include lunch. Responsibilities for meal assignments include: food preparation and setting the table.
- c) 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. There will be times that the meal you are cooking needs to be started before 4 p.m. It is your responsibility to check the menu for special instructions.
- d) You need to advise Staff by noon if you will be away for supper. If you are on meal prep or dishes, you need to be here for the meals unless approval has been given by the Director of Programming.

<b>Purchasing Snacks/Food</b>
<p>If you are purchasing food (ie. Pizza slice), you need to eat it before returning to Ramoth House.</p> <p>Snack food you purchase needs to be stored in your room in the sealed container provided for you. If the food stored in your room is left outside your container and attracts bugs or becomes a safety concern, the privilege of storing food at Ramoth House will be revoked. Snack food you purchase is to be eaten in your room.</p> <p>You may have one small bottle or canned drink (500ml) in the fridge.</p> <p>You cannot leave your drinks/food sitting on the counter.</p> <p>Residents cannot store personal food items in the freezer.</p>