

Parent Manual for Preschool

This parent manual was reviewed by the board of directors in May 2011. Policies and programs are subject to change with the board's approval.

Welcome

We take pleasure in welcoming your family to the many benefits of Spare Time Fun Centre.

We hope that your child will enjoy being with us. Our activities are based upon his/her needs and interests.

This manual outlines our preschool policies and programs. As you depend on us to provide information about Spare Time and your child, we hope you will share with us any relevant child care or home concerns you or your child may have.

Thank you for choosing our centre. We look forward to serving you and your child.

Key Parent Responsibilities

We ask that you remember these key points:

- ask a supervisor to clarify anything you do not understand in this manual
- be sure you sign in and sign out your child according to preschool hours
- keep your child's personal record up to date
- provide post-dated cheques or a subsidy authorization number at registration time; in June you will be asked to provide a deposit for the following September
- give proper written notice upon withdrawal (January or June) from the Centre.

Questions / Concerns

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your child, the program or staff members, please speak to a supervisor. If you are not satisfied with the supervisor's resolution you may contact a parent representative from the board of directors. If the problem cannot be immediately resolved you may request a special board meeting.

License / Insurance

We have a provincial licence under the authority of the Community Care Facility Act of the ministry of health. The licence regulates the site conditions, staff qualifications, program content and maximum enrolment.

We are a non-profit society and a registered charity. We operate at David Lloyd George (DLG) Elementary School but we are not part of the Vancouver School Board.

We maintain insurance coverage to protect assets, property, the board of directors, staff and the children who use our services.

History

Our centre pioneered school-age child care in September 1974 with dedicated parents and 12 children from 6 to 12 years old. Some other landmark dates in our history are:

- 1979 to 2009 open other Spore Time Centres at Laurier, Wolfe, Kingsford-Smith, Oppenheimer and McKechnie schools but we operate independently from them
- 1980 first Kinderclub starts
- 1981 to 1994 Happiness Is family child care operates in a house across from DLG
- 1982 and 1984 trips to Disneyland
- 1983 new room increases licensed capacity to 75 making us the largest centre in B.C.
- 1986 redevelop DLG basement and open the Challenge Room for Kinderclub increasing the centre's total capacity to 95 children
- 1990 to 2009 operate summer camp at Sunnyside Family Campgrounds, Cultus Lake
- 1990 Hot Lunch expands from serving just Kinderclub to offering soup / sandwiches to the whole school; then expands to a daily entrée and salad bar
- 1991 and 1996 trips to Puerto Vallarta, Mexico
- 1992 Leader Portable opens on upper field after moving out of a DLG classroom
- 1997 Explorer Portable opens on upper field after Challenge Room claimed by school for classroom space; licensed capacity increases to 100 children
- 2001 office portable opens after previous space claimed by DLG for a support classroom
- 2004 pre-school opens in Explorer Portable

- 2007 Safe Base and Imagination Station Portables open; licensed capacity increases to 130 children.

We were the first child care centre to integrate children who need extra support. Our centre is frequently used as a resource facility for child care students, staff and board of directors. Spare Time has assisted in opening school-age programs in several other communities and provided leadership at child care conferences in B.C. and Alberta.

Philosophy

We recognize individuals: your child is encouraged to develop his / her social, emotional, physical and intellectual skills. Your child is responsible for his / her own actions. We promote self-worth and confidence.

We meet in groups: our centre believes in equality and strives to be non-sexist and non-racist. Our programs try to reflect the various cultures of the children. We promote respect for others and co-operation.

We participate in the community: children use and contribute to the neighbourhood. We promote a sense of belonging and steps to independence.

Objectives

Our objectives are to:

- Provide a safe and comfortable place for your child.
- Establish reasonable limits for your child consistent with his/her own abilities; make him/her accountable to someone.
- Provide resources so your child may develop talents and explore new interests; offer passive and active opportunities.
- Assist you in raising a responsible child by giving consistent guidance – the direction your child receives will ultimately rest with you.

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is the foundation and governing body of the centre. It is composed of parent representatives and staff supervisors from each age group of children. The board approves policies and budgets. It sets the fee rates according to a mandate for a self-sustaining centre that must cover all expenses with the fee incomes. Board members are elected at the annual

general meeting held in the spring and meet as scheduled from September to June. You are invited to attend the board meetings.

Staff

Preschool staff members are directed by a supervisor who has an Early Childhood Education (ECE) license. Employees go through police screening, a medical check-up and first aid training.

Staff may need to know personal information about your family in order to work effectively with your child but that information is kept confidential. Supervisors take full responsibility for staff actions and conduct only during regular centre hours.

Practicum Students and Visitor Policy

Spare Time Fun Centre committed to ongoing professional development. We work closely with our local colleges to have Early Childhood Education (ECE) students participate in our program. Occasionally, these students will conduct practicum and do observations in the classroom (A child is never left alone with practicum student or anyone under the age of 19).

All students have been carefully screened before entry into the ECE program by the universities or colleges they attend. They have all had a criminal record check.

Any person other than staff members or practicum students staying for more than 30 minutes must make prior arrangements to observe or visit the preschool program.

Hours

Preschool program operates Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. from September to June. Please follow the preschool hours as the centre operates other programs in the portable before and after preschool – do not be early for preschool as children in our breakfast program use the portable before going to elementary school and do not be late as StrongStart families use the portable after preschool ends.

We are closed: New Year's Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Victoria Day, Canada Day, BC Day, Labour Day, Thanksgiving, Remembrance Day, Christmas Day, and Boxing Day.

Preschool is closed during DLG teacher professional days, spring break and winter break holidays. Your preschool school year calendar will indicate these closures. It is also closed if a strike closes DLG and if DLG classes are closed due to severe snow storms. During all of these situations our portable space is used for school-age child care programs.

Child's Record

Your child's registration form and emergency consent card must be completed before he / she attends the centre. This information is restricted to those who need to use it.

It is your responsibility to advise the centre immediately of any changes in telephone numbers (home / work), alternate pick-up people or other vital information.

Enrolment

Siblings of children enrolled in a program will be given priority over others.

Fees

Post-dated cheques, payable to Spare Time Fun Centre or your subsidy authorization number are required in order to register in the program. You will be charged for any NSF cheques.

The current fee is posted on the parent information board in the cubby room.

If fees are not paid according to our financial policy and suitable arrangements cannot be agreed upon then termination of our services may be required.

Outstanding fees with a 10% surcharge will be forwarded to a collection agency.

We reserve the right to charge a late fee if you pick up your child after 11:30 a.m. and or 2:45 p.m.

The provincial government may provide subsidy for families who qualify. One of our centre supervisors can provide more details.

Fees are required regardless of your child's possible absence due to sickness or a vacation. There is no refund if you withdraw your child. See Withdrawal.

You are required to pay a \$100 non-refundable space deposit fee to hold a space from June to the following September if your child does not attend the

summer program. The \$100 will be credited to your September fee. There is no refund if your child does not attend in September.

Child care costs are income tax deductible. Your receipt will be ready in February.

Trial Period

Your child is subject to a minimum two week trial. This evaluation will ensure that we can provide an environment appropriate for his / her needs. We may suggest a gradual entry:

(1) your child and a family member come for a tour and orientation (2) your child stays and a family member takes a short break away but stays on the premises (3) your child stays for a typical day. We will suggest alternatives if our programs are not suitable for your child.

Withdrawal

One month's written notice must be given if you want to withdraw your child from the preschool program. The \$100 deposit will be kept if you do not give proper notice. Failure to give proper notice seriously affects and delays other children from being able to enrol.

Termination of Services

Termination of services may be required if: fees are not paid according to our financial policies (see Fees); you do not abide by the expectations in this manual and successful resolution of the differences is not achieved; you or a family member harasses, threatens abuse or commits a violent act toward a staff, child or a family member in our program; continued late pick-up; your child's behaviour is severely disruptive or physically threatening to the well-being and safety of other children, staff or the environment, and additional support for your child is not available. Your child will be allowed to complete his / her final month if it is possible but we reserve the right to serve an immediate termination of services if necessary.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality applies to all verbal and written information about former, potential and enrolled children and families and staff members. It also refers to information related to "in camera" board discussions and decisions.

All board members and staff members will be expected to fulfill their obligation to respect protection of privacy. Each individual will ensure that no private or personal information is revealed that may cause another individual harm.

No information will be released about a child and the enrolling parent / legal guardian without first receiving written permission of the enrolling parent / legal guardian. This excludes the responsibility as outlined in legislation and when information is subpoenaed by the court.

Preschool

Preschool (3 to 5 years old) is based in the Explorer Portable. It is a comfortable and enriching environment where your child may gain needed skills before entering kindergarten. There are a variety of activities such as arts and crafts, baking, math, science, music and movement and phonics. Your child's day includes circle time and a daily activity, which are theme based, indoor free play and outdoor play time.

Extra Support

Children who require extra support due to physical, mental or behavioural challenges may join the preschool. All staff members work with the children with added support staff in a variety of different staff / children ratios.

Supervision / Guidance / Discipline

Our responsibility begins when you sign in your child and acknowledge a staff member.

Children and staff work together on establishing centre guidelines and logical consequences. Reminders and limits are expressed in a positive manner. Appropriate behaviour is reinforced and praised while inappropriate behaviour is addressed with a focus on the behaviour rather than the child.

Staff must be informed of any event or change or routine at home which might affect your child's behaviour. You will be told if your child has persistent challenging behaviour at the centre.

Your child may be redirected from a situation if he / she shows a persistent refusal to respect the rules of safety for self, others or the environment. We are opposed to gender stereotyping and do not guide your child to a "boys" or a "girls" activity.

Staff will address any language used by your child that is sexist, racist, foul or otherwise abusive.

Staff may hold your child with just sufficient strength to protect him/her or others.

Health / Safety / Emergencies

Do not bring your child to the centre if he/she:

- has a communicable disease
- has a contagious infection, including pink eye
- has a sore throat, watery eyes, is sneezing or coughing frequently and has a constant runny nose (signs of the first two or three days of a severe cold)
- has a fever over 38 degrees Celsius or has not been free from fever for a minimum of 24 hours without the use of fever suppressant medication
- is vomiting or has diarrhea
- has an undiagnosed rash
- is not well enough to participate in program activities

You should report communicable diseases promptly to the centre in consideration for the health of other children and staff.

If your child becomes ill or has a minor injury while here you will be called and he/she may rest in the office until you arrive. In the event of an emergency requiring medical or dental attention, we will take your child to the hospital, call an ambulance or call his/her doctor or dentist. We will contact you or a designated alternate.

Prescription medication must be in its original container, clearly indicate your child's name, doctor's name, medication name, dosage required and frequency of medication.

You must also sign our prescription medicine chart.

There is no smoking anywhere inside or outside on the school property.

Fire drills are practiced by the staff and children on our own and in conjunction with DLG at least six times every school year.

If we must evacuate the school property, children will be taken to Spare Time II at Laurier Elementary School, 7350 Laurel Street - a centre started by us but now independent.

Reporting Child Abuse

If staff has reason to suspect child abuse or neglect it will be reported to the ministry of children and families as required by law. The board of directors will be informed if a report is filed.

Apprehension by the Ministry for Children and Families

The Child, Family and Community Service Act defines when a child is in need of protection. Decisions related to when, how and where the Ministry of Children and Family Development can apprehend a child rest with the Ministry. If and when a social worker from the ministry intends to apprehend a child at the centre, a supervisor will be responsible for responding to the situation. Prior to the child being removed, the staff will verify with a ministry supervisor that the social worker is authorized to apprehend the child. It is the responsibility of the ministry to make all reasonable efforts to notify the family of the apprehension.

Custody and Access

If parents live separately, we expect that the information provided by the enrolling parent is accurate. Without a custody agreement or court order on file at the centre, Staff cannot deny access to the non-enrolling parent. If one of the parents is not authorized, the policy on unauthorized persons will be followed.

If custody has not been legally determined and conflict between the parents and / or their family member is evident, we may not be able to care for the child unless both parents and / or other family members sign a written agreement confirming details regarding authorization for pick up and access to information about the child.

If a family has a custody agreement or court order, a copy must be provided and placed in your child's file.

Sign In

You must call us or send a note if your child is going to be away. It is not necessary to call daily if your child is away on consecutive days but it is advisable to call the centre when your child is returning after an absence. The centre is not responsible for your child if you arrive late for a field trip for which prior notice has been given.

Sign Out

Staff members will not release a child to an unauthorized person. Alternate people who pick up your child must be named in either: your child's registration form; a signed letter by you; in person or by a telephone conversation. Alternate pick-up people may be required to present photo identification. Please make your own alternate pick up arrangements.

Staff members will not release a child to anyone who is alleged to be impaired and thus unable to provide adequate care. We will offer to call a relative or authorized person to pick up the child or call the ministry for children and families. If the presumed impaired person chooses to drive, Staff will call the police.

If you are going to be late, please try and call the centre. If we have not heard from you by 11:30 a.m. and / or 2:45 p.m. our procedure is:

- call you at home and work; if there is no answer
- call the emergency contact from your child's file; if there is no answer
- call the Ministry for Children and Families, district office 604-660-5437 which may care for your child at 1177 West Broadway.

Staff will talk with you about your child's day but we also use the sign in / out book to keep track of messages for you and from you ("I will pick up early for the dentist").

Food

We provide a nutritious snack. Please let our staff know if your child has any food allergies.

Birthday

You are invited to bring a "special snack" to celebrate your child's birthday. Select a day that is most convenient to you. Please check with staff members if there are any food allergies of other children.

Clothing

Please bring an extra set of clothing for your child everyday to cover any accidents or wet weather. We do not wear outside shoes in the portable so you may include slippers or inside shoes if you do not want your child to play in socks. We have a small selection of clothing that may be used in emergencies.

Clean Up

All children and staff members are responsible for keeping the Centre clean and organized. We appreciate your co-operation in waiting for your child to tidy up before leaving the centre.

Pets

We have pet dogs on site owned by staff members. Children may visit with them inside and walk them outside on a leash. Studies have shown many positive benefits for children establishing relationships with dogs and for some children it can be very therapeutic. If your child has any allergies or fears to pets, please inform a staff member immediately.

Transportation

Our Variety Club vans may be used for city field trips. We may also use public transportation and, on occasion, Staff may use their own cars.

For Home

Throughout the year there are important notices for you to read and registration forms that must be completed. These papers will be given to you or put in your child's backpack.

There is child care resource material in the office. You are invited to sign out these books and cassettes.

From Home

Your child should not bring: candy, gum, money or toys / games. On planned show-and-tell days, items from home will be put away after they are shown at circle time.

Fundraising

Co-coordinating our fundraising projects is a volunteer position but the leg-work involves help from everyone. We ask one parent / guardian from each family to assist with various fundraising campaigns.

The money we collect goes toward children's equipment and allows the centre to keep the fees at the lowest possible rate.

Volunteer Help

Please consider the volunteer positions: fundraising (raffles, flea markets, sales); board of directors (monthly meetings); centre maintenance (carpentry, painting, cleaning, computer updates); program assistance; driving (class 4 license needed); other positions to be announced or suggested.

Evaluation

We value your opinion about our program, policies and staff members. Please feel free to comment, write us a note or ask for an evaluation form.

When is a Child too Ill to Attend Child Care

Children in child care programs are grouped together at the ages when they are most susceptible to infections. To determine what is a significant illness in a child is difficult for both parents and staff. There are three important issues in determining when a child is too ill to attend a child care program.

The protection of other children from communicable disease.

1. The comfort and safety of the child who is ill.
2. The capacity of the program staff to look after an ill child.

With these issues in mind the following guidelines are given:

1. Any child too ill to participate in normal activities of the day care **should be excluded**.
2. Children with gastro-intestinal problems (i.e. vomiting, diarrhea) **must be excluded** from the program. If vomiting or diarrhea develops while the child is at daycare, separate the child from other children immediately and notify the parent to pick up the child. If a cause of the vomiting or diarrhea is identified or if there are 3 or more cases in 4 days or less in the daycare, notify the licensing officer for further guidance.
3. Children with upper respiratory infections **need not be excluded** for the protection of other children. Respiratory viruses are so common and can spread before symptom start, so it does not make sense to single out for exclusion those who exhibit symptoms.
4. Children on antibiotics and otherwise well **need not be excluded**. (No daycare should require a child to be on antibiotics before returning).

5. Children with chickenpox **should be excluded for 5 days after the onset of the pox rash**. They may then return even if pox are still present.
6. In the case of diagnosed communicable diseases, the child care should advise the **Public Health Nurse** at the local health unit. For some diseases, like measles, mumps and rubella, children will be excluded. These diseases are rare in Vancouver and require blood test to diagnose.
7. Children with a chronic symptom such as persistent cough or persistent fever warrant medical evaluation. Once appropriate medical evaluation is obtained, **they need not be excluded** from the child care program **unless** they fall under the terms of 1), 4), or 5) above.
8. Whenever a child attending a child care program develops new symptoms of illness (whether mentioned above or not) or has a worsening of symptoms, the parent should be notified to take the child home.

***Reference:**

Trumpp C.E., Karasic R: Management of Communicable Disease in Daycare Centres. Pediatric Annals 12:3, Pages 219-229.

Community Care Facilities Licensing

**#800-601 West Broadway
Vancouver, B.C., V5Z 4C2
Telephone No.604-675-3800
Fax No.604-736-8651**

Handout-When is a Child Too Ill

