

Parent Manual for School – Age Child Care

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 school-age program and policies. 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 your child is picked up before closing time
- keep your child's personal record up to date
- help to re-enforce the importance of your child's accountability by checking his / her name tag on the appropriate Area Board
- contact the centre if your child will not be attending; sign out at the centre even if you pick your child up at his / her classroom
- provide post-dated cheques or a subsidy authorization number at registration time: in June you may be asked to provide a deposit for the following September
- confirm your child will be attending spring, summer, winter break programs
- give one month's written notice upon withdrawal from the centre.

Questions / Concerns

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your child, the program or staff; 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 license under the authority of the Community Care Facility Act of the ministry of health. The license 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 the m
- 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 neighborhood. 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
- give your child a chance to choose community activities which are agreed upon by both you and the staff
- assist you in raising a responsible child by giving consistent guidance – the direction your child receives will ultimately rest with you
- promote necessary social and community skills so your child may successfully pursue leisure activities when he / she no longer needs the security of our centre.

Board of Directors

The board of directors is the foundation and governing body of the centre. It is composed of parent members and honorary members who may be a former parent member; or a person who has performed outstanding service to the society; or a person who is deemed to have skills considered to be of beneficial service to the society. 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

Employees go through police screening, a medical checkup 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.

Hours

We are open Monday to Friday from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. There is an After Hours program until 7 p.m. Your child should not stay longer than 10 hours per day. During school, the program hours are: Before School: 7 to 9 a.m. and After School: 3 to 6 p.m. Some portable space is used for preschool and StrongStart programs from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

We are open regular hours on teacher professional days, spring, summer and winter break school holidays.

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

We are able to operate out of our portables if a strike closes the school. We may or may not be open when school classes are cancelled due to severe snow storms. Our opening will depend upon whether or not staff is able to travel to the centre. In either a strike or storm situation, when we are not using our school space, our licensed capacity is reduced so we may have a special registration or ask you to call before bringing your child to the centre.

Fees

Post-dated cheques, payable to Spare Time or your subsidy authorization number are required in order to register in all programs.

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. You will be charged for any NSF cheques.

A current fee list is included in this package. It is also posted on parent information boards throughout the centre.

The provincial government may provide subsidy for families who qualify. These details are available in our office.

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. There will be an additional fee during any unexpected school closures, such as a strike, in order to cover the cost of additional staff.

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

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.

Confidentiality

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

All board members and staff 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.

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 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 a program. One month's fee will be charged if you do not give proper notice. Failure to give notice seriously affects programs and delays other children from being able to enroll.

Expulsion

You will be asked to withdraw your child from the centre if we have determined that his / her behavior jeopardizes the welfare of others or is destructive to the centre's equipment or the environment. You also face expulsion if you are continually late in picking up your child. Your child will be allowed to complete his / her final month if it is possible but we reserve the right to serve an immediate expulsion notice if necessary.

Enrolment

Priority is given to children enrolled at DLG. Siblings of children enrolled in a program will be given priority over others.

Explorers Club

Explorers Club (4 to 6 years old) is based in the Explorer Portable. Children have an opportunity to develop their skills, discover new talents and stretch their imaginations through art, drama, baking, music and indoor and outdoor free play.

Discovery Club

Discovery Club Juniors (6 to 9 years old) sign in / out in the Main Room inside DLG. Children are encouraged to participate in a wide-variety of stimulating indoor and outdoor activities. They may be introduced to community programs through supervised field trips.

A Discovery Club Junior who is close to turning nine years old begins his / her journey as a Leader-In-Training (L-I-T). This allows him / her to do some activities

with the Adventure Club Leaders when he / she is able to follow the appropriate responsibilities.

Adventure Club

Adventure Club Leaders (8 to 11 years old) sign in / out in the Leader Portable. They are given a Leader manual and an application form before entering the program. Leaders help to plan and implement their own activities and field trips. This skill building concept includes: problem solving, decision making, evaluations, how to use the community, budgeting and making reservations. Staff is present to advise and support the Leaders and to accompany the group on all planned adventures.

Safe Base

Safe Base is a program for 11 to 13 year old children who are ready to accept the challenge of increased responsibility and more independence. The top five characteristics for a child in this program are: accountability, responsibility, creativity, independence and hard-work.

Extra Support

Children who require extra support due to physical, mental or behavioral challenges join the appropriate age-level program. All staff work with the children with added support staff in a variety of different staff / children ratios.

Supervision / Guidance / Discipline

It's your responsibility to contact the centre if your child will not be attending. Our responsibility for Before School, and non-school days, supervision begins when your child signs in and acknowledges a staff.

Children who attend kindergarten are picked up at school. For other children, After School supervision follows this routine: if your child is not present for the 3 p.m. sign in by a reasonable time - 3:30 p.m. being the latest, we check his / her classroom and school grounds; if not accounted for, we call you at home and at work; if no contact is made, we call the emergency contact; if no contact is made at all we call the police to report a missing child. For those who are late arriving by school bus we call the bus company before we call you.

Each age group has a supervisor and specific staff. Some staff float between age groups and organize activities, or monitor an area, for all children.

Explorers Club (1 staff: 8 children) and Discovery Club (1:10) may only play where there is constant staff supervision.

Adventurer Club Leaders (1:15) and Safe Base children (1:15), who show responsibility and have signed permission from their parents, may have intermittent supervision. See the Adventure Club and Safe Base manuals.

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

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.

Your child may be removed from a situation if he / she shows a persistent refusal to respect the rules of safety for self, others or the environment. Use of time out is accompanied by an explanation. The time out period is an opportunity for your child to calm down, think about alternate behavior and to decide when he / she is ready to play again.

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

You will be told if there is a discipline problem with your child.

Our supervisors and the DLG teachers share some learning and behavior information about individual children. If we notice any changes in your child's behavior we work with you and the school administration to try and find a solution to the problem.

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 in consideration for the health of other children and staff.

If your child becomes ill or is injured while here, you will be called. If your child becomes ill or injured while at school, he / she is under the care of the school staff.

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 with the school.

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.

Sexual Development

Many school age children are beginning to talk and ask about sex and sexual development. As you are aware, the pace of development changes varies for individual children. In order to respect the beliefs and values of each family, we will approach such questions discretely and simply. Staff will assess the children's "need to know" and will provide information that is appropriate to the development stage of the child.

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. Ministry of Children and Family Development. Decisions related to when, how and where the 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 to 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.

Clean Up

All children and staff 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.

Transportation

Our 24-passenger bus and 6-passenger mini-van are used for city field trips. We also use public transportation and may sometimes rent school buses for special events or have staff use their own cars. All staff that drive our 24-passenger bus have a class 4 chauffeur's license.

Telephone

Our telephone is for business. Children are not allowed to call you or a friend in order to make social plans.

Before School

We open in the Explorer Portable and also use the Adventure Portable. Mornings offer a low-key wake-up program of breakfast, cartoons, stories, art, quiet games and computers.

Explorers stay with our staff when we go outside. The school provides outdoor supervision at 8:30 a.m. and the Discovery Club, Adventure Club and Safe Base children may then choose to be with children who do not attend the centre. Please let us know if you do not want your child to go outside.

After School

Explorers are picked up at school. All other children are expected to go directly from school to their respective sign-in areas.

Explorers Club has a 3 p.m. "choice time" which allows children to play in designated areas announced that day. Discovery Club and Adventure Club choose from a variety of indoor, outdoor and community-based activities. Safe Base children plan their own days.

Arts and crafts instruction is available daily in the Explorer Portable with self-starter projects offered in other areas. All play areas have a variety of individual and group board games and puzzles. We use the school gym and the girls' basement when they are available along with the playground, basketball court and fields with weather permitting.

The Leader Portable has a homework room while Discovery Club and Safe Base children may work at tables in their respective areas. Please let us know if you would like your child to do homework while at the centre.

During the year we may bring in special instructors or reserve spots for some children in classes at the Marpole-Oakridge Community Centre; or take children to other facilities such as bowling alleys, skating rinks and swimming pools. If your child registers for a special course we expect him / her to attend all of the classes in the course. All special centre courses or field trips will be announced in the monthly newspaper or with a specific notice listing days, times and transportation. Other spontaneous field trips "who wants to go to Fraser River Park?" usually have the children returning to the centre by 5 p.m.

Spring and Winter Breaks

Each age group has a schedule of centre activities and field trips for both the spring and winter break holidays. Staff will ask if your child is attending.

Summer

The summer program has a different registration starting in May. It is important for you to register as soon as possible because space is open to children in the community starting in June and we need to give notice to our staff as their schedule is set according to enrolment

The summer is a mix of centre days and field trips which are planned according to weather and group sizes. We walk to local parks and use our vehicles and public transportation to take children on field trips.

We provide snacks, lunch, field trip expenses and sunscreen. We advise that your child brings a bathing suit, towel and hat to be ready for sun and water fun.

Area Boards

Area Boards are directories designed to help you locate your child at sign out time.

Your child has a name tag on an Area Board near his / her sign-in book. We encourage accountability and ask your child to move his / her own name tag to the appropriate spot on the board which marks where he / she is located.

We monitor the boards with spot checks ("Is your body where your name tag says it is?") and limit area options for those who cannot handle this independence. Your help is essential in teaching the importance of this accountability: praise your child when his / her name tag leads you to the correct play area; reinforce the importance of this responsibility when the Area Board is not used correctly.

Some of the place names on the Area Boards are:

- back field - the dirt lower field and the grass upper field behind the two portables
- basketball court - between the school and Leader Portable, it runs beside 67th Avenue; we also include the intermediate playground in this supervision area
- front field - the grass field, garden, stage and primary playground in the front and side of the school
- Explorer Portable - on the grass upper field, walk up the wheelchair ramp, enter the cubby room and turn left
- Leader Portable - on the grass upper field, walk up the wheelchair ramp, enter the cubby room and turn right
- Main Room - in the school basement - it's also used as the school lunch room

- Inside DLG – includes playing in the boys' basement, girls' basement, gym, kitchen or our office that is in the girls' basement.
- Safe Base – steps to this portable are at one end of the basketball court
- Imagination Station – this portable is connected to Safe Base with its own outside steps.

Sign In

There is a sign in / out book with daily attendance sheets for each age group.

During school, there is a morning sign in for those in Before School care and at 3 p.m. the staff monitor the sign in of everyone for After School care. The DLG safe arrival program accounts for each school child by 9:30 a.m. and again at 1:30 p.m.

On all non-school days, we have a morning check by 10 a.m. and our regular 3 p.m. sign in. It is helpful if you can let us know the approximate time your child will arrive at the centre on these days as it saves time with phone checkups and in starting fieldtrips.

You must call us or send a note if your child is going to be away from school or the centre. 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.

Sign Out

Look for your child's name tag on the appropriate Area Board.

Write the time and your initials in the sign in / out book – older Discovery Club children, Adventure Club Leaders and Safe Base should be the ones to sign out as to your instructions.

Our responsibility ends when your child is signed out and left the centre.

If you pick up your child at the classroom before 3 p.m. you must let us know. If you are here at 3 p.m. pick up your child at the correct sign in / sign out book not at the classroom. If you pick up your child directly from the front or back fields please be sure to tell a staff.

You must tell us if your child is walking home whether it's one day or as a routine. Children under 7-years-old may not go home alone. No children may leave on their own in the dark.

Staff 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 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 closing time our procedure is:
- call you at home / work; if there is no answer
- call an alternate from your child's file; if there is no answer
- call the Ministry of Children and Family Development, after hours emergency: 604-660-4927 located at 1818 Cornwall Avenue.

The sign in / out book is also used for messages to you ("see Barb" or "bumped knee on playground, applied ice 4 p.m.") and from you ("will pick up early for the dentist").

For Home

Throughout the year there are important notices for you to read and registration forms that must be completed. This information may be sent by e-mail or on papers are handed to your child to put in his / her backpack or left beside your child's sign in / out book. If you have more than one child at the centre, notices are given to your oldest child or left by his / her sign in / out book.

There is a monthly newspaper from September to June featuring art and stories by the children. There is also a staff-written Parents' Page to keep you informed of upcoming events and other news. There is one newspaper printed for each family, it is distributed the same way as other notices.

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 - items brought for school show-and-tell will be put away during centre hours.

Clothing

Your child has a cubby or a coat hook. All belongings should be taken home every day. For younger Explorers Club children there is some space to leave extra clothing to cover wet weather or accidents. We have a small selection of clothing that may be used in emergencies.

Lost and Found items are inside the two cubby room benches. Items left for more than one month are donated to charity. DLG has a Lost and Found by its office.

In the summer: children wear our T-shirts for field trips; your child should have a bathing suit and towel available everyday - brought on Monday and taken home on Friday.

Food

Breakfast is served from 7 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. Cereal and toast are offered daily with other items featured on a rotating basis.

There is a 3 p.m. snack for all children. We usually do not serve snack "seconds" after 5 p.m. in order not to interfere with dinner. Your child may take advantage of our Hot Lunch program with is offered to the whole school. This lunch features an entree, salad bar, milk or juice. An advanced monthly menu is provided. There is a listed monthly fee but you pay only what you can afford as the program is subsidized by the city council.

On days without school, 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. snacks and a lunch are provided for all children.

Fundraising

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. There have also been special fundraising projects for our summer camp boat and for special trips to Disneyland and Mexico.

Pets

We may have pet dogs on site owned by staff. Children may visit with them inside and walk them outside on a leash.

Volunteer Help

Please consider the volunteer positions: fundraising (raffles, flea markets, sales); board of directors (monthly meetings); centre maintenance (carpentry, painting, cleaning, computer updates); camp set-up/dismantle (April/September); program assistance (fieldtrips, teacher professional days, spring break, summer, winter break); driving (class 4 license needed); other positions to be announced or suggested.

Evaluation

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