

Family Handbook  
&  
Childcare Agreement



**THE CHILDREN'S CENTRE**  
at Duncan Elementary

1033 Nagle Street Unit B  
Duncan, British Columbia  
V9L 2E6  
250-597-0308

## **Welcome to The Children's Centre at Duncan Elementary!**

The Children's Centre is an early learning centre for children ages 30 months to Pre-K. At The Children's Centre we guide children through independent learning and healthy social development.

Our philosophy is that children benefit from learning through free play and group activities where they have unlimited opportunities to gather knowledge in an indoor and outdoor environment. We take a child-led, teacher-guided approach to early childhood education, incorporating various elements from Reggio Emilia, Montessori, and Waldorf learning models, and offer a home-like setting where the needs and pace of each individual child's development is embraced.

The Children's Centre is a supportive environment where mindfulness, personal empowerment, and creating a peaceful and kind classroom are of the utmost importance.

At The Children's Centre, we understand the importance of creating an inclusive and supportive environment for all members of our community. We accept families from all diversities.

We value each family's input and involvement in their child's education and offer an open classroom where healthy and respectful discussion is encouraged.

### **Program Details**

The Children's Centre considers all stages of child development - physical, social, cognitive, and emotional. We follow the key elements of the BC Early Learning Framework and focus on the values of free play, individual empowerment, and self-awareness practices.

Our daily activities include outdoor exploration, free play, guided art and collaborative projects, gardening and food education, story, song, language and math exercises, physical exercise, safe risk play, group circle time, and relationship building. This allows children to develop a deeper sense of self and connection to their environment and their peers, so they can approach life with confidence and grace.

As part of our inclusive community, we encourage families and members of the community to share their expertise and knowledge with an age-appropriate approach.

## **Hours of Operation**

The Children's Centre is open from 7:30am to 5:30pm Monday to Friday. Children must be picked up and signed out by 5:30pm each day or late fees will be charged.

## **Late Pick-Up**

It is considered a late pick up if parents have not signed out their child by 5:30 pm. Please arrive no less than 10 minutes before pick-up time. If a late pick up occurs more than once, there will be a late fee of \$10 levied for the first ten minutes and \$10 for each 5-minute increment thereafter, payable directly to the staff on duty. If you know you are going to be late, please call the centre and have an alternate authorized person pickup your child if possible.

\*It is important that The Children's Centre is notified of any changes in family schedules, phone numbers, and addresses. All information on the registered paper MUST be kept current and up to date.

The cut off time for drop off is 9.30 am unless, previously arranged with management.

## **Family Vacations and Child Illness**

The Children's Centre requires one month notice for family vacations, when possible, to ensure efficient classroom daily planning. If a child is sick, please notify us at least 12 to 24 hours before via the **Brightwheel** application. ***Emails are not a reliable form of communication for urgent or timely messages.*** Fees must be paid regardless of whether the child is away for any reason.

Parents must inform the childcare if a child has a communicable disease (i.e., chicken pox). Upon notification, staff will contact other families attending the childcare maintaining confidentiality of your child's identity. Any child dropped off at childcare must be able to fully participate in the daily program and go outside. If your child is unable to participate in the activities due to illness, they must be kept at home. See ***Health Policies*** for more information.

## **Centre Holidays**

The Children's Centre will be closed all stat holidays including:

*New Year's Day*

*Family Day*

*Good Friday*

*Easter Monday*

*Victoria Day*

*Canada Day*

*BC Day*

*Labour Day*

*National Truth and Reconciliation Day (September 30th)*

*Thanksgiving Remembrance Day*

*Boxing Day (December 26th)*

*Christmas (one week including New Year's Day)*

\*Notice of stat dates will be given to families beforehand as they change each year.

## **Professional Development Days**

Professional development is an important part of operating a high-quality early childhood program. Early childhood educators must also maintain a minimum amount of professional development as part of their qualifications. The Children's Centre staff participates in professional development days which can be in the form of conferences and other activities that are sometimes scheduled during centre hours. We will provide one month's notice for any time taken for professional development when the centre will be closed.

## **Fees**

Monthly fees are due in advance or by 5:30pm on the 1st of each month and are inclusive of absenteeism due to illness, weather conditions, vacations, statutory holidays, or school closures. A \$20.00 late fee will be applied for each day tuition is late. If tuition is not paid after five days, your child will lose their spot at the centre. **Refunds** will be made if The Children's Centre does not have adequate staff levels.

<b>Child's Age</b>	<b>Monthly Fees</b>
30-35 Months	\$1405
36 Months -5 Years	\$1070

The Children's Centre reserves the right to increase fees and do so in September of each year. At least two months notice will be given prior to increase so to update the Affordable Childcare Benefit.

The Children's Centre requires full tuition from one parent or caregiver and will not be responsible for obtaining split tuition from two or more parents or caregivers. Yearly receipts will be issued to the parent or caregiver who pays the full tuition.

## **Other Fees and Requirements Upon Registration**

- \$250 deposit that can be used for the first month in the centre or refunded after three months minus any outstanding penalties.
- Two clear and current photos of your child for emergency contact cards.

## **Payment Options**

Cheques post-dated 6 months in advance.

e-Transfer to [gatewaychildcaresociety@gmail.com](mailto:gatewaychildcaresociety@gmail.com)

## **Late Payments**

NSF Cheques will have a \$25.00 fee that will be charged to the payer.

Delinquent payments or if a child leaves with fees unpaid, the account will be transferred over to a collection agency.

## **Fee Reductions**

### **Affordable Child Care Benefit**

We accept the *Affordable Child Care Benefit*. Parents/caregivers are expected to fill out and complete all relevant paperwork. Full tuition is due by 5:30pm the first day of each month. The subsidy amount will be refunded once it has been received by The Children's Centre.

### **Metis Child Care Benefit**

If you have children newborn to school age years of age that are Metis, you can apply for this benefit to help offset childcare costs. Please see [Métis Child Care Benefit Program | MNBC](#) for more information.

You may contact CCRR (Child Care resource and Referral) for support with this process.

### **Deposit and Registration**

A \$250.00 deposit is required to secure a space for your child and can be used for the first month in the centre or refunded after three months minus any outstanding penalties.

### **Withdrawal**

Families who want to withdraw their child from the program must submit written notice to The Children's Centre one month prior to their last day of care. A **Withdrawal Form** must be submitted by the end of the previous month and there is no reduction in fees nor refunds due to early withdrawal.

The Children's Centre has a one-month probationary period policy. The Children's Centre and/or parents reserve the right to request that a child be withdrawn if we are unable to meet their needs. The Early Childhood Manager will assess and speak with family about any social, emotional, or physical needs that the centre is unable to resolve after exhausting all other supportive resources. During this period, either the centre or parent(s) will require only one week's notice. After this time, one month's written notice to terminate this agreement will be required or a fee equivalent to one month of care. If your child is unable to adapt at any time while enrolled or exhibits violent behaviour towards the children or teachers, or we are unable to meet the child's needs the centre may give immediate notice with fees being refunded for days going forward that are not used.

### **Centre Tours or Inquiries**

Families may direct all inquiries regarding centre tours or any question or concerns to the centre manager.

### **Confidentiality and Duty to Report**

The Children's Centre will maintain the confidentiality of families and their children. All families with children enrolled must maintain confidentiality.

As professionals, The Children's Centre staff and management have an obligation by law to report suspected abuse or neglect towards a child in our care to the appropriate authorities.

### **Emergency Contacts**

The Children's Centre requires at least 3 emergency contacts, all of which should be in the area in which the family resides. Emergency contacts can only be added in person by a parent or caregiver, not by phone, email nor text. Photo ID is required for emergency contacts. See **Approved Contacts Form**.

### **Drop Off and Pick Up Policy**

Parents, caregiver, and authorized alternative contacts over the age of 18 must drop off and pick up a child. Photo ID will be required for individuals who are unknown to us including a non-enrolling parent or caregiver.

Please arrive on or before 5:20pm each day to allow at least 10 minutes to organize your child in the centre before leaving for the evening. Late fees will apply if a child is not picked up by 5:30pm each day. Please call the centre if you will be late for pick up and drop off.

If a custody agreement or court order exists, The Children's Centre must have a copy attached to the registration package. This will remain confidential. Parents and caregivers are responsible for providing accurate and up to date information concerning legal guardianship of the child. Without a custody or court order on file, we cannot deny access to the non-enrolling parent.

Please inform staff if there is a change in the designated and authorized pickup person. This individual must be on our authorization list before your child is released.

## **Safety Considerations**

Children must arrive at school with a parent or caregiver. If a child arrives alone, it will be grounds for immediate termination of care. Children must be accompanied into the childcare centre and signed on, as staff are not responsible for a child dropped off outside the door.

Parents, caregivers, and authorized contacts must not be in possession of controlled substances or be intoxicated, which include but not limited to marijuana, alcohol, or other controlled substances. If parents, caregivers, or authorized pickups are deemed by staff to be unsafe, the child will be released to another adult from the child's **Approved Pick-up and Drop-off Contacts** list.

## **Active Play Policy**

Active play is fundamental to physical literacy. Licensing requires a minimum of 60 minutes per day of active play, and we practice this through a variety of exercises, free play, stretching and children's yoga exercises, dramatic play, music and movement during circle time, and in our outdoor play where we walk, run, jump, stretch, and ride toy cars. We practice injury prevention by providing age-appropriate play spaces that are frequently monitored for safety and suitability.

## **Injury Prevention and Safety**

The Children's Centre staff are responsible for applying the principles and practices of injury prevention and to ensure the children's safety.

- Through active and positive supervision when children play, walk, run, etc.
- Programming of activities will match the needs, skills, and abilities of the children in care.
- All staff will have a current and up to date first aid certification and renew prior to the expiry dates.
- Emergency numbers are clearly posted in the centre and on the daily clipboard.
- All incidents are recorded and reported when necessary.
- All staff are aware of where the first aid kits are located.
- All first aid kits are appropriately stocked and restocked as needed.
- Emergency Contact Cards are on hand during care hours and on field trips including while participating in outdoor activities and during indoor at the centre time.



## **Screen Time Policy**

At The Children's Centre, children do not participate in any scheduled screen time. We do however offer special events like movie days or pajama days. Parents will be notified of the event in the monthly calendar.

## **Outdoor Play**

The Children's Centre at Duncan Elementary participates in outdoor early childhood learning. Children must be comfortable playing and learning outside rain or shine. We also have a warm indoor space for mealtimes, participating in quiet time, and for creative learning and play.

## **Be Prepared for the Outdoors**

Appropriate and safe outdoor clothing and an extra change of clothes is required for each child to participate. Pants and long sleeve shirts are required for the fall and winter months. Hats are required for the spring and summer months. Closed toed shoes are required all year. Children must wear weather appropriate clothing. If your child has long hair, please have them wear it up and/or out of their face so they can play confidently and freely.

## **Sunscreen Policy**

The Children's Centre must have permission to apply sunscreen to your child throughout the day during summer months and whenever appropriate. Please provide and apply sunscreen to your child before the day begins when appropriate. The Children's Centre staff will also apply sunscreen to your child 15-30 minutes before going outside and every two hours thereafter. If your child does not have sunscreen, we will apply centre sunscreen. On hot summer days when the UV index is high, outdoor time will be limited and shaded areas will be considered when planning activities.

## **Toileting Items**

For the children that are in the process of potty training, families must provide wet wipes or diapers and replenish as needed. The centre staff will send out reminders via personal note in your child's cubby or Brightwheel.

### Nap Items

Please provide a small blanket for nap time to ensure your child is comfortable and warm.

### Confident Play

Confident Play, also known as **Risky Play**, is beneficial to children's development. Children develop wise body awareness, are more resilient, have increased physical literacy, develop risk assessment skills, increase their confidence and self-esteem, develop proficient problem-solving skills, and learn how to deal with trial and error. The Children's Centre provides opportunities for children to engage in confident play through outdoor exploration and activities that are closely supervised and monitored for safety. Encouragement and guidance are provided as needed.

### Early Learning Policy

The Children's Centre is conscious of age-appropriate early learning practices. We provide positive behavioural guidance, age-appropriate educational materials, and build our curriculum around the needs and development of children ages 30 months to 5 years old following a child-led, teacher guided approach.

The following techniques are used:

- Regardless of the setting, children's safety, health, and happiness are the non-negotiable elements of quality care and education. Minimizing risk and maximizing opportunities to engage with teachers, other children, and the world around them are essential strategies for promoting physical health and social emotional language and cognitive development.
- Establishing healthy boundaries that are appropriate, clear, consistent, and simple.
- Modelling appropriate behaviour.
- Guiding children through challenges by encouraging problem-solving.
- Demonstrating respectful, kind, and mindful behaviour.
- Encouraging positive social interactions and discussing social challenges.
- Presenting choices.
- Using natural and logical consequences.
- Providing learning materials indoors and outdoors, such as books, puzzles, math games, language materials, sensory materials, dramatic play materials, gross motor development structures, open-ended crafts, and art materials, etc.
- Offer a quiet space for individual children as needed.
- Promote cooperation, team building, creativity, problem-solving, and empathy through group projects and activities.

## **Care and Supervision Policy**

Care and supervision are of the utmost importance in an early learning program. Staff are trained to establish clear and simple boundaries for the children's safety, scan and circulate play areas for potential hazards and safety concerns and be aware of each children's abilities to prevent injury. Staff are required to always supervise children, including:

- During free play and group activities both indoors and outdoors.
- During nap time and quiet periods of rest.
- During mealtimes.
- While toileting and changing.
- While entering and exiting the centre.

## **Nap/Quiet Time Supervision**

The Children's Centre requires that children participate in a nap/quiet time at least one hour per day. Each child will have their own nap mat that will be designated for them. Staff members will be present in the nap area, in accordance with ratios, to ensure the children are comfortable and safe. Children who do not want to nap will be required to rest quietly, look at a book, or engage in a quiet activity such as puzzle construction under the supervision of staff either in the nap area or outside of the nap area.

## **Food and Meals**

Families are required to supply nutritious snacks and lunches fully prepared in a lunch kit. 1 snack for morning, 1 snack for afternoon, and 1 lunch are required. We promote healthy eating and are considerate of your child's preferences/dietary needs, as well as an inclusive approach to the diverse foods that families provide for their children. Safe drinking water is available, and we encourage children to drink as much as they require. Some baked goods and healthy snack foods will be provided on special occasions with ample notice with parents' and caregivers' permission, and with the consideration of child allergies. A microwave is available at the premise for heat ups.

\*Please bring along a water bottle full of water for your child each day.

Recommended healthy lunch and snack items:

- Home-made food
- Vegetables and fruit
- Granola bars or crackers
- Yogurt and cheese
- Water in a bottle
- Sandwiches and wraps
- Vegetables and dips

\*Staff will encourage children eat fresh food and protein first and save packaged and processed food items for afternoon snack or home time.

\*No juice boxes please.

\*Due to safety concerns and the development of children's dental health, chewing gum is not permitted.

## **Birthdays**

Families are welcome to bring a cake or cupcakes to The Children's Centre to celebrate this special day. Please let the staff know a few days before so they can be prepared for it and notify parents in case of allergies.

\*We ask that parents do not bring a birthday gift for the child, please keep this for your party at home.

## **Items from Home**

Please label clothing, meal containers, and lunch bags. All personal items, including toys, that are not required for the day should be left at home unless a show and tell day is scheduled. The Children's Centre is not responsible for lost, broken, or missing items. Jewellery such as necklaces pose a safety risk during outdoor play and are not permitted. If a child wears an item that is considered unsafe, they will be asked to place it in their backpack until home time.

## Health Policies

The Children's Centre prioritizes preventative health practices to decrease the incidences of illness and spread of disease. This includes such measures as handwashing, respiratory etiquette, sanitization, and cleaning, reducing transmission in activities. To keep everyone as healthy as possible, please do not attend if your child is sick, experiencing any illness symptoms, unable to participate fully in routine activities. This includes cold symptoms and mild fevers. Key health and safety measures are in place to ensure a safe and healthy environment for all. Please see Communicable Disease Policy.

### Immunization

Licensing requires the Children's Immunization Record to be kept on the site. The Childcare Centre encourages routine childhood immunizations as recommended by Public Health to assist in keeping all children at the centre free of serious illness and disease. Please see our **Immunization Form** for further details. For more information on immunizations, refer to the *BC Health Guide's Immunization Schedule*.

### Illness

If a child is experiencing any symptoms of illness, they must stay home until symptoms subside. If a child becomes ill in care, parents or caregivers will be contacted immediately for pick-up. Pick must be as soon as possible and If we are unable to reach you, emergency contacts will be required to pick the child up.

Symptoms of illness include:

- Chills, runny nose with green/thick discharge, or persistent sneezing
- A fever of 100.2F/38C or higher
- Persistent/worsening cough, difficulty breathing or wheezing
- A sore throat or difficulty swallowing
- Unexplained or undiagnosed pain, headache, body aches, or fatigue
- Loss of sense of smell, taste, or appetite
- Infected skin, eyes, or an undiagnosed rash
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting or experiencing nausea
- Severely itching their body or scalp
- Any communicable disease or symptoms of one
- Demonstrating abnormal behaviour and/or irritability
- Has received fever reducing/over-the-counter medication to reduce any of the above symptoms

## **Allergies**

Parents or caregivers must report any allergies their child has upon registration and regularly monitor their child for signs of the onset of allergies. At The Children's Centre we monitor the health and wellbeing of the children that attend our centre and will report any unusual symptoms related to their health including possible allergens and adverse reactions to allergens. Please see **Allergy Report Form** for further details.

## **Medications**

If your child requires medication, please ask the staff for the 'Request to administer medication form' which must be signed. All the medication must be in the bottle prescribed by the doctor.

## **Medical Emergencies**

If a child becomes critically ill or injured while in care, first aid will be administered, parents will be notified, and an ambulance will be called. Any relevant health information about your child will be given to medical authorities in the event of a medical emergency as well as the contact information parents, or caregivers provide upon registration. Any medical emergency is considered a reportable incident to Licensing.

## **Poison Control**

In the event of poisoning:

- 911 will be called.
- Poison control will be contacted.
- Any suggestions for care of the child recommended by 911, poison control, or provider's knowledge will be implemented.
- Parents or caregivers will be notified.

## **Injury**

### **Minor**

Parents or caregivers will be notified at pick up and a logbook will be kept.

### **Major**

911 will be called. Appropriate care will be given to the child. Parents will be notified.

## **Communicable Diseases**

Parents or caregivers must notify our staff if their child is infected with a communicable disease. This will help us know what to look for in the other children who attend the centre to help to prevent further spread. We are also required to notify other families without disclosing the identity of the infected child. Children can return to the centre when symptoms have subsided for at least 48 hours. Please see ***Communicable Disease Policy***.

## **Covid19 Policy**

Please see *The Ministry of Health and the BCCDC's* health guidance for childcare settings for more information at [Guidance\\_Child\\_Care.pdf \(bccdc.ca\)](#) or [Child care COVID-19 health and safety - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](#)

## **Safety Policies**

Your child's safety is our priority. We are equipped with a Disaster Plan, First Aid kit, emergency evacuation plan, and earthquake supplies.

To ensure a safe environment, we also conduct daily visual inspections of our indoor and outdoor play areas, conduct monthly fire drills, and annual earthquake drills.

### **Fire**

***A routine fire drill will be conducted each month using the fire plan created by The Children's Centre and the local fire department. Muster point is the flagpole directly adjacent to the heritage building.***

When the fire alarm sounds or in the event of a fire:

- 911 will be called.
- Grab emergency kit and attendance sheet.
- Gather children in one location outside and lead children to a safe location.
- Take attendance.
- Call emergency contacts for immediate pick up.
- Wait for fire department to arrive for further instructions.

### **Lockdown Procedure Policy**

In collaboration with the school district 79, we practice annual emergency drills.

## **Inclement Weather Conditions**

### **Power Outage**

If the power goes out and we are unable to maintain a comfortable temperature in our centre, parents or caregivers will be notified for immediate pick up of their child.

### **Snow**

We follow the school district's closure schedule for snow days. If snow accumulation is becoming hazardous to travel while children are at our centre, parents or caregivers will be contacted immediately for pick up of their child.

### **Field Trips by Bus**

The Children's Centre has a 25-passenger school bus for occasional field trips to parks, museums, and local attractions. To ensure the safety of all who travel on the bus, we abide by the following:

- The driver of the vehicle is 19 years of age or older.
- The driver holds a Class 4 drivers' license that permits them to legally operate the bus.
- Child/teachers ratios are maintained to licensing standards.
- A headcount of children will happen before every centre departure to ensure all children are on the bus and accounted for, during the field trip, and before departure from the visiting location.
- Safety checks of the vehicles will be made before every trip.
- All vehicles will be checked and maintained regularly by a certified mechanic.
- All children will be seated in appropriate car seats/booster seats when and if necessary.
- Notice will be sent out no less than one week beforehand to inform parents of upcoming field trips.
- There will be times posted outside of the centre to inform families of what time the bus will be departing and returning.
- Children will be required to sit in their seats safely and will be closely monitored by all staff present on the trip.



## Childcare Agreement

*It is important that all policies in this document are understood and abided by to ensure your child has a smooth transition into our care. Please sign below.*

Print Parent/Caregiver Name

Date

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Parent/Caregiver Signature

X

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