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Jenn's Little Bears Early
Childhood Education Centre

Purpose & Philosophy

We serve the families and children in the Western Communities offering a “learning through play” environment. Recent studies now tell us that the first six years of a child’s life are critical for learning. Our centre will offer children the space and materials to stimulate their social, intellectual and physical development.

Young children will move through various stages of play from infants involved in solitary play to five year olds being involved in cooperative and group play scenarios. Our centre will provide children the space to develop these social skills with each other.

Both the infant toddler centre and the preschool/daycare program have a wide range of activities and a great balance of quiet and active, individual and group and free and planned activities.

Little Bears ECE Centre will provide the following important aspects to our environment for every child;

- A safe and nurturing environment
- Valuing and respecting diversity
- Open ended, free choice and developmentally appropriate activities
- Partnerships with families
- Modeling appropriate personal and professional behavior

Little Bears ECE Centre will help each individual child develop the skills they need to explore and continue on to kindergarten.

Program Goals

In both the Infant and Toddler Centre and the 3-5 Centre the program goals are to provide children with a place to learn and develop skills in all the areas of development. Our educators will work with each group of children to provide a program best suited to the children’s needs, skills and abilities.

Drop off and Pick Up Policy

When dropping your child off please sign in the child on the sign in sheet. Make sure you touch base with an educator before leaving the centre to ensure that we know the child is in the centre. Please let us know about the child’s morning and any unusual occurrences in the child’s morning.

Not attending? Please call the centre if you are not bringing your child in or are bringing your child in late. Please call the centre before 9:30 am so we can plan our day accordingly. If you arrive at the centre after 9:30 we may not be able to take your child as we may not be within ratio.

It is important for young children to have security and a routine, we must ask that children be dropped off prior to 9:30 am otherwise they will not be able to join us that day. Special circumstances, such as an appointment or emergency, are of course the exception. If you pick your child up mid day for an appointment they will not be allowed back in the middle of the day. It is disruptive for the child as they have left for the day, missed lunch and/or nap. Exceptions are made for graduating children attending kindergarten orientation.

At pick up time please sign your child out on the sign in sheet and make contact with an educator so that we are certain your child is safe.

The Infant and Toddler Centre has a 9 hour policy for attendance. Please see our IT contract to check drop off times and pick up options. We do ask that children in the 3-5 centre also attend for a maximum of 9 hours as this is a long day of socializing and playing hard.

If you are late for picking up your child, there is a \$1.00 charge per minute. If you have not been in contact with the centre to let us know that you will be late we will contact one of the emergency contacts you have provided. If after 30 minutes past closing there is still no contact or pick up arrangements we will call Emergency Services of the Ministry of Children and Families.

Each child's safety is important to us. It is imperative that we have written permission for individuals, other than parents or guardians, to pick up a child. Alternative caregivers or individuals that will be picking up your children need to have identification at pick up time for the educators to release each child. Anyone not on the authorized pick up list will not be given access to the child. The child will remain with the caregiver and all reasonable efforts will be made to ensure each child's safety, as that is our main concern.

It is also our responsibility to ensure that we are releasing each child into a safe environment. If the caregiver feels that the person picking up a child is impaired in any way we will not allow the child to drive with this person. The ECE will offer a ride, to call a cab or another individual to pick both child and the person picking up. If the educator believes that the child is in need of protection the educator will call the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

If there are any restraining orders or other legal documents with regards to your child and another adult we ask for copies of these documents so we can assist you in keeping your child safe. Without legal documents we cannot deny a parent access to their child.

Centre Closures

If there is a fire, lack of power or heat or extreme weather conditions the center may be forced to close. If my staff cannot safely make it to the centre we will be unable to open. If during the course of the day an emergency arises we will contact you to come and collect your child. We will of course remain with the children, making sure they are safe until parents arrive.

We are closed all statutory holiday as well as Easter Monday. In the event that a statutory holiday is on a Tuesday or Thursday we will also close the adjoining day for a long weekend. We are closed for one week in the summer and for 2 weeks at Christmas break, following the Sooke School District. Closures will be posted in advance on our website as well as in the centre. Full fees are still due in the event of closure.

Sick Policy

If your child has a communicable disease it is important for them to stay home and rest in order to get better. Ill children are not able to fully participate in the program that we have planned. It is imperative that children rest when sick in order to fully heal.

If your child becomes sick while at the centre, you will be contacted immediately and expected to promptly pick up your child.

Illness included but not limited to:

- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Eye infection with yellow or green discharge
- A fever over 38 Celsius/99 Fahrenheit
- Excessive coughing, so much that the child cannot participate in the program

- Yellow or green nasal discharge
- Exhaustion due to lack of sleep or illness
- An undetermined rash

If a child has vomited, had diarrhea or began an antibiotic, we must ask that the child stay home from the centre for at least 48 hours. Doctor's notes are necessary for return with a rash to ensure that the rash is not contagious. If a child is unable to fully participate in the program, they are not well enough to be at the centre.

The staff are trained and educated to recognize symptoms of illness and will use their judgment to determine if a child is healthy enough to be attending the program. If a child becomes ill during the day, we will call you to pick up your child. If you need to pick up your child they will not be able to attend the program the following day.

We are not equipped to properly care for sick children and sick educators leave the centre with inadequate ratios.

All children must be 48 hours symptom free in order to return to the centre if they have been sick with a gastrointestinal virus or fever. All other illnesses require 24 hours symptom free to return, including starting antibiotics.

All children who are in care are not permitted to attend if their siblings are also ill. For example if 2 year old John has a gastrointestinal virus then 4 year old Beth also needs to remain home. This policy is in place to alleviate the spread of germs between centres.

Teething

Teething medication, Tylenol or Motrin may be brought in for acute teething symptoms (tooth is pushing through the gums or gums are swollen/red).

Teething may cause the following symptoms:

- Increased drooling
- Restless or decreased sleeping due to gum discomfort
- Refusal of food due to soreness of the gum region
- Fussiness that comes and goes
- Bringing hands to the mouth

- Mild rash around the mouth due to skin irritation secondary to excessive drooling
- Rubbing the cheek or ear region as a consequence of referred pain during the eruption of the molars

Importantly, teething is *not* associated with the following symptoms:

- Fever (especially over 101 F)
- Diarrhea, runny nose, and cough
- Prolonged fussiness
- Rashes over the body

<http://www.medicinenet.com/teething/page2.htm>

<http://kidshealth.org/parent/general/teeth/teething.html#>

<http://www.abc.net.au/health/talkinghealth/factbuster/stories/2010/08/18/2985998.htm>

Medication cannot be given for fevers and your child will be sent home and your child cannot attend the next day.

Medication Policy

Medications will only be administered when the required "Permission to Administer Medications" form has been completed and signed.

- A new form is required with each new medication
- Medication is never to be placed in a child's lunch box
- Prescriptions must be in the original bottle, with the medication label stating the child's name, prescribing doctor and dosage
- Over the counter medication must also be in its original bottle with the label intact
- No cough drops or candy's
- The caregiver dropping of the child must inform the educators of when the child received the last dose of medication, otherwise we will not be able to administer the medication
- Allergy medication (i.e. EPI PEN) is an exception. A separate permission form will be kept on file.

Immunizations

Licensing requires that we have copies of all children's immunizations records. These can be acquired through your doctor or Queen Alexander Health Unit on Wale Road. All children must be immunized to attend Jenn's Little Bears.

Smoking

Smoking in the centre or on the grounds of the centre is not permitted. This does include the parking lot. Please leave the grounds completely for ensure there is no residual smoke present for children being dropped off or picked up.

Supervision & Safety

Children's safety and supervision is very important to us. Whether we are inside or outside children will always be appropriately supervised. In the case that ratio cannot be met we may have to ask children to be picked up. This will of course be a last resort.

Safety of equipment and play areas is also important. We will be certain to keep watch out for any broken equipment or toys and do ask that parents contact the manager if they have any concerns about this.

Fire & Emergency Evacuation

Fire drills are practiced with the children once a month and logged for licensing.

An emergency kit is required for each child that is enrolled in the program. This will allow each child personal items in case of an emergency.

Emergency Contacts

We ask that each child have at least 2 emergency contacts. These contacts will be used in case of emergency, illness or late pick up. If we cannot get a hold of a child's guardian(s) if a child is sick (see above illnesses), still at the centre past pick up time or there is an earthquake, fire or other natural disaster, we will contact the emergency contacts to pick up your child.

Hygiene & Toileting

All children will wash their hands after messy activities, before and after eating and after using the toilet. As early childhood educators it is our mission to help children to learn everyday habits that they will carry on with them through life. Liquid soap and paper towels or individual towels will be provided for best care.

Toileting is something that the older children 3-5 will do on a daily basis. We do ask that once children are between 2-2.5 years old parents do try to actively work on toilet learning as we will also do in the centre. We have no problem helping children use the toilet and cleaning up any accidents that may occur. It is all part of learning.

We will encourage children aged 2 to try out the toilet. It is part of the daily routine to try the potty each time we do diaper changes. Getting used to sitting on the toilet is a huge part of toilet learning. Recognizing and labelling your child's bowel movements is an important part of toilet learning as well. "Your diaper is wet, you've gone pee" "You have a poop in your diaper, we need to clean that"

We will try to work with each parent's routine and ideas for their child, as that is what the child will be doing at home. Please let us know if you have concerns or thoughts about this process.

Food and Drink Policy

Each child will need to bring snacks for morning and afternoon snack time as well as lunch. We ask that parents try to follow Canada's Food Guide to ensure excellent nutrition.

Please have a water cup that your child can leave at the centre for water on a daily basis.

We are able to heat up lunches and snacks in the microwave and cut up fruit or vegetables if necessary. We suggest parents provide 9 or more items for the day, as that allows children at least 3 choices per meal time.

Nap & Quiet Time

Both the Infant and Toddler Centre and the 3-5 Centre have naps/quiet time in the afternoon shortly after lunch. We do understand that some children do not need naps or that you may not want your child to nap. We do feel that each child needs to have some quiet time to rest.

Therefore we ask that if a child does not need to nap they still need to lie down quietly on a cot or sit quietly with a book while the other children nap.

If your child does nap, we ask that they bring a blanket and cuddly toy (if they use one) that will help them feel comfortable for this time. All the children's bedclothes are laundered each week.

Guidance & Discipline

In the centre we use positive guidance to help children learn appropriate behavior and self help skills. Using a calm and controlled voice and body language we will get down to the child's level and help them to solve the problem. The following techniques will be used when using guidance with young children;

- Clarifying expectations
- Model appropriate behaviors and interactions
- Redirecting inappropriate behaviors
- Using respectful language and mannerisms
- Giving the child options of what they can do
- Use the environment to help teach positive learning opportunities
- Positive reinforcement
- Supporting development of self help skills
- Use of "I" messages and reflection of feelings/emotions

Aggressive behaviours, such as biting, hitting, or kicking, are handled differently. If the behaviour is repeated, the child may need a short break from the group to calm their body. An educator will speak with the child about the behaviour and its consequences.

Screen Time and Active Play

There is no screen time in the Infant and Toddler Centre. In the 3-5 program, the children do watch ½ hour of a movie or show before nap time.

We make every effort to go outside on a daily basis. In spring, summer and fall we go outside in the morning and afternoon. In the winter only in the morning as it is too dark in the afternoon. We are outside anywhere from one hour to four hours a day depending on weather conditions. If we are unable to go outside due to rain or wind (we have a lot of trees in our yard) we do many forms of active play indoors. We do various gross motor activities including, dancing, yoga, rough and tumble play and other active games.

Clothing Items from Home

The centre can be a messy fun place for exploration, therefore extras are always needed. We ask for the following items to be at the centre on a daily basis:

- Extra pants
- Extra shirt
- Extra underwear
- Extra socks
- Slippers

Spring/Summer Items:

- Water play clothes & sandals
- Hat
- Sunscreen

Fall/Winter Items:

- Toque
- Muddy Buddies
- Gloves/Mittens
- Snow pants
- Snow jacket

Extra clothes will be needed on a daily basis in case of an accident, messy play or other dirty games. We do have a few extra items but not enough for everyone attending.

Enrollment

In order to enroll, we will need completed copies of registration forms, parent contracts and a non-refundable deposit of \$400. This deposit is deducted from the first months tuition. The space will not be held until all these items are completed, until this is provided the space is open to others. There is also a registration fee of \$25.00.

Please indicate the days you are enrolling for on the top right hand corner of the registration form. If approved, these days will be locked in for 6 months.

First Day

On the first day all documentation and payments must be in order. This includes:

- Fully completed registration forms
- Signed parent contract
- Immunization records
- Emergency kits

Application to Change Days or Giving Notice

We ask that parents apply 2 months in advance to drop days from their schedule. Applications must be submitted, in writing, on the last business day 2 months prior to the requested change. Applications will be approved or denied by the end of the first month.

Applications to add days must also be put forth in writing but are able to be completed much faster.

The centre will need one full months notice if your child will be leaving the centre. Notice must be given, in writing, the last business day of the month previous to your last month. For example if you intend your last month to be June notice must be given the last business day of May.

Payment Policy and Parent Fees

Payment is due on the last day of the month prior to services rendered. Payment can be via e-transfer or cheques. If payments are made late on multiple occasions post dated cheques will be required.

Late payments or NSF cheques will be charged \$50.00. Lack of payment will result in termination of our contract.

We do accept the affordable childcare benefit, however with processing being up to 4-6 weeks sometimes we will need to be paid the full months fees until ACCB approves the application. Once the application is approved and we have a benefit plan in place then we can reimburse the overpayment or apply it to future months' fees.

Annual tuition increase will occur between July-September each year. Increases will be between 3-6%.

Failure to give full notice will result in a full month's payment being owed. If the fees are not paid, we will contact collections.