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Jenn's Little Bears Early
Childhood Education Centre

Purpose & Philosophy

Our centre, located in the Westshore, is a very well rounded and exciting childcare centre. We are excited to care for and teach your little ones while you are at work! We know that your child is very important to you and we thank you for allowing us to be a very important part of your family.

Our centre is a mixture of many different philosophies as we believe children are able to grow from a wide range of activities. We follow emergent curriculum, Reggio, Waldorf as well as a HighScope approach. We believe incorporating several approaches will help children maximize reaching their learning potential. We believe in independence and we encourage children to try things out, explore and take risks to see what they are capable of. We encourage risk taking in a safe environment where children can learn and trust the adults who care for them. This kind of learning encourages problem solving skills. Both the infant toddler program and the preschool aged program have a wide range of activities and a balance of quiet and active, individual and group and free and planned activities.

Our centre offers 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 when they are 5 and getting involved in cooperative and group play scenarios. Our centre will provide children the space to develop these social skills with each other.

Little Bears ECE Centre advocates for children's learning, growth, safety and health. If we feel a child could benefit from a different approach either in the centre or at home, we will speak to you about it. Our job is to advocate for children first and foremost. This can lead to conversations about a child's development or behavior. Please know that we always have your child's best interest at heart.

Program Goals

In both the Infant and Toddler Program and Preschool aged program the 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 & Times

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 9:00 am so we can plan our day accordingly. If you arrive at the centre after 9:30 your child likely will not be able to attend for the day.

Special circumstances, such as an appointment or emergency, are of course the exception.

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.

Attending childcare is a big job for children. Socializing, learning and developing new skills, sharing and listening is all hard work and exhausting for children. This can result in fatigue, stress and burnout for children if they don't have adequate relaxation and down time. Therefore we have max times for children in our attendance. This also is important to help our educators maintain ratio in the centre as well.

For our Infant and Toddler program we our time slots are in 9.5-hour blocks (7:00-4:30, 7:30-5:00, 8:00-5:30). Your child can be dropped off anytime after their scheduled drop off time and picked up anytime before their pick up time. Children do not need to be here for the entirety of their time slot, they too benefit from letting loose and having downtime at home just as adults do.

The preschool aged program does not have specific time slots but we do require that children are in attendance for less than 9.5 hours a day as well. If your drop off times will vary, we also ask that you let us know, as we have our educators staggered to meet ratio requirements.

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 try contacting you once. If we are unable to get ahold of you, 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 to call a cab or another individual to pick up both the child and the adult 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 and the police. Assault of any kind directed at the educator will result in a police report and a ban of that adult from the centre going forward.

If there are any restraining orders or other legal documents with regards to your child and another adult, we require 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.

In the event that we have more than 2 educators ill we would need to close the centre as we would not be able to maintain adequate ratio. This closure may last more than one day as we need to ensure that everyone is healthy enough to return.

In the event of a pandemic or state of emergency we may close the centre for the health and safety of all families involved.

The centre is closed for all statutory holidays, Easter Monday and a two week break at Christmas. The two week break typically follows the Sooke School District's break.

Full fees are due in the case of all closures. In the event of a long-term closure such as a pandemic, we will try our best to find a way to cover all basic expenses without charging parents full fees. Other avenues such as government funding or a percentage of parent fees may be applied.

Sick Policy

A sick policy is necessary in order to maintain the health and wellness of both the children and the educators. If your child is ill, they need to stay home in order to rest and recover from their illness. Daycare is a very active and high energy environment and while your child may seem to have some energy at home, they may not be able to cope with the high demands of the day at care. The decision is up to the educators at the centre.

If your child becomes ill while at the centre, you will be contacted immediately and expected to promptly pick up your child. If you can not be reached one of your emergency contacts will be called to pick up your child.

Illness included but not limited to:

- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Red, irritated or discharging eyes
- A fever over 38 Celsius/100 Fahrenheit
- Coughing
- Thick nasal discharge

- Lethargic, tired behavior
- A rash

If a child has vomited, had diarrhea, a fever or began an antibiotic, the child will need to stay home from the centre for at least 48 hours. Doctor's notes are necessary for return with a rash or any other illness that is not treated with antibiotics. We reserve the right to overrule a doctor note if we feel that the child is not well enough to participate in the program.

If a child is unable to fully participate in the program, they are not well enough to be at the centre.

If your child is sent home from care for illness, they will be unable to attend for the next 48 hours. If you feel that your child may be off that morning, please do keep them home rather than chancing the day. A child sent home on Monday will not be able to attend again until Thursday at the earliest.

Do not send your child in the morning having given them Tylenol. Tylenol masks the signs of illness but the germs are still spread throughout the day. If you feel your child needs Tylenol for teething, please bring it to the centre and we will check the child for symptoms of illness before providing the Tylenol.

Giving your child Tylenol and not telling the educators is dangerous in many ways and could result in termination of care.

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

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 will not be given for a fever at the centre and your child will be sent home and cannot attend for the next 48 hours.

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
- 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 Alexandra Health Unit on Wale Road.

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 to ensure there is not 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.

Fire & Emergency Evacuation

Fire and earthquake 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.

We also encourage parents to pack a toothbrush to stay at the daycare, so each child can brush their own teeth after lunch. This is another basic hygiene practice that is important for children to learn at an early age.

Toileting is something that the older children will do on a daily basis. We do ask that once children are over 2.5 years old parents do try to actively work on potty training as we will also do so 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 potty. 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 training.

Being potty trained or actively working on potty training is a requirement for the preschool program.

Food and Drink Policy

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

Please have a water bottle 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.

Nap & Quiet Time

Both the Infant and Toddler program and the preschool aged program have naps/quiet time in the afternoon shortly after lunch. We do feel that each child needs to have some quiet time to rest. While we understand that some children may struggle with bedtimes if they do have a nap, we do advocate for children and their needs. If a child is so tired that they are falling asleep sitting up they will be allowed to lay down for a short rest. If you would like a shorter nap for your child, we can wake them after 30 minutes.

If your child has a special blanket or stuffy that they require for sleep feel free to bring it. If it needs to go home at the end of the day, you will need to remind us at days end.

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

Aggressive behaviors such as biting, hitting, kicking or swearing are dealt with a little differently. If it is a repeated behavior the child will need to take a little time away from the group, in order to calm their body down. An educator will talk to the child about the behavior and the consequences of the behavior.

If certain behaviors are persistent and becoming an ongoing problem an educator will speak to you, the parent or guardian, about it. A plan will be developed to work on the behavior(s). We do expect parents and/or guardians to do their part with regards to alleviating the situation. If we do not feel that you are on board with working on these issues, this can be grounds for termination of care. We have worked with many challenging behaviors and enjoy helping children and families learn from these challenges, but if a family is unwilling to work with us for the safety and well-being of the child and the other children in care then our relationship can no longer progress forward.

Screen Time and Active Play

There is no screen time in the Infant and Toddler program. In the preschool aged 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

It is recommended that you label your child's clothes as there are many children in the centre. We take no responsibility for lost, stained, ripped or ruined clothing. Please do not send your child in items that you deeply care about.

Summer Items:

- ✓ Water play clothes & sandals
- ✓ Hat
- ✓ Muddy Buddies (in rainy weather)

Fall/Winter Items:

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

Sunscreen, toothpaste and wipes are provided by the centre. If you have a specific kind of sunscreen that you require please provide it labelled with your child's name.

Enrollment

In order to enroll, we will need completed copies of registration forms, parent contracts and a non-refundable deposit of \$300. This deposit is deducted from the first month's tuition. The space will not be held until all paperwork and the deposit is provided.

Please indicate the days you are enrolling for on the top right-hand corner of the registration form. 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:

- ✓ 6 months of post dated cheques (made out to Little Bears ECE Centre)
- ✓ Fully completed registration forms
- ✓ Signed parent contract
- ✓ Immunization records
- ✓ Emergency kit

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 month's 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.

Fees & Payment Policy

Payment is due on the last day of the month prior to services rendered. If the last day of the month is a weekend, a postdated cheque for the scheduled payment date is required. It is requested that post-dated cheques be given in order to allow prompt payment and in order to alleviate the stress of remembering to write a cheque every month. Cheques must be made out to "Little Bears ECE Centre"

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

We do accept subsidy, however with subsidy being 4-8 weeks behind on approvals we will need to be paid the full months fees until subsidy approves the application. Once the application is approved and we have a benefit plan in place the we can reimburse the overpayment or apply it to future months fees.

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.

Fees will be increased each year in September. Fees are generally increased by \$50 in the Infant and Toddler program and \$25 in the preschool aged program. At least 2 months' notice is commonly provided.

Termination of Care Policy

We reserve the right to terminate care within the first month of our contract if we feel the fit is just not right for the child and/or family in care.

We reserve the right to terminate care if a child has behavior issues that are causing disruptions within the centre. This includes but is not limited to; hitting, kicking, biting, punching, swearing, endangering themselves or other children. We will make every effort to work with the child and the family, however if we do not feel that the family is on board with a plan of action with the child, we may be forced to terminate care for the safety of all children in our care.

We reserve the right to terminate care if our policies and procedures are not being followed. This includes our illness policy, giving children medication before care without telling us or our payment policy is not being followed.