



FAIRFIELD GONZALES
COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
the place to connect

Fairfield Gonzales Community Association
Huckleberry Infant and Toddler Centre

1330 Fairfield Rd.
Victoria, BC V8S 1G8

Parent/Guardian Handbook

2021/2022

Welcome

Welcome to the Fairfield Gonzales Community Association's (FGCA) Huckleberry Infant and Toddler Centre. We are excited that you will be joining us and look forward to creating positive relationships with you and your child. Please familiarize yourself with the information contained in this handbook as it provides an introduction to our childcare programs and philosophies.

Fairfield Gonzales Community Association would like to acknowledge that the land in which we play and work is located on the traditional, unseeded (never surrendered) territories of the Lekwungen (Songhees) peoples. We are grateful visitors on this land.

Red huckleberry grows in BC coastal forests, typically on rotting logs and stumps, and the red berries are eaten by many different birds and animals. Traditionally, many coastal First Nations peoples ate the berries and used the plant for medicinal purposes. Red huckleberries represent the littlest members of our organization; they are tiny, bright, and full of life. They bring joy and energy to our community, just as the berries do within the forest in which they grow.

Executive Director's Note

On behalf of the Board of Directors and Huckleberry Infant and Toddler Centre management we warmly welcome you and your family to our Early Years program. All of us are dedicated to nurturing exploration, individuality and creativity and we look forward to fostering healthy relationships, building strong community and creating happy memories.

Contact Information

HUCKLEBERRY INFANT/ TODDLER CENTRE

Lead Educator: Nikki Cuddy

Program cell: 236-464-5969

Manager Cell: 250-464-6234

E-mail: huckleberry@fairfieldcommunity.ca

EARLY YEARS COORDINATOR,

Debbie Banerjee

Tel: 778-535-7853

Email: eyc@fairfieldcommunity.ca

CO- EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Kristina Wilcox

Tel 250-382-4604 ext.105

E-mail: kwilcox@fairfieldcommunity.ca

FAIRFIELD COMMUNITY PLACE

Tel: 250-382-4604

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Huckleberry Infant Toddler Centre Philosophy

The principles of the Early Learning Framework guide our practice at Huckleberry. We believe that relationships are the foundation of our work; this includes connections with the children, families, educators, and the land on which we learn. Through these relationships, the children at Huckleberry will feel safe, secure, and supported. We strive to meet the needs and interests of each individual child while creating a unique community of creative and curious learners (children, families, and educators).

We see the environment as the “third teacher” and believe that environments contribute to our well-being. We carefully consider inside and outside spaces, the materials within these spaces, and the rhythms and flows when co-creating our days with the children. Children are strong, competent, and have an innate curiosity and desire to learn; we follow the interests and needs of the children moment to moment in a relaxed, unhurried manner.

Huckleberry is an outdoor-focused program. We will spend as much time as possible outside and encourage the children to observe, experiment, and explore their environment. We believe that the outdoor environment provides unique learning opportunities and nurtures us in a way that no other environment can. Throughout the day, there will be opportunities for climbing, music, stories, sensory play, dancing, art materials, and messy play both indoors and outdoors. You can expect your child to get dirty!

We recognize that family is the most important educator in a child’s life and we strive to work empathetically with all families and honour the diversity of the families that we serve. We want to continually learn about and improve how we create belonging and community within our program.

The Huckleberry program is inspired by the Reggio Emilia philosophy where children and educators collaborate on learning together through play. These learning experiences are made visible through narrations and other documentation. Our play space is creative and collaborative and the environment is thoughtfully crafted to support the emerging interests of the children.

Huckleberry is an inclusive space that welcomes all children; all members of our community benefit when we include everyone.

http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/DownloadAsset?assetId=245C9B82FFF94171BB61818A53F0674A&filename=early_learning_framework.pdf

Our Educators

Our dedicated educators possess a wide range of skills, interests and education and are required to meet the following FGCA and VIHA licensing standards.

- Appropriate certification and documentation (Infant and Toddler Educator License, E.C.E license and/or E.C.E. Assistant documentation)
- Standard First Aid and CPR C
- Criminal Record Check and 3 character references

Holiday, Professional Development, and Staff meetings Closures

Huckleberry Infant and Toddler centre runs: Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00 am and 5:00pm.

The FGCA is committed to quality care for families, to offer this care we need time devoted to active learning in staff meetings, for us this conveys the importance we place on thinking about growing, our program and your children. This is also an opportunity for us adults to continue learning and provide valuable experiences for children.

Huckleberry will be closed the following days:

Professional Development Full- Day Closures (one day in the following months; typically a Friday):

September
October
November
May
August

Early Pick-up days to allow for all-staff meetings

***Pick-up will be at 3:30pm (Typically a Friday)**

December
January
February
March
April
June
July

Huckleberry is closed for one week for winter break, one week in the spring and one week in the summer. These week closures typically coincide with Christmas/New Years, the second week of the SD61 Spring Break and British Columbia Day long weekend. Check in with your manager to get the exact closure dates. Huckleberry is closed on all statutory holidays.

Recognized STATUTORY holidays:

New Year's Day	Canada Day	Remembrance Day
Good Friday	BC Day	Christmas Day
Easter Monday	Labour Day	Boxing Day
Victoria Day	Thanksgiving Day	Family Day

Practicum Students

We welcome students from various Early Childhood Education programs to complete their required practicum experiences with us. Students bring energy and new ideas to our centre. Our staff supervises the students at all times while in the program. All students are required to have a clear Criminal Record Check before participating within our program.

What to bring?

Please make sure that all clothing and personal items are clearly labelled with your child's name.

Change of Clothes Please bring 2 changes of clothing (top, pants, underwear, and socks) in a labeled large zip lock bag when your child starts with us.

Waterproof Bag: Please include a waterproof bag in your child's pack. We will use this to send wet and soiled clothing home.

Food: Lunch and snacks need to be sent each day. Please send a water bottle (these will be kept at the centre and washed and sanitized daily).

Outside Wear: Items required throughout the year: rain and winter coat with a hood, rain and winter boots, muddy buddies (rain pants or suit), hat and mittens. We will have extra muddy buddies and spare warm clothing for each child in our program should personal clothing get too soiled or wet.

Bedding: A child sized blanket and/ or sleep sack, any personal items needed to rest (i.e. stuffed animal or special blanket), and a pacifier (x2) if required.

Sunscreen: Please provide sunscreen for your child. Huckleberry will keep some hypoallergenic, tear-free and child-friendly sunscreen at the centre which can be used should your child run out.

Formula/breast milk/other types of milk and bottles: Formula needs to be premixed and brought in bottles. Please note that if your child requires two bottles per day, two separate bottles need to be provided for each serving. Breast milk can be brought in fresh (as long as it has been refrigerated for up to 72 hours max) or in labelled frozen bags (For up to 6 months past pumping date). The educators will reheat and serve formula and breast milk in accordance with Food Safety guidelines and procedures. All other forms of milk can be served in sippy cups (if desired) and offered throughout the day.

Diapers: We ask that families provide at least one week's worth of diapers at a time on an ongoing basis. Often families find it convenient to bring their supply once a week and/ or large bulk quantities to store in our diaper change area. When your child is getting low on diapers, you will receive a text requesting more.

Wipes: Please send your child with a week's supply of wipes at a time. If your child runs out of wipes while in program, Huckleberry will provide hypoallergenic wipes.

Diaper cream: Please provide a cream to be administered on your child should they develop a rash. This will be applied if the area looks inflamed and irritated after a diaper change.

Inside shoes/slippers: As some of our children may potentially be non-walkers, we ask that families provide children with inside shoes and or slippers for our indoor space. Alternatively, children are able to explore the space in socks or bare feet.

Food and Drink

It is expected that children will be sent with lunch and snacks each day they are in program, unless otherwise specified. Please pre-cut all foods into appropriate and manageable infant/toddler serving sizes before packing them into your child's lunch bag/container. Water is available for children throughout the day.

We promote healthy eating and nutritional habits. We recognize that families have children's best interest at heart, and we do not set limits around in what order a child consumes their own lunch. We respect a family's decision of what to pack for lunch and we respect a child's decision of what to eat. We take a holistic approach to healthy eating by sitting to eat lunch together, by eating until we are full, and by giving thanks to the food that sustains us.

The children decide when they want a snack throughout the day as they learn to listen to their bodies' needs. Snacks and lunch may be eaten inside or outside depending on the flow of the day. We have a microwave available for heating food and a bottle warmer.

If your child has a food allergy, we will work with your family to ensure your child is as safe as possible while in our program and will develop a specific care plan. In the case of a severe nut allergy, Huckleberry will adapt to fit the needs of the children in our care and a notification will be sent home to families.

Nap time

We recognize individual children's needs and work to support infants as they grow and develop. If your child enters the program on a two-nap schedule, we will aim to follow their routine to our best ability and slowly aid in the transition to one nap.

For our children on one sleep, nap time begins at approximately 11:30 every day. Children will be supported through a toileting and a quiet-down routine before entering our nap room. This may include a quiet 'mat time,' stories and songs. Children will be provided with their own cot or crib and fitted sheet. These sheets are washed once a week and cots/ cribs are sanitized in between use. Parents are asked to send their own special items from home that will allow their child to sleep more comfortably, such as a blanket, pacifier if required, and one stuffed animal from home. These items will be stored individually and washed weekly. Please label these items.

During rest time, educators aim to make children comfortable and to establish a peaceful environment. Educators practice responsive care and attend to children to meet their individual needs during naptime. Responsive care during nap time might include rubbing a child's back, stroking a child's head, or quietly whispering to comfort a child and to assure them that they are safe and able to relax. During nap time the curtains are closed, the lights are off, quiet music and a white noise machine plays to create an environment that is calm. The children are never left unattended during nap time. Children sleep until they awake, unless otherwise instructed by the parent/guardian. As children wake up, quiet activities will be available for them.

Outdoor active play

We go outside every day for a minimum of 90 minutes, rain or shine, so please provide clothing that is appropriate for the season and weather conditions (see below for details). The amount of outside time may vary depending upon the rhythm and flow of the day. We aim to spend most of our morning and part of the afternoon outside. If

extreme weather is a factor, we will endeavor to be outside but time may be limited to 25-45 minutes. If outdoor play is not an option, indoor active play will take place for the same duration of time.

Our primary outside play area is a fenced space outside of the Camas Early Years Center. We will explore other outdoor spaces within the community (e.g. Porter Park, Fairfield food forest). We believe in the importance of ritual, and hope to visit various outdoor spaces within the community on a regular basis. Parents will be notified in advance of visits to other outdoor spaces.

Daily Schedule and Routine (subject to change with the flow of the day and children's needs)

Educator Shift times (3 Educators)

Opening shift: 7:30-4:00

Middle shift: 8:30-5:00

Late shift: 9:00-5:30

General Routine

7:30 am First educator arrives, prepares for the day and begins room/ activity set-up

8:00 am Huckleberry opens

8:30 am Second educator arrives

8:30 – 10:00am Children explore outdoor environment. They are invited to have 'open-snack' if they are hungry. Educators will begin to aid in diapering/ toileting. Outdoor play may include walks in the community and visits to playground spaces close-by. Children will transition indoors in small groups.

9:00 am Third educator arrives

9:30-11:30am Children begin to transition in small groups indoors for snack/ lunch.

** Infants on two naps will begin their first nap roughly around 10am

11:30 pm- 3 pm Naptime. Children are transitioned into the nap room in small groups based on their individual schedules. They are permitted to sleep until they awaken. As children wake up, quiet activities are encouraged.

2:00 - 5:00 Children explore indoor and outdoor activities depending on group and individual needs and interests. Children are invited to have an open afternoon snack.

4:00 p.m. First educator leaves

5:00 p.m. Huckleberry closes. Educators clean space.

5:30 p.m. Third educator leaves.

Primary Caregiving

At Huckleberry we use a modified primary caregiver approach. To ease transition into the program, one educator will provide most of the care to your child, which will allow your child to develop a secure and trusting relationship. As your child becomes more comfortable in the program, they can choose to have a different educator help them throughout the day.

Gradual Entry

We want to create a positive transition experience for your child and we believe that a gradual entry process will facilitate this. As this may be one of the first experiences your child has away from their home, it is essential to familiarize your child gradually to care. We believe it is best to slowly increase the time your child spends away from you in the centre to allow your child to build secure relationships with us.

We also want you to feel comfortable leaving your child with us. A gradual entry allows you to have the time to observe our program, get familiar with our spaces and routines, and ask any questions that may arise over time. When a family is comfortable with a program, the child will have a much easier transition.

The following is an example of what gradual entry might look like. We will work with each family to design a process that best meets their needs. This gradual entry happens typically 1-2 weeks *before* the child's first week of care.

Day 1

Arrive together and play in the indoor/outdoor space. Parents and educator will go over an orientation to the program and review the Parent Handbook and any questions. (Approximately one hour)

Day 2

Arrive together in the morning and stay together in the indoor/outdoor play space for an hour. Parent/ Guardian will say goodbye and leave for up to one hour. (Approximately two hours total)

Day 3

Arrive together in morning and stay together in the indoor/outdoor space for half an hour. Parent leaves for 2 -3 hours. Child will have open snack with peers and may transition to another program space. (Total time approximately 3.5hours)

Day 4

Parent and child arrive together in the morning. Parent stays for 15 minutes to settle child and then leaves for 2 - 3 hours. Child will have snack and may transition to a different play space. (Total time 3.5-4 hours)

Day 5

Same as Day 4, but parent leaves for between 5 hours and full day. Child may have a nap and be picked up early.

Screen Use

Unless there is an identified need, electronics from home are not permitted in program. Educators use a program cell phone to communicate with families as required, take photographs to share with families and for pedagogical narrations, and to communicate with administration as required. We will discuss this with each family; this is not a requirement to participate within our program. We will also use our program cell phone to play music within the program. This phone is separate from personal use and is securely stored.

Communication

We use e-mail communication and will contact you with the e-mail you have provided on the registration form. Important information is sent out via e-mail so please ensure the e-mail you have provided is accessible at all times, even during holiday breaks. If this is not possible, please provide your preferred method of communication.

We will assume that you have received and read our e-mail unless it bounces back as undeliverable. If this occurs, we will notify you by phone.

E-mails include: monthly newsletters, billing notifications and relevant program information. It is the parent's responsibility to:

- Provide accurate contact information
- Read monthly communications
- Inform themselves of important program related information
- Notify the FGCA if your personal contact information changes during the year

Huckleberry also uses an online photo sharing platform called 'Fresh Grade.' After you sign the permission to post form, you will receive an invite to join the Huckleberry class and download the app. We strive to post everyday and you will receive notifications when we've posted a photo of your child. We feel this sharing platform allows families to stay connected with their child's day.

Educators will connect with you about any important information relating to your child and their day at pick up and drop off times. If there is ever a need for a longer conversation, the lead educator will contact you to set up a separate meeting time. Also, feel free to request a meeting at any time should any concerns or questions arise.

For daily reminders and diaper or clothing restock requests, the educators communicate through texts via the program cell phone. Parents can also communicate any absence and varying pick-up and drop-off times via text as well.

Fairfield Gonzales Community Association Code of Conduct

The FGCA has developed a code of conduct by which we hope to foster positive relations among all. It's understood that all board members, staff, volunteers, participants and users adhere to the following to guide all is behavior and activities related to the FGCA:

We will interact with respect, courtesy, objectivity, and inclusiveness

We will work towards the good of all community members, and not for personal benefit
We will promote collaboration, cooperation and partnership with each other and with other groups
We will promote health, wellness and safety for the entire community

Registration Fees

Ages 6-36 months, Monday-Friday, 8:00am-5:30pm
\$1005.00/month

- Fees increases happen annually (September). The increase rate is between 3-5%. Adequate notice of the increase will be provided.

NOTE: Fees are averaged over the year, although some months have fewer days, fees do not vary and discounts are not applied.

Registration Requirements

- \$40 administrative fee. Each new family is required to pay a one-time administration fee at the time of registration.
- \$250 program deposit. Deposits are placed against your child's account and applied to the last month of care. Deposits are retained if we fail to receive 30 days notice of withdrawal or your account is not in good standing at the time of de-registration.
 - Both the deposit and administrative fee (\$290 total) are due 30 days prior to the confirmed start date and will be processed via direct withdrawal using the banking information you have provide for ongoing program payments.
- Registration Package including:
 - Registration forms
 - Pre-Authorized Debit (PAD) form
 - Immunization Records
 - Up-to-date colour photo of your child
 - Custody agreement & care plan; if applicable

** Please refer to the Guide to Registration for more details.*

Waitlist

If the centre is full, parents can register their child(ren) on the waiting list. The waitlist is by application only.

Priority will be given in the following order to:

- Staff
- Existing families (*families who currently have a child registered in an ongoing program*)
- The general public

In reviewing the applications for enrolment, the Early Years Coordinator may consider, but will not be limited to, such factors as the length of time on the waitlist, family units, returning children, or other factors FGCA feels necessary to operate in a prudent and professional manner.

Payment Requirements

Program financials are managed by the Early Years Manager. We use e-mail communication and will use the e mail you have provided on the registration form. Important information is sent out via e -mail; therefore, please ensure the e -mail provided is accessible at all times, even during holiday breaks. If this is not possible, please provide your preferred method of communication.

Fees are due on the **1st business day** of each month and are paid by direct withdrawal.

- Withdrawals will appear on your statement as '*Fairfield Community Association or FCA*'

Each new family is required to pay a one-time administration fee of \$30.00

Upon registration a non-refundable deposit of \$250.00 is due. This will be applied to your last month of care

- Deposits must be paid by cash, cheque, visa/mc or debit
- Cheques should be written out to *The Fairfield Gonzales Community Association*
- On the memo line indicate your child's name & program (Huckleberry)

A completed Pre-Authorized Debit (PAD) authorization form must be provided prior to your first day of care.

- For families wishing to have more than one benefactor (payee) please complete two separate PAD forms.
- A VOID cheque must be attached to the PAD agreement. If you are unable to attach a VOID cheque please ensure the financial information is entered correctly. Failure to provide correct information will result in a charge of \$10.00.
- Those unable to pay using pre-authorization debit can speak to the Manager

Here at the FGCA we recognize that there are a number of situations that can cause financial strain, if you need to arrange alternate payment arrangements, please contact the Childcare Coordinator.

Affordable Child Care Benefit (Subsidy)

As a licensed child care centre, we are eligible to accept provincial child care subsidy for eligible enrolled children. The following are expectations that our program has for families utilizing child care subsidy.

1. Parent/Guardians are ultimately responsible for all fees as registrants to our program.
2. Parent will be responsible for fee payments until subsidy authorization has been received by our program. Please note that subsidy application processing can take 6 to 8 weeks.
3. Parents are responsible for paying any parent portion remaining after the deduction of subsidy from the program fees.
4. Parents are responsible for renewing subsidy authorization before it expires.

For more information about this program visit www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare/subsidy/index

If you need assistance with the subsidy process contact the Child Care Coordinator or the Child Care Resource and Referral Centre 250 -382-7000. Please note, authorization from the MCFD (Ministry of Children and Family Development) may take several weeks to process.

Families receiving subsidy must pay the balance of their account by the 1st of the month.

Late Fee Payment- Penalty Procedure

If your payment is not received by the 1st of the month, a late fee of \$5.00 per day will be charged. If payment is not received in full by the 5th of the month your child(ren) may not return until the account is paid in full.

NSF Penalty Procedure

Should your direct debit payment or cheque be returned to our organization as NSF, we require re-payment. Charges will be applied to your account unless payment by cheque or cash is requested. Re-payment must be in the amount of the original fee as well as a \$15 NSF penalty charge. Upon the FGCA receiving notification from our financial institution regarding NSF we will send a notification to you via e-mail.

Withdrawal and Refund

Families must provide the FGCA's **Early Years Coordinator** with **one month's written notice, received by the 1st day of the preceding month** to de-register without penalty for care. Alternatively, you will be charged one month's fees in lieu of notice.

Absentees (when your child will not be attending our program)

If your child will be absent from program, please phone or text the program cell phone and leave a detailed message stating your name, your child's name, and the date of absence. Alternatively you can e-mail Huckleberry centre ahead of time to let us know your child will be away. If your child will be arriving later, please call or text us. We can let you know if we will be inside or outside at the time you will arrive.

Health and Safety

Injury and accident procedures

Should your child sustain an injury that requires medical attention, we will contact you immediately.

If we are unable to reach you we will call the emergency contact person for direction.

All injuries are documented. Minor injuries such as bumps, bruises, small scrapes or surface cuts will be tended to by staff, documented and brought to the parent's attention at pick-up time.

Injuries requiring medical attention will be reported to the parent, Manager, Co -Executive Director (Kristina Wilcox) and VIHA licensing.

If the injury requires immediate medical care we will call 9-1-1.

Outside

We carry first aid kits with us at all times, as well as attendance sheets and children's emergency forms. It is very important for parents to keep the emergency forms and their registration papers up to date throughout

the school year. For additional safety, our playground areas are checked daily by staff as well as inspected monthly by our facility staff and routinely inspected by our Licensing Officer as part of their program review.

Planned Outings or Offsite Trips

The FGCA will ensure that parents have reasonable access to their child at all times. We are committed to including children as active and engaged members of the community. As such, we may plan trips in the community to extend upon the children's interests, or to include children in appropriate community initiatives. On such occasions, we will communicate our intentions to families in advance via email and in person during pick-up or drop-off. We always invite families, or extended family members to join us on these excursions. For example, we may visit Ross Bay cemetery, Ross Bay beach, or Government House.

If you are running late, please be prepared to meet us at our destination. Otherwise, you can call to meet us en route. Some examples of a planned community engagement would be a visit to the art gallery, excursion to government house, a visit to Camosun College for a larger community event.

Emergency Situations

FGCA staff is trained to follow the FGCA Emergency Procedures. Procedures are posted in program spaces. Programs are equipped with cell phones and staff will attempt to contact parents/guardians during/after an emergency.

Emergency Closure and Weather Closures

In the event of an emergency (including but not limited to: unforeseen weather, lack of human resources, natural disasters, health emergencies (includes Island Health mandated closures), power failure, renovations or teachers strike), the FGCA will close. If emergency closure is necessary during operating hours we will attempt to contact you by phone to promptly pick up your child. There will be no refunds issued for emergency closures; however, in the event of a closure lasting more than one month, we will assess our feasibility to provide fee credits. Should the region be experiencing dangerous weather conditions, and SD61 closes, the FGCA will also close. Follow the steps below to obtain the most up to date information:

- Check the SD61 website at <http://sd61.bc.ca>.
- Check the FGCA website at www.fairfieldcommunity.ca.
- Call your onsite manager (refer to numbers provided at the beginning of manual)
- Check your e-mail as your onsite manager will endeavor to provide written notification

Emergency Parent Handbook

If the FGCA opens for Emergency Childcare, for example during COVID-19, please make sure you have read and understood the Emergency Handbook that can be found on our website <https://fairfieldcommunity.ca/early-childhood-programs/daycare/>

Missing Child On or Off Site

If at any point during program a child is missing we will do a 5 minute area search. After 5 minutes, we will call 911.

Authorized Pick-up

Children may only be released to persons named on the child's registration and emergency form. Authorized pick-up contacts must be responsible adults who are of the legal age of 19. Staff will ask for photo ID and a local phone number.

Unauthorized Pick-up

If you wish to have an unauthorized person pick up your child, we require advanced written authorization by completing the unauthorized pick-up section of the registration package or by sending a fax or letter. Pick up contacts must be responsible adults who are of the legal age 19. Staff will ask for photo ID and a local phone number.

Release of Care

Parents must sign their child in and out of program. Sign in must include the time and initials and must be done in pen. Your child must be signed out by a responsible adult from the authorized pick-up list. Your child may never sign themselves out, walk home or leave the premises without being signed out. At the managers' discretion the FGCA may facilitate play-dates for children; however, our staff will not provide contact information for children or call on behalf of children unless permission from all guardians is given.

Late Pick-up

If your child remains at the centre after programming ends (5:00 pm) and we have not heard from you, we will take the following steps:

1. We will call you
2. We will call the emergency contact and authorized pick-up persons
3. If we are unable to reach a contact within half an hour, we will call the Ministry of Children and Family Development Emergency (MCFD)
4. The MCFD will take the child into their custody until a parent is located
5. A note will be left at the centre stating where your child may be picked up

Staff will be required to treat every late pick up as if something serious may have happened. Please call ahead if you find yourself delayed. In the event of late pick-up you are required to pay the staff in attendance \$25 per quarter hour upon arrival. Staff onsite are not authorized to waive the fee. Three late pick ups will result in dismissal from the program.

Alleged Impaired Pick-up

The FGCA must take reasonable steps to prevent any person unable to provide care from gaining access to a child. If a staff member believes the child to be at risk, they will offer to call a taxi, relative, or friend to pick up the person and child. As required by law, the FGCA staff may call Child Protection Services and/or the police in the event that a child is taken off premises by an allegedly impaired person.

Custody

We require, with registration, all legal documentation regarding custody and custody orders. The FGCA cannot withhold a child from a parent and will not intervene in custody issues. In the case that we have a copy of a custody order that is not being abided by we will contact all concerned parties. This may include phoning the police and/or The Ministry of Children and Family Development.

FGCA Custody Arrangement Document

We require written paperwork indicating the agreement plan outlined by separated or split families. parents/guardians are required to fill out the documentation and paperwork to ensure that information is Both shared. If you have **joint custody** of your child, we expect payments, pick - up persons, and penalty fees to be provided from the parent who is listed first on the registration form; split payment information must be provided at the time of registration. If you have **sole custody** of your child we expect payments, pick up persons, and penalty fees to be your sole responsibility. In the event that fees are accrued on your day registered pick up you are responsible for paying fees before the child can attend your next registered day.

Discharge

The FGCA reserves the right to discharge based on:

- Inability of the child or family to follow FGCA expectations and policies
- Inability of the program to meet the needs of the child or family
- Refusal to meet with management and/or failure to communicate regarding the care of your child. In the case that your child is discharged from the program we will provide a pro-rated reimbursement with sufficient notice.

Three Strike Policy

The FGCA utilizes a three strike policy. If you receive three strikes from the on-site manager an immediate meeting will be scheduled with the Early Years Coordinator to discuss your enrollment with the FGCA. Grounds for discharge include, but are not limited to:

- Three late payments, non-payments or NSF cheques
- Three late pick-ups
- Inability of the child or family to follow FGCA expectations and policies
- Inability of the child or family to adhere to the FGCA's Code of Conduct
- Inability of the program to meet the needs of the child or family \
- Refusal to meet with management and failure to communicate regarding the care of your child

Conflict Resolution

The FGCA believes that a successful Early Years program intrinsically relies on the cooperation and cohesiveness of children, their families, the staff, management, the community and various integral outside resources. In the event of a conflict, the FGCA takes a problem solving and family -centred approach. We value open communication, mediation, and the FGCA encourages parents to discuss any concerns regarding their child and their child's experience in our programs. Managers have an open door policy and will address a parent's/guardian's concerns in a respectful environment. Whenever possible please make an appointment with the manager to assist in discussing the matter in a timely fashion.

In the event that an issue is unresolved between the manager and parent please make an appointment with the Executive Director. If, after meeting all of the above, concerns have not been remedied, parents may contact the Board of Directors.

Alleged Child Abuse

We are required by law to call the MCFD if we suspect any form of child abuse or if a child discloses information to a staff member. The FGCA staff members are not able to discuss details of legal investigations with families.

Medication and Administering Medication

Parents must fill out a permission to administer medication form as directed by the manager.

Medication will be given to the child in the amount and at the time specified by the care plan.

We will ensure that a child's medication is not accessible to any child, except for children who require access to their own medication (i.e. Epi-pens/insulin). Our staff will assist/supervise and document the administration of a child's medication.

Care Plan

If your child requires extra support, or has special medical or behavioural needs, a care plan outlining instructions for specialized care must be created. The plan will be created by the caregiver, parent, and possibly outside resources and will be updated yearly. Your manager may request a care plan and will guide you through the creation of a care plan.

Illness and Communicable Disease

When your child is too ill to attend daycare:

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

1. The protection of 7 other children and staff from communicable disease.
2. The comfort and safety of the child who is ill.
3. The capacity of the daycare to look after an ill child.

Children with the following symptoms must be excluded from program (not attend daycare).

1. Any child unable to participate in normal activities in the early year's program.
2. Children with gastro-intestinal problems (ie. vomiting/diarrhea) will be excluded for 24 hours since last bout of vomiting/diarrhea.
3. Children with generalized rash and fever where measles, rubella, mumps, or chicken pox are suspected, will be excluded pending diagnosis.
4. Children with acute cold symptoms, green or brown runny noses.
5. Children with frequent cough: 3-5 times an hour.
6. Children with a fever (38^oc or higher) may return to daycare after 24 hours when the fever has dissipated and no medication is needed to control fever.
7. Children with a communicable disease.

It is the parents' responsibility to inform the educators if the child has contracted a communicable disease (chicken pox, impetigo, scabies, etc). This will enable us to alert others as to the possible health risk. Your child will not be permitted to attend program during this time.

As a licensed program, we are required to report if a medically diagnosed communicable disease has been identified in the early years program. We will ensure that all enrolled families will be notified in such a scenario while protecting the privacy of the child and impacted family as much as feasible in a small program.

When a child returns to the program after having a communicable disease the FGCA reserves the right to ask for a 'physician's note' stating that the child is well and able to return. Please respect the health of other children and staff in our facility and honor our policy.

Diapering

Parents provide all supplies needed for diapering. Please send enough for each week. All diaper creams should be in their original containers. A signed permission to administer form is required.

We encourage children to be active participants in their diapering routine. Children are supported to climb stairs to the change table (with educator assistance), find their own diapers and wash their hands thoroughly. Individual ability and awareness is respected. Our approach is relaxed and unhurried and we encourage the children to participate as they are able. Potties and a child sized toilet are accessible for children who are interested in and ready for transitioning out of diapers. We will create a plan with individual families.

Children are offered the toilet/potty at any time during the day. Children who are in diapers are changed continuously as needed (i.e. immediately after bowel movements, etc.). They are often changed before and after every transition (i.e. before outdoor play, after outdoor play, before/after nap time, etc.) They will also be supported to wash their hands before and after transitions.

Toilet Learning

At Huckleberry, we see a great deal of children beginning and successfully mastering toilet learning. Because toilet learning is a major learning experience that occurs when the child is in a full day child program, our facility should be recognized by providers and parents as a place where toilet learning is guided.

The initiation of toilet learning should always be based on the child's developmental level rather than on the child's age. Initiating toilet learn before the child is developmentally ready can create stress and anxiety for the child and the family, and increase the length of time it takes to train the child.

It is important for the child to begin toilet learning when he/she exhibits signs of interest and readiness.

Educators can recognize the signs of readiness by understanding certain cues. Readiness cues include the following:

- The child can express interest in toilet learning.
- The child can communicate his/her need to eliminate (urinate/defecate).
- The child is able to pull clothes up and down (on and off).

The temperament of the child, which includes motor activity, intensity of reactions, mood, regularity (especially behavioral), initial approach/withdrawal response, adaptability to new situations, attention span/persistence, distractibility, and sensory threshold/frustration level, needs to be considered when determining the child's readiness and the caregivers' strategy for toilet learning.

Educators advise parents that toilet training is a multi-stepped process and that setbacks are common, should be anticipated, and need not be seen as a failure, but rather as a temporary step back to a more comfortable place and, indeed, another natural step toward progress.

Often toilet learning evolves as part of our curriculum. For example, we read stories to the children about the subject and we facilitate conversations that reinforce toilet learning practices. The make the toilet learning experience as positive, natural, and nonthreatening as possible, so the child feels confident that he/she is doing the learning on his/her own.

Children often learn skills and benefit from observing and imitating their parents and peers. Although parents can avoid pressuring their child to toilet learn, the pressure that a child receives from his/her peers cannot be as regulated. Whereas parental pressure can hinder the toilet training process, shared experience with peers can benefit the child by helping to boost the child's interest in and desire to learn. With this in mind, educators may encourage peer observation/participation of toilet learning practices by implementing a variety of group activities while remaining sensitive, at all times, to privacy needs of the child.

Toilet learning, when initiated, should follow a prescribed, sequential plan that complements toilet learning methods practiced at home.

We remind parents that toilet learning is best started when the child is not experiencing any other change (eg, moving, new siblings, new school, new child care situation).and to dress their child in easy-to-remove clothing. For example, belts and overalls should be avoided because they are difficult for a child to manipulate.

We welcome and encourage parents to speak freely about concerns they have about their child's development or problems with toilet training. Providers can schedule meetings with parents to discuss and resolve any crises and/or special problems.

Biting

Biting is unfortunately not unexpected behavior for toddlers. Some children and many toddlers communicate through this behavior. However, biting can be harmful to other children and to staff. This biting policy has been developed with both of these ideas in mind.

Our goal is to help identify what is causing the biting and resolve these issues. If the issue cannot be resolved, this policy serves to protect the children that are bitten. If a biting incident occurs, the parent of the child biting and the parent of the child who was bitten will be contacted. Names of the children are not shared with either parent.

When Biting Does Occur: The educator's job is to keep the children safe and help a child that bites learn different, more appropriate behavior.

For the child that was bitten:

1. First aid is given to the bite. It is cleaned with soap and water. If the skin is broken, the bite is covered with a bandage.
2. Parents are notified. If the bite has broken the skin, parents will receive a phone call letting them know.
3. Educators will report the incident if skin is broken as in compliance with licensing regulations. The incident is documented in the incident log book.

For the child that bit:

1. The educator will firmly explain to the child that biting hurts our peers and help the child 'make amends' and check on the injured child.
2. The parents are notified.

When Biting Continues:

1. The child will be shadowed to help prevent any biting incidents. (Shadowed means that an educator stays within arms reach at all times)
2. The child will be observed by the educators to determine what is causing the child to bite (teething, communication, frustration, etc.)
3. The child will be supported in redirection of behaviour.

Head Lice

If your child contracts head lice, please inform the educators immediately. As a large childcare provider, with multiple childcare spaces, it is important that we control the spread of lice; therefore, we ask that you do not send your child(ren) back to program until they have been lice free for a minimum of 24hrs and proper treatment has been given. This will also ensure we are able to disinfect all affected areas in a timely manner. For more information please visit Health Link BC at: <http://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthfiles/hfile06.stm>

Sunscreen Policy

In warmer weather, please have your child arrive at the centre wearing sunscreen. If you have not done so, please inform an educator, and we can apply it before we head out for the morning. We ask that families provide sunscreen for your child. The sunscreen should be labelled and should remain at Huckleberry. We will have a basket of labelled sunscreen near the front door during sunnier months. If you are unable to provide sunscreen, please inform an educator and we will accommodate your child. If your child has any skin sensitivities, or allergies to sunscreen, please inform an educator.

Educators will apply sunscreen if the UV is a level 3 or higher. The educators reapply sunscreen to your child approximately every two hours. When we are outside for long durations, educators will be responsible for reapplying sunscreen.

Guidance and Discipline

The FGCA will ensure that behavioural guidance is age -appropriate, applies logical consequences and will take into consideration the cultural and individual needs of the child. The FGCA views children as individuals deserving of respect. Our staff support and encourage children to express their feelings, make positive choices and work towards solving their own problems. Our guidance policy is based on the below:

1. Role Modeling
2. Discipline is based on safety, respect and cooperation.
3. A child is not allowed to hurt themselves or others.
4. Children will be given clear, simple and consistent limits regarding appropriate behaviour.
5. Choices will be offered whenever possible.
6. Verbal direction and re-direction will be the main means of guidance and discipline.

If it is necessary for the child to have time away from the group, the child will be supervised. Under no circumstances will physical, emotional or verbal punishments be used . The FGCA does not tolerate inappropriate behaviour such as , but not limited to : rude and disrespectful behaviour towards staff , offensive and coarse language, bullying behaviour, verbal and physical aggression or abuse, emotional abuse, malicious behaviour, teasing, cliques, peer pressure, physical discrimination, inappropriate discussion and touching, sexual abuse, theft, unauthorized absence or departure from program, disrespect of others' belongings and FGCA property. Religious, racist or socio-economic discrimination will not be permitted.

Behaviour Management

If a child is having difficulty co-operating in a program the following steps will be taken:

1. Encourage the child to make a positive choice.
2. Using age appropriate language to explain the importance of appropriate behaviour and re -direct the child
3. If child is still non -compliant, offer the choice to (a) follow the expectation or (b) have time away until child is ready to problem solve.
4. If undesirable behaviour continues, the manager and educators will discuss and problem solve with the child.

5. If manager deems necessary, a phone call to parent/guardian will be made. The parent/guardian may be asked to pick-up the child immediately.
6. A meeting with manager will be scheduled to discuss concerns and solutions.
7. If the above steps are unsuccessful, a meeting with the Manager and/or Co-Executive Director will be scheduled and a care plan will be discussed.

All of our staff members are trained to document notable behaviour. The FGCA reserves the right to inform parents that alternate childcare arrangements will need to be made if we feel our safety and behaviour expectations are not being met.

We warmly welcome you to the FGCA and hope you and your family make long lasting connections here😊