



FAIRFIELD GONZALES  
COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION  
the place to connect

**Fairfield Gonzales Community Association**  
**Huckleberry Infant - Toddler Centre**

1330 Fairfield Rd.  
Victoria, BC V8S 1G8

**Parent/Guardian Handbook**



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## 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, unceded (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 many different birds and animals eat the red berries. 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

Program cell: 236-464-5969

E-mail:

[huckleberry@fairfieldcommunity.ca](mailto:huckleberry@fairfieldcommunity.ca)

**\*\*OFFICE HOURS: THURSDAY 9-5pm**

### EARLY YEARS COORDINATOR

Debbie Banerjee

Tel: 250-382-4604 Ext. 103

Email: [eyc@fairfieldcommunity.ca](mailto:eyc@fairfieldcommunity.ca)

### CO- EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Kristina Wilcox

Tel 250-382-4604 ext.105

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### FAIRFIELD COMMUNITY PLACE

Tel: 250-382-4604

Fax: 1-250-382-4613

Email: [place@fairfieldcommunity.ca](mailto:place@fairfieldcommunity.ca)

Website: [www.fairfieldcommunity.ca](http://www.fairfieldcommunity.ca)

## **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).

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. 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. 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.

## **OUR EDUCATORS**

Huckleberry is staffed with three full-time educators and one part-time educator.

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 three character references

As well, we welcome students from various Early Childhood Education programs to complete their required practicum experiences with us. 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 in our program.

## TRANSITIONING CHILDREN TO CAMAS EARLY YEARS CENTRE

Huckleberry Infant-Toddler centre is a 'feeder' program to our Camas Early Years Centre (2.5-5yrs). We value continuity of care and like to see children progress from Huckleberry to Camas. We demonstrate this commitment by prioritizing care in Camas to children in Huckleberry. Consequently, when children reach the age of three they are expected to move to Camas. The Huckleberry license prohibits children three years and older from participating in the infant-toddler program. The following applies to the transfer of care:

- We will prepare for your child for an exit out of Huckleberry by paying close attention to birthdates and movement in Camas. With that, there are a few scenarios that could transpire:
  - o Your child may need to move prior to their three year birthday
    - We will communicate this well in advance and you will have an opportunity to move your child or keep them in Huckleberry; however, if you have declined the space offered and there is no available space in Camas when they reach the age of three, care can no longer be offered to your child.
  - o If a space is not available close to or at the time your child turns three, we will offer to keep your child in Huckleberry past their third birthday. If this occurs we will need to file for a licensing exemption. The maximum exemption we are able to offer is four months and it is contingent on an approval from Child Care Licensing. If a space is not available after the four-month period, we will be unable to offer your child care. Please know, this is very rare but is a possibility, which is why we need to highlight it.

## ATTENDANCE

Huckleberry Infant-Toddler Program is a full-day, Monday-Friday program. Part-time spaces are not available at this time. We believe children benefit most from consistency and regularity. The running of a childcare program is like a well oiled machine and inconsistency create chaos and disruption to all participants. Therefore, the following is required:

1. A minimum, regular attendance of four days per week
2. Communication with the program is required should your child be arriving late (**after 9:30am**) or being picked up early (**before 3:30pm**)

If your child is not regularly attending program and we feel that the program is not being utilized for its full-time availability, management will take the following steps:

- 1) Bring it to your attention in an informal way (email, phone call, check-in at pick-up/drop-off)
- 2) A formal notice will be provided outlining expectations for attendance
- 3) Termination care

### 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.

## PROGRAM CLOSURES

***\*Please speak to the Lead Educator for a list of exact closure dates!***

### Professional Development Closures:

The FGCA is committed to quality care for families, to offer this care we need time devoted to active learning by way of staff meetings and professional development opportunities. For us, this conveys the importance we place on thinking about growing, our program and your children.

Huckleberry closes **5** days per year for full-day professional development and has **7** early pick-up days per year. Our 'year' runs September- August.

### Holiday Closures:

Huckleberry is closed for one week for winter break, one week in the spring and one week in the summer (three weeks per year). These week closures typically coincide with Christmas/New Years, the second week of the SD61 Spring Break, and the British Columbia Day long weekend.

Huckleberry is closed on all statutory holidays. FGCA observes the following 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
National Day for Truth & Reconciliation		

## PROGRAM DETAILS

### What to Bring

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

An appropriate size backpack: Backpack's must be of an appropriate size to carry their lunch and water bottle. Please ensure the backpack is size appropriate for your child and that they can carry the bag themselves.

Change of clothes: Please bring two 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, snacks and water bottle need to be sent each day.

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 six 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

A daily snack is provided each day. In addition to this snack, it is expected that every day your child will be sent with:

- a full lunch
- snacks
- a water bottle ~ *to go home at the end of each day*
- Ice pack (if applicable) ~ we do not have the capacity to refrigerate food.

**\*\* IMPORTANT:** all food must be pre-cut into appropriate and manageable infant/toddler serving sizes before packing them into your child's lunch bag/container.

We promote healthy eating and nutritional habits. We recognize that families have children's best interests at heart, and we do not set limits around 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 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 between uses. 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.

Requests for naptime wake-ups: we understand that longer naps can lead to more difficult nighttime routines, and you may want us to wake your child up after a certain amount of time. We will always work with you to trial this, but if it causes your child to become unreasonably upset and sets them up for a harder afternoon we may be unable to accommodate an early wake up.

### Outdoor 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 'What to Bring' for more 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 endeavour 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 Centre.

We will explore other outdoor spaces within the community (e.g. Porter Park, Fairfield food forest). These trips are part of regular programming and do not fall under the 'Out Trip' category. Anything beyond the school/Robert. J Porter park grounds is considered an out trip. See 'Out Trip' for more details. We believe in the importance of ritual, and hope to visit various outdoor spaces within the community on a regular basis.

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

#### *Educator shift times*

Opening shift: 7:30-4:00

Middle shift: 8:30-5:00

Late shift: 9:30-6:00

#### *General Routine*

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

8:00am: Huckleberry opens. Admittance before 8am is strictly prohibited.

8:30am: Second educator arrives

8:30-10:00am: Children explore outdoor environment. Morning snack is offered.

9:00am: 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

11:30am-3:00pm: Naptime.

2:00-5:00pm: Children explore indoor and outdoor activities depending on group and individual needs and interests. Afternoon snack is offered.

\*4:00pm: First educator leaves

5:30pm: Huckleberry closes.

### Gradual Entry

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.

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.

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–Joint visit (approx.1 hour)

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.

Day 2–Joint & independent visit (approx. 2 hours)

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.

Day 3–Joint & independent visit (approx. 3.5 hours)

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.

Day 4–Independent visit (approx. 3.5 hours)

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.

Day 5–Independent visit

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

**\*Days 3-5 may be repeated to meet the needs' of the family.**

Planned Outings/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 expand upon the childrens' 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 tend to visit Ross Bay cemetery, Ross Bay beach, or Government House on a regular basis.

If you are running late on an out trip day, please be prepared to meet us at our destination. Otherwise, you can call to meet us en route. Some examples of a specially planned community engagement would be a visit to the art gallery, excursion to Government House, or a visit to Camosun College for a larger community event.

Screen/Phone 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 in the program. This phone is separate from personal use and is securely stored.

### 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 Medication 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, providers and parents should recognize our facility 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 learning 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).

If you are interested in learning more about independent toileting please speak to the Lead Educator.

### Biting

Biting is unfortunately not unexpected behaviour for toddlers. Some children and many toddlers communicate through this behaviour. 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 to 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, 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 arm's 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.

## COMMUNICATION

We use email communication and will contact you with the email address you provided on the registration form. Important information is sent out via email so please ensure the email 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 email unless it bounces back as undeliverable. If this occurs, we will notify you by phone.

Emails include: monthly newsletters, billing notifications, and relevant program information. It is the parents' 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 Instagram as an online photo sharing platform. After you sign the permission to post form, you will be granted permission to join the group. 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.

## **REGISTRATION & FEES**

### Registration Fees

Huckleberry Infant-Toddler Centre is part of the \$10 a Day ChildCareBC Centres!

Ages: 10-36 months

\$200.00/month

- *Fees are subject to our participation in the Provincial Government's \$10 a Day ChildCareBC funding agreement. Should this program discontinue, fees will be adjusted.*
- As a [\\$10 A Day Childcare Program](#) we are required to provide the Province a limited personal information about the enrolled children for the purposes of determining and auditing the provision of funding under the Program.

### Registration Requirements

- \$40.00 administrative fee. Each new family is required to pay a one-time administration fee at the time of registration. This can be paid by cheque, cash or credit card at the front desk.
- 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.*

### Payment Requirements

Program financials are managed by the Early Years Coordinator and Office Manager. We use email communication to communicate fee changes. Important information is sent out via email; therefore, please ensure the email 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 **first business day** of each month and are paid by direct withdrawal.

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

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 \$15.00.
- 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 alternative payment arrangements, please contact the Childcare Coordinator.*

### Affordable Child Care Benefit (ACCB/Subsidy)

As a licensed childcare centre, we are eligible to accept the provincial [Affordable Child Care Benefit](#) for eligible enrolled children. The following are expectations that our program has for families utilizing childcare 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
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

Pre-completed arrangement forms are available at the centre. Please contact the Early Years Coordinator for a copy of these forms or if you need assistance with the application process. Child Care Resource and Referral Centre (250-382-7000) is also a great resource.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** If you are experiencing financial hardship and are unable to access the Affordable Child Care Benefit in a timely manner, please contact us. We are always happy to work with families to remove barriers to accessing care.

### Late Fee Payment Penalty

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

### NSF/Returned Payment Penalty

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 plus the \$15.00 NSF penalty charge. Upon the FGCA receiving notification from our financial institution regarding NSF payments we will send a notification to you via email.

## Withdrawal and Refund

Families must provide the FGCA's **Early Years Coordinator** with **one month's written notice, received by the first 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.

To confirm your intent to withdraw, a [de-registration confirmation form](#) must be completed and signed. Please contact the Early Years Coordinator ([eyc@fairfieldcommunity.ca](mailto:eyc@fairfieldcommunity.ca)) to access this form.

## Waitlist

If the centre is full, parents can register their child(ren) on the waiting list. The waitlist is by application only and is managed in the following way:

- Waitlists close once we reach 40 applicants
  - o The waitlist is reviewed and updated three times a year (January, April & August). These are the best times to check in to see if the waitlist has opened, if it is actively closed. All details will be on our website
- If your family is offered a registered space on or after their desired start date (as indicated on the waitlist application form) and you decline the space, you will be removed from the waitlist. Requests to remain on the waitlist for a future date will be denied
- Registration priorities:
  1. INTERNAL 1
    - i. A sibling of a child actively attending Huckleberry.
  2. FGCA STAFF children
  3. INTERNAL 2
    - i. A sibling of a child actively enrolled in Camas Early Years Centre.
  4. INTERNAL 3
    - i. A sibling of a child actively enrolled in Fairfield Out-of-School Care or Margaret Jenkins Out-of-School-Care.
  5. EXTERNAL
    - i. A family/child who does not fit into one of the above categories.

At the discretion of senior management, a child may be given priority registration due (but not limited to) financial hardship, economic status or demonstrated need.

## **PICK-UP & DROP-OFF**

### 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 Lead Educator's 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.

## 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.

If you wish to have an individual who is not listed on your registration package pick up your child, we require advanced **written** authorization by either completing 'additional contacts' form, by sending an email or leaving a note with the manager. Pick-up contacts must be responsible adults who are of the legal age 19. If a staff member does not recognize a pick-up person they will ask for photo ID.

- If you wish to have more than three permanent pick-up persons please complete an 'additional contacts' form. Forms are available through your onsite manager.

## 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.

In the event that staff need to intervene with the pick-up of a child due to concerns with impairment, the FGCA is equipped with taxi vouchers, bus tickets and extra car seats.

## Late Pick-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 \$25.00 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.

If your child remains at the centre after programming ends (5:30pm) 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

## 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.

If a shared custody agreement exists, we require 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 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 registered pick up day you are responsible for paying fees before the child can attend your next registered day.

## **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, Executive Director and VIHA licensing.

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

### Outside Play

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.

### Emergency Situations

FGCA staff are 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 & 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](#)
- Check the [FGCA website](#)
- Call your onsite manager (refer to numbers provided at the beginning of manual)
- Check your email as your onsite manager will endeavor to provide written notification

## Smoke & Extreme Heat Protocols~ new as of June 2023

### **1. Monitoring and Evaluation**

We will regularly check air quality advisories and weather alerts in the Greater Victoria region to stay informed about smoke, wildfire and heat warnings. The [Air Quality Health Index](#) and [BC Heat Impacts Prediction System \(BCHIPS\): BCCDC](#) will be checked daily.

### **2. Outdoor Activity Modifications**

a. During periods of poor air quality:

- i. We may reduce outdoor activities to minimize everyone's exposure to smoke.
- ii. Outdoor activities may also be postponed or rescheduled to times when air quality is better, as per the air quality index.
- iii. The duration and intensity of the program may be adjusted or canceled as per the advisory to prioritize the safety of the children and staff.
- iv. Staffs ensure that children drink plenty of water throughout the day to reduce the risk of dehydration. Regular reminders are given to the children to take frequent water breaks, ideally every hour.

b. During periods of extreme heat:

- i. Staff will take the necessary steps to adjust program to accommodate the heat. This may include trips to the beach, outdoor water play or indoor play within our air conditioned spaces.
- ii. Play areas with ample shade are selected, and large physical activities are planned for cooler parts of the day to minimize heat-related risks.
- iii. Staffs ensure that children drink plenty of water throughout the day to reduce the risk of dehydration. Regular reminders are given to the children to take frequent water breaks, ideally every hour.
- iv. Throughout the summer, the UV index is monitored and sun protection is applied accordingly.

### **3. Program Interruptions**

In the event that the FGCA is unable to provide a safe care environment for children & staff, we will elect to close or shorten program hours. Decisions will be made on a case by case basis. If we are struck with an extreme weather spell or the Air Quality Index is reading at HIGH, please check your email for the status of program. See FAQs for more details.

#### **4. Preparedness and parental involvement**

Parents are expected to pack appropriate essentials for summer days which includes, but is not limited to:

- i. Breathable, loose clothing
- ii. Water play clothing/footwear & a towel
- iii. Water bottle
- iv. Cold pack with lunch kits
  1. Please label all items inside lunch kits. We may take specific items out of lunch bags to be refrigerated.
- v. Large sun hat
- vi. Sunscreen

In addition, parents and guardians should continually monitor their child for signs of heat exhaustion, heat stroke and smoke related illness.

The following guides are available for families:

- i. [HEAT RELATED ILLNESS](#)
- ii. [SMOKE RELATED ILLNESS](#)

#### **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](#).

#### **Missing Child On- or Off-site**

If at any point during program a child is missing we will do a five-minute area search. After five minutes, we will call 9-1-1.

#### **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**

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.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

### FGCA 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 behaviour 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.

Failure to adhere to our Code of Conduct will result in immediate termination from our program.

### 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. Management has an open door policy and will address a parent's/guardian's concerns in a respectful environment. Whenever possible please make an appointment 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.

### 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

## **HEALTH**

### 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 years program
2. Children with gastro-intestinal problems (i.e. 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: three to five times an hour
6. Children with a fever (38°C 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 honour our policy.

### 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](#).

### 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 three 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 & 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 the 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 the 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 alternative 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 ☺***