



Little Friends Childcare

Preschool Handbook

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info@littlefriendschildcare.ca

(250) 479-8423

Welcome Friends & Families!



Little Friends Toddler Center strives to provide a safe, warm, and nurturing environment for your child. We offer a diverse program for children between the ages of two and a half and five. Please take the time to read this information package as important details are enclosed. Please keep handy for future reference. If you have any questions please feel free to contact us. For more information please visit our website at www.littlefriendschildcare.ca

Sincerely,

Tracy Paquin & Kim Sinclair

Tracy Paquin Owner/Director

Tracy has been an Early Childhood Educator and part owner of Little Friends since 2001. Although, apparently she has always known that she wanted to "have a daycare and four kids" and even wrote about it in her Grade 1 journal. Tracy loves to spend her days playing and implementing learning environments for children and then capturing their expressions in photographs. She finds it fun to create new and exciting sensory and art experiences and loves to hear all the funny and inspiring things children have to say. Tracy also feels very fortunate to work in the preschool alongside her amazing husband Ben (ECE). Together they have four beautiful children. They enjoy camping, cooking, beach combing, watching their kids activities (baseball, soccer, gymnastics, jazz, ballet, swimming, Guides) and spending time with their large extended family.

Kim Sinclair Owner/Director

Kim has been caring for infants and toddlers since 2001 when she opened her first toddler center. Kim is known for her huge heart, loving arms and absolutely falling in love with every single child who comes into her care. Kim could literally sit with a child and lovingly read them the same board book over and over again to their heart's content. Kim loves to read, sing, and snuggle children all day long. She truly believes she has the best job in the world! Kim is also an exceptional mother to two crazy little boys and a thoughtful, caring wife to a crazy Australian. When she isn't taking care of others, she tries to take care of herself by playing baseball, doing cross fit, reading, cooking or catching a movie with a friend.

Philosophy



At Little Friends Preschool Center we believe play is the work of childhood. We recognize the value of unstructured learning allowing children to make choices, experiment, and use hands-on exploration with materials. We provide developmentally appropriate toys and activities to facilitate the cognitive, emotional, social, and physical needs of your child. We also offer a structured circle time where the children can share in a group story time, learn new songs and have relevant discussions about things happening in the center, in the community, and in the environment.

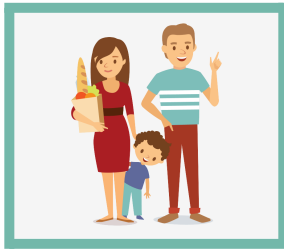
At the art table we believe in “the process not the product”. Materials are readily available throughout the day and the child may be the creator as they choose (there is never a wrong or right way). We do not provide adult directed “arts and crafts” because this would assume dexterity and may frustrate a child into feeling “they can’t do it”. We believe that to be “truly creative” an art activity must originate in the mind of the creator.

We regard each child as unique with their own set of strengths and abilities. We strive to foster these aspects of your child by giving them the respect they deserve. At this young age children deserve to be asked what their needs are and their responses should be respected. For example, if they say they are hot outside and would like to take off their jacket we would respect that decision. Children are entrusted with taking responsibility for their own personal tasks and personal belongings. This includes dressing, toileting, feeding, washing, and putting away toys. For example, upon arrival children remove their outdoor clothes, put them away, put on their indoor shoes prior to playing. Before

they leave, children put away their jobs and toys. To respect what children do, we call the play at Little Friends “work”. When we say, “you need to put away your job”, it isn’t just toys that the children put away, it is their work.

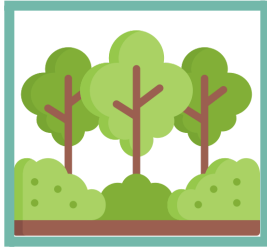
Children are encouraged to make their own decisions independently with our guidance and support. This helps children to gain a sense of self worth and self-respect and aids in acquiring a positive self-image. Independent and creative thinking is enhanced by children becoming responsible for engaging in their own tasks and for making decisions about themselves. At Little Friends we strive to provide a caring, nurturing learning environment for each child. We believe Preschoolers learn best when allowed to make their own choices and explore in an environment which is physically safe, cognitively challenging and emotionally nurturing.

Parent Partnerships



Open communication between parents and caregivers is encouraged. Our center supports an “open-door communication” policy. Parents are welcome to visit the center at any time during your child’s day (for example, drop by for lunch). Parents will be given a run-down on their child’s day at pick up time. We also invite family members to participate in our program by “showing off” special talents to the children (for example: coming in and playing a musical instrument). Please let Educators know of any major changes that may be happening in your child’s life (a move, a divorce ect...). This will enable our Educators to provide extra support, such as reading a relevant story, which will help you child deal with strong emotions. Please feel free to ask or comment on any aspect of your child’s developmental progress.

Outdoor Play Policy



At Little Friends Childcare we are very lucky to have access to two big, beautiful play yards filled with natural resources.

Children will naturally engage in “risky play”. In our yard, children will climb trees, swing on ropes, build with items such as large rocks and crates, run, bike, and sometimes even wrestle. They will climb, jump, balance, take risks, and explore boundaries. Little Friends Educators are there to support, ask questions, encourage a thoughtful process, and navigate situations safely. We would never put a child in a situation where they feel uncomfortable (lift into a high space for example). We encourage independence to build on their own abilities and own sense of mastery. Educators will also help navigate and set personal boundaries for each child’s own personal comfort level.

Children will have access to water. They often enjoy making mud and getting messy. That is ok! The sandbox and mud kitchen are a favorite activity. Often educators will add different “ingredients” such as lavender, mint, rosemary, acorns, chestnuts, maple leaves, cedar bows, fir sticks, pinecones – endless materials! We very much appreciate it when families collect and donate items to enhance the play process (even safe, hearty plants or shoots are welcomed.)

The children learn to love the great outdoors in every season and all types of weather. This not only builds resilience but also helps regulate their bodies energy. Exposure to nature has been found to enhance children’s concentration, self-discipline, and behaviour. Exposure to natural sunlight also keeps our pineal gland ticking along nicely and synchronizing our biological clock. Melatonin production is essential for the regulation of our circadian rhythms and a good night’s sleep. It also has a powerful impact on our immune system. Our philosophy is “there is no bad weather, only inappropriate clothing.”

Good quality rain gear is essential in our climate! We highly recommend and encourage Mountain Equipment Co-op rain pants and rain jackets. You can layer with a base of fleece or wool in cooler temps. Wool socks with Blundstones or bog boots keep toes warm and toasty. Mitts/Gloves only work if they are waterproof (MEC is the best!). Please do not send cotton/polyester gloves – they instantly get wet and dirty. We set up hand warming stations in cold weather, so we can keep on playing and exploring comfortably. In the warmer months, the big cedars and moveable bamboo pots give us plenty of natural shade.

Please ensure your child always has a change of clean clothes, and a reusable wet/dry bag (for the laundry) so we can ensure each child can get cozy when it's time to come inside to eat and rest.

The children play outside twice a day for a minimum of 3 hours every day! Having two sets of outdoor gear here when the weather is REALLY wet is super helpful. Little Friends has lots of extras to share as well.

Comfortable kids are happy kids! www.outsideplay.ca

Inclusion Policy

Little Friends is an inclusive environment for all children and adults regardless of race, sex, gender, religion, beliefs, physical ability or economic situation. We welcome all different types of family compositions and strive to provide a safe and welcoming environment for all.

We are friends and allies of the LGBTQ2+ community.

We are a gender inclusive employer and value diversity.

Our physical environment and program are conducive to supporting both physical needs and neuro diversities.

We are happy to consider enrolling families from all ethnicities, cultures and economic backgrounds regardless of potential barriers (language, financial stability, access to resources etc).

Gradual Entry

Upon enrolling in our center, we encourage at least 3 days of gradual entry.

Parents and child(ren) should visit the center together and get to know the children and teachers and explore the space before the first day of school.

Then the gradual Entry schedule may look like this:

Day 1: Parent and child arrive and spend some time together settling in.

Parent then leaves and returns just after lunch (12:00).

Day 2: Child may stay until just after nap (2:00)

Day 3: Child may stay until mid afternoon (3:30)

Parents are welcomed to call the center at anytime to inquire about their child's day

Policies and Procedures

Drop off/Pick up



Families are required to sign their child in and out and make their presence known to the educators. We ask that children do not spend an excess of 8-9 hours a day in the center. The center is closed at 5:00; please arrive five or ten minutes before closing in order to allow for enough time to get your child's things together. If a parent is not at work or school your child must be picked up by 4:00 pm. If an alternate person is going to pick up your child at the end of the day, the individual's name and phone number must be given to a staff member (via written note). The person must present a picture ID upon pick up. In the event of an emergency, it is the responsibility of the family to pick up their child or to

arrange for the pick up of their child. If a parental custody order is in place, Little Friends requires a photocopied version of this order to remain at the center.

If any persons picking up your child (including main caregivers) appear to be under the influence of alcohol or other substances, the staff has a legal obligation (as per Child Care Licensing procedures) to detain and to assist these persons in finding alternative transportation (i.e. Taxi) or contacting another authorized caregiver to the center. These measures are to ensure the safety of your child.

We encourage parents to come inside and spend time with their children in the center during this sometimes difficult transition time. However, we ask all persons coming into the center to please remove their shoes, as the floor is where the children play.

Late Pick Up Fees

There will be a late charge for parents who arrive at the center after the 5:00 closing time. The charge is \$ 10.00 for the first 5 minutes, and \$2.00 for every minute thereafter. In accordance with Licensing Regulations, any child not picked up by 6:00 pm will be reported to The Ministry of Children and Families social services.

Absentee



All children should arrive at the center by 9:30 am unless the staff has been notified otherwise. This ensures that your child takes full advantage of the morning program and gets settled in before a transition. We would appreciate parents to update the himama app by 9:00 am if your child will be absent from the center for the day. Please inform staff of any planned vacations.

Items to stay at the Centre

Your child will require the following items

(Please bring them in on the first day)

- Rubber soled indoor shoes or Slippers
- Extra clothes – sweater, shirts, pants , underwear (lots if needed), socks
- Muddy buddies
- Boots
- Hat
- A blanket and crib sheet
- Recent picture of your child
- “comfort kit” - for natural disaster (see attached)

All items must be clearly labeled with your child's name. The center is not responsible for lost items. Due to the limited space in our cubby room, please leave only what your child needs seasonally at the center.

Please ensure your child's clothes are developmentally appropriate and help to foster independence. For example, Velcro shoes and pants that can be easily accessed for independent toileting

Laundry

Parents are responsible for taking home and washing bedding every Friday and returning it on Monday. Please ensure your child has an extra set of bedding at the center at all times.

Toys from Home

We kindly ask that children do not bring toys from home to the center. The staff is not responsible for lost or broken toys. Any toys that are brought to the center will be placed in the child's cubby basket. Children may bring a cuddly for use at rest time. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Celebrations

At Little Friends we enjoy celebrating many occasions; this includes birthdays, as well as multicultural diversity. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to come to the centre to share their family traditions with us. For birthday celebrations, a birthday hat is made to acknowledge the special day. We ask that parents provide a cake, cookies or treat of their choice, if desired.

Toilet Learning



Little Friends Preschool Center assists families in teaching children to use the toilet once the child shows signs of readiness. We encourage children to use the toilet regularly such as before meals, rest time, and at transitions. Please send a surplus of underpants and other clothing as learning to control bowels and bladders does involve some “accidents”. Educators assist the child in developing self-help skills when cleaning up their own “accidents”. This assistance is done in a non-judgemental, caring manner.

Fostering Independence

Little Friends strives to foster self-confidence and positive self-esteem by encouraging the children to be independent and believing in their capabilities. Please send your children in clothing they can easily master, such as Velcro shoes and elastic waist pants.

Guidance and Caring Policy

The word “guidance” describes a teaching and learning process by which children develop socially acceptable and appropriate behaviours as they grow to maturity. The goal of guidance is to assist the child in establishing inner control and making decisions.

Little Friends Preschool Centre adheres to the guidelines of the Ministry of Health's "Guidance and Discipline with Young Children" handbook.

Warmth and empathetic understanding have proven to be an effective means of influencing young children's positive adjustment. We strive to nurture and preserve children's feelings of well-being thoroughly: being consistent, stating clear limits for acceptable and unacceptable behavior in a positive way, setting reasonable expectations, helping children to develop trust and confidence, and identifying and validating children's feelings.

Children need many opportunities for success. They achieve competence through what they can do. We encourage children to make their own decisions, choices, and problem-solve whenever possible. This increases feelings of mastery and independence.

Children deserve our unconditional positive regard and respect. This will be achieved through: modeling appropriate behaviour, modeling problem-solving skills, offering reasonable choices, redirecting when necessary, allowing natural and logical consequences, and providing individualized personal caring. We will endeavour to "catch them being good" and reinforce this behavior through positive comments.

Educators may assist children in resolving conflicts, helping them use acceptable words and identifying feelings

Our goal is to create a positive and warm environment for all the children who attend our center.

If a child persistently refuses to abide by the limits of safety for self, for others, or for the environment, educators may on occasion remove a child from the situation or limit the use of equipment. Removing a child may involve walking with the child and gently holding their hand. The child is given the opportunity to regulate when they are able to play safely once again.

Aggressive and violent behaviors may include persistent hitting, scratching, biting, kicking, spitting, screaming, unprovoked attacking, verbal and/or physical abuse or self inflicted abuse. "In these rare situations holding a child may be an effective strategy. Where a child's loss of control and the ability to reason causes the child to thrash and scream, or where all other strategies have proven unsuccessful in dealing with the persistent aggressive behavior, a caregiver may assist the child in reestablishing control through this technique. At this time, caregivers can hold the child with just sufficient strength to protect the child and the other children. The intent of this strategy is to soothe the child until self control is re-gained. Here again the calm controlled attitude of the adult is critical in ensuring that this strategy is supportive, not punitive. Apart from a few comforting phrases adults (should) refrain from conversation at this time". (Guidance and Discipline With Young Children, BC Ministry of Health, 1997). Little Friends Educators will use such phrases as: "when you can be safe, I will stop holding you".

If aggressive or violent behaviors persist, the educators are required to:

1. Observe and document the behaviors;
2. Share the observations with the parents informally
3. Invite parents to meet with the educators to discuss challenges and strategies for solutions
4. Provide the family with a report of the child's behaviors and Little Friends concerns
5. Restrict the Child's hours of attendance
6. Request assistance from ministry social workers or psychologists
7. Employ new strategies while continuing documentation
8. Provide the family with a notice of termination of services

Little Friends Preschool Center reserves the right to restrict the child's attendance on any given day or hours of participation in the program on an ongoing basis to ensure the safety of all children and staff. Children exhibiting aggressive or violent behaviors may be required to be collected immediately, or,

may be requested to attend from 9:00 am till 4:00 pm to ensure sufficient educators are present. Little Friends Preschool Center refuses to tolerate persistent aggressive/violent behaviors. Therefore, when all strategies have been implemented and protocol has been exhausted, Little Friends will implement notice of termination of services.

Nutrition



Parents are responsible for providing a morning snack, a nutritious lunch, and an afternoon snack. Parents are asked to cut and prepare food age appropriately (i.e. cut oranges, offer appropriate serving sizes etc.). How the food is sent is how it will be served to the child. For example, if you would like your child's apple cut and peeled please prepare it beforehand. Please send hot food items in a thermos container. We request parents to not send candy into the center. Please provide enough healthy food for your child's fluctuating appetite. Little Friends Educators encourage children to choose their food intake. Educators do not force or expect children to eat if they are not hungry.

- **Please inform staff of any allergies or any food sensitivity.**
- If a child with an allergy is enrolled at the center, signs will be clearly posted and families must obey guidelines.

Screen time and Active play policy

Little friends do not have TV's or computers accessible to the children. To encourage active gross motor play the children play outdoors twice a day for at least an hour. Please provide a water bottle to be taken outside everyday and apply sunscreen to your child before dropping them off at the center (as needed). If you would like to request your child have sunscreen reapplied in the afternoons, please inform your child's educator.

Medication

Staff will not administer non-prescription meds to a child. If a doctor prescribes prescription drugs for a child they must not return to daycare until they have received the medication for 24 hours. A "Permission to Administer Medications" form must be filled out with each new prescription.

Health Policy



Please refer to our covid – 19 specific health policies

The following health policies and guidelines are created for the comfort and safety of the child who is sick, plus the protection of the group, their families, and daycare staff. Capital Regional District Health guidelines will be used in determining when an ill child will be excluded from and accordingly readmitted to the center. If the center is forced for reasons related to the health pandemic, parents will be required to pay fees and/or give sufficient 1 months notices (as stated in the policies). Parents will arrange alternate care when their child exhibits symptoms such as generalized colds, flu's, rashes, vomiting, diarrhea, chronic cough or persistent fever until a clear diagnosis is established. We will not hesitate to telephone you if your child is not well during the day. **We expect you will come and pick up your child immediately**

The staff has the right to refuse admission to a child who appears to be too ill to be at daycare. If a child becomes ill during the day, a staff member will contact the parent/s or, if the parents cannot be located, the staff member will make arrangements to send the child to the home of the alternate person listed on the registration form. Whenever doubt exists about a child's health, staff may request that the parent seek medical advice and provide a doctor's note stating that the child is infection free. It is our hope not to inconvenience parents, but to ensure a safe environment for all.

Emergency Medical Attention

In the event of an emergency, the staff will contact the parents, the family doctor, or the staff may take the child directly to the hospital (which may be by ambulance), and then call the parents. Parents will assume the cost of the ambulance.

Health History

We require that all of the children have their immunizations up-to-date before entry into the Centre. Parents are required to fill out a health history.

Illnesses and Procedures

This list will clarify the illnesses and accompanying symptoms that deem it unsuitable that a child attends the Little Friends Centre, and the procedures to be followed at the time he/she returns. The criteria are designed in conjunction with the Capital Regional District guidelines for children participating in-group care.

Acute Cold: Usually, in the first few days, includes a very runny nose and eyes. Fever, coughing, and/or sore throat may accompany these symptoms. Child may return when his/her temperature has been normal for 24 hours, other symptoms have subsided, and the child has not developed a secondary infection.

Cough: Frequent bouts, and especially if choking and/or vomiting accompanies the cough, Child may return when acute symptoms have subsided.

Diarrhea or loose stool: A child experiencing diarrhea, especially accompanied by fever & cramps, must be symptom free for 48 hours before returning to daycare. If blood is found in stool, parents will be notified to take the child to their doctor.

Earaches and infections: Because the CRD says untreated ear infections can lead to hearing loss and are potentially infectious, we require children to see a

doctor for direction and that children stay home for a minimum of 24 hours with or without antibiotic medication. This allows for the children to be monitored and assessed. Children may then return when symptoms such as fever and ear tugging have subsided.

Fever: 100° or 38.3° C. The cause of fever can be a number of things, (including teething), nevertheless; children should be monitored at home. Children may return when the fever has subsided for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication such as Tylenol), and have not developed a secondary infection.

Headache: Pain is severe and/or is accompanied by fever, stiff neck, and nausea or vomiting.

Infected Skin or eyes: A doctor must examine undiagnosed skin irritations, and medical clearance for return is obtained. Conjunctivitis (pink eye) is very contagious and may be treated with a prescribed medication. Children may return when the doctor advises it is no longer contagious and eye discharge has cleared. The symptoms are redness/puffiness/discharge in and around the eyes.

Lice: Children may return once they have been treated with an effective treatment and all lice and nits have been combed or picked out of the hair. Follow up shampooing must be administered to complete treatment.

Vomiting: Both vomiting and diarrhea are symptoms that may indicate a bacterial or viral (gastrointestinal) infection, which is very easily passed to others. Children may return when they have been symptom free for 48 hours.

Communicable Diseases: Communicable diseases like chicken pox and measles must be reported to the daycare centre staff as soon as they are diagnosed. The duration of the child's treatment and exclusion from daycare will depend on the CRD's Communicable Disease recommendations which staff will be able to provide.

Emergency Procedures

All Little Friends Employees are trained on how to react in case of a fire, earthquake or other natural disaster. Children practice monthly fire drills and are encouraged to have inside shoes on at all times. Little Friends "safe place" is located at the Strawberry Vale Community Center on High Street.

Each child must have a comfort kit with them at the childcare center. Comfort kits will be placed in a rolling garbage can just outside the center's doors for easy access. All kits should be in a large zip lock freezer bag (please label) with the following items inside:

- Parents cell numbers and out of province contact
- Water bottle and/or juice box
- Fruit bar/granola bar or other small non-perishable item
- Small toy or comfort item (crayons/notepad/toy car/small stuffy)
- Family photo
- Written Letter for comfort and reassurance
- Small flashlight

Parents are responsible for keeping the food fresh and up to date. Please switch out food items every 6 months or so.

Registration

The Provincial Child Care Facilities Licensing Board requires registration information to be kept on file for all children enrolled in a licensed facility.

This information helps to contribute to high standards of health and safety for your child.

The registration forms must be completed, as well as a "1 months fee" deposit must be paid in order to confirm your child is enrolled in our center.

Parent/Educator interviews are required before registration occurs. This will give us the opportunity to discuss goals and expectations of the center and for your child.

ALL INFORMATION WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL

Hours of Operation

Monday to Friday from 7:30 am to 5:00 pm

- The Center will be closed for all statutory holidays and Easter Monday
- The Center will be closed 1 week at spring break
- The Center will be closed for two weeks over the winter holidays (same as the school district)
- The Center will be closed for the last 5 days leading up to the August long weekend

Monthly Fees



- Our monthly fees are \$1000.00 per month for 3-5 year olds and \$1290.00 for under age 3.
- Fees will increase annually by %2
- Little Friends childcare has “opted in” to the NDP government's parent fee reduction initiatives. This means children enrolled in the center will receive reduced fees until when/if our contract with the government expires. The current rates are \$900 per month for children under 3 years old and \$545 per month for children over 3 years old. Part time is pro-rated.
- Monthly fees are to be paid via “e transfer” to littlefriendsvictoria@gmail.com E Transfers are subject to a .50 cent service fee and **MUST** be received on time.
- If the first of the month falls on a Saturday or Sunday payments must be made on the Friday before.
- Late payments (e transfers/cash/checks delivered after the due date) are subject to a \$25 late fee per day. Children may not attend while payments are outstanding.
- NSF cheques will be paid in cash with an additional \$30.00 charge.
- There will be no refund for family vacations or center holiday closures.
- Withdrawal of a child will be given in writing 6 weeks in advance. Notice will be given on the first of the month. The deposit (of a ½ month of fees) will be taken off your child’s last month of attendance.
- Government subsidies are available. Please ask for further information.
- In the event of centre closures due to environmental factors, (i.e. snow storms, family emergencies or unexpected occurrences, parents will be notified that the centre will be closed. We will try our best to prevent centre closures however parents will be responsible for finding alternate care and fees are non-refundable.

Notice of Withdrawal and Termination

Notice of Withdrawal of your child must be given six (6) weeks in advance, and must be submitted in writing. Fees for these four weeks must be paid regardless of whether your child will be attending Little Friends Toddler Centre during that time. The deposit paid upon registration will be deducted from the last month of your child's attendance.

Notice of withdrawal must be given before the 15th day of the month, as the fee schedule runs from the beginning of one month to the beginning of the next month. Refunds will NOT be given for part of a month. For example, if a parent gives notice on October 20th, the one-month's notice actually begins on the first day of January^t. Full fees must be paid for all of October/November/December.

Please visit our website for more information

www.littlefriendschildcare.ca

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact

Little Friends owners/directors Kim and/or Tracy

Monday – Friday 7 am – 3 pm at 250 479 8423

or message us on the himama app

Little Friends Preschool Center



FIRST DAY CHECKLIST

- Registration forms completed
- Rubber soled indoor shoes
- Extra clothes
- Muddy Buddies
- Bedding (fitted crib sheet, blanket)
- Cuddly toy (if desired)
- Earthquake preparedness kit (in ziplock bag)

All items MUST be clearly labeled! Due to limited space please leave only seasonally appropriate items at the center.