

VWCA Little Steps Children's Centre Parent Handbook

Program Information

Philosophy

The Little Steps program is child directed and play based. This emphasizes the value of unstructured learning that allows children to make choices, experiment, and use hands on exploration with materials in the preschool and daycare environment. The toys and activities are developmentally appropriate to support your child's emotional, physical, social and cognitive needs. It is our philosophy that children learn best when the information provided to them is easily relatable to their lives, so the majority of programming revolves around topics that they can find within their community.

Little Steps strives to provide a safe, welcoming environment for children to learn about their world as well as how to navigate in it. Emphasis on cooperation, using words to solve conflict and build self confidence is a large part of the program. We strive to allow children to make their own choices and explore in an environment which is physically safe, cognitively challenging and emotionally nurturing.

Program Hours

The program will run Monday to Friday from 8:00am to 5pm, with your choice of day and pick up times. Preschool ends at 12pm, the extended program ends at 1:30pm and the daycare ends at 5pm. I encourage the days to either be consecutive or consistent to give the child a chance to settle and relax, which makes for an optimal learning environment.

Daily Schedule:

8am: Daycare program opens, children arrive, hang up their things in the cubby provided and begin play time.

9am: Preschool program opens, children arrive, hang up their things in the cubby provided and begin play time.

10:30am: We clean up the room as a group, putting the toys back in their proper places.

10:45am: DANCE PARTY!!!!

11am: Circle time, followed by hand washing for snack.

11:15am: The children find a seat at the table and eat the snack that was brought from home. The children are encouraged to eat what they need and take the rest home.

When Children have finished their snack, they get ready to go outside, and read a book or do some puzzle while we wait for everyone to be finished. If a group is ready early, a staff will take a group out early.

12pm: Children are picked up outside, at the playground.

1pm: Back inside the room for snack/playtime, or stay outside if weather is nice.

1:30pm: Extended program ends, daycare children get ready for rest

1:30pm-3pm: Rest time. IF the children do not sleep, quiet activities are provided for the children to do while the sleepers are sleeping

3pm-5pm: Rest time is over, children have the option of having another snack, then playtime until they go home

We go outside rain or shine, but if it is absolutely awful, we will only go out for a few minutes. It is important to have time to be loud and run!

The times of the schedule are not set in stone. If the children have taken a keen interest in something or are engaged in some amazing play, circle time or dance party will be shortened. Also, if they seem to need bigger spaces to run and be loud, play time will be shortened so we can go outside to play.

Program Expectations

Your child must be toilet trained or training and be 3 years old by December 31st.

What to bring?

- Please bring a change of clothes (top, pants, underwear, and socks) in a labeled large zip lock bag when your child starts Preschool. We can store the bag of spare clothing in a bin at the preschool.
- Food: Lunch and/or a snack need to be sent each day
- Outside Wear: Weather appropriate clothing.

Food and Drink

We promote healthy eating and nutritional habits. Safe drinking water is available for all children at all times and we encourage them to drink as much as they would like. If a child has specific nutritional requirements, we will ensure that all staff understand these requirements. Please pack a snack and/or lunch from home which follows Canada's Food Guide. Please inform the staff of any dietary needs or allergies!!

Fees

Fees are due on the first of the month, and are payable by cheques, debit or credit. Upon registration, a \$100 non refundable deposit is due. Please post-date your cheque for July 1, and make it payable to **VWCA**

The deposit will be applied to your first month's fees. NSF cheques will be paid in cash with an additional \$30 charge. For the extended program, an additional \$50 is added to the preschool fees

Preschool		Daycare
2 days a week	\$150	\$373
3 days a week	\$190	\$533
4 days a week	\$230	\$677
5 days a week	\$270	\$805

Every 2 years starting in September(2017,2019etc) the fees will increase to keep up with the cost of living. Parents will be notified with the amount prior to registration for the following year.

Fees are averaged over the school year, some months may have fewer days, some have more but the fees do not vary.

Withdrawal and cause for discharge

To withdrawal or change registered days without penalty, families are required to give one month's written notice on the first of the month. The full months fees will be charged if notice not given. If the event of a nonpayment/ late pickups, 3 warnings is sufficient for immediate de-registration from the program.

Subsidy

Child care subsidy often does not cover your entire monthly fees. Authorization from the MCFD may take weeks to process. The \$100 deposit is still required to hold the spot, and I encourage those parents interested in the program to start the application process immediately as subsidy approval is required in order to register.

Policies

Behavior and guidance policy

The word "guidance" describes a teaching and learning process by which children develop socially acceptable and appropriate behaviors as they grow to maturity. The goal of guidance is to assist the child in establishing inner control and making decisions. Little steps preschool centre adheres to the guidelines of the ministry of health's "guidance and discipline with young children" handbook.

Encouraging children to make their own decisions, choices and problem- solve is the best solution. Of course this is a learning process so an educator will assist the child to resolve the issue themselves.

Drop off/pick up policy

Due to the nature of the preschool/Daycare program, drop off time can be flexible. The program is open at 8am, so parents can drop off their child anytime after 8am. The preschool portion of the day starts around 9am. There are different pick up times during the day, 12pm, 130pm and 5pm. Staff schedules are dependent on these times, so if you are running late please let us know ASAP!!! Our fabulous staff would like to leave when their shift is done. The day ends at 5pm, with other community centre programs running afterwards, so please give yourself at least 5 minutes (maybe more when your child first starts the program) prior to closing to pick up your child to make sure that everybody is able to be out of the room at 5pm. If an alternate person will be picking up your child, please have a written note with the person's full name and phone number as they will be asked for identification.

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.

Alleged Impaired Pick-up

The staff 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 VWCA 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

With regards to custody, please include all legal documentation regarding custody and custody orders with registration.

Late fees Policy

There will be a late fee of \$5 for the first 5 minutes after the closing time. An additional \$1 for every minute after that will be charged.

Call if you are running late!

The following steps will be taken in the event of a late pick up.

-You will be contacted

-Emergency contacts will be contacted to find someone to come pick up your child.

-If both emergency contacts and parents are unable to be contacted within half an hour of closing, the ministry of children and family will be called and the child will be put into emergency daycare services until a parent is located.

Three late pickups in a row will result in dismissal from the program

Closures

The preschool will follow school closures, which are statutory holidays and one for the 2 weeks at Christmas. In the result of any unexpected closures (heavy snowfall or power outages), you will be notified as soon as possible.

Illnesses

Please keep your child home if they have any of the following symptoms: ear infections, eye infections, cough, diarrhea, fever, lice, vomiting and any communicable disease like chicken pox. This prevents the spread of illness in the centre. If your child has any of these communicable diseases, your child needs to be at home for at least 24 hours after meds have been given or the symptoms have stopped. If your child becomes sick here, we will be contacting you to pick your child up as soon as you can, for 2 reasons. One, your child will be much more comfortable at home while they recover, Two, we want to make sure nobody else gets sick ☹️ If you would like some more information about communicable diseases, please ask! I have a copy of sneezes and diseases which is a really helpful resource 😊

The main goal is to have a safe place to learn and explore. To ensure the safety of others, the children will be informed of the boundaries of the space and of other children.

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 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 and read the notifications that are emailed out. Notify Kate Thring (childcare manager) as soon as possible if your personal contact information changes during the year.

Contact information

Childcare Manager: Kate Thring

Email: littlesteps@victoriawest.ca

Phone number: 250-590-8922 (community centre) 250-419-2159 (cell phone)

VWCA Parent Agreement

The parent/guardian must initial each box and must sign below acknowledging and taking responsibility for all expectations and policies outlined in the parent/ guardian handbook.

- The policies around fee payments, refunds, de-registration and penalty payments
- If the information provided on this form changes, I am responsible for updating it with the manager
- If my child is sick or unable to participate safely I, upon request, will immediately pick-up
- Actively communicate with program staff about your child's needs

By signing below I/we confirm that I/we have read and understand all expectations and guidelines outlined in the parent/guardian handbook

_____ Date _____