

**VWCA Little Steps Childcare
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 most of the 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 Expectations

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

What to bring?

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

Food and Drink

We promote healthy eating and nutritional habits. Safe drinking water is always available for all children 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 understands 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!!

Active Play

We acknowledge the importance of active play in the preschool and the daycare. Gross motor development is just as important as fine motor development. We go outside every day, for a minimum of 90 minutes for the daycare program. When we are outside, we have outdoor equipment that the children can explore, and we have a variety of games that we play, like "go go stop" and "what time it is mister wolf?". When it is raining, snowing or too cold, we will still go outside to give the children a chance to run and get some fresh air, but will come inside for some group games or go use the gym if its available. Please make sure your child has weather appropriate clothing. If we see puddles, we will probably be jumping in them! There are many fun activities to do in the rain, and we will be enjoying as many of them as possible.

Program Hours

The daycare program operates Monday to Friday from 8:00am to 5:00pm.

Daycare Daily Schedule:

8am- 9am: Morning snack table open

8am – 9:30: Free play

9:30am – 10:30am: Morning Activity

10:30am: DANCE PARTY!!!!

10:45am: Circle time/Group Time

11:15am: Children sit at the table and eat the snack that was brought from home. The children are encouraged to eat what they need.

12pm: Children are guided to the park for outside playtime.

1:30pm: Children return from outside

1:30pm – 3pm: Rest time. Quiet activities are provided for children that do not require a nap.

3:30pm – 4:30pm: Afternoon Activity

3pm-5pm: Children have the option of having another snack, then playtime until they go home.

The times of the schedule are flexible and may be adapted to meet the needs of the children

Nature Preschool Daily Schedule:

The preschool program operates Monday to Friday from 9:00am-12:00pm.

9:00 – 9:40	Free Play	Monday:	Garden/Orchard
9:40 – 10:00	Group Time	Tuesday:	Field Trip/Adventure
10:00 – 11:30	Outdoor	Wednesday:	Nature Art & Craft
11:30 – 12:00	Lunch	Thursday:	Science
		Friday:	Animal

Fees

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

The deposit will be applied to your first month's fees. NSF cheques must be paid in cash with an additional \$30 administration charge.

Preschool

Daycare

2 days a week	\$170	\$435
3 days a week	\$240	\$625
4 days a week	\$300	\$795
5 days a week	\$350	\$950

Every 2 years starting in September (2019,2021/etc) 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 withdraw 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 is not given. In the event of a non-payment/late pickups, 3 warnings is sufficient for immediate discharge 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 your child's spot. We encourage parents interested in the program to start the subsidy application process immediately as subsidy approval typically takes some time. Full payment of daycare/preschool fees is required until such time as subsidy has been approved.

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 childcare 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.

Screens policy

We do not provide any screen time at preschool or daycare.

Drop off/pick up policy

The daycare program is open at 8am, so parents can drop off their child anytime after 8am. Daycare closes at 5pm

There are 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 can be out of the room by 5pm. If an alternate person will be picking up your child, please have a written note or send an email with the person's full name and phone number as they will be asked for identification.

The preschool opens at 9am, and ends at 12pm. (Fireplace Room)

Staff schedules are dependent on these times, so if you are running late please let us know ASAP!!! You can contact the Daycare cell phone at 250-516-2752 or Childcare Manager cell phone at 250-516-2770.

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 check in with staff so that they can sign your child in and out of program. Your child must be picked 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 VWCA 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 if 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 the registration forms.

Late fees Policy

Once the program has finished for the day (12:00pm for Preschool and 5:00pm for daycare), a late fee of \$5 for the first 5 minutes will be charged for each child in care. After this, an additional \$1 per minute will be charged. The staff will write up an invoice for the amount owing, your copy can be taken to the office and paid immediately. If the fee has not been paid before the end of the week, an additional \$50 fee will be added. If the fee is not paid by the end of the month you will be contacted by the manager to discuss further consequences.

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 and 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 families will be contacted, and the child will be put into emergency foster services until a parent is located.

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

Closures

VWCA daycare and preschool will be following school closures, which are statutory holidays, and 2 weeks at Christmas. Preschool runs September-June, and Daycare runs year-round. If the school district closes for a weather event, the daycare and preschool program will be closed as well. In the result of any unexpected closures (heavy snowfall or power outages), you will be notified as soon as possible, and you will need to come and pick up your child.

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 other 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 medication has been given or the symptoms have stopped. If your child becomes sick while in care, you will be contacted for immediate pick up. If you would like some more information about communicable diseases, please ask! I have a copy of sneezes and diseases which is a helpful resource 😊

Communication

We use e-mail communication and will contact you by the e-mail you have provided on your registration form. Important information is sent out via e-mail so please ensure the e-mail address 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 the childcare manager as soon as possible if your personal contact information changes during the year.

Contact information

Childcare Manager: Robyn Wagner

Email: littlesteps@victoriawest.ca

Phone number: 250-516- 2770 (cell phone)

Please Text to let staff know that your child is sick/away for the day

250-516-2752

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

Signature: _____ Date: _____