

VWCA Childcare Parent Handbook

Nature Daycare Little Steps Daycare



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Dear Parents,

We would like to extend a warm welcome to all the children and families at Victoria West Community Association. We are committed to providing the best possible learning experience for each child entrusted to our care. To facilitate the preschool, daycare and OSC Kids Club programs, we are pleased to offer this parent handbook. The purpose of the handbook is to better acquaint parents with the philosophy, principles, and operations of the Centre. It is hoped that the contents of this handbook will assist you and your child in making your time at Victoria West Community Association a successful, happy, and positive experience.

All parents are expected to be familiar with the Centre guidelines and policies listed within and abide by them.

Sincerely,

Staff of Victoria West Community Association

Victoria West Community Association

Vision:

Victoria West community is a diverse, healthy and vital place to live, work and play.

Mission:

The Victoria West Community Association is a not for profit organization whose mission is to engage residents in community stewardship, to impact decisions that affect the community, to raise awareness, to foster a sense of spirit and pride and to encourage participation in community issues, solutions, projects and events.

Victoria West Community Centre is the heart of the neighborhood, offering diverse and relevant activities for all. It is a place where neighbors meet, learn and volunteer. The Centre provides physical, intellectual, social and cultural services and programs that contribute to individual and community health and development.

Values:

Accountability: We are transparent and accountable to our community, funders and partners.

Inclusiveness: The purposes of the Society are to promote, support or undertake any activity that will enhance the quality of life in the Victoria West community and supports the diverse population of the community.

Sustainability: The social, environmental and economic health and vitality of the community is enhanced by VWCA activities and initiatives.

Service: The VWCA provides services to the community as an advocate for, and facilitate participation in, the discussion of community issues in the provision of community services and in sharing information.

Territory Acknowledgement

With humility and gratitude, we acknowledge that the land on which we gather as guests is the traditional territory of the Coast Salish peoples, specifically the Lekwungen, also known today as the Songhees and Esquimalt nations.

Little Steps Daycare 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 daycare and outdoor 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 are capable and competent learners who gain knowledge about themselves and the world around them through investigation and discovery, and through art, dramatic play, and social interactions. Most of our programming evolves from the interests and experiences that they 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, and using words to solve conflicts 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.

Little Steps Program Hours

Nature Daycare operates Monday to Friday from 8:00am to 5:00pm year round, with a week long break at Christmas and March Break (according to the School District #61 School Calendar).

Typical daily schedule:

8am- 9:30 am: Classroom opens, free play activities and snack table open

9:30-10:00am: Group activity

10:00-10:30am: Transition to outdoor play

11:30am: 12:00pm: Lunch time

12:00-12:30pm: Transition to rest time

12:30pm-1:30pm: Rest time

1:00pm: Children that are awake have quiet activity time

2:00pm: Snack and story time

2:45pm: Transition to outdoor play

4:00pm-4:55pm: Free play activities, end of day

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

Parent's are welcome into the cubbie/entrance area of the classroom. We ask that you stay with your child until they have been signed in. All children should wash their hands before entering into the play area. Snack is a choice in the morning but please be aware that the snack table closes at 9am; if you arriving after this time, please ensure that your child has already eaten. If you arrive after 10:00am, please ensure that your child is already dressed appropriately for the weather that day, has used the toilet and is ready for outdoors. There are also washrooms in the community centre. Please try to arrive before we transition to our group activity at 9:30, however if occasional circumstances require a later drop off, please notify the educators ahead of time. We kindly request that you return to pick up your child no later than 4:55. We do not have options for late pickup.

Nature Daycare Philosophy

The Nature Daycare offers a curriculum that supports a deep connection to nature. Our program interacts with nature both as the teacher and the classroom. Our core values include creative play-and inquiry-based learning, often child-led or child-centred activities, diversity and risky play. Our Nature Daycare includes some indoor time but will mostly be outside in the beautiful Banfield Park. We will explore the ever changing natural world throughout all seasons and in all kinds of weather, safety permitting. Our mission is to provide a safe and nurturing environment where children fall in love with the natural. We believe that time spent in nature will bring children confidence, resilience, empathy, health and happiness.

Nature Daycare Program Hours

Nature Daycare operates Monday to Friday from 8:00am to 5:00pm year round, with a week long break at Christmas and March Break (according to the School District #61 School Calendar).

Typical daily schedule:

8:00am - 9:00am: Classroom opens, free play activities and snack table open

9:00am - 12:00pm: Outdoor Exploration

12:00pm - 12:30pm: Lunch time

12:30pm - 1:30pm: Rest Time

1:00pm: Children that are awake have quiet activity time

2:00 - 2:30pm: Washroom Break, Snack and Transition to Outdoors

2:30pm - 4:30pm Outdoor Exploration

4:30pm - 4:55pm: Return inside for Quiet Activities and End of Day

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

**Please ensure that you drop off by 9:00am at the latest. Each day before dropping off your child, please ensure that they use the toilet and wash their hands in the community centre bathroom. If you arrive after 8:50, please ensure that your child is already dressed appropriately for the weather of that day and ready for outside. We kindly request that you return to pick up your child no later than 4:55. We do not have options for late pickup.

Little Steps Daycare and Nature Daycare Requirements

Your child must be three years old by December 31st to attend and be fully toilet trained. This includes using the toilet unassisted and without prompting.

Application forms will not be accepted until fully completed. A tour will then be scheduled by the manager after this process is completed. Registration is not confirmed until the application is accepted and the non-refundable deposit is received.

What to bring?

Please label each item of clothing and store in a large zip lock bag in cubby or backpack. If items are not labelled, an educator will label them. If clothing is sent home dirty, it must be replaced the following day.

- Two changes of clothes (top, pants, underwear, and socks), indoor and outdoor shoes.
- Weather Wear: rain coat, muddy buddy/rain pants, rain boots, warm hat and gloves, sun hat, sunscreen (summer), and running shoes. (No open-toed shoes or sandals).
- Food: Lunch and two snack (*Please follow the Food and Drink Policy) and a water bottle needs to be sent each day. Please label all lunch bags, containers, and water bottles with your child's name.
- Fitted Crib Sized Sheet/Blanket (labelled). Optional: small stuffed animal
- All children are required to participate in rest time. Books/quiet activities will be provided after 30 minutes to any child that does not fall asleep.

Home Toys

Children can bring one small soft toy for comfort during rest time. We request that all other toys are kept at home unless a special request (such as Teddy Bear Day or Show and Share) is made by the educator.

Food and Drink Policy

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 inform the staff of any dietary needs or allergies.

For both Little Steps and Nature Daycare, please pack two healthy snacks and a lunch from home that follow Canada's Food Guide <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/>. Please do not send candy, gummies, cookies, cake, pastries, chocolates, chips, juice or pop. Foods with high sugar content are not allowed in our programs. We cannot reheat foods so please send foods that need to stay warm in a thermal container. Please include all necessary utensils required to eat the lunch and snacks. For Nature Daycare, please include an icepack in the lunch box to keep the foods fresh.

Please note that in the event that we have a child attending one of our program with a severe nut allergy, the program will then enforce a **NUT FREE policy. Please ask the educator about the status of allergies in the room before including any nut products in your child's snack/lunch. **

Birthday Parties/Shared Food

We understand that families may have a desire to celebrate special occasions within the daycare environment. We request that this is done without the use of foods, cakes or sweets. The educators in your child's program can help to suggest some alternatives such as a special theme day to mark the occasion (favorite colour day or pajama day) or you could bring a small gift bag to hand out.

Active Play Policy

We acknowledge the importance of active play in all our programs. Gross motor development is just as important as fine motor development. Our Little Steps friends go outside daily for 60-120 minutes, and our Nature Daycare friends stay outside most of the day. When we are outside, we have outdoor equipment that the children can explore and lots of time to explore natural materials. We will go out in ALL weather conditions and enjoy the outdoors in all seasons. Please see "What to Bring" to ensure your child is dressed appropriately for all outdoor conditions.

Little Steps and Nature Daycare Fees:

	Monthly Rate	CCFRI Funding	After CCFRI
5 days/week	\$1108.00	\$545*	\$563*
664.80	\$646.80	\$327*	\$337.80*
2 days/week	\$443.20	\$218*	\$225.20*

The BC Childcare Fee Reduction amount is approximate and may vary. Parents are responsible for paying any parent portion remaining after the reduction. You can get more information about the Childcare Fee Reduction Initiative at this link: [CCFRI Estimator website](#).

Please note that each year in September childcare fees may be adjusted to keep up with the cost of living. Parents will be notified with the amount at least a full month prior to the increase.

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

Fees are **due on the first business day of the month**, payable by direct withdrawal.

Non-Refundable Admin Fee and Deposit

Upon confirmation of your child's registration, a non-refundable \$125 deposit will need to be paid in order to secure the space. \$25 will be retained for the administration fee and \$100 will be applied to your first month's fees.

NSF Penalty Procedure

Should your direct debit payment be returned to our organization as NSF, we will attempt to withdraw fees a second time (up to 30 days from original payment date). An additional fee of \$30 may be applied if funds are unavailable at the time of withdrawal. VWCA will not be responsible for any costs charged by your bank/ financial institution.

Payment Requirements:

Program financials are managed by the Childcare Manager. We use email communication and will use the email address you have provided on your child's registration form for all communication. Important information is sent out via email; therefore, please insure that 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 1st of the month and are paid via direct withdrawal. Withdrawals will appear on your statement as Victoria West Community Association or VWCA.
- A completed Pre-Authorized Debit (PAD) Authorization form must be provided prior before your first day of care.
- For families wishing to have more than one payee, please complete separate PAD forms.
- A VOID cheque must be attached to the PAD agreement. If you are unable to attach a VOID cheque, please ensure that your financial information is entered correctly. Failure to provide correct information will result in a charge of \$15.00.

Here at VWCA we recognize that there are a number of situations that can cause financial strain. If you need to arrange alternate payment arrangements, please contact the Childcare Manager at least 3 business days before the end of the month to avoid any penalty or late fee.

Affordable Child Care Benefit (ACCB)

As a licensed child care provider, VWCA is eligible to accept provincial childcare benefit for eligible enrolled children. The following are expectation that our program has for families utilizing childcare subsidy:

1. Parents/Guardians are ultimately responsible for all fees as registrants to our program.
2. Parents/Guardians will be responsible for fee payments until benefit plan authorization has been received by our program. Please note that Affordable Child Care Benefit application processing can take 6 to 8 weeks.
3. Parents are responsible for paying any parent portion remaining after the deduction of subsidy from the program fees.
4. Parents are responsible for renewing the benefit authorization before it expires.
5. For more information about this program, please visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/child-care-funding/child-care-benefit>

ACCB can be applied to online through the MY FAMILY SERVICES website. All subsidies are processed through VWCA Little Steps. Alternatively, you can apply through a paper form and in this case, the childcare manager will provide you with a form with our information. You will then fill in the remaining family information and send it to the ministry. If you require assistance with the application process please contact the childcare manager, or the Child Care Resource and Referral Centre 250-382-7000 or MCFD at 1-888-338-6622, option 1. Please note, authorization from the MCFD (Ministry of Children and Family Development) may take several weeks to process. Families receiving the Affordable Childcare Benefit must pay the balance of their account by the 1st of the month.

Child Pickup and Drop Off Policy

The Centre will only release your child to caregivers whose names are indicated on the registration forms. Please include on the Childcare Application Form the name and phone number of anyone who will be picking up your child. Temporary permission may be granted and must be received in writing. Pick up contacts must be responsible adults who are of the legal age 19. Staff will ask for photo ID. Please let us know in advance if you are sending someone to pick up in your place so we can verify they are on your contact list. Parent and/or caregivers must check in with staff so they can sign your child in and out of the program.

Parent Communication

At Victoria West Community Centre, we believe in regular communication. An integral part of a parent's involvement in their child's education is through effective communication with the Centre. The Centre has an 'open door' policy so should you have any immediate concerns please don't hesitate to touch base with the educators in your child's program.

The main mode of communication is via-email. We will use the address provided on your registration form. Important information, updates and pertinent news will be sent out via email. 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. It is the parent's responsibility to provide accurate contact information and read the notifications that are emailed out. Please notify the Childcare Manager as soon as possible if your personal contact information changes during the year.

Yearly Schedule

Both daycare programs run year round. We will close each year for the first week of both Winter Break and Spring Break (according to the School District #61 School Calendar) for Facility maintenance.

We will also close for the following STAT holidays:

New Year's Day	Family Day	Good Friday	Easter Monday
Victoria Day	Canada Day	BC Day	Labour Day
National Day for Truth and Reconciliation	Thanksgiving Day	Remembrance Day	Christmas Day & Boxing Day

In the case of inclement weather, VWCA Programs will mirror the of the Greater Victoria School District #61 for closures. Please check their website www.sd61.bc.ca in the morning for updates. Families will not be contacted directly.

Please note, no discounts or refunds are issued for missed days, statutory holidays, sick days, vacations or closures due to inclement weather.

Parent Code of Conduct

We are very proud of our community. We do ask that parents observe the following as good decorum:

- Treat their children and other children with respect both verbally and physically.
- Treat each staff member with respect.
- Treat each other with respect on school grounds.
- Use a soft voice while inside the program areas.
- Refrain from using inappropriate language. There are many ears listening.
- If you have a conflict with a staff member, parent, or child, please take it to the Childcare Manager immediately. Any misunderstandings can be cleared up through the office. Unsubstantiated gossip undermines the professionalism of the programs and can be harmful to the community at large.
- Smoking and vaping tobacco or cannabis are strictly prohibited inside the centre or on or near centre property.
- Children will not be released to parents who appear to be under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances.
- It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure Participant Information Forms are kept updated with correct addresses and lists of emergency contacts.

Attendance

Good attendance and arriving on time are vital to the overall learning process and is an essential element that promotes successful integration for the child. It is the responsibility of parents to inform the educators or childcare manager by email or phone if their child is unable to attend or is delayed for any reason, preferably ahead of time. It is helpful to also keep us informed of plans for vacations, etc. Please note that monthly fees will not be adjusted due to illness or vacation requests.

Punctuality and Ratios

A sense of order and punctuality is an important learning. We strongly encourage parents/caregivers to ensure that their child arrives on time each day (before the first transition of the day). A student arriving late for their program may be both disruptive and distracting to the ongoing learning process. Consistently late arrivals may miss out on valuable topics and materials being introduced.

In order to operate a full 9 hour/day program, there will be 1 staff for the beginning and end of each day. Maintaining the same schedule for arrival and pickup will allow us to schedule staff accordingly to ensure the required ratio of 1:8 (educator:child) is always maintained. Please plan to have your child attending not more than 8.5 hours each day. If necessary, families may be assigned a specific group schedule as outline below.

Little Steps Daycare operates from 8:00am-5:00pm.

Please drop off before 9:30am. Please arrive for pickup by 4:55pm.

Group A – 8:00-4:30

Group B – 8:30-5:00

Nature Daycare operates from 8:00am-5:00pm.

Please drop off before 9:00am. Please arrive for pickup by 4:55pm.

Group A – 8:00-4:30

Group B – 8:30-5:00

Staff schedules are dependent on these times, so if you are running late please let us know! 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 the time the program ends for the day.

Toileting Policy

We expect all children to be fully toilet trained before entering our programs. It can be disruptive to the learning process of others when one of the teachers is called away to take care of a toileting concern. Ongoing issues can lead to stress and anxiety for the child and turn it into a negative experience.

We understand that accidents do happen from time to time, especially in the first few weeks for new children, but if a child regresses or is not truly toilet trained when they start with us, the program staff will consult with the parents to work on a solution. In extreme cases when a remedy cannot be found we may ask that the child have a shortened day or stay home until they are successfully toilet trained. If this should happen staff will work closely with the parents to ensure a positive and successful return to the program.

Diapers and pull ups are not permitted in the program.

Child Guidance / Harassment and Bullying Prevention

Victoria West Community Centre believes that all children have the right to learn in a safe, caring and orderly environment with a focus on physical safety, social connectedness, inclusiveness and protection from all forms of bullying, regardless of a child's gender, race, culture, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity.

Our approach to behaviour guidance is to assist children in developing self-control, self-confidence, and ultimately self-discipline and sensitivity in their interactions with others. The Centre's approach to discipline is positive, proactive and consistent with the developmental age and stage of each child. We encourage acceptable behaviour such as being respectful to ourselves, to others, and to centre property and learning to follow Centre rules such as walking calmly when inside and staying in designated areas.

Unacceptable behaviour can consist of but is not limited to: fighting (or play fighting), lack of respect for others, teasing, throwing objects and running in building. This applies whilst at the centre, at a program-related activity or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the centre environment.

The consequences of unacceptable behaviour will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, will respect an individual's right, and take into account their age, maturity and special needs, if any. Consequences will be restorative rather than punitive.

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

1. The first incident of inappropriate behaviour will result in the child being redirected to a different activity. The staff will discuss with the child the reason that their behaviour is inappropriate. The child will be supported by the staff to make more appropriate choices and find problem solving solutions.
2. If inappropriate behaviours continue or progresses in frequency and escalates in peril, the educators will contact the parents to discuss solutions/options to address the problem. The incidence will be logged in our internal documentation. The parent may be called to pick the child up immediately depending on the severity of the incident.
3. Should the solutions arranged by the staff and parents prove ineffective, a more formal meeting will be scheduled to look at alternative solutions. The parents may be advised that the child cannot attend the program temporarily if the alternative solutions are unsuccessful. The incident may be documented for our Licensing Officer to review.
4. If the behaviour is still a concern, the Childcare Manager reserves the right to discharge the child from the program.

Separation

Separation is a process we go through all our lives. Though often challenging and exciting, this growth towards independence can be painful and scary, especially for young children. Parents and staff working together collaboratively show children that they trust and believe in one another. This offers a foundation of support when the world suddenly seems a new and different place.

Independence is one of the key goals, but many children have second thoughts about being away from their family initially. We do encourage a quick drop off but realize that the transition from parent to teacher can sometimes be challenging. Remember that sometimes staying only makes it more difficult for your child as well as for yourself. We encourage parents to remain in the Centre a few minutes whilst the staff settle their child or to call the Centre once at home or at work to see how they are doing. Please don't leave without letting your child know that you are going.

Illness

We understand that parents may choose to bring their children to our programs even with a mild sickness. However, we have an obligation to everyone to ensure a healthy atmosphere for all.

If a child has a bad cold with a runny nose or cough and comes to program, the chances are that other children and staff could also contract the cold. Germs have the potential to spread quickly in the program environments. With your cooperation, we can establish a healthier environment for everyone if, when your child is sick, they remain at home.

Please Note: If we see that your child is not feeling well, we will call you to pick them up promptly.

Below is a general list of illnesses that would prevent your child from being allowed to attend childcare as well as a general guideline for the Centre's educators to call you to pick up your child promptly.

- A fever exceeding 38°C or 100.4°F
- An infection for which the child has not been on an antibiotic for at least 24 hours.
- A child vomiting or complaining of severe headaches or stomach aches.
- A child who has diarrhea.
- A child who has been constantly coughing or has a runny nose with thick discharge.
- A communicable disease such as pink eye or head lice. Parents are required to notify the Centre immediately if their child contracts a communicable disease.

Please Note: We ask that parents keep their child home until they have been symptom-free (without the use of fever reducing medication) for at least 24 hours.

Medical Information

It is important for the Centre to have all relevant medical information at hand to ensure the safety of your children including:

- Full Disclosure: Parents must fully disclose all medical information about the child during registration (information as specified in the medical section of the application and/or registration form). Disclosure is vital so that the Centre can take any medical precautions as becomes necessary – such as requiring an EpiPen be kept in the program areas for a child with a severe nut allergy.

- **Up-to-Date Information:** Should a child undergo a medical procedure or treatment after registration, parents are required to inform the Centre so that changes to medical information can be amended and a medical plan implemented if deemed necessary.
- **Immunization:** Up-to-date immunization record is required for all newly enrolling children.
If a child's caregivers have chosen not to have their child vaccinated:
 - a) The Centre will provide the family with a guide from the public health unit that explains the benefits of immunization and risks of not vaccinating
 - b) The Centre will keep a log to confirm that the parent has received a copy of the guide
 - c) The family is advised that in the event of an outbreak, or an immediate threat of an outbreak, the child will need to temporarily stay home from their program to protect their child from becoming ill and prevent the spread of the disease
- **Student Medication:** Staff should be notified of any prescription or non-prescription medication a child is taking. In the case where staff may be required to administer medication, please complete a "Permission to Administer Medication" form, copies of which can be found at the office and hand to the Childcare Manager.
- **Allergies:** Parents must notify the Centre of any allergies and if/when any new allergies or physical condition arise. Emergency medications such as an EpiPen or puffer must be kept on premises for those children prescribed them for severe and life-threatening allergies. These are labelled and kept safely out of reach of other children in the program areas, but easily accessible to staff should they need to be administered. Parents are responsible for ensuring such medications are up to date.

Additional Needs

If your child has special learning or medical needs, please discuss this with the Childcare Manager. A child who may show additional needs after starting in one of the programs may require a professional assessment. Parents and staff will work together to determine the best course of action to help with the child's success.

Inclement Weather

In the event of extraordinary inclement weather conditions such as snow, whether unanticipated or where prior knowledge of such conditions are received through meteorological announcements, programs at the Centre may be cancelled. The Centre will make every effort to inform parents as early as possible of any cancellation of programs through email. The Centre will also follow SD61 inclement weather closures.

Parents are asked to ensure that they have a reliable backup plan should an emergency prevent them from picking up their child on time. Fees will NOT be reduced due to closures caused by extreme weather conditions.

Clothing and Possessions

Please ensure that children are dressed appropriate to the weather and with clothing that they can easily put on and off themselves. Shoes/boots must be appropriate for active play with a closed toe and heel. Crocs and flip flops or fancy dress shoes are not appropriate for outside play.

A second set of clothing should be left at the centre at all times in case of "mishaps". Please remember to bring a spare set of clean clothes if the previous ones were taken home to be washed. All clothing should be labeled with your child's name.

Indoor / Outdoor Shoes (Boots)

All children must have a pair of shoes for indoor use as well as a pair of outdoor shoes and, as previously stated, a pair of boots for the playground. This will help maintain a clean program environment.

Accidents/Incidences

All accidents/incidences involving children are documented at the Centre.

In case of a Minor Accident or Incident:

The child/ children will be tended to immediately by a staff member. Appropriate first aid will be administered if necessary (soap and water and/or an icepack, bandage), or comfort and support given should that be more appropriate. It will then be shared with the caregiver picking up the child that day as well as being documented in the classroom communication book and/or on a "VWCC Incident Report Form" which is kept on file for the year.

In case of a Serious Accident:

- The child will be tended to immediately by a staff member who will ascertain the extent of the injury, begin first aid if it is appropriate and inform the Childcare Manager as soon as possible through another staff member
- Parents/caregivers will be notified
- For serious injuries, the teacher, Childcare Manager and/or Centre Manager will also call 911. (Parents will be expected to assume responsibility for any expenses incurred.)
- Should the child need to go to the hospital and parents cannot be reached, he/she will be accompanied by a staff member who will take along all their necessary medical information; care card number, family doctor etc.

Fires, Earthquakes and other Major Disasters:

- VWCC has an Emergency Preparedness Plan as well as an Emergency Procedures Flowchart, which addresses the procedures staff would take in the event of a fire or bomb threat, a minor or major earthquake (including tsunamis), a Lock Down or a major weather event.
- The children do practice fire drills once a month and earthquake drills once a year. The Emergency Preparedness Plan is practiced at least once each year by the staff.
- **We ask that you DO NOT phone the Centre.** Phone lines must be kept open for emergency calls.
- **TUNE into local radio station CFX 1070** using a battery-operated radio or car radio for information and direction.
- **ESTABLISH an out-of-area contact person.** Phone service will likely be limited during a major disaster. It may be much easier to phone someone outside the region than to contact someone locally.
- **Electronic Mail** may serve as a means of communication.
- **Epipens and Emergency Medication.** Time and safety permitting staff will do their best to ensure that epipens or other emergency medications are taken with them during an evacuation.
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Privacy Policy

VWCA respects the right of individuals to the protection of their personal and family's information. VWCA is committed to maintaining the confidentiality, privacy, and accuracy of personal information it collects, uses and discloses. VWCA staff and volunteers who have access to personal information follow fair information principles, in keeping with privacy laws. Families in our programs are in turn expected to respect the privacy of other participants and staff. If at any time you feel your privacy is not being appropriately respected, please bring it up to the Team Lead and/or the Childcare Manager.

Concerns and Issues Resolution

If any parent wishes to clarify or discuss any matter or concern about the programs or their child, the following guidelines should be followed:

Issue/ Concern	Contact
-your child's needs	-one of the staff in your child's program
-your involvement with an individual teacher	-the staff person directly (using discretion as to time and place.)
-general program matters or concerns about program environment	-Program Team Lead or Childcare Manager
-personnel issues in general	-Childcare Manager, Centre Manager or Executive Director
-financial matters	-Childcare Manager
-buildings and grounds	-Centre Manager
-overall functioning of the Centre	-Centre Manager or Executive Director
-registration and enrolment	-Childcare Manager

Appeals Policy

- If a concern is not addressed satisfactorily with the staff member(s) involved, following the above guidelines, the Executive will make every attempt to solve the matter.
- If the parent feels that the matter has not reached a satisfactory conclusion, the parent should present the matter, in writing, to the Executive Director.
- If a concern is in regard to the Executive Director, the matter should be presented in writing to the Board. The Board will contact all parties involved and after careful consideration, will resolve the matter.

Custody Issues

Should there be custody issues:

- The Centre must have legal papers of visitation schedules and any other relevant legal documents, including restraining orders, etc.
- If there are no legal papers, the office will accept a written agreement signed by both parents.
- Each parent has a right to receive Centre mail, speak to staff, see sign-in sheets, and leave with their child on their appropriate day and time.

Only the parent with legal custody may enroll the child, withdraw the child, or sign permission slips and paperwork.

It is staff policy not to side with either parent in the event of a divorce. Staff also may not write letters in your defense for any legal hearing or legal action. Trust that our staff is here to aid your child and give him/her the best care possible in a consistent and nurturing environment.

If the occasion happens when both parents are in the Centre grounds during a time when the two parents are estranged, we expect both parents to treat each other with respect. No conflicts will be tolerated while on Centre property.

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.

Duty to Report

We are required by law under the Child, Family and Community Service Act to report any suspected cases or disclosures of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities for investigation. Our responsibility is to report suspicions or disclosures, not determine if abuse has occurred. Investigations are the responsibility of the Ministry for Children and Family Development and/or the police, and they are responsible for contacting the parent/guardian.

Screens Policy

We do not provide any screen time in our daycares.

Parents: Notice of Withdrawal and Refund Policy

Parents/Guardians who wish to withdraw their child or reduce the number of days they attend must provide notice to the Childcare Manager, at least a full month (30 days) before their intended withdrawal/change date. This written notice must be received by the last day of the month prior to the last month before you wish to withdraw/reduce your enrollment. Withdrawals with or without notice, and sudden departures are treated the same and are required to pay full fees for the full calendar month following the date of notification/departure/withdrawal. If a child is absent a period of 30 days without any notice or other explanation, that child is then deemed to have given notice, and the family will be required to pay full fees for the following full calendar month.

Continued Enrollment for the Next Term

Each year in January, our current families will receive a questionnaire regarding their intentions for the next term. This information allows us to be able to anticipate the number of spots available for new enrollment in September. An additional admin fee/deposit is not required for families who will continue to attend daycare in the following term.

For those wishing to enroll in the OSC Kid's Club before and after school program at VicWest Elementary, our current families can apply online in February. Once your enrollment is confirmed, an annual admin fee and deposit will be required to hold your spot in this program for September.

Contact information:

Childcare Manager

Email: childcaremanager@victoriawest.ca

Daycare Team Lead

Email: littlesteps@victoriawest.ca

For all enquiries regarding financial matters, enrollment, general program matters or concerns about the program environment or staff, please contact the Childcare manager by phone or email.

Childcare Office Phone: (250) 590-8922 ex:1

Please contact your child's program directly by phone/text if they will be away/sick/or if you are running late. If your child is sick with something potentially contagious to others, you must also contact the childcare manager by email and list their symptoms.

LITTLE STEPS DAYCARE: 250-516-2752

NATURE DAYCARE: 250-732-1525

Victoria West Community Centre: 250-590-8922

Preventing Contagious Disease Outbreaks - Guidance for Childcare Settings

The pandemic is officially over, however it has taught us how important it is to protect ourselves and others from contagious diseases. We must work together to ensure that our childcare spaces are safe and healthy places for our children, families and educators.

If you're ill—stay at home.

All children and staff who are ill with fever, cold, influenza, or infectious respiratory symptoms of any kind need to stay home. Parents of children with cold or influenza-like symptoms should keep their children home. Children can return to childcare of 24 hours after their symptoms have ceased, without the use of fever reducing medication.

Continue to encouraging hand hygiene

As we know, little and big hands pick up germs easily, from anything they touch, and can spread those germs to objects, surfaces, food, and people. Handwashing with soap and water is still the single most effective way to reduce the spread of the illness.

Children forget about proper hand washing so practice often and teach them to wash their hands properly in a fun, relaxed way. Everyone should wash their hands more often!

When sinks for hand washing are simply not available, you may use alcohol-based hand sanitizers (ABHS) containing at least 60% alcohol. Know that this is not very effective when a child's hands are quite soiled, when coming in from outside, for example. Read labels and wash hands with sanitizer the same way you would wash with soap and water.

Six steps to proper handwashing

1. Wet hands with warm running water.
2. Apply a small amount of liquid soap. Antibacterial soap is not required.
3. Rub hands together for at least 20 seconds (sing ABC's). Rub palms, back of hands, between fingers and under nails creating a lather.
4. Rinse off all soap with running water.
5. Dry hands with a clean, disposable towel.
6. Discard the used towel in a waste container.

Children should wash their hands...

- When they arrive at the Centre before entering the program
- Before eating and drinking
- After playing outside
- After sneezing or coughing into hands
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty

Cough and sneeze etiquette:

- Cough and sneeze into an arm or tissue.

Please keep your child at home if they have any of the following symptoms: cough, fever, runny nose, respiratory symptoms, ear infections, eye infections, diarrhea, fever, lice, vomiting and any other communicable disease like chicken pox.

This prevents the spread of illness in the centre.