



Ashurst Children's Centre

Your Handbook

*Please be sure to read this handbook.
It's important that you're familiar with its contents and any
revisions that have been made.*

Updated June 2019

At A Glance

Parents/guardians can help us by:

- Calling the Centre if your child will not be attending that day;
- Calling the Centre if you will be arriving later than your regular arrival time.

Parents/guardians can be involved by:

- Joining us in the daycare for lunch or snacks with your child, or take part in the program. An observation room to watch your child play is also accessible.
- Keeping us informed of any changes in your child's life, such as new interests, likes or dislikes and any other information to help us to get to know your child and his/her needs. Our goal is to maintain consistency from the home to the Centre in as many ways as possible. Daily sharing of information is very important;
- Sharing with the children a talent that you have such as singing, playing the guitar, art, carpentry, reading or telling stories, etc. Please let us know;
- Calling us any time during the day if you wish to check on your child or if you have a question. If we can't answer the phone, please leave a message and we will return your call as soon as possible.

We look forward to getting to know your family, as we work together to provide a great experience for your child at the Ashurst Children's Centre!

If you have any questions about the information in this handbook, please feel free to contact us:

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WE WELCOME YOU!

Ashurst Children's Centre (ACC) is a licensed, community daycare with:

- Certified Infant and Toddler and Early Childhood Educators
- Spaces for 8 children ages, newborn to 3 years
- Spaces for 16 children, ages 3-6 years

We originally opened our doors in 1994 under the management of the College of New Caledonia. From operating in the old Southbank school on Southside, to the upstairs floor of the George Brown Memorial building, we've seen some changes and upgrades! In 2016, we were excited to transfer operations of ACC from CNC to Lakes District Family Enhancement Society (The Link).

We are proud to be part of the Lakes District and believe strongly in supporting our communities. One of the ways we do this is by linking with other programs:

1. The Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program offers a supportive group environment for pregnant women and new mothers. Free daycare is provided during class time for the children of the women attending this program.
2. The Link's Community Connections Program offers daycare and outreach supports for community members accessing other Link programs.
3. Supported Child Development provides additional staff for children in need of extra support. This program is offered through MCFD.

Our Staff

Our Daycare Manager is able to work on the floor, oversee staffing and plan programming due to being well supported by our dedicated & qualified staff:

- (2) ECE: Post-Basic Infant/Toddler
- (2) ECE
- (2) ECE Assistants

Mission Statement

To enhance the health and socio-economic wellbeing of individuals, children and families.

Vision

To be responsive to the diverse needs of the communities of the Lakes District through an interconnected hub of services.

Core Values

To provide:

- Respectful, inclusive services that focus on improving the quality of life for all members of our communities.
- Supportive environments that are thoughtful, non-judgmental, considerate and solution-focused.
- Reflective and dynamic practices that allow services to best meet the needs of those the Society serves.
- Dignified, respectful, caring and understanding services that ensure a welcoming environment.

Philosophy and Goals

The Link's Ashurst Children's Centre has the following philosophy, practices and goals regarding the Centre's programs and childcare:

The **children** at Ashurst Children's Centre are:

- **Accepted** as individuals, growing and learning at their own pace
- **Respected** for their diverse cultures, personalities and abilities
- **Encouraged**, through play, to reach his/her potential in all areas of development
- **Entitled** to a safe, fun and stimulating environment

The **families** at Ashurst Children's Centre are:

- **Recognized** as the most important influence in their child's life
- **Encouraged** to take an active part in their child's daycare experience
- **Respected** for their diversity

The staff will work closely with the families to provide a consistent and nurturing environment that will best meet the needs of the child.

The **staff** at Ashurst Children's Centre will:

- **Ensure** they maintain their professional development and keep informed of changes in the field of Early Childhood Education
- **Create** a work environment, which recognizes and respects their training, skill and commitment to childcare
- **Work** closely with the families to provide a consistent and nurturing environment that will best meet the needs of the child

Hours of Operation

We are open 8:15am to 4:45pm, Monday to Friday.

The Centre is closed the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Family Day
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- Victoria Day
- Canada Day
- Labour Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Remembrance Day

Other closures:

- Winter break: Dec 21, 2019 to Jan 5, 2020
- Spring break: Mar 21 to Apr 5, 2020
- Summer break: We are planning to run a summer program in 2020. Details will be announced in the spring.

In support of our staff in their pursuit of professional development and current Early Childhood practices, the Centre may be closed for two professional development days that will coincide with school district professional days. Parents will be notified ahead of time and will not be charged.

Registration

In order for your child to be permitted to attend their first day at Ashurst Children's Centre, the following forms *must be completely filled out and signed*:

1. Parent/Guardian Agreement
2. Registration
3. Immunization Record
4. Home Health Record
5. Emergency and Medical Information
6. Photo/Interview Release
7. Billing Agreement

Rates

***Please note:**

1. Payment is due by the 1st of the month for which services are being billed for.
2. No rescheduling nor refunds for days missed.
3. If the Centre closes for reasons beyond our control (i.e. power outage, severe snowstorm, etc.), fees charged will be credited on the next month's invoice.
4. For those receiving subsidy, families are responsible for paying any amounts over and above what is covered by subsidy.

Preschool room: \$5.75 per hour

Infant and Toddler Room: \$6.50 per hour

Family Rate: \$11.00 per hour for the first two children, regular rates apply thereafter

**Rates are subject to change*

Privacy and Confidentiality

Children's records are extensive and considered crucial to the program's success and children's safety. To ensure that all information regarding your child and family is kept confidential, all registration forms are stored in a locked cabinet. All of the records and information for each child are considered confidential and are only collected to meet the needs of your child and licensing requirements. Due to licensing regulations, all records for a child will be kept on file for a minimum of 2 years, after which documents will be properly disposed of.

Ashurst Children's Centre will not release any information regarding your child or family to other families in our centre or any other members of the public.

In recognition of the small size of our community, and in an effort to prevent harmful rumours, we ask that questions or concerns regarding any member of our staff be handled with discretion and care. Such matters are to be strictly directed to either our Daycare Manager or our Executive Director, and NOT to other members of daycare staff.

Parents/guardians are expected to respect the privacy of other families in our centre and their right to confidentiality, as well as the privacy and right to confidentiality of our staff members.

Enrolment

Parents/guardians are required to enroll their child into either full-time (minimum 30 hrs/wk) or part-time (less than 30 hrs/wk) care. Charges are based on: (registered hours/day * service days/month) less the Provincial Fee Reduction Initiative (FRI). The criteria for determining a rate depends on how many days per week your child is registered for in combination with how many hours per day. Fees will be reduced up to:

- \$350/month for group infant/toddler care
- \$100/month for group care for children aged 3 to Kindergarten

For more information: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/running-daycare-preschool/child-care-operating-funding/child-care-fee-reduction-initiative-provider-opt-in-status/child-care-fee-reduction-initiative-info-for-parents>

Gradual Entry

A child's enrolment process is discussed with their parent/guardian. A gradual entry process may best suit your child, which will usually be over a period of three days. This time may be lengthened or shortened in consultation with the family and the Centre Manager.

Early Transitioning

In consultation with parents/guardians, children at 30 months may be placed or transitioned to the preschool room.

Priority Policy

When a program is operating at full capacity, the priority policy is implemented. This policy is in place to ensure there are no misunderstandings when it comes to scheduling

1. Families registering for full time care take priority over requests for part time care
2. Preference will be given to siblings of children already enrolled in the Centre

Waitlist

Families will be placed on a waitlist when there are no spaces available in a program, and will be contacted when a space opens up for their child. If you wish to withdraw your place on the waitlist, we ask that you please notify us immediately out of consideration for other families waiting for a spot. Registration is on a first come, first serve basis in conjunction with the Priority Policy.

Fee Policies

As a non-profit society, we operate on a pre-payment system and rely on fees being paid in a timely manner. You will receive a monthly invoice via email two weeks prior to the payment due date. For example, the invoice for October services will be emailed by September 16th.

****Payment is due by the 1st of each month.***

Drop Ins

Invoices are sent as soon as billing information is received in The Link main office. Fees must be paid upon receipt of invoice. Failure to pay within a week of invoicing will result in a call from our Finance Manager to arrange payment. If the payment plan is not met, unfortunately we will no longer be able to provide drop-in services for your child.

Late Pick-Ups

***Please note that this policy applies to both invoiced and subsidized families.**

Our staff are scheduled based on the drop-off/pick-up times given to us at the time of registration and plan their lives accordingly.

- Being late at closing will automatically result in a charge of \$30 for any portion of an hour that the parent/guardian is late. Time will be rounded up to the nearest quarter hour.
- If being late results in The Link having to pay overtime wages to a staff member, a fee of \$30 will automatically be charged for any portion of an hour that the parent/guardian is late.

If the late pickup occurs during operational hours and **does not** result in overtime wages:

1st Time Late – verbal reminder

2nd Time Late – verbal reminder, plus extra time charged at regular rate; time rounded up (i.e. Late 5 minutes, billed for 15 minutes)

3rd Time Late – \$30 fee charged for any portion of the hour, and reported to the Executive Director

4th Time Late – Executive Director reserves the right to notify the parents/guardians that the Centre can no longer provide care for the family

Ultimately, when we notice that a particular time slot is not working, we prefer to work with the family and adjust the drop off/pick up times accordingly and whenever possible.

Late Payment Policy

If payment has not been made by:

1. ...the 7th of the month, the invoice is reissued to you as a friendly reminder.
2. ...the 15th of the month, the Administrative Assistant will make contact via email regarding payment
3. ...the 20th of the month, a \$25 Late Payment fee will be charged to your account followed by contact being made by the Finance Manager (FM) to inquire about any obstacles that may exist and will work with you to solidify payment arrangements.
4. ...end of the month, the Centre reserves the right to cancel your child's space if payment is not received by the time that was agreed upon with the Finance Manager.

Billing Adjustments

If your child misses a scheduled day due to illness, holiday, etc., the day cannot be rescheduled and money cannot be refunded.

Government Subsidy

Great news! The Province of BC implemented the Affordable Child Care Benefit (ACCB) in 2018 which raised the income cap to \$111,000. The Centre encourages all families that fall within this threshold to apply for ACCB as receipt of this benefit could dramatically lower your daycare fees. Application must be made by you; however, help will be provided by the Daycare Manager if needed.

Families are responsible for paying any differences between the subsidy amount and the amount due to the Centre.

Withdrawal

Two weeks written notice to the Daycare Manager is required when withdrawing your child from the Centre. Payment of fees for any portion of the two weeks' notice not given are required.

Guidance

Our staff will provide guidance that assists each child in learning:

- Sensitivity in their interactions with others
- Self-control
- Self-confidence and self-discipline
- Decision-making and choices

The staff will work co-operatively to ensure that our philosophy and interactions with the children remains positive, consistent and suited to the age and abilities of the child.

Families can expect the staff to:

- Model appropriate and respectful behavior
- Promote the development of positive social skills including self-esteem and self-control
- Encourage the children to understand and follow simple rules and routines
- Supervise the children at all times

Staff will strive to:

- Establish clear, consistent and simple expectations
- Provide opportunities for appropriate and positive behavior through the program and activities
- Acknowledge children's feelings
- Offer choices that are developmentally appropriate
- Demonstrate respectful affection and caring to each child
- Give verbal and non-verbal (including sign language and gestures) direction and redirection as the main way of guiding children

We encourage families to ask about guidance strategies. We are committed to working with families and to providing opportunities that will enhance knowledge of child-development and approaches to child-rearing practices.

Questions and Concerns

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to discuss questions and concerns regarding any aspect of the child care program with the Daycare Manager. If an issue arises, the goal is to resolve differences of opinion and conflict, using the conflict resolution steps outlined below.

As noted in our Privacy and Confidentiality clause, questions and concerns regarding our daycare staff members must be strictly directed to either the Daycare Manager or the Executive Director, and not to other daycare staff members. These concerns should be handled with professionalism and sensitivity and brought up for discussion solely in our offices.

Conflict Resolution Steps

The Ashurst Children's Centre places great importance on having positive relationships with the parents/guardians of the children in our centre. We are dedicated to working cooperatively with our families and staff in a caring, approachable, non-judgmental manner that encourages all parties to feel comfortable and respected. As differences of opinion and conflict do occur at times, the following conflict resolution steps have been put into place:

1. Parents/guardians are encouraged to discuss their concerns with the Daycare Manager. If you do not feel that you were understood and the results that you were looking for were not obtained, or if the parent/guardian does not feel comfortable speaking to the Daycare Manager – see step 2.
2. Refer your concern to the Executive Director (ED). The ED will try to reach a conclusion that will be satisfactory to all parties involved.

If after the above steps have been taken and you are not satisfied with the outcome, issues may be referred to the Board of Directors.

Parents/guardians have the right to receive support from an advocate of their choice throughout this process and may ask The Link for help in finding an advocate.

Under no circumstances will a complaint nor an expression of concern that has followed this process and adhered to policy result in retaliation or barriers to services.

Child Abuse/Neglect Policy

According to the Child, Family and Community Service Act, anyone suspecting child abuse/neglect has a duty to report the concern to a child welfare worker.

Daily Program – Preschool Room

8:15 – 10:00	Early morning free play During free play children choose the activities they wish to participate in.
10:00 – 10:15	Snack time
10:15 – 10:30	Group time Children sing songs, listen to stories and participate in activities with their friends.
10:30 – 11:00	Art time and quiet play
11:00 – 12:00	Outdoor play (weather permitting) If children stay indoors, gross motor activities are presented.
12:00 – 12:30	Lunch time
12:30 – 1:00	Quiet time Stories and art time, cleanup from lunch, toileting and brushing teeth.
1:00 – 1:30	Rest time Children rest and look at books. Some children may sleep.
1:30 – 2:30	Afternoon quiet play Planned activities for children while other children will continue with rest time.
2:30 – 2:45	Snack time
2:45 – 3:30	Some children depart for home, others continue with afternoon free play.
3:30 – 4:00	Afternoon free play May include stories, games, art, outdoor play, etc.

Daily Program – Infant and Toddler Program

The daily schedule is flexible according to the infant/toddler's individual needs.

Caregiving routines, including diapering and toileting, washing hands, naps, etc. are carried out according to each child's needs.

Morning Activities:

- Individual time with each child
 - Includes stories, simple games, songs, cuddling, etc.
- Group activities
 - Includes activities such as art, stories, games, puppets, songs, etc. This time is optional for toddlers to attend
- Free Play
 - Indoor play will include a wide variety of large and small motor activities including water and sand play, blocks, puzzles, stacking toys, wheel toys, etc. Activities will be presented based on each child's abilities and interests.
 - Outdoor play includes playtime in our yard or a walk in our community
- Snack Time
 - Served at approximately 10:00 a.m. and includes a variety of healthy choices
- Nap Time
 - For infants and younger toddlers as per their individual schedules
- Lunch Time
 - 11:30- 12:00 (depending on children's schedules)

Afternoon Activities:

- Nap Time
 - Children are settled, individually, into their "own" beds
- Free play and individual time similar to morning
- Preparation for home is based on each child's needs

Arrival and Departure

Arrival

Parents/Guardians are required to accompany their children to and from the ACC staff each day. When signing in your child, please indicate any special information to our staff members. By signing in, you officially sign over the care of your child.

Please advise us by telephone with as much advance notice as possible if your child is sick, not attending, arriving at a later time than usual.

Departure

The Centre closes at 4:45pm.

Please arrive with sufficient time to assist your child with leaving the Centre before or no later than their scheduled pick up time.

Late Pick Up Protocol

During operating hours, in the event that your child has not been picked up by the designated pick up time, the following process will begin:

In the event that your child has not been picked up by closing, the following process will begin:

- 1) 4:45pm the Centre is closed and no one has arrived to pick up your child,
 - a) Staff will phone parents/guardians
 - b) Staff will phone emergency contacts
 - i) If an emergency contact person came to pick up your child, a message will be left at the phone numbers for the parents/guardians
- 2) 5:15pm if your child(ren) are still at the Centre, the Daycare Manager will be called
- 3) 5:30pm if your child(ren) are still at the Centre, the Executive Director will be called

If your child(ren) are still in our care 2 hours past closing, Ministry for Children and Family Development will be called.

Release of Children

As a child care facility, our main concern is for the health and safety of the children in our care. Therefore, the children will only be released to authorized persons who are currently named on the Registration Form. Please notify the Centre in writing, text or email, if someone other than the usual person will pick up your child. The person picking up your child will be required to provide photo identification in order for our staff to verify the information and description you have given us. Your child will not be placed into the custody of anyone not properly authorized to have custody.

A child will not be placed into the care of a parent/guardian who is unable to provide safe care. In this case the alternative care person will be contacted.

***Please note:** It is very important for you to keep us up to date with your alternate emergency numbers, changes in work phone number, home/cell phone numbers and new address.

Items for Parents/Guardians To Supply

***Please note:** All clothing, lunch kits and personal belongings should be clearly labelled with your child's name.

- Complete change of clothing
- Indoor shoes or non-skid slippers
- Appropriate outdoor clothing
(**winter** – warm hat, snow pants, mitts, lined boots)
(**summer** – hat, sunscreen and a light jacket)
- Daily nutritious and complete lunches (please refer to the section on Nutrition)
- Diapers for your infant/toddler – a supply of disposable diapers can be stored in the child's cubby area in the bathroom
- Formula, cereal and/or jars of baby food for your infant – a supply can be stored in the Centre's kitchen

Clothing and Possessions

Children should wear comfortable, washable clothing that will allow them the freedom to participate in all aspects of their program. Each child is provided with a their own "cubbie" where they may keep their personal belongings. Please do not allow your child to wear or bring expensive jewelry or other valuables as they may get lost or broken.

Nutrition

Eating nutritious food is an important part of a child's day. Food provided by the Centre will be selected with Canada/Indigenous Food Guide requirements. Please inform staff of any food restrictions/allergies or changes in your child's food intake.

The families will:

- Provide nutritious lunches for their child
- Provide infant and toddler milk and formula
- Provide any other food the infant needs for the day such as pabulum, rice cereal, prepared foods

Each lunch may contain a main course, a fruit or vegetable and a small dessert.

Main course ideas

Mac & cheese
soup
bagel with cheese
yogurt/granola cups
pizza
sandwiches
meats noodles/rice
potato salad
cheese and crackers

Fruit or Veg. ideas

oranges
grapes
carrot sticks with dip
watermelon cubes
celery sticks
banana
raisins and apple
fruit cup
cherry tomatoes
apples

Dessert ideas

fig/fruit filled cookies
apple sauce
yogurt
oatmeal cookies
granola bar (not choc. dipped)
apple crisp
fruit cup
peanut butter cookies
berry pie
muffins

Please Note: Staff will not give any candy, chocolate, chips, pop, fruit rollups or other “fruit” shapes included in your child’s lunch kit.

The Centre will:

- Provide nutritious mid-morning and mid-afternoon snacks and drinks
- Provide a beverage at lunch time (milk or water)
- Provide ice packs to keep lunches cool when they cannot be refrigerated due to lack of space

Staff will:

- Encourage children to eat a variety of foods
- Be sensitive to individual food preferences, cultural preferences and any restrictions or allergies
- Provide sufficient time to eat
- Not force a child to eat
- Heat prepared lunches that are sent in a microwave safe dish

Field Trips

Taking fieldtrips is part of our regular programming here at ACC, particularly spontaneous trips to the library, parks and other locations within walking distance. The purpose is to provide fun, educational and new experiences for the children. Parents/guardians are required to sign a permission form in the Parent/Guardian Agreement in order for your child to participate.

Health and Illness

To protect your child and other children, we encourage all families to have their child immunized before attending the Ashurst Children’s Centre. A health record will be required upon admission.

While we are sensitive to the stress that illness may cause for families, we are not licensed to care for children when they are ill. Please keep your child at home or make alternate arrangements, if your child has any of the following:

- A fever over 39 degrees Celsius (102 degrees Fahrenheit)
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- A communicable disease
- A skin infection or an undiagnosed rash
- A contagious infection, including pink eye
- An illness that prevents participation in all program activities including outdoor play
- An acute cold with fever, runny nose and eyes, coughing and sore throat

If your child becomes ill during the day, we will first attempt to contact you to pick up your child. If you are unavailable, we will contact your emergency contact(s) to arrange pick up.

Parents/guardians will inform staff at the Centre, and the staff will notify parents/guardians, within 24 hours of a diagnosis of a serious illness or contagious disease of a communicable nature in the family, or the Centre. Children must be free from symptoms of illness or have a Doctor or Medical Health Officer approval before returning to the Centre. Ultimately, the care of the child is the parent/guardian’s responsibility.

Centre Closure and Emergency Procedures

Closure Due to Power Outage

If a power outage occurs during operating hours, we will wait one hour before we begin to phone parents/guardians to come and pick up their children. If parents/guardians cannot be reached, emergency contacts will be phoned to arrange pick up and a message will be left at the parent/guardian's primary number as to who picked up your child.

Closure Due to Fire

It is our policy that fire drills be practiced regularly at our Centre. Children practice to line up in an orderly fashion and be led outside by their teachers to Subway.

- All children lined up in an orderly fashion
- First attendance check
- Children are led outside while the Daycare Manager (or Assistant D/C Manager in the absence of the Daycare Manager) checks all areas of the Centre before leaving in order to ensure that everyone is out of the facility
- Once outside, DM/ADM will call 911
- Second attendance check at Subway
- Once informed that it is safe to do so, staff will begin contacting parents/guardians to come and pick up their children

Closure Due to Extreme Weather Conditions

In the event of extreme weather conditions, the Centre will close early, and in some instances, not open its doors. This is done to ensure the safety of the children, their families and our staff. Parents/guardians will be informed as soon as possible regarding closure. In the event of an early closure time, parents/guardians will be required to pick up their children at that time. If parents/guardians are unable to pick up their children at the specified time, we ask that you make alternate arrangements, and that the Centre is informed as quickly as possible regarding these arrangements.

***It's critical to keep us up to date with any changes to your:**

1. Home and cell phone numbers
2. Residential address
3. Work location and the phone number
4. Alternate emergency contacts (names & numbers)