



Ashurst Children's Centre

Your Handbook

Sept 2022 – June 2023

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

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:

- 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 Center (ACC) is a licensed, community daycare with:

- Certified Infant and Toddler and Early Childhood Educators
- Spaces for children ages, newborn to 3 years
- Spaces for 24 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 organizations/programs.

- The Canada Prenatal Nutrition program offers a supportive group environment for pregnant women and new mothers.
- The Link's community Connections Program offers daycare and outreach supports for community members accessing other Link programs
- 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:

- ECE: Post Basic Infant/Toddler & Special Needs (2)
- ECE: Post Basic Infant/Toddler (1)
- ECE: (1)
- ECE: Assistant (1)
- Responsible Adult (1)

Mission

The Lakes District Family Enhancement Society (LDFES) is a community-based organization that offers services that facilitate the advancement of families, individuals, children, and youth in the Lakes District and, as such, the society is responsive to the diverse needs of residents and the community.

Vision

To be responsive to the diverse needs of the communities of the Lakes District through 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
- A commitment to reconciliation and decolonization through the adoption of the United Nations declaration on the rights of Indigenous peoples, setting out concrete actions on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action and to learn from and support local Indigenous communities.

Philosophy and Goals

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

The **Children** at Ashurst Children's Center are:

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

The **Families** at Ashurst Children's Center 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 families to provide a consistent and nurturing environment that will best meet the needs of the child.

The **Staff** at Ashurst Children's Center 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

The Centre is open 8:00 am to 4:30pm, Monday to Friday.

The Centre is closed the following holidays:

- Labour Day
- National Day of Truth and Reconciliation (Sept 30)
- Thanksgiving
- Remembrance Day
- Family Day
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- Victoria Day

Other closures:

- Winter Break: December 19 – January 2, 2023 (Reopen Tuesday Jan 3, 2023)
- Spring Break: March 20 – March 31, 2023

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 91 professional days. Parents will be notified ahead of time and will not be charged.

- Professional Development Day - closure Oct 21st 2022

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. Records and information kept for each child 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 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 and confidentiality of other families in our Centre6+, as well as the privacy and right to confidentiality of our staff members.

Registration

In order for your child to be permitted to attend their first day at Ashurst Children's Centre, the following forms *must be 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, pandemic 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: \$6.25 per hour

Infant and Toddler Room: \$7.00 per hour

Family Rate: \$12.00 per hour for the first two children, regular rates apply thereafter

**Rates are subject to change*

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 Policy

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 Operations Manager to arrange payment. If the payment plan is not met, late fees may be charged and we will no longer be able to provide drop-in services for your child.

Late Pick-Ups/ Early Drop-Offs

***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 staff scheduling is arranged to meet licensing requirements according to this schedule.

- Being late for a scheduled pick-up will automatically result in a minimum 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.
- Being early for a scheduled drop-off will automatically result in a minimum 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 the late pickup occurs

1st Time Late – verbal reminder

2nd Time Late – \$30 fee charged for any portion of the hour, and reported to the Executive Director

3rd 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

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 Accounting Department 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 Operations Manager 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 agree upon with the Operations Manager.

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 or Community Connections Outreach worker 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

8:00 – 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

Procedure

- Exchanges will happen at the main daycare doors. Please ring the doorbell and a staff member will greet you and your child/children.
- The same process will be followed when children are picked up; staff will greet you at the door with your child based on the time.

Parents/Guardians are required to accompany their children to and from the Centre's staff each day. When a childcare provider greets you, please indicate any special information to our staff members. At this point you have officially signed over the care of your child.

We ask that you advise us by telephone with as much advance notice as possible if your child will not be attending, or if there will be a late drop-off/pick-up.

Late Pick Up Protocol

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

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

- 1) 4:30 will phone parents/guardians
 - a) 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) 5:00pm if your child(ren) is still at the Centre, the Daycare Manager will be called
- 3) 5:15pm if your child(ren) is still at the Centre, the Executive Director will be called

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

Release of Children

As a childcare 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 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
- Will keep the fridge and microwaved sanitized with a mild bleach solution

Field Trips

Taking children on adventures is part of our regular programming at the 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 for your child to participate in any fieldtrip that requires transportation. Parents/guardians will always be notified in advance of these special trips.

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.

Staff and parents should regularly check to ensure that they (or their child) are not experiencing any symptoms of illness before coming to childcare to prevent spread of communicable diseases, within the childcare settings.

While we are sensitive to the stress that illness may cause for families, due to licensing, we are unable to care for children when they are ill. This is a directive from the Provincial Health Authority which must be strictly adhered to, without exception.

It is required that you keep your child at home or make alternate arrangements if your child has any of the following:

- An acute cold with fever, runny nose/eyes, coughing and sore throat
- A fever over 38 degrees Celsius (100 degrees Fahrenheit)
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- All communicable diseases (including respiratory and skin infections, undiagnosed rashes, pink eye etc.)
- An illness that prevents participation in all program activities including outdoor play

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.

If a child develops symptoms at home:

1. Children must remain at home if they are exhibiting symptoms of illness (including but not limited to COVID-19 symptoms)
2. Children may return to the centre once symptoms have resolved and feel well enough to return to regular activities and their fever has resolved without the use of fever-reducing medication (e.g. acetaminophen, ibuprofen).
3. If unsure or concerned about symptoms, connect with a health care provider or call 8-1-1.

If a child starts showing signs of illness and not able to participate in regular activities while attending ACC:

1. The caregiver will be notified for immediate pickup.
2. Increase air circulation in the space if possible.
3. Once the child is picked up, all surfaces will be washed and disinfected.
4. Contact public health and licensing officer if concerned.

If your child becomes ill during the day, we will first attempt to contact you to pick up your child.

Parents need to understand that they or an emergency contact will need to be able to pick up their child immediately if they start showing signs of illness.

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/Natural Disasters

*** Only upon notification from staff and in the event of evacuation, caregivers will pick up their children at this secondary location: Subway***

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

- All children lined up in an orderly fashion
- First attendance check
- Children are led outside while the Daycare Manager (or Daycare lead 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/lead 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 is 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)