

Alexandra Neighbourhood House Children's Centre



Family Handbook

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Welcome to Alexandra Children's Centres!

Introduction

This family handbook provides you with important information on Alexandra Children's Centre, from its foundational philosophy to the day-to-day operations. We encourage you to read it carefully, and save it for future reference. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to speak with any of the staff, they will gladly assist you.

Alexandra Neighbourhood House is a non-profit community service agency serving the South Surrey/White Rock community since 1916 and a member of the Association of Neighbourhood Houses of BC. We are excited to collaborate with the City of Surrey to provide qualified licensed childcare that meets and exceeds the Community Care Facilities Licensing Act of BC with licensed Early Childhood Educators who practice the Reggio Emilia approach to curriculum planning.

Our centres are open Monday to Friday with our Kensington Prairie Community Centre (KP) and our Crescent Beach (CB) locations providing service for children birth to 12 years, and our Crescent Park and Pacific Heights School locations providing care for school aged children only.



Mission Statement

Alexandra Neighbourhood House provides opportunities for people to gather, grow and build a spirit of community.

Since 1916, Alexandra Neighbourhood House has been instrumental in gathering individuals who share skills, passions and

experiences to create a vibrant, inclusive community on the Semiahmoo Peninsula.

We are committed to providing childcare programs where children are valued for their wonder and curiosity, their unique perspectives, their ability to play, and their capacity for meaningful work.

Our highly qualified staff provides a Reggio Emilia inspired approach to learning through their delight in children, an understanding of the value of play, their vision, knowledge, skills and a strong commitment to families.

We value the ability to learn and explore together, as well as from one another because at Alexandra Neighbourhood House we are committed to supporting the community in its efforts to raise happy, confident children at our Centres.

Key Principles of the Reggio Emilia Approach



The Image of the Child

Adults see each child as competent, full of potential and active in constructing his or her own knowledge through interactions with others. Adults try to understand as fully as possible, the child's viewpoint and abilities (the child's culture.)

Symbolic Representation

The Reggio Emilia approach can be seen as an extension of the "whole language" approach, except that in addition to spoken and written language, an entire array of creative media is considered as "other languages". Through all these different forms of expression, children develop mental concepts that encourage them to express themselves and enhance their creative, social and cognitive development.

The Role of the Environment

Through conscious use of space, colour, natural light, displays of children's work and attention to nature and detail, the environment serves as another teacher. It conveys to children, parents and educators how the space is to be used, and that their presence is valued and respected. The environment serves as an invitation to enter and participate.

Education Based on Interaction and Collaboration

Education is experienced as a continuous interaction. This takes place with exchanges between children, parents and teachers, children and children, teacher and teacher, teacher and parent, parent and teacher, and again between children and teacher in a circular process. School then takes the form of an educational community where each individual is both learner and teacher, learning together as contributors to the educational process.

Role of the Educators

Educators facilitate the children's ability to represent what they know and imagine. It is not enough to learn by doing, educators must facilitate by talking and thinking about what is being done. Educators mediate between the children's current understanding and what they are on the threshold of understanding, by reviewing assessing and helping.

The Importance of Time

Projects and themes follow the children’s interest and development of concepts. Projects and activities are not “one-shot deals”. Rather, they build upon one another over time, as the children “revisit” their original work and ideas, refining them further through new experiences, activities and forms of expression. Time is also important in building sustainable and collaborative relationships

The Role of Parents

The educational process involves three equally important participants: children, educators, and parents. Parents have the right – and should be encouraged – to be active contributors in their children’s activities, classrooms, school, and development. The school welcomes parent involvement in a wide range of ways. Parents participate by giving time and talents and serve as an advocate for the school in community politics. *



*The Merrill-Palmer Institute of Wayne State University National Association for the Education of Young children, 1993 Annual Conference

Daily Schedule & Classroom Routines

Each day children have opportunities to participate in a wide variety of age-appropriate activities. A consistent, but flexible daily schedule allows the children to know what to expect each day.

Self –Directed Play

Play is a vital part of a child’s development and through play, children have the opportunity to explore, create, discover, learn, and grow. During self-directed times, children choose their own activities such as art, puzzles, sand/water tables, dramatic play, blocks, transportation, table toys, or books. The staff observe the children at play, providing little direction and allowing them the joy of learning and discovering at their own pace.

Documentation

Throughout the day children have opportunities to share their learning experiences with each other. Staff assist the children in documenting their activities and display the children’s drawings and creations within the classrooms and through

Facebook postings. This allows families to join the learning experience and understand what their children are participating in.



Art

Opportunities to participate in various arts and crafts activities are available each day. The focus is placed on how the children use a variety of materials rather than on the end product. Through the Reggio approach, projects are often developed over time until the child has determined the final outcome. Art can also incorporate different focuses including the alphabet, colours, shapes, music and movement, and drama activities.

Meal / Snack Routines

Through snack and meal times there are numerous ways to share cultural traditions with one another and encourage healthy, nutritious eating habits. We provide two nutritious snacks on a daily basis and ask that you provide a nutritious lunch for your child. We eat “family style” to encourage dialogue and conversations between educators and children. We also provide opportunities that allow the children to learn about how to create a variety of foods to share with one another.

We are an “Allergy Aware” centre, and ask that all meals sent from home be nut-free. We work closely with families, whose children have allergies or dietary restrictions, to ensure the safety of all children. If your child has allergies or food sensitivities, please ensure that when completing your registration forms, that all allergies and food sensitivities are noted. Where medical intervention is required if an allergy reaction may occur, we will require additional information signed off by your family doctor.

Nap/Quiet Time

To ensure that your child has a successful day, time is set aside to rest and rejuvenate. We work closely with families to determine the length of naps for their child. Daily quiet times for each child allow them an opportunity to play independently without interruptions from others.

Outdoor/Gym

Children need time each day to exercise, use their large muscles, and have opportunities to be involved in “risky play”. We provide opportunities for this through a variety of equipment in our outdoor/gym play spaces. Exploration of this equipment promotes a healthy physical body by developing flexibility, endurance, and strength.

We spend a minimum of 60 minutes outside every day to provide opportunities for fresh air that children need to stay healthy. Please ensure that your child is dressed to be able to participate in our outdoor activities, which includes sunhat and sunscreen for sunny days, and winter mitts, jackets and boots for cold and rainy days.



Risky Play

“Risky play” provides children with opportunities to encounter or create uncertainty, unpredictability, and potential hazards as part of their play. We do not put children in danger or serious harm. Good risks and hazards in play activities engage and challenge children’s creativity and imagination while supporting their growth, learning and development. By providing “risky play” opportunities in a controlled environment, children learn how to:

- judge risks
- problem solve
- gain experience needed to face the unpredictable nature of the world around them
- learn vital life skills
- build their self-confidence.

Screen Time

While technology and screens are becoming an every day part of our lives, there is so much for children to learn and explore from hands-on activities. Staff, however, use iPads and computers to document the children’s learning and will on occasion, invite children to work alongside them using these tools to research and assist in telling their learning stories. Screen time for the children is limited to 30 minutes or less per day and children under 2 years of age will have no access to screen time.

Bathroom Routines

As children grow, their need for assistance in the bathroom varies greatly. For infants and toddlers, we request parents to provide enough diapers for the child for each day. When toilet training begins, we work closely with each child and their family to make this transition as smooth as possible. We ask that you provide a full change of clothes for each child to be kept at the centre at all times for the occasional accidents.

Parking

During the day our parking areas, can be very busy, so we ask that you carefully escort your child into and out of the building, reminding them of safety rules around vehicles.

Cubbies

Cubbies are accessible by the children throughout the day. We ask that you label anything that is left in the cubby and clean out your child's belongings at the end of each week. Please do not leave any valuables and/or medications in your children's cubby as the children have access to their cubby throughout the day.

Personal Toys

One soft cuddly toy is permitted at naptime. All other toys should be kept at home to prevent them from being lost or broken. From time to time we may have a specific item that we request children bring from home, which may pertain to a particular colour, shape, or other object that we are learning about. Please ensure that these items are clearly labeled with your child's name.



Birthdays

Each child's birthday is a special event. Staff will work with each birthday child to plan what they would like to do for their special day. Children will help prepare a special snack of their choosing on their special day with their educators and friends. We ask that no outside food be brought to the centre due to allergies and food sensitivities.

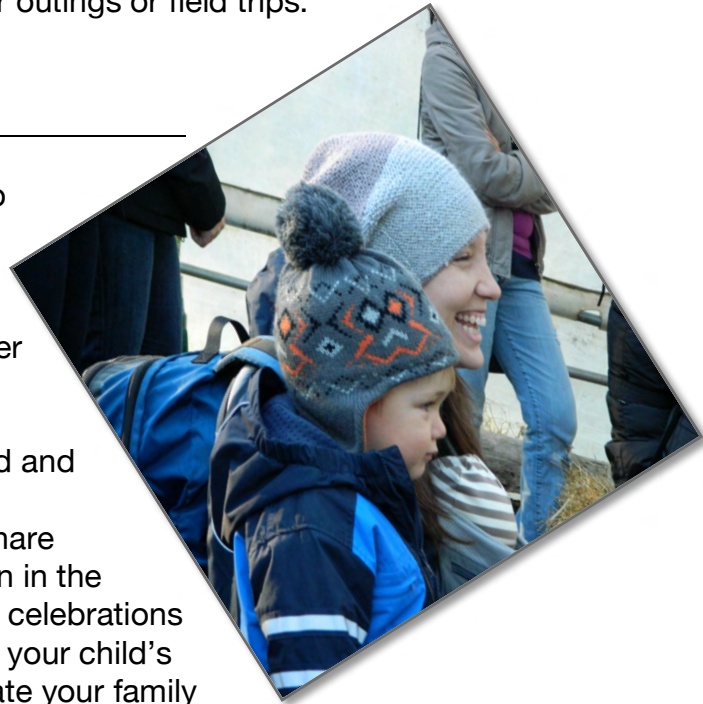
Field Trips

Our community has a number of exciting educational and fun adventures for children to experience. We go on walks in our neighbourhoods, and occasionally go on field trips into the community. These neighbourhood outings correspond with the themes we are exploring. For community field trips, we ask parents/guardians to participate, as well as complete a permission form consenting to participating in the outing. As all staff assist with supervision on community field trips, there is no alternate care provided for children who do not go. Parents are welcome to join us for any of our outings or field trips.

Family Events & Cultural Celebrations

Families are an important part of a child's life, so throughout the year, events are available for you and your family to participate in. These provide important opportunities for you to get to know the staff, other families, as well as the wider community.

Cultural holidays can be very important to a child and he/she may want to share their anticipation and excitement with others. Families are invited to share aspects of their holidays/culture with the children in the classroom. Meaningful, respectful, and inclusive celebrations are the goal of our program. Please consult with your child's teacher as to how we might be able to incorporate your family celebrations as part of the classroom learning opportunities.



Guidance

Our belief is that all children are capable, competent and confident. Our educators encompass this belief while supporting the children to explore the relationships within their lives.

Goals

- To encourage self confidence
- To encourage responsible decision-making and problem-solving skills
- To develop respect for self, others, and the environment

Methods

- To model appropriate behaviour
- To provide simple, clean, and consistent limits and expectations

- To focus on the child's behaviour
- To structure the classroom environment and activities to avoid potential challenges
- To reinforce appropriate means
- To offer appropriate choices
- To use logical and neutral consequences
- To work on problem-solving strategies
- To provide re-direction to children where appropriate



Children are treated with dignity and respect as individuals, and therefore under no condition will force or humiliation be used in their care, this includes: shoved, hit, shaken, spanked or subjected to other forms of corporal punishment. We do not subject children to degrading or harsh treatment whether verbal, emotional or physical.

We do not punish children. We will not confine, restrain, nor deprive a child of food, rest or use of the toilet. We do ask parents to assist us if we are having challenges with a child's interactions, and request you to work with us as a team to reinforce strategies that are mutually agreed to.

Behavioural Management

When a child's behaviour becomes challenging for the staff and/or other children, we meet with the family and prepare an individual care plan that is specific to the child. We bring in appropriate community resources to assist the family and the centre in providing support and intervention for the child. This individual care plan is closely monitored and updated annually, with the parents being consulted on a regular basis. It is vital that in challenging situations, parents and staff work closely together to ensure consistency for the child.



Child Abuse

Children depend on others for their safety and wellbeing, and have right to be protected from abuse and neglect. Section 7 of the Family and Child Services Act requires staff to report any suspicions or disclosures of abuse. It is the responsibility of the Ministry of Child and Family Development to investigate and decide if abuse has occurred.

Health and Safety

In the event of a serious accident or sudden illness, staff will call an ambulance (911) immediately and make every effort to contact the parent or guardian concurrently. Be sure to provide accurate up to date information on your child's registration form, including an emergency contact person you are reasonably sure can be contacted if you are not available.

It is the parent's responsibility to notify the center regarding any changes to contact information.

In order to provide a healthy play environment for all participants, please DO NOT bring your child if he/she is ill with any of the following symptoms:

- Chills
- Coughing
- Runny nose
- Stomach ache
- Nausea
- Diarrhea
- Skin rashes/sores
- Fever
- Communicable diseases
- Sore throat
- Earache

If your child becomes ill or unduly upset while at our program, we will telephone you or your designated emergency contact person so your child may go home to rest comfortably.

The staff reserves the right to judge when your child is unable to manage within our program and when they may return.

Medication

We prefer not to give medication to children while they are at the centre. Medication of any kind, including natural medications, will not be administered unless ordered by a physician. You are required to sign a daily consent form before we accept responsibility to administer medication.

Medication must be in the original pharmaceutical container and be accompanied by a doctor's instruction. Non-prescription medication will not be given (i.e. Tylenol), unless special circumstances exist that are supported by a letter from your doctor and confirmed by the staff. Though the staff will do their best to administer medication according to instruction, Alexandra Children's Centre will not be held liable.

In accordance with the Child Care Facilities Licensing Act, all medications will be kept in a locked container, with the exception of Epi-pens, which are kept in classroom first aid kits in accordance with the Child Care Facilities Licensing Regulations.

Allergies

Alexandra Children's Centres recognizes the potentially serious consequences of children with allergies. It is our commitment to make every reasonable effort to reduce the risk to children with severe allergies or anaphylaxis by creating an environment where children, staff and families cooperate and understand the risk of severe allergy reactions. If your child has been diagnosed with allergies, please ensure that your child's registration form notes any potential allergens and reactions. An additional medical information form signed off by your family physician may be required, if your child requires an Epi-pen.



We are a "NUT AWARE" facility, and ask that no nuts or nut products be brought to the centre at any time. However, our programs share the space with other community programs and partners, and we are unable to guarantee a "nut free" environment at all times.

Incident Reports

Even in the best childcare programs, incidents of injury are unfortunately inevitable. At Alexandra Neighbourhood House Children's Centre the goal is to keep injuries to a minimum. To maintain the health, well being and safety of all

those at the centre, and to maintain a consistent plan of action, the following incident report policy has been adopted:

Parents are notified immediately of any health or safety incident that might have occurred. Any minor incident such as a scrape or bruise will be recorded in each classroom's logbook. A critical incident report will be filed and reported to our Child Care Licensing officer any time outside medical attention is required. Child Care licensing regulations define a critical incident as, any situation where a child is injured, causes injury to another child or teacher, or is sick while in a childcare centre and requires medical attention.

Parents will be notified immediately if an incident occurs. The staff will complete the critical incident report detailing the illness or injury. The incident report will be forwarded to the Community Care Facilities Licensing Office and parents will also receive a copy.

Clothing

Your child should be brought to the centre in clothes that are suitable for play. A child must feel free to engage in activities without worrying about getting dirty. Rubber soled shoes are required at all times. Your child must be prepared for outdoor play every day. A jacket, nylon/plastic pants, and boots must remain at the centre at all times. Mittens and warm hats are required in the winter, and sun hats and sunscreen are needed when the weather turns sunny. Please also keep a change of clothes (shirt, pants/shorts, socks and underwear) in your child's cubby AT ALL TIMES.



Home-School Connections

Family involvement is at the core of our programs. We advocate working together in a spirit of partnership with families. This means that we value your input, ask for your suggestions and ideas, and we engage in problem-solving together. You are encouraged to share information that can be helpful to educators in working with your child.

If at any time you have a question or concern about our program, please speak directly to staff so that we can work together to ensure that our approach to caring for the children is at the centre of our work.

Educators encourage daily contact with families. Arrival and departure are good times for a quick update about your child's day. Longer meetings/conferences, or phone conversations about your child, can be scheduled at a mutually convenient time. Other forms of communication utilized by the centre are newsletters, Facebook postings, flyers, emails, and notes about the centre's activities.

Communication with our families is crucial and will be sent regularly via email and on our Facebook pages. Please ensure that you are reading your emails/newsletter carefully so that you are aware of events scheduled at the centre.

Staffing

All staff working at Alexandra Children's Centre undergo an extensive hiring process which includes a formal interview, reference checks, and criminal record checks. Child Care Licensing regulates our child: teacher ratios, as well as level of education/certification required for each classroom. We maintain these standards at all times.



Our goal is to provide consistency for the children within each classroom, and we carefully consider our staff placements and schedules. While occasional adjustments are required to staff placements within classrooms, our approach ensures we are considering the needs of all children in our care. It is a usual practice within childcare settings to have staff move between classrooms to support breaks and coverage issues, which allows the children to become familiar with our entire team. When it becomes time for children to transition between classrooms, the children are already familiar with their new teacher.

People in the Classroom

Throughout the year a variety of professionals, students and volunteers visit our centre. These people may contribute to aspects of our program, observing students as part of a practicum or sharing a skill or talent with the children. All community volunteers must complete a Volunteer Application Package and

complete a criminal record check. If you ever have a question regarding people within the classroom, please feel free to speak with a teacher.

Centre Operations

Alexandra Neighbourhood House Children's Centre is open Monday to Friday, except to following statutory holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Family Day
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- Victoria Day
- Canada Day
- BC Day
- Labour Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Remembrance Day
- Christmas Eve (Centre closes at 1PM)
- Christmas Day
- Boxing Day

The centre is also closed for one staff professional development day, which is held on the Friday prior to the September long weekend, as well as 4pm on the Monday afternoon prior to Christmas for our annual staff gathering.



Hours of Operation

Kensington Prairie - 7:30AM to 5:30PM.

Crescent Beach - 7:30AM to 5:30PM.

Don Christian Rec Centre - 7:30AM to 5:30PM. **Opening Fall 2021.**

Crescent Park and Pacific Heights schools - 7:30 - 8:30am & 2:30 - 5:30pm - **School Age Care only**

Children adjust well to their day when they are able to acquaint themselves with the centre and their friends at their own pace. Please phone the centre by 9:30AM if your child will be absent for the day so that staff are able to finalize their daily plans.

Arriving & Departing

Your child must be signed in every day and escorted into a staffed classroom. Any specific instructions pertaining to your child can be left with a staff member. Please help your child place their personal belongings in their cubby and on their coat hook.



A smooth transition to home occurs when both the educators and parents work alongside the child. The end of the day is a great time to check in with your child's teacher to see how their day went. Please help your child to clean up what they have been involved with, then gather their belongings from their cubby and coat hook prior to going home.

Pick Up & Release of Your Child

Your child must be signed out in our daybook each day. Only those people whom you have authorized on your child's registration form are allowed to take your child from the centre. If you do require pick-up by someone not listed on your child's registration form, we ask that if possible, you provide the centre with the name of the person who will pick up your child. Staff will request photo ID and verify information with your child's registration form before releasing your child. Please let those people you authorize know, that they will be asked for photo identification before they are permitted to take your child out of the centre.

It is the staff's responsibility to ensure that they do not release a child to an unauthorized person, or to someone who is unable to provide adequate care for the child. If the child appears to be at risk, the staff will either call another authorized person to pick up the child or will contact the Ministry of Child and Family Development.

School Pick Up and Drop Off

School transportation services are provided to the following local schools.

Kensington Prairie services:

- Pacific Heights
- Rosemary Heights

Crescent Park SAC services:

Crescent Park school

Crescent Beach services

- Ocean Cliff

Pacific Heights SAC services:

Pacific Heights school

If transportation to school is required, children must be at the centre by 8:00am. They are then transported in Alex House vehicles and/or staff vehicles to their school. Staff remain at the school until school supervision is underway. Kindergarten children are escorted directly to their classroom door, while children in Grade 1 or higher are empowered to head to their own classroom

independently. Throughout the school year, we work closely with the kindergarten children to build their understanding and confidence so that they are eventually able to walk directly to and from their classroom on their own.

At the end of the day, staff will pick up Kindergarten children directly from their classroom. They then head to the designated meeting area at the school to gather the rest of the children prior to loading into the vehicles and heading to the centre.

If your children does not require pick up from the school, it is essential that parents notify staff prior to 2:00 pm so we can ensure that we have an accurate headcount prior to leaving the school. Please ensure your child knows to go to the office if they have concerns about their pick up. While we attempt to leave enough time to pick up children from school, there could be traffic emergencies preventing timely pick ups, and the child should go to the office and wait.

In the event of snow and poor road conditions we will be unable to provide transportation to and from school. We will post a message on our Facebook pages, and make every effort to contact families via text or phone call. If you are unsure as to whether we will be providing transportation, please call the centre to confirm.



School Closures and Play Away Day Camps

Our school age care program operates year round. For school closure days, such as spring break, winter break, as well as school professional days and early dismissals, we are prepared to care for your child for the full day. These full days of care are included in your monthly fees- September to June. For the summer months, fees increase to full day rates.

Play Away Day Camps are held during spring break and summer months at Crescent Beach. This provides opportunities for the children to interact with other local community children in a variety of activities that inspire creativity, curiosity, and exploration of their community. Summer day camps are lead by camp counsellors and supported by our child care staff. Transportation to and from Kensington Prairie is provided.

Emergency Preparedness

Each time we hear of a natural disaster, we are reminded of the importance of being prepared. We practice both fire and earthquake drills on a regular basis, to allow your child to become familiar with emergency procedures. The safety of the children is our utmost priority.

In the event that there is an actual emergency, we will ensure that the children are in the designated safe areas and once everyone is accounted for, we will begin to contact parents/guardians as soon as possible. Please do not call the centre, as this will tie up our phone lines. **WE WILL CALL YOU.**

We will also post notifications and information on our classroom Facebook pages. Staff will remain with the children until each child is picked up by you, or your authorized emergency contact person. We will be prepared to care for your child for 72 hours, but would encourage you to arrange to pick up your child as soon as possible, so that they can be at home where they are most familiar and comfortable.

For our families with school aged children, if an emergency occurs during school hours and your child is at school, you will be required to pick up your child directly from school. We are not able to pick up your child from school in an emergency situation.

Power outage

When a power outage occurs, staff conduct a head count of all the children in their classroom and scan the space for any potential hazards that may be of issue. Every effort is made to ensure the children are safe and remain calm. Each site/classroom has emergency backup flashlights, lanterns, etc. If for some reason the power outage is anticipated to continue for an extended length of time, and ensuring the safety of the children within the facility becomes challenging (classrooms become too dark or cold), we will contact parents/guardians to arrange for the pick up of your child.

Fire

In the event of an actual fire, children and staff will evacuate the building heading to the designated safety area and will follow the directions of the firefighters and other emergency personnel. If required, we will begin our evacuation procedure as noted below.

Earthquake

Earthquake drills are practiced on a semi- annual basis. All children and staff are instructed to DROP, COVER, and HOLD ON. Every effort is made to find a place under a table or in a doorway to ensure the safety of the children. This however,

will depend upon which classroom the children are in, or if the children are in the gym or outside spaces. Staff then gather the children, and conduct a head count to ensure that everyone is accounted for. Once staff have ensured that all the children are safe they will then conduct a safety scan of the classroom/building, and if it is deemed necessary, children and staff will evacuate to their designated safety area on site or begin our site evacuation procedures as noted below.



Evacuation

If for some reason our sites are deemed dangerous and the safety of the children is at risk, we will evacuate our sites.

Kensington Prairie – children will be taken to Pacific Heights Elementary School at 17148 26 Ave. Surrey, or alternately Grandview Aquatic Centre located at 16855 24 Ave, Surrey

Crescent Beach – children will be taken to Crescent Beach United Church at 2756 127 Street, Surrey or alternately St. Mark’s Anglican Church located at 12953 20 Ave Surrey

Don Christian Rec Centre – Children will be taken to Don Christian Elementary School – 6256 184 Str. Surrey or alternately Cloverdale Baptist Church 18685 64 Ave Surrey

Crescent Park School - children will be taken to Crescent Beach United Church at 2756 127 Street, Surrey or alternately St. Mark’s Anglican Church located at 12953 20 Ave Surrey

Pacific Heights School – children will be taken to Kensington Prairie Community Centre at 16824 32 Ave. Surrey or alternately Grandview Heights Aquatic Centre located at 16855 24 Ave. Surrey.

Staff will use agency and personal vehicles to transport children if required. Emergency backpacks will be taken to the evacuation sites and once the children are settled, staff will begin to contact families by phone. They will also send out a Facebook message to all families with further instructions. Please do not call the centre, as this will tie up our phone lines. **WE WILL CALL YOU.**

Please note the safety of the children is our utmost priority, so contacting individual parents/guardians, may take some time.

If we have left the site, and were not able to contact you prior to your arrival at Kensington Prairie and Crescent Beach, we will be sure to post clear signage to let you know that we have evacuated to our alternate safetysite.



Photographs / Facebook groups

We frequently take pictures of the children to document their day within the program. This allows parents to see the various activities and learning opportunities that the children participate in. Children are at the centre for long periods of time and this is one way for parents to be a part of their day. As a part of the enrolment application, you will be required to sign a waiver. If you do not wish your child's photo to be taken, please make Centre staff aware of this.

Photos are often posted on our Facebook private group pages. These private groups are classroom based, and closely monitored by staff to ensure the privacy of the children and families. If you do not want your child's picture posted on Facebook, please notify the staff.

Enrolment

To register with Alexandra Neighbourhood House Children's Centre, we first require families place their name on our interest list (available online at www.alexhouse.net). Once this is complete you will receive an invitation to attend an Open House. Open House tours take place once a month, alternating between our sites. After attending the open house tour you can confirm your desire to register in our program by completing a waitlist form. This form is kept on file until a space becomes available. Each open house includes a tour of the facility, an overview of the program and philosophies and will allow families the opportunity to meet some of the staff, and ask questions about our programs.

Once a placement becomes available, our child care manager will contact you, and will request from you a registration form completed in full, a \$100 non-refundable registration fee, along with a cheque for the first month's fees which are required to guarantee your child's placement within the program. Information on the registration form must include authorized emergency contact people, your child's care card number, medical information, and info regarding immunization records. Your signature is required on your child's form,

confirming that you have read and agree to the policies and procedures stated in this handbook.

Gradual Entry

The first days in a new childcare facility are extremely important to a child's feeling of security and acceptance. When separation is handled well, it helps both you and your child adjust to this new environment and experience. We implement the following mandatory gradual entry process for all new children (0-5 years of age) to make this an easy and positive transition for all concerned.

Day 1 – 9-11AM

Day 2 – 8:30AM – after lunch

Day 3 – Your regular drop-off time – until after naptime

Day 4 - Regular day - drop-off and pick-up as needed



Monthly Fees

Monthly fees are due on the first of each month, paid by direct debit or post-dated cheques (a minimum of 6 months are required). Cheques should be made payable to 'Alexandra Neighbourhood House'. Please complete the preauthorized debit (PAD) agreement from and submit a 'VOID' cheque with your completed registration form.

Any requests for additional days of care must be confirmed by the site supervisors with the "Extra Day of Care Request" form and payment submitted prior to the day of care. We can not guarantee any extra days of care beyond the days that your child is registered for.

Any NSF cheques returned to the centre will be charged a \$25 service fee.

Included in your monthly fee are daily food costs (two nutritional snacks). Family rates for three or more children are available. Please check with the child care manager to see if you qualify for the family rate.

We issue one annual income tax receipt, which you can declare as a childcare expense when doing your tax return. If you have moved or withdrawn from the centre, please contact us so that we can verify your address and issue a receipt in a timely fashion.

Monthly fees are based on a 52-week of care and an average of 20 days of care per month. Payment is required even when a child is absent due to illness or

vacation, or if the centre is closed due to scheduled holidays or weather related emergencies.

We accept children on a full-time or part-time basis. Part-time children must attend on the same days each week and must include either a Monday and/or a Friday in their days of care.

Fees are reviewed on an annual basis. Any increase in fees takes into consideration increased costs to delivery of programs, typically related to increased staffing and food costs. Fee schedules run from April 1 to March 31 each year.

Child Care Subsidies

We also work closely with those families who access the BC Child Care Subsidy program, if financial assistance is required. Parents are responsible for ensuring that we receive the appropriate childcare authorization forms and for any portion of fees over and above the daycare subsidies.

Please check the following website: www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare and follow the prompts to see if you qualify. You must submit your subsidy application directly to the Ministry of Children and Families. If you qualify, and an approval has been noted, please inform the centre immediately and ensure the centre has the required documentation.

ALL SUBSIDY DOCUMENTATION MUST BE AT THE CENTRE BY THE FIRST OF EACH MONTH OR WE ASSUME THAT YOU ARE COVERING YOUR FULL MONTHLY FEE ON YOUR OWN

Withdrawal Notice

We require 30 days written notice of your child's withdrawal from our centre. Withdrawal with less than 30 days notice is subject to full fees. Please ask staff for a withdrawal form.

Absences

If your child is absent due to illness or away on vacation, the full monthly fee is still required to maintain your child's placement.



Late Pick Up

All our locations close promptly at 5:30pm. If you anticipate arriving after the closing time, please call to notify staff. If we have not received a phone call 15

minutes after closing, your authorized emergency contact will be asked to pick up your child and the child care manager will be contacted. If your child has not been picked up within the half hour after closing, it is presumed that the child has been neglected and staff are required to contact the Ministry of Children and Families - Protective Services.

The first time each month that a child is left past closing, grace will be granted within the first 15 minutes. Additional care provided 16 – 30 minutes past closing or on subsequent late pick-ups, will incur the following late fees:

- 0 – 15 minutes past closing - \$5
- at 16 minutes past closing and each subsequent minute - \$1 per minute

You will be asked to sign a late pick-up form to verify both your pick-up time and your agreement to pay the charge incurred.

Emergency Closures

In the event of weather or disaster related closure a message will be placed on our StoryPark app community notification, and every effort to contact families will be made. It is vital that your contact information is current. Local television and radio stations provide updated closure information when applicable: CKNW 98, BCTV Global, and CTV. If you are unsure as to whether the centre is open, please call the centre to verify.

Dismissal

We want to ensure that all children are safe and comfortable in our centre, so we reserve the right to cancel your child's placement at the centre for any of the following reasons:

- Late payment of fees
- Non-compliance with Alexandra Neighbourhood House Children's Centre policies and procedures
- Failure to work with the staff to meet the child's needs
- Inappropriate placement of child

It is our intent to work closely together in every way possible to give your child a secure, enriching environment at home and at the centre. Let us communicate your child's needs, development and accomplishments. All staff members are available to you to discuss any concerns regarding your child.

