

ARCADIAN EARLY LEARNING

Preschool

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Welcome to Arcadian Early Learning Preschool

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Thank you for choosing Arcadian Early Learning Centre for your child's preschool experience. We welcome you and your family to our centre.

Each child comes to our centre with his or her individual temperament, family structure, cultural heritage, language and learning ability. At Arcadian we value and respect each child's unique sense of self. We believe children thrive when they are given abundant opportunities to play in a creative supportive environment.

We encourage you to read this Parent Handbook and begin a dialogue with staff about the preschool program we offer. We are very interested in understanding your child's interests, learning style and temperament.

Our preschool program runs with one teacher for ten children, and one teacher and one assistant if enrollment is more than ten children.

Parents are always welcome in the preschool program. The more positive and open the communication between parents and teachers, the more positive your child's experience will be.

Arcadian Preschool Philosophy

We value and respect children as unique individuals. We see children as capable and full of potential. This image of the child allows us to recognize the diverse ways that children express and create what is meaningful for them in their learning. We work alongside children to provide opportunities that will foster positive social, emotional, cognitive and physical development in a safe, responsive, healthy and loving environment. We believe that children benefit from play and discovery in both indoor and outdoor environments in many kinds of weather. Explorations and time to linger outside strengthens our connections with nature. Inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach in a Canadian Westcoast context and guided by *BC's Early Learning Framework*, we value reflective educational practices and engagement with the multiple modes of arts expression such as painting, drawing, sculpture, music, story, and movement.

We value and respect each family's dignity and culture, their need for quality childcare and their rights to be involved in the childcare experience. We value and respect each staff's need for a working environment that recognizes and respects their training, skills and commitment to childcare. This is demonstrated through respectful communications and personnel policies.

Hours of Operation and Parking

The preschool runs from September to December and from January to June.

We offer a three-day-a-week morning program on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9 AM to 1130 AM and a two morning program on Tuesday and Thursday.

The first day of preschool is Mon. Sept. 11 for M/W/F classes and Tuesday Sept 12 for T/Th classes. This first day will be with a Meet and Greet. Parents and siblings are invited to stay for the first session to help familiarize your child with the flow of the program.

Throughout the school year, we will be closed for the following statutory/public school holidays:

- Thanksgiving
- Remembrance Day
- Winter Break December 16 - January 1
- Family Day
- Spring Break March 20 - 24
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- Victoria Day

** Please note that there will be 6 closure days in addition to above dates for professional development*

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAYS

Arcadian Early Learning Centre supports staff in their ongoing professional development. There will be 6 weekday closures from September to June for staff meetings and workshops that strengthen team building and early childhood practice. Please see arcadianearlylearning.com to see closure dates for the year's professional development and make arrangements for alternate care. The Preschool will not be open on these dates.

SNOW DAYS – during the winter months, we ask parents to listen to our local

radio station, Sun 89.7 for up to date information on weather conditions. If the School District closes the schools due to heavy snowfall, the preschool will also close.

Parking

Parking is at a premium on school days, as preschool and daycare children often arrive together, we ask that all drivers observe the speed limit posted at the bottom of the driveway. We would like to avoid all preventable accidents so please take precautions both up and down Arcadian's driveway, when parking and backing up your vehicles.

Starting Preschool

Preschool is a program for children before they enter the school system. Community Care Facilities Licensing is the governing body that oversees the preschool program. Licensing requires children who attend preschool to be at least 30 months old and 36 months by December 31 of the year of entrance.

Children need to be toilet trained before they enter the preschool program. For children who may need some extra protection we ask that children come in pull ups. Extra pull ups left at the centre are also a good idea. Parents need to be mindful of time taken away from the group to help children who need extra help in the bathroom.

Most children begin preschool in September, but entry is encouraged year-round. After you have completed the necessary paperwork to begin preschool we ask that you and your child come together and stay together on the first day. This gives you the opportunity to observe the preschool program and allows time for your child to feel comfortable getting to meet the teacher and your child's new friends. Please feel free to read a story with your child or join in any of the daily activities.

During the first few weeks at preschool, your child may cry when you leave them. This is not uncommon. Our staff handles children's tears and feeling of insecurity and sadness with compassion and understanding.

Food and Clothing

Snack

The preschool program provides a snack for all the children (not lunch). Snacks are healthy and nutritious and often include fruit, veggies, yogurt, raisins, cheese, crackers, muffins etc. We also welcome our families to share unique cultural foods with the children at snack time. If you wish to do this please arrange it with the preschool teacher. Water is provided at all times throughout the day.

We discourage high sugar snacks such as candy and chocolate. However, we welcome a special birthday treat if parents want to make prior arrangements with the teacher for special events.

Clothing

As art and nature play (sand and mud) is a focus of our program we encourage parents to dress their children appropriately for preschool. Painting smocks are provided at the art easel but children can still get messy enjoying the many activities provided for them.

Please ensure your children arrive at school in washable **PLAY CLOTHES** that can get messy. Safe footwear is also needed for a variety of indoor and outdoor play activities.

We recommend and encourage appropriate seasonal outdoor clothing:

- For rainy days – boots, raincoats, muddy buddies
- For chilly days – mitts and hats
- For warm sunny days – sun hats

We also encourage parents to provide a complete change of clothing to stay at the school. Each child has a cubby area for hanging coats and keeping extra clothing.

- One pair of indoor shoes (runners) is ideal.
- All clothing and shoes should be labelled

Sunscreen

On another seasonal note, there is a general permission form in the Parent Agreement which allows staff to apply sunscreen to your child. The Preschool will provide a generic brand of sunscreen with at least 30 SPF. If you child has a sensitivity or allergy, please provide your own labelled bottle. It is helpful if you apply sunscreen before the start of each session.

Guidance and Discipline

Safety is a priority at Arcadian. Our preschool program is located across the hall from our three to five year Daycare Program and down the hall from our director's office. The preschool teacher will always be able to call another adult for support or in an emergency situation.

Early childhood educators guide and support children towards acceptable behaviour. Children will be encouraged to communicate their needs and feelings in an appropriate and safe manner. The teacher will intervene, when necessary, and provide support and suggestions for children to make their own choices and decisions. We welcome your questions, insights and feedback as partners in guiding your children.

Strategies used:

- Redirection and distract inappropriate behaviour
- Give verbal and non-verbal directions
- Establish clear, consistent and simple expectations
- Give choices and responsibilities that are developmentally appropriate
- Practice concentrated listening
- Allow children to experience natural consequences
- Acknowledge and name feelings
-

Medical Concerns

Medications

The teacher should be aware of any medication your child may be taking as we are required by licensing to document this, even if they are taking it at home and not at school.

We will administer prescription medications if parents request it. To do so, parents must complete and sign a Medication Consent form which includes instructions for administering (available at the centre). All

medication administered at preschool must be in their original container with a label from the pharmacy showing the name of the physician and the instructions. Please do not leave medication in your child's cubby as all medications are required to be kept in a locked container.

Illness

We realize that illness is a stress on the whole family but we ask that children stay home when they are unwell. If your child is staying home for a preschool session, we ask that you call the centre to let the teacher know.

Please keep your child home if:

- He or she has a communicable disease
- He or she has a contagious infection, including pink eye (conjunctivitis)
- He or she has a fever of 100 degrees F/38 C within the last 24 hours.
- If your child is vomiting or has diarrhea within the last 24 hours.
- Has a skin infection or undiagnosed rash
- If your child is not feeling well enough to participate in one or more program activities, including outdoor play
- Has a persistent cough
- Has a runny nose producing cloudy and coloured, as opposed to clear, mucus

Emergencies

If your child is injured or becomes ill at preschool, three levels of procedures may be followed:

If first aid treatment is required, staff will:

- Provide first aid treatment
- Acknowledge your child's feelings
- Provide supervision to ensure child does not require further first aid or medical attention as the day progresses
- Complete an incident report for the parent to sign
- Inform the person who comes to pick up the child and follow up with

the parent as necessary

If non-urgent medical attention is required, staff will:

- Get help from another Arcadian staff member
- Contact child's parent or caregiver or the emergency contact person
- Get help from medical personnel (public health nurse, child's doctor, emergency room physician)
- Take child (with health information and contact information) to a medical facility if required
- Complete an incident report for the parent to sign
- Follow up with the parent

If emergency medical attention is required, staff will:

- Stabilize situation with hurt child
- Call for help: Arcadian staff member and ambulance
- Administer first aid until ambulance attendants arrive
- Contact caregiver/parent/guardian or the emergency contact
- Accompany child to a medical facility with medical information
- Complete an incident report that is sent to the Community Care Licensing Officer (in accordance with licensing regulations)

NATURAL DISASTERS

Fire and Earthquake drills are practiced regularly throughout the year in accordance with regulations. In case of evacuation, we will meet at

Wedgwood House at 256 Government Avenue (at the bottom of our hill).

Finances

Fees are due on the first of the month and must be paid by the 15th of the month. Fees are averaged over the 10-month preschool year. Fees for our three-day week preschool program are \$180 per month.

Cheques should be made to Arcadian Early Learning. Post-dated cheques are encouraged. Receipts will be issued for tax purposes.

The Society will charge \$25 for N.S.F. cheques.

All families with children attending one of the early learning programs at Arcadian are **required to purchase a onetime \$20.00 membership fee** into our non-profit society. Membership fees are renewed annually for \$10 on your child's enrolment anniversary. Membership allows families one vote at all of the society meetings, including the Annual General Meeting, which is held in October. It is at the Annual General Meeting that the new parent volunteer board of directors is voted in. All parents with a current membership in our society are eligible to join our board of directors. Our board of directors oversee and set policies for our centre.

Please provide us with 30-day's notice if you withdraw your child.

Government subsidies are available to families who qualify. Subsidy coverage will vary depending on your personal situation. Subsidy does not cover the entire cost for the preschool and a parent portion is required to make up the balance.

If your subsidy is discontinued for any reason, parents are responsible for paying the fees in full.

Refunds

We are confident that after completing the required orientation process your child/children will be happy attending Arcadian. However, for the first two weeks your child is enrolled we provide a money back guarantee. Should you withdraw your child within the first two weeks after enrollment, you will receive a full refund of any fees paid.

Unfortunately, refunds are not provided for statutory holidays, children's

absences due to illness, vacations or personal reasons, snow closure days or other unforeseeable emergencies.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Can I drop my child off early?

A. No, sorry. Staff use the time before the program starts to prepare for the day ahead.

Q. Can I stay and play in the preschool room after the session is over?

A. Sorry again. Teachers need to continue their day at supporting the daycare program when preschool is not in session.

Q. Do the children go on field trips?

A. Yes, as often as volunteers, parent involvement, and the children's interest allows. Parents will be given 24 hours notice of any planned upcoming field trip.

Q. When can I talk to the teacher if I have a concern?

A. The teacher will be on hand at the beginning and end of the session to connect with parents. If parents need more time to talk we ask they let the teacher know so the teacher can phone them or set up a face-to-face meeting with them at a time that is convenient to both.

Q. Can I visit during the session?

A. Yes! We welcome parent participation in every aspect of the program. The teacher will give suggestions and support parents and children who experience separation anxiety during the preschool hours.

Snapshot of a Preschool Session

9:00 AM – 10 AM Welcome families and children into the large outdoor play space..

10:00 AM Free choice activities.

10:15 AM Mid-morning snack.

10:30 – 11:00 AM Free play inside / outside

11:00 – 11:20 AM Group time: sharing/singing/music/drama etc.

11: 20 – 11:30 AM Outside & Farewell

Times are approximate and subject to change based on children's rhythm and group needs.