



North Island Community Services



Huckleberry House Children's Centre

Parent Handbook

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Overview

Huckleberry House Children's Centre is one of a number of programs under the umbrella of North Island Community Services Society, a not-for-profit society serving the Mount Waddington area.

Housed at Cheslakees Early Learning Centre, Huckleberry House Children's Centre is a provincially licensed Early Childhood Education Centre providing:

- **Daycare,**
- **Preschool,**
- **Infant & Toddler Care,**
- **Before School Care ,** and
- **Cool Kids**

All staffing levels and qualifications are in accordance with BC Child Care Regulations. Different programs and age groups require different training and staffing levels. Staff members at Huckleberry House hold valid Early Childhood Education Certificates or Diplomas or are recognized by the Child Care Licensing Board as Child Care Assistants or Responsible Adults, having both the training and experience required to hold these positions. All staff members hold valid First Aid Certificates and complete criminal record checks.

All staff wages are paid by parent fees. Our Centre receives a small operating grant from the provincial government (all licensed child care programs in BC are eligible to receive this grant). This grant is based on program attendance.

Fund raising is very important to our centre; the funds raised are used to replace and repair equipment and furnishings and to purchase supplies as needed. Help and support with these events is always greatly appreciated.

Centre Philosophy

Huckleberry House believes that children learn through play. Through play, children learn basic concepts and social skills. Play strengthens all

domains of a child's general development (cognitive, physical and emotional & social). Huckleberry House strives to provide an environment that fosters early learning in a fun, safe and child centered program.

Huckleberry House believes that children need to be loved, supported and encouraged by the people around them to be able to grow and learn to their full potential. Children are entitled to an environment and opportunities that foster all areas of a child's development and that values inclusiveness, independence, dignity, respect and multiculturalism, while allowing the child the freedom to be an individual.

Huckleberry House believes that parents are the most important factor in their child's early years. Parents deserve the assurance of a caring, nurturing and safe space for their child.

Huckleberry House believes that our staff is entitled to a working environment that recognizes and respects their training, skills and commitment to providing a quality early learning program for your child.

Child Care Programs

The child care programs at Huckleberry House have been designed to provide a fun, safe, child-centred early learning environment for young children. The program structure and staffing help to promote social, cognitive, physical, and emotional development of children. This is accomplished through a balanced routine of activities that will encourage children to be more confident in their abilities and more independent with self-help skills such as toileting, dressing, eating and becoming responsible for their belongings. Daily activities include, free play arts and crafts, science, tactile activities, puzzles, games, calendar, circle and story time, outdoor play and much more.

These activities promote all aspects of your child's development and are led by teachers who have post-secondary training in child development, child psychology, child guidance, health, safety and nutrition.

Daycare Program

- For children 30 months – 5 years
- Hourly, full day, monthly
- Monday to Friday
- Drop in (if space is available)

Infant & Toddler Program

- Toddler program 18 months to 36 months
- Infants program birth to 18 months
- Hourly, full day, monthly
- Monday to Friday
- Drop in (if space is available)

Before School Care

- For children kindergarten to 12 years
- Monday to Friday
- Bus pick up at 8:30am

Preschool Program

- For children age 3-4 years of age
- Monday to Friday
- Early learning programs from September to June
- Closed on school Pro D days, spring break, stats and Christmas break

Cool Kids Program

- For children grades 1-5
- 3:00PM – 5:00PM
- Monday to Friday

Strong Start

- For children birth to 5 and their parents/ caregivers
- Located at Cheslakees School Port McNeill
- Woss Elementary Woss BC
- Sea View Elementary Port Alice BC
- ECE facilitated

HHCC Hours of Operation

Huckleberry House Children's Centre is open year round with the exception of a two week closure at winter break and all stat holidays. The Preschool Program and Strong Start program will follow the same calendar as the local schools, and will be closed during all regular school closures such as Pro D days, spring break, summer breaks.

The centre is opened at 7:00 am and closes at 5:00pm, Monday to Friday the centre is not opened for business on the weekends.

HHCC hours are not flexible; Scheduled hours of care must be made in advance. Any drop off or pickups outside of prearranged times must be made in advance to ensure proper staffing levels are available or the following fee penalties will apply;

A fee penalty will be charged to the parents at a rate of \$10.00 for every 15 minutes that a child is left/dropped off at the centre early or past their scheduled times.

If a child is left past 30mins at the centre without parental contact, the Ministry of Children and Family Development will be contacted to retrieve the child. After three late charges, child care services may be refused and parents may be asked to withdraw their child from the centre.

Sickness Policy

Children who attend child care centres may seem to get sick more often and in some cases, this is certainly true. Children in child care are in larger groups and therefore exposed more often to a variety of childhood illness, especially during cold and flu season.

Children do get sick and infections are a common reality in all child care settings. Sometimes children will need to stay home or may be sent home from our child care programs. We ask that parents be prepared and make arrangements for alternate care should your child become ill. Huckleberry House has a 24 hour stay home policy. This means 24 hours from the last time your child vomited or had a fever.

We know parents are aware that flus and colds travel very quickly in a large group setting and that we work hard to stop this from happening.

Children often have runny noses and may cough from time to time. However, we ask parents to keep their child home if they have:

- **A fever higher than 100.4 F**
- **Vomiting**
- **Diarrhea**
- **Continuous wet cough (green or yellow mucus)**
- **Or if the child is not able to participate in the program**

This 24 hour sickness policy will be strictly enforced to protect all the children and the staff.

Medication

Medications such as antibiotics or Tylenol are not to be kept in your child's back pack or cubby. All medication is to be kept in a **lock box** out of the reach of children.

Parents must fill out and sign a medication consent form. **No medication will be given to a child without written consent unless it is an emergency and administered by a paramedic.**

All medication must be in its **original packaging** with the labels and dosage clearly labelled and the child's name, doctors' name, dosage and date.

No medication can be authorized for administration by phone message.

Lunches and Snacks

Lunches and snacks are to be provided by the parents. We encourage parents to pack nutritious lunches that incorporate all food groups. On average, children tend to eat more while attending Daycare programs as snack and lunch are very social times. Please pack a few extra items to make sure your child has enough. When choosing snacks, we encourage parents to include items that follow the Canadian Food Guide.

If a parent does not want their child eating after 4 pm please inform the room supervisor.

Please note: pop, chips, chocolate bars, and fruit roll ups are not permitted and will be sent home with a reminder of our nutritious snacks requirement. No food with nuts are allowed in the Centre.

We do allow a small treat on Halloween as a special occasion.

Required items for Daycare and Preschool

- Inside shoes or slippers
- Sturdy lunch kit
- Spare clothes

Please label all items with your child's name and leave in your child's cubby.

Outdoor Play

Outdoor play is a very important part of a child's early learning development and is mandated by the BC Child Care Regulations. Outdoor play is also a daily part of all our child care programs. We have a beautiful playground with lots of room for a child's physical development and we will be outside on non-rainy days.

We also have the use of our school gym and age appropriate equipment for the children to play on and with. Please ensure your child is properly dressed for the appropriate weather. Children will not be kept inside during these times as every child is expected to participate in the programs.

Messy Activities

Every program run is designed for the maximum amount of fun for the children.

We will be doing activities such as painting, gluing, sparkles, shaving cream painting, finger painting, pudding painting and more. Please make sure all clothing is able to get dirty.

Huckleberry House will not be responsible for any clothing that is stained or damaged.

Pictures

We are often taking pictures of the children in the centre during play activities. The pictures are used within the centre to display on bulletin boards and may be used for thank you cards, art activities or promotional information displays used at community events such as healthy kid's day. Other uses may include presentations for funding opportunities. We also have a new Face Book group page where we display pictures and centre activities. Parents are welcome to view any pictures that are taken. Media consent/non-consent forms must be signed.

Bus Service

Bus service is available in the mornings leaving Cheslakees School for School age children going to school at Sunset Elementary.

The bus arrives at the school at 8:30 am children are supervised at all times and taken out to the bus. **It will be the sole responsibility of each parent to take their child to school if they arrive late to the centre.**

There may be days over the school year when bus service may be interrupted it will be the parents responsibility to take their child/ children to school on those days.

Huckleberry House will make every effort to inform parents if there will be an interruption of bus service.

Field Trips

Programs at Huckleberry House often include short outings to various locations in Port McNeill. These are spontaneous walking excursions. All precautions will be taken to ensure that the safety of the children is the main priority.

Pick Up & Drop Off

For the safety and security of the children, it is important that the following policies are followed and respected. All children are to be taken into the centre and left in the care of the appropriate staff. **No children are to be dropped off, or left in the hallway or washrooms without the**

knowledge of the staff that are to care for your child. The Parent or guardian must accompany children.

This is a licensing requirement and will be strictly enforced by all staff members.

There is no parking in the loop at the front of the school after 8:15 am; the school bus has a very hard time getting around vehicles. If you are arriving around that time please park in the parking lot and accompany your child into the centre.

Parents are asked to make sure all people picking up their child/children are on their registration forms pick up list. No verbal telephone permission will be granted, this is a licensing requirement and it will be strictly enforced to protect every child in the centre.

Family and friends will be asked to produce identification if the staff is not familiar with them and your registration pick up list will be checked.

All children will be signed into the centre and signed out of the centre by all staff depending on which program your child/children are attending.

Pick up of children from the centre

- Parents must come into the centre to pick up their child
- Parents must make verbal contact with a staff member to ensure staff know that their child is leaving for the day, **especially in the playground.**
- Children will be signed out by the staff member when parents arrive showing that the child is now in the care of their parent.

Release of Children from the Centre

- Children will only be released to their parents or persons previously authorized to pick up the child.
- It is the parents' responsibility to update the authorization list regularly. Any changes to pick up authorization must be given to the staff in writing.
- **Verbal or phone calls will not be accepted or recognized. (licensing requirement)**

- Children will not be permitted to leave the centre without a responsible guardian (a babysitter must be over the age of 12 years of age and must be on the pickup list)
- Any new or unfamiliar person will be asked for identification and the child file will be pulled to make sure that said person is on the pickup list.
- Children will **not be released to anyone under the influence of drugs or alcohol**. The emergency contact person will be contacted to retrieve the child.

Guidance & Discipline

Discipline is always of great concern to parents when enrolling their child in any child care program. High on the list of the most frequent questions are “Do you use discipline in your programs”?

We are left with the task of explaining the importance of maintaining a delicate balance between freedom (to be, to do, and to grow) and restraint (which is necessary if the child is to grow and learn the value of social rules and respect of others.) The kind of discipline that we use at Huckleberry House is an intelligent, concerted effort to help children live more comfortably, happily, and productively with one another.

At Huckleberry House Children’s Centre, we advocate:

- **Consideration of others:** we help children act in ways that are considerate and respectful of the rights and feeling of others. Such as the materials and equipment others are using and the activities or property of others.
- **Helping by example and reminders:** By modelling this behaviour, we help children to become more sensitive to the particular needs of others, such as a new child in the group, a smaller child or a child with disabilities. We help children by example in speaking and acting in ways that is polite, friendly and considerate of the feelings of others.
- **Safety:** We help children act in ways that are safe for themselves and for others. This includes the use of materials in a safe way or physical

activity that could become dangerous like rough play, running inside or throwing rocks or toys.

- **Respect of property:** We help children (by example and reminders) to act in ways that indicate an awareness of responsibility towards equipment, furnishings and their shared environment. This includes helping to put things away and to clean up after activities, helping to care for books and equipment and helping to care for the outdoor environment (picking up litter on the playground).

Methods of Discipline

In every child care centre there is a certain level of noise or clutter that may be overlooked as long as it is not infringing on the rights and safety of others. Staff will set up their programs and furnishings in such a way that will invite desired behaviours to occur.

Since no two children are alike, and no one situation is exactly like another, it is difficult to answer questions about discipline without knowing the child or discipline, however we never use harsh or belittling language towards a child, never leave a child unattended as a form of punishment or never physically restrain a child unless there is fear for the safety of the child or others.

- **Accentuating the positive:** Constant reminders and reinforcement of acceptable behaviour is needed. Rules are learned in the context of situations as they arise. Our staff strive to be aware of opportunities to praise or reinforce the kinds of behaviours you hope will occur.
- **Establishing clear limits and realistic expectations:** We help children accept limits that put a curb on actions that are unacceptable as far as safety or productive group living is concerned. There are times when we must say “stop I can’t let you do that because...” Is it interfering with others? Is it unsafe? Is it destructive?
- **Redirecting:** (finding alternatives) a skillful child care worker almost automatically adds an alternative to unwanted behaviour. We use our

resources to redirect the child to a more appropriate outlet, behaviour or activity. Redirection will be the main form of guidance in the child care programs. Children will be treated with respect and dignity at all times.

- **Having a Time out:** Sometimes children do require a break or a time out to calm down and to remove them from the situation. It is important that a caregiver recognizes these times and acts accordingly. Time out is often used when a child is acting in a mean or aggressive way towards others, if the teacher has tried other methods unsuccessfully, or if the child is a repeat offender. During a timeout the child may be given the choice of sitting in the play area, away from other children or going to a quiet place in the classroom for some time alone.
- Children will never be left alone as a form of discipline. After a short period of time, the caregiver will talk to the child about the incident, how the child felt and what they could have done to change the situation. After the caregiver has talked to the child, it will be the child's choice to decide if they are ready to return to the activity. Depending on the severity of the incident, parents may be asked to talk to the child about the situation.
- We are sensitive to when it is necessary to step in and help out.
- We watch to identify if a child:
 1. Becomes overly aggressive
 2. Has difficulty expressing themselves
 3. Is unable to cope, such as with an older or bigger child.

Please feel free to talk to the staff or the centre co-ordinator if you have any questions or concerns about the handling of any incident.

Fee Payments

Please note fee adjustments effective Sept 2016. All fees must be prepaid unless prior payment arrangements have been made. If any fees are owing past the 1st of the month, service will be refused.

Any fees not paid by the 15th of the month will be subject to a 10% late charge. A fee penalty will be charged to the parents at a rate of \$10.00 for every 15 minutes that a child is left/dropped off at the centre early or past their scheduled times.

Parents **must** turn in a schedule of times their child/ children will be attending the centre, by the 20th of the month for the month following. This will allow our accountant to bill accordingly and staff schedules to be made. Any schedules received after this date will not be guaranteed space and will be charged the hourly rates only. Payment must be made before or at time of service delivered.

Huckleberry House Children's Centre requires **2 weeks' notice** if your child will be absent for an extended amount of time or you are ending service. Pre-paid fees will be reimbursed if the child has not attended with notice.

Failure to make a payment will result in the **refusal of service** from the centre.

Payments may be made by cash or cheque only at Huckleberry House in the office drop box or at the NICSS Office (in the Old School). Payments can also be made through CIBC on line banking, or by email money transfer.

All standard charges will apply to NSF payments.

Fee Schedule:

INFANT/TODDLER ROOM	RATES
Hourly rate	\$8.00
Full day (6-9 hours)	\$48.00
Monthly rate	\$900.00
DAYCARE ROOM	
Hourly rate	\$7.00
Full day (6-9 hours)	\$42.00
Monthly rate	\$800.00
BEFORE/AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM	
Hourly rate (charged by the 1/4 hr)	\$7.00
Full Day rate (6-9hrs Pro-D days & School breaks)	\$42.00
Monthly rate (July - Aug)	\$800.00
PRESCHOOL FEES	
3 year old (10 month session 2 days per week)	\$1,200.00
*Prepaid or Post-dated cheques	(\$120 monthly)
4 year old (10 month session 3 days per week)	\$1,600.00
*Prepaid or Post-dated cheques	(\$160 monthly)

- * Payments for services are PREPAID due before the first of each month.
- * Payment arrangements can be made by contacting NICSS main office at 250-956-3134.
- * Any fees not paid by the 15th of the month will be charged a 10% penalty.
- * All hours rounded to the nearest quarter hour
- * \$25 dollars off monthly preschool fees for fulltime daycare

Huckleberry House Children’s Centre

I have read and understand all the information in this handbook.

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Child(ren) Names: _____

Signature: _____