

**NORTH OKANAGAN CHILD CARE AND
MONTESSORI PRESCHOOL SOCIETY
PARENT MANUAL**

Revised Edition – May 2009

West Vernon Children's Centre
2711 38th Street
Vernon, BC
V1T 6H5
250-558-9963
250-558-4260 fax

Kidston Club
1210 Linden
Coldstream BC
250-542-5351

noccs@telus.net

www.noccs.ca

WELCOME

Dear Families:

Welcome to the North Okanagan Child Care Society We look forward to working with you to provide quality education and care for your child in a safe and nurturing environment. This manual has been developed to provide you with information about our society and our programs and to acquaint you with our policies and procedures. We welcome any feedback.

HISTORY OF THE SOCIETY

The society was started by a group of parents in 1994 and has gradually built a strong reputation in the community for quality child care. Over the years the society has worked to meet the changing and evolving needs of the community for child care and early childhood education. It remains a parent-run organization.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

Our child care programs respect, reflect and promote the inclusion of all people. We are enriched by diversity of age, culture, religion, sexual orientation and abilities of all people in our community.

We believe that:

Children have diverse abilities and are entitled to a supportive, quality environment and to a variety of opportunities to foster optimal development of their social, emotional, physical, creative and intellectual skills. Our programs support the inclusion of all children.

Families are entitled to be involved in a meaningful way in their child care experience and deserve assurance of safe, quality child care for their child.

Staff are entitled to a work environment which is free from discrimination and harassment, which supports the dignity and self esteem of all employees and which values and honours, training, experience, culture and commitment to child care.

The child care program enhances the lives of children, their families and the community by providing an essential service.

OUR GOALS:

We will:

- *Provide quality, individualized care and education for each child*

- *Model* and encourage appropriate guiding and caring for each child and family
- *Provide* opportunities to increase the family's knowledge of children's healthy development
 - *Support* families in meeting their responsibilities to their children
 - *Liaise* effectively and work with community agencies, individuals and organizations that are essential to the well being of each child and family
 - *Increase* the awareness and utilization of community resources as needed

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

We are a non-profit society and a registered charity. The legal and fiduciary duties of the society are overseen by an elected Board of Directors. The Board of Directors is made up of volunteers from our membership or interested community members. Elections are held at our Annual General Meeting with vacancies filled in between when needed. Parents are encouraged to serve on the Board.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

Parent participation is a requirement of membership. We believe that parental involvement increases the quality of the program and is a vital part of the organization. Generally, parents are required to volunteer 4 hours per year if their child attends 20 or less hours per week and 8 hours per year if their child attends more than 20 hours. Program supervisors/coordinators will provide a list of volunteer jobs and a time sheet for volunteer hours.

PARENT EDUCATION

Our agency promotes a range of opportunities for parent education that enhance parenting skills and supports the inclusion of all children.

Parent manuals, newsletters, an on-site library of child and family related reading material, magazines, journals, and information updates are available for parents.

Workshops and parent meetings will be held to enhance parent education. Knowledgeable staff can help with many of your questions and concerns and can refer you to other resources in the community.

OUR STAFF

Our administrative staff consists of an Executive Director who reports directly to a Board, and a team of Coordinators who report directly to the Executive Director. Our administrative staff are available in the office at West Vernon Children's Centre to help you with questions or concerns. Our child care staff are trained and certified as early childhood educators, infant/toddler educators and in some cases as special needs educators. They maintain valid First Aid Certificates and are members of their professional association, the Early Childhood Educators of BC. They have all undergone Criminal Record Checks and have been cleared by a physician for physical and emotional

suitability. Qualified relief child care staff will be called in when regular staff are away for reasons of illness, vacation, professional development or administrative duties in order to maintain the staff to child ratio required by Child Care Facilities Licensing.

The majority of our staff work four ten-hour days. This allows for fewer turnovers of staff during the child's day and allows staff a day off during the week to attend to their personal and family responsibilities. Staff work rotating shifts that vary slightly from program to program.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION STUDENTS/OTHER STUDENTS

From time to time, the Centre will participate in accepting students of the Early Childhood Education program, nursing students, secondary school students or exchange students. We will introduce them to you and your child.

VOLUNTEERS

Throughout the year, the Centre also welcomes volunteers. They are trained to participate in activities that will enhance the programs. Some of the ways a volunteer may be involved are baking and preparing snacks, assisting with cleaning/preparation work, accompanying us on field trips or reading to children. Volunteers will not be responsible for primary caregiving responsibilities or supervision of children. The majority of volunteers are parents or grandparents of children enrolled in our programs. Volunteers will be introduced to families and children.

CRIMINAL RECORD SEARCHES

All regular staff, relief staff, students and volunteers will complete the Criminal Record Search process prior to starting at the child care centres in accordance with the Child Care Licensing Regulation.

DAYS AND HOURS OF OPERATION

Centre opening and closing times are set to meet the needs of the majority of our members. We also need to be mindful of the family responsibilities of our staff, so opening and closing times are strictly adhered to. Staffing shifts are adjusted when possible to support the work schedules of the parents. Supervisors will ask you for your schedule upon enrolment and will organize staff shifts accordingly. Parents are asked to keep staff informed if they will be changing their drop-off or pick-up time. Not all schedules can be fully accommodated and we strongly recommend that children not attend the child care programs for more than 9-1/2 hours per day.

The society will consider changes to our hours if there is enough demand for the service, it is financially viable, and it meets with our rental agreements. Parents are encouraged to send written requests to the NOCCS Board for consideration of a change of hours of service.

We close on all statutory holidays and between Christmas and New Year's Day. A list of specific days of closure is included in the Family Agreement. We also close for the Early Childhood Educators Conference annually. Parents/guardians will be given at least one month's notice of this closure.

PHOTO-TAKING

With parent/guardian permission, staff will take pictures of your child to be used at the Centre for the enjoyment of families and staff. A permission form is attached for the use of photos for other purposes.

We will also use video recording within the centre as part of our learning and documentation process.

CLOTHING AND POSSESSIONS

As the children participate in a variety of indoor and outdoor play activities each day, it is essential that your child wear washable, comfortable clothing that is appropriate for the weather.

Please provide:

1. An extra shirt, pants, underwear, socks and a sweater
2. Outdoor clothes
3. A pair of soft, skid-proof indoor shoes –slip-on or Velcro
4. For rainy days – boots and a muddy-buddy or rain suit
5. In the winter- extra mitts, a hat and warm outdoor clothes
6. In the spring – sun hat and sunscreen
7. In the summer – a sun hat, preferably with neck protection and sunscreen
8. Child safe insect repellent (according to Doctor's recommendations)

If needed the Centres have supplies of extra clothing. If your child wears these home, please return them so we can keep an extra supply available. We appreciate donations of extra clothing. Please mark all children's possessions with their full name.

ENROLLMENT POLICIES

Our programs are in high demand with long waiting lists in most programs. Children are generally enrolled on a first-come, first-served basis to ensure fair access to our programs, but we also consider the following priorities for enrolment:

1. Children currently enrolled in one age group and moving to the next
2. Children currently enrolled in part time spaces and increasing to full time
3. Siblings of children currently enrolled
4. Children of employees of the Centre or host school

5. Children on either the “typical” or “extra support” wait list.
6. All other children
7. A child with extra support needs will follow the same priority criteria as typical children, except for the wait list procedure described below. Children who need extra support can receive assistance from the Ministry for Children and Family Development through the Supported Child Development Program. Supported Child Development will consult with the centre staff and parents as well as other community professionals to assist parents in accessing services that meet the needs of their child. Supports can include consultation, development of an individual family plan, centre staff training, extra staffing and referrals.

Wait List:

As demand for our services usually exceeds available space, we maintain a wait list in each program. We have a wait list for typical children and one for children who need extra support in recognition of the difficulty that families with developmentally challenged children have in accessing quality programs to meet their children’s individual needs. The enrolment priorities listed above apply to both lists. Wait listed families will be offered an available space depending on the current population in the program, the needs of the child, and the environment and staffing available.

Denial of Space:

Sometimes the current enrolment of children with high needs may make it necessary for our centre to deny enrolment to a child who otherwise would be eligible to enrol in the program. If the child has a file with Supported Child Development, the centre staff will work with Supported Child Development and the family to both give a rationale for the decision and to offer assistance in finding another setting that meets their child’s needs. If the child does not have a file with Supported Child Development, the family will be given information on contacting a Supported Child Development Consultant.

INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH EXTRA SUPPORT NEEDS

Individual Plan:

Centre staff work in collaboration with the child’s family to develop an Individual Plan for the child. The family and the child care program may identify other professionals they wish to include in the development of the plan. These might include the Supported Child Development Consultant and other professionals such as a physical or occupational therapist, a speech and language pathologist, a psychologist and others.

The child’s family always has the final say regarding who is to be included in the planning process.

Each Individual Plan will identify:

- The child's strengths and needs
- Exceptional health care needs
- Goals over a given time period
- Adaptations to the physical environment that may be required to support the child
 - Staffing supports required to ensure provision of quality care to the child
 - Specific times during the day when child will require extra support
- The child's needs during transitions and routines and how these needs will be met
 - The Individual Plan will be reviewed regularly and adjusted as required

Exceptional Health Care:

A Health Care Plan will be developed for all children with exceptional health care needs. Before a plan can be developed for the child, a health assessment must be provided by a physician or other health care professional. The Health Care professional will be involved with the family and program staff in developing the Health Care Plan.

Children who are medically fragile will attend the program only if the required nursing support is available. Child care staff may attend to the child's health care needs only if they are adequately trained to carry out the necessary procedures. Child care staff must not under any circumstances perform procedures that are identified as requiring professional nursing expertise.

Medication will be administered only on written instruction from the physician and with written consent of the child's enrolling family/legal guardian. Changes in medication must be accompanied by written instructions from the child's physician.

A change in the child's health status or in the required health care procedures necessitates a review of the child's Health Care Plan. Services to the child may need to be suspended while the Plan is under review.

Physical Environment:

Children with extra support needs are encouraged to participate in all aspects of the program including both large and small motor activities both indoors and outdoors. Every effort is made to include children of diverse abilities in every aspect of the program through the use of special equipment, carefully planned access and other modifications to the environment.

When changes are made to the physical environment of the child care program, accessibility for all children is enhanced.

GRADUAL ENTRY

Transition times such as starting child care or preschool or moving from one program to another can be challenging for children and parents. A carefully planned gradual entry will assist you and your child to:

- Feel comfortable in the Centre
- Begin a trusting relationship with the staff
- Experience a positive start at the Centre or in a new program.

We recommend the following steps:

Step 1: Your child and a family member come to the centre for a tour and orientation

Step 2: Your child and a family member stay for two to three hours. The family member takes a short break from the child, but remains on the premises.

Step 3: Your child arrives with a family member and attends for the morning and lunch. The family member settles the child, says goodbye, explaining that they are leaving and will be coming back after lunch.

Step 4: Your child will stay for a typical day.

As each child adjusts, consultation between the family and the Centre staff will determine a timetable for gradual entry. For children who require additional supports, the Supported Child Development Consultant will be involved in the gradual entry plan.

TRANSITIONS

The centre will work in collaboration with the child's family and other service providers to facilitate a smooth transition between programs and services. Support may include:

- Provision of written documentation
- Meeting with new service providers
- Coordination of the transition with other service providers and the family
 - Visiting new centre/program/service with the family
- Supporting the child during orientation to the new centre/program/service

Centre staff will adhere to centre policies regarding confidentiality and the release of information.

Steps for a gradual entry plan when a child is moving from one program to another within the Society will be developed based on the needs of the child and family, the needs and availability of the staff, and the availability of space in the program. Because of limited spaces, choice of which children to move to the next age group will be determined based on a number of factors in consultation with staff and parents. When all factors are equal, the child with the earliest birth date will be moved first, but the developmental needs of the child will always remain the determining factor. The primary caregiver from the toddler program will play an active role in the transition plan to the preschool-aged programs.

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance helps children to adjust and develop socially. We ask that you phone the centre before 9:30 if your child will not be attending due to illness or vacation. Also, we ask that children arrive no later than 9:30 when a field trip or special activity is planned. This does not apply to children who only attend in the afternoon.

CODED ENTRANCE

All doors to the centres are kept locked at all times except the front entrance. The front entrance at West Vernon has a coded lock to keep out unwanted visitors. Parents will be given the code for the lock when they register their child. It is very important that you memorize this code just as you would your bank code and also to protect it in the same way by not allowing the children to know the code and not sharing it with more than two people. There is a buzzer that can be used by occasional pick up person or if you forget the code.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Children must be signed in by a responsible adult upon arrival. Children who arrive from school will be signed in by a staff person. We recommend that parents plan for a little extra time each day to talk to staff and get their child settled. If your child will be absent, please call the centre before 9:30.

At pick up time, please speak directly to the staff before you sign out. Please remember to check your mailbox and the signboards for notices.

PARKING

Short term parking spots are designated for drop off and pick up at West Vernon Children's Centre. No parking is permitted within the fenced area around the building to ensure the safety of children, parents and staff. We encourage you to arrange your pickup times so that they do not coincide with school bus drop off time to avoid congestion. Extra attention and care are necessary to ensure the safety of children and families in the parking lot.

PICK UP

It is very important that you inform staff if someone else will be picking up. Please ensure that you put the names of authorized pickup persons on the registration form and ensure that you inform us if these change. If someone is picking up your child who is unknown to staff, even if they are listed as an authorized pickup person, they will be asked for photo identification, so please ensure that they are instructed to arrive with ID.

We ask that you call the Centre, and describe the alternate pick up person to the program supervisor before pickup time, including name, address, telephone number and physical description.

LATE PICK UP

If you have not picked up your child by closing time, or the agreed upon time that is registered and paid for, the senior staff person will contact the alternative person(s) from the authorized pick up list to pick up your child. If the alternatives are not available, and you have not contacted the Centre within 45 minutes, we are required to notify Emergency Services of the Ministry for Children and Family Development and they will send an emergency social worker to pick up your child. A late pickup penalty fee will be charged.

SUSPECTED INTOXICATION

If a parent or other pick-up person arrives in an intoxicated state, and plans to drive, the staff will follow the procedure below:

1. Offer to call a relative or friend to pick up the parent and child.
2. Offer to call a cab
3. Inform the pickup person that if he/she chooses to get in the vehicle with or without the child, the educator will notify the police immediately. Drinking and driving is against the law and the educator must support the legal position.
4. Call the nearest Ministry office if the educator feels the child is in need of protection.

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Open Door Communication Policy:

- Parents are welcome to drop in and observe the program at any time. If you would like to consult with an early childhood educator at the centre, please let us know ahead of time so the educator can arrange a time to give you her/his undivided attention.
- Telephone communication is encouraged. Please check with your child's educator to determine a mutually convenient time and to ensure you have the direct phone number.
- Parents can expect ongoing communication with staff concerning their child's progress, program activities, and hours of operation.
- Parents can expect individual parent and educator meetings in the preschool twice a year and at predetermined times and upon request in other programs.
- All parents are asked to become familiar with the contents of the Parent Manual
- Staff welcome feedback and input from parents on any aspect of the program.

-Parents are encouraged to speak to their child's educator if they are concerned with the care of their child or any incidents in the child care centre.

IF YOU HAVE AN EMAIL ADDRESS, WE STRONGLY ENCOURAGE YOU TO USE THIS METHOD OF COMMUNICATION. YOU MAY EMAIL US AT noccs@telus.net WITH YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS AND TO COMMUNICATE WITH US. EMAIL IS CHECKED REGULARLY THROUGHOUT THE DAY. WE ALSO ENCOURAGE YOU TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT www.noccs.ca FOR INFORMATION AND UPDATES.

Procedures for Parents When They Have Concerns:

Parents with concerns about their child's care should contact the child's educator immediately. If the parent does not wish to speak to the educator, please contact the appropriate individual listed below, in order of listing:

1. Child's Educator
2. Program Coordinator
3. Executive Director
4. Member of Personnel Committee – Board of Directors
5. Chairperson – Board of Directors
6. Local Licensing Officer – Community Care Facilities Licensing

A concern arising between an individual staff member and a family:

The parties involved are encouraged to discuss the issue openly and attempt to reach a mutually acceptable resolution. If this does not bring satisfaction, the Program Supervisor can arrange a meeting with the parent, staff and supervisor. If this does not bring satisfaction, a meeting with the Executive Director can be arranged.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Families are encouraged to discuss questions or concerns regarding any aspect of the child care program with the staff or Program Coordinator. If an issue arises, the goal is to resolve differences of opinion and conflict in a peaceful way and find solutions that everyone can accept. The steps outlined will be followed:

Step 1: The enrolling parent/guardian and center staff will meet to define the issues and state their point of view

Step 2: Solutions and/or appropriate resources will be identified, whenever appropriate

Step 3: A plan will be agreed upon by the enrolling parent/guardian and the Program Coordinator

Step 4: If a plan cannot be agreed upon by all parties, other arrangements may be required

TOYS FROM HOME

We strongly discourage bringing toys from home. They can be lost, broken, misplaced or stolen. Conflicts arise between children over shared use. Some toys may be inappropriate for the age group or not in keeping with our philosophy. Staff may be able to help you to resolve problems when children ask to bring toys from home.

BIRTHDAYS AND OTHER CELEBRATIONS

Parents are welcome to send food or activities for children to share in celebration. We ask that you discuss your plans with your child's caregivers to ensure that there are no time conflicts with other activities and that dietary considerations and allergies are accounted for. We believe that cultural diversity enriches all of us and welcome a chance to share in personal or cultural celebrations with your family.

If there are personal or cultural celebrations that you do not wish your child to be involved in, please let staff know so that alternative arrangements can be made.

FIELD TRIPS AND TRANSPORTATION OF CHILDREN

Parents are asked to sign a waiver upon enrolment for permission to take spontaneous short walking trips in the community such as to the park or pet store. All other field trips will require an individual parent permission form for each trip. Most trips involve walking or public transportation. Parents will be informed if children will be travelling by car, and all drivers will be required to fill out a form indicating that they have at least \$5,000,000 liability insurance.

GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE

Each child will be encouraged and supported to develop positive relationships and learn social skills and social and civic responsibility. Our goal is to provide a safe and healthy learning and living environment in which each child can feel secure. Families can expect the staff to:

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

Staff will strive to:

- Establish clear, consistent and simple expectations
- Offer straightforward explanations for limitations
- State limits in a positive rather than negative way
 - Acknowledge children's feelings

- Positively reinforce appropriate behaviour with words and gestures
 - Focus on the behaviour rather than the child
 - Offer choices that are developmentally appropriate
 - Demonstrate respectful affection and caring to each child
- Give verbal direction and redirection as the main way of guiding children.
 - Ignore minor incidents
 - Allow children time to respond to expectations
- Encourage children to use their problem solving skills while using the staff as a resource
 - Be alert and stay close

These strategies create a positive environment and maximize opportunities for desirable behaviours.

When inappropriate behaviours do occur, the staff will:

- Gain a child's attention in a respectful way
 - Use proximity and touch
 - Give reminders
- Acknowledge feelings before setting limits
 - Redirect or divert
 - Model problem-solving skills
 - Offer appropriate alternative choices
 - Use natural and logical consequences
 - Limit use of equipment (sparingly)
- Provide opportunities for children to make amends
 - Provide time away with staff assisting child to deal with their feelings
- Holding techniques (rarely used; only when the child, other children or staff are endangered) used only as part of a behaviour management plan developed by qualified professionals such as Supported Child Care Consultants and involving centre staff and parents/guardians of the child involved.

We encourage families to ask about guidance and discipline during the orientation and as any questions arise. We are committed to working with families and to enhancing knowledge of child development and approaches to child-rearing practices.

SAFE SPACES BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAM

Our staff are trained in the Safe Spaces Bullying Prevention Program. Every year parents will be offered information about this program and all staff, parents and children are expected to abide by the Code of Conduct which includes: my body is safe, my feelings are safe and my work is safe. The concepts and sign language for friendly/not friendly, safe/not safe, and fair/not fair will be taught to all children and should be reinforced at home for consistency.

THERAPEUTIC RESTRAINTS

In general, restraints will not be used as a method of behaviour management.

In rare situations, holding a child may be an effective behaviour management strategy. Staff will hold a child with just sufficient strength to protect the child or other children. The intent of the strategy is to soothe the child and to keep them and others safe until self-control is regained.

A behaviour management plan may include the use of a physical holding of a child in such a way as to protect the child, other children and /or the staff from harm. Therapeutic restraints protect the safety, well-being and dignity of both children and staff.

The centre staff, professional consultants, parents and other team members must agree on what therapeutic restraints are to be used and no restraint plan will proceed without professional guidance from child development experts.

A written support plan will be drawn up and kept on file including a detailed description of the procedures to be followed and a record of incidents with rationale for the use will be given to both parents and Child Care Facilities Licensing.

The goal of any behaviour plan including restraint is to diminish the use of restraint so that it is no longer necessary to ensure the safety of children and staff.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Our centres have been carefully designed to ensure they are safe, comfortable environments that will accommodate the abilities of all the children.

Our goal is to promote good health, safety and nutrition by providing the children with a clean, well-maintained, safe environment and opportunities for:

- Learning how to take care of their bodies and develop self-help skills
 - Both rest and exercise
 - Indoor and outdoor activities

NUTRITION

Eating nutritious food is an important part of each child's day. Food provided by the Centres will be selected in accordance with Canada Food Guide requirements.

Staff will:

- Prepare nutritious snacks
- 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

The Centres will:

- Provide mid-morning and mid-afternoon snacks each day
 - Provide certified filtered water
 - Provide space for each child's lunch
- Occasionally provide hot lunch for an extra fee

Families will:

- Provide nutritious lunches such as small portions of fruit yoghurt, sandwich and biscuits
 - Provide a water bottle with child's name in permanent ink
 - Provide a piece of fruit or vegetable for the sharing basket daily
- Not include candy, chocolate, chips, or pop or other unhealthy or unsafe foods in their child's lunch
 - Refrain from sending juice to the program. Water will be provided
- Inform staff of any food restrictions/allergies or changes to their child's food intake.

Allergies:

Our centres are allergy- aware facilities. We will work with families to minimize risk of exposure to allergenic foods or materials, but in a public facility we cannot guarantee that you child will not be exposed. We will post a list of children's allergies in each program. If children have a life-threatening allergy, we will post an allergy-alert form with that child's picture and information about dangerous foods and treatment. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that an Epipen or Anikit is left at the facility and that it is replaced when expired.

NAPTIME

As proper rest promotes the healthy development of young children, children are encouraged to have rests during the day. For most children this will be after lunch. Parents are asked to provide the centre with whatever their child needs to assist him/her to sleep. If your child does not need to have a nap, quiet activities will be provided while the other children rest. While we can accommodate a soft toy or small blanket to assist with rest time, we ask that all other toys be left at home.

TOILETING

As toileting of young children involves close adult-child contact, each child will have a designated staff member whenever possible to assist them with toileting. Staff will involve the child by encouraging him/her to help out as much as possible.

Staff will:

- Follow the toileting procedures posted in the washrooms
- Wash their hands and encourage/assist children to wash their hands
- Encourage and assist children to undress and dress themselves as they are able.
- Decide with the family when, and if, a child is physically and emotionally ready to start to learn to use the toilet
- Be patient, supportive and understanding during this learning process
 - Be respectful of the child's needs

IMMUNIZATION

As immunizations are one of the most effective ways of preventing the spread of communicable diseases, we recommend that all families have their child's immunizations brought up to date prior to starting at the centre. Once enrolled, please provide updated immunization information as necessary. We are required to keep a photocopy of immunization records on file, or a signed conscientious objector form.

ILLNESS

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

- Has a communicable illness
- Has a contagious infection, including pink eye and head lice
 - Has a fever over 38 degrees Celsius
 - Is vomiting or has diarrhoea
- Has a skin infection or an undiagnosed rash
- Is not well enough to participate in all program activities including outdoor play

The program staff will consult with their coordinator if concerns about the health of a child who is present at daycare arise. The coordinator along with the staff will make the decision of whether or not a child should be sent home, and the coordinator will make the phone call to the parents or contacts. If the program coordinator for that child's program is not available, another one of our program coordinators will be consulted and they will make the decision and calls.

**** A doctors note may be required before your child can return to his/her program.**

Please notify the Centre if your child has a communicable disease so that other families and the Community Health Department can be notified.

If your child becomes ill during the day, we will attempt to contact you. If you are unavailable, we will try to reach your designated emergency contact(s). We will provide a quiet, resting area and close staff supervision until you or your emergency contact can pick up your child. If the situation becomes urgent, we will follow the emergency procedures outlined. Children must be kept home for a clear 24 hour period after having a fever, diarrhea or vomiting.

Staff become very familiar with children's cues and often know when a child is not able to cope with being at the centre due to extreme lack of sleep or the beginnings of illness. We ask that parents respect our staff's judgment in these situations as you may be called to pick up your child if they are not able to cope with the day and we do not have the staffing to give them the individual attention they need.

ADMINISTERING MEDICATION

If you would like the Centre staff to administer prescription or non-prescription medication to your child, the Child Care Licensing Regulation requires that we have certain information and follow certain procedures. We require that the medication be provided in the original container and a Medication Consent form be completed with instructions on administering the medication. All medication will be stored in a locked container.

If you plan to have prescription or non-prescription medication administered to your child at the Centre during the day, please ensure that it is given to the staff. Older children are not permitted to self-medicate and medication cannot be in any child's possession.

MEDICAL EMERGENCY

If your child is injured or becomes ill while at the centre, staff will quickly assess the situation to decide what action/attention is required. Outlined below are three procedures that may be followed.

If First Aid Treatment is required, staff qualified in First Aid will:

- Provide First Aid Treatment
- Acknowledge the child's feelings
- Provide close supervision to ensure that the child does not require further first aid or medical attention.
- Complete an Incident Report and process
- Inform the family when they come to pick up the child.

If medical attention is required, a staff qualified in First Aid will attend to the needs of the child while the senior staff person will:

- Contact the family/guardian, then the emergency contact(s) if the family/guardian is not available.
- Contact the child's doctor if the family/contacts cannot be reached
- If the child's doctor is not available, proceed as if it is an emergency medical situation
- Access transportation via taxi to take the family and the child to the medical facility as required – centre's car seat to be used for the child, if appropriate.
- Access the child's file for medical information and permission
- Accompany the child or family to the medical facility with medical information, or decide which staff member should go
- Provide information to doctor and family/emergency contact
- Support the child and the family/contact person
- Complete the Incident Report and process

If emergency medical attention is required, qualified staff will administer First Aid until ambulance attendants arrive. Senior staff will:

- Call and request an ambulance
- Contact family and/or emergency contact(s) as above to meet staff at the emergency facility and provide access to transportation for the family/contact, if required.
 - Access medical information as above
 - Accompany the child to the emergency facility
 - Provide information to the doctor and family
 - Support the child and family
 - Complete the Incident Report and process

FIRE DRILL/EVACUATION PROCEDURE

As safety is an ongoing part of the Centre's program, fire drill/evacuation procedures, (approved by the Fire Marshall) are posted in the Centre and are practiced once a month.

During orientation, we will review these procedures, as it is important for you to understand your role if an emergency evacuation happens while you are on site.

CENTRE CLOSURE

In the case of fire, extended power or heat failure, extreme weather conditions or an evacuation due to the safety of the facility, the Centre may have to close. The staff will care for children until families/emergency contact(s) have picked them up. Evacuation procedures as posted at the exits will be followed.

UNSCHEDULED CLOSURES

If an incident occurs in which the center must be closed, the following procedures will be followed:

1. Administrative staff will initiate action via calling licensing for the daycare and/or Interior Health Authority to establish risk.
2. They will then determine closure based upon risk assessment and recommendations from consultation of appropriate authorities.
3. They will then determine a time period for closure based upon these risk assessments and recommendations.
4. Assessment of remuneration based upon #2 and #3 will be made in consultation with NOCCS Board of Directors.

Following a closure, opening will be based on the following guidelines:

1. Based upon contact and risk assessment, programs are regulated by individual time lines. ie. Infant Toddler is at higher risk than School Aged children.
2. Parents will be given information on where to go for information on openings when informed of the closure.
3. Children may be requires to bring in a doctor's note to return to their program.

PLEASE NOTE:

NOCCS is regulated by Licencing and must conform to regulations from the Interior Health Authority, thus all actions are inevitably regulated by governing bodies.

Some of our centres are located in a unionized setting and are affected by the collective agreement of CUPE staff. In the event of a strike by the teachers or support staff, we will try our utmost to keep services available. This may require using a temporary location or coming to an agreement with the striking parties. Parents may experience a temporary interruption of service while arrangements are made. In the interests of our continuing good relationship with school district employees and to ensure the well-being of children, families and staff, our goal is to come to a solution that is acceptable to all parties.

SMOKING

Smoking is not permitted in the centres, schools or schoolyards. If you wish to smoke, please do so outside of the perimeter fences of the schools or child care facilities.

SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

All children in BC are entitled to be protected from abuse, neglect and harm or threat of harm. The Child and Family Act also states that any person who has reason to believe that a child needs protection must promptly report the matter to the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

APPREHENSION BY THE MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

The Child, Family and Community Services Act defines when a child is in need of protection. Decisions related to when, how and where the Ministry of Children and Family Development can apprehend a child rest with the Ministry. If and when a social worker from the Ministry of Children and Family Development intends to apprehend a child at the child care centre, the senior staff person on duty will be responsible for responding to the situation. Prior to the child being removed, the centre staff member will verify with a ministry supervisor that the social worker is authorized to apprehend the child. It is the responsibility of the Ministry to make all reasonable efforts to notify the family of the apprehension.

VISITORS AT THE CENTRES

As the safety and security of children, families and staff is critical, visitors need permission from the Executive Director prior to visiting the Centre. Community Resources/partners and immediate family members of children enrolled are welcome to visit, however, arrangements must be made in advance with the staff. Unauthorized visitors will be asked to leave the premises.

UNAUTHORIZED PERSONS

If an unauthorized person arrives to pick up your child, the child will remain under the supervision of the Centre staff. The senior staff person will explain the policy that written authorization from the enrolling parent/guardian is required to release a child. If difficulties arise, all reasonable efforts will be made to ensure the safety of the child, other children and staff. If necessary, the senior staff person may need to call the police for assistance.

CUSTODY AND ACCESS

If parents live separately, NOCCS expects that the information provided by the enrolling parent is accurate. Without a custody agreement or court order on file at the Centre, staff cannot deny access to the non-enrolling parent. If one of the parents is not authorized, the policy on unauthorized persons will be followed.

If custody has not been legally determined and conflict between the parents and/or their family members is evident, NOCCS may not be able to care for the child unless both parents and/or other family members sign a written agreement confirming details re: authorization for pick up, agreed-upon pick up and drop-off times and procedures and access to information about the child.

If a family has a custody agreement or court order, a copy must be provided and placed in the child's file.

If you require double copies of notices for parents living separately, please provide the administrative office and your child's program supervisor with a written request so that we can ensure that both parents are kept informed.

INFORMATION ON FILE

Parents are asked to ensure that all information kept on file is updated regularly. Changes such as new address, phone number, authorized pick-up persons, immunization or health changes, new doctor or dentist, custody and access information must be kept up-to-date to ensure the health and safety of children. Please give any changes to your child's program supervisor in writing. All personal information concerning your family is kept confidential and is destroyed upon withdrawal of children from the centre except where retention is required by law. No personal information is shared with other groups, agencies or individuals without the written permission of the child's parent or guardian. Written personal information is only requested when required by licensing and other regulating agencies.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality in our agency applies to all verbal and written information about potential, enrolling and previously enrolled children.

All staff will be expected to fulfil their obligation to respect protection of privacy. Each staff will ensure that no private or personal information is revealed that may cause another individual harm.

No information will be released about a child and the enrolling parent/legal guardian without first receiving written permission of the enrolling parent/legal guardian. This excludes the responsibility that service providers and others have as outlined in legislation about child protection and/or when information is subpoenaed by the court.

WITHDRAWAL

Families are required to provide one month's notice in writing if they plan to discontinue using the child care centre or pay one month's fees in lieu of notice. Failure to comply with this policy as outlined in the Family/Centre agreement will result in legal action. All post-dated cheques will be returned to the parent within 15 days of withdrawal if all fees are paid.

SUBSIDY

Some families are eligible for child care subsidy from the Ministry. We will provide information to families who want to know about and access this subsidy. It is the

responsibility of each family to ensure that their subsidy is kept up to date. Subsidy rates do not always cover the entire fee so parents are responsible for the difference. The expected parent portion must be paid at the beginning of the month. If subsidy authorizations are not received by us after one month of service, parents will be required to pay the entire fee until the subsidy is received. Overpayments will be reimbursed or credited to the account.

TERMINATION OF SERVICES

Staff are committed to providing a caring and supportive environment for all families. However, termination of services may be required if:

- Fees for services are not paid according to the financial policies in the family/centre agreement and suitable arrangements cannot be agreed upon
- Family does not abide by expectations in the family-centre agreement and successful resolution of the differences is not achieved
- Family member harasses, threatens abuse or commits a violent act towards staff, child or other family involved in the program
- The centre is unable to satisfactorily resolve problems of late pick-up with a family
- The child's behaviour is severely disruptive or physically threatening to the well-being and safety of other children or staff and additional supports to accommodate the child are unavailable.

Termination of services is a last resort measure. Before the centre determines they cannot continue to provide services to the child, steps will be taken to accommodate the child's needs. Such steps include:

- Working with the family to identify other more suitable programs and resources
- Consulting with professional support resources such as a Consultant from the Supported Child Development Program
- Requesting increased staffing through Supported Child Development or the Ministry of Children and Family Development
- Referring to appropriate services for staff training or intervention with the child and/or family

In the event that termination of services is required, the centre will support the family to access other programs and resources.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Your feedback is important to us. The staff will encourage on-going feedback as well as provide you with opportunities to share comments/suggestions. Your response to our program evaluation helps us to develop programming policies and procedures and to provide child care that meets family and community needs.

FEE PAYMENT POLICIES

As a charitable and non-profit organization, we depend on a combination of grants, fund-raising and parent fees to operate our child care programs. Parent fees represent a percentage of the real cost of providing service. We depend on prompt payment of fees to ensure our financial sustainability.

1. Families must become members of our society in order to enrol children in one of our programs. ***The annual membership fee is due upon registration or re-registration and is \$30 for one child or \$50 for two or more children.***

2. Fees are due on the first of each month. ***Monthly fees will be calculated by your Program Coordinator upon registration or when days are added or subtracted.***
Fees apply for all registered days whether the child attends or not.

3. Fees are to be paid by 10 post-dated cheques due September 1st and 2 post-dated cheques for the summer due July 1st. If your fees change during the year because of a changed schedule, you may request that your cheques be returned and write new ones or write a new cheque for the difference. The child's program and days should be written on the cheque so that the bookkeeper can credit it to the correct account. If your child has a different last name, please put child's name on the cheque bottom as well. All post-dated cheques will be returned within 15 days upon payment of the final month's fees and receipt of one month's written notice.

4. Parents may choose to use our Direct Deposit option. Your child's educator or an administrative staff member can provide you with this application form. Payments made with the Direct Deposit method can only be made on the first day of every month.

5. A \$10 charge will apply to late fee payment or NSF cheques.

6. Occasional extra days (drop-in) are to be paid for on the day of drop-in.

7. Application for subsidy is the responsibility of the parent and must be completed in advance of enrolment. Assistance with filling forms is available through CCRR at 542-3121 loc 111.

8. If service is offered before subsidy authorization is in place due to backlogs with the Ministry, parents will have one month's grace, after which time they will be required to pay the entire fee until the subsidy amount is paid. They will then be eligible for a credit.

9. Fees should be paid to your child's Coordinator except cash payment which must be made in the society office.

10. Discrepancies with fee payments should be discussed with the Director or Bookkeeper at 558-9963 or noccs@telus.net.
11. Parents who wish to use an alternative payment method must fill out an “Alternative Payment Request” form available from their Program Coordinator or from the Administration Office. The number of requests approved is limited and dependent on approval by the administration.
12. Non-Compliance with fee policies can result in withdrawal of service. No child may remain enrolled if fee payments are more than 30 days in arrears without prior written approval from the Executive Director.
13. One month’s written notice of withdrawal is required or one’s month’s fee payment in lieu of notice. The only exception is in the first month of attendance when a refund for unused days will be given if the child is withdrawn. The Family/Centre Agreement is a legally binding contract.

**NORTH OKANAGAN CHILD CARE
AND MONTESSORI PRESCHOOL
SOCIETY**

PARENT MANUAL

Revised Edition – May 2009

West Vernon Children's Centre
2711 38th Street
Vernon, BC
V1T 6H5
250-558-9963
250-558-4260 fax

Casimir Court Educare Centre
Young Parent Program
250-541-0358

Kidston Club
1210 Linden
Coldstream BC
250-542-5351

noccs@telus.net

www.noccs.ca

