

Stepping Stone PRESCHOOL

Family Handbook



Quality Preschool Programs Enriching Young Minds



WELCOME

Welcome to Stepping Stone Preschool, a licensed, play-based, multi-disciplinary preschool program for children ages 2.5 to 5. We offer programs in the morning, available in 2-, 3- and 5-day options.

Since our first days in September 1975 when a group of parents banded together to establish a high-quality non-profit school, we have been proud to offer an enriching program that balances **fun and learning** to prepare your child **for the coming years of education.**

Our Teachers are familiar with a wide base of knowledge concerning Child Development, including the philosophies of Reggio Emilia, Montessori, and the theories of a variety of Child Psychologists and Educators. Our multi-disciplinary approach allows our Teachers to tailor every class and activity to the needs, interests and abilities of the children in that particular group. They are also continually developing to ensure that we are offering the most current ideologies and activities available for children.

Our Teachers strive to provide a safe, trusting environment in which children can develop on all levels. Children in our program learn to express themselves verbally and learn about their own limits and boundaries, as well as those of others. The program is designed to provide challenges appropriate for each child, recognizing and respecting their unique and individual needs as well as their own pace of progress.

The Curriculum is based on Play, as play is a child's 'work'. Through play, children develop positive self-esteem, express feelings and ideas, explore, discover, store impressions, classify and organize their world. Play provides a basis for children to learn about collaboration through interactions with the Teachers and their peers as well as providing limitless opportunities for "teaching in the moment" – a philosophy that allows Teachers to use spontaneous events in the day to highlight or demonstrate educational concepts to an already engaged and interested student.

As a non-profit organization, we are managed by a volunteer Parent Board of Directors, and we have some opportunities for enthusiastic parent volunteers to help in other ways. We always encourage parents to volunteer in some capacity as it is a wonderful way to create a sense of community and family within our school.



OUR PHILOSOPHY

Children are entitled to discover themselves socially, emotionally, physically and cognitively in a stimulating and positive environment. They are able, responsible beings who benefit themselves and others by developing an interdependent community. Children are inspired to learn when topics are relevant to them and when they are communicated with in a reciprocal manner. Children who learn stages of cooperation and negotiation have the confidence to be critical thinkers and problem solvers - desirable qualities and skills in our society.

Families are entitled to be involved with the school, creating a partnership with Teachers for the benefit of their child, communicating with the Board for the ongoing growth of the school and developing friendships with other families to add to their communities. We strive to uphold the values of cultural diversity by welcoming families to share their customs, stories, language and traditions.



OUR GOALS

- ✓ To use fun, exciting, developmentally appropriate and personally relevant interests and projects as a foundation for the education of, among other things, Math, Science, Music, Art, Geography, History, Language, Reading, Writing, Culture, Life Skills, Bodily Health, Critical Thinking and Social Well Being.
- ✓ To provide a safe and enriching learning environment that enhances a child's desire and ability to successfully integrate into Kindergarten.
- ✓ To utilize the British Columbia Early Learning Framework as described by:
http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/early_learning/pdfs/early_learning_framework.pdf.
- ✓ To uphold, practice, and honour our commitment to share Indigenous values and learning to the best of our knowledge and ability.
- ✓ To mentor future early childhood educators by providing a practicum placement for Colleges and Universities.
- ✓ To positively model and reinforce appropriate, respectful behaviour in order to build our students' social skills such as self-esteem, self-control, empathy, respect, honesty, enjoyment and sense of fairness.
- ✓ To support families in our community by maintaining a close relationship that keeps parents informed of their child's progress and increases their overall knowledge of child development and health.
- ✓ To effectively liaise and work with community agencies, individuals and organizations that are essential to the well-being of each child and family; and,
- ✓ To communicate with families whenever extra support needs are suspected and to assist in enhancing the awareness and utilization of community resources available for meeting those needs.



GUIDANCE POLICY

Everything children do is logical to them. By understanding child development and discovery, Teachers are able to assist children to communicate their feelings and needs in a cooperative way. By assessing behaviour and determining the root of it, Teachers can discover the child's reasoning and then respond appropriately. The Teachers use the following skills to guide the children:

- ✓ **Encouragement** - Children are encouraged in their activities through honest appreciation of them. Positive statements by Teachers set a comfortable tone in the classroom. Children learn cooperation rather than obedience and this requires negotiating and respecting the rights of others.
- ✓ **Negotiation** - The Teachers model ways for children to talk through conflicts and find reasonable solutions. Children are encouraged to state their needs and feelings and to make "I" statements. For example, "I want a turn", rather than "He won't share".
- ✓ **Responsibility** - Children are responsible for themselves and their actions. They are taught to care for themselves, each other, the Teachers, and the objects in the room. Natural consequences are used as a means of highlighting this expectation.
- ✓ **Communicating** - Teachers assist children who are arguing to verbalize their difficulties appropriately. They help to define the problem and may suggest alternatives. When a resolution is reached, the Teachers monitor from a distance, acknowledging and encouraging positive results.
- ✓ **Anticipation and Redirection** - Teachers work to anticipate problems and redirect children with potential conflicts to other activities. For long-term results, Teachers give the children the support they need to learn to communicate boundaries and needs effectively.
- ✓ **Quiet Corner** – A tent with soft pillows and mats are set up as a cozy and calm place for children to relax and read. We believe children need an emotional space to go during times when they may need to step away from the group.



COMMUNICATIONS

Communication with Parents

Several different communication tools are used to ensure that parents are well informed of special events and important dates throughout the school year.

School Website

Our website is regularly updated throughout the year. It includes information about the school as well as all important dates and events. In the event of heavy snow in Vancouver, Stepping Stone Preschool will notify families about school closure by putting a notice on the main page of the Stepping Stone Preschool website by 8am on the morning of the snow day. A notice will only be placed on the website in the event that school is closed for the day.

Parent Bulletin Board

This bulletin board is located on the main entrance door of the preschool. It will contain important dates and events, as well as useful reference information for families.

Email

Email updates will be sent throughout the year. Please make sure that the school has an up-to-date email address for your family.

Monthly Newsletters

A monthly newsletter will be emailed at the beginning of each month. The newsletter will contain reminders, upcoming events and an update of learning from the past month.

Stepping Stone Preschool observes and is closed for the following Statutory Holidays: Truth and Reconciliation Day, Thanksgiving, Remembrance Day, Family Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday and Victoria Day.



PARENT VOLUNTEER ROLES

We encourage and welcome parents to lend their skills to the school to benefit all of our children through volunteering. It is a great way to get to know the other parents and the school Board members. Listed below are some ways in which parents can volunteer in our school. Most roles are approximately 1 hour per month. In September, we will email families with an invitation to volunteer.

- ✓ **Scholastic Book Fundraiser** – Run the Scholastic Book fundraising program (monthly orders).
- ✓ **Purdy's Fundraiser** – Runs the Purdy's Chocolates fundraiser (once or twice a year).
- ✓ **Shopfunds Fundraiser** – Runs the Shopfunds (gift card purchasing) fundraiser (once or twice a year).
- ✓ **Raffle Coordinator** – Help coordinate the Winter Raffle with Board Assistance
- ✓ **Special Events Coordinator** – Assist the Board and teachers with school special events (Fall Parent Social, Winter Potluck, Annual General Meeting, Year-End Picnic).
- ✓ **Maintenance Helper**- Coordinate with teachers to ensure school equipment and toys are maintained. Sometimes an immediate response will be required to resolve safety issues.
- ✓ **Laundry** – Washing school towels and costumes.
- ✓ **Parent Librarian** – Work hand-in-hand with the teachers to borrow books. Preferably once a month, a preschool library card will be provided.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS – PARENT VOLUNTEERS

A vital aspect of Stepping Stone Preschool's continued existence is the community's ongoing support. As a non-profit organization, we are required to have a volunteer Board of Directors made of a minimum three members from the school. This means that parents of attending children are required to oversee the Director of Operations and the overall administration of the school. All parents are encouraged and welcomed to attend the Annual General Meeting held at the end of the school year.

The Parent Board people for the Executive of the school and make the ultimate decisions on how the school should be operate. Stepping Stone is a registered non-profit society under the BC Societies Act. Joining the Parent Board is an excellent way to make an impact in our children's educational experience, while making connections in your local community. Over the 40+ years at our school, many past Board members report making lifelong friendships. If you are interested in volunteering on the board, please let us know and we can provide you with more information.



FUNDRAISING

During the year, we organize fundraisers such as Purdy's Chocolate, Plant sales, Ecosacs and Shopfunds, if we have a particularly special fundraising 'wish list' piece of equipment to purchase. We appreciate the support of all parents who participate in our fund-raising events. We also encourage parents to come forth with any fundraising ideas the school could organize in the future!

If you prefer to donate directly to the school, please contact a Board Member or the Teachers about specific items that could be purchased for direct donation to the school. Although tax receipts cannot be offered (because as a non-profit society we are not registered as a charitable organization), cash donations are also accepted.

ADMISSION

Stepping Stone Preschool is licensed to provide care for up to 20 children per class. We have a strong commitment to quality programming, and it is a priority of our teachers to direct individualized attention to each student.

We will continue to accept registration during the current school year until we reach capacity. Registration for the school year begins in February, following our annual Open House. Priority registration for September of the next school year will be given to currently enrolled families and siblings of Stepping Stone students. Following our annual open house, registration will open to the general public. When a class is filled, all following applications for the September term will be placed on a waiting list.

Children who will be 3 years of age by December 31st of the year they are enrolling are eligible for our programs. If your child will not be three until after December 31st, you may request to be placed on the waiting list for January intake. Please contact the school for more information regarding January intake.

Application and Enrollment Process

We recommend contacting us and setting up a private tour with our Teachers or attending an Open House. Once a space has been offered to you by our Director of Admissions, you will be invited to complete our online Registration Form and Parent Agreement. Following that, to complete your enrollment at Stepping Stone, we ask that a non-refundable Registration Fee, as well as one month's tuition fee deposit be submitted. The tuition deposit will be held in trust and applied to your child's last month in the program.

Gradual Entry

Gradual entry is an optional process where children are slowly eased into the preschool program through a series of steps to ensure that the transition is a smooth and positive. Not all children require gradual entry, it is dependent on the individual child. Some returning students may benefit from Gradual Entry in September as well as new students. It allows for children to see the day in parts rather than the whole, so it is not too overwhelming for them.

The steps taken for gradual entry are guidelines and will be tailored to the individual needs of the child based on parent and teacher observations of how your child is adjusting to school. Communication between the teachers and the parent will be very important during this process and the Teachers will make every effort to facilitate these discussions.

We understand that some children may experience separation anxiety from their parent. Please discuss with our Teachers if you believe your child would benefit from gradual entry.



INCLUSION POLICY

Stepping Stone Preschool is committed to providing all of our students with the best possible environment at all times, and makes environmental adaptations as needed for the group, or for specific students. These extra support needs may be language barriers such as ESL, social or emotional challenges, or physical barriers caused by mobility issues or other health concerns. We are also committed to meaningful collaboration with families. We liaise with community programs such as PACE and Supported Child Care, or community health nurses to bring in specialized assessment officers who observe students in the preschool environment and make recommendations to the school to better support the group or specific children. To this end, our teachers observe and document any extra support needs and bring them to the community officers, and before the Board of Directors if necessary. We aim to make every effort to successfully support the child within the scope of our program and the current classroom situation. If the teachers note concerns regarding a specific student, the general process for accessing support for the student is as follows:

- ✓ Teachers observe and document student behaviours (social, communication, cognitive, and/or physical)
- ✓ Teachers make adaptations to the environment and note any differences in student behaviour (social, communication, cognitive, and/or physical)
- ✓ If changes in behaviour (social, communication, cognitive, and/or physical) do not occur, teachers share concerns with the family and get further information that may help support the child and get consent to liaise with community program(s) if needed.
- ✓ With consent, teachers liaise with community program(s), implement recommendations, and note changes in behaviour (social, communication, cognitive, and/or physical).
- ✓ Teachers request support from the Board of Directors to inform the Board of the student behaviours and progress to date. A member of the Board may observe the student, meet with the teachers and family (if possible) to discuss further community support to access.
- ✓ Teachers, family, a board member, and any community support members previously involved with the child meet together to further discuss an action plan to support the student.
- ✓ Teachers implement the support plan and discuss progress with the board.
- ✓ The board evaluates the progress made, and whether or not the preschool can provide the supports necessary for the child. The family may be required to withdraw their child from the program.

TUITION FEES

Flexible Payment schedule:

We accept payments by either e-transfer or cheques. We offer flexible payment plans, including annual (e-transfer/cheque), three installments (e-transfer/cheque), and monthly payments (cheque only).

The BC Provincial government does provide Child Care Subsidies for families with demonstrable financial needs. If you are interested in obtaining more information concerning application for provincial subsidies, please contact the school's Director of Operations.

Late Payments

If a tuition payment is past due and not received by the 15th of the month, a written notice will be issued. If the past-due payment is not received by the 30th of the same month, and alternate arrangements have not been approved by the school, the child may be withdrawn from the school program by the school and the space may be offered to another child from the waiting list.

If tuition cheques are returned because of insufficient funds, the family must provide alternate payment within 5 days, and cover the bank charges that we incur due to the NSF cheque. If such a payment is not made the child may be withdrawn from the school program by the school.

Deposit and Refund Policy

Should you need to withdraw your child from the program for any reason (moving, travel, child care needs change), a full month's written notice is required. Your tuition deposit will form your last month's tuition payment.

This policy applies even if the child withdraws before school begins. Withdrawal notice given after August 1st means that September tuition must still be paid, so your deposit would form the September tuition. Alternatively, withdrawal notice given before August 1st would result in a full refund of your tuition deposit.

If withdrawal is made during the school year, your tuition deposit will be applied to your child's final month. For example, if you give notice on October 31st, your final month will be December and the deposit will be applied to December. All other remaining tuition fees will be refunded.



WITHDRAWAL

At Stepping Stone Preschool, we are committed to providing a caring and supportive environment for all children and families. However, there are certain situations that may require a child be withdrawn from our program. They are:

Family Decision

Should you need to withdraw your child from the program for any reason (moving, travel, child care needs change), a full month's written notice is required. Your tuition deposit paid at time of enrollment will form your last month's tuition payment.

Unpaid Fees

Unpaid fees in arrears of more than one month put the student's enrolment at risk of termination. Please communicate with the Registrar immediately if you find yourself in this situation. In some cases, special arrangements can be made.

Violence or Harassment

Our school is a safe and harassment-free environment. If any child or family member's behaviour disrupts or potentially threatens the well-being or safety of a child or Teacher, the Teachers will immediately approach the appropriate Family member. The school and family will then develop a plan in an attempt to alter these behaviours.

If the behaviour continues, or in the event that the family is not willing to work as partners with the school to resolve the problems, the family will be asked to withdraw their child from the program, immediately or the school will withdraw the child involuntarily.

Consistent Late Pickup

If we are unable to satisfactorily resolve consistently late pick up of a child, the school may ask the family to withdraw.

Extra Support Needs Beyond the Scope of our Program

Occasionally, a child may have Extra Support Needs beyond the abilities of what our Teachers can manage within the context of our program. The school will access every available professional resource before a decision to terminate enrollment will be made. In those cases where we cannot accommodate the needs of a family, every effort will be made to identify more suitable programs and resources within the greater community for the family and to establish connections with those programs on the family's behalf.

Criminal Activity

Families who engage in any criminal activity in or on school property will be withdrawn.



OUR DAILY OPERATIONS

Classroom Environment

Our program integrates many aspects of learning including fine/gross motor play, self-directed discovery, socialization, experiential and intellectual learning. We provide access to many of these activities through the classroom environment.

“The wider the range of possibilities we offer children, the more intense will be their motivations and richer their experiences” – Loris Malaguzzi

At Stepping Stone Preschool, we prepare the classroom as an environment that allows the child to be actively engaged in the process of learning. Our values and curriculum are reflected throughout the classroom in each of the areas, as the teachers can see the children observe, become curious, and show interest in the environment around them, therefore allowing the teachers to further develop the curriculum according to the interests of the children. Our “hands on” learning centres include:

- ✓ **Playground** – This area provides opportunities for children to develop their large muscle skills and explore nature in an outdoor setting. We believe outdoor activities are part of a healthy balanced life. Outdoor play allows children to connect with nature and learn through play in varied environments with natural materials. Outdoor play continues to be a daily part of elementary school, and outdoor play at Stepping Stone Preschool prepares children for recess and lunch time in their Kindergarten year and beyond.
- ✓ **Sensory Play** – Examples of sensory play areas include the sand and the water table, playdough and cornstarch. Sensory activities provide opportunities for children to transform open ended materials in many different ways. This is important because many children explore their world and acquire information in a kinesthetic way.
- ✓ **Dramatic Play Corner** – This is an area designed to inspire children’s imaginations using diverse props and real-life materials. The dramatic play corner helps children to use role-play as a means to express their stories and feelings from both their imaginative world and daily living.
- ✓ **Construction Area** – This is an open space for individuals and groups of children to build structures using blocks, natural materials, and manipulative toys. We believe that with construction play, children can further develop their cognitive thinking through activities such as: balancing blocks, creating homes for animals, and negotiating/working with others.
- ✓ **Writing Centre** – This is a space dedicated for children to practice their fine motor skills by using a variety of mediums such as: felt markers, pencils, pencil-crayons, chalk,



stencils, tracers, and scissors. We believe children benefit from a variety of tools to motivate and enhance the foundations of the writing process.

- ✓ **Puzzle Table** – This area provides a variety of games and puzzles incorporating math, science, and life skills. We believe that with these types of games, children can further develop logical thinking such as: classification and 1:1 correspondence.
- ✓ **Light Table** – This is an area provided for children to manipulate light by arranging transparent objects. We believe this is a unique tool for children to explore the possibilities of light.

We would like to remind families that children will be participating in outdoor play every day. Please continue to bring the appropriate outdoor clothing for your child, according to the season such as: waterproof pants, boots, warm waterproof jacket, hat, and waterproof gloves or mittens. In the event of very heavy rain, or very cold weather, the teachers may reduce the time spent outside, or make the decision to play inside. If you have any specific questions or concerns regarding outdoor play, please speak with the teachers directly, or you may also speak with our Director of Operations.

The focus of our activities is to offer learning opportunities that allow children to explore and discover at their own developmental rate. Teachers ask pertinent questions which guide learning rather than giving answers for children to memorize. Music, art, science, math and language are active parts of learning that are integrated with each other to make them more accessible to young minds. For example, in an art activity we may cover the concepts of lines, colour mixing, shapes, textures, and patterns, many of which are considered Mathematical concepts.

We also engage the children with group activities centred on children's questions that may spring from project literature, current events, family experiences, etc. Children's questions can come from infinite sources and our Teachers will facilitate their discovery of answers.

Whether indoors or out, gross motor development is an important part of every day; through directed games and activities using our playground and indoor play equipment.

Our last day of school includes a family picnic and 'sport day' that emphasises team spirit and self-esteem.

SCHOOL POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Visitors

All regular visitors, including college students or volunteers, must have clear Criminal Records Checks and are under the guidance of the Teachers and the Board.

Drop-Off Policy

Teachers welcome the students at 9:00 a.m. Prior to 9:00 a.m., parents must remain with their child until the arrival of a teacher. Parents are required to sign-in their child on the sheet provided at the playground gate or school door. Children are encouraged to hang up their own backpack on the hooks provided.

Parents are required to practice social-distance at Drop-off as well as perform their Daily Health Self-Assessment. We will not be taking temperature checks at drop off.

Pick-up Policy

Pick-up will take place outside at the playground gate or at the main doors of the school. You must SIGN OUT your child from the sign in/out book. If you intend to take your child home early, you must first notify the teachers and sign out your child, and let the teachers call the child and bring them to you.

Late Pick-up

Please be on time for pick-up. If a parent is more than five minutes late, they will receive a verbal 'reminder' from the Teachers. The second offence will result in a written warning from the Registrar. For the third late pick-up and each subsequent late pick-up, there will be a \$25.00 fine per late pick-up to cover the Teachers' extra supervision time. Consistent lateness will be grounds for the school to ask the family to leave the program. Please refer to the Appendix for a sample of the late pick-up form that will be used by the Teachers to document and track late pick-ups.

If after 10 minutes, no one has arrived to pick up your child, the Teachers will attempt to contact, in order, the persons listed on the Community Care Facilities Licensing Registration Form (see your Registration Package). If, by 12:30 pm., the Teachers have been unable to contact an authorized individual to pick up your child, emergency social services will be contacted. Thank you for your understanding in this matter.

Authorized Pick-Up

For your child's safety, everyone who picks up a child from school must be on the Community Care Facilities Licensing Registration Form. Parents must provide the Teachers with written notice at drop-off time if someone unknown to the Teachers will be picking up their child. The new person will be required to show photo identification to the Teachers before the child can



be released. If someone not listed on your registration forms, but known to the Teachers, will be picking up your child, the Teachers will also have to be informed by the parents, preferably in writing, but at least verbally. Children cannot be released to intoxicated adults, regardless of parental authorization. In this situation, the Teachers will follow the same procedures for contacting an alternative authorized individual set out above, including contacting emergency social services if necessary.

In an emergency, please call the school during session and leave a message informing the Teachers who will be picking up your child. This person must follow the above procedures for our Teachers to be able to release your child to them.

If an unauthorized person arrives to pick up your child, the child cannot be allowed to leave even if they know the person or believe their family has authorized the pick-up. Teachers will attempt to contact the family to obtain authorization, but they cannot and will not release the child without appropriate consent. In cases where the Teachers believe that the child, staff, or anyone else at the facility is in danger, the police will be called immediately.

If parents live separately, Stepping Stone Preschool expects that the information provided by the enrolling parent is accurate. If there is a court order regarding child custody, the Teachers will verify and file the statement and, by law, must comply. If no court order or custody agreement is filed with the Teachers, staff cannot deny access to the non-enrolling parent. Legally restrained parents are treated the same as unauthorized persons as outlined in the Pick-up and Drop off section of this manual.

If custody has not been legally determined and conflict between family members is evident, the school may require that a signed agreement be provided confirming the details concerning authorization for pick up and access to the child's information.

This agreement may be a requirement for conditional enrollment in the program, with conditions that state that breach of the agreement may result in withdrawal of the student.

If a Ministry Officer intends to apprehend a child at our School, our Teachers will verify with a Ministry Supervisor that the Officer is indeed authorized to apprehend the child. If all is in order, our Teachers are legally bound to comply.

Inclement Weather Policy

In the case of inclement weather, Stepping Stone Preschool will generally follow the Vancouver School Board's procedures. Per the VSB website *"During severe weather events, all schools in the Vancouver School District will remain open if possible. If a District-wide closure is necessary, that will be decided by 7:00 a.m. at the latest"*.

In exceptionally severe weather, it may be unsafe for our staff and students to commute in to school. In these cases where VSB has decided that school will remain open despite these potentially unsafe conditions, our policy is that our teachers will contact the Board by 7am at the latest, to determine whether it is safe or possible for them to commute into school. The



Board will then communicate to parents by 8am at the latest whether Stepping Stone will open for that day.

We ask that parents keep an eye on their email inboxes in case of early morning communications notifying parents of the decision to not open the school.

Nutrition & Snack Policy

At Stepping Stone Preschool, we value both the social experiences enjoyed by the children during snack time and the nutritional value of maintaining adequate energy stores during activity. In light of substantial research into the benefits of proper nutrition and the negative impacts that certain foods have on memory, learning and attention span, we have adopted a healthy policy toward acceptable snacks.

Snack time is an activity that serves many purposes. Older children are exposed to 'open' snack concepts that allow them some freedom and responsibility in meeting their own food needs. All the children enjoy the social aspect of eating with friends and sharing their news of the day, while younger children may be experiencing eating on their own for perhaps the first time.

Children are required to bring a small snack, in their own lunch pack, every day. Please label your lunch bags and juice containers. Appropriate snacks can be small portions of fruit, vegetables, crackers and a non-carbonated drink. Please remember to cut foods that can present a choking hazard (e.g., grapes) in half. In addition, as part of our criteria to teach environmental awareness, we do encourage the use of recyclable containers such as no-spill cups and reusable snack containers over the use of juice boxes, etc.

Please follow the following guidelines when preparing snack for your child:

- ✓ **We have a NO NUT policy.**
- ✓ Teachers should be notified of all food allergies.
- ✓ Children may not share their snacks with others, as some children may have allergies or food restrictions.
- ✓ We encourage that treats are limited: cookies, candy, any kind of chocolate, chips, pop.

Toileting & Cleanliness

The school promotes self-directed toileting skills and recommends parents work with their child to help them communicate these needs to the Teachers. Teachers are there to support children with the training process and give reminders throughout the day.

Along with assisting the child with their toileting when needed, our Teachers will provide your child with clear instructions on proper bathroom hygiene, hand washing techniques, dressing and undressing advice, and a patient, supportive and understanding attitude toward them during this learning process. Teachers will remind children throughout the day and will help



change a child with an occasional accident. If your child requires more frequent and regular diaper changes, please contact us to discuss readiness for our program.

Clothing & Personal Items

While at school, the children will be busy exploring, experimenting, painting, etc. They will go outside daily, even on rainy and wet days. Please send them in appropriate clothes, for indoor and outdoor play. We ask that you provide a complete change of clothing in a large Ziploc bag with the child's first and last name written on it in large letters. Give this to the Teachers during the first week of school. These will be stored in the bathroom in case a change of clothes is needed.

Please label ALL of your child's belongings in order to avoid lost items and to allow the Teachers to know which items belong to which child. The Lost and Found box is located near the school entrance. All unclaimed items will be donated to thrift stores in June, after classes have finished.

Personal Toys and other items from home are discouraged at our school except during our special 'Show and Tell' week, typically the first week of every month. This is to avoid conflicts that can arise from children who do not wish to share a personal item or from damage that can accidentally occur when these items do get shared. We ask for your assistance in upholding this rule at our school.

Special Events & Field Trips

Throughout the year, our school hosts several Special Events. Notices and details for all events are provided on our website and on our bulletin board so be sure to check them regularly.

- ✓ **Parent Social Evening** – This is a great opportunity to meet other families and find out more about what your child is doing and learning at school.
- ✓ **Halloween Ball** – We participate in the Halloween festivities through such activities as putting on a fun dress-up party with games and prizes and creating fun-filled activity centres.
- ✓ **Winter Holiday Potluck** – In the last week of classes before winter break, all of our families will gather for a Winter Potluck Dinner at the school. The children make gifts for their families and share their holiday plans with one another. Traditionally, there is entertainment too! It's a wonderful chance to meet and chat with the other families at your school and to join in some holiday cheer. Our winter raffle concludes the evening.
- ✓ **Valentine's Day Party** – Our classes will share in a special Valentine's Day circle. Please ensure that your child brings a Valentine card for all the children to avoid any hurt feelings.



- ✓ **Mother's & Father's Day Celebrations** – We offer special events to make these days special. A significant female and male figure in your child's life is invited to attend the school on these days.
- ✓ **Year-End Picnic/Sports Day** – The last day of school wouldn't be the same without a picnic at Maple Grove Park! The children and parents have a great time while saying goodbye to our teachers and classmates.
- ✓ **Field Trips** – We take 2- 3 field trips throughout the school year, and classes are cancelled the day of field trips due to travelling time and logistics of the event. Transportation to and from the field trip must be arranged by the family and parental attendance is mandatory.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Illness, Immunization & Public Health

Children must be well enough to attend school. Please keep your child home from school if your child has a fever, is listless, has a headache, or has had diarrhea or vomiting within the last 24 hours. Also keep your child at home if they exhibit any Covid-19 symptoms, have been in contact with a known or suspected Covid-19 case or if they have travelled outside of Canada within the last 14 days. If a child becomes ill at school, the Teachers will phone the family or emergency contact to take the child back home from school. The child can return when recovery or quarantine is complete. Please advise us by phone if your child is staying home due to illness.

Children who are seriously ill with a communicable disease may not attend school.

If your child shows symptoms as described in “Sneezes and Diseases” Public Health Handbook, staff will ask you to bring the child home. A doctor’s note may be required for returning to school following any serious communicable illnesses. Symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhea, pink eye, a fever over 38° Celsius, or undiagnosed infections or rashes are sufficient cause for a child to be sent home.

Please ensure that your immunization records are up to date. The Vancouver Coastal Health’s list of recommended immunizations is included in your registration package. We do accept students who are unable to be vaccinated due to being immunosuppressed either from an illness or undergoing chemotherapy. We are unable accept children who have not had their recommended vaccinations as a result of a family preference.

The Public Health Nurse visits us and can check records and observe the children. The nurse can also make referrals to other health professionals for initial assessments such as speech therapy.

Administering Medication

If your child requires that medication be administered at school, please provide a Medication Consent form signed by both yourself and your doctor. This includes Epi-Pen medication administration. The form must clearly outline the amount and timing of the medication to be given. Medication is stored in a locked cabinet or in the fridge, if necessary.

Medical Emergency Policy

If your child becomes ill or is injured while at school, the Teachers will quickly assess the situation to determine what action/attention is required and then will act accordingly.

First Aid Situations

When a child is not seriously injured and First Aid is sufficient, all Teachers are First Aid Certified and will provide such treatment as is necessary. They will comfort and reassure your child while acknowledging their feelings as well as recognizing the needs and concerns of the rest of the class. An incident report is filed, and the family is notified upon pick up.

Medical Attention Required

One Teacher will remain with the child while the other attempts to contact either the family or the emergency contacts provided. If none can be reached, the family physician will be contacted. If the family physician cannot be reached, the Teachers will proceed as though it were an emergency situation. (See next).

As in the first aid situation, the Teachers will comfort and reassure your child while acknowledging their feelings as well as recognizing the needs and concerns of the rest of the class. An incident report is filed.

Emergency Medical Situation

One Teacher will remain with the child while the other calls 911 for an ambulance and attempts to contact either the family or the emergency contacts provided. When the ambulance arrives, one Teacher will accompany the child to the hospital, to provide comfort and reassurance to your child. The Teacher will bring your child's medical information as provided by you in your Registration Package along with your Medical Consent forms and remain with your child until either a family member or an emergency contact arrives to relieve them.

The other Teacher(s) will continue to attempt to contact the family of the injured child as well as calling the Board to request classroom assistance. The Teacher(s) will remain with the rest of the children, calming and reassuring the children as they return to regular class activity. Teachers will work with the children to discuss and debrief the event as necessary.

In the event of evacuation of the school, a notice of intent will direct you to our meeting place, which will likely be on the church property, or at McKechnie Elementary field. Teachers will remain with the children until they are picked up by family or emergency contacts. The school is equipped with a large tent and earthquake supplies that will be utilized on or near the church property.

Natural Disaster Emergency Procedures

Our school is equipped with 72-hours of emergency supplies, including a tent for shelter. We practice drills with the children to ensure safety. The drill is taught to the children as a game so as to not alarm them. Please feel free to speak with the Teachers if you would like more information about our classroom drills. Please ensure that you have completed your Earthquake Form and sent your Emergency Kit to the school. Please refer to the Appendix for a copy of the full Emergency Plan which is distributed to parents.



COVID-19 PREVENTIVE PROCEDURES

COVID Symptoms

If your child begins to experience any Covid-19 symptoms at school, a parent will be notified to come pick up their child. While awaiting pick up, your child will be in a separated space away from their classmates, with a teacher present. We ask that you promptly pick up your child in this circumstance. More importantly, we ask that before attending school, you do the Health Self-Check every day to stop the spread of communicable diseases.

Cleaning and Disinfection of Facility

- ✓ Minimum of twice a day, high touch surfaces sanitised (door handles, light switches etc.)
- ✓ Faucets, sinks, soap dispensers and toilets sanitized after each use.
- ✓ All toys used that day to be sanitized at the end of each day.
- ✓ All surfaces to have one final sanitisation at the end of day.
- ✓ All soft toys and dress up will be inaccessible for the foreseeable future.
- ✓ No Children's toys from home
- ✓ Any "mouthed" toys to be cleaned and sanitised immediately.
- ✓ All garbage emptied daily.

Personal Hygiene

- ✓ Children will sanitize their hands upon arrival at drop off.
- ✓ Children will wash hands after playground, before and after snack, after toileting, after any sneezing or coughing.
- ✓ Staff will wash their hands thoroughly and often.
- ✓ Children are supervised with handwashing.
- ✓ Coughing or sneezing to be done into elbow. Children will be regularly reminded of their "cough pocket" (elbow)
- ✓ Hand sanitizer is provided by facility and used regularly by staff and children.

Physical Distancing and No Physical Contact

- ✓ Staff should maintain at least a 2-meter distance from each other whenever possible.
- ✓ Encourage physical distancing amongst the children and do not allow physical contact.



- ✓ Give children plenty of room to space out and whenever possible, designate space through markers to make it easy for them to see the appropriate distancing.
- ✓ Lot of verbal reminders for children to spread out.

In case of Illness

- ✓ Area for children to be taken if having symptoms – front office by washrooms. A staff member will supervise the child until they are picked up and must clean and sanitize the area and all other areas the child has been prior to pick up.
- ✓ Parents/guardians must be available and able to pick up children when needed.
- ✓ All parents, caregivers, children and staff who have symptoms of Covid-19 OR were identified by Public Health as a close contact of a confirmed case must stay home and self-isolate.
- ✓ Parents and caregivers must assess their child daily for symptoms of any infectious disease before sending them to childcare.
- ✓ Children who are ill, including children or essential service providers, will not be permitted to attend.
- ✓ Staff must assess themselves daily for illness before working and stay home if ill.
- ✓ If there is a suspected or confirmed case of Covid-19 at Stepping Stone, we will contact our licensing officer through Vancouver Coastal Health for further instruction.

Other

- ✓ Children use a separate cubby.
- ✓ No Sharing of personal items or snacks
- ✓ As much outside time as possible
- ✓ As per Public Health Guidelines: masks are a personal choice in the preschool setting and not a requirement. Children and staff are welcome to wear masks if and when they choose.

APPENDIX

Late Pickup Form

The following form will be used to document and track consistent late pickups. If a parent is more than five minutes late, they will receive a verbal 'reminder' from the Teachers. The second offence will result in a written warning from the Registrar. For the third late pick-up and each subsequent late pick-up, there will be a \$25.00 fine per late pick-up to cover the Teachers' extra supervision time. Consistent lateness will be grounds for the school to ask the family to leave the program.

STEPPING STONE PRESCHOOL
LATE PICK-UP FORM

Late Pick-up Policy
Please be on time for pick-up. If a parent is more than five minutes late, they will receive a verbal 'reminder' from the Teachers. The second offence will result in a written warning from the Registrar. For each subsequent late pick-up, there will be a \$25.00 fine to cover the Teachers' extra supervision time. Consistent lateness will be grounds for the school to ask the family to leave the program.

Child Name: _____

Parent Name: _____

	Date	Time	Parent Signature
1st offence			
2nd offence			
3rd offence			

The third offence and any subsequent late pick-ups will result in a \$25.00 fine each time.



Emergency Plan

Emergency Plan

In the event of the following events, the following is our emergency plan

Power Outage

- Call families for pick up
- As our indoor space provides adequate lighting during certain times of the day, we will determine how much time to spend inside, and when it would be appropriate to wait for families outside in our playground

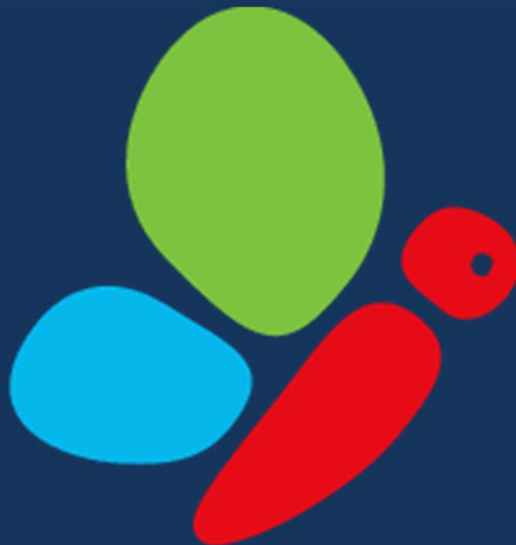
Flood

- Call families for pick up
- Wait outside in our playground

Earthquake

- If the school building is structurally sound, we will wait for families for pick up
- We will access our earthquake supplies and kits
- ⊗ • If the school's structure is not sound, we will go to mckechnie Elem. Parents are aware of our earthquake plan and will meet us there.
- We will take our earthquake supplies and kits

⊗ Mckechnie Elementary School
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Vancouver, BC
V6P 5P8



Stepping Stone Preschool
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