

Westlock Child Care Society



Westlock Community Daycare School-Age Care Parent Handbook

I have read and understand the information in the Parent Handbook.

Child's Name:

Parent's Name:

Parent Signature:

Today's Date:

The Parent Handbook can be read and signed online. Once complete, email a copy to westlockcommunitydaycare@gmail.com. Approximately one month after registration, you can sign this page for your child's file.

Table of Contents	Page
Early Learning and School Age Program	
• Welcome!	4
Contact info	
• Office Hours	4
• Complaint Process	4
Society info	
• Board of Directors	5
• History	5
• Philosophy	6
• Vision, Mission, Goals	6
Program info	
• <i>Early Learning and Child Care Act and Regulation</i>	7
• Evaluation and Improvements	8
• <i>Occupational Standards for Early Childhood Educators</i>	8
Parent info	
• Child Guidance	9
• Child Supervision	10
• Criminal Record and Child Intervention Checks	10
• Communication	10
o Family	10
o Program	10
• Community Contacts and Events	11
• Confidentiality/Privacy	11
• Daily Routines (Times of Transition)	11
o Field Trips	13
o Meals and Snacks (Nutrition)	11
o Programming	12
o Outdoor Play	12
o Resting/Sleeping	12
o Safety Checks (Indoor and Outdoor)	12
o Toileting/Diaper Changing	12
• Staff and Educator Qualifications	13
• Family Involvement	13
• Inclusion and Diversity	14
• Interactions	14
• Open Door Policy	15
• Record Keeping	16
• Use of Technology	17
Financial/Insurance info	
• Affordability Grant	17
• Invoicing	17
• Payment	17
• Subsidy	17
• Termination	17

Health and Wellness info	
● Accident or Injury	18
● Allergies and Emergency Medication	19
● Communicable Diseases	19
● Health Care Other Than First Aid	19
● Immunizations	19
● Infection Prevention	19
● Medical Conditions	20
● Medication and Herbal Remedies	20
● Potential Health Risk/Illness	21
● Protection from Environmental Contaminants	21
Programming Support info	
● Best Practices in Early Childhood Education	22
● Children’s Developmental Needs	22
● Curriculum	23
● Curriculum Framework - <i>Flight</i>	23
● Developmental Screening	24
● Lending library - Families	24
● Positive Child Guidance	24
General Policies	
● Absence/Late	24
● Drop-off/Pick-up	25
● Evacuation	25
● Photo Permission	25
● Serious Incident Reporting	25
Definitions	30

Words that are *underlined and italicized* are included in a definitions page at the end of the document.

Early Learning and School Age Programs

Welcome to the Westlock Child Care Society!

Our Early Learning and School Age programs are licensed through the Ministry of Children's Services.

Contact Info

Office Hours

Main Office

Monday to Friday (except holidays)
10804 101 Street
child123@telus.net
780.349.4999 (w)

Program Director

Erin Kalisch
Monday to Friday
westlockcommunitydaycare@gmail.com
780.349.4999 (w)
780.307.8076 (c)

Office Administrator/Financial Officer

Theresa Frizzell
Monday to Friday
oa.wccs@gmail.com
780.305.6333 (c)

Executive Director (all programs)

Christine Villeneuve
Monday to Friday
ed.wccs@gmail.com
780.349.4999 (w)
780.674.0543 (c)

E-transfers can be sent to payment.wccs@gmail.com

Complaint Process

We promote open and transparent communication in all aspects of our programs. We encourage educators and parents to speak daily on the routine care and learning experiences for the children. Building caring relationships between families and children are important to establishing trust and help with children's transitions into child care programs.

Sometimes conflicts or misunderstandings can arise between a family and the educator. In this case we urge the family to speak with the educator directly. The educator will also inform their Program Director, as they can also support or offer advice on handling difficult situations between the family and the educator.

If the misunderstanding is between the family and a Program Director, please reach out to him or her. It may be a simple miscommunication that can be easily fixed with a phone call. Our Program Director makes all efforts to ensure the programs run smoothly.

If you feel that you have reached out and are not satisfied with the results, contact the Executive Director, who will investigate the situation. He or she may ask for documentation about the complaint, such as who, what, when, how, and where. The Executive Director will document his or her findings and file the report with the Ministry of Children's Services. The outcome of the investigation will be communicated to concerned individuals.

Depending on the results of the investigation, the Executive Director will provide guidance and/or support the investigation process. Children's Services and/or the RCMP will investigate serious complaints. Our Early Learning and Child Care Staff (previously Licensing Officer) is:

Nadine Forsyth, Child Care Licensing Officer
Early Childhood Services Division
North Central Region
Duniece Building
Third Floor Suite 3000
4810 – 50 Street
Athabasca, AB T9S 1C9
780.212.6763 Nadine.forsyth@gov.ab.ca

Society info

Board of Directors

The Westlock Community Daycare and School-Age Programs are operated by the Westlock Child Care Society, which is a non-profit organization under the Society Act and administered by a Board of Directors. The Board of Directors consists of parents and community members. Parents are considered members of the organization when they enrol their children in our programs and can have input on policy changes. The Board of Directors meets regularly, with information on upcoming meetings posted on our website <https://www.westlockchildcare.com/news-and-events>

Our Board of Directors is composed of 5 to 11 members, and at least 3 are considered the Executive: President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary. The Treasurer and Secretary roles can be combined into one.

As a Policy Board, Directors meet to plan the future sustainability of the Society's programs, approve new policies, revise current policies, and provide strategic direction to the Executive Director.

History

The Westlock Child Care Society was formed in 1980, and was registered as a non-profit organization under the Societies Act. Originally, services included the Day Care Centre with an integrated special needs program and the Satellite Family Day Homes program. Since then, services have expanded to include Out-of-School Care programs.

The Day Care Centre was originally built in 1980 to commemorate Alberta's 75th birthday. In the 1990's, two additions were built onto the original building to meet the expanding demand for Day Care services.

In 2014, we started to upgrade our programs and facility, incorporating more technology into all aspects of our programs.

In 2017, the Westlock Community Daycare was one of the first 22 Early Learning and Childcare Centres in Alberta to receive a \$25/day operational grant from the Government of Alberta, which allowed us to offer affordable child care and increase the quality of our program.

In 2021, the Westlock Family Day Home Agency received grant funding to create new spaces in rural areas surrounding Athabasca, Barrhead, and Westlock. Later that year, a historic Federal Child Care Plan was signed by the province with the Government of Canada. Due to this plan, in 2022, the Affordability Grant provided programs with funding to offset the cost of care for families of children under the age of 6 (kindergarten or younger).

Our Philosophy

The Westlock Child Care Society is committed to providing high quality early learning childcare programs for the children and families of the communities we serve. We are dedicated to building relationships with families by sharing information and providing support as they raise their children.

Our image of children is of citizens, explorers, researchers, inventors, and Mighty Learners. We notice children's dispositions of learning as they show caring, seeking, persisting, participating, and playing; we nurture and support their physical, social, emotional, creative, and cognitive growth through the holistic play-based goals of the Curriculum Framework for Alberta, *Flight*.

Our programs are adaptable and unique to each child's needs, background, and parent preference and by consistently building capacity in our staff, we are well-equipped to learn and work alongside children during the most formative years of their lives.

Vision, Mission, and Goals

Vision statement: Happy children. Engaged families. Thriving society.

Mission Statement: The Westlock Child Care Society provides a fun, safe, nurturing environment supporting children's healthy development and future success.

Goals: We strive for excellence and assess our programs regularly. Our programs focus on the safety, security, well-being, and development of children through their mental, physical, spiritual, and social needs.

Agency Info

Early Learning and Child Care Act and Regulation

The Agency follows all rules and laws set out by the Province of Alberta. The [Early Learning and Child Care Act](#) and [Regulation](#) guide decision-making for the Agency.

Evaluation and Improvements

We evaluate our programs in different ways.

- **Our Families:** you are encouraged to participate in our programs in many ways. By completing surveys, applying to be on the board of directors for the Society, participating in fundraising, going on field trips with the program, and giving us feedback on how we can improve, you are letting us know what is important to you!
- **Our Educators:** Educators also complete surveys to provide feedback, meet monthly for regular staff meetings, and have many options for additional training throughout the year. These training sessions can be for child development, effective communication, *Flight*, and much more!
- **Our Staff:** Staff (other than educators) support the program in other ways - our office administrator provides administrative support to families and staff, our dietary cook provides nutritious meals to help children's growing bodies, and our leadership team provides pedagogical support and guidance on best practices to educators. Staff provide input on best practices within their areas of expertise, and give feedback on how we can improve our services to families and children. We develop a **Program Plan**, a document that guides our practice which is approved by Children's Services. We will upload this to our website for families to access.
- **Objective Rating Scales:** Part of our Program Plan, we use objective, research-based tools that help us improve our skills, environment, and interactions. Some of the tools we use include the *Infant and Toddler Environment Rating Scale*, *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale*, *School-Age Care Environment Rating*

Scale, Rating Observation Scale for Inspiring Environments, Program Administration Scale, and Child Caregiver Interaction Scale.

- **Our Policies:** Staff, educators, and families can review draft changes to policies that will affect them. We encourage your feedback! Due to recent government changes in the *Alberta Early Learning and Child Care Act* and *Alberta Early Learning and Child Care Regulation* we are in the process of reviewing all our policies, so they align with the *Principles* and *Matters to be Considered* from the *Alberta Early Learning and Child Care Act*.
- **Government Early Learning and Child Care Staff:** Complete at least one annual file review and site visit to ensure our files and practices are up-to-date and compliant with the *Alberta Early Learning and Child Care Act*, *Alberta Early Learning and Child Care Regulation*. If the programs are found to be in non-compliance, additional review and visits will occur throughout the year.

Occupational Standards for Early Childhood Educators

The [*Occupational Standards for Early Childhood Educators*](#) was developed by the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council of the Government of Canada. It outlines the knowledge, skills, and abilities that are required to work effectively as an Early Childhood Educator.

Educator Info

Child Guidance

Our programs are committed to ensuring children are given guidance in their behaviour and interactions in a positive manner to assist them in developing self-control and self-confidence, and ultimately sensitivity and empathy, in interactions with others. We provide strategies for educators to use to help children develop social interaction skills so children feel safe, comfortable, and respected in interactions and experiences in the program.

Educators should use

- age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate activities
- choice (offer children a choice of activities or material and follow through with their decision)
- listening (be attentive, engaged, and aware of children's thoughts and feelings)
- modelling (children learn by watching trusted adults deal with their emotions, show them how)
- reinforcement (encourage behaviour through praise and attention)
- outlets for expressing feelings (show children how to express big feelings safely)
- natural and logical consequences
- reasoning (explaining to children the consequences and importance of following the rules)
- redirection (redirecting the child's attention to a different activity)
- setting rules and outlining limits in a positive way (please walk, instead of "don't run")

Educators should avoid

- setting unrealistic expectations

Educators must never

- threaten to inflict, inflict or cause to be inflicted, any form of physical punishment, verbal or physical degradation or emotional deprivation
- deny or threaten to deny any basic necessity
- use or permit the use of any form of physical restraint, confinement or isolation.

Child Supervision

Children must receive developmentally appropriate supervision by educators at all times. This looks differently for each age group. We strictly maintain government ratios:

Infants 12m and younger	1 educator : 3 infants
Infants 12m - 19m	1 educator : 4 infants
Toddlers 19m - 36m	1 educator : 6 toddlers
Young preschooler 36m - 48m	1 educator : 8 children
Preschoolers 48m+	1 educator : 10 children
Kindergarten	1 educator : 15 children
School-Age Care	1 educator : 15 children

Regular head counts and face to name counts are done by educators, especially in larger groups and outside.

Criminal Record and Child Intervention Checks

Criminal Record Checks with a Vulnerable Sector Search and Child Intervention Checks are required to be updated every three years for every person working alongside children. Board members require a Criminal Record Check with Vulnerable Sector Search.

Communication

- **Family**
 - Family communication should be open, transparent, and clear. Families must be made aware of several things:
 - daily menu (posted in each room)
 - field trips (parent signatures are required)
 - room routines (what your children are doing)
 - parental expectations (ie. providing a schedule, calling or texting if your child will not be here if they are scheduled to be, bringing appropriate clothing for all seasons, providing an adequate supply of diapers (if needed) and extra clothes, sunscreen and hats in warmer weather, etc.)
- **Program**
 - Supervisors monitor the programs to ensure compliance to the ELCC Act, Regulation, and company policies. They provide additional support to educators and families. Educators use their cell phones and an app called "WhatsApp" to communicate within the program (making learning visible, requesting support, and/or providing HiMama information to families).
 - Educators are encouraged to speak with families at drop-off and pick-up times about the children, the program activities, and any concerns either party may have. Occasionally the Program Director and/or Executive Director may wish to speak to a family to brainstorm additional ways to support the family (child guidance, supporting children's needs, referring to other agencies, providing information, etc.).
 - The Office Administrator supports families with invoicing and subsidy applications.

Community Contacts and Events

The program has a list of community resources and contacts that can be shared with educators and families. We create reciprocal relationships with community organizations and encourage educators to attend community events with children. Monthly newsletters also showcase in-person or online events that can be enjoyed by all. These are found on our website: <https://www.westlockchildcare.com/newsletters>

Confidentiality/Privacy

We respect the confidentiality of information from or about the children, families, and staff in the program. This information will be treated with respect and used only within the context authorized by the individual giving the information. This confidentiality will apply to discussions, storing written material, and maintaining records in computer files. Information collected is only shared with authorized individuals. Release of information (including children's photos) to third parties can only occur if written permission is received and placed in the staff, educator, or child's file.

Staff and Board Members must sign annual Oaths of Confidentiality.

We are also committed to ensuring the privacy of individuals accessing our programs. Early learning programs follow the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA), which allows us to collect personal data from individuals, keep it in safe locations, and not share without consent.

Daily Routines (Times of Transition)

Field Trips

Educators must have the parent's written permission to transport their child. Additionally, field trips are encouraged and FDH educators must receive parent consent to take children offsite (away from the home).

While in transport, all children under 40 pounds must be properly secured in a properly installed CSA approved car seat. Children from 40-60 pounds must be secured in a CSA approved booster seat, making proper use of the shoulder and lap belts. Children over 60 pounds must be secured with the shoulder and lap belts. Proper car seats for the child's weight and height must be correctly installed. Car seats must be used and installed as per manufacturer's recommendations. Children under the age of 12 must not use the passenger seat of a vehicle.

Meals and Snacks (Nutrition)

Our dietary cook and educators provide food to children following the [Canada's Food Guide](#) or [Alberta's Nutrition Guidelines](#). Daily menus must be available to families and Children's Services. Changes to the menu must be communicated to families and changed on the menu.

Families will provide infant formula and baby food if infants are not yet eating table foods. To meet children's needs, it is recommended that children eat every 2 to 3 hours. Research shows that providing a relaxed environment while interacting with children and talking about healthy food choices helps children learn appropriate behaviours during mealtimes and be more open to trying new foods. Every interaction is a learning experience!

Educators must ensure the manner in which children are fed is appropriate to the age and level of development. Children should be seated while eating and seated or standing while drinking. No beverages should be given to children while napping.

Programming

Our programs implement [Flight: The Curriculum Framework for Alberta](#) and emergent curriculum. Our leadership team assists staff in developing a program that meets children's safety, security, wellbeing, and development. Observing children to learn their interests, providing time, space, materials, and participating with children during play is a crucial first step in the program planning process. Scaffolding, extending play, or challenging children's current knowledge by adding something a little more difficult, helps children to gain new skills in key developmental areas. Educators must be able to explain how they

are meeting children's physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional needs. The daily program planning must be posted in the room and visible for families and Children's Services.

Outdoor Play - Part of Program Planning

Our program views the outdoor environment as an extension of the indoor space. We encourage educators to get outside and play! Daily program planning for time spent outdoors is required and safety guidelines must be followed at all times. Because of the importance of outdoor play, it is crucial that families ensure children have adequate clothing to spend a lot of time outdoors (weather specific - hats, warm clothing in winter, cool clothing in summer, appropriate footwear, splash pants/muddy buddies). We believe in messy play and children will get dirty!

Resting/Sleeping

Infants sleep in a CSA approved crib and are slowly transitioned to a CSA approved cot. Educators have additional training on sleep, especially for infants, which outlines the importance of how we provide quality sleep environments for children. We do not provide bottles or cups for children to drink while they are napping.

Toileting/Diaper Changing

Parents must provide an adequate supply of disposable or cloth diapers. Our program cannot wash cloth diapers. Educators support children's growth and development by assisting with potty training, toileting, and proper sanitary bathroom practices.

Educator Qualifications

There are different levels of Early Childhood Educators based on the education they receive. Level 1 ECEs have learned at least the basic principles of early childhood development (50 hours). Level 2 ECEs have at least a 1-year college certificate in Early Childhood Education. Level 3 ECEs have at least a 2-year diploma in Early Childhood Education. Some of our educators have additional qualifications, such as undergraduate or postgraduate degrees.

Our supervisors all have a Level 3, and the Executive Director has a Master of Education in Early Childhood Education.

Our staff and educators have their first aid, and clear Criminal Record and Child Intervention Checks. These are all renewed every three years before they expire.

Professional learning is an important part of our program. Educators develop a professional learning plan that outlines which training must be completed as well as optional training in areas of interest.

Family Involvement

Our programs encourage family involvement. Families are invited to complete annual surveys, provide ongoing feedback to the educators and the Program Director regarding child care practices, as well as offer opportunities to provide input on policies that affect them and/or to sit on the Board of Directors. We have an Open Door Policy that encourages families to connect with educators at any time during operating hours. The Program Director and Executive Director are available to meet with families for any reason, and they may reach out to families to make arrangements for meetings. Transparency and open communication with families promotes a positive working relationship.

Inclusion and Diversity

Our program accepts children of all abilities and backgrounds. Educators will

- Identify and monitor their biases concerning gender, stereotypes or other differences between children.
- Utilize the parent's expertise in relation to their child's needs and invite children and families to share cultural experiences and/or preference as well as cultural traditions and celebrations.

- Show respect for the various ways that families care for their children and be aware of different child-rearing practices and beliefs.
- Display posters and provide materials that are representative of a variety of social, cultural, linguistic and ability backgrounds including non-traditional family units such as single parent families, same sex parents and/or children living with grandparents. (dolls, dress-up clothes, puzzles, food, songs and music, games, art materials, books and print material, photos, posters, etc.)
- Regularly change the images and materials used within the program to maintain interest and stimulate and to reflect the changing nature of society.
- Share information with children about different cultures and abilities.
- Provide opportunities for children to use their native languages with each other and educators and allow opportunities for children to teach others words and/or phrases from their home language.
- Talk to children about differences in positive ways.
- Help each child to be able to recognize and challenge bias.
- Acknowledge and value children's unique and individual differences and qualities.
- Celebrate occasions that are relevant to a variety of cultures.
- Provide opportunities for all children to try new activities and/or experiences on their own regardless of their abilities.
- Arrange play space in a way that will accommodate the number of children in the program as well as the diverse needs of the children.
- Provide additional support to identified children as required in order for those children to fully experience and benefit from the program offered.

Interactions

The most important quality aspect of a child care program are the educators. Interactions with children are crucial to the safety and security, and positive growth and development of children. Educators model respectful interactions with adults and children at all times and encourage children to interact with each other positively and respectfully.

- Educators greet each child upon arrival and departure, respond attentively and show interest when children communicate with them. (Educators will endeavor to be aware to make eye contact with children, get down to their level when possible, refrain from interrupting children, maintain a positive facial expression and physical demeanor that portrays openness to children's communication)
- Educators are available to the children at all times and are actively engaged with the children most of the time by participating in their play, talking with them and facilitating their play.
- Educators engage in conversations with children and encourage them to express their needs, feelings, desires, and opinions.
- Educators will provide opportunities and encouragement for children to try new things independently.
- Educators will be aware of and responsive to children's abilities and possible needs for assistance.
- Educators will communicate with all parents regularly in an open and positive manner regarding their child. A comfortable and supportive environment for parents to communicate with educators will be provided.
- Educators are provided with necessary information about children and families in the program in order to best meet individual needs.
- Educators will be made aware of best practice information in a timely manner through written communication and/or verbal communication during educator meetings.

Open Door Policy

We have an open door policy. Educators should be warm and inviting, and all inquiries and/or concerns from families must be dealt with in a professional, efficient and timely manner.

- Families will be welcome to visit the program at any time, unless it is unsafe to do so.
- Families will be encouraged to participate in the program if they desire.
- Activity permission forms will include a space for parents to sign up as volunteers to attend activity.
- Educators will allow opportunities for families to share skills, experiences, hobbies, etc.
- Educators will maintain a professional standard at all times.

- Educators will work with families in a way that respects and encourages the primary responsibility of the families for their own children.
- Educators will establish eye contact and smile at parents when they enter the program, even if they are too busy to talk to them at that point.
- Educators will strive to let parents know they want to help and support them. Educators must never dismiss a parent's request or complaint as trivial. Even if educators cannot do anything about the issue at that moment, they will let the parent know they recognize that the parent is concerned and will follow up on it. Educators will advise their supervisor of issues immediately. We will follow up with families to ensure that their requests or complaints have been addressed.

Record Keeping

- It is a requirement that families review their registration forms annually. Occasionally, due to new information, we will ask you to update your registration form. It is crucial that emergency contact info be reviewed, as we call these individuals if we cannot reach the parent in an emergency. There must be at least one person (not the parents) listed for emergency contacts.

Use of Technology

The Use of Technology/Social Media Policy has been developed to create specific regulations about the use of technological devices such as the Internet, social media sites, and cameras. We are committed to providing a safe environment for the staff, educators, and children who are under our care. This policy is not intended to interfere with the private lives of our staff or educators, or impinge upon their right to freedom of speech. This policy is instead designed to ensure that our image and branding are maintained, as is the health and safety of the staff and children under our care.

Our program will typically send this over Himama, an app that families can download and we can use with their permission. Occasionally, we will send photos or videos through text.

- Photos and videos of children cannot be taken unless we have written permission from the parent.
- Photos and videos of children cannot be shared on personal social media sites.
- Educators can share photos of children with the program for observation, documentation, and planning purposes (faces of children can be covered).
- Occasionally, videos or photos of children will be shared with the parent for consideration of illness, assistance with observed behaviours within the program, and to share what learning is taking place.

Financial Info

Affordability Grant

The Government of Alberta entered into an agreement with the Government of Canada to provide a grant to families who are accessing licensed child care. The Affordability Grant is available to families of children kindergarten and younger who are enrolled at least 50 hours per month.

Invoicing

Invoicing starts on the 20th of the month for the next month's fees. Invoices are emailed to the family by our Office Administrator.

Payment

Fees are payable by the first of the month, prior to child care services being provided, at payment.wccs@gmail.com (there is an auto-deposit to the Westlock Child Care Society).

It is important to remember that families are pre-paying for a space within the program. If your child is sick, you will not receive a refund on child care fees. The Fee Agreement form outlines the fees set by our program and agreed upon by the family. Billing occurs based on these fee agreements.

Subsidy

We recommend families apply for provincial subsidy. More information can be found here <https://www.alberta.ca/child-care-subsidy.aspx>. The Office Administrator can help families with their online application if help is requested.

The Subsidy program pays part of program fees to the Agency on the parent's behalf. It is based on the family income and hours of care required. Subsidy is a grant offered to families by the Government of Alberta, which can change any aspect of qualification or receipt of this grant, at any time.

Termination for Non-Payment

If payment is 30 days outstanding, child care services will be terminated. If a payment arrangement is not made with the Office Administrator, or if fees remain outstanding for 3 months, the file will be sent to collections.

Health and Wellness info

Accident or Injury

In the event a child is assessed by the educator to require emergency medical care as a result of sudden onset of a compromising medical condition, e.g.:

- convulsions or change in conscious state due to any cause
- respiratory obstruction
- serious physical injury

The educator will:

- provide first aid procedure appropriate to the situation
- arrange for immediate transportation to medical service (the safety of the other children must not be compromised by lack of supervision, therefore ambulance service is appropriate)
- notify the parent/guardian (or the child's emergency contact if unable to reach parent/guardian) immediately of the situation and action taken
- notify the Program Director immediately of incident and actions taken
- document the incident for the Executive Director and Board of Directors
- participate in an investigation from the Executive Director, Children's Services, or the RCMP as required

If a child requires medical attention (even if the child goes home and the family goes to the doctor later that evening), it must be reported to the program. The Program Director reports Critical Injuries/Illnesses to Children's Services.

Allergies and Emergency Medication

Parents are responsible to advise the program of their child's allergies or suspected allergies. Children's allergies must be posted where food is prepped and in the child's room. Prior to accepting children with severe allergies and a potential risk of anaphylaxis, educators must take training from www.allergyaware.ca and the Program Director will develop an emergency medication plan with the family.

Communicable Diseases

If an educator or children participating in the program come into contact with a communicable disease, the program must be notified. We must report suspected communicable disease to Alberta Health Services. Following positive diagnosis, the child will be unable to return to the program until the period of isolation recommended by the medical authorities has passed.

The Program Director will communicate with all parents of children regarding the suspected communicable disease and of the procedures being followed.

Illness symptoms for children, educators, the actions taken, information given by families in regards to children's illness, and physician diagnoses (if available) will be recorded on illness tracking forms. Details recorded on the form will include the individual's name, date the individual was observed to be ill, time the parent was initially contacted (if illness symptoms appear for children), time the individual was removed from the program, and date the individual returned to the program. Forms are to be reviewed by the Program Director on an ongoing basis and if requested, by AHS Health Inspectors and Children's Services Licensing Officers. If there are 2 individuals ill at a program with the same symptoms this information will be reported to Alberta Health Services and if necessary, the program will be placed on outbreak status. Continued monitoring of the number of individuals with symptoms will be reported to health personnel until the program is declared clear of outbreak status.

If a suspected outbreak occurs staff will introduce the following actions:

- Post notices for parents to inform families of any outbreak, incidents and request confirmation of child's absences due to illness
- Increased disinfecting of high touch surfaces such as door handles, railings, etc.
- Sensory play (water and sand tables, playdough etc.) will not be used until clear of outbreak.

Please note that our staff are not permitted in the program if they are sick. Even a simple cold will keep an educator off work until they are symptom-free. Please keep your children home if they are sick. **If we have a lack of available staff, rooms will close to ensure we are never over-ratio.**

Health Care Other Than First Aid

Educators can administer herbal medications. Medication administration forms must be completed.

Immunizations

At this time, there are no requirements for educators or children enrolled in the program to provide proof of immunizations. The program will caution educators and families that during times of outbreak (more than 2 individuals having similar or the same symptoms of illness), individuals who are not immunized will likely contract the illness as they may not have antibodies.

Infection Prevention

Educators must practice thorough hand washing routines using warm water and soap:

- before and after eating
- before and after food preparation and handling
- before and after administering medications and/or first aid
- before and after assisting children with toileting
- before and after personal toileting
- after cleaning nasal discharge
- after sneezing or coughing
- after coming in from outdoors
- after contact with animals
- after handling toxic materials
- after cigarette smoking
- whenever hands are soiled

Disposable gloves must be used if educators are in contact with potentially infectious materials such as nasal discharge, vomit, feces, infected eyes, and wounds.

Children must practice thorough hand washing routines using warm water and soap:

- before and after eating
- before and after personal toileting
- after cleaning nasal discharge
- after sneezing or coughing
- after coming in from outdoors
- after contact with animals
- whenever hands are soiled

Any personal grooming items used are to be labeled with the child's name. Educators will ensure that each child uses his or her own personal grooming items and that these items are not shared by children. Soiled clothing will be stored in plastic bags to be sent home with the child. Clothing soiled with stool will not be washed at the program. Educators will empty stool into the toilet and will put soiled clothing into plastic bags to be picked up at the end of the day. This policy protects the health of the children and educators. Washing soiled clothing exposes educators and children to large amounts of disease-carrying germs.

We follow all AHS recommendations and guidance documents in the event of illness, outbreak, or pandemic. These documents will be shared with educators and reflected upon regularly (during educator meetings, as events occur within the program, etc.). It will also be shared with families and posted on social media.

Medical Conditions

Families complete an emergency medical condition form (included in the registration form) and if necessary, an emergency medication administration form which will be placed on the child's file. Educators will be made aware of educator's and children's medical conditions.

Medication and Herbal Remedies

- All medications must be in the original container, clearly labeled with the physician's name, child's name, date of issue and instructions for administration.
- **Patent** medications and herbal remedies must be labeled with the child's name and dosage.
- Educators will only administer the medication according to the labeled directions.
- All medication and herbal remedies must be given by the parent to the educator (not left in a bag or backpack) and must be signed up and signed by the parent on the Daily Medication Administration Log. This is available from the Program Director. This log includes the child's name, medication name, dosage, time to be given, time last given to the child, special instructions, date, and parent signature.
- For children who receive medication on a daily basis, parents can complete a monthly medication form that includes required information.
- Educators will record the medication administered, the date and time administered, the dosage given, and sign the Log sheet.
- Emergency medication (ie. epi-pen, puffer for asthma) will be stored in cupboards or on high shelves in the child's play room and must be placed in a zippered pouch to carry on all outings or during outside play time.
- When emergency medications are used to treat allergies, educators must be able to recognize the allergy symptoms and know how and when to administer medication.
- Educators must be aware of all children who require emergency medications (ie. Epi-Pen, puffer for asthma), where medications are stored and how to administer the medication.
- Parents must update the emergency medical administration form every 6 months or as information changes.
- Educators will be trained on how to administer any emergency medication not covered in their First Aid course. (www.allergyaware.ca)
- Educators will monitor children for allergic reactions after receiving medication and/or herbal remedies.
- Medications and/or herbal remedies will be returned to parents when the authorized administration period has ended.
- **All** medication, vitamins, and herbal remedies must be kept locked and out of the reach of children.

- All medications and herbal remedies will be inspected a minimum of once every six months and all expired and unnecessary medications and herbal remedies will be returned to the parent or if unable to return to the parent, medication will be taken to a pharmacy for disposal.
 - If the Program Director and/or Executive Director is concerned that a particular child is receiving a patent or prescribed medication too frequently, specific medical authorization and instruction may be requested.
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Potential Health Risk/Illness

Where an educator knows or has reason to believe that a child is exhibiting the following signs or symptoms of illness:

- Vomiting, having a fever, diarrhea or a new or unexplained rash or cough
- Requiring greater care and attention than can be provided without compromising the care of the other children in the program
- Having or displaying any other illness or symptom the educator knows or believes may indicate that the child poses a health risk to persons on the program premises

The educator must ensure that the child's parent arranges for immediate removal of the child from the program, and that the child does not return until the Program Director is satisfied that the child no longer poses a health risk to others in the program. Illness forms are required to be completed by the Educator and signed by the parent anytime a child is sent home with illness symptoms. These forms are kept in the child's file.

Educators must ensure that the sick child is kept as far away as is practicable from the other children until the parent removes the child from the program.

It is our policy that children with an illness (not allergy-related) must be 48-hours symptom-free before returning to child care. In the case of a fever, 24-hours symptom-free without using fever-reducing medication. If a child has an infection, typically they can return if on antibiotics for at least 24 hours.

Programming Support info

Best Practices in Early Childhood Education

We strive to bring up-to-date practices in early childhood education into our program at all times. Occasionally we have coaches from ARCQE (Alberta Resource Centre for Quality Enhancement) enter our programs and provide guidance on how we can improve our work. Our educators are encouraged to obtain higher education and are supported financially by both the program and Children's Services grants that cover the cost of tuition and books. We value continuous professional learning as new ideas in current ways of thinking about early childhood are typically taught in post-secondary and implemented within the program once educators understand these new concepts. Educators become mentors and grow their leadership skills by sharing what they've learned with other staff.

Curriculum

We provide an emergent, developmental curriculum. This means we focus on what children are interested in and provide experiences that foster growth in all their developmental areas. Young children learn from all their experiences. Educators use their skills of observation, planning, and documentation to provide appropriate experiences.

- Developmental domains: Gross motor, fine motor, communication, problem solving, personal-social, social-emotional
- Developmental needs: physical, mental, emotional, spiritual
- Children will be more engaged in learning if educators plan experiences that focus on children's current interests

Curriculum Framework

Our program implements *Flight: Alberta's Curriculum Framework*. The core concepts, beliefs, and values of this framework align with our philosophy of child care.

The Alberta framework recognizes, appreciates, and values:

- the practice of relationships among educators, children, and families that make visible the uniqueness of each child care centre and family day home in Alberta.
- the co-constructed nature of early learning curriculum: recognizing the unique nature of learning in early childhood educators make curriculum decisions “in the moment,” extending play and learning through thoughtful reflection and dialogue with children, families, and other educators.
- the search for a shared professional language – a language that may cause pause, calling upon us to reflect deeply in order to make the values, principles, and goals that frame practice in early learning and child care clear to ourselves and visible to others.

(*Flight*, p.4)

This curriculum framework will inspire, provoke, and guide educators in their work with children and their families – a framework of possibilities.

- For nurturing each child's identity as a mighty learner and citizen
- For valuing play in the lives of children
- For making children's play, learning, and development visible for children, families, and educators
- For respecting family, social, and cultural practices and traditions in local communities
- For reflecting on the everyday experiences of children that are the basis of curriculum meaning-making in early childhood communities.

The vision is for *Flight* to be a living document and that educators will use it to question, discuss, and reflect on curriculum meaning making.

(*Flight*, p.10)

You can learn more about *Flight* by checking out their website at <http://flightframework.ca>.



Children's Developmental Needs

In 2021, the Ministry of Children's Services outlined 4 needs of children within the Program Plan, a document that we follow that outlines some major features. These are:

Mental Needs: Research shows that the earlier a child learns how to label and manage their emotions, the more well-adjusted adult they will become! We participate in *Getting Ready for Inclusion Today's Access, Support, and Possibilities (ASaP)* program that teaches our educators strategies to support children's emotional health, wellbeing, and development. We also teach children prosocial skills and strategies for problem-solving. We encourage nurturing relationships with adults and between peers. Lastly, we encourage cognitive development by providing children with developmentally-appropriate and age appropriate materials and activities.

Physical Needs: The physical needs of children include many bodily movements, which include:

- Gross motor: movement of the large muscles, legs, arms, and body – walking, running, playing with balls, hula hoops, climbing and more!
- Fine motor: using the smaller muscles of the hand and fingers, figuring out a puzzle, weaving, lacing, stacking, many types of art.
- Vestibular: learning how to balance ourselves, walking on different types of ground surfaces, walking on balance beams, learning new large muscle movements

- Proprioceptive: learning about our body and its location in a space (for example, close your eyes and touch your nose!), and becoming more aware of our body
- Meals and nutrition
- Rest times

The physical needs of children also include the ability to spend time outside and exploring indoor and outdoor responsive environments.

Spiritual Needs: The spiritual needs of families and children are viewed in different ways. From being thankful for what we have, being a good citizen, and respecting others to participating in yoga and deep breathing, learning how to be calm and mindful, and noticing special days, there are many ways to meet the spiritual needs of children. We ask this question in all our registration forms to be certain we acknowledge each family's view. Respecting diversity and differences are important skills to teach young children.

Emotional Needs: Humans are social creatures! There have been many child development theorists that have studied how we grow and learn by being near others. Educators set up spaces to encourage children's social play. Occasionally and with parent permission, children may also go on field trips to explore their communities.

Developmental Screening

Ages and Stages Questionnaires are a developmental screening tool for determining whether children need additional support in several developmental domains (gross motor, fine motor, communication, problem-solving, personal skills, and social and emotional learning). A link to access the questionnaires is provided to families during the first month of care.

We provide the results to both the families and the child's educators, who can use them to provide individualized planning for the child.

Lending Library - Families

Occasionally, a family may wish to know more information about a topic of interest, especially in the development of their child. The program may have resources on child development families can borrow to help! Additionally, families can ask for a meeting with the educators, Program Director and/or Executive Director to discuss their child's progress.

Positive Child Guidance

Child guidance is how we help children learn the expectations for behaviour in various settings. It is the way we help children know what it means to be a member of our community (in an early learning program, in their home, and in the larger community). It means helping children learn from their mistakes and make positive choices while preserving their self-esteem and dignity.

Examples of positive guidance include:

- Avoiding unrealistic expectations by understanding the skills and abilities of each child
- Setting rules and limits and where appropriate, have children help
- Stating rules and directions positively (ex. use "we walk inside" vs "no running")
- Providing age appropriate and developmentally appropriate activities
- Offering choices of activities and accepting the child's decision
- Listening to children by being attentive, engaged, and aware of children's feelings and thoughts
- Modelling by showing children how to handle a situation or new activity
- Using reinforcement to encourage children's behaviour
- Reasoning with children by explaining the consequences of their actions
- Redirecting children to another activity
- Using natural and logical consequences

Child guidance is not punishment, neglect, or abuse. Under no circumstances will any staff use

- corporal punishment (hitting, slapping, or spanking),
- humiliation or other methods do degrade children and negatively affect a child's self-worth and self-esteem,
- verbal or physical degradation or emotional deprivation,
- confinement or isolating a child,
- physical restraints, and/or
- withhold or threaten to withhold food, warmth, clothing, bedding, or any basic necessity.

General Policies

(In alphabetical order)

Absence/Late

Please let the program know if you will be late in dropping off/picking up your child. We plan exciting events, and if your child does not show up on time the educators may leave the program before you drop off your child! Also, let the program know if your child will be absent for the day. If the absence is due to illness, there are other questions that will be asked and recommendations for isolation if required. **A reminder that our policy for illness is 48-hours symptom-free (exception for allergies), and 24-hours symptom free for fever (while not using fever-reducing medication).**

Drop off/Pick-up

In the event that someone other than the parents are to pick up a child from the child care program, the parent must notify the program prior to pick up. The other person will need to bring identification and sign a form indicating who picked up the child.

Evacuation

Our programs have an evacuation plan posted that is visible from outside the program. This plan ensures that in the event of an emergency, the family knows where their child will be within the community. Please talk to the educators about their plan, who to contact in the event of an emergency, and where they will relocate (neighbour, community collection point, other).

Photo Permission

Photos of children registered in the program may be used for communication purposes (to the parent, for program planning, and training), in displays and photo albums at the program, produced by the Westlock Child Care Society. Photos will not be used for any public social media formats.

Videos of children registered in the program may be used for communication purposes (to the parent, for program planning, and training), in displays and albums at the program, produced by the Westlock Child Care Society. Video recordings may be used for developmental assessment. Videos will not be used for any public social media formats.

Serious Incident Reporting

In the event of a serious incident, including a hospital or doctor visit due to injury in the home, an investigation takes place. The Program Director or Executive Director will request information from the educator, the family, and anyone else involved. It is the policy of the Westlock Child Care Society that all staff must participate and cooperate in any investigation conducted by the Executive Director, Board of Directors, and/or authorities from Children's Services or other law enforcement agencies as required.

Definitions

Emotional Deprivation: Emotional deprivation can include withholding appropriate affection, comfort, or cognitive stimulation to a child. The Regulation prohibits the use of emotional deprivation as a form of child guidance.

Matters to be Considered: The *ELCC Act* gives direction on a number of matters that must be taken into consideration by providers of child care programs and operationalized in the program plan:

- (a) children should be encouraged in having care and play experiences that support their development and learning;
- (b) the child is to be protected from all forms of physical punishment, physical and verbal abuse and emotional deprivation;
- (c) diversity in
 - (i) the background and circumstances of children in the program and their families, including those who may be experiencing social or economic vulnerability , and
 - (ii) the abilities of the children in the program are to be respected and valued;
- (d) the child's familial and Indigenous or other cultural, social, linguistic and spiritual heritage are central to the child's safety, wellbeing, and development;
- (e) care of the child must be appropriate to the child's mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical needs and stage of development;
- (f) involvement and engagement of parents supports accountability of child care program providers, monitoring of child care programs, and maintenance of good quality child care programs.

Principles: The *ELCC Act* identifies the following three principles to guide its interpretation and application in all areas relating to the licensing of child care programs:

1. The safety, security, wellbeing, and development of the child is to be supported and preserved.
2. Flexibility in child care supports choice and accessibility for families.
3. Engagement of parents and community members in the provision of child care supports the child's optimal development.

Responsive Environments: Encompasses 4 elements: time, space, materials, and participation.

- **Time** for play, for inquiry, for thinking, and for pursuing an interest alone or with friends and educators is important if learning is to become meaningful for the learner.
- **Space** for play, for alone time, for social play with others, and for focused opportunities to pursue an interest are important for children as learners and as citizens.
- **Materials** open up possibilities or limit possibilities for young children's care, play, and learning.
- **Participation** of educators, children, and families is central to a practice of relationships and is revealed through the early childhood environment.

(*Flight*, pp.64-69)

Verbal or physical degradation: Includes any harsh, belittling, or threatening or degrading response by any adult (parent, staff member, volunteer) which humiliates or undermines a child's self-respect. It may also include inappropriate exposure to sexual contact, activity or behaviour; force-feeding; exposure to profanity; or exposure to violence between parents or staff members, including volunteers or other adults. The Regulation prohibits the use of verbal or physical degradation as a form of child guidance or discipline.