

TREE OF LIFE NATURE PLAYSCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK 2021/22

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Thank you for your interest in Tree of Life Nature Playschool. I, Kate Lawes, owner/operator, am a graduate from the West Coast Institute in Early Childhood Waldorf Education. I also have my BC Early Childhood Education Certificate from Pacific Rim Early Childhood Institute and my Forest Nature School Practitioners Certificate from Child and Nature Alliance of Canada.

My licensed Group Childcare Facility will allow for a total of 16 children (starting Sept 2021) at the Silver Bow Studio located in Esquimalt.

This Parent Handbook was prepared to provide you with basic information to help you learn a little about the program and the care that I am providing for your child.

I look forward to the day when I can welcome you and your child to Tree of Life Nature Playschool.

Warmly,
Kate Lawes

I would like to acknowledge and thank the Lekwungen speaking people, also known as the Songhees, Esquimalt, and Beecher Bay First Nations communities, for allowing us to live, work and play on their lands. We also give thanks to the ancestors, supernatural ones, hereditary leaders and matriarchs, creatures big and small for looking after the rich resources and cultural teachings of this beautiful land.

PHILOSOPHY, IDEAS AND IDEALS

I choose to take care of children as my job for a myriad of reasons ... foremost, because I believe in the precious and magical time that is childhood and find great joy in being part of nourishing their growth and development through Nature based education. The well being of your children is at the heart of my business and service.

Pedagogies used to create the Tree of Life program are Waldorf Early Childhood Education, Forest Nature School, Place Based Education and Bioregionalism.

CAREGIVER TO CHILD RATIO

At Tree of Life I maintain a high caregiver to child ratio - 2 to 7. This allows our team to give your child the time and attention needed. It also allows us, even when one of our staff is sick, to provide consistency of care as then we do not have to bring in a substitute that does not know your child or the program we are delivering.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Monday to Friday 9:00 to 3:00

DAILY RHYTHM (this is guideline)

8:45 - 9:00 Children arrive/good morning circle

9:15 Go to morning park location - We go outside to a local park everyday. We get to the parks by walking, by bus or organized field trips where parents will drop off and pick up.

9:30 Free Play

10:00 Morning Snack

10:20 Free Play

11:30 Circle

12:00 Lunch

12:30 Pick Up Time for Half Day

12:30 Free Play and art activities

1:30 Puppet play and Rest Time

2:15 Afternoon Snack, stories and games

3:00 - 3:15 Pick Up

WEEKLY RHYTHM

Monday (Silver Bow Studio) - Baking and Painting

Tuesday (local park) - Sewing

Wednesday (local park) - Woodworking

Thursday (local park) - Felting

Friday (Silver Bow Studio) - Baking and Painting

Drop off for field trips will be at parks like Saxe Pt, Macaulay Park, Highrock Park, Gorge Park Esquimalt. We will plan to visit these parks on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday's. On Mondays and Friday we will often walk from Silver Bow studio to visit [Lugrin Place Park](#).

FOOD and DRINK

Monday all food is supplied. All other days two snacks and a well balanced lunch needs to be provided by the parents.

Food provided by Tree of Life is balanced and wholesome, often organically grown low in sugar and refined products. Emphasis is on nuts, grain varieties, cheeses, all varieties of fruits and vegetables, are offered at every meal. The Canadian Food Guide is followed. **Water bottles are to be provided by the family and sent every day.**

TOYS

There will be NO special toys coming to Playschool. Toys, stuffed animals and treasures sometimes come to Playschool. They are better kept at home since they may become lost or damaged and are often hard to share. If a special toy would like to be shared that is something we can talk about and arrange.

DRESS CODE

In the interest of providing an environment that most supports the young child's development and growing imagination, we adopted the following dress code to the best of your ability. Clothing should be:

- free of media characters or caricatures, advertisements and writing.
- no lights on shoes.
- indoor shoes must be supplied that can be left at Playschool

OUTDOOR CLOTHING

We play outdoors every day except in extreme wind or rainstorms. Proper dress is essential and warmth is of utmost importance. Please supply complete body covering from head to toe, with consideration to waterproofing and mud-proofing. From April to October hats and sunscreen must also accompany your child. **Please label ALL your child's clothing.**

PARKING and ENTRANCES

When at Tree of Life Nature Playschools in door space, Silver Bow Studio #15-1182 Colville Rd, there is a great amount of on street parking. Please do not allow you children to play out front of the studio as it is a high traffic area and not a safe place to roam. Always cross the road at the cross walk!

INCLEMENT WEATHER

In case of extreme weather days we would not go outside. This would include high winds, large amounts of snow and heavy rain fall.

HOURS OF OPERATION, DROP OFF and PICK UP

The facility is open from 9:00am to 3:00pm. Drop off is between 8:45 and 9:00 and pick up is between 3:00 and 3:15. If a child will be arriving later than 9:15 or will be picked up after 3:15 a text to both myself and my co-teacher is required. **Your child will experience a wonderful, secure feeling when you drop them off on time and are present at the end of the day.**

HOLIDAYS and IMPORTANT DATES:

The facility will close on all statutory holidays and will be closed for 2 weeks at Christmas and two weeks in the summer months.

AGE

Tree of Life Nature Playschool is a program that is most suitable to children 3 years to 5 year old.

TOILETING

We welcome children who are still potty training and will be happy to plan with you and your child on how best to work towards the goal of being diaper free.

FEES

Fees are due in full on the first of each month of care. If fees are not paid on the first of the month parents will be given a reminder. If fees are not paid by the following week of that month childcare will be terminated.

Tree of Life Nature Playschool is part of the [Child Care Reduction Initiative](#) (CCRI) helping reduce fees

5 days a week

- 18 -36 months \$980 (rate before CCRI \$1080) per month
- 3 - kindergarten \$890 (rate before CCRI \$990) per month

4 days a week

- 18 -36 months \$890 (rate before CCRI \$990) per month
- 3 - kindergarten \$860 (rate before is \$940) per month

3 days a week

- 18 -36 months \$800 (rate before is \$860) per month
- 3 - kindergarten \$700 (rate before \$760) per month

2 days a week \$505 (rate before \$545) per month

Being a licensed facility families can apply for the [Affordable Child Care Benefit](#)

WITHDRAWAL/TERMINATION

At least two months written notice is required for withdrawal of your child from Tree of Life Nature Playschool. If withdrawal is immediate, parents are responsible for payment of two month fees in lieu of notice. The centre reserves the right to terminate service at any time at the centre's sole discretion and fees for the month of termination will not be reimbursed.

ORIENTATION AND GRADUAL ENTRY

It is very important that you and your child feel comfortable at Playschool. It takes time to build trust in a new and unfamiliar setting. It may be necessary for your child to begin with half days or a shorter week depending on the child and the parents schedule.

PROBATIONARY PERIOD

The first month of care is considered probationary, during which either the parent or the childcare provider may decide to terminate care. After the first month of care both the parent and the caregiver are required to give two calendar months notice to terminate care.

COMMUNICATION

Morning and afternoon connection - We will endeavour to have a quick connection with you each morning and afternoon to hear how your weekend or evening was with your child and let you know a little about how are day went. We will also have a clip board which we will have a few details written about our day. We will share these each day via email. It is best not to talk about sensitive issues at this time but set up a time when we can.

Weekly reminders - I will send out weekly reminders of upcoming events if needed

Monthly Newsletter - I will be taking pictures of your children and our adventures indoors and out and will send you several of these in the Newsletter. I will also send out any other interesting articles that I think you might enjoy that may or may not be connected to our Parent Afternoon topics.

Joining us in the class room - please feel free to join us in the classroom, indoors or out. Let me know what days and times work for you and we can arrange for you to join us.

TREE OF LIFE CONTACT INFORMATION

For quick connection call me at 250-813-3050 and email me at kate@treeoflifeplayschool.ca anytime between Monday to Friday 7:00 to 7:00 and or Vanessa King my Co-educator is also available at nurturebynature@hotmail.com or call 250-532-3973 during Playschool hours only.

PARENT CRAFT EVENINGS

These evenings will be at Silver Bow Studio on Wednesday evenings from 6:30 to 8:30. Approx 6 times a year.

FESTIVALS

Festivals are an important part of building a community and celebrating the seasons. We will have several small festivals a year. A festival committee will help to prepare and organize these events. Parents and educators alike will gather once a month to prepare. Interested?! Tell Kate!

PARENT AFTERNOONS

There will be 10 parent afternoon gatherings to discuss a variety of parenting topics. Dates for this will be discussed with parents but in the past have been held every 3rd Sunday from 2:00 to 4:00 at a local park unless other wise indicated. Both parents are asked to come and a limited number of **free child care** spaces will be available.

PARENT - TEACHER CONFERENCES

Conferences are held once a year in the Fall and a wonderful way to get some one on one time. Dates tba. If however at any time throughout the year you have questions or concerns, a

meeting can be scheduled. I value open, honest and ongoing communication and also appreciate hearing about any significant changes or circumstances that affect your child.

LIBRARY

A lending library of books about Parenting, Waldorf Education, Early Childhood care giving and nature connection are available at Silver Bow Studio. Please remember to sign the books out and enjoy for no longer than one month.

CHILDREN and SCREEN USE

There is never any television or screen time given to children at Playschool.

Children are encouraged to play at Playschool by acting out of and exploring their own innate capacity for imaginative play. However a child who has been watching television, movies, playing on a computer or with video games on a regular basis will re-enact these experiences during playtime. This prevents the child from receiving the full benefit of the Playschool program.

Please limit your child's exposure to media. Resources about the topic of how media exposure impacts your child's growth and development are available upon request.

ACTIVE PLAY POLICY

Children will receive a healthy amount of physical activity at Playschool. We are out of doors, at a minimum, in the morning from 10:30 until 12:00. While outside active games which will include running, jumping and climbing will be encouraged. From 12:00 to 1:30 circle time, lunch, artistic activities, and a rest will take place. Circle time and artistic work will incorporate a variety of specific gross and fine motor skills. More active outside time takes place from 1:30 to the end of the day at 3:00. This gives the children approximately 4 hours of active playtime during the day sometimes more or sometimes less depending on the day.

BIRTHDAYS

A child's birthday is a very special day and we honour it with a short but sweet little celebration, that includes the reading of their birthday story. We also ask that you bring a food treat to share with the children on this day and join us if you can!

FIRST NATIONS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

At the end of each day we will acknowledge the land that we have had the privilege to enjoy each day at our closing circle:

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