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firstfriendsdaycare@bellaliant.com



Family Handbook

Introduction

Welcome to First Friends Daycare Society (First Friends Daycare). We are pleased that you have enrolled your child(ren) in our center. We are open Monday through Friday from 6:45am - 6:00pm. The intention of this Family Handbook is to provide you information relating to the daycare center and the care your child will receive within it. This handbook will assist you with any questions you may have concerning the center. Please feel free to contact the Director, April Hamilton, at 902-865-4493 if you have any questions regarding the policies herein.

First Friends Daycare is operated by an elected Board of Director's. Day to day operations of the center are overseen by the Director, April. The center is maintained financially by the fees we charge to parents for the care of your child(ren), as well as funding received from the government under the Canada-Wide Childcare agreement which helps lower the fees paid by you. Additionally, in order for the center to maintain a quality program at the lowest possible cost to you, we must strive to always maintain a full enrollment at the center.

The fees charged and collected from the parents pay for the expenses of the daycare, such as; wages, groceries, rent, utilities, maintenance, school and office supplies and equipment for the children (inside and out). These expenses are generally consistent throughout the year, regardless of the number of children enrolled. It is thusly imperative that fees are paid in full, on time and for everyday your child's space is available at the center. In other words, while your child is enrolled in the center, the fee is charged for the space whether your child is in attendance or not. This includes statutory holidays, sickness, vacations, and so on. Failure to maintain an up-to-date account could mean the loss of your child's(ren's) space.

Again, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our Director April Hamilton or Assistant Director Annette Lewis at either: 902-865-4493 or via email at firstfriendsdaycare@bellaliant.com

We look forward to caring for your child(ren) in our Center





First Friends Daycare Society

Family Handbook

Please be advised that the following items are posted on our Parent Board, located near the office upstairs, and on the Parent Board in the hallway downstairs.

- A copy of the Daycare Act and Regulations
- A copy of the Family Handbook
- The License for First Friends Daycare Society
- A copy of the Behavior Guidance Policy for First Friends Daycare Society
- A copy of First Friends Daycare Menu (four week rotating)
- A copy of the Daily Routine at First Friends Daycare
- A list of the current members of the Parent Committee at First Friends
- A copy of the most recent minutes of the Parent Committee Meeting.
- Notification of the funding provided to First Friends Daycare Society by the Minister and Department of Early Learning and Education
- A copy of the Food and Nutrition Standards
- A copy of the Daily Program Standards
- A copy of the Exclusion Criteria
- The Food Establishment Permit
- The Certificate of Incorporation with Joint Stocks
- A list of current members on the Board of Director's
- A copy of the Strategies for Prevention and Spreading of Communicable Diseases
- A copy of the Fire Drill Record Log
- Any other information required by the Minister



Philosophy

At First Friends Daycare, we believe that high-quality Early Childhood Education is the foundation to positive future functioning and growth of *all children*. We strive to create an environment that is secure, stable and inclusive at the center. We create a positive, loving, nurturing, home-like atmosphere in which curiosity, health, safety, nutrition and overall well-being of children are important to us. We encourage mutual respect, patience and creativity so that *all children* at the center can learn through our play-based, emergent curriculum as part of our programs. We consider the individual needs and the different levels of development of each and every child here at the center. The curriculum we use (Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework) is based on the concept of the *Image of the Child*, a philosophical concept which states that an individual's personal *Image of the Child* is influenced by their own experiences, biases, and knowledge. We see children as curious, creative, full of potential, capable, and confident. We value and honour children for who they are today, and for who they will become. We also value how all children's families, cultures, and communities influence and contribute to children's learning and development. (*Education and Early Childhood Development*, n.d.)

Goals and Objectives

The policies in this handbook are an expression of our concern and desire to protect and care for your children during the time they spend at the center. Our Program provides:

- 1- Consistent positive reinforcement and enjoyment.
- 2- Positive self-image.
- 3- Self-worth.
- 4- Friendship.
- 5- Exploration of the child's own creativity.
- 6- Value and respect for the children.
- 7- Helping the children to function and be themselves in a group setting.
- 8- Development of each child's potential.
- 9- A learning environment full of fun.
- 10- Life experiences through imaginative play, creative art, music and movement, field trips, crafts, and so on.
- 11- Development of large and small motor skills.
- 12- For the child's uniqueness to be realized and expressed according to their learning patterns of individuality.



Curriculum Objectives

- 1- To provide an enriched learning environment for all children which enables the children to express themselves in the available areas of interest, such as: blocks, reading, arts, crafts, sand, water, and so on.
- 2- To use a combination of emergent and play-based curriculum.
- 3- To provide a structured, but flexible, equitable and inclusive program geared to meet the needs of all children while keeping our current environment in mind.
- 4- To use the Nova Scotia Early Learning Curriculum Framework as the basis for planning activities. This framework guides us to use a holistic approach to Early Childhood Education.
- 5- To have children experience active learning environments where problem solving, imagination and creativity are encouraged and purposefully planned.
- 6- To prepare a program for the children to experience a safe, secure environment where their social, emotional and physical well being are nurtured and supported.

Staff Objectives

- 1- To use positive reinforcement.
- 2- To recognize a child's uniqueness.
- 3- To provide a well-organized and structured program allowing the children to choose from several age-appropriate available activities and to participate in large and small group activities.
- 4- To help the children develop social skills that will enable them to interact with other children in a variety of settings and establish a sense of belonging.
- 5- To help the children develop a positive sense of identity and social responsibility by showing them they are valued and supported through relationships and experiences.
- 6- To use intentional teaching methods and reflective practice to deliver high-quality programming through observation. We will record and observe each child by evaluating their behavior, motor development, vision, fine motor skills, hearing, speech, and social interactions. This is undertaken by, for example, using open-ended questions during playtime, which encourages children to think critically and express their ideas. By observing and documenting each child's interests and abilities, one can plan and respond by shaping environments and experiences that support their curiosity, creativity, and development.



Equipment

We provide a variety of toys which create a diversity of interests for children, focusing upon:

- 1- gross motor equipment
- 2- fine motor equipment
- 3- creative equipment
- 4- learning materials
- 5- materials designed for group and individual use.

Staffing and Administration

The centre is managed by a Director and an Assistant Director, with additional staff assigned based on enrolment numbers, as required by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Early Years Branch. Subject to available funding, the team may also include an Inclusion Co-ordinator and Support Staff. At least two thirds of staff members are required to hold qualifications in Early Childhood Education or an equivalent credential. All staff have current First-Aid Level C training, clearance through the Child Abuse registrar, and a Criminal Record Check for the Vulnerable Sector. Each one of these certificates is renewed every three years. The Centre is also licensed and inspected twice a year by the Department of EECD-EYB as per the Daycare Act. Currently, one of these inspections is scheduled, while the other is unannounced. The centre holds a Food Establishment Permit that is renewed annually. We are inspected annually by a Public Health officer for the Department of Environment and Climate Change as per the Early Learning and Childcare regulations and Food and Safety Regulations. The centre is also inspected by the Fire Marshall on a regular basis (every 5 years)

Programs:

Full Time Daycare

Age Group	Child to Teacher Ratio	Daily Rate
18 months-3 years	6 children :1 Teacher	\$14.75
3-5 years	8 children : 1Teacher	\$14.75

Description:

Full time daycare is an all-day program designed for children who require full time supervision outside the home. This is a quality program designed to meet the different developmental stages of each child. Two outdoor times, structured and free play times are a part of the daily program. Children may have breakfast at the center if it is supplied by the parents and also follows the guidelines of the Food and Beverage Criteria in the Early Learning and Childcare Programs (a list of acceptable items is available upon request).



Lunch and two snacks are provided daily by First Friends Daycare. First Friends Daycare is responsible for ensuring that the food served within the center meets the Food and Beverage Criteria.

After School Program

Age Group	Child to Teacher Ratio	After School daily rate	Before and After School daily rate	Full day rate
5 yrs – 12 yrs	15 children to 1 Teacher	\$9.40 daily	\$10.50	\$23.00

Description:

The After School Program is provided for children who attend school regularly. The school we service is Sackville Heights Elementary. The bus (provided by HRCE) picks the children up in front of the center and drops them off in the afternoon. When the schools are closed the children can attend First Friends Daycare for the full day. We also offer a March Break and Summer program for our school aged children. As per the preceding table, the full day fee is \$23.00.

Outdoor time, structured and free choice activities are a part of the daily program. Children may have breakfast at the center provided it is supplied by the parents and also follows the guidelines of the Food and Beverage Criteria, as previously stated. A list of foods that fall within the Criteria is available upon request. Lunch and afternoon snacks are provided by center and meet the Food and Beverage Criteria under the Food and Nutrition Standards in Early Learning and Childcare Programs.

Parents are responsible for paying for field trips and any other outside activities. The cost of these outside activities will be kept to a minimum, when at all possible. All the aforementioned Programs take advantage of indoor, individual and small group activities as well as larger group and outdoor activities.

Age-Limit Policy

Although we are licensed to age 12, due to high demand for our school age program and space limitations of 15 children, our school age program shall operate under these guidelines:

- 1- Priority for the space will be given to children moving up from the preschool program, siblings of currently enrolled children and children aged 5- 9.
- 2- We will offer care until age 11 or until the end of Grade 5 (according to the school year calendar, this care will cease on June 30th).



- 3- It is up to the discretion of director if the child is asked to leave before that date, between the ages of 9- 11 (grade 4) due to developmental differences, and in particular, appropriate conversations among children. All effort will be made to help the enrolled children recognize why the language, conversations, or behaviours they are undertaking is inappropriate for daycare, and the child will be given the opportunity and space to allow that conversations or use of language to happen when and where possible.
- 4- We value all the children in our care, and because we are a mixed age group (4 ½ - 11) we must maintain developmentally appropriate topics and language from the youngest to the oldest.
- 5- If there are inappropriate conversations, language, or behaviours:
 1. The child will be spoken with (and the conversation logged) and also be given the opportunity to correct their behaviour. In addition, parents or guardians will be informed.
 2. If the behaviour persists, and correction is undertaken several times, the family will be asked to seek care elsewhere.
 3. The amount of notice given to the family will be up to the discretion of the Director and will correlate directly to the inappropriate behaviour. For example: Physically hurting children or staff would result in immediate dismissal. For repeated inappropriate language amongst their peers, notice will be between 14- 30 days.

Income Source

First Friends Daycare is a non-profit center, which is owned and operated through an elected Board of Director's as a service to the local community. The center is maintained financially by the fees that are charged to the parents for the care of their children and also by funding received from the government of Nova Scotia under the Canada Wide Childcare Agreement (specifically, through fee reduction). We also fundraise and utilize other grants that are applied for yearly.

Enrollment- Deposit required

The following is the procedure to be followed when registering your child at this center.

- 1- Fill out a waitlist request form to be officially placed on the waitlist.
- 2- When there is a vacancy, you will be offered a tour of the facility.
- 3- Advise the Director if you wish to take the available spot within 3 days of the tour.
- 4- Admission forms will be given for you to complete and return to the daycare either before or upon the first day of Orientation (either by email or printed copy).
- 5- A welcome email will be sent to you with information on our orientation policy, a copy of this family handbook and a fees schedule with information on how and when to pay.



- 6- A non-refundable deposit of **\$100** is required to hold the space once you have accepted it. The deposit will go towards the first month's payment at the center.
- 7- A **\$5.00**, non-refundable membership fee is required upon acceptance into the centre, as we are a non-profit daycare and membership is part of enrolment.
- 8- **Orientation:** This is very important for your child. In order to help them make a happy adjustment, a gradual introduction is recommended.
 - a. Day 1 & 2- morning attendance from 9am- 11am. This is required for both toddlers and preschoolers. Both mornings are free of Charge.
 - b. Day 3 & 4 - each day the child is to stay a little longer to add one more transition period. Required for toddlers, as needed for preschoolers. Fees will begin from day 3.
 - c. Decide if shorter days are possible/needed for the first full week for each individual child.
 - d. Be available to assist us in helping your child to adjust to this new experience the first full week of attendance.
 - e. Naturally, we understand the difficulties that this schedule can present to working parents and we are willing to make alternate arrangements if necessary and in the best interest of the child, family, and staff. This is a very important transition for any child and help from all involved is the best way forward.
 - f. A more detailed orientation procedure is available in Appendix A.

Fees

- 1- Fees are subject to change upon government directive, with proper notice given.
- 2- Fees are payable in advance bi-weekly or monthly on a set schedule, given at time of enrolment.
- 3- Fees are payable in cash, cheque or e-transfer (auto-deposit is enabled) to firstfriendsdaycare@bellaliant.com
- 4- The deposit of \$100 will go towards your first month's fee. If you are on subsidy, the \$5 membership fee will be considered your deposit to hold your space.
- 5- Parents are responsible to pay for ALL days their children are registered at the center, including illnesses, vacations, holidays, and storm days.
- 6- In the event of an NSF cheque, parents are responsible for all the bank charges.
- 7- If the centre receives two NSF cheques, thereafter the daycare fees will be requested in cash or e-transfer only.
- 8- Parent payments are a key source of income for the centre. Fees that are not paid regularly or on time could result in termination of your space from our centre.
- 9- In order to eliminate financial loss to the centre, vacancies must be filled immediately:
 - a- Two weeks written notice of withdrawal is required.



- b- Written notice is to be given to the Director
- c- The reason as to why you are withdrawing your child from our care.

StoryPark & Communication

In effort to maintain open communications with our parents while still adhering to the regulations for Childcare Centres in Nova Scotia, we use the StoryPark app as our main form of daily communication. StoryPark is a secure invite and member only app that our daycare purchases for this service. Much of the communication at the center is undertaken through the StoryPark app, including details such as:

- 1- Group stories: only the current members of daycare can see group stories. Each child has a personal page where only the administrators (parents/guardians) of the account can access the information.
- 2- Daily toddler logs which contain information about their day, such as: diaper changes, nap information, food eaten and daily activity are no longer in paper form, but solely in StoryPark. Other groups, although not required, will often also receive a small story about their day.
- 3- Every effort will be made to take photos and write a small story daily per child enrolled within the full-day program at First Friends. The school-age program will also receive stories and updates but may not be as frequent as the younger children as they are not with us all day long.
- 4- When you are enrolled in the daycare you will receive an email from StoryPark on our behalf to activate your account.
- 5- The profile information kept on StoryPark includes, but is not limited to your email, phone number, child name and birthdate, gender, siblings, enrolment days and wellbeing information such as allergies, cultural and food restrictions, and medical diagnoses.
- 6- We do our attendance through StoryPark, and you will receive notification of an absence if you have forgotten to notify the centre by 10:30am each day.
- 7- We submit our incidents or accident reports through StoryPark. You will receive notification of an incident report for you to view. Once you have viewed it, we receive notification that it has been read.
- 8- StoryPark is also a place for you to post stories about you and your child that you would like to share with us. You can personalize your page with your own picture and information.
- 9- You can send messages (labelled as conversations) through StoryPark to a specific teacher or group as well as commenting on individual pictures.
- 10- Any important information such as reminders of closure for holiday, meetings, fundraisers, and so forth, will be posted to the main community page.



11- Quarterly newsletters will be posted to the main community page in StoryPark as well as being posted outside each classroom.

Attendance

1-Arrival and Departure- General:

The Children **MUST** be accompanied to and from the centre by the parent or guardian responsible for them that day. If an alternate arrangement is made, please advise the center (either the Director or teachers).

Children **MUST** not be left at the door of the centre or in the parking lot. This is extremely unsafe for the child and does not guarantee their arrival at the center.

It is essential that parents or guardians **NEVER** remove their children from the daycare or playground without informing the staff on duty and receiving acknowledgment from the staff of the child's departure.

Upon leaving the center with your children they are your responsibility and must not **AT ANY TIME** be left alone on the premises.

2-Times of Arrival and Departure:

Approximate times of arrival and departure are to be arranged upon enrollment. Parents should notify the daycare center if any changes occur. The center is open from 6:45 am to 6:00 pm (11 hours a day). Parents and children should vacate the premises no later than 6:00 pm.

3- Late fees - We are obliged to enforce this policy very strictly:

- If you are late to pick up your child(ren), a **\$25.00 per 15 minutes** late fee will be charged, unless you are unavoidably detained (such as due to a traffic accident). It is required that you call to let us know if this should happen, as the staff on-site have obligations as well.
- If there are multiple incidents of being "avoidably detained", the late fee rules will be applied.
- Late fees will only be charged 3 times. A 4th occurrence will result in childcare being terminated immediately.

4- Late arrival and Early Pick-up:

Children enrolled on a full-day basis should be at the center by 9:00am. This enables them to take part in most of the planned daily activities, while allowing our cook to have accurate



numbers for the daily meals. If you are going to be later than 9:30 am, a notification must be made either by phone, email or StoryPark. You may be refused care if you arrive after 10:00am without the proper notification. There is to be no drop-offs or pick-ups between the hours of 12pm and 1pm, prearranged or not, as this is the very heart of naptime at our center. Our staff are busy helping the children settle down for naptime and it is very disruptive to the group to have someone arriving or leaving during that time. The only exception to this rule will be an emergency situation, or an occurrence in which the staff have been notified in advance. Outings will usually commence by 9:30am. When an outing is planned, there will be NO supervision in the classroom after that time. If you arrive after the time of departure, if space allows, your child will join another classroom for the day. If there is no space in any other group, we will be unable to provide care for that day.

5-Long-term Absences:

Failure to pay for spacing when your child is absent may result in the loss of your child's space. This includes vacation times, sick times, holidays and long-term absences. Absences lasting more than one calendar month will require a discussion regarding the reason for the extended absence and plans for returning to the daycare. While payment is expected and secures the space during an absence, spaces can only be held for families with prolonged absences for a maximum of three months due to a significant waitlist and the opportunity for other community members to access available spots. For proper program planning, parents are requested to notify the Director or staff two weeks prior to vacation dates, which also state the duration of vacation. Please note that during that vacation time, payment is still required and if you wish to bring your child to the center, your spot will still be here, and you are able to bring your child if you wish.

6-School-Age ONLY Vacation arrangements:

If your child is enrolled full-time in our school-age program, there is an opportunity for you to decrease summer enrolment, or to book off vacation time without the need to pay. This is a request that progresses through the first comes first serve basis and *only* if we can fill the space during your child's absence.

- A- This process has a deadline. Forms will be passed out at the beginning of April and are required to be received by the center by the end of the month.
- B- If we can fill your space with another child requesting care, you will not be charged for the time you have booked off, and the space will be yours when you return.
- C- Once you give specific dates *and* the space has been filled you will be notified. You will not be required to pay for that designated time off.
- D- Once you have received that notice, the space is considered taken for another family and we will not be able to provide care during the booked vacation time should you change your mind.



Closures

The center is closed on all Statutory Holidays and the following observed holidays:

January: New Years Day

February: Family Day

March & April: Good Friday, Easter Monday

May: Victoria Day

July: Canada Day

September: Labor Day, Truth and Reconciliation Day

October: Thanksgiving Monday

November: Remembrance Day

December: Christmas Day & Boxing Day. And one other day:

1-1.1 At Christmas time the daycare will be closed for 5 consecutive days. This means we will either be closed on Christmas Eve or the 27th, depending on how the calendar years falls.

1-1.2 Christmas Eve (when it is open) and New Year's Eve the Centre will close at 2:00pm.

Early Closure & Unexpected Closure:

In the event of an early closure due to weather conditions, loss of power or water for more than 2- 4 hours or a declared state of emergency, you will be notified by phone and/or StoryPark direct messaging or email. You will be given a time that the center will be closed at and expected to arrange pick up for your child before that time. In the event of a full day closure due to weather conditions, loss of power or water or declared state of emergency, notice will be posted to our Facebook page as well as the StoryPark main page by 6:30 am. An email will be sent out from StoryPark on our behalf and when possible, notice given to local radio stations.

Generally, if Metro Transit pulls their buses from the road (cancels service), we are closed or will be closing. If the buses are on a snow plan, then it is up to the discretion of the Director if we remain open or closed. Many of the staff travel in and may not be able to make it to the center if the driving conditions are unfavorable. The safety and well-being of our staff and the children at the center are of the utmost importance to us. That being said; **please make sure your contact information is current.**

Discipline & Behavior

- 1- It is part of the First Friends Daycare Policy that staff are NOT Permitted to use any form of physical (striking, shaking, shoving, and so forth) or verbal (humiliating, belittling or degrading responses) abuse to discipline the children. A brief period of time away from



the group may sometime be required and is the acceptable form of discipline used. Re-direction to a new activity is preferred.

- 2- Staff will adopt a positive attitude towards children, which includes enjoyment of and respect for the children as individuals.
- 3- Discipline statements will be expressed positively whenever possible.
- 4- Limits will be enforced consistently and fairly.
- 5- Staff will **NOT** use food as a form of discipline to reinforce a desired behavior or as a punishment for undesired behavior.
- 6- When all else fails, a child can be removed from the room, to be supervised by a staff member elsewhere.
- 7- In the event that a child's persistent behavior is determined to be detrimental to other children or staff, the child may be dismissed from the center.

Dress & Clothing

- 1- Our program includes many “messy” activities such as painting, gluing, sand and water play. Please bring your children to daycare dressed in appropriate play clothing, suitable for the season, for indoor and outdoor activities.
- 2- We go outside twice a day, in almost any weather. Please ensure your child is always dressed in weather appropriate gear, such as rain boots and splash suit on a wet day, or Snow boots, snow suit, hat and mittens when its winter and cold outside. During the summer, sneakers, a hat, or a light sweater is preferable on warmer days. A seasonally appropriate hat is always required.
- 3- Splash pants and splash suits (Muddy Buddy’s) are highly recommended, especially for Spring and Fall.
- 4- All clothing (including shoes and boots) must be LABELLED to help prevent loss.
- 5- ***We are not responsible for lost or misplaced items of clothing.*** However, every effort will be made to help you find the missing items.
- 6- Please provide your child with at least two complete changes of clothing that are to be left at daycare. Pants, tops, underwear, socks, etc. In winter several changes of socks, hats and mittens are appreciated.
- 7- For children that are training: parents are to provide at least 5 diapers per day, and 4-5 pairs of training pants or underwear, pants and wipes.
- 8- We are required to conduct a Fire Drill once a month, therefore indoor footwear is a requirement. A sturdy shoe, slippers with a hard sole, or crocs are recommended.



Health/Illness

- 1- If your child becomes ill while at the center, you will be called. The center will provide care apart from the other children for a period of one hour. We cannot provide care in isolation for the duration of the day.
- 2- If a child contracts a communicable disease, please inform the center as to the nature of the disease and the date the symptoms appeared. The child cannot be accepted back at the centre until the disease is no longer contagious. We follow Public Health guidelines to determine when this is. We do have a separate Covid-19 Policy.
- 3- The daily program includes outdoor play for **ALL** children, with the exception being when the weather is too severe. Children **WILL NOT** be permitted to remain inside due to illness. Supervision is not available in the center for individual children. If your child is too sick to participate in all the daily activities, then they should not be in attendance at the center.
- 4- A medical questionnaire on each child in the center is required with a completed immunization record, with dates given.
- 5- Staff will attend to minor injuries such as bruises, cuts and scratches with an incident report being filled out by staff and sent to you by our communication app, StoryPark. Serious injuries shall be noted by the Director who will call the parents and arrange for medical care and also prepare a serious incident report to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development- The Early Years Branch.
- 6- Prescription and non-prescription drugs may be administered by the staff – if in its original container with legible instructions *and* is accompanied by written authorization from the parents/legal guardian.
 - a- Yearly authorization for Epi-Pens, Puffers, or other medicines that are on a when needed, as needed basis
 - b- We may not administer Fever Reducing medicine unless you are on the way to pick up your child and give authorization to do so.
- 7- Please report any diet, allergies or health concerns/problems that your child has upon enrollment.
- 8- Please see attached exclusion policy (appendix b) and covid policy (appendix c)

Food & Nutrition

- 1- All food and beverages served in the centre will follow “Canada’s Food Guide” and fall under the “Food and Beverage Criteria in Early Learning and Childcare Programs.”
- 2- Clean potable water is always available during the day. We require you provide your child with a reusable water bottle from home to be left at the centre daily, year-round.
- 3- The center is in support of breastfeeding mothers and when requested will provide a safe, comfortable space to do so.



- 4- The center provides a rotating 4-week menu, which is posted and signed, indicating that the food and beverage nutrient criteria has been met.
- 5- Purchases or donations of food or beverages must be from an establishment permitted by the department of agriculture and comply with the food and beverage criteria, as previously stated. The product must include a list of ingredients and any special preparation, storage or serving instructions must be legible and clear on the label.
- 6- Any foods brought in from home must be labelled with the child's name and date and are to be stored appropriately (such as bottles to be refrigerated, for example) and also meet with the food and beverage criteria, as previously stated.
- 7- Staff will allow the children to explore their food, feed themselves and respond to their own hunger and fullness cues.
- 8- Staff are responsive to children's hunger cues and will provide snacks and meals outside of the regular schedule as required.
- 9- A relaxing and enjoyable meal environment will be provided where the children can routinely transition from play to snacks and meals. Children will be encouraged to respond to hunger and fullness cues. They will not be forced to finish food that has been served (this is described as responsive feeding).
- 10- Staff will model healthy eating practices that are consistent with the Standards for food and nutrition in early learning and childcare centres. Staff will sit with the children and engage them in conversation at mealtimes.
- 11- The behaviour guidance policy of the centre states: Food is not offered to children as a reinforcement for positive behaviours. Food is not withheld from children as a consequence for undesired behaviours. Food is not used as a reward for completing a task or finishing a meal (that is to say, dessert will not be withheld if the child does not finish the main meal).
- 12- Promotional materials that are intended to advertise specific brands or characters are not used to serve meals and snacks.
- 13- Fundraising during operating hours comply with the expectations set out in the food and beverage nutrient criteria.
- 14- Special Functions- Foods and beverages present at special functions during regular operating hours (such as, Valentine's Day, Halloween, Mid-Autumn Festival, and birthday celebrations) are identified on the menu in advance of the celebration and comply with the food and beverage criteria. Early learning environments will create opportunities for sharing and learning about cultural food practices and traditions to foster an inclusive, supportive, food environment. Traditional and culturally relevant foods, provided as part of occasional cultural sharing or an intentional learning activity, can include minor exceptions to the food and beverage criteria.



Parent Involvement

A parent committee is established from the current parents of the children enrolled in the center (minimum of 5 parents required) and can also be a subcommittee of the Board of Director's. The parent committee will provide a forum in which parents provide input and receive notice of any matters of interest or concern. The parent committee will meet at least twice a year. Two weeks written notice will be given of the meeting and its agenda. The meeting is open to all parents of enrolled children. Parents who attend can add any items to the agenda. Minutes of the parent committee meeting will be posted in the center until the next meeting.

A position on the Board of Directors is available to any parent wishing to volunteer their time for the best interests of the daycare. Meetings are once a month except for the summer months. An Annual General Meeting (AGM) is scheduled once a year, where all the parents are invited to come and be informed of the past years' happenings. The Directors yearly report and financial report is given at that time. The minutes of the AGM will be posted in the facility until the next meeting. Twice a year, each parent will be given a pre-school evaluation of their child(ren). Parents may stop in at the center anytime to check on your child(ren). The teachers are always available to talk to parents/legal guardians about concerns and to help with any questions you may have. If a staff member is unable to talk with you at the moment, a time can be scheduled that works well for both, to answer your questions. As a non-profit organization, parental support with fund-raising efforts would be greatly appreciated and very beneficial for your child(ren). A parent's area of expertise and assistance to the centre in any way will always be greatly appreciated.

This is your daycare and your voice, suggestions and help are always welcome.



Appendices:

Appendix A

Orientation Letter

It is important that all children new to our program (newly enrolled) have some orientation time. It is especially important for children that have never been in a childcare setting before.

We recommend for toddlers the following:

Morning 1: 9am-11am visit. This allows the children time to play inside, to have a morning snack and outside play, and thus experience some transition times at the daycare. Parents or guardians may stay or leave, that is your choice during this time.

Morning 2: 9 am-11am visit. Again, this allows the child time to experience our different activities. Parents or guardians may stay or leave during this time, this is your choice.

Morning 3: 9am-12pm visit. This visit includes staying for our lunch hour, going home just before naptime. It introduces one more transition time. Parents or guardians will NOT stay at this time.

Morning 4: 9am-230pm visit. This visit includes one last important transition: *naptime*. Parents or guardians will NOT stay at this time.

Start Day: We are open from 645am- 600pm, drop off can occur at anytime up until 930am. If you are going to be later than that, a phone call is required to let us know. If possible, for the first full week of attendance we recommend shorter days as it helps the children get used to their new routine without you. We understand that this is not always possible for families, but it is recommended.

We recommend for preschoolers the following:

Morning 1: 9am-11am visit. This allows the children time to play inside, to have a morning snack and outside play, and thus experience some transition times at the daycare. Parents or guardians may stay or leave, that is your choice during this time.

Morning 2: 9 am-11am visit. Again, this allows the child time to experience our different activities. Parents or guardians are recommended to leave during this time.



Morning 3: If necessary: 9am-12pm visit. This visit includes staying for our lunch hour and going home just before naptime. It introduces one more transition time for the child. Parents and guardians will NOT stay at this time.

Start Day: We are open from 645am-600pm, drop off can occur at anytime up to 930am. If you are going to be later than that, a phone call is required to let us know. If possible, for the first full week of attendance we recommend shorter days as it helps the children get used to their new routine without you. We understand that this is not always possible for families, but it is recommended.

Please note that the first 2 Orientation days are free of charge, fees will be applied from the 3rd day or the start date.

Appendix B

Exclusion Policy Criteria

Any child or staff who is exhibiting any of the following symptoms will have to be excluded from the center until they are feeling well and free of any symptoms for 24 hours without the aid of medicine: Fever, diarrhea, vomiting, persistent coughing causing breathing difficulty or rash with a fever. See the Exclusion Policy Guidelines due to illnesses for further guidance and other illnesses also requiring exclusion from the center.

As children arrive at the facility every day a quick health check will be done to determine if any signs of illness are present. If a child does not meet the health criteria, and may infect others, the child may **NOT** be left at the center. Children must be well enough to participate fully in the daily program, including outdoor play.

If a child is returning after an illness we need to know about the child's health, such as: whether they are on medications, their sleep needs, their eating needs, any lingering symptom, and so on.

If a child becomes ill while at the center the child will be isolated from the other children and the parents will be contacted to come and remove their child immediately. The child must be excluded from the center until the illness is gone. It is recommended that every parent have a childcare back up plan, in the case that your child must be excluded from the center.



Children are susceptible to a variety of communicable diseases and illnesses, especially in daycare. Infectious diseases can make life miserable for everyone, whether they be children, parents or staff. We can't prevent all infections, but we can control their spreading. The key is to follow healthy infection control practices. The benefits are that children, parents and staff are less sick, and thus missing less time from daycare and work.

HEALTHY CHILDREN MAKES FOR A HAPPY DAYCARE

Appendix C

Covid-19 Illness Policy

(updated October 2024)

In order to reduce the spread of Covid-19 within the daycare, we are implementing the following policy:

If there is a known positive case within the center, it will be posted on the parent information boards outside of each classroom. If it is within your child's classroom, you will be told directly, asked to monitor closely for symptoms, and encouraged to test right away as well as 72 hours later, or if symptoms should begin.

If your child has a positive Covid test, they can return when they meet the following guidelines:

Your child may return to the centre after 3-5 days.

- 3 days if they are recovering, major symptom free (**see below) AND they can wear a well fitted mask until day six.
- If they cannot wear a mask they can return after 5 days, and they are recovering, major symptom free (**see below)

**Recovering means symptoms are continually improving. Major symptom free is for at least 24 hours without the aid of medication. Major symptoms are considered to be:

- Fever, gastrointestinal symptoms (such as diarrhea or vomiting), shortness of breath, muscle aches, constant cough, sore throat and a headache

Some people may continue to have a lingering cough, particularly if they are prone to a chronic cough. Nasal congestion may linger as well.



If a member of your household has tested positive for Covid-19, your child **MUST STAY HOME** for at least 3 days and until the following conditions are met: One negative test taken immediately, as well as a negative test 72 hours after the positive members test **AND** no symptoms at all.

Remember that the count starts at day zero. Day one is the first full 24 hours after the onset of symptoms or after the positive test.

The following is the schedule of payments for 2026:

E-transfers sent to: firstfriendsdaycare@bellaliant.com

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If paying Monthly:

MONTH	DAILY FEE	DAYS OF ATTENDANCE	TOTAL DUE	DATE DUE
January	\$14.75	22 days	\$324.50	January 3 rd
February	\$14.75	20 days	\$295.00	February 3 rd
March	\$14.75	22 days	\$324.50	March 3 rd
April	\$14.75	22 days	\$324.50	April 3 rd
May	\$14.75	21 days	\$309.75	May 3 rd
June	\$14.75	22 days	\$324.50	June 3 rd
July	\$14.75	23 days	\$339.25	July 3 rd
August	\$14.75	21 days	\$309.75	August 3 rd
September	\$14.75	22 days	\$324.50	September 3 rd
October	\$14.75	22 days	\$324.50	October 3 rd
November	\$14.75	21 days	\$309.75	November 3 rd
December	\$14.75	23 days	\$339.25	December 3 rd

If paying Bi-Weekly:

WEEKS OF	DAILY FEE	DAYS OF ATTENDANCE	TOTAL DUE	DATE DUE
January 1-9 th	\$14.75	7 days	\$103.25	January 1 st
January 12-23 rd	\$14.75	10 days	\$147.50	January 12 th
January 26 th -February 6 th	\$14.75	10 days	\$147.50	January 26 th
February 9 th -20 th	\$14.75	10 days	\$147.50	February 9 th
February 23 rd -March 6 th	\$14.75	10 days	\$147.50	February 23 rd



March 9 th -20 th	\$14.75	10 days	\$147.50	March 9 th
March 23 rd - April 3 rd	\$14.75	10 days	\$147.50	March 23 rd
April 6 th -17 th	\$14.75	10 days	\$147.50	April 6 th
April 20 th -May 1 st	\$14.75	10 days	\$147.50	April 20 th
May 4 th -15 th	\$14.75	10 days	\$147.50	May 4 th
May 18 th -29 th	\$14.75	10 days	\$147.50	May 18 th
June 1 st - 12 th	\$14.75	10 days	\$147.50	June 1 st
June 15 th – 26 th	\$14.75	10 days	\$147.50	June 15 th
June 29 th -July 10 th	\$14.75	10 days	\$147.50	June 29 th
July 13 th – 24 th	\$14.75	10 days	\$147.50	July 13 th
July 27 th -August 7 th	\$14.75	10 days	\$147.50	July 27 th
August 10 th -21 st	\$14.75	10 days	\$147.50	August 10 th
August 24 th -Sept 4 th	\$14.75	10 days	\$147.50	August 24 th
September 7 th - 18 th	\$14.75	10 days	\$147.50	September 7 th
Sept. 21 st -October 2 nd	\$14.75	10 days	\$147.50	September 21 st
October 5 th – 16 th	\$14.75	10 days	\$147.50	October 5 th
October 19 th - 30 th	\$14.75	10 days	\$147.50	October 19 th
November 2 nd - 13 th	\$14.75	10 days	\$147.50	November 2 nd
November 16 th -27 th	\$14.75	10 days	\$147.50	November 16 th
Nov.30 th - December 11 th	\$14.75	10 days	\$147.50	November 30 th
December 14 th -31 st	\$14.75	14 days	\$206.50	December 14 th

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