



**North & South Shuswap Community  
Resources**

# **Sorrento Playschool Parent Handbook**



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### **Sorrento Playschool Welcome**

Welcome to the Sorrento Playschool! We are a non-profit, community based preschool managed by the North & South Shuswap Community Resources(NSSCR). The NSSCR is the organization administering the preschool and is the body that does the behind the scenes operations which allows the playschool to run smoothly. We are run by a board of directors made up of community members.

We believe the preschool years are very formative years in children's lives. We want your families' years at the playschool to be a positive experience that helps to develop your child's interest and enthusiasm for learning.

We believe it takes a community to run a playschool and we invite our parents to play an active role in their child's playschool experience. We have a number of opportunities for parent involvement including monthly PAC meetings, NSSCR board of director's positions, family field trips, parent helper days (voluntary) and some great fundraising initiatives that are always fun and easy.

We look forward to spending the year with you and your child. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have about our program or facility.

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## **Sorrento Playschool Philosophy:**

We are proud to be a play based learning facility. Our playschool program provides children with numerous opportunities to learn through play. A morning at our facility provides children with opportunities to engage in active play, creative play, cooperative play, dramatic play, quiet play and outdoor play. These play opportunities allow children daily opportunities to participate in science, early literacy, early numeracy, sensory activities, music, art and outdoor recreation. During these opportunities children are encouraged to discover, question, explore, express, take turns and problem solve. A large focus of the play based learning includes socialization where children are encouraged to engage with peers. This allows them to learn how to communicate as well as show respect and empathy.

## **Classroom Routine**

Our daily classroom routine includes indoor free play, circle time, snack time and outdoor free play. These activities change weekly and in some cases daily to correspond with our monthly themes. The activities provide opportunities for children to engage in play with costumes, puppets and props, a kitchen, blocks, train set, cars, sand table, water table, indoor climber, puzzles, games, crafts and numerous other play stations available daily. In addition to our classroom program we implement field trips and outdoor classes held at a variety of different locations.

## **Classroom Ratios**

As a licensed playschool we are required to provide one instructor for every eight children. The NSSCR believes that a quality program involves instructors who can provide individual attention to the children in the facility. To ensure children have a quality playschool experience our maximum number of students per class is 16.

## **Program Operation & Hours**

Our playschool program operates Tuesday-Friday from 8:30 am-11:30 am. We believe a three hour program provides enough time for children to fully engage and explore the activities of the daily program. In order to maintain our licensing agreement it is important that students are dropped off no earlier than our opening time-8:30 am and picked up at closing time 11:30 am.

The playschool follows the school year calendar and observes the same school closures aside from professional development days. Below is a list of important dates to remember for the 2014/2015 school year:

**September 9-12- First week of Playschool**

**November 11- Remembrance Day Closure**

**December 20-Jan.5- Winter Vacation Closure**

**March 14-30- Spring Break Closure (To be confirmed)**

**April 3- Good Friday Closure**

**June 16-19- Final Week of Playschool**

## **Helpful Hints**

### **Determining Program Frequency**

The first decision regarding playschool is determining the program frequency and then deciding which days. For some this is predetermined based on the families' work schedule or extracurricular activities. It is important that your child's experience at playschool be positive as well as meet some of the developmental and school readiness needs. Here are a couple ideas to consider when determining frequency.

### **Have you considered a consecutive day schedule?**

Kindergarten in SD 83 is a full day program. For those children headed to Kindergarten the next school year. It may be helpful to attend playschool 3-4 days a week to help ready children for the full day challenge of Kindergarten. This helps them adjust to the routine of regular mornings required for

Kindergarten. Additionally, perhaps consider choosing a solid days schedule such as Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday or even Tuesday, Wednesday Friday(if 3 days in a row looks daunting) to help prepare for the demand of the full day schedule. In our experience we've found that solid day schedules allow for quicker transitions and better adaptation to school routines and expectations. This in turn allows for a positive playschool learning experience.

### **Are you unsure about how much is too much?**

For many of our students especially the three year olds, this is their first program without parent involvement. This is an exciting time, however you may have concerns about it being very tiring. We encourage you to begin with at least a two day a week program. Children need a minimum of two days a week in the program to learn the routine, expectations and develop secure relationships with peers and teachers. Attending a program less than twice a week leaves up to 7 days between program days. This is a long time in the life of a three or four year old. The length results in children spending most of their time reacclimatizing and re-familiarizing themselves with the facility, people and activities rather than fully engaging in the program and the learning.

### **What to bring to school**

#### **Snack**

Please send a small nutritious snack. Snack time is short, 10 to 15 minutes, we find two small items is generally enough to fill them up and not too much to have them feeling rushed to finish all their food. Some suggestions are: Fruit & yogurt, veggies & small sandwich, crackers & cheese & applesauce, granola bar & pepperoni stick. We provide water at snack time so sending drinks is optional but not necessary.

#### **Clothing**

Clothing should be comfortable, safe, and manageable for your child. One of our goals at playschool is to foster independence in children. This includes being able to put on and remove their own clothing. This is best achieved when children have manageable items. Avoid sending children with lace up shoes, button fly jeans, belts, gloves or tight fitting clothing that is difficult to manage in the bathroom. Below is a list of items your child will need in each day the classroom:

Indoor Shoes/Slippers to remain in the classroom (avoid lace up shoes please)

Ziploc bag containing a change of clothes to remain in the classroom (shirt, pants, socks, underclothing)

Fall & Spring Months- Rain gear, rubber boots and splash pants if the weather is wet. We intend to go outdoors each day, its important children be dressed accordingly so they can enjoy their play outside.

Winter Months- Warm jacket, snow pants, snow boots, mittens (no gloves) and hat. We will be outdoors and plan a number of activities in the snow. Children need to be dressed warmly to enjoy the outdoor winter activities.

***Initials or names on clothing, backpacks, snack bags and equipment help to find their way home to their owners.***

## **Sickness Policy**

### *Responsibilities of the Parents:*

Parents will inform the preschool within 24 hours of a serious illness or contagious disease in the family.

Parents will ensure that the child is free from symptoms before returning to the preschool. In the case of a communicable disease a doctor's approval must be given before returning to the Preschool.

Parents will provide any necessary prescription medication with a signed Medication Authorization Form.

Parents will keep or take a child home if the child has one or more of the symptoms listed below:

- \*Pain complaints of unexplained or undiagnosed pain.
- \*Acute cold or fever with runny nose or eyes.
- \*Difficulty breathing, wheezing, or persistent cough.
- \*Acute, unexplained fever.

- \*Sore throat with difficulty swallowing.
- \*Itching of body and scalp, infected skin or eyes, or undiagnosed rash.
- \*Headache and stiff neck (should see a doctor immediately).
- \*Unexplained diarrhea or loose stool, combined with nausea, vomiting, or abdominal cramps.
- \*Children with known or suspected communicable disease.

#### Responsibilities of the Preschool:

The preschool will report a case of communicable disease to the Medical Health Officer within 24 hours.

The preschool will notify parents immediately if a child becomes ill or injured. If a parent cannot be reached the alternate person will be contacted.

If emergency contact person cannot be reached the preschool will contact a Physician or if necessary an ambulance.

Child will be kept in a quiet, supervised area until parents or help arrives.

The preschool staff will maintain valid First Aid Certificates at all times.

#### **Playschool Open House**

The first week of September, before the beginning of the playschool year we will host an open house. This will give families an opportunity to visit the centre, meet the teacher and attend an information session to help learn about all the aspects of the playschool. This is a great opportunity to have your questions answered and allow your child to visit the classroom before their first day. Watch for your invitation in the mail in August.

## **Parent Involvement**

### **Classroom Helpers**

We invite parents to participate in the classroom in a variety of roles. We are happy to have parents join us to help in the day to day programming, be a party helper, help with out of class duties such as laundry and recycle or be a classroom visitor (we love to have our parents come and share and explain their jobs and hobbies- we've had police officers, firefighters, veterinarians, chefs as well as visits from parents with special animals). All of these experiences enrich the learning and joy in the classroom. These are all voluntary roles and in no way should you feel obligated. It's simply an option and a welcome to participate. These opportunities can be arranged with the teacher during the school year.

### **Fundraising**

Playschools in British Columbia lack complete funding. As a result, in order to keep the program affordable and operational our facility requires the shortfall of funding to be fundraised by the families. We facilitate 3-4 fundraising opportunities throughout the year. These opportunities may include fundraising options such as: poinsettia sales, hanging basket sales, cookie dough sales, raffles and silent auctions.

We offer parents the option to participate in the fundraising opportunities. The opportunities are typically enjoyable and have good community support resulting in easy fundraising for those involved.

Alternatively, should you prefer not to participate in any fundraising we provide the pay-out option. A payment of \$100 can be made to the playschool at the beginning of the year.

### **PAC Meetings**

We ask that parents play an active role on the Parent Advisory Committee that meets 4-6 times during the school year. This is the committee that connects the parents to the teachers and the programming in the classroom. It is also the committee that determines the fundraising initiatives. Strong PAC participation contributes significantly to a well-run preschool. PAC meeting always includes dinner and child care so it makes attending easy.