



Family Handbook

2022-2023

Mighty Learners at Tsuma-as would like to recognize that we operate within the unceded & traditional territories of the Hupacasath, Tseshaht and nuučaan'uutʔath nism'a First Nations.

Our Philosophy

Mighty Learners is an inclusive, family-focused early years centre. We offer play-based learning, through nature focused experiences and explorations.

Play-Based Learning

We believe that children learn and develop best when they are given the opportunity to follow their interests and freely explore their environment through play.

Inclusive & Family-Focused

We strive to ensure our programming feels welcoming to all children and their families. We value open communication, transparency, and family involvement. Our programming grows and changes to meet the diverse needs of the families we serve.

Nature-Focused

Building a connection to the natural world is important for children of all ages. Mighty Learner strives to foster this connection. This is reflected in both our indoor environment and our time spent in nature. We spend as much time as possible outdoors, exploring and learning. We ask that families ensure their children are **ALWAYS** sent with **MULTIPLE** changes of weather appropriate clothing that can get dirty or stained.

Documentation

At Mighty Learners, we believe an important and valuable role as educators and care-givers is to document the growth, learning, and explorations happening with the children in our centres through photos, narration, audio/video recordings, artwork, and other creations.

Documentation is a form of pedagogical narration - a way to record children's play and make learning visible. This is an important and valuable task; that helps deepen children's learning, connect families to what's happening, but also allow our staff to reflect on how to best support children.

Documentation will be posted at the centre near the entrance to the facility in the cubby area as well as throughout the play spaces to allow all people entering our space to see and enjoy. In addition to physical documentation we will make social media posts for families to view even when they are unable to visit our space in person.

Family Involvement

We value family connection and involvement. We have an open-door policy. Families are always welcome to come into the centre, at any time during the day. We also invite you to share any special talents, hobbies, or time with us at the centre.

We want to ensure that children feel connected to their family and culture while they are in our care. Sharing with us how we can represent your family - through photos, special items, activities, food, language, or music is so important to us.

We extend an open invitation for family involvement!

Hours & Operation

We operate from 6:30* am to 5:30 pm Monday to Friday.

Our Infant & Toddler program operates 7:30 am - 5:00 pm

We offer limited early drop-off spaces between 6:30 - 7:00am, for our School Age and 3-5 year old program

We are open 12 months of the year. Including Out of School care remaining open through July and August.

Closures

Mighty Learners is closed for all statutory holidays. Fees remain payable.

In addition, we close for one week in December (dates to be determined each year). Fees will be adjusted accordingly.

Rates & Fees

Important Note:

Below regular fees, is the fee reflecting the Provincial Child Care Fee Reduction Subsidy. Fee reductions are subject to government initiatives and provisions of the 2022/2023 CCOF funding program. We are pleased to apply for this program and offer a reduction in fees for parents once approved. This is however not an initiative of Mighty Learners and parents are responsible for paying FULL FEE amount until subsidies are received, and if this funding initiative ceases/changes.

Registration Fee Non refundable/annual	\$40.00
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Ages: 1 - 3 years	5 days/wk Full Time	4 days/wk	3 days/wk	2 days/wk	1 day/wk
Full Day (4 hours +)	\$1,300.00 \$950.00	\$1,040.00 \$760.00	\$780.00 \$570.00	\$520.00 \$380.00	\$260.00 \$190.00

Ages: 3-5 years	5 days Full Time	4 days	3 days	2 days	1 day
Full Day (4 hours +)	\$900.00 \$800.00	\$800.00 \$720.00	\$600.00 \$540.00	\$400.00 \$360.00	\$200.00 \$180.00

School-Age Care 5 years +	1 day	2 days	3 days	4 days	5 day
AM Only	\$80.00	\$140.00	\$200.00	\$260.00	\$300.00
PM Only	\$96.00	\$172.00	\$248.00	\$324.00	\$380.00
AM & PM	\$100.00	\$180.00	\$260.00	\$340.00	\$400.00
<p><i>Schedule used for school months (September to June See Schedule for 3-5 for July, August and school closures)</i></p> <p><i>Pro-Days: Full day-care is charged at a rate of \$45/day, existing fees would be subject to a 'top-up' for this rate.</i></p>					

Payment of Fees

Registration fee and first month's payment, must be paid in full prior to your child's first day. On-going payments are to be received the 1st of each month, thereafter. **Payments may be made by Cash, E-transfer (made payable to magnolia_cs@outlook.com or Post Dated Cheques.**

Late Payments

If fees are not received on time, a reminder will be sent out on, or around the 5th of the month (via email).

If payment is not received by the 15th of the month, a second reminder of outstanding fees will be provided.

If payment is still not received by the 1st of the following month, care will be **suspended** until payment is fulfilled. If after two weeks fees remain unpaid care will be forfeited and any outstanding balance will be forwarded to a collection agency.

Our team values open and honest communication, so informing us of extenuating circumstances impacting payment is appreciated and we can arrange to create a payment plan suitable for both parties.

Affordable Child Care Benefit

If your family qualifies for the Affordable Child Care Benefit, please be advised full payment is required for your registration to be completed even if your benefits have not come through. Once the benefits are confirmed a credit will be applied to your account based on the amount you receive.

If there is a difference between ACCB subsidy and the centre's monthly fees, families are required to pay the remainder.

Please keep in mind the ACCB only pays for days that your child attends. To allow for 2 weeks per year vacation or sick leave. Once these days are used up and a child misses scheduled care these days will not be covered and need to be paid in full by the parent or guardian.

Repayment Agreement

Fees will **NOT** be refunded in the following circumstances:

- Snow days
- Power outages, fire, flood, or any other emergencies outside the centre's control.
- A death/funeral related to the centre
- Pre-announced Professional Development and Training days (if no adequate coverage available).
- Days that the child has missed due to illness, family holidays, arriving after 10:00am or other personal reasons.
- All statutory holidays

In the event Mighty Learners is unable to provide care for any other reason than noted above a full refund will be given for that day and any subsequent days thereafter upto 1 week.

Withdrawal Policy

If withdrawing your child from the program, 30 days written notice is mandatory.

If 30 days written notice is not provided, payment for the following month will be required.

Mighty Learners reserves the right to terminate our service agreement at any time. In the event of termination, 30 days written notice will be provided.

In very rare and/or exceptional circumstances, in which the safety of children or staff is considered compromised, Mighty Learners may terminate services immediately without a full month's notice.

Fees will not be reimbursed.

Attending - What to Expect

Registration & Introduction

Before being enrolled in programming, each family will have completed a registration package, and be given the opportunity to visit the centre.

We encourage all families to come, meet staff, explore the space, and learn about our centre's philosophy. A visit prior to enrolment allows families the opportunity to see if we are a suitable fit and gives time to build those initial connections at a slower pace.

We also request that prior to the first day, you provide a family photo(s) that can be displayed in the centre.

What to Pack

For **ALL** children we ask you provide:

- A large healthy lunch (see Food Policy for suggestions). If not opting into our lunch program.
- Clothing that can get messy, and possibly stained.
- Comfortable non restrictive clothing to allow for greater movement and ease with independent changing and toileting.
- Several changes of spare clothes (can be left at the centre).
- Pair of clean shoes for gym-time (otherwise slippers, barefeet, or socks are fine inside).
- Outside Gear for the season (Weather Appropriate)

Fall & Winter

- Rainsuit/ Jacket & Pants
- Insulated Rain Boots
- Warm Layers
- Warm Jacket
- Mittens/Hat (water resistant is great)

Spring/Summer

- Comfortable shoes or strapped sandals
 - Sun Hat
 - Sunscreen (can be left at centre)
 - Sunglasses
 - UV protective clothing
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- Any medication, with signed approval (see see Health & Safety)
 - If napping, a blanket from home (left at centre if possible).
 - Any comfort items, ex. Stuffedies or pacifiers.

For babies & toddlers:

- Diapers, wipes & rash cream (see Diapering & Toileting)
- If needed, bottles & milk and/or formula.

Please check your child's cubby daily to ensure outdoor gear is clean and dry. Replace extra clothing or diapers, wipes and diaper cream as needed.

Please ensure that all belongings are clearly labeled.

First Days

Arriving for the first few days can be hard for many children. We encourage you to discuss with a staff member, prior to drop-off, about any concerns you have, and how we can best support your child's transition. Mighty Learners staff are experienced, and can make lots of helpful suggestions.

Arrivals

When arriving at the Centre please ensure that you make contact with an educator to provide an opportunity to tell us how our child's night and morning went, or any other changes in their regular routine.

We appreciate children arriving by 9:00 am, as we like to take the children on frequent neighbourhood walks and forest explorations. If you are not in the centre before this time it may be difficult to find us or your child will be coming into a transition which is often challenging for children and families to adjust to.

Please drop off and pick up your child at the times agreed upon in your parent contract as this allows us to staff accordingly. If you are going to be late or away we ask that you call the centre to inform staff as soon as possible.

10:00 Deadline

Mighty Learners has a daily arrival deadline for all families. We request all children arrive **NO LATER** than **10:00**. This allows for consistent staffing, more time for field trips and higher quality care. Please note if you arrive past 9:00 we may have already left the centre and be on an adventure. You may contact your child's group via their cell phone. If arriving past 10:00 without any previous communication Mighty Learners will have assumed your child is absent and will have adjusted their staff accordingly. Your child will not be able to attend care that day and you will not be reimbursed. **Exceptions can be made with 24 hours notice and pre approval by managerial staff.**

Emotional Drop Offs

It is normal for children to be hesitant and upset during drop off, especially when they are new to a centre. Families are always welcome to stay as long as they feel comfortable.

We do encourage a short, and consistent goodbye, as prolonged departures can often be more difficult for children. We also encourage families to say good-bye, and try to avoid “sneaking” out. Our nurturing educators will help transition your child into our care with positive support and redirection. We will always be happy to provide updates once you have departed, to let you know how your child is doing.

Typical Daily Routine

Mighty Learners maintain a flexible, but predictable routine each day that consists of child-led play, meals, and rest times. **Regular diapering and toileting will happen throughout the day.**

An average day consists of:

Morning

- Free-play inside or out (weather dependant)
- Outside time - nature walks, playing in the park, forest field trips.
- Centre-provided, open snack time.

Lunch

- Flexible between 11:00 and 12:00.
- Time for children to sit together and enjoy meals from home.

Nap/Rest

- Children under 2.5 are given a separated sleep space to nap.

- Children over 2.5 will be given the opportunity to nap, if needed, and spend quiet down time with calming explorations/activities.

Afternoon

- Free-play inside and/or outside. Outside time in the afternoons we will stay within the yard to ensure ease of access for various pick-up times.

Signs posted on our door will always indicate whether we are inside or outside throughout the day.

Field Trips & Visitors

We want to build community connections with the children in our care. We are located within a community hub of services, but also have a wonderful neighbourhood to explore!

In addition to field trips into the forest, we will also plan excursions to visit different locations within our community.

We also invite different community partners into our space. This can include individuals such as First Nations community members to share cultural experiences, and professionals in the community (ex. Firefighters).

We also partner with North Island College in inviting Early Childhood Education students to join us during their practicums.

Families will always be informed, and consent will be requested before we invite visitors into our space.

Departures

When leaving the centre please touch base with an educator. This is to allow us the opportunity to share how your child's day went, and keep you

informed and up to date on important information.

Always ensure that an educator knows you have arrived at the centre and are taking your child. Please do not leave with your child before speaking with a staff member.

Safe Release Policy

Children will **only be released to persons authorized to pick up** (as stated on their registration papers). Photo ID must be provided if the person picking up has yet to meet staff.

If an unauthorized person attempts to pick up a child, our procedure is to:

- Refuse the release of the child to the unauthorized person.
- Contact the parent/guardian to request written consent.
- Have parent pick up child themselves
- Contact an emergency contact person authorized to pick up .

If an unauthorized person attempts to forcefully take children, staff will contact 911, the RCMP.

Please, note, Mighty Learners staff cannot refuse the release of children to a parent or legal guardian, without a court approved custody order.

We reserve the right, and are responsible not to release children to a parent or guardian if they appear unfit (ie: under the influence of alcohol or narcotics, improper car seat) to care for the child safely. In the event a parent or guardian is unfit to provide safe care or transportation our procedure is to:

- Call another authorized contact on the pick up list
- Call a taxi (**expenses incurred by the parent/guardian**)
- Contact police if necessary

- Call the Ministry of Social Services if needed.
- Document the event details for our records.

Late Pickups

If you are going to be late please inform staff **immediately**. We will do our best to accommodate your needs, within reason and discretion.

If staff have not been informed of extenuating circumstances, you will be called and charged an additional \$5.00 per 15 minutes you are late (rounding up the minutes).

If a parent or guardian cannot be reached staff will do their best to call alternative contacts and arrange pick up.

After 1 hour, if no one has arrived to pick up your child, staff will call MCFD to take over care until the family can be contacted. **Please drop off and pick up your child at the times agreed upon in your parent contract.**

Important Policies & Procedures

Behavioural Guidance Policy

Mighty Learners staff understand that all behavior is a form of communication. Children act positively and are engaged, when their environment is meeting their needs

Encouraging Positive Behaviour

An important part of our role as educators and caregivers, is to create and environment that encourages positive behaviour:

- We arrange our classroom to reflect the environment as the third teacher. Providing a thoughtful variety of developmentally

appropriate activities and materials.

- We follow a semi flexible schedule, which helps to eliminate unnecessary transitions at times when children are more engaged in their play.
- We encourage children to self regulate, within developmental expectations, and work through conflict themselves, with our support.
- We model appropriate and positive behaviour in our own actions.
- We build trusting relationships with children and families, to best understand the needs and personalities of each child.
- We set clear and developmentally appropriate expectations and offer choices for children to navigate through their day.
- We foster independence in each child at their own unique pace, encouraging them to do tasks on their own before physically assisting.
- We observe and document the children during play to ensure that the environment is meeting their developmental needs, and adapt our programming when necessary.
- We encourage emotional literacy in all ages through literacy, conversation and activities.
- We respect and honor the range of emotions all children experience.
- Children are given the space and time to rest and nap. Children under 2.5 are required to have a nap/rest period. Children 3 and older are given the opportunity to rest if needed or given calming activities to engage in during rest periods.

Responding to Challenging Behaviour

When guiding children through behaviours and conflict, staff will:

- Use positive and respectful language.
- Use positive reinforcement.
- Maintain consistency and follow through.
- Offer choices, and support child-led problem solving.
- Use redirection when necessary
 - Encourage playing in a new area.
 - Encourage playing with different people.

In guiding and caring, Mighty Learners staff will **NOT** act in any matter that harms children, this includes:

- Using any form of physical, 'corporal', punishment.
- Using food as a form of punishment or reward.
- Forcing children to repeat movements.
- Using belittling or degrading language.
- Confining children in any way.

Active Play Policy

Being a nature-focused program, Mighty Learners children spend ample time outside.

We ensure that children have a **minimum** of 60-120 minutes each day of gross motor, active play. This includes free-play and adult-led activities, both inside and outside.

On days when we are not able to spend as much time outside (ex. very extreme weather), active play can also happen in the gymnasium.

Screen-Time Policy

Educators may use electronic devices to take photos and create documentation (see release form in registration package). Devices may also be used as educational tools to research specific topics, listen to music, and play audio stories.

Children will not be exposed to regular screen time. Children under 2 will not be permitted any screen time at all. However, if no children under 2 are present there may be opportunities to watch short movies or videos when it enhances learning explorations. On very rare and special occasions, children over 2 years in age, may be allowed to watch short videos (ex. holidays).

Health & Safety Policies

Illness Policy

To prevent the spread of illness to others and allow for ample rest and recovery time, we ask that children experiencing any of the following symptoms remain in the comfort of their home until they are completely symptom free and have been so for a **minimum of 24 hours** before returning to care.

- Unexplained or undiagnosed pain
- Cold or flu symptoms
- Harsh coughing
- Fever (99.6 F / 37.6 C)
- Sore throat or trouble swallowing
- Infected skin or eyes
- Undiagnosed rash
- Headache and stiff neck
- Unexplained diarrhea
- Nausea and vomiting

- Parasite related conditions (impetigo, scabies, etc.)
- If your child has a known or suspected communicable disease

Please keep your child home until they have been completely free of all symptoms and remain home for 1 full additional day prior to returning to care

Lice Policy

If you find lice or nits (eggs) in your child's hair or clothing, please seek proper treatment immediately, and inform Mighty Learners staff when possible.

We request that your child return to care, only after they have started treatment. If staff notice symptoms of lice (ex..excessive itching), they will call home, and request that parents perform a lice check at home. If lice is confirmed, we request that treatment be started before returning.

The staff at Mighty Learners do **NOT** perform lice checks in the centre, but maintain the supervision and cleaning procedures required to best prevent the spread of lice.

If lice does appear in our centre we will inform families, request home-checks, and send home information on treatment.

Medication Administration

Staff can only administer medication* with a completed, medical release form (provided). Form must be signed and dated, and include complete instruction.

*This includes prescription AND over the counter medications, as well as emergency use medications such as EpiPens.

All medications **must** remain in their original packaging.

First-Aid Administration

All Mighty Learners staff are trained in child first aid. In the case of a non-emergency injury requiring first-aid (ex. small cut or bump), staff will follow standard procedures to administer band-aids, ice-pack etc. All incidents are logged in a daily report, in-house incident reports, and in some cases reported to licensing. Families will always be informed when first-aid is administered to their child.

Please see “Emergency Procedures” for information on more serious injury procedures.

Meal program

Mighty Learners offers full meal services. This includes morning and pm snacks as well as home made lunches. We follow Canada's food guide providing a variety of nutritious hot and cold options and will honour any dietary restrictions your little ones may have. We ensure our kitchen staff have up to date food safe certificates and will allow children ample opportunity to assist in meal preparation and planning.

Infants - If your infant is using bottles we require breast milk and or formula to be ready made in labeled bottles on a daily basis. We will feed children based on their individual needs and developmental stages. *If you are exclusively breastfeeding your child, we will do our best to support you in any way we can to keep that option available.*

School age - Children attending Mighty Learners before and after school program will be offered daily afternoon snacks when they arrive and will be adopted into the lunch program on prodays and other school closures. We ask that you indicate whether or not you will be opting in so we can ensure there is enough for all.

Sign ups will go out prior to specified dates.

Food & Nutrition Policies

- At Mighty Learns we believe children should be given a wide variety of healthy, nutrient rich foods and snacks. If providing your child's lunch please include several servings of fruits and vegetables, healthy protein and carbohydrates. Sandwiches or Leftover dinners are great for main options.
- We believe children should follow their own hunger cues which can mean meal time takes longer than the allotted scheduled time. And if a child is hungry during a non designated eating period, we will set up a clean space for them to eat.
- We provide a nutritious morning snack including, but not limited to, one fruit or vegetable and whole grain carbohydrate. We will supplement an afternoon snack as needed
- It is our policy to encourage children not consume high processed or sugary foods & treats while in our care. We encourage families not to send 'treat food' on a regular basis. **There may be special occasions in which home-made treats are shared.**
- We provide children with drinking water from our water cooler. If possible, send your child with a labeled water bottle. We also discourage sending your child with juice or pop.
- We encourage and support the use of labeled reusable containers and try to avoid single use plastics when possible.

Please inform staff if your child has any allergies, food restrictions, or your family has specific diet restrictions (ex. vegan or gluten free). We support all dietary needs, and can adapt our snacks to ensure inclusion.

Quiet Time & Napping

All children participate in quiet time after eating lunch each day. Children under 2.5 years will be put down to nap during their routine nap time (usually between 11:00pm & 2:00pm).

Children over 2.5 years will be given the opportunity for sleep and/or rest. Children over the age of 2.5 will be encouraged to rest their bodies for 30 minutes or more in preparation for a busy afternoon by engaging in a calming art exploration, table top activity or story time.

Mighty Learners will provide sheets and sleep mats, however we ask parents to supply a familiar blanket and any comfort stuffy or sleep aid if needed.

Diapering and Toileting

Children are encouraged to be independent in toileting when they start showing signs of potty training readiness (generally between 18months and 2.5 Years).

All children are welcome to use the washroom as needed and several routine washroom breaks occur throughout the day before going outside. For children in diapers please provide:

- Diapers (cloth diapers are welcome)
- Wipes
- Diaper creams/ointment.

Accidents can, and will happen for most children, please provide extra, loose fitting (easy up/down pants) underwear and socks.

Before and After School Care - Tsuma-as Elementary Priority

Children already attending Tsuma-as Elementary will be given priority placement each September. If spaces are not filled with Tsuma-as Families by Sept 15 of that year we may reach out and offer care to other schools. *Staff permitting.*

For children attending school on separate campuses this is not a guarantee for ongoing care but rather only a space for that particular school year.

Safety Policies

Custody Agreements

Any and all custody or court ordered agreements need to be kept in our records as per VIHA licensing requirements. When it relates to the safety, and safe release of children in our care, Mighty Learners will always refer to any court ordered documentation on file.

Suspected Child Abuse

It is our ethical and lawful duty to report any suspected child abuse to The Ministry of Children and Families (MCFD).

If the safety and well-being of children requires immediate action, staff will contact emergency services (ex. RCMP), as well as contacting MCFD.

Emergency Procedures

Staff always have access to first aid-kits, both inside and out. We maintain

working fire extinguishers, and ensure that our space is in working order (ex. sprinklers are working). We keep emergency kits that are stocked appropriately, and regularly updated, for the number of children and staff in our care.

Injury

In the event of an injury in which medical attention is required, but not immediate or life threatening, staff will contact parents/guardians, or alternative contacts, to pick-up the child to seek medical advice.

In the case of serious injuries requiring immediate medical attention, Mighty Learners staff will contact 911 services, before contacting parents or guardians. [See registration package for emergency consent form.](#) Mighty Learners asks families to sign this document prior to enrollment.

In these situations a staff member will accompany a child being transported to hospital and stay until connection with a family member is made.

[Any and all fees incurred by medical transport and care remain payable by the parent or guardian.](#)

Natural Disaster & Other

Mighty Learners staff practice regular, monthly fire and earthquake drills, as well as regularly practice emergency evacuation of buildings.

Mighty Learners maintain emergency supplies for all staff and children in the building. These are taken with us when building evacuation is required.

Power outage: Mighty Learners will call and ask for children to be picked up if our power has been disrupted for over 1hr.

Earthquake & Tsunami

In the event of an earthquake, staff will follow standard earthquake procedure and ensure children are safely sheltered under tables or other sturdy structures. If outside, we will ensure children are together and away from any large, falling risks.

Mighty Learners at Tsuma-as is located within the tsunami induction zone thus once the earthquake subsides we will follow our evacuation procedures and transport all children and staff to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints located at 4816 Compton Road which is outside of the tsunami induction zone. Which is in correspondence to Tsuma-as elementary's evacuation plan.

Fire

In the event of a fire, staff will calmly and quickly evacuate children out of the building following a predetermined route. We will relocate to our emergency gathering location which will be allocated to us from the school district and we will adjust this section once we have a permanent area allotted for us.

Parents will be contacted once children are safely out of the building, and asked to be picked-up as soon as possible.

Emergency Relocation

In the event of a major natural disaster or other emergency, in which immediate pick-up of all children is not possible, and the safety of our building is compromised, Mighty Learners will evacuate relocate to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints – 4816 Compton Road which is outside of the tsunami induction zone. Which is in correspondence to Tsuma-as elementary's evacuation plan.

In all emergency situations, families will be informed and updated once children are safe and secure. Please refrain from calling as we need to

maintain open phone lines and we will do our best to contact families within a timely manner.

Final Note

We strive to create an enriching and safe environment for all children that enter our care. In doing so, we recognize that caring for children is a collaborative effort.

You are your child's best teacher and caregiver. Your input and questions are always important to us in providing the best care possible to your child. With this in mind, please do not hesitate to bring any questions, concerns, thoughts or ideas to our attention.