

# The Children's Grove School Age Care



## Family Handbook

February 2024



We acknowledge with grateful hearts,  
that we **live**, **learn**, **love**, and **play** on the  
Traditional and Unceded Territories of the

**Yuułuᓃifᓃath First Nations**

Located at

The Children's Grove

1450 Peninsula Road,

Ucluelet, VOR 3A0

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## MISSION STATEMENT

The Children's Grove School Age Care (SAC) is a licensed, School Age Care program, offering high quality Early Learning experiences. The Children's Grove SAC is specifically designed for 5–12-year-old children with the hope of inspiring and supporting the creation of rich, joyful early learning spaces. Our goal is to provide opportunities where children can strengthen their self-esteem, independence, responsibility, leadership, friendship, and respect for others. As well as strengthen the connection between school and care for our young children and their families.

## PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

At the Children's Grove SAC, we believe that young children are active, curious learners. We value creating spaces for children where they can explore, discover, wonder, ask questions, seek answers, experiment, get messy, take risks, problem solve along with their peers, families, and educators. We respect all children and the value their culture and family background that they bring to the program.

We provide many play-based opportunities that fosters the ideas and experiences of the children enrolled. Our Educators works hand in hand with the children to answer their questions, to seek out knowledge, understand and to foster their sense of wonder and curiosity.



## OUR IMAGE OF THE CHILD

Our Program is greatly influenced by the BC Early Learning Framework. We view children as competent, curious, capable, and full of potential. We understand that children have a need and desire to connect to the world around them and to establish meaningful relationships with others. Our program has been created with the premise that the environment acts as a ‘third teacher’ in the lives of children. Our classroom and outdoor space have been intentionally designed and organized to support and plan for various spaces for children to create, to learn and to explore.

## OUR PROGRAM

The Children’s Grove SAC is a Pacific Rim Children and Families SD70 licensed School Age Care program that operates at The Children’s Grove in the StrongStart room. It is facilitated by our SD70 CUPE Education Assistants. The program operates Monday-Thursday from 7:05 am- 8:25am & 2:35-5:00 and Friday from 7:05 am- 8:25 am & 1:58-4:28, from September to June. The Children’s Grove SAC will operate full days on non-Instructional days, one week at Winter and Spring break from 8:00-4:00

The program is guided by curriculum and pedagogy that recognizes the benefits of play-based learning.

At The Children’s Grove SAC we use the following frameworks: “The Early Learning Framework”, and “The First Peoples Principles of Learning”, to guide our practice. As a result, your children will have many opportunities to:

- participate in experiential activities where they will learn about themselves and the world around them.
- explore, discover, and create indoors and outdoors in our classroom, forests and outdoor play spaces.
- learn life skills by caring for themselves, their peers, the classroom, and the land.
- to explore and develop their sense of self and place, family identity, and social and emotional skills.
- learn alongside with their educator, peers, and families and co-construct knowledge together about the world around them in ways that are inclusive, local, ethical, and democratic.
- form relationships with school staff and other students.
- acknowledge and celebrate their peers and their own cultural identities.



## OUR ROUTINE

Children feel confident and secure when they know what to expect and have consistency to their days. We keep our daily routine or “rhythm of the day” consistent to ease stress and upset around transitions and to keep our days running as smoothly as possible. Our daily routines are planned to ensure that there is a balance between individual, small and large group activities, child-directed and educator-initiated activity, as well as indoor and outdoor experiences. Our days remain flexible to meet the needs of children. On non-instructional days, winter break, and spring break, the routine will follow the same flow, but will have longer periods where children are exploring inside and outside with child and educator-initiated projects.

### Morning Routine

Arrival

Open breakfast/snack time

Exploration Play Time (inside and outside) (children will have time to explore through play with the Educator scaffolding their ideas and theories- I.e., art experiences, small group projects, stories, science, music etc.).

Clean up

Outside time

Walk to Elementary School together

Prior to leaving the room to either go outside or to go on a field trip, the children will use the washroom facilities. The washroom is located in the hallway outside of the Children’s Grove SAC room. An educator will have a clear line of vision of the hallway while any child is in the washroom, to ensure safety, privacy, and dignity of the children.

*Morning Dismissal:* The Children’s Grove SAC children will walk with the SAC staff from the Children’s Grove through the side road to the Elementary School and they will be released into school supervision. Kindergarten children will stay with SAC staff outside or inside on an inside day and once the bell rings, kindergarten children will walk with SAC staff to the kindergarten classroom to start their school day.

### Afternoon Routine

SAC Staff Pick up children at Primary Playground at school and walk to Children’s Grove together



Exploration Play Time (children will have time to explore through play with the Educator scaffolding their ideas and theories- I.e., art experiences, small group projects, stories, science, music etc.).

Open snack time

Clean up

Outside time or Elementary/Secondary gym if weather is undesirable

Outside time: We will use the forested area surrounding the Children's Grove, and Play areas located at Ucluelet Elementary School. The forest and Play areas will be inspected daily; paying attention to rubbish or any type of items left behind from previous children in the play area. Any other hazards like broken pieces of wood or debris that could be hazardous will be removed.

Afternoon Pick Up: The Children's Grove SAC staff will pick up kindergarten children at their Kindergarten classrooms. Children's grade 1-7 will meet SAC staff at the playground outside. Once all children enrolled are together, everyone will walk together to the Children's Grove.

## FOOD

Food is very important to us at The Children's Grove SAC. We know that young children are active learners who experience the world through their senses, physical involvement, active play and from behaviors modeled by adults and peers.

Nutrition education in the early years can prove instrumental in influencing the development of healthy eating habits while developing skills through hands-on activities in the areas of science, math, art, and literacy.

Research indicates that when children learn where food comes from, how it is grown, have hands-on experiences, and use their senses to understand it, they are more likely to taste new food items and accept them as part of their diet and build a foundation of lifelong healthy choices. The Children's Grove SAC requires that children bring a healthy, nutritionally sound snack from home. As well as a reusable water bottle with your child's name on it.

### **We are a juice and candy free environment.**

The Children's Grove SAC believes strongly that offering children healthy, fresh, seasonal fruits and vegetables to supplement snacks brought from home, help to lay the foundation for a happy and healthy day.



Please notify us if your child has any allergies, dietary restrictions or specific needs. If an allergy is noted, we will require you to fill out a Allergy Action Care Plan. The plan must be filled out prior to enrollment.

The following principles guide us in our menu planning:

- Appropriate portion sizes for each required meal set by the Standards in the Canadian Food and Nutrition Guide
- Low sodium and low sugar
- Children participate in setting the tables for snack each day
- Snack is enjoyed together during the first half hour of the program.
- The staff at The Children's Grove SAC are responsive to children's cues around hunger and may provide snacks outside of the regular schedule as required.

## LOOSE PARTS

Many of the materials in our classroom are comprised of 'loose parts' - materials that can be moved, carried, combined, redesigned, lined up and taken apart and put back together in multiple ways. They are materials with no specific set of directions that can be used alone or combined with other materials. Our Loose Parts are often made from natural, recycled, and repurposed materials.

## MESSY PLAY

The work of children can be messy. While your child is here, we can guarantee you they will get messy. From exploring outside in our natural play space and forests, using art and sensory materials in the classrooms, painting and exploring with their hands and feet, learning how to serve, and feed themselves snacks - the work of childhood is a messy (and fun!) learning experience.

**If you are concerned about an article of clothing getting dirty and/or stained here, please do not send it to The Children's Grove SAC.**

## BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

We believe that children display positive behaviours and engage in meaningful activities when the environment reflects their interests, is child-centered and is play-based. When children are respected for who they are and are supported by caring adults and peers to resolve difficult



situations, they learn positive problem solving and coping mechanisms. In this way, all educators, staff, volunteers, and students consistently deal with children's behaviour in a positive manner, always keeping in mind children's age and development.

Staff re-directs children to alternative activities, when necessary, use positive language, model respectful behaviour, and set reasonable expectations for children.

Please see our Behaviour Guidance Policy in our Policies & Procedures Handbook for further information on behaviour management at The Children's Grove SAC.

## FAMILY INVOLVEMENT & COMMUNICATION

We believe that learning is a partnership between the child, the family, and educator. We encourage family participation and involvement, as well as open communication between the educator and family members. Children's work is displayed throughout the program and shared digitally through email, so you get a sense of what the children are currently working on.

## COMMUNITY

We believe that fostering a sense of community, belonging and neighbourhood pride is an important part of childhood development. Exposure to a stimulating, diverse environment and community helps to challenge children's curiosity and desire to understand their world.

The children will explore off-site on walks to visit surrounding areas and businesses in our community. We will welcome community members to come and share their knowledge and talents with the class.

## DROP OFF AND PICK UP

Our drop-off time is flexible in the morning. We just ask that you phone or email to let us know if your child will not be attending the program.

The educator will "sign in and out" your child on the attendance chart daily. This is a licensing regulation.

All children are to be picked up by 5:00 Monday to Thursday and at 4:20 on Fridays, at The Children's Grove SAC Room or alternative location communicated by Educator.





If parents or guardians arrive at pick up who appear to be incapable of providing safe care to their child, alternative contacts will be called for pick up as well the RCMP. If the issue escalates, additional supports will be called for the staff.

Children will not be allowed to leave the program alone or with any unauthorized persons. Children will not be allowed to leave the program with anyone who is not on their registration form, without parent, or guardian [written consent](#).

It is **imperative** that children are **picked up no later** than **5:00** Monday to Thursday and **4:20** on Fridays, or **4:00 pm on NID, winter and spring break care** Children picked up past those times will be charged a late pick up fee of \$55.00.

If a child is still at the program after the program is completed, every effort to contact parents, guardians or emergency contacts will be made by staff. If staff is unable to locate someone for the children within one half hour after closing, they will contact the Ministry of Children and Family Development who will assume responsibility for the child until the family can be contacted

**In the event that a family is late at the end of the day, they are required to contact staff IMMEDIATELY and a late fee of 55.00 will be charged.**

## ADMINISTRATION

The Children's Grove SAC is run by Pacific Rim Children & Families, SD70 The Children's Grove, Ucluelet BC. We have a manager and 1 morning and 1 afternoon staff that are SD70 CUPE Education Assistants. We occasionally welcome ECE students into our program to complete their Student Practicum from North Island College. All staff, students and volunteers have current First Aid certificates, completed Criminal Record Checks and have read and signed our Behaviour Guidance Policy.

## ENROLMENT

The Children's Grove SAC maintains an active waitlist. As spaces become available in our program they are offered to the next child on the list with completed registration. Priority is given to children in the Ucluelet Elementary School catchment area.



## ADMISSION

Once your child is enrolled, we will discuss your child's start date. We may suggest a 'gradual entry' for your child. This may include spending some time at the program with your child, so they are comfortable getting acquainted with the educators, the classroom, and the other children. These visits will be individually scheduled based on children's needs and family availability.

## FEES & PAYMENT

The Children's Grove SAC is a School Age Care program is open September to June. Our fees are \$511.00 per month. Non-Instruction Day Winter, and Spring Break care is 50.00 a day.

Fees are collected via Pre-Authorized Debit (PAD). Families are required to fill out and sign the Pre-Authorized Debits Agreement form and send the form in with their application Payment will be taken out on the 1st of each month. There is a 25.00 NSF charge for any returned deposits.

**\*Please note that fees are charged regardless of statutory holiday, days missed due to illness, vacation, or closure due to inclement weather/storm/snow days. \* Fees are calculated on a pro-rated basis calculating in all days off due to holidays and pro days and balanced as such that each month has equal payments. \* If there is closure due to sickness of staff (and there is no substitute), families will be reimbursed on the next month's invoice.**

All parents utilizing Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) Affordable Child Care Benefit must apply for the benefit before starting program. Call 1-800-338- 6622. Our West Coast PacificCare Consultant and/or The Children's Grove SAC Manager and Educators can assist parent with accessing and filling out the forms.

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to continue with the Affordable Child Care Benefit renewals. If there is a difference between the amount of the benefit and our fees, the parent/guardian are required to pay the difference. If the benefit is discontinued, the family is responsible for all fees. If a family is denied, they are responsible for all outstanding fees. Please visit the MCFD website to check eligibility: [Affordable Child Care Benefit - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](http://Affordable Child Care Benefit - Province of British Columbia (gov.bc.ca))



One month's written notice is required when withdrawing your child from The Children's Grove SAC. Failure to give adequate notice of withdrawal directly impacts the operational budget and the opportunity for other children to participate in our program.

Parents will be charged one month's fee in lieu of giving proper notice (one month). One month's notice MUST be given in writing. Once you have made the decision to withdraw from our PROGRAM, please see the Manager to hand in your letter. This procedure allows the program adequate time to consult the wait list and find a family to fill your spot.

## HOLIDAYS & CLOSURES

The Children's Grove SAC operates on a September to June schedule – in alignment with the Pacific Rim School District 70 Calendar. We operate five days per week – Monday-Friday and Professional Development Days. We are closed all statutory holidays, one week at Winter Break and One week at Spring Break. A calendar of closures will be provided upon enrollment for families.

## FIRST DAYS

Your child will have a hook outside the classroom to keep their things. This will be labeled with their name.

**Please ensure that all your child's personal belongings are clearly labeled.**

We have Sharpies in our classroom should you need to borrow one. We will not account for each child's personal belongings if they are not labeled.

The Educator will send items home as needed to be changed out or to washed.

While they are here your child will need the following:

- complete change of clothes - including socks and underwear, seasonally appropriate.
- CHILD FRIENDLY SHOES - Please do not send your child in shoes that they cannot master themselves. We encourage self-help skills and fostering a sense of self-confidence and esteem in their ability. When children are dependent on adults to facilitate their dressing, we are taking away opportunities for them to learn important life skills and develop their confidence. Please do not send your child in shoes with laces unless they can tie them.
- Sunglasses and sunscreen
- Seasonal Outdoor Wear - sweaters, raincoat, splash pants or rain suit, hats (toque, rain hat, or sun hat), mittens, rain boots, winter boots, snow suits.



## HEALTH & SAFETY

The Children's Grove SAC follows the Provincial Guidelines for Communicable Disease Prevention and Control for Child Care Programs. We teach children proper hand-washing techniques to limit the spread of communicable illness. However, given the nature of group care, germs can be spread easily among children. To ensure a healthy environment we engage in the following practices:

- Proper handwashing by all children, staff and parents
- Asking you to keep sick children home as per our Illness Policy.
- Keeping our program clean and sanitary
- Regularly disinfecting and sanitizing all areas, toys, and materials
- Maintaining a safe environment, inside and out
- Employing trained staff in Emergency First Aid & CPR

Section 48(5) of the Child Care Licensing Regulations requires a Licensee to ensure that safe drinking water is available to children. Health Canada sets a Maximum Allowable Concentration (MAC) of lead in drinking water at 0.005 mg/L. The Children's Grove SAC levels are below the Maximum Allowable Amount. Even though this is below the allowable concentration, we will be running the taps for two minutes to flush the lines at the beginning of the program.

## ILLNESS

To ensure a safe and healthy environment for children and staff, and to help to reduce the spread of infectious and communicable diseases, The Children's Grove SAC has developed an Illness Policy and COVID Policy for our families. Please review these policies in our Policies and Procedures Handbook.

Please note that if your child requires medication (Tylenol or Advil) to attend they are likely too ill to be in care. Sending them to our program with Tylenol or Advil makes it difficult to determine how sick they are or allow us to accurately take their temperature. This practice is discouraged, as we are not able to attend to the individual needs of a sick child in our care.

If your child becomes sick while in our care (vomiting, diarrhea, fever, too lethargic to participate in daily activities, inconsolable crying), we will call you to come and pick them up. Your child will need to be kept home for a 24-hour time period, or until they are symptom free before they may return. Under some circumstances, a doctor's note may be required to ensure children are not contagious and are able to fully participate in the daily activities.



## ACCIDENTS & EMERGENCIES

Even with the best precautions, accidents may happen. When a child has a bump, bruise, cut, scrape or injury of that nature, staff will administer first aid measures and fill out an accident report. This report will be made available to you at pick up that day. In the event of a serious emergency, 911 will be called and a staff member will administer any necessary First Aid/CPR. Parents and/or guardians will be called, followed by emergency contacts, if necessary. Messages will be left at all numbers if we are unable to reach someone. If deemed appropriate by the 911 operator, the Manager or a SD70 employee, may transport the child to the Emergency Department if the parent/guardian/emergency contact has not arrived. In this event, you and/or your emergency contact will be notified immediately.

For this reason, it is imperative that we have the following on file for your child:

- Current home, work, and cell numbers.
- Names and contact numbers for at least TWO other adults we can contact in case of emergency.
- Child's health card number.
- Signed consent form for emergency transportation.