

Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre
2772 East Broadway
Vancouver, BC V5M 1Y8
Ph: 604.709.5661 Fax: 604.709.5662
Toll-free: 1.877.262.0022
Email: info@wstcoast.org
www.wstcoast.org



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES: "The Rulebook for a Centre"

The purpose of this print resource is to:

- provide some background information on the development of policies and procedures
- provide a checklist that will identify key areas for policies and procedures to guide the delivery of child care programs/services.

What are Policies and Procedures?

The policies and procedures of a child care program describe the expectations and practices which help a program to run smoothly. *Policies* are the "ground rules" that spell out *how* the centre operates and *procedures* refer to the ways in which policies are "*put into action*". Both policies and procedures are based on the philosophy, goals and objectives of the sponsoring organization (e.g., the Society):

1. philosophy considers the purpose of the child care centre
2. goals considers what Early Childhood Educators, a Board of Directors, and families are aiming to accomplish in the child care program/s
3. objectives considers the tasks, duties and responsibilities required to achieve goals

Child care program policies should be consistent with and reflect:

- assumptions about how children develop and learn
- standards of best practice e.g., Developmentally Appropriate Practice, NAYEC
- values of families and Early Childhood Educators (values influence approaches to child rearing and teaching strategies)
- needs of children, families and staff
- Code of Ethics (e.g., ECEBC)
- legislation.

Well written policies and procedures will communicate clear expectations, ensure consistency and guide children, families, staff, volunteers and board members.

Approval of policies “rests” with the governing body/the licensee, and development of procedures is the primary responsibility of staff. Input from families using child care, staff and board members is vital for making informed decisions and setting appropriate policies and procedures.

Key Areas for Policy and Procedures

Typically, policies and procedures are required for the *organization* and for the *service delivery of child care programs*.

1. *The Organization - the General Operations*

A staff operations manual may incorporate information found in the general operations area. This would include, but not be limited to:

- personnel
- privacy
- confidentiality
- financial management and administration
- record keeping
- organizational and decision making structures
- conflict of interest
- concerns and complaints.

2. *The Delivery of Child Care Programs/Services*

The following checklist has been divided into six key areas of service delivery: Enrolment, Attendance, Health/Safety/Hygiene, Emergencies, Food and Curriculum. This would include; but not be limited to:

ENROLMENT

Admission/registration

- instructions to follow when a family calls for information and/or to register
- registration procedures once a space is confirmed
- procedures for initiating contact with the family
- eligibility to attend
- the licensed capacity in each group
- children who require additional supports e.g., assessments, utilization of community resources

- approaches to grouping e.g., ages, primary caregiver
- eligibility for employees' children to enrol in the program

Waiting list

- maintaining a waiting list
- priorities for enrolment, if any
- reference to equality and human rights
- notification process when a space becomes available

Part-time status

- procedures for part-time attendance and/or temporary care and any restrictions
- procedures if a family requests a change from full-time to part-time or vice versa or any changes in part-time hours/days
- priority if any, if there is a full-time family on waiting list but part-time request is next

Family orientation

- responsibility and procedures for orienting new families to each program
- verbal and written documentation for family members

Gradual entry and transition to next age group

- schedule and process when a child enters into a program or to the next age group
- communication with the family

Forms and records

- enrolling parent/legal guardian's responsibility to complete all registration/consent information required
- filing and storage of information
- custody of the records
- identify who "needs to know" and have access to information in files
- confidentiality
- privacy protection

Visits and family tours

- arranging and conducting a tour of the centre
- visitor/drop in tours

Centre-family agreements

- expectations re signing of an agreement
- privacy statement should be included in information

- society membership and responsibilities, if any

Siblings

- fee differentials, if any
- procedures re priority, if any, to families with more than one child

ATTENDANCE

Hours and days of operation

- hours and days of the week child care is open
- expected drop off and pick up times
- maximum number of hours a child can attend
- closures e.g., statutory holidays, emergency closures
- procedures if an emergency, disaster or inclement weather
- early dismissal and/or professional development days for school age programs

Arrival/departure

- expectations about communication between caregiver and family member at these times
- phoning if your child will not be attending
- the centres commitment to good communication
- procedures for signing in and out
- daily information for families e.g., daily sheets for infants and toddlers
- any security issues about pick up
- parking for families, staff and visitors

Clothing and toys from home

- centre's policy on bringing toys or personal items from home
- appropriate clothing and shoes (indoor, outdoor, for changing weather)
- diapers and extra clothes
- labelling items to prevent loss
- location of lost and found articles

Custody and access

- obligations of the enrolling parent/legal guardian
- requirements re custody information/status in writing upon enrolment
- information re authorized pick up persons
- policy in case of unresolved family custody disputes

Release of children

- safety and security of children
- family responsibility for maintaining accurate and updated information in registration forms
- expectations and requirements when new person arrives to pick up a child
- steps in handling occasional and frequent late pick up
- unauthorized or alleged impaired person picking up a child
- apprehension by the Ministry of Children and Family Development

Termination of services (by the child care program)

- steps to be implemented before termination e.g., meetings with enrolling parent/legal guardian and accessing resources from community
- notice which may or may not include: nonpayment of fees; unsuccessful resolution of difficulties when family is not abiding by expectations in centre/family agreement; change in custody of child; acts of violence; harassment or abuse by family member; centre unable to meet the additional needs of child or family within existing resources

Withdrawal

- required procedures and expectations when a “family chooses to withdraw” their child from the program
- exit interview

Extended absence

- procedures if families request to temporarily withdraw their children from the centre, e.g., vacation and/or for medical reasons, hospital stay or communicable disease if choosing not to immunize

HEALTH/SAFETY/HYGIENE

Cleaning procedures

- procedures for cleaning and sanitizing of toys and equipment
- overall cleaning procedures at centre including frequency and thoroughness
- recommended cleaning products used
- storage of hazardous materials
- soiled clothing and laundering procedures

Toileting and diapering

- process for diapering and assisting children in the bathroom
- readiness for toilet learning
- toilet learning - working with families and children

- recommended handwashing techniques
- universal precautions and posting of information
- record keeping for each individual child's day

Nap/rest time

- health needs of children
- routine for non-sleepers
- staff supervision of the sleep room
- use/non-use of bottles
- approaches to assisting children to sleep
- individual sleep routines and styles for infants
- spacing of cribs and mats
- recommended sleeping positions

Sick child

- requirements when children are sick and are not allowed to attend the child care program
- symptoms that necessitate exclusion
- steps taken with communicable illnesses/contagious infections
- information about communicable and other illnesses
- procedures required re informing staff if medication has been administered prior to coming to the centre
- steps taken if child becomes ill at the centre
- copies of medication forms
- administration and storage of all medications - prescription and non-prescription
- disease prevention and head lice checks

Child abuse

- requirements for reporting/documenting an allegation of child abuse
- legal responsibility
- community resources

Accidents and injuries

- safety precautions
- location of first aid supplies and responsibility for replenishing
- first aid kits for outdoor play area and walks
- needle stick injuries
- treatment of minor injuries

- treatment of critical incidents including how children are transported
- documentation and reporting including licensing requirements
- communication with families, staff and children

Immunizations

- recommendations re immunizations for children and staff
- communicating with families
- keeping files up to date
- admission of families choosing not to immunize their child and time away from centre that may be necessary due to non-immunization

Opening and closing

- duties and procedures to maintain safety and security
- procedures if a break in is discovered

Sun protection

- expectation re sunscreen lotion
- supplying and administering
- written authorization from families
- protection for infants
- provision of shade and appropriate clothing as added protection

Maintenance

- responsibility of maintaining safe toys and equipment
- facility maintenance and repairs
- frequency of reporting on inspections

EMERGENCIES

Fire /evacuation drill

- practices
- procedure for drill and evacuation
- posting and documenting as required

Fire alarm

- determining first steps
- procedure for evacuation
- calling of fire department

- head counts, meeting place and alternate meeting place
- calling parents/legal guardians and emergency contacts
- documenting and reporting
- debriefing and follow up

Earthquake

- practices
- recognition of earthquake - stop, drop and cover
- procedure for evacuation when appropriate
- earthquake kits
- meeting area
- communication with families
- documenting and reporting
- debriefing and follow up

Missing child

- search procedures on site and off
- when to call police
- procedures for notifying family
- responsibility for handling the media
- documenting and reporting
- debriefing and follow up

Visitors/strangers

- handling strangers and unauthorized adults entering the centre

FOOD

Nutrition policy

- nutritional standards
- approach to serving of food - social and environmental
- restrictions including allergies and religious or cultural beliefs, food not allowed at the centre
- children's refusal of food
- communicating with families

Snacks/lunches

- responsibilities of the family, the centre, and staff
- menu and posting of information
- fee if lunches/snacks forgotten and provided by centre

Food storage preparation and purchasing

- health regulations with regards to storing and preparation of foods
- hygiene and universal precautions
- purchase of foods

Infant feeding

- support for families choosing to breast-feed
- procedures for bottles - stored, warmed, and served
- recommendation regarding bottle safety and restrictions on bottle contents e.g., no medication, no propping
- introduction to solids
- responding to family preferences
- self-feeding readiness

CURRICULUM

Program plans and activity plans

- program goals, philosophy and resources
- responsibility for program planning
- sharing information with families
- opportunities for family/community involvement

Schedules and routines

- responsibility for posting a schedule for families and staff
- typical day

Physical environment and room setup

- health and safety considerations
- philosophy and goals
- elements of best practice in the room set up and physical environment

Outdoor play

- children's schedule and program plans
- health and safety considerations
- developmentally appropriate toys and equipment
- appropriate clothing

Celebrations and anti bias curriculum (further information available from Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre)

- centre's policy regarding celebrations
- inclusion of multicultural and gender neutral language, toys, teaching tools, visual and auditory aids

Walks, field trips and transportation

- planning and organizing field trips
- informing and obtaining permission from legal guardian
- involvement of families
- insurance needs for trips off site and involving transportation
- guidelines for walks in the neighbourhood
- safety and security issues
- first aid and emergency kits and procedures

Family - staff meetings

- plans for staff and family meetings - informal and formal
- procedures to ensure effective meetings

Supervision

- procedures for ensuring all children are supervised at all times
- staffing and regulation requirements
- selecting and utilizing substitute staff
- responsibilities for practicum and other students and volunteers

Program evaluation

- procedures and responsibility for program evaluation
- evaluation tools
- responsibility for evaluation – external and/or internal, results to families, role of licensee and staff
- goal setting and planning

Guidance

- philosophy and goals
- suggested and prohibited practices
- community resources

Communication

- responsibility and reporting
- concerns and complaints
- conflict resolution
- opportunities for informal and formal staff to staff communication
- utilization of community resources
- media relations
- phone calls
- verbal and written communication with families

In addition to this checklist presented above, each organization will also identify additional areas where they will want to develop policies and procedures specific to their child care programs/ services.

The following additional reading material is recommended:

1. *INFORM Guide: An Administration Manual for Non-Profit Child Care in BC*
 - Chapter 2 – Organization
 - Chapter 7 – Program Planning and Review
 - Chapter 8 – Legal Issues and Liability, Custody
 - Chapter 9 – Financial Management, Fee Collection
2. *Policies and Procedures for Child Care Programs – Tough and Sensitive Issues – Part I and II*
Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre

Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre does not assume responsibility for actions taken based on information provided.