



Almosthome Childcare/Preschool Ltd.

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www.almosthomecare.com

Welcome to Almosthome Childcare/ Preschool! We are excited about having your child and family join our centre! This handbook was designed to familiarize you with the centre and make this transition as easy and comfortable as possible. If you have any questions or concerns, we welcome you to address any of our staff, or contact Cindy or Tina in the office at 250-590-7666 or almosthomechildcare@shaw.ca.

Our Philosophy

To provide a safe, nurturing environment for each child to explore, develop and grow as an individual. We facilitate the development of a positive self image and instill confidence in all of our children through the joy of learning and socialization. At Almosthome Childcare we believe in the need for a holistic approach to childcare.

- We are all unique individuals
- Children learn through play and experiences
- A strong family and support is essential to a child's well being
- Everyone deserves respect

About Us

Almosthome Childcare/Preschool Ltd. is owned by Cindy Ross, an early childhood educator offering quality childcare since 1982. Cindy has years of experience working with preschoolers, children with special needs and infant care. She recognizes that there is a need for quality childcare in a natural setting in every municipality and hopes to validate every child's sense of belonging to our "family". We employ specialized staff in our centre's to provide a valuable support to the children in our care and their future development.

Operation

The hours we operate are between 7:00am and 5:00pm with our Langford centers open until 5:30pm, Monday thru Friday with a few exceptions that are listed below. **We believe in, and offer a maximum of 9 hours of care for each child.** We are closed for all government observed holidays as well as 2 professional development days falling in September and May.

Holiday closures include:

- New Years Day
- Family Day
- Good Friday and Easter Monday
- Victoria Day
- Canada Day
- BC Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Remembrance Day
- Christmas Day and Boxing Day

Additionally, we close the centre for a Christmas holiday break of 2 weeks which follows the same time period of the local school districts. Please consult your monthly calendars and newsletters for actual dates.

The monthly fees are due in full during any and all closures and personal holiday time to maintain enrollment.

9 Hour policy

At this time we are negotiating our contract with our Government Child care Operating Funding Program. We are reviewing our staff costs and are having a substantial increase in the amount of overtime occurring due to children being in care outside of their registration times.

This is not only difficult for us to plan our staffing but also provides hardship on the families of the staff that are already work 9 hour shifts.

Because of these costs we will be charging for any children in care exceeding 9 hours.

The late charge will be \$20 for the first 15 min and repeating in 15 min increments.

Orientation

Our facility encourages parent/guardians to support their child's transition into each centre through a gradual entry program over 2-3 days. The staff will work with each individual child and parent to ensure this process is as comfortable as possible for all parties involved. Once the parent is encouraged to leave their child, it is helpful if they make the goodbye as quick as possible. Please trust the educator to assist your child to feel comfortable at their own pace. If you are feeling unsure of the transition, we encourage you to call the centre and we will give you a current update of your child's day.

Please provide the following items labeled with your child's name:

- A spill proof cup for water only (no juice/milk please in preschools)
- 2 healthy snacks and a well balanced lunch everyday
- A small current photo (4x6 or smaller)
- A small blanket, crib sheet and stuffed animal for quiet time

- 2 complete changes of clothes
- A pair of inside, hard sole shoes or slippers
- Rubber Boots and rain wear (all season)
- Snow Boots, snow suit, toque and mitts (winter)
- Sunscreen, water shoes, towel, bathing suit (summer)

Items from Home

We do not encourage children to bring toys from home as these items can be lost or misplaced and can cause conflicts between children. If a child needs a special comfort item for rest time, they are welcome to bring a small stuffed animal to stay at the centre in their bed box.

Almosthome Childcare is not responsible for lost, broken, or misplaced toys.

Daily Arrivals and Departures

To ensure the safety of all children in the centre, VIHA requires the parent to sign their child in and then out at pick up time. It is the parent responsibility to make the staff aware of their child's departure.

Pick Up and Drop Offs

In order for your child to enjoy our centre experience fully we ask that you ensure your child is in attendance by 9:30am. If you are planning to arrive late due to an appointment, please discuss with the staff as our program and transitions begin at 9:30 and it may be difficult for your child to join after this time. Please inform the centre if your child is going to be absent. **Almosthome reserves the right to decline any drop off after 9:30am to avoid disruption in the classroom.**

If you are arriving late to pick up your child, please call the centre to advise the staff so they can make any care adjustments. A fee of \$20 is charged before the first 15 minutes, and a fee of \$40 after the first 15 minutes. If the staff is unable to contact you or an alternate by 5:30pm, 6:00pm at all the Westshore locations, the late pick up policy will be enforced. A note will be placed on the front door to inform you of where to call to pick up your child.

Staff

The child care licensing regulations of the Vancouver Island Health Authority governs our staff to child ratio, which is observed at all times. Every staff member is licensed to practice in B.C. as Infant/Toddler Educators (I.T.), Early Childhood Educators (E.C.E), or Educator Assistants (E.A.) through V.I.H.A as well.

The centre also provides work experience and practicum placements for students from:

- University of Victoria
- Camosun College
- Sprott Shaw Community College
- Pacific Rim Early Childhood Institute
- CDI College

Licensed and Inspected by:

Vancouver Island Health Authority, Community Care Facilities Licensing and the local fire department.

Emergency Preparedness

The centre and vehicles are fully equipped with all emergency safety equipment; including fire extinguishers, first aid kits, and emergency/earthquake kits. The centre participates in a monthly fire drill and a yearly emergency/earthquake drill as required by the local fire department and V.I.H.A. Upon registration, all parents are required to supply their child with an emergency/earthquake package as listed in required items.

Current first aid certifications are held by every staff member.

Celebrations

Birthdays are celebrated at the centre and are an important day in the lives of young children. A card, certificate, crown, and song will be shared with the child on their special day. If you wish to bring in an item to share with the other children, please consult the staff for an estimate of the number and any allergy concerns.

Celebrations or holidays are an important time for families to share aspects of their culture and traditions with others around them so we can appreciate the diversity within our centre.

Food and Drink Policy

This policy is to make clear that Almosthome Childcare/Preschool Ltd. places restrictions on feeding children unscheduled or unplanned food or beverages. Parents are responsible for providing food and beverages other than water for their children. Almosthome is a “no-juice” facility. Infants and toddlers are familiarizing their digestive systems during their early years. We will not provide foods, to avoid complications and allergies to food exposures without the parent’s previous consent.

A monthly hot lunch and baking day may occur in the preschools but will be planned with a description for parents if they wish their child to participate, or they may provide an alternative option.

Fees

Preschool programming and all extracurricular activities are included in the monthly fees.

- Payments are required in form of credit card, post dated cheques (6 months), or E-Transfer of funds and is due upon registration
- To complete registration, \$100 non-refundable registration fee and the first months fees, (post dated cheques/credit card form/E-Transfer of funds), child registration form and contract must be returned
- All subsequent monthly fees must be received on or before the 1st of the month to avoid a \$30 late fee and the potential for disruption of care

- If subsidy is included, we must have a copy of the current authorization number or verbal confirmation directly from the subsidy office prior to the first day of care
- NSF cheques and late payments will be charged an additional \$30
- Almosthome Childcare reserves the right to suspend care due to lack of payment
- **The centre requires a 60 day notice if your child will be leaving and vacating their spot. Written notice (phone calls are not acceptable) must be given to the office before the last calendar day 2 months prior of last day. If required notice is not given, you will be responsible to pay the following months fees in full, with no pro-rate available.**
- Part time clients are responsible for payments for the centre annual vacation as well as government observed holidays
- If we do not receive or are denied your Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative, you as parents are responsible for the outstanding amount.

Subsidy

Subsidy forms are available from our office or the B.C. government website. For more information, please contact the Ministry of Human Resources office at 1-888-338-6622. It remains the parent's responsibility for all amounts payable to Almosthome Childcare. If the fees are not received by the 1st of the month, the parent is responsible to pay the full fees, which will be reimbursed when payment is received.

Centre Closures

If the centre experiences a lack of power, extreme weather conditions (heat or cold), or a fire, the centre may be forced to close due to safety reasons. If in doubt whether the centre will be open in extreme weather conditions; please try calling, check Facebook, listen to CFX 1070 AM radio and follow the recommendations of the local school district. If during the course of the day an emergency arises, we will contact you to pick up your child immediately.

Release of a Child Policy

Every child enrolled at Almosthome Childcare will only be released to the listed parent/guardian or those individuals the parents have previously listed on the "release of a child consent and registration form." If we do not recognize a person trying to pick up a child, they will be asked for identification. We do not accept phone call authorizations for pick up as per our licensing guidelines. If we have not received verification by a parent/guardian, we are unable to release a child to the pickup regardless of their relation to the child. You can add an authorized pickup by:

- Adding an authorized pickup under the Emergency Contacts on your Sandbox portal
- Sending the head office an email at almosthomechildcare@shaw.ca
- Filling out an information change form at your centre

Notice must be in written communication from licensing standards. Please note, we also need the following information for them to become an authorized pickup:

- Their first and last name
- Phone number and address
- Relationship to child
- Whether they are an emergency contact and/or authorized pickup

Toileting

Toileting is something that all children in the centre will participate in on a daily basis to varying degrees. We will work with the parent routine to be a consistent partner in toilet training. The staff will assist all children with toileting and accident clean up, if needed, while still respecting a child's right to privacy. Please make sure you communicate your child's toileting needs to the staff. **A Toileting Policy must be signed and returned before the center can support your child in the process.**

Nap and Quiet Time

The centre will offer a nap and quiet time after lunch every day. Almosthome Childcare is required by VIHA to offer each child some form of quiet time or a rest on their mat. We do understand that some children do not need to nap or that a parent may not want their child to nap. Children that are not napping will be offered a child friendly movie in a separate viewing area as they rest on their mat. For those children that sleep in the nap room, there will be an educator in the room to assist in the falling asleep process.

Screen Time

At Almosthome Childcare, all preschool centres have the option of screen time which includes selected shows such as Nickelodeon, Disney, and Pixar. There is no programming with rescue heroes, superheroes, etc., and the programs we show must be of an educational nature.

In all preschool centres, there is a limited maximum of 30 minutes of screen time during the quiet rest time. During this time, we also offer other options such as bed bags, puzzles, and mat toys. Please inform the centre if you wish for this to be an option. Please note that infant and toddler centres are not offered any screen time.

Guidance and Discipline

Almosthome childcare recognizes and respects the uniqueness and individuality of each and every child. Therefore, the centre staff will provide each child with the freedom to explore, experience, problem solve and **learn through play**. The educators will address the behavior rather than the child when assisting the child in finding appropriate ways of expressing feelings. We practice redirection, modeling, positive reinforcement, choices and limit setting as techniques for guiding young children. All new children are on three month probation to assess our ability to meet the child's needs. For more detailed information on this subject, please call the office to enquire about the guidance and discipline policy.

Repayment Agreement Policy

A parent/guardian is responsible to pay the child care fees on the first day of every month. The following are the terms and conditions under which refunds may not be made to the parent/guardian.

- A non refundable fee of \$100 is required to register a child.
- If less than one month notice is given, the parent/guardian will be responsible to pay the fee for the upcoming month
- Almosthome Childcare must provide the parent 1 month's notice if we are no longer able to provide care for the child
- If a child is sick and unable to attend the facility, the parent will not receive a refund as payment are arranged by a standard monthly fee
- If a child is not going to attend the facility due to vacation or parent staying home, the parent will not receive a refund
- If the facility is closed due to a vacation time, pro d day, extreme weather, etc., the parent will not receive a refund

Sick Child Policy

If a child is ill and is not able to fully participate in our program, it is expected that they will stay home to rest. This will also assist in reducing the amount of illness in the centre. If a child becomes ill during the day, the staff will contact the parent/guardian to pick up the child within the hour. If the parent/guardian cannot be reached, the staff will move on to the emergency contacts to have the child picked up as soon as possible. **Almosthome Childcare reserves the right to refuse admission due to suspected illness.**

- If a child receives an antibiotic by prescription, they may not return until 24 hours after the first dose has been administered
- Staff will only administer medication from the original container and a "Permission to Administer Medication Form" has been filled out and attached
- Children that require long term medication such as asthma inhalers or allergy medications must have their requirements entered into the medical book. The staff will keep a running log of daily dosages administered or any other pertinent information
- If a child needs Tylenol or any other pain medication to complete their day, they are not well enough to attend and should be kept at home to rest. (Infant/Toddlers are exempt for teething)
- Please contact the centre within 24 hours if your child has a confirmed communicable disease. The illness will be posted on our sick child board for the other families to view and determine whether to have their child attend. A child may only return to the centre with written medical consent from a physician
- **Vaccinations- When a child (0-36mths) receives their vaccination they must be kept home 48 hours after the shot has been administered in order to closely monitor for any adverse reactions. Vaccinations are recommended to occur on a Friday.**

Alleged Impaired Pick Up

It is the caregiver's responsibility, to the extent that it is reasonable, not to release a child to an authorized person who is unable to adequately care for the child. If the caregiver believes that a child will be at risk, the caregiver will offer to call a relative or friend to pick up the person and the child. If the person is driving a vehicle, the caregiver will explain our responsibility and obligation to ensure the safety and well being of the child. If the parent/guardian insists upon leaving with the child in a vehicle, the caregiver will immediately contact the local police with the geographic vicinity and description of the vehicle. If the caregiver believes that the child is in need of protection, the caregiver will contact the Ministry of Children and Family Services, Child Protection with details of the incident.

Child Custody and Related Court Orders

If there is a child custody or court order, the parent will provide a true copy to the caregiver. A copy will be kept in the child's file while in our care. The parent is responsible for providing accurate and current information concerning the legal guardianship of the child. Without a child custody or court order on file, the caregiver cannot deny access to the parent who is not party to the agreement (the non-enrolling parent). If the non-enrolling parent is not listed on the authorized pick up list, the Release of a Child policy will be implemented.

Please see our Policy Handbook for additional information.

Thank you for considering Almosthome Childcare/Preschool!