Almosthome Childcare/Preschool Ltd.

Mailing address: 5229 Sooke Road, Sooke BC V9Z 1J6

Registration Office # 250-590-7666

Email: hello.almosthome@gmail.com

Website: www.almosthomecare.com

Welcome to Almosthome Childcare/Preschool! We are excited about having your child and family join our center. This handbook was designed to familiarize you with the center 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 Rhonda in the office at 250-590-7666

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, and everyone deserves respect.

About Us

Almosthome Childcare/Preschool Ltd. has been locally owned and operated since 1992. We offer quality in a supportive and caring environment. We recognise that there is a need for quality childcare in a natural setting and hope to validate every child's sense of belonging to our "family". We employ specialized staff in our centers to provide valuable support to the children in our care and their future development.

Operation

The hours we operate are between 7:00am and 5:00pm, Monday thru Friday, with a few exceptions that are listed below.

We believe in, and offer a daily maximum of 9 hours of care for each child.

Closures

We are closed for all government observed holidays, as well as 2 professional development days a year.

A one week closure at Spring Break and one week closure in August for summer planning. A two week closure over Winter Break, that follows our local school districts. Exact closure dates will be announced on a yearly basis.

Holiday closures include:

New Year's Day	BC Day
Family Day	Labor Day
1 week of Spring Break in March	Thanksgiving Day
Good Friday and Easter Monday	Truth and Reconciliation Day
Victoria Day	Remembrance Day
Canada Day	Christmas Day and Boxing Day
1 Week of Summer Break in August	2 Professional development days per year

Holiday closures will be posted as soon as possible in the month of January. All clients are responsible for payments for the center annual vacation as well as government observed holidays. Almosthome Childcare/Preschool Ltd. reserves the right to temporarily adjust center operation hours due to staffing restraints or other unforeseen circumstances in our centers. Please contact the main office at **250-590-7666** for the current hours of your center.

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

9 Hour policy

Tuition fees are based on a nine-hour attendance bracket for their registration space. This is required for us to plan our staffing, but also provides Almosthome with the ability to plan and maintain our ratio with our Licensing board. There are additional costs for any child exceeding over 9 hours per day.

Orientation

Our facility encourages a child's transition into each center through a gradual entry program over 2–3 days. This transition may take a month if children are not pre-socialized or have difficulty with self soothing sleep techniques.

A typical transition start for a Infant toddler will be:

- First day- One-hour visit, a successful visit is when a child can self soothe and enjoy themselves without consistent crying
- Second day - 2 hour visit, including morning snack
- Third day - ½ day including lunch, pickup before nap
- Fourth day we will try a nap and early pick up
- If your infant/toddler cannot make it through these four days without settling, please expect your transitioning time to take longer. We are not able to accept a child that cries all day, as this does not foster a positive experience. We encourage parents to arrange their transition time a month before they return to work to ensure their child is settled before they return to a full work commitment.

A typical transition start for a preschooler will be:

- First day- Two-hour visit, including morning free-play and circle time
- Second day-Pickup after lunch - 12:30
- Third day-Full day, early pickup at 3 pm
- If your child does not settle into this schedule, please expect your center manager to arrange further transition time before they can attend full days.

The staff will work with each individual child and parent to ensure this process is as comfortable as possible. 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 use the childcare software to message the center and we will give you a current update of your child's day.

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

A spill proof cup for water only (Milk okay in infant/toddler programs)

2 healthy snacks and a well-balanced lunch everyday

A small blanket and sheet for quiet time

2 complete changes of clothes, and a wet bag, ziplock bag or reusable bag for wet/soiled clothes

A pair of inside, hard sole shoes or slippers

Rubber Boots and rain wear (all season)

Snow Boots, snowsuit, 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 center 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 center, VIHA requires the parent to sign their child in and then out at pickup time. It is the parent responsibility to make the staff aware of their child's departure. The process of signing a child in/out is done through the Childcare software.

Child Pick Up and Drop-Offs

In order for your child to enjoy our center 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 center 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 center to advise the staff, so they can make any care adjustments. A fee of $20 is charged before the first 15 minutes, and $20.00 for every portion of 15 minutes thereafter. If the staff is unable to contact you or an alternate by 5:30pm, the late pick up policy will be enforced. A note will be placed on the front door to inform you of where 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 center also provides work experience and practicum placements for students from:

University of Victoria

Pacific Rim Early Childhood Institute

Camosun College

CDI College

Sprott Shaw Community College

Licensed and Inspected by:

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

Emergency Preparedness

The centers are fully equipped with all emergency safety equipment; including fire extinguishers, first aid kits, and emergency/earthquake kits. The center participates in a monthly fire drill and a yearly emergency/earthquake drill as required by the local fire department and V.I.H.A. Current first aid certifications are held by every staff member.

Celebrations

Birthdays are celebrated at the center and are an important day in the lives of young children. A card, 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 of children in attendance 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 center.

Food and Drink Policy

This policy is to make clear that Almosthome Child Care/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/water only” facility.

Infants and toddlers are familiarizing their digestive systems during their early years. We will not provide foods without notice, 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.

Anti-Harassment Policy

Almosthome will not tolerate any verbal or physical abuse from any parent, guardian, or child. Bullying and harassment from parents/guardians towards any staff member or other parents is not tolerated and will be grounds for immediate termination. No refunds will be provided for any termination or breach of our policies and procedures. Almosthome reserves the right to give parents 30 days notice if we are unable to meet the needs and care of your child. Immediate termination will occur due to Violence/Aggression in the Workplace.

Tuition

Monthly tuition fees are due on the first of every month regardless of whether the child is starting care on the first of the month, or any subsequent day. Your child's first month of care is pre-paid upon registration. Late payments received after the first will receive a $30 late fee and the potential for disruption of care. Late payments include:

- Money received after the first of the month.

If receiving a subsidy, we must have a written notice of your approval directly from the childcare services center prior to the first day of care. If a child were to begin without an approval from the childcare services center, parents are responsible for the entire monthly fee. Almosthome Childcare reserves the right to suspend care due to lack of payment. Secondly, late payment is grounds for probation or termination (please see probation policy and termination policy).

Parents are responsible for paying a $100 non-refundable registration fee and prepaying the first month of care that is required to register a child and secure the spot. If a parent pays the $100 registration fee and leaves Almosthome Childcare before starting care, they will not be refunded. Your child's tuition for the first month of care will be prepaid at the time of registration. If care has not begun, the withdrawal and termination policy still applies.

Tuition payments are paid at the beginning of the month on the 1st. If payments are not received, late charges will apply at the rate of $30. If payment has not been received by the 4th of the month, care will be suspended until payment is made, and potential loss of space in the program.

Almosthome Childcare processes tuition payments via direct withdrawal from a bank account or credit card through our Childcare management software. Credit card payments are subject to a 2.9%+$.50 fee on each transaction PAD payments are subject to a 0.1%+$.50 fee on each transaction, up to a maximum of $5. Automatic payments may be turned on to ensure tuition payments are made on time.

Families will receive an email from the Childcare Software to help them set up your payments in the "invoicing" section of their app.

Withdrawal and termination

The center requires a 60 calendar days notice if your child will be leaving and vacating their spot. Written notice must be received and confirmed (phone calls are not acceptable) to the Office before the last calendar day, 2 months prior to the last day. If required notice is not given, you will be responsible to pay the following month's fees in full, with no pro-rate available.

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 two-months notice is given, the parent/guardian will be responsible to pay the fee for the upcoming months. Almosthome Childcare must provide the parent 1 month notice if we are no longer able to provide care for the child for any reasons such as staffing, behavior challenges or a child requiring additional support. In extreme cases where the health and safety of others in care are at risk, Almosthome reserves the right to terminate care effective immediately with no notice. If a child is sick and unable to attend the facility, the parent will not receive a

refund as payments are arranged by a standard monthly fee. If a child is not going to attend the facility due to vacation or a 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.

CCFRI

If the Childcare Fee Reduction Initiative (CCFRI), Childcare Subsidy or Affordable Childcare Plan do not cover their full monthly commitment, the parent is responsible for the tuition amount. This could be done for cancellation of their above programs, ineligible closures or termination of the client's eligibility or any other reason. CCFRI Contracts are renewed yearly on March 31. We reserve the right to increase childcare fees in accordance with our CCFRI contracts. A 30-day notice will be provided in writing. Child care providers must apply to receive funding. Parents do not need to apply for the CCFRI Funding. Agreements are subject to annual renewals. Providers applying to CCFRI are not required to reduce their parent fees until they receive written approval from the Child Care Operating Funding (CCOF) program. Should the application process be delayed or interrupted for any reason, it is the parents' responsibility to cover the full fees until a contract renewal has been approved and funding has been received. Almosthome will then apply appropriate credits or refunds to your account. Almosthome reserves the right to refuse to renew this funding agreement should we feel that our values are not being respected, and overhead operational costs are not covered through required fee increases. Tax receipts are provided at the beginning of the following fiscal year.

Affordable Childcare Program

If we do not receive or are denied your ACCB(AFFORDABLE CHILDCARE BENEFIT), parents are responsible for the outstanding amount. Affordable Childcare 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 back to the payee parent when Almosthome receives it from the Ministry of Children and Families.

Extreme weather /Centre Closures

If the center experiences a lack of power, extreme weather conditions (heat or cold), or a fire, the center may be forced to close due to VIHA regulations. If in doubt whether the center will be open in extreme weather conditions; please try calling, check Facebook, listen to CFAX 1070 AM radio and follow the recommendations of the local school district or RCMP. If during the course of the day an emergency arises, Almoshtome 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 pickup 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 Contacts in the childcare software
- Sending the head office an email at hello.almosthome@gmail.com
- Filling out an information change form at your center

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

- Pickup's first and last name

- Phone number
- Relationship to child
- Whether they are an emergency contact and/or authorized pickup

Toileting

Toileting is something that all children in the center will participate in on a daily basis, depending on their age and stage of development. 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 center will offer a nap and quiet time after lunch every day. Almosthome Childcare offers 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. 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 centers 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 Almosthome show must be of an educational nature. In all preschool centers, 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 center if you do not want your child to view the 30-min television time and we will do our best to accommodate this. Please note that infant and toddler centers 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 center 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.

Health and Wellness Policy

The health and well-being of the children is our first concern. To promote a healthy environment, we will ensure that:

- Proper hygiene is practiced and maintained at all times
- Proper handling and disposal of diapers and materials that may have come in contact with blood / body fluids
- Proper handwashing techniques are used by all children and adults
- Families are informed of any outbreak of a contagious disease
- Tissues and wipes are provided as needed
- Clean clothes and bedding are provided as needed
- There are daily opportunities for a minimum of 60 minutes of outdoor play (weather permitting)

Illness Policy

To ensure the well-being of all children and staff, we ask that families follow these policies when determining whether their child is well enough to attend daycare.

A child must be symptom-free before returning to care.

- If a child is unwell, showing symptoms of illness, or unable to fully participate in daily activities, they should remain at home.
- If a child requires medication such as Tylenol*, Advil*, cough syrup or any other medication to manage symptoms and get through the day, they are not well enough to attend and should stay home to rest.

**Infants and toddlers (under 3 years old) who receive pain-relief medication for teething must remain home for 8 hours after the last dose. However, if a child is teething and requires Tylenol or Advil during the day, it may be administered at daycare if provided by the parent. Staff will always consult families before administering any medication, and record it on the medication sheet.*

Almosthome Childcare/Preschool Ltd. reserves the right to refuse admission if a child appears unwell upon arrival.

Conditions for children to be excluded from care

- **Coughing:** Persistent cough or a cough that worsens with physical activity. *A child with a mild infrequent lingering cough, and no other symptoms, may attend so long as they are able to catch their cough and it does not interfere with their ability to participate.*
- **Fever:** 100.4°F (38°C) or higher. Children may return once fever, and any other symptoms, have resolved without medication for at least 48 hours.
- **Lethargy/Lack of Appetite:** A child who is not participating in play/activities or declining food should remain home. They can return to care once they resume engagement in regular daily activities and meals.
- **Vomiting/Nausea/Diarrhea:** Child may return 48 hours after the **last** episode. *If a child experiences a bowel movement that extends outside of their clothing while in care, we will call for an immediate pickup. Our staff are unable to provide the level of cleaning required in these situations, and the child will need to be cared for at home.*
- **Cold Symptoms:** Congestion, heavy nasal discharge, especially yellow/green mucus.
- **Antibiotics:** If prescribed, the child must remain home for 48 hours after the **first** dose, in *addition to being symptom free*.
- **Infected Eyes:** Conjunctivitis (pink eye) or other eye infections must be treated, and eyes must be clear before returning.
- **Skin Rashes:** Any unexplained rash (ex: red, raised, or oozing). An assessment by a medical professional is recommended. The child may return once the rash is treated and no longer visible.
- **Communicable Diseases (e.g., Chickenpox):** Parents must notify the daycare within 24 hours and follow Island Health's return-to-care guidelines.

Should these symptoms appear while your child is in care, a staff member will call a parent/guardian for pickup. If that parent/guardian is not available, an emergency contact will be called. Please ensure at least one listed contact is able to reach your child within 1 hour.

Medication Administration

- Staff can only administer medication from its original container with child's name & prescription dosage, and a completed **Permission to Administer Medication** form.
- For long-term medications (e.g., inhalers, allergy medication), a **Care Plan** must be on file.
- Staff will document all administered doses.

Vaccination Policy

- **Infants & Toddlers (6–35 months):** Children must remain home for 48 hours after receiving a vaccination to monitor for any adverse reactions. For this reason, we recommend scheduling vaccinations on Fridays.
- **Preschool-Aged Children (36 months+):** These children do not need to stay home after routine vaccinations unless:
    - They are receiving a vaccine for the first time.
    - They have had an adverse reaction to a vaccine in the past.

You must inform us within 24 hours of:

- The diagnosis of a serious illness or communicable disease in your child, or
- The exposure of your child to a serious illness or communicable disease in any other member of your family. You should inform us about this diagnosis or exposure, so we can warn other families about the potential spread of illness or disease. We will call our local health authority for advice in situations like this.

We are required by law to immediately notify you of a child who becomes ill while in our care, as

required by Section 19(1) (a) of the Child Care Licensing Regulation, B.C. Reg. 319/89.
We are required to notify the local Medical Health Officer within 24 hours of it coming to our attention that a child enrolled in the facility has a reportable communicable disease. Appropriate follow-up measures by the health authority will then be taken if necessary. This is a requirement of

Section19(2) (b) of the Child Care Licensing Regulation, B.C. Reg. 319/89

In summary, a child must be kept at home (or taken home) when a child is suffering from one or more of the above symptoms; or is not well enough to take part in the regular program.
Almosthome reserves the right to exclude a child from care based on health concerns that would compromise the overall health of the group or educators, a doctor's note may not always be sufficient in granting you medical clearance to attend.

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 center. 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.

Alleged Impaired Pick Up

It is Almosthome'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 any 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!

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