

# Preschool Parent Handbook



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# About Us

## Welcome

Welcome to Extra Steps Preschool! We are a licensed private facility offering high quality, enhanced programs for preschoolers. As Early Childhood Educators we are dedicated to promoting the physical, emotional, social, intellectual and linguistic development of young children.

## Why Choose Extra Steps for Your Preschooler?

We offer:

- a fun, friendly, play-based learning atmosphere which engages each child's interest
- a team of qualified and experienced Early Childhood Education staff with integrity and a passion for their chosen field of work
- a high ratio of staff to children
- a variety of scheduling options and longer class times
- a beautiful facility located in the heart of the Douglas Park community
- solid knowledge about what it really means for your child to be "ready for kindergarten" and how to accomplish that
- an approach to learning that respects your child's individual temperament, stage of development, likes and dislikes
- daily routines that are flexible, not rigid, and responsive to your child's needs
- opportunities for you to communicate with staff about how your child is doing
- programs to share photos and documentation with you directly to your phone

We encourage you to think about what you want for your preschooler and to do your research on available preschool programs. Have a question about how we do things and why? Please just ask!

# In the Classroom

## Daily Schedule

Our class times are 8:30-12:00 and 1:00-4:30. Our 3.5 hour class schedule changes daily, but below is an example of what your child may expect:

**Meet & Greet (15 mins)**

Free time, explore the room, chat with friends

**Opening Circle (10 mins)**

Welcome, today's activities

**Free choice in Play-based Learning Centres (90 mins)**

Guided play, art, toys, table activities, sensory, baking, open snack time

**Middle Circle (25 mins)**

Puppets, stories, sharing time, games, transition to outside time

**Outside Time (60 mins)**

Outside activities, nature walks, sports, games, playground equipment

**Closing Circle (10 mins)**

Stories, talking & listening, wrapping up, getting ready to head home

Please note that schedules and activities may vary depending on the day's events. In addition, we are flexible, not rigid, about our schedule because we understand how young children learn. For more details, please talk to staff.

## Learning Tools

### Outside

As fresh air, sunlight and yes, rain, are very important for children's healthy growth, we will regularly go out on little adventures throughout our neighbourhood. These experiences are fun, memorable and a natural teaching tool to help children understand the larger world around them. Our license also requires us to offer daily outdoor activities.

Heather Park is a beautiful spot just a five-minute walk from the centre. It offers many enjoyable outside activities for preschoolers. Other destinations can include, the local corner store, post office, dentist's office, a neighbourhood grocery store or special learning program. We also have longer field trips to places such as museums, the airport or community gardens. Your child will enjoy the fun, stimulation and discovery of our many outings and field trips, which are incorporated into our classes so that the learning outcomes continue long after they are over.

## Inside

Our preschool room is spacious, warm, comforting and flooded with natural light. It is designed around children's needs and is set up to foster children's development.

Our learning tools are inspiring and challenging. Some of the hands-on indoor learning tools your child will be using in our preschool include:

manipulative toys	sand	felt boards	arts
floor toys	water	dress-up	crafts
balls	carpentry	puppets	bean bags
housekeeping	puzzles	instruments	books

Some of the indoor activities your child will take part in include:

sports	songs	circle time	socializing
games	music	sharing time	art activities

Whatever our environment, outside or inside, we promote an enchanting, enjoyable, stress-free atmosphere where the children are encouraged to learn about and gradually demonstrate sharing, teamwork, self-control and independence. They acquire language skills and problem-solving techniques in their play process. All of this helps their developmental growth and prepares them for kindergarten and beyond.

## Children's Personal Items

Please provide a pair of inside shoes (with your child's name written on the inside) that can be left at the centre. They will be kept in your child's own special cubby box. Inside shoes help to keep our floor space clean and allow us to use it for more activities.

We understand that children sometimes want to bring in toys and personal items from home, however these items can get lost in our very active environment. This would be disruptive to the class and upsetting to your child, so please leave these items at home.

## **Communication Tools**

Our communication tools are designed to ensure that you are fully aware of what is happening in your child's preschool class.

The bulletin/white board located in our front entrance provides up to date information on our program, class activities, useful resources and other related topics.

We use Lillio (HiMama) for sharing documentation, photos and quotes of your child's activities, communication with teachers and families as well as billing.

## **Parent/Staff Conferences**

While we don't hold formal parent/teacher conferences, we invite you to talk to staff anytime, contact us by e-mail, or make an appointment to meet with us to discuss any aspect of your child's progress at preschool. Our door is always open.



# Admissions & Withdrawal

## Enrolment Requirements

All children must be at least 30 months of age and turning 3 in the same calendar year as their start date. While we would love if all children were toilet trained before starting our preschool program, it's not always developmentally appropriate. Please speak to us if you have any questions or concerns about your child and toilet training :)

## Class Description

All of our classes are **3.5 hours in length** and our staff-to-child ratio is often 3:20. Our license requires **1 teacher for 10 students** and we strive to exceed this. This means your child is not rushed and is able to get individual attention. It also gives us more time to offer bigger projects and other special programs throughout the year.

We understand that making your child's preschool fit into your busy schedule can be difficult. Our extended class times make it easier to schedule your childcare needs. While getting those extra learning opportunities, your child also has more supervised time to interact with their friends and peers in an extended class environment.

## Registration Requirements

To register your child in Extra Steps Preschool, we require:

First Step:

- A completed Class Registration Preference Form
- A non-refundable registration fee of \$65, payable by cheque/e-transfer/cash
- A deposit equivalent to one month's fees (which will cover fees for June of your child's school year), payable by cheque/e-transfer/cash

Second Step:

- A completed Registration Form Package
- A copy of your child's birth certificate

Any cheques returned from your financial institution will incur an NSF fee of \$50.

## Registration Package

All registration packages and information are available on our website ([www.extrasteps.ca](http://www.extrasteps.ca)). A link to the registration package will be sent through Lillio once your child's enrolment has been confirmed.

## Class Times & Fees

### Morning Class

Days: Mon/Tues/Weds/Thurs/Fri  
Parents choose any combination from 1 to 5 classes per week  
Time: 8:30 - 12:00  
Fees: \$182/month for 1 day/week  
\$271/month for 2 days/week  
\$365/month for 3 days/week  
\$491/month for 4 days/week  
\$625/month for 5 days/week

Ages: Children who are 30 months at start date and 3 years old before Dec 31<sup>st</sup> of the calendar year they begin

### Afternoon Class

Days: Mon/Tues/Weds/Thurs/Fri  
Parents choose any combination from 1 to 5 classes per week  
Time: 1:00 - 4:30  
Fees: \$182/month for 1 day/week  
\$271/month for 2 days/week  
\$365/month for 3 days/week  
\$491/month for 4 days/week  
\$625/month for 5 days/week

Ages: Children who are 30 months at start date and 3 years old before Dec 31<sup>st</sup> of the calendar year they begin

\*Please note that the above fees are after the CCFRI approval for the 2024/25 preschool year\*

## Family's Request for Withdrawal

A deposit equivalent to one month's fee is required at the time of registration. It is held interest-free and applied to your child's last month's fee - June unless withdrawing earlier. During the school year, if you wish to withdraw from the program or make changes to your child's schedule, you must give a full forty five (45) days notice in writing prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the month of the request change i.e., November 15th for leaving January 1st. Failure to do so will mean that your deposit is forfeited.

### Notes:

1. The last date to be eligible to withdraw or make changes to your child's schedule during the school year to receive a refund is February 15th for leaving April 1st. No deposits will be returned after this deadline.
2. Registration for the September school year begins in early spring each year. **There is no deposit refund for withdrawals or changes prior to starting in September for the new school year.**

## Facility's Request for Withdrawal

Extra Steps Learning Centres Inc. can terminate its services to a family under the following circumstances:

- If fees for services are not paid in full and on time and suitable arrangements cannot be agreed upon;
- If the centre is unable to satisfactorily resolve a problem with a family;
- If a family member harasses, threatens or commits a violent or unlawful act toward a staff member, child or other family involved in the program;
- If a family picks up their child late three times or more without having made previous suitable arrangements;
- If, in the assessment of the staff, a child is unable to be safely managed in a group of children within the given adult-to-child ratio. In this case, termination of services will be a measure of last resort.

## **Open House & Registration**

We open registration for the September school year around March each year. Prior to registration, we hold an open house so families that are interested in seeing the centre and meeting the teachers are able to join us and ask any questions they may have. We highly recommend visiting the preschool prior to registration so you are able to make sure we're the right program for your family!

We offer tours throughout the year for families who are interested in joining any available spaces we may have. We are unable to offer private tours if your child is not of age to begin or has not been offered an available preschool space as they can be very disruptive to the classroom.

### **Registration Priority**

Our registration takes place as follows:

1. Families currently enrolled in our program and siblings of current/past families
2. Families who have applied online
3. General public

# Yearly Calendar Information

## Start & Finish Dates

Classes are generally scheduled to begin the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of September and end the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of June. The calendar is available on the website

## Holidays & Breaks

We strive to match the holidays and seasonal breaks of Vancouver public schools however this can be hard to do so watch our calendar. All Extra Steps Preschool dates will be confirmed in our school year calendar prior to each school year start.

## Professional Days

Our entire staff takes approximately 3 professional days during the school year. These dates will be confirmed in our school year calendar.

Though we do not like to close the centre for a whole day, and know it may be an inconvenience to you, we firmly believe that everyone – staff, parents and children – benefits from professional days. They allow us to continually improve our education about early childhood learning, and give us opportunities to change up the classroom to better meet the needs of the children.

## Class Photos

During the school year a professional photographer will take individual and group photographs of the children. They are a wonderful memento for parents and you will have a variety of options if you wish to order them.

## Commonly Asked Questions

### Can I drop by during class time?

Yes, but please be aware that your child's behavior can vary with sudden changes at school. We are not a parent participation preschool program and do not require any volunteer time from parents.

### How will I know how my child is doing?

Just ask! We firmly believe that giving you honest, helpful feedback when you ask for it, even on a moment's notice, to help you understand how and what your child is doing in preschool, is one of our greatest skills, and one that can be overlooked by preschools. We are also committed to letting you know if any issues come up with your child that we think we should talk to you about. You're also more than welcome to send us an email with any questions or concerns and we will respond as soon as we can.

### Do you have a gradual entry schedule?

We don't have a gradual entry schedule as we find most children do not need it. If your child is struggling, we will work with you and come up with a plan that works for you and your family. We have different strategies for individual children including early pickup times or having a parent stay in the cubbies while the child is exploring in the room. Most often, after a few days of this, the child will settle into the preschool and their anxiety will ease.

## How do I deal with my child's separation anxiety?

Separation anxiety in children is very natural. Children do grow out of it, generally by four years of age. If your child has tantrums, yells, is clingy or cries, please be reassured that these are all normal reactions and show that they have a loving bond with you. Most children tend to stop crying a few minutes after their parents leave their sight. Separation anxiety can come and go for a while, however children soon learn to adapt and this does not cause them long-term harm.

We recommend that you try these useful tips to help ease this transition:

- If possible, visit the preschool, teachers or other children prior to the first day.
- Have a quick good-bye with a hug, kiss, or special wave.
- Let them know who will be picking them up.
- Do not sneak out as this can make your child distrustful.
- Do not bribe your child.
- Once you leave, remember that you are leaving your child with staff who genuinely care about them, who are skilled at getting to know them, and who have experience assisting parents and children with this process.

A child's first day is more often harder on the parent than the child. With many of our students, the first day of preschool is the first time a child is joining a program without a parent or other trusted adult (Grandparent, Nanny etc). Children can sense this which can then lead to a child feeling more nervous. This is a great time to practice your brave face and hold onto those tears until you're out of sight. We promise, we do not want your child to be upset and crying anymore than you do, and if we cannot help them settle within a reasonable time, we will call you back to come up with a new strategy.

## How does play help my child learn?

Although adults generally separate “working” and “playing” it is important to remember that playing is the work of young children.

As your child plays they connect their play objects to what they are thinking and observing in the world. Play allows them to learn math and spatial concepts, language skills, gross and fine motor skills, social skills, and to express themselves emotionally and creatively.

Play is how children naturally learn about themselves and the world around them. That is why high quality preschools make play-based learning the core of their programs.

## Will my child learn to read and write?

We do not “teach” reading and writing per se. That is not the purpose of preschool. Your child may be able to read and write before kindergarten but that depends on many factors. The purpose of preschool is to assist your child to be physically, emotionally, socially, intellectually and linguistically ready for kindergarten.

If you are anxious about this question, please talk to our staff about the skills and developmental stages that kindergarten teachers hope to see in their new students in order for them to be truly successful in school.

## Do I qualify for the Affordable Child Care Benefit?

You may qualify to receive a government subsidy through the Affordable Childcare Benefit program to reduce the cost of preschool. To find out if you qualify, please check out the ACCB website:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/child-care-funding/child-care-benefit>

The easiest way is to apply online. Once approved, we will reduce your monthly fee by the specific amount and apply any credits to your child’s account if necessary.

## What do I need to send with my child each day?

Your child’s **inside shoes** are kept at the centre. Please dress your child appropriately for the weather, **muddy buddies and rain boots** are important for the rain as we do a lot of puddle jumping! An **extra set of clothing in a labelled ziploc bag** to be kept in their cubbies or backpacks is often used after very wet days or extra messy art! Otherwise all you need to send with them is a **healthy snack in a labeled snack bag and a labeled water bottle** to each class. If anything else is ever needed, you will be given plenty of notice beforehand.



# Policies & Procedures

## Absence

If your child will be away for any reason (illness, appointment, vacation etc) please notify us as soon as possible by email or in Lillio. Please note Extra Steps cannot hold the space for a child leaving during the school year on a vacation without the full monthly tuition paid. Additionally, there are no make-up days for children missing school due to vacation.

## Active Play

Extra Steps recognizes the importance of physical activity for young children. Implementation of appropriate physical activity practices supports the health and development of children in our care, as well as assisting in establishing positive lifestyle habits for the future.

The purpose of having an Active Play policy is to ensure the children at Extra Steps preschool are encouraged to engage in active play, develop fundamental movement skills. The fundamental skills include:

### Indoor:

- **Balance skills:** the children are encouraged to build balancing beams inside the classroom, we practice yoga and mindful activities during the week, many games and songs are used during circle time to practice this skill, for example 'Head, shoulders, knees and toes'.
- **Coordination skills** – yoga is a wonderful activity to support children's coordination skills. We also set up obstacle courses in the classroom, we have bean bag games, fishing games, throwing games, bowling and much more.
- **Locomotor skills:** throughout the year we take out our trampoline and teeter totter inside the classroom, the children use our cushions to jump and leap in the classroom. During circle time we play Simon Says, jumping, hopping and skipping games. We also use music instruments, shakers and scarfs to create movement games with the children. We have yoga stories which bring children on many physical adventures using stories to get the children active and stretching!

- **Physical Literacy:** Most of our staff members are trained in Appetite to Play so we are very knowledgeable about the importance of physical literacy. We have an open snack table where we role model healthy eating and discuss the importance of healthy food the child eats. We have a multi-stream waste station by the snack table to encourage children to recycle and beware of how important it is for the environment. The children plant their own vegetables in the classroom and in our community garden which helps to encourage and develop healthy eating choices. The preschool provides many books on gardening, healthy foods and how to eat, cook, and stay active. We also invite our public nurse and nursing students to present a hand washing and germ program to our children. The teachers role-model and discuss different ways to stay healthy with the children. We have lots of books, songs and activities to support physical literacy.
- **Un-facilitated play (free play):** this is child chosen and self-directed, self-led movement, activity or interaction which encourages children to use their imagination, discover their interests and tap into their creativity. At Extra Steps during free play, children build towers together, build forests, create obstacle courses, play throwing games, hide and seek, dance and more.

## Outdoor:

The children go outside every day for 30 to 60 minutes each day. Please note when the weather gets warmer, the children may spend the entire time outside

*\*If you feel your child is too sick to go outside then he/she is too sick to be at preschool. We request that you keep him/her at home until they are well enough to go outside.\**

- **Balance skills:** At the park there are lots of curbs we use as balance beams.
- **Coordination skills** - yoga is a wonderful activity to support children's coordination skills. Planting is also a great way for children to develop their coordination skills, we plant in our local parks and in our community garden, and inside the classroom. We have skipping ropes, chalk drawing, painting, art work. Everything we do inside we can do outside!
- **Locomotor skills:** Outside the children play tennis, hockey, jump off boulders, climb trees, play tag, 'what time is it mister wolf', football, soccer, chase the teacher, and much more. We are supporters of risky play and believe children need space to evaluate risks and problem solve

without the help of a teacher. We actively supervise children but allow them to explore our local parks and create their own adventure games.

- **Physical Literacy:** When we go outside we talk to the children about how important fresh air is to our health. We support and encourage the children to get dirty and messy, and explain to them that this helps to build their immune system. When the children are active we teach them this helps them sleep better, eat better and keeps their body and mind healthy. The children also take care of our community garden, planting and learning about growing food.
- **Un-facilitated play (free play):** this is child chosen and self-directed, self-led movement, activity or interaction which encourages children to use their imagination, discover their interests and tap into their creativity. We use many different parks in the community and each park brings a new place to discover and when the children are given time to explore, they always find the most wonderful games to play.

### **Appropriate Dress for Physical Activity:**

Extra Steps Preschool goes outside every day that it is safe to do so. We encourage and support messy play both inside and out. Please bring your child ready to play and have fun each day. Children will participate in both indoor and outdoor play so play clothes and shoes which can get dirty and allow for free and safe movement are best. We expect parents to provide children with appropriate clothing for safe and active outdoor play during the school year.

**Fall/Winter Clothing:** Rain gear – rain pants and a rain jacket, spare clothes, toques, waterproof mittens, scarfs, boots

**Spring/Summer Clothing:** Hats, sunscreen, closed toes shoes, sunglasses

**Big Body Play** – This takes place indoors and outdoors

Here at Extra Steps preschool, we believe in the value of exuberant, boisterous, rough and tumble play to a child's overall development.

To support the use of big body play, we do the following:

- Provide training to all staff on the importance of big body play and how to supervise it
- Prepare both indoor and outdoor environments for this play style
- Establish indoor and outdoor rules with the children to keep them safe
- Encourage staff to play big body games with children
- Supervise the play constantly, which means ensuring an adult is with and listening at all times
- Model appropriate play, coach children as they play so that are able to interact comfortably with each other in this way

## **Child Abuse**

We are required by law to report any suspected or disclosed abuse of a child by anyone to the Ministry for Children and Family Development. In this situation, we are not allowed to notify the child's parents unless we are instructed to do so by the Ministry.

## **Confidentiality**

We have a strict policy of confidentiality. Anything said between staff members, between staff and parents, or between staff and management is kept completely confidential.

Extra Steps Preschool will never give out a parent's contact information without expressed permission.

In addition, we respect the children by not speaking to any other families about a child that is not their own. If two children are involved in an incident together, we will explain what happened to the parents without naming the other child.

## **Conflict Resolution**

We are committed to providing a caring and supportive environment for our children and families. You are strongly encouraged to discuss any questions or concerns about your child's program or our procedures with staff. If a conflict arises, our goal is to resolve differences of opinion and find solutions that everyone can accept.

If a problem continues, we can arrange a meeting between families, staff and management to define the issues, state differing points of view, and identify possible solutions.

If you wish to appeal a decision, you can have a further meeting with the manager. The manager's decision will be final.

If the issue has still not been resolved to your satisfaction, you may file a complaint with Community Care Facilities Licensing of Vancouver Coastal Health.

In the case of persistent conflicts, when all reasonable attempts to solve problems have failed, the family will be asked to make other preschool arrangements (see "Facility's Request for Withdrawal").

## Criminal Record Checks

All staff members, substitutes, practicum students, or volunteers that have any involvement with our program are first required to provide us with a Criminal Record Check as per our childcare license from Vancouver Coastal Health.

## Drop-Off & Pick-Up

To ensure the safety of all our children, we have a strict policy for signing in and signing out when each child arrives and leaves the centre. Your child will only be released to you or people that we know (grandparents, nannies etc). If someone arrives to pick up your child that we do not know/recognize, they must be listed on your child's registration form and must provide photo ID to staff unless you have informed us prior. In this situation, staff members would still exercise caution and contact you if they were concerned about the pick-up for any reason.

## Emergency Evacuation Procedures

**Fire drills** are held once a month as required by fire authorities. A teacher sounds a bell and the staff follow the emergency evacuation procedure for the centre. Staff members have children line up quickly and quietly. They then take the backpack with emergency cards and the children to a designated location to conduct a head count and attendance.

One teacher gathers keys and the iPad; checks all rooms, washrooms and closets; and meets the group at the designated location.

**Earthquake drills** are held once a month. During the drill, children are taught to stay away from windows and to "duck, cover and hold" until shaking stops and a teacher says it's all clear.

Staff members have children line up quickly and quietly if required to leave the building. They then take the backpack with emergency cards and the children to a designated location to conduct a head count and attendance.

One teacher gathers keys and the iPad; checks all rooms, washrooms and closets; and meets the group at the designated location.

Emergency drills are completed monthly. Staff record the date and time the drill was completed, along with the time it takes to complete the drill. This information is posted in the centre.

**In the event of a real fire, earthquake or other emergency, parents (or others listed on their child's registration form) will be contacted immediately.**

Our emergency routes are posted in the centre. Our designated meeting place will be either Heather Park at 18<sup>th</sup> Ave. & Heather or Douglas Park Community Centre at 801 W 22<sup>nd</sup> Ave. Please make yourself familiar with this information, and be sure to keep your contact information up to date.

An emergency kit is located on the property with emergency supplies, food and water for the children and staff. Families are asked to send in a comfort letter and family photo to add to the emergency kit.

## **Guidance**

Our program is designed to maximize fun and learning and minimize any problems with children's behaviour. We prevent problems by ensuring that our classroom environment is stimulating and rewarding and is set up to meet the children's stages of development and individual needs. In addition, our staff have realistic expectations with clear limitations for the children, and use a gentle, positive approach at all times.

If your child needs guidance, staff will speak to them at their eye level, using positive words and tones, to help them understand. The focus will be on the behaviour and they will be redirected to a new activity if necessary.

We do not use a punitive "time-out" method of separating a child from everyone if their behaviour is disruptive. However, a "time-in" method is used by staff if a child needs time away from other children to settle down. In that case, a staff member will sit with your child (for no longer than one minute for each year of your child's age) to help them to calm down and understand what has just happened.

If all our strategies are not effective, we will meet with you to decide on other appropriate actions.

Under no circumstances do we ever use corporal punishment of any kind.

If any child endangers the safety of others, we have to remove them immediately from the program.

We ask you to keep us informed of any changes, big or small, in your child's life and/or routine, as this can cause behavioural changes in your child at preschool.

## Holiday Celebrations

We honour and celebrate all of Canada's major holidays and celebrations in our preschool. In addition, we will incorporate other cultural celebrations, as much as we are capable of, out of respect for the children in our program and the diversity of our community. If you would like us to celebrate something meaningful to your family, please let us know and we will do our best to accommodate your request. We have had families come in and cook a traditional treat to share, some have led a special circle time or read a book to the children. We welcome all ideas and suggestions about your cultural celebrations.

If there are holidays or celebrations you prefer your child not be involved in, please discuss this with us prior to the date so we can accommodate your preference.

## Illness

If your child is ill, they will need your loving care and should not be at preschool the day their symptoms appear. They are permitted to return after being free of symptoms for a 24-hour period. For the sake of all the children and staff at the centre, we cannot make exceptions to this policy.

Runny noses are a common part of all children's lives, however if the mucus is thick and coloured it is usually a sign of infection. These symptoms need to be looked after, as should diarrhea, vomiting, fever or any other signs that your child is not well. If the illness is more serious, such as open sores or contagious diseases such as chicken pox, measles, mumps, etc., then you may need to provide clearance from a doctor before your child can return. Please check with staff if you have any questions. [Sneezes and Diseases](#) is a great resource for most common childhood illnesses.

If your child becomes ill while at preschool, they will be cared for in a quiet area and you will be notified to come and pick them up.

In case of emergency, 911 will be called and your child will be taken to hospital, accompanied by a staff member who will bring the child's emergency card and medical information. You will be notified immediately.

## Inclusion

We are committed to including, not excluding, children. If your child has special needs please let us know. We will not turn a child away if we can accommodate their special requirements, together with you and/or with community resources. Some resources available are:

- [Vancouver Supported Child Development](#): Support in class and at home for children with a variety of needs such as anxiety, development etc. A SCD consultant visits the centre each month to visit your child, observe, offer advice and other resources. We create a goal plan with the families and the consultants and review it. If your child continues onto a licensed after school care program, SCD support can continue. SCD also offers a waitlist for funding if your child needs a support worker.
- [PACE Program Vancouver](#): Support in class and at home for children with emotional and/or behavioural challenges. The individual child support is a 6 week program with a weekly visit with a PACE consultant and meetings with the family and childcare staff.
- [VCH Speech and Language Pathology](#): SLP services are free of charge until children are age 5, so if you have any concerns about your child's hearing or speech, check it out! Waitlists apply, so the earlier you refer, the better. There are also many private SLPs in Vancouver and we can recommend some that we have worked with.

## Inspection Visits

Extra Steps is a private facility licensed by Vancouver Coastal Health, who will make regular inspection visits to ensure we are following all required safety procedures. This includes checking all equipment and programs. All inspection reports will be posted and/or on file in our centre for viewing anytime.

## Lateness

All families are expected to follow our hours of operation. We cannot tolerate lateness as it is disruptive to our program and does not meet our childcare standards. If there is an emergency that forces you to be late for picking up your child, you must contact us immediately so we can agree on other arrangements.



## Medication

All medications must be stored by staff in an appropriate lock box or approved area. They must be in original prescription containers, labelled with your child's information and dosage. If your child is being treated with over-the-counter medication, you must provide a doctor's note with instructions and your child's name. We also require you and a staff member to fill out a form when you arrive at the centre with your child.

## Missing Child Procedures

Entrances to and from the preschool are always supervised by at least one member of staff at drop-off and pick-up times. We use child safety gates for additional security and can bolt doors once all children have been dropped off.

If a child goes missing from the centre, we follow this procedure:

- The person in charge carries out a thorough search of the building and outdoor area.
- Attendance is checked to make sure no other child has gone astray.
- Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security.
- The person in charge talks to staff to establish what happened.
- If the child is not found, the child's parent is contacted and the police are called.
- The person in charge contacts Vancouver Coastal Health as soon as possible.

On outings, children are counted and assigned to specific staff members. If a child goes missing from an outing where parents are not attending, we follow this procedure:

- Staff on the outing ask children to stand with their designated person and carry out a headcount to ensure no other child has gone astray.
- One staff member searches the immediate vicinity.
- The person in charge is informed (if they are not on the outing), and they then make their way to the venue to aid the search, to be the point of contact for police, and to support staff.
- Staff take the remaining children back to the centre.
- The person in charge of the preschool contacts the child's parent, who makes their way to the centre or outing (as decided by the person in charge).
- Staff contact the police and report the child as missing.
- In an indoor venue, staff contact the venue's security who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found.
- The person in charge contacts Vancouver Coastal Health as soon as possible.

## **Nutrition & Snacks**

We believe in healthy food choices which promote positive growth and development in children. We are a nut friendly preschool, so any food is acceptable. We encourage children to not share snacks in case of any allergies. Please send in snack containers that your child can open and close independently. If you need to send anything needing refrigeration, please send an icepack in a lunch kit.

We have an open snack policy, so when children are hungry, they are welcome to find their snacks and eat during free play. There is always a last call for snacks, so every child will have the opportunity to eat. A teacher is always available to be at the snack table with children.

Children are asked to wash their hands before and after eating.

## **Safety on Outings & Field Trips**

At least two adults accompany the class walking to and from the park or going on other outings depending on staff/child ratios for that class. We always carry a first aid kit and emergency cards and teach the children about how to stay safe when outside and at parks. This includes but is not limited to dog safety, road safety, staying together, finding garbage outside etc.

On walks, children are required to walk in pairs, holding a rope and/or independent walking in the group and adults are positioned at the front, middle and end of the group of children. For bigger planned field trips, you will receive detailed information including things like transportation plans, ratio numbers, times and drop off/pick up info. You will receive an email in advance of the event.

## **Screen Time**

As a preschool we do not provide the children with any screen time. We have no computers, iPads or televisions on the preschool floor for children's access.

## **Smoking**

No smoking is allowed by anyone in our building, on our site, or during any of our outings or field trips.

## Sunscreen

On days where there is bright sun or sun with snow on the ground, we expect you to put sunscreen on your child before arriving to class. If an unexpected situation arises and your child needs sunscreen, we may apply our own, unless you have instructed us otherwise beforehand.

**Your child will have a rewarding, fun, safe learning experience at Extra Steps Preschool!**

Have more questions?

*Just call or e-mail us.*

Want to schedule a visit?

*Contact us as soon as possible.*

Ready to register your child?

*See page 9 of this handbook.*

Already registered?

*Be sure to read the entire handbook.*

***The greatest poem ever known  
Is one all poets have outgrown:  
The poetry, innate, untold,  
Of being only four years old.***

*~Christopher Morley, To a Child*

