

FIRST CHOICE DAYCARE

Parent & Staff Handbook

Warm care. Clear expectations. A safe place to grow.

23635 119 Avenue, Maple Ridge, BC

A practical guide for families and staff

01 Welcome to First Choice

Our philosophy and what families can expect

Our philosophy

At First Choice Daycare, we believe children learn best when they are given time to explore, play, build confidence, and grow at their own pace. A familiar daily routine helps children feel secure while still leaving room for imagination, curiosity, friendships, and individual needs.

We aim to provide the warmth of a nurturing home environment while maintaining clear health and safety expectations. Children are guided through the challenges that naturally come with each stage of development, with encouragement to become increasingly independent and confident.

We respect and celebrate the ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds of the children and families in our care.

A note for families

Open communication is an important part of quality child care. Please share questions, concerns, changes, or information that may help us better support your child.

Inside this handbook

Daily Rhythm

A flexible routine for meals, play, outdoor time, rest, and activities.

Attendance & Arrival

Absences, arrival expectations, and notice when ending care.

Pickup & Safety

Authorized pickup, identification, late pickup, and custody situations.

Guidance

Positive behaviour guidance, problem solving, and prohibited practices.

Emergencies

Medical emergencies, evacuation, reportable incidents, and duty to report.

Health & Medication

Illness symptoms, return to care, and medication procedures.

Fees & Closures

Deposits, payment timing, late fees, holidays, and vacation closures.

Play & Screen Time

Active play expectations and screen time limits.

Everyday Agreements

Communication, hygiene, transportation, rest, and photo consent.

What to Bring

Clothing, comfort items, weather gear, and personal supplies.

02 Our Daily Rhythm

A familiar routine with room for flexibility

Our schedule gives children a comfortable rhythm to the day. Timing may shift depending on the children, activities, weather, and individual needs.

Time	Activity
9:30 AM	Snack
10:00 AM	Special activity / gathering time
10:30 AM	Toileting
10:45 AM	Fresh air, outdoor play, or a walk
11:45 AM	Toileting and hand washing before lunch
12:00 PM	Lunch
12:30 PM	Nap or quiet resting time
2:30 PM	Free play
3:00 PM	Snack
3:30 PM	Arts and crafts, reading, and puzzles
3:45 PM	Indoor or outdoor free play
4:00 PM onward	Free play and end-of-day pickup routines

Rest time

No child is forced to sleep. Children who are not sleeping are expected to remain quiet while others rest.

03 Attendance & Arrival

Helping children settle into a predictable routine

Regular attendance helps children become comfortable with the daycare routine and supports a smoother transition into each day.

If your child will be absent

- Please notify the daycare by 9:30 AM if your child will not be attending that day.
- Missed attendance is not deducted from the regular child care fee.
- Parents are welcome to visit their child at the daycare.

At arrival

- Complete or sign any required intake forms before leaving.
- Place diaper bags and extra clothing in your child's cubby or designated bin.
- Label soothers and personal items.
- Place bottles that need to remain cold in the refrigerator.

Ending child care

Families who wish to end child care services are asked to provide 30 days written notice, signed and dated.

Daycare readiness

Children should arrive clean, dressed in clean clothing, groomed, and ready for the day. Children should also arrive well fed.

04 Safe Release & Late Pickup

Clear pickup procedures help keep every child safe

Who may pick up a child?

A child will only be released to a parent or legal guardian unless another authorized person has been identified on the registration form or the daycare has been notified of an alternate arrangement.

- Families must notify the daycare in writing when alternate pickup arrangements are made.
- Photo identification may be required when the pickup person is not known to daycare staff.
- Children will not be released to anyone under 14 years of age.
- If a pickup person appears unable to provide safe care because of illness, intoxication, or another concern, the child will not be released to that person.

Custody situations

Families must provide a copy of any custody order that affects the release of a child. If a non-custodial parent attempts to remove a child contrary to the applicable custody arrangement, staff will calmly restate the release policy, keep children and staff safe, contact the custodial parent, and contact the RCMP if necessary.

Late pickup

Parents and guardians are responsible for picking up their child on time. Emergencies can happen, but late pickup is subject to a fee of \$10 for every 15 minutes after the scheduled pickup time.

- Staff will attempt to contact parents, guardians, and emergency contacts.
- If no authorized pickup person can be reached, staff will contact the Ministry for Children and Family Development for direction.
- Staff will not transport a child home because of a late pickup.
- Any applicable late pickup charge will be added to billing.

Transportation to and from daycare

Transportation to and from the daycare is the responsibility of each family. Please notify us as soon as possible if you are experiencing transportation difficulties.

05 Positive Guidance & Behaviour

Helping children understand feelings, limits, and relationships

Guidance is a process of helping children understand their feelings, express themselves appropriately, solve problems, and learn to cooperate with others. Behaviour can be influenced by a child's development, environment, health, energy level, and the adults around them.

Our approach

- Respect and enjoy children.
- Praise effort and progress.
- Model kindness and patience.
- Be fair and consistent.
- Encourage independence.
- Set clear, age-appropriate limits.
- Use calm and helpful language.
- Offer choices when appropriate.
- Encourage problem solving and communication.

When conflict happens

We first help children talk through the problem and work toward a solution. If the conflict continues, children may be separated for a calm, quieter activity and given additional support. Careful observation helps us understand what a child may be trying to communicate through their behaviour.

Practices we do not use

Physical punishment, hitting, spanking, inappropriate restraint, forced toilet training, verbal or physical abuse, and using food or rest as punishment or reward are not permitted. Concerns are discussed with families and documented when needed.

06 Emergency & Incident Procedures

Prepared responses for unexpected situations

Possible emergencies may include flooding, waterline disruption, severe weather, power failure, fire or smoke, gas leaks, medical emergencies, a missing child, or an earthquake.

Medical emergencies

- Assess the situation and contact 911 when necessary.
- Notify the child's parent or guardian as soon as possible.
- Document the date, time, and circumstances in the child's record.

Shelter-in-place / lockdown

Staff will follow the daycare's established shelter-in-place or lockdown procedure at 23635 119 Avenue, Maple Ridge, and remain in designated safe areas until an all-clear is given.

Evacuation

- The evacuation map is posted near the front door under the red first-aid bag.
- If the facility must be evacuated, the alternate nearby shelter is Alexander Robinson Elementary, 11849 238B Street, Maple Ridge.
- For fire or smoke, staff will use the alarm system, close doors to help contain the affected area when safe to do so, and contact emergency services.
- A fire extinguisher is located near the front entrance.

Reportable incidents and duty to report

First Choice Daycare follows the reportable incident requirements that apply to licensed child care. Examples may include serious injury or illness, choking, a missing or wandering child, medication error, poisoning, abuse or neglect concerns, disease outbreaks, and other incidents identified by Child Care Licensing.

When a child is or may have been involved in a reportable incident, the required parent or emergency contact and the medical health officer are notified in accordance with the applicable reporting requirements. Incident documentation is completed and retained.

If abuse or neglect outside the daycare is suspected, there is a duty to report the concern to the Ministry of Child and Family Development. Allegations involving the licensee or staff are reported to Child Care Licensing within the required timeframe.

07 Health, Illness & Medication

Supporting a healthy environment for everyone

When a child is too ill to attend

Children should remain home when illness prevents them from comfortably participating in the regular daily program. Symptoms that may require a child to stay home include:

- Fever
- Discharge from the eyes or ears
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Nausea
- Unexplained rash
- Undiagnosed pain

Children diagnosed with a contagious illness such as chickenpox, measles, mumps, rubella, gastroenteritis, impetigo, conjunctivitis, or lice should remain home until they are ready to safely return to care. A doctor's note may be requested to confirm that the child is no longer contagious and is ready to return.

Medication

- Medication must be handed directly to the caregiver rather than left in a child's bag.
- Medication is stored securely and out of children's reach, including refrigerated storage when required.
- Parents must tell staff about possible side effects or reactions, such as hives, drowsiness, or diarrhea.
- Prescription and non-prescription medication will only be administered when the required parent form has been completed and the medication is provided in its original packaging.

08 Fees, Deposits & Notice

Straightforward expectations around payment and enrollment

Registration fee

- Registration fees are non-refundable.

Deposit

- A deposit equal to one-half of a month's daycare fee is required with registration.
- The deposit is held and applied toward the final billing period rather than used as a regular monthly payment.
- The deposit may be retained if 30 days written notice of termination is not provided.

Monthly payments

- Fees are due at the beginning of the month or on the child's initial day of care, as applicable.
- A late payment charge of \$20 per day may apply when payment is overdue.
- Families are responsible for the monthly fee until subsidy or benefit approval is confirmed; adjustments can then be made to the account.

Important

Please speak with First Choice Daycare directly if you have questions about your family's current fee, subsidy, benefit, or billing arrangement.

09 Closures, Screen Time & Active Play

Balancing predictable care with healthy daily activity

Statutory holidays and planned closures

- The daycare is closed on statutory holidays recognized by the federal and British Columbia governments.
- The daycare is also closed on March 20 for Persian New Year.
- The daycare may close for up to 15 staff vacation days each year. Families will receive advance notice of planned vacation closures.
- Planned vacation closure days are not deducted from the monthly child care fee.

If the regular caregiver is unavailable because of illness or an emergency, a trusted and capable substitute may be arranged to run the regular program.

Screen time

Screen time is limited to 30 minutes or less per day. First Choice may offer a Friday movie within this limit. Computers and electronic games are not part of the regular program, and children under age two do not participate in screen time.

Active play

First Choice aims to provide more than two hours of active play throughout the day. Weather permitting, at least 60 minutes of active play takes place outdoors. Activities are adapted for different ages and abilities to support safe movement and development.

- Movement during circle or gathering time
- Interactive stories, music, games, yoga, and dancing
- Gross-motor movement through everyday activities
- Walks to local parks and forest areas
- Field trips and outdoor exploration

10 Everyday Agreements

Communication, transportation, rest, and photo consent

Communication

Families are encouraged to communicate any needs, concerns, changes, or questions about their child. Strong parent-provider communication supports consistent, nurturing care.

Transportation

Children may be transported for field trips, activities, errands, or school pickup and drop-off by the caregiver using a safely insured vehicle and a valid Class 5 driver's licence.

Rest and nap time

Children are not forced to sleep. Children who do not nap are expected to participate in quiet activities while others are resting.

Photos and consent

Parents and guardians will be asked for consent regarding photographs of their child and the release or use of photos taken by daycare staff.

Hygiene and readiness

Children are expected to arrive in good hygiene, in clean clothing, with trimmed nails and groomed hair, and ready to participate in the day.

11 What to Bring

Helpful supplies to keep at daycare

Please label personal items whenever possible and replace supplies as they are used or sent home.

- Emergency kit: dry snacks, bottled or boxed drink, extra clothes, a comforting toy or object, a letter from parents, and a family photo.
- A sweater, preferably a zip-up sweater, that can stay at daycare.
- Extra clothing, including underwear, socks, pants, and shirts.
- Indoor shoes.
- Weather-appropriate footwear.
- Hat, sunscreen, and sunglasses for spring and summer as needed.
- Diapers, wipes, rash cream, and other hygiene products as needed.
- Hand and face towel.
- Bed sheet and blanket.
- Personal cup, sippy cup, or bottles as appropriate.

A simple rule

If an item of extra clothing or another supply goes home, please replace it so your child continues to have what they need at daycare.

12 Working Together

A warm, clear partnership with families

Thank you for being part of First Choice Daycare

Our goal is to create a safe, caring, and welcoming place where children can play, learn, build confidence, and enjoy their day. Clear routines and policies help us work together while keeping children's individual needs at the centre of care.

If anything in this handbook is unclear, please ask. Open communication helps us provide the best possible care for every child.

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