

# Family Handbook



## *OUR MISSION*

Caring for children for community's sake

## *OUR VISION*

We are visible, valued advocates for children and their families. We are a financially self-sufficient child care and family resource centre supporting the Quadra community's changing needs for children and families in a nurturing, creative environment.

## **HISTORY OF PHIL THOMPSON MEMORIAL SOCIETY**

*For simplicity we most often refer to our service as Quadra Children's Centre but our official name is the Phil Thompson Memorial Society. Phil was a gracious old character who loved flowers and people, especially children. Phil passed away the year the Centre was opened so his name was entwined with the Centre's. His name will always remind us of our shared love for children.*

Quadra Children's Centre began operation in 1986, at our first location in the new community centre; under the auspices of the Recreation Society. We soon outgrew that space and moved into two log buildings formerly used for a Waldorf School. Within a few years, we were able to purchase the buildings through loans co-signed by community supporters. In 1990 we moved, buildings and all, to a 1 acre property at Blenkin Park owned by Quadra Recreation Society and available to us on a long term lease.

In 1993, the Recreation Society and our Society collaborated to begin construction of a playground in Blenkin Park adjacent to the centre – as a resource for the whole community.

Over the years, Quadra Children's Centre has grown in its capacity to serve the families and children of Quadra Island through preschool, school age, and summer recreation programs, as well as parent support and resources. Many people and organizations have contributed time, funds and specialized skills – enabling us to fulfill our dream of a model rural childcare centre. In addition to many individuals, among our founding supporters were the Vancouver and Koerner Foundations, the Quadra Recreation Society, Ministry of Social Services, and the McMillan Family Fund. Grants-in-aid from Canada Employment, United Way-Partner in Organizational Development, Regional District and the Ministry of Women's Equality as well as funding from the Ministry of Children and Families has enables us to sustain our growth and build upon our success.

Our ability to attract professional staff, develop innovative programs, and maintain a first class facility has always depended on the commitment of our Board of Directors, teachers, parents and the community of Quadra Island. As we celebrate caring for Quadra Island's children we are grateful to all who have enabled us to achieve this dream and who are our partners in Quadra Children's Centre's future.

## **GOVERNANCE**

Quadra Children's Centre is a registered non-profit Society in the province of British Columbia.

The purposes of the Society are to:

- Obtain and provide quality child care facilities for children and their families on Quadra Island, British Columbia and;
- Raise funds for charitable or educational purposes in accordance with our Constitution and Bylaws.

Families attending the centre join the Society as members and pay a \$10 yearly membership fee. The Society is governed by a Board of Directors. The Board of Directors is elected from the general membership and larger community and has ultimate governing and administrative authority. The Board's key functions are to ensure financial stability, legal compliance and adherence to policies, and to delegate to the administrative director the day-to-day administration of the Society.

The Centre complies with provincial laws and regulations governing non-profit societies as well as the Employment Standards Act, the Community Care Facility Act, the Child Care regulation Act, and the Human Rights Act. Staff members are guided by the Early Childhood Educators of British Columbia Code of Ethics.

## **OUR PHILOSOPHY**

Our program goals are based upon an understanding of the families and children served by the centre. Warmth, flexibility and sensitivity toward each child's needs and individuality is basic to our philosophy. We believe each child in our care deserves to feel respected, loved and appreciated. We want the children to feel safe to be themselves and to entrust the teachers with their joys and their challenges. We believe it is important to touch children; we hug, tickle, cuddle and respectfully convey caring appreciation, reassurance, and comfort. We believe each child deserves to be treated as a unique individual free of gender or any other stereotyping. We encourage these attitudes in the children as well.

We believe honest and open relationships are the foundation of our program. We believe in the importance of working as a team with parents and teachers to nurture and guide the children through their early childhood years. To this end, we encourage parents to spend time in the Centre, and we strive to keep communication lines open.

We believe in teaching children to solve problems in a peaceful manner and encourage and reinforce this by teaching children social skills of communication, empathy, assertiveness, cooperation, independence, leadership, and respect for self and others. We translate our concern to the children with three basic rules:

1. To take good care of myself, by playing safely and following the rules.
2. To take good care of others; to help and not hurt.
3. To take good care of the world around me; to look after equipment, and the environment.

We work to create a stimulating environment where children can have fun. This is an environment that encourages curiosity, thinking, exploration, choices and learning; and that also allows space and time for solitude and quiet.

Our goal is to enable children to live well and happily in the world with a sense of personal empowerment, confidence, independence and competency, knowing they have the ability to cooperate with their fellow humans.

## WHAT DO WE DO?

### *Living together: conflict resolution, caregiving and routines.*

Co-operation, expression of feelings, conflict resolution, and all the daily tasks of living together are potential curriculum for young children. Physical care, self help skills, eating, and resting, washing and dressing are the everyday life experiences that nurture the growth of young children. Caregiving and the resolution of interpersonal issues are not interruptions; they are basic to the curriculum.

### **OUR LIVING TOGETHER IS BASED ON THESE PRINCIPLES:**

- We have a deep respect for the strong potential of children
- Children and teachers are partners in the learning process
- We believe that children, parents, and teachers are equally important components of a quality childcare experience
- We need and value community involvement & support
- We provide an environment that fosters a sense of well-being and contributes to teaching and learning
- Relationships are the foundation of our work with children, parents, teachers and the community as a whole
- We respect children's own time and rhythm in the daily life at the Centre
- We work with many languages (besides written and spoken words) expressed with a variety of materials and media. These languages are considered essential in making it possible for children to fully represent their ideas and to develop their thinking.

*We gratefully acknowledge the childcare centres in Reggio Emilia, Italy for inspiring us in our work with children and their families.*

# OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

## Hours of Operation

We are open from Monday to Friday 7:30 am to 6:00pm (except for statutory holidays) Families are required to notify the Centre if their child will not be attending, the parent will be late picking up their child, or a person other than the parent will be picking up their child.

## Licensing Regulation

We are licensed and regulated by the Health Authority and the Community Care and Assisted Living Act.

We hold a group childcare license, preschool license, school-age childcare license and a multi-age childcare license.

The multi-age childcare license enables us to combine our preschool program and school-age program when there is low enrollment. Eight children would be the maximum capacity when we use this license. Typically we would use this license on non-school days from 7:30-9a.m. then 5-6p.m.

## Fees

Fees are charged on a monthly basis and are based on the current fee schedule. These fees are subject to change with Board of Directors' approval with a minimum of one month notice.

Parents will automatically be charged a \$3.50 late fee if you come after 6:00pm. If parents have not picked up their child by 6:10pm, and cannot be contacted, the designated emergency contact people will be called to come and pick the child up. At this point, the parent will be responsible to pay a \$15.00 late fee.

**We will care for the child until 7:00 pm and if the parent or the designated emergency contact people cannot be reached we are obligated by law to notify the Ministry of Children and Families and follow their directives.**

## Enrollment and Registration

Enrollment forms are due on the third Monday of the previous month. You will find the enrollment forms in a file folder in the foyer of our preschool building. You may also submit your child's enrollment by email to [quadrachildrenscentre@telus.net](mailto:quadrachildrenscentre@telus.net). Do not use email for any other enrollment changes, please contact us by phone.

**If it is not received by this date you will be billed for the same days and times as the previous month.**

If you need to make changes where the 2 week notice is applicable use a cancellation form which you will find in the same file folder.

In the month of December we require an enrollment form to be submitted by all families by the third Monday in November.

Historically there is a two week school closure near the end of December. We will base our Christmas closure around the family's enrollment needs, as indicated on your December Enrollment form.

There will be no re-imburement for cancellations in December.

All families are required to complete a registration form, memorandum of agreement, emergency consent card and an earthquake form for each child.

**Families are expected to update the registration information as changes take place.**

### **Clothing**

Please ensure your child had appropriate clothing for all weather conditions: raingear, boots, hats, mitts etc., including a complete change of clothes. We find it very helpful if families label their child's belongings with their names. The Centre does have some extra clothing available. Please return borrowed clothing as soon as possible.

### **Mealtimes**

Families can expect the Centre to provide a comfortable, relaxed non-coercive environment for the children during lunch and snack times. The staff will model healthy attitudes towards food and mealtimes.

Families provide lunches and the Centre provides two snacks: one in the morning and one in the afternoon. We post our daily snacks above the sign in sheet for families to keep track of their child's daily nutritional intake.

We request that no candy, pop or other high sugar foods be sent in your child's lunch. We encourage the children to finish their leftover lunch at the afternoon snack. Any insight into your child's eating habits is always helpful to us.

Every second and fourth wednesday we attend the Community Kitchen at the Community Centre where they provide soup, bread, fruit and vegetables. Please send a \$2 donation and pack a large snack for your child that day, no lunch is required.

### **Unsafe Pick-up of a Child from the Centre**

When an authorized person arrives to pick up a child and a staff member suspects that the person is unable to provide safe care (for example, is under the influence of alcohol). The staff member will attempt to engage that person, as a means of further assessing his/her condition. This process may allow the staff member and the person to develop strategies to minimize risk: e.g. calling a friend or relative or arranging alternate transportation. Should that person persist in taking the child and the staff member feels the child is in danger; the staff member has the legal obligation to inform the Ministry for Children and Families. Further, if unsafe operation of a motor vehicle is involved, the staff member will report to the RCMP with a description of the vehicle and its probable destination if possible.

### **Unauthorized Pick-Up**

By law, we can only release you children to people who have your *written permission* to pick the children up. On the registration form included anyone whom you want to be authorized to do this. Once registered, they may do so when you verbally notify us or inform us in the sign-in book. If you discover that you need your child to be picked up by someone who does not have this authorization, you will need to fax (or in some other way get), the written permission to the Centre before we can release your child into their care.

### **Power Failures**

The Centre has a generator which enables us to be open for families when there are power failures.

### **Weather Closure Policy**

The Centre will follow the School District 72's weather closure policy and close our Centre when the schools close.

### **Volunteers**

We often have volunteers come into our programs. The volunteers come from various sources ranging from the Early Childhood Care and Education program at North Island College, the School District, the John Howard Society, to interested people in the community. Our volunteers may work directly with the children, go on field trips, do maintenance work, office work and/or fundraising activities. All volunteers submit to a criminal record check and go through an interview process. Volunteers who work directly with the children are not left alone for any extended periods of time, and are not given any personal care duties to perform (e.g. toileting). We value the contributions volunteers make to our programs.

## **GUIDENCE AND DISCIPLINE POLICIES**

The purpose of guidance and discipline is to provide a safe and healthy learning environment in which each child can feel secure, respected and valued. Each child will be encouraged and supported to develop positive relationships with their peers and the staff. Staff members will strive to be appropriate behavioral role models, showing respect for children, parents, co-workers and their environment. To this end, families can expect that staff will:

- Demonstrate affection and caring to your child through appropriate forms of verbal and physical interaction
- Maximize opportunities for appropriate and positive behavior for your child through the program and activities offered
- Provide clear, simple and consistent limits regarding appropriate behaviors within the Centre. Harsh or belittling language will not be used at any time. Physical punishment will not be used at any time
- Give verbal direction and redirection as the main and first means of guidance and discipline
- Communicate clearly the expectations of the child, and the logical consequence of inappropriate behaviors
- Recognize and label your child's feelings in situations which may be difficult for her/him
- Physically restrain your child only if he/she presents a physical danger, either to self or others; such restraint will protect your child until your child feels she/he is once again in control
- Supervise your child at all times and will not remove your child to an unsupervised area as punishment or any other reason.
- Use quiet time when the above guiding techniques have not worked. The child is removed from the activity they are involved in and asked to sit quietly in another area of the room, for a duration of 5 minutes or less. A quiet time is used when a child repeats the same inappropriate behavior repeatedly. The staff member carrying out the quiet time will ensure the child understands what the inappropriate behavior consisted of. They will ask the child to think of a better way to solve the problem in the future. Often, a quiet time is a means for the child to calm down, after which he/she can often resolve their difficulties on his/her own.

Parents are encouraged to question staff if they are unclear or uncomfortable about the handling of any incident within the Centre. As partners guiding your child through these key developmental years, it is very desirable that staff and parents work closely and honestly together.

## PHYSICAL CARE POLICIES

The purpose of these policies is to ensure the physical health and well-being of the children attending the Centre. It is very important that parents inform us of their child's physical needs at the time of registration and of any changes after that.

Families can expect that staff members will:

- Encourage individual responsibility for dressing and toileting. Assistance and support will be given to a child as needed
- Encourage the development of healthy personal habits by modeling good personal hygiene
- Assist the children to wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water after toileting and before eating
- Require families to find alternative care for their sick child. If a child has a fever (which is defined as a temperature above 99.4 F degrees. A child cannot be on medication to bring the fever down and attend the centre), diarrhea, is vomiting, has an earache and/or has thick green mucus running from their nose we ask that the child does not attend the Centre. A child needs to be symptom free for a 24 hour period before returning to the Centre. The Centre does not have the facilities or capabilities to care for sick children.
- Record and report any illness or injury experienced by their child at the Centre. Advise parents of treatment their child received on the day the illness occurred
- Require parents to provide written permission for the administration of medication
- Require parents of children who have had a communicable disease to get clearance from their doctor before returning to the Centre
- Possess current first aid certificates and provide adequate first aid supplies.

Families with concerns or questions about the physical care of their child should consult with a staff member.

## **“OPEN DOOR” COMMUNICATION POLICY**

We support an “open door” communication policy, which means:

- Parents are welcome and encouraged to drop-in and observe and/or join into the program at anytime. It is important for children to see their family take an interest in their childcare experience
- If consultation with staff is desired, please let us know ahead of time so that we can give you our undivided attention
- Telephone communication is encouraged: please check with the Administrative Director for mutually convenient times
- Parents can sign-up for parent/teacher conference at anytime. If staff have concerns, we will initiate a meeting with the family
- Parents can expect information about relevant educational opportunities to help them understand their child’s development and the programs offered at the Centre.
- Parents can expect information on community resources to be available to them at the Centre.
- Parents who are concerned with the care of their child, or any incident occurring at the Centre, are urged to speak with the Administrative Director
- Staff welcomes the input, interest and concern of parents on any topic!!!

## FAMILY PARTICIPATION

We value and need family participation to make the Society successful and viable. First and foremost, it is important for children to see their parents be part of their childcare experience. For a family to truly feel that our Centre is “*a home away from home*”, the family needs to participate in the daily life of the Centre.

This could look like:

- Spending some time at arrival and departure with your child and finding out what they have been doing at the Centre
- Showing interest and asking about the documentation panels and wall displays
- Participating in family events such as potlucks, parties, and our Mayday Float
- Joining us on a field trip
- Joining in on snack time
- Sharing a special talent you have with the children such as gardening, an art activity, cooking, woodworking, or ???.

Secondly, it is important that families understand that their fees only cover approximately 50% of the operational costs of the Society. The rest of the costs are covered by gaming revenues, government grants, and fundraising. The Society needs family participation in fundraising activities and the upkeep and maintenance of the buildings, equipment, and grounds. There is a variety of activities a family may choose to participate in.

Our Participation Program runs on a 3 month rotation. Each month, the participation hours required minus the hours you have earned by doing participation hours will be posted at the bottom of your bill. If you have not fulfilled any participation hours during a 3 month period, you will be switched to the maintenance program and will be charged \$2 for each day that your child attended in those months. The following rotation, you will once again go back to the Parent Participation Program and your tally will be recorded at the bottom of your bill. **You will not be charged the maintenance fee if you have participated in the past three months.** Families will accrue participation hours according to the following attendance:

Child attends:

1-4 times per month	=	½ hour of participation
5-9 times per month	=	1 hour of participation
10-14 times per month	=	1.5 hours of participation
15+ times per month	=	2 hours of participation time

Alternatively, a family may choose to pay a maintenance fee of an additional \$2.00 each day your child attends the Centre. This fee will be reflected on your bill at the beginning of each month.

If your family does not use the Centre during a calendar month, you will not need to fulfill any participation hours or maintenance fees for that month.

*The Society's preference is for families to be involved  
in their child's childcare experience...  
This childcare centre belongs to the families of Quadra Island!!!*

