

VICTORIA CHILDREN'S CENTRE SOCIETY

HANDBOOK

Welcome to Victoria Children's Centre!

This guide has been designed to provide you with a complete package of information about the **Victoria Children's Centre** and the **Victoria Children's Centre Society**. The guide is intended to precede and complement your introductory visit to the Victoria Children's Centre and also serve as a resource during your infant's time at the centre.

If you have any questions after reading this handbook, please contact the Head Supervisor at the Centre.

So you're thinking of putting your infant in our daycare...

We would like to help you make an informed decision about your infant's daycare and also insure that there are no surprises if and when your infant does enter the Centre.

This might seem like a very straightforward matter, as long as the caregivers have good qualifications in the field and the premises are suitable; but it is not as simple as that. Some other important questions are: What is the Society all about? Do I have any obligations beyond paying monthly fees? Is it okay for my child to come to daycare if he/she is sick? What if my child has special dietary needs? Can I visit whenever I want to? Putting your infant into licensed group care involves many considerations and probably a few adjustments.

We have a **Philosophy** and **Health Policies** that we hope will meet your expectations, and most importantly we have a **Parent Agreement** that you must sign in order to leave your infant in our Centre.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Address: Victoria Children's Centre
1st Floor - 1515 Blanshard Street
Victoria, B.C. V8W 3C8

Phone: (250) 380-2484

Hours: 8:00 am to 5:00 pm

Cost: \$1,315 per month

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An **APPLICATION FORM** is included in the back of this handbook.
Please complete it to enter your child on our waitlist.

TODDLER CARE (ages 18 months to 3 years) can be difficult to establish as well; we suggest you visit several toddler centres and wait-list your child.

1 INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Victoria Children's Centre

The Victoria children's centre is a licensed group child care centre, located downtown in the main Ministry of Health building. The Centre is licensed for 12 infants. Children may start at age 3 months, and will graduate no later than at the end of the month in which they turn 20 months. Because infants need time to grow comfortably in group care, the latest a child can enter is at the beginning of the month following their first birthday.

The centre has four full-time caregivers, and adheres fully to all child care regulations.

What is the Victoria Children's Centre Society?

It is a **non-profit society** (incorporated under the B.C. Societies Act) and a **registered charity** (able to give receipts for federal income tax purposes). The society was originally sponsored and organized by the British Columbia Ministry of Health, but is now independent. The Society's membership is open to anyone, and includes parents of infants currently or formerly attending the centre, community daycare professionals, and other interested people from the community. The Society's Board is composed of Society members who volunteer their time to manage the Society and the Centre. The Board's members serve two-year terms, with half the members normally elected at each September's **Annual General Meeting**. Board vacancies arising between annual general meetings can be filled by majority vote at regular Board meetings. The **Head Supervisor** of the daycare sits on the Board as a non-voting, ex-officio (non-elected) member.

Parents automatically accept membership in the Society on enrolling a child in the Centre, and are encouraged to participate as Board members or committee members before, during, or after their child's time at the Centre. The Society welcomes the participation and expertise of professionals from the early childhood education field and other disciplines. Long term support, beyond the term of a child's attendance at the Centre, is particularly appreciated as it broadens the Board's perspective and improves management of the Centre. It is mandatory that a member from each family is present at the AGM.

Where does the Society get its operating funding?

The Centre is located in the Richard Blanshard Building (B.C. Ministry of Health), but is not administratively connected with the Ministry. However we are provided with rent and maintenance at no cost to the Centre, through the government. This contribution significantly reduces the cost of care at the Centre.

Fees paid by parents are not sufficient to support the Centre. Even with rent-free space, the actual cost of care at the Centre is well over \$1,500 per month. The Daycare Operating Grant Program from the Government of B.C. currently provides a grant which offsets some costs and assists in paying staff salaries; however, **without fundraising by Society members, monthly fees would be higher.**

In the past we have relied on licensed gaming as our major form of fundraising, however these funds have diminished and become unpredictable. The Society does apply each year and our last gaming grant was 6,000 for the year.

The Board continues to explore new avenues of fundraising to help off set operating costs, and parents will be asked to participate from time to time. **Participation in fundraising events is a requirement of all families with children attending the Centre.**

2 PHILOSOPHY

PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

Our program wishes to support and supplement parental care for infants in a specialized high quality setting.

We support the right of all children, regardless of their diverse abilities, to participate actively in a natural setting within their community or parental workplace.

Our caregiving philosophy is based on respect and incorporates Magda Gerber's theories on infant care. Each child's natural pace and level of development is supported. Each child is encouraged to learn about his/her world through exploration, to make his/her own choices, and become a self learner. Individual care and attention is provided through a primary caregiving system, providing an environment of consistency and security.

Communication and cooperation between caregivers and parents is considered essential to the well being of all the children, with the goal of ensuring consistent care and consideration of the unique needs of each infant and family.

As new or expectant parents investigating group daycare for your infant, you may have some mixed feelings and definite concerns. The following is an explanation of our Centre's philosophy which we hope answers some of your questions about the type of care your child will receive. If and when your infant enters our program you will continue to be encouraged to learn more about our philosophy and to ask questions at any time during your child's stay with us.

Our caregiving philosophy is based on "respect" and is centered around four points:

1. Consistency and security
2. Personal care
3. Independent exploration
4. Infant-infant interaction

2.1.1. Consistency and security

We believe that infants thrive on **consistency** as well as in having **secure** relationships with the adults in their lives. As an infant enters the Centre s/he is assigned to one caregiver; this caregiver will have three (3) infants in their care. From your infant's first day, the caregiver will become in tune with each individual's needs. Parents can feel assured that there is one caregiver who takes primary responsibility for their infant.

The primary caregiver will work in partnership with parents, with the goal of ensuring consistent care and consideration of the unique needs of each infant and family.

Primary caregiving is a vital part of infant group care and most centres caring for infants have embraced this method. It is strongly advocated by Magda Gerber, Early Childhood Specialist. Her institute, named **Resources for Infant Educators (RIE)**, looks at infancy as a critical time for learning. This learning happens best with the infant's secure attachment to their parents at home and one primary caregiver in their daycare life.

2.1.2. Personal Care

Personal care routines (diapering, feeding and napping) with their primary caregiver maximize a secure relationship by fulfilling infants' needs for unhurried one-to-one dialogue, cooperative participation in their care, and warm individual attention.

You will notice we do not have mobiles over the change table because we feel that this is a social/cooperative time, not a time to distract infants. **RIE** calls these "refueling" times which enable infants to feel confident in their later independent exploration.

Independent Exploration

Independent exploration is an infant's work. Magda Gerber says "Infants learn best when allowed to freely move and explore in an environment which is physically safe, cognitively challenging, and emotionally nurturing... The educator allows for long uninterrupted times for play and fosters interaction between infants."

We will not use walkers, bouncers, cuddle seats, or any other devices that mobilizes infants, nor hold or prop infants in any way that encourage them to do something that they may not be physiologically capable of doing. They will be encouraged to grow physically with independent experimentation by using varied equipment such as climbers and push toys. We believe that perfecting existing skills is far more important than pushing infants to develop new ones.

2.1.3. Infant-Infant Interaction

Infant- infant interaction is not always a pleasant mix of coos and smiles. Because infants are "explorers" they may be motivated to explore another infant's eyes or curiously hit another infant over the head with a toy. We attempt to insure that infants don't hurt each other; we model appropriate touching; e.g. stroking the offending infant gently while saying, "gentle touch", with a calm voice. If children are competing for a toy, caregivers will begin by reflecting the situation to them, placing themselves close by; e.g. "I see that you both want that truck", and often the situation will resolve itself without requiring an adult's intervention.

Adult intervention or "discipline" at the Victoria Children's Centre fully adheres to the requirements of the B.C. Child Care Regulation. Children are never subjected to corporal or unusual punishment, humiliation, mental abuse or other punitive measures.

Our goal is to encourage independent problem solving. If a child becomes aggressive; e.g. kicking, biting, etc., caregivers will step in, attempting not to "label" the aggressor or "rescue" the victim, but to ensure that there is no physical harm done. This may mean calmly directing the infants to an alternative area or activity. It is a learning process for the infants, one in which the caregivers act as supportive facilitators, not authoritarians. Similarly, instead of "rescuing" infants when they are momentarily challenged or frustrated, caregivers carefully observe the situation. A child can be frightened if too much attention is paid to a fall, and may react to the adult's feelings, not their own, Caregivers will quietly enter the infant's experience; sitting down beside the child, giving full attention and empathy. A caregiver will pick an infant up only if s/he chooses to be held.

SUMMARY

If there is one word that best encompasses our caregiving philosophy, it would be "**respect**". We do not pick up an infant without telling them; we give them choices as often as possible, and wait for their responses; we tell them if we are leaving and encourage parents to do so as well; we feed them on their own schedule. We put them to bed when they are tired, letting them sleep as long as they wish, unless the parent requests otherwise in the late afternoon (4:00 pm or later) because sleep would disrupt the family's evening.

2.1.4. GRADUAL ENTRY

Gradual entry into a new environment is important for infants. Even if an infant does not seem upset when their parents come and go, we believe coming into the daycare environment full time is a drastic change from anything an infant has experienced. If a parent spends time in the Centre in their infant's first days the infant can sense the parent's comfort and so contribute to their feelings of well being. It is helpful for the infant's primary caregiver to build knowledge of the new infant in care, as well as help the infants in the program get used to a new face. Please set time aside for this important process (a minimum of 5 days) and consult the staff as to the best arrangement for your infant.

Parents who have been through a gradual entry process comment that it gave them time to get to know the staff and the new routines.

2.1.5.SUPPORT FOR CAREGIVING STAFF

Parents are asked to return the respect and trust which caregivers show parents and children. The Centre is fortunate to have highly skilled, experienced, professional caregivers, and the Board of Directors asks parents to join us in recognizing that our caregivers' talents are what makes the Victoria Children's Centre such a special place for infants and parents.

Wages for child care workers do not generally reflect their years of specialized training and experience. Child care researchers have found that improving pay levels is an important part of ensuring quality child care. The Victoria Children's Centre tries to maintain a balance between parents' ability to pay, fundraising, and staff salaries, benefits, and working conditions. Our compensation levels are neither the highest nor the lowest in this area.

Caregivers work in a demanding profession, in which meeting children's needs often means working a longer day than their paid hours, and not taking all the coffee and meal breaks which many office workers take for granted. Parents are asked to show caregivers every possible consideration, and to assist in lightening their workload whenever possible. Of paramount importance is adhering to the Centre's hours and co-operating with Centre policies.

2.1.6.ATMOSPHERE IN THE CENTRE

Consistent with our philosophy, we strive at all times to maintain a calm and caring atmosphere for the children. We ask parents to assist us in maintaining a peaceful, secure, child-centered environment. Please speak quietly, and refrain from discussing contentious "adult" issues (with staff or with other parents) in front of the children. As explained in the parent agreement, caregivers or the Head Supervisor are always available for private discussions with parents (either in person or by telephone). Members of the Board of Directors may be contacted at home about Society or policy matters.

We realize that evening pick-up time can be stressful for parents, with many things to do and too little time to do them in. It may help if you can arrange your day so that you can arrive with at least 15 minutes to spare, the latest we expect you to arrive is 4:50 pm. Just as at other times, however, please make every effort to avoid letting the tension of the day spill over into the Centre. If we can all care for and support each other, both adults and children will benefit.

3 DAILY ROUTINE

WHAT TO BRING

3.1.1. Food

Parents are responsible for supplying all liquid and solid food for their infants while at daycare, and for recording their infant's food sensitivities or allergies for staff. As far as possible, everything should be labeled with the child's name.

Breastfeeding mothers are welcome to nurse their infants at the Centre. If bottles are used, they should be prepared at home and brought to the Centre ready to heat and serve.

Cereal and other commercially prepared solid food may be brought either in original packages or ready to serve. Home cooked food should be ready to serve where practical, though soft fruits such as bananas may be left whole to preserve freshness. Foods such as raw carrots, raisins, apples, popcorn, nuts and grapes (unless well cut up) are not suitable for infants and should not be brought to daycare. We strive to be a nut/seed free facility.

3.1.2. Diapers

The Centre requires parents to supply sufficient disposable diapers for their child. Parents should also supply whatever diaper cream and sun screen they would like staff to use (labeled please). Staff will inform a few days ahead of time when new supplies are needed.

3.1.3. Daycare Wear

Comfortable, inexpensive clothing (labeled) is best. We provide an experiential setting including water play, and part of every day is spent outdoors.

3.1.4. Footwear

No shoes inside (for adults or children). Shoes are not necessary for young infants and can impede natural physical development. Soft boots/shoes with non-slip soles such as "Robeez", are great indoors (and outdoors for non-mobile infants). Children walking need shoes for outside. Please label as much as possible; leave spare items in your infant's entrance cubby.

When visiting the Centre, please leave your own shoes in the front entrance.

3.1.5. Spare Clothing

Children's indoor clothing sometimes needs to be changed because of diaper leak, food spillage, or outside weather conditions. The parents are asked to bring at least two complete outfits, including socks, if possible. Please label everything you can; leave spare clothing in your child's basket on the overhead storage shelves in the diaper room.

3.1.6. Outside Clothing and Supplies

Parents should provide suitable clothing (labeled) for outdoor play and outings. In cool or wet weather, a one or two piece zippered nylon suit with hood (preferably water proof), hat, and mittens are useful, and in warmer weather parents should provide a sunhat and sunscreen/block. Please label as much as possible; leave spare items in your infant's entrance cubby. It is recommended that parents apply a layer of sunscreen on their child in the morning before departing.

3.1.7. Miscellaneous

If your child uses a soother for naps, you may wish to provide a special soother which stays at the Centre. We provide all bedding, but you may send a blanket from home if you wish. Infants may bring a special toy as a transition object, when starting at the Centre, but as a general rule we prefer not; it can be hard for children to share a special toy, and

toys are hard for staff and infants to keep track of.

3.1.8.Photos

Centre staff will be taking photos for our documentary display board. We ask parents to bring 2 photos of their child for the "gallery" in the front hall and our emergency booklet.

DAILY ARRIVALS

Here are some steps helpful for settling into the routine of the daycare.

1. Fill in the sign-in sheet. This includes noting the last diaper change, last feeding time and wake-up time. Also, any other comments related to your infant's care, including notification of an earlier or later pick-up time. It is important that parents fill in and initial arrival and departure times because in the event of an emergency evacuation, we use the clipboard as a reference for attendance.
2. Please be aware that licensing regulations require a maximum 4:1 ratio (infants to caregivers). Staff scheduling demands that there are only two caregivers from 8:00 until 8:40 am and two caregivers from 4:30 to 5:00 pm.
3. Infants should attend daycare in suitable clothing, as we provide an experimental program. We will ensure that they are warm and dry while they enjoy their experiences.
4. Medicines: When a medicine is to be administered it must be placed either in the medicine box in the fridge or in the medicine box on the first aid shelf. Absolutely no medicines are to be left in the infant's cubby! The medicine **MUST** be in the original pharmaceutical container and be clearly labeled. A medication form will be provided by the staff, and parents must fill out the necessary directions. This form must be initialed by the parents each and every day that you would like the medication to be given.
5. Please try to call by 9:00 am if your infant is not coming in. This helps us plan staff and infant schedules, and in case of illness it is important that we know what the illness is, in case other infants may have been infected, or are exhibiting similar signs.
6. Your arrival time may not be precisely the same every day but keep in mind that your infant's caregiver may be on a lunch break between 11:00 am and 3:00 pm. Settling may be less comfortable for your infant with the caregiver away. Also, the Centre is not for drop-in use: a predictable schedule for all infants and caregivers is important.
7. Parent Visits: The Centre is for infants and parents in nearby workplaces so please visit as you wish. A daily visit at a regular time becomes an important part of an infant's routine, and can greatly enhance your child's experiences at daycare. If, as a normal part of your infant's development, more than one leave taking a day causes your infant undue anxiety, please consult with your infant's primary caregiver to determine if less visiting would be appropriate for some period of time.
8. Large number of adults (especially newcomers) can be overwhelming for infants. Please check with staff before inviting guests into the Centre.
9. Stroller Storage: We are short of storage space and also are restricted in the use of the front entrance as it is an emergency exit. Strollers can be left outside, on the grassy area between the back gate and play yard gate, but are left at your own risk. The best solution, for the Centre, is for you to take them to work or leave them in your vehicle.

10. ID tags / Gate lock cards: To be able to enter and exit the building freely all parents will be issued a picture ID card from Management Services. A request form is issued by the Centre. ID tags must be returned when your child "graduates" from our care. All visitors and special guests must sign in with security at the front security desk, at the Ministry of Health main entrance, they will issue a visitors pass that you use to enter through our playground just off Pandora Avenue at the back of the building. The pass is left with staff at the Centre.

SAYING GOODBYE

Saying good-bye is not easy, but there are ways to make the process more positive and secure for your infant.

Even with a young infant you should tell your infant that you are leaving and that you will be back. It is amazing how the words "coming back" begin to mean something new they can rely on. Decide when you are going to leave and make it short and casual. But DO leave. If you hang around with some uncertainty, your infant will feel there is something wrong with your leaving, and may become upset.

Feel free to phone and check that your infant has settled. We understand it is not easy to leave your infant, especially if they are upset. BUT rest assured they will be all right!

DEPARTURES (HOMEWARD BOUND)

1. Please give yourself time to come into the Centre and help your infant and yourself adjust to "going home". Caregivers will attempt to have your infant ready, but occasionally you may need to change his/her diaper.
2. Other housekeeping includes reading about your infant's day and gathering your infant's belongings from bathroom and kitchen. Caregivers will make every effort to keep track of your infant's things, but may not always be able to actively seek your infant's belongings, especially on days when all infants has been present. Eyes that are hunting for missing socks cannot be watching for the safety of infants. Labeling as many of your infant's possessions as possible will assist immensely with this process!
3. Parents and infants should be leaving the Centre no later than 5:00 pm so staff may close the Centre and leave on time. This includes the entry area of the daycare and the playground. **There is a late fee of \$ 15 for each 15 minutes, payable beginning at 5:01 pm, but we must emphasize that persistent lateness is unfair to staff and will lead to further sanctions.**

Feel free to make an appointment with your infant's primary caregiver at any time to discuss any concerns you may have. This could include developmental progress, change in routine, or special situations at home. Any concerns about the program or policy should be addressed to the Head Supervisor or to the Board.

4 HEALTH GUIDELINES

There are many factors involved in ensuring an infant's optimum growth and development; good health is a particular important one. While infants are ill, the active environment of the daycare is not the place for them. They require a more relaxed atmosphere and more individual attention than the Centre can provide.

When choosing "group" infant care, parents must keep in mind that they will be restricted in their use of the care if their infant is sick. It is understood that keeping a sick child at home can mean a parent might miss valuable work hours. It is advisable that you consider what your options for alternate care will be in this situation, and plan ahead, because infants do get sick.

Whenever doubt exists about a child's health, staff may ask the parent to seek medical attention and provide a doctor's note stating that the child is well enough to attend group care. No child may attend who is judged to be unwell or a source of infection. The staff person in charge may refuse to accept a child deemed too ill to attend.

The following points are intended to minimize the health risks inherent in caring for infants in a group setting. Infants, parents, and caregivers all benefit when they are followed.

Please note, the following criteria for exclusion are recommended by the Vancouver Island Health Authorities. These criteria may differ in some respects from your physician's opinion, primarily because these criteria are designed for infants participating in group care. Our policy is that infants should not attend daycare under the following conditions:

Acute cold

(Initially most contagious), with fever or runny nose and eyes, coughing and sore throat. Obviously infected nasal discharge (thick and/or colored) could be a sign of a secondary bacterial infection. Return the infant when the symptoms have subsided.

Cough

Frequent bouts (3 to 5 times an hour), especially if choking or vomiting accompanies the cough. Return the infant when the symptoms have subsided.

Fever

Children with a temperature of 101 degrees F or 38.3 degrees C or more are considered to have a fever. The cause of fever could be a number of things (including teething); nevertheless, the child should be monitored at home for a minimum of 24 hrs. An infant may return to the daycare when the fever has subsided (without the use of medication) and the infant has not developed a contagious illness.

Infected skin or eyes

Return the infant when examine by a doctor and medical clearance for return has been obtained. Conjunctivitis (pink eye) is contagious and must be treated. Eyes should be clear for 2-3 days before infants may return to the Centre.

Clarification in regards to eye-infections - Any symptoms of a possible eye-infection requires examination by a doctor. If a child is diagnosed with an eye-infection that child is excluded for a full 2 days, while undergoing treatment, eyes must be symptom free upon return. No doctor's note can override this policy. If a doctor diagnoses the infection to be viral and refuses to give treatment, the child will be excluded until symptom free, but again a minimum of 2 full days (however without treatment it is likely to take longer). If a child is displaying some symptoms of a possible eye-infection and the doctor's diagnosis is negative due to other trauma to the eye, a doctor's note must be obtained stating that fact in order for the child to return.

Diarrhea (2 or more times in 3-4 hours)

Return the infant after at least one (1) normal bowel movement.

Vomiting Both vomiting and diarrhea are symptoms that may indicate a bacterial or viral (gastrointestinal) infection which is very easily passed on from one child to another. Return the infant 24 hours after the last bout of sickness

Antibiotic treatment

You may return the infant after 24 hours has passed since start of medication if the infant is otherwise well and has not shown any adverse effects from the medication.

Communicable Diseases, (chicken pox, etc.)

Report to the Centre as soon as possible and observe Public Health standards for return to the Centre.

Immunization Policy

As recommended by Public Health Officials it is strongly encouraged that infants attending the Centre have all immunizations appropriate for their age. If exposed to a communicable disease, infants without proper immunization will likely face a longer exclusion, the centre will follow recommendations from Health Officials and the parents must comply.

Medication Policy

Medications and supplements (prescriptions or over the counter) will only be administered when accompanied by a written order from the child's doctor, clearly stating dosage, time of administration, major possible side effects, AND a written authorization from the infant's parent. Prescription medication must be delivered to the Centre in their original pharmacy container. Tylenol will ONLY be administered for teething pain, and only when accompanied by written permission from the child's doctor indicating the length of time for administration.

Please ensure that you notify your child's primary caregiver of his/her need for medication, each day it is necessary, and remember to sign the medication form each day as well. It is a good idea to note that medication is needed on the daily sign-in sheet.

We do not accept children that are medicated without a prescription.

Other information

The Centre has a small library of books on child development. Please ask for any information which you feel may be helpful to you.

Please note that in order to recognize professional boundaries it is a Victoria Children's Centre policy for staff, and support staff, not to offer outside childcare to families attending our program.

5 PARENT AGREEMENT

This is an agreement between the parent(s) of an infant enrolled at the Victoria Children's Centre and the Victoria Children's Centre Society.

In this agreement,

"parent(s)" refers to the parent or parents or guardian or guardians who have legal custody of the child;

"Centre" refers to the Victoria Children's Centre; and,

"Society" refers to the Victoria Children's Centre Society.

5.1 General Drop off and Pick up

- Infants will start at the Centre on a gradual basis, as mutually agreed upon between the staff and the parent(s).
- The Centre opens at 8:00 am. Staff may be in the Centre before 8:00 am but this is their time to set up the Centre.
- The Centre closes at 5:00 pm and staff are finished their shifts at that time. Parents must exit the Centre entirely by 5:00 pm (not remain in the entrance area) to allow staff to leave on time. In the event that a parent is late, they will be levied a fine payable to the staff person who has had to stay late. The penalty is \$15.00 per fifteen (15) minute period commencing at 5:01 pm.
- After one hour from the Centre's closing time, if an infant has not been picked up and parents or their contingency alternate person cannot be reached, staff will contact the Ministry for Children and Family Development for advice on what to do.
- Parents will generally notify staff by 9:30 am if their infant will not be attending the Centre that day. If possible, the notification should be made the day before.
- Staff will not release an infant to anyone other than a parent unless that person has been specifically designated by the parent in writing and has proof of identity. Staff will not release a child to anyone under the age of 16.

5.2 Non-Custodial Parents

- When a court order exists regarding visiting rights of a non-custodial parent, a copy of this order shall be provided to the Centre by the custodial parent and be attached to the child's registration form. The non-custodial parent may only pick up the child from the Centre according to that legal agreement. Custodial parent(s) is responsible for ensuring that the Centre has current custody agreements and/or restraining orders.

5.3 Outside Activities

- Generally VCC does not take trips outside the Centre. We use quad strollers for emergency purposes, to keep the children safe and protected. During any outing, emergency and otherwise. Every safety precaution will be taken by staff, but parent(s) waive all liability concerning the Society and staff.

5.4 Photographs

- Parent(s) will specify to the Head Supervisor in writing if they wish their child to be excluded from photographs taken for publicity purposes (e.g. a newspaper picture and accompanying article, or television news story).

5.5 Students and Volunteers

- The Centre is a practicum setting for Early Childhood students and volunteers seeking certification as qualified Early Childhood Educators. As such, the Head Supervisor will regulate

participation for these individuals, for the security and well-being of the children in the Centre.

5.6 Vacations

- Parent(s) are asked to inform the Centre of scheduled vacation time. However, a child's space in the Centre will only be maintained if the parents continue to pay the monthly fee. If you plan to use the Centre during family vacation, or days off, please try to shorten your infant's day as infants need a break too.

5.7 Payment of Fees

- To retain space once offered, there is a \$100.00 registration fee which must be paid immediately along with a postdated cheque for the first month.
- Monthly fees for child care are due and payable on the first day of each month.
- Parent(s) must submit to the Centre, six (6) post-dated cheques to cover the first six (6) months of child care. One month prior to the expiration of the six month period, parent(s) must submit a series of post dated cheques for the remaining months of their infant's expected stay in the Centre.
- Fees are subject to change. Parent(s) will receive written notice of any fee change at least one month in advance.
- In the event of an unforeseen closure, due to circumstances out of our control, no refunds will be issued.

5.8 Failure to Pay

- If a monthly fee is not paid by the fifth (5th) working day of the month, parent(s) will receive written notice to pay by the fifteenth (15th) of the month, or forfeit their child's space.
- If fees have not been paid in full by the fifteenth (15th) of the month, or if an acceptable repayment schedule has not been arranged between the parents and the Society, by the fifteenth (15th) of the month, parents will be in default of payment and will receive written notice to withdraw their child from the Centre. Further, the Society may assign a collection agency, start proceedings in Small Claims Court, or take other measures to collect outstanding fees; all collection costs will be carried by the parent(s).
- If a repayment schedule has been arranged, but subsequently not adhered to, parent(s) will be in default of payment and will receive notice to withdraw their child from the Centre effective immediately. Further, the Society may assign a collection agency, start proceedings in Small Claims Court, or take other measures to collect outstanding fees; all collection costs will be borne by the parents.

5.9 Subsidy

- Parent(s) are responsible for making application for subsidy assistance and for renewing authorization when funding expires. Any fees owing the Centre due to funding not being kept current or funding being denied are the responsibility of the parent(s). Parent(s) are also responsible for paying the portion of the fees not covered by the subsidy.

5.10 Notice of Withdrawal

- At any time while your child is attending the Centre you must give one full month's written notice of withdrawal. Notice must be given before the first of the month to take effect at the end of that month.
- Late notices are not accepted. If you provide less than one month's notice, you will be required to pay for an extra month of care.

5.11 Change of Address

- Parent(s) will notify the Head Supervisor, in writing, of any change of address, phone number, or employment, or change of person to be contacted in case of emergency.

5.12 Board and Fundraising Commitment

- As the Centre is run by a non-profit society and only partially funded through parent fees, parents are required to participate in fund-raising events, and encouraged to participate in the management of the Society.
- Participation in fund-raising activities approved by the Board, is a requirement of all families. Parents who fail to participate as required could be given notice to withdraw their child from the Centre. Unless otherwise requested in writing, a complete parent list will be distributed to the family responsible for a fundraising event.
- It is mandatory for each family to be present at the Annual General Meeting. Parents are also encouraged to participate in Society management by serving on the Board of Directors, and serving on special interest committees.

5.13 Health Policies

- Parents will follow the Society Health Guidelines for the health and safety of infants, their families and Centre staff. If an infant becomes ill during the day, a staff person will contact the parent(s) and/or will make arrangements to send the infant to the home of the alternate person listed on the Registration form.
- Parents will inform the Centre within twenty-four (24) hours of a diagnosis of a serious illness or contagious disease of a communicable nature in the family. The Centre will report any communicable diseases to the Local Health Unit (VIHA) in compliance with the Health Act.
- If an infant is taken to a doctor and receives antibiotics, parent(s) may not return the infant to the Centre for at least twenty-four (24) hours after commencement of treatment.
- Parents will provide up to date immunization records for their infant and will ensure that their infant is immunized appropriately for their age, as recommended by Public Health Officials. Parents will update their infant's immunization record as necessary.
- Staff can administer medication only with a parent's written instructions on a medication form. Staff will administer only medications prescribed by a physician, and only those they are trained and qualified to administer.
- In event of medical emergency, the Centre staff (with up-to-date First Aid Certification) will take immediate action, as necessary. In case of a serious emergency, staff will contact the parent(s) immediately. If the parent(s) cannot be located, staff will call the infant's doctor or the Alternate Person listed on the Registration Form, or bring the child to a clinic or hospital, possibly by ambulance.
- Parents are to notify staff of any medication being given to an infant outside of daycare hours. This helps staff recognize any possible side effects. In addition, if a child must be taken for emergency treatment, and parent(s) cannot be contacted, this information may be of critical importance.
- ACTIVE PLAY: At VCC our environment promotes physical movement, and unless eating or sleeping, our infants/young toddlers are engaged in active play all day, indoors as well as outdoors. A minimum of one hour outdoors is offered every day.
- If an infant is not well enough to participate in the full program (including outdoor play) they should be kept at home.

5.14 Parent-Caregiver Relationships

- Parents will recognize the importance of working with their infant's caregiver and the policies of the Centre. The individual care of their infant shall be discussed with their caregiver but if at any time a parent wishes to question the policies of the Centre they must ask for a meeting with the Head Supervisor for clarification.

5.15 Membership in the Victoria Children's Centre Society

- The Application Form is also an application by the parent's for membership in the Society. Custodial parents and guardians who are at least 19 years of age, and not employed by the Society, are eligible for membership. Society membership (for eligible parents) commences with enrollment of the child in the Centre, which represents acceptance by the Board of Directors of the application. Unless parents are still serving on the Board of Directors, or have notified the Secretary of the Society, in writing, that they wish to retain Society membership, parent's membership ceases after the Annual General Meeting following their Child's withdrawal from the Centre.
- Copies of the Society Constitution and Bylaws are available from the Head Supervisor at any time. Operation of the Society is governed by these documents, and parents of children at the Centre should become familiar with them.

5.16 Statutory holidays and Christmas/New Year closure

- The Centre is closed on statutory holidays (including Easter Monday).
- The Christmas/New Year holiday season is a special time for families. Even young infants know that something is different, and benefit from a break in the routine. In order to meet this need, allow our staff to spend time with their families, and recognize the dedication of our staff to parents and children all through the year, the Centre closes at 2:00 pm on December 24, and will be closed for the days between Christmas and New Year's Day.
- **Unscheduled closures:** In the event of extreme weather conditions our centre will be closed if public transportation cannot operate.

Please see application form, where you sign acceptance of the terms of the Parent Agreement.

Victoria Children's Centre – Application Form

In order to register for our wait list you must read the Handbook (including the Parent Agreement), visit the centre, fill out this form, and pay a \$25 non refundable wait list fee.

Application received:		Month/Year you expect to need child care:	
How did you hear about the Victoria Children's centre?			
Child's full name:			
Also known as:			
Date of Birth:		Sex:	
Home Address:		Phone:	
e-mail		Postcode:	
Child's first language:		Second language:	
Parent/Guardian Information:			
Name:		Sex:	M F Relationship:
Employer:		Work phone:	
Usual hours of work:			
Name:		Sex:	M F Relationship:
Employer:		Work phone:	
Usual hours of work:			
Child lives with:			

We request that you read the Parent Handbook carefully and ask as many questions as you like concerning the Centre's policies, program, and philosophy. Included in the handbook is a Parent Agreement that explains the terms and conditions you may expect for parents, children, and staff at the Centre.

I/We have thoroughly read and understood the Handbook and the Parent Agreement. I/We agree to join the Victoria Children's Centre Society, and to be bound by the Parent Agreement once my/our child enrolls at the Victoria Children's Centre. I understand that volunteering for fundraising is required, and that monthly fees may change (with one month's notice).

Date: _____ Signature _____