



Summerland Early Learning Centre

Group Child Care (30 months to School Age)

Nurturing the Joy of Discovery and the Love of Learning

Information Handbook & Registration Package

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General Information

Mission Statement

The Summerland Early Learning Centre provides a licensed, full day Child Care Program, incorporating flexible preschool education that nurtures the joy of discovery and the love of learning.

Goals and Objectives

Our goal is to instill a lifelong love of learning, self-confidence, a capable positive attitude and a universal respect for the world and its inhabitants. Our objective is to facilitate a joyous learning journey by providing a carefully planned, stimulating environment which will help children to develop within themselves the attitudes, habits, skills, and ideas essential for a lifetime of independent, creative thinking and learning. We strive to combine the best early childhood education practices to create a unique and meaningful Early Learning Program.

Organizational Structure

The South Okanagan Montessori School Society (SOMSS) administers the Summerland Early Learning Centre (SELC). The SOMSS is a not-for-profit, registered charity, operated by a Board of Directors. The Board is comprised of volunteer members of the Summerland Montessori School, the Summerland Early Learning Centre, and the greater community, and is elected by its membership each year at the Annual General Meeting held in the fall. The Board is responsible for the overall administration of the society and its programs.

The Summerland Early Learning Centre Manager has overall responsibility for the daily operations of the Child Care Programs. The Early Childhood Educator (ECE) is responsible for the planning and implementation of the program of activities. All staff, including our Early Childhood Educator Assistants and After School Staff, meet the licensing regulations with regards to required credentials and experience and work together as a cohesive team to ensure the nurturing and guiding of all children in their care. All staff are employees of the society.

Program information

We believe that children are naturally curious and active participants in their learning journey. Our educators facilitate learning as a journey of inquiry through discovery and nurture a love of learning by providing children with an engaging environment carefully selected to guide learning outcomes. Our program of activities incorporates a flexible Preschool Curriculum that fosters holistic, interconnected learning through play. Our qualified and experienced educators create learning activities and environments that encourage children to construct their own knowledge of concepts through their active experiences of play which cover a wide spectrum of learning and development in areas such as creative art, literacy, numeracy, social, environmental, science, music, and physical literacy. Our program of activities focuses on encouraging the holistic development of the growing child (physical, intellectual, creative, emotional, social, and language).

“Stand aside for a while and leave room for learning, observe carefully what children do, and then, if you have understood well, perhaps teaching will be different from before.”

Quote by Loris Malaguzzi

Summerland Early Learning Centre Policies

Active Play Policy

We believe children are active participants in their learning journey and provide facilitated and un-facilitated active play activities. Children will spend at least 60 minutes per day playing outdoors in all weather conditions (unless for some reason the weather conditions are deemed unsafe). Please make sure your child has sufficient weather appropriate clothing to utilize each day outdoors.

Attendance and Pick-up Punctuality

If your child is unable to attend, please call/email and let us know.

Children may only attend on the days they are enrolled. Our attendance records must match our enrolment reports.

Children may only be picked up by those authorized to pick up as indicated on the registration form. All children must be signed in and signed out every day they attend the SELC.

Please ensure that your child is picked up by 5:00 pm at the latest. If a child's parent/guardian has not picked up the child by 5:15pm, the alternate parent/guardian will be contacted to pick the child up. If they cannot be reached, then the emergency contact will be called to pick up the child.

If your child is repeatedly picked up late, we may recommend that you find a childcare centre that can better accommodate the hours of care that you require.

Behavioural Guidance Policy

Behavioural Guidance describes the teaching, guidance and support that educators offer to children as they grow and learn appropriate behaviour. This positive and supportive guidance helps children as they learn self-regulation and find appropriate ways to express their wants, needs, views and feelings. Behavioural Guidance provides children with appropriate and positive models of behaviour and helps them to develop respect, self-confidence and empathy as they learn and grow in a social environment. Guiding children's behaviour is an ongoing and varied process.

The SELC Behavioural Guidance Policy (see Appendix 1) includes prevention and intervention strategies that are based on age-appropriate child development. Consistency is important and we have laid out our Behavioural Guidance Policy in detail to assist parents/guardians to make use of these strategies at home. Please take the time to read it.

If a child has a 'Care Plan' that includes instructions respecting behavioural guidance, the educators will use behavioural guidance strategies consistent with those instructions.

A child who is in repeated conflict with SELC's Behavioural Guidance Policy may be asked to withdraw from the program, under the recommendation of the SELC staff, manager, coordinator and Board of Directors, and find a child care centre that is better suited to the child's needs.

Birthdays and Classroom Celebrations

Children's birthdays will be acknowledged at the Summerland Early Learning Centre. However, birthday parties and exchanges of gifts are to be done outside of the Child Care setting.

The children will participate in many celebrations throughout the year including but not limited to: Thanksgiving, Halloween, Christmas, Chinese New Year's, Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day and Easter. Families are encouraged to share their other cultural celebrations with the Child Care Staff so that we may incorporate these into our cultural programming.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Any concern regarding child abuse and neglect that the staff of the SELC have about a child, will be reported to the Ministry of Children and Family Development. Staff will reference *The BC Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect* regarding what constitutes abuse, how to recognize abuse, how to respond when children disclose abuse, and how to report abuse or neglect concerns. If a child is believed to be in immediate danger, the police will be contacted.

Clothing

Please label all clothing, footwear, and accessories

Children are required to wear comfortable, season appropriate clothing. We recommend dressing children in layers as children tend to get hot during active play. Please provide spare labelled clothing and appropriate accessories (mitts, hats, sunscreen etc.) daily or leave at minimum one labelled set at the SELC (two sets preferred).

Outdoor footwear must be removed upon entering the SELC and one pair of indoor footwear is required (velcro runners or slippers with rubber soles) to be left at the centre for daily use.

Communication

Communication between the child, parent/guardian, and staff is critical for the success of the child and their early learning experience. The SELC is committed to creating an atmosphere of trust and open communication. Parents/guardians are welcome to seek an educator's help or input regarding their child's early learning experience at any time during the year. Newsletters will be sent out throughout the year to keep families informed. Please fill in the permission form for staff to store a contact number on our cell phone.

Conflict Resolution

There are times when problems might arise within our early learning community. In order to maintain the trust and integrity of the SELC and home relationships the following procedures will apply.

1. Concerns will initially be addressed with the educator involved.
2. If the concern or problem is not satisfactorily addressed, then the parent/guardian should contact the manager of the SELC.
3. If the problem or concern has still not been dealt with satisfactorily, the parent/guardian may contact the Board of Directors directly.
4. If the concern relates to the safety of the children within the SELC it can be directed to the Child Care Licensing Officer.

Custody and Access Agreements

If parents have agreed to live separately, the SELC will abide by the information given by the enrolling parent/guardian. However, without a custody or court order on file, the SELC cannot deny access to the non-enrolling parent/guardian. A copy of a custody or court order must be submitted at time of registration. Staff of the SELC will call the RCMP if assistance is required to ensure compliance with a custody order. Please make sure that you have listed persons not permitted to access to your child on the registration form and that you keep this information current.

Other than parents/guardians, only those persons listed as emergency contacts and persons authorized to pick up your child will be permitted to sign out your child from the SELC.

Emergency Preparedness

Emergency procedures are practiced regularly according to Licensing Regulation Standards. Emergency evacuation plans are posted at each exit in the SELC. Parents/guardians are encouraged to make themselves familiar with the exit routes and meeting places. The SELC will store emergency provisions in the event children are required to stay at the SELC for an extended period due to an emergency such as an earthquake or other disaster.

In the event of a medical emergency, a child will be taken to the nearest emergency centre by ambulance in accordance with the signed medical emergency consent form.

At all times we will have one staff member who is trained in First Aid present at SELC.

Fees, Withdrawal notice, Payment and Repayment Agreement

Fees

Fees are calculated according to the number of days per week that you require care for your child. The SELC's budget is based on fees for enrolled spaces and cannot be reduced for children's absence from the program due to illness, vacation, or other circumstances. Fees are calculated as an annual sum represented in 12 monthly installments. This means that full fees apply to each month regardless of closure. Fees are subject to change.

Please note, full fees apply to each month regardless of closure, foreseen or unforeseen.

Withdrawal and changes to enrolment

The specific days of enrolment are selected on the registration form and can only be changed with one month's notice. Once a child is enrolled, a space is reserved until the child enters Kindergarten (end of August of the year they turn 5). If you require your child to remain at our centre longer than Kindergarten age, please submit a written request at time of enrolment.

The SELC requires a 30-day written notice for withdrawal from the program.

Payment

Payment is due on the 25th of the month prior to the month you are paying for.

(example: March fees are due on the 25th of February)

A \$100 non-refundable registration fee is payable upon registration.

(we use these funds to purchase emergency supplies and learning resources)

We accept the following methods of payment: cash, cheque, debit/credit card, or e-transfer.

Please make post-dated cheques payable to 'SOMSS' for the 25th of each month prior to the month for which the fees are payable. All NSF fees will be borne by the parents/guardians.

Please contact the Summerland Montessori School Office for e-transfer details.

To find out about Government Child Care Fee assistance initiatives, such as the Affordable Child Care Benefit (ACCB), please contact the Summerland Montessori School Office or the SOMSS Coordinator

Repayment Agreement

In the event the SMS office is in possession of post-dated cheques dated after the official withdrawal date of your child, the SMS office will return these post-dated cheques to the mailing address on your child's registration form. To meet Child Care Licensing Regulation Standards, parents/guardians are required to sign a Repayment agreement which forms part of your child's registration documentation.

Field Trips

The SELC understands that parents/guardians work and therefore rarely plan field trips. However, if a field trip is planned it is organized as an enhancement to the curriculum at the discretion of the Early Childhood Educator, Manager and Coordinator. Consent forms with details of the trip as well as a liability waiver are sent home prior to the outing.

Hours/Days of operation and Closure

The SELC is open daily Monday to Friday from 7:30am – 5:00pm (except on closures listed below)

We reserve the right to close the SELC at short notice if required for any reason.

We are closed on all BC statutory holidays as well as Easter Monday.

We are closed for the Summer break (Monday to Friday the week before Labour Day) and Winter

Break (December 24 – January 1). Subject to change

Please note, full fees apply to each month regardless of closure, even in the event the SELC is required to close for unforeseen circumstances. (Our fees are calculated as an annual fee divided into 12 installments)

Illness/Emergency Care Policy

Children must stay home if they are sick.

The SELC has a NO ILLNESS POLICY which means that only those children demonstrating NO ILLNESS may attend. The SELC cannot admit a child who is ill.

Our responsibility is to the health and safety of all staff and children in our care. We strictly enforce health regulations as illness can spread rapidly. Please respect our staff's judgement if they request that your child needs to go home.

Children are required to be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to the SELC (this includes diarrhea and vomiting), or under the advisement of a medical practitioner been on medication for 24 hours and a doctor's clearance to return to the SELC. Please notify the SELC staff if your child or anyone in your family has come into contact with a communicable/contagious illness.

Please note: If your child shows any symptoms of illness while at the SELC the parent/guardian or emergency contact will be notified and requested to come pick up the child. It is the SELC policy to notify parents/guardians immediately when a child requires medical attention. For a medical emergency, if we are unable to contact the parents/guardians or the emergency contacts as indicated on the emergency consent form, we will make the necessary arrangements to take the child to the nearest emergency service by ambulance. The ambulance fee is the responsibility of the parent/guardian.

Staff at the SELC can only administer medication with a signed 'Medication Authorization Form'.

If at any time the SELC deems it necessary to take precautionary measures due to suspected contagious illness, the facility may close at short notice at the discretion of the SELC.

Items from Home

No toys from home or other nonessential items are allowed at the SELC due to COVID-19 transmission concerns. Children may bring one comfort toy to be used during nap/rest time. We are required to be firm with this policy as everyone's health depends on it. All nonessential items such as watches, jewelry and toys pose a potential health risk to the other children and our staff.

The SELC is a "weapon-free" zone.

Lost and Found

Parents are requested to label all their children's belongings such as hats, mitts, scarves, swimsuits, cot sheets, water bottles, lunch containers etc. to ensure that they are returned to the owner. Any items found are placed in the lost and found box located in the cubby area. Once a month any remaining items are donated to charity.

Nap/Rest Period

All children are required to spend at least half an hour per day resting during our nap/rest time. Learning to relax promotes lifelong health benefits. The SELC provides individual resting mats for each child. Children that do not sleep may read while on their mats and move to the adjacent room after the rest period. Children that do sleep are given approximately 2 hours to sleep. Interacting all day with other children can be very tiring for children so we do encourage children to sleep as much as needed. Stuffedies/comfort toys are permitted for nap/rest time.

All children are required to bring **two labelled sets of bedding** (crib sheet and blanket/top sheet). Each week one set will be sent home for washing and must please be sent back on Monday.

Nutrition/Meals Policy

Summerland Early Learning Centre is a "PEANUT FREE" facility.

Please provide 3 healthy snacks and 1 healthy lunch meal DAILY plus a clean water bottle. Please label all containers, lunch kits and water bottles. Please clean and sanitize daily. We encourage the use of environmentally friendly packaging and ice packs (BPA free). Please consult the latest Canada Food Guide for nutrition information. Your child's health is dependent on what you provide for nutrition. SELC will provide filtered water.

Please consider choking hazards when packing your child's lunch and snacks (for example: cut grapes, small tomatoes, sausages, and carrots lengthways-julienne, please do not send popcorn).

Junk food and candy are not permitted (no high sodium or high sugar foods)

Snacks/lunch are eaten in the SELC under the supervision of the educators. **Sharing of snacks/lunch is not permitted.** In the event you forget to bring your child's daily snacks/lunch we will call you and ask you to bring it to the SELC.

On occasion the staff will share fruit/vegetables with the children (either grown by the children or from local farms). Please make sure you indicate on your registration form if your child has any fruit/vegetable allergies.

Personal Information Privacy Policy

The South Okanagan Montessori School Society, Summerland Montessori School, Summerland Early Learning Centre and the After School Program acknowledges that there will be no disclosure of personal information to unauthorized personnel or third parties who are not directly involved in school management or the care, supervision and instruction of your child at the school/Early Learning Centre (ELC), unless written authorization from a parent or legal guardian is provided to the school/ELC. The school/ELC will securely store all digital and hard copy parent and child personal information.

Safe Release of Child Policy

In accordance with childcare licensing regulations, a child in our care will only be released to the authorized parents/guardians or authorized persons as indicated on the registration form.

It is the staff's legal responsibility to ensure the safe release of children from their care. In the event an authorized person arrives to pick up a child and it is evident to the staff that the authorized person is unable to adequately care for the child and the child is at risk, the staff member will not release the child and instead contact an alternate authorized person to pick up the child.

If an unauthorized person (as indicated on the registration form) arrives to pick up the child, the staff will not release the child and continue to care for the child until such time that an authorized person arrives to pick up the child.

It is crucial that information regarding authorized and unauthorized persons remain up to date. We cannot release your child to someone that is not listed as a person authorized to pick up your child.

Screen Use Policy

Summerland Early Learning Centre follows a screen-free policy. We do not incorporate any screen use by the children in our daily program of activities, such as TV or computers.

Smoking

The SELC follows a no smoking and vaping policy on all the South Okanagan Montessori School Society premises (includes e-cigarettes and cannabis).

Toileting/Diapering

We encourage self-help skills and request that you dress your children in clothing that is easy for them to remove to use the toilet independently.

If your child still requires a diaper or pull up, please ensure that you provide all the daily supplies required to facilitate diapering or pull up changes. This includes spare diapers/pull-ups and baby wipes. We only accept SINGLE USE DISPOSABLE DIAPERS. Please provide an extra pack of diapers/pull ups when your child starts at the SELC. Clearly label all packs and bags with your child's name. Please provide adequate spare clothing. Soiled clothing will be sent home to be washed. We have a sealed Rubbermaid container in our washroom where soiled clothing is stored. Please check.

Transportation

We do not transport children unless it is a medical emergency in which case the child will be transported by an ambulance. In the event a field trip is planned which requires children to be transported, a separate consent form will be sent home prior to transporting the children.

Trial Period

Trial Period: Every child attending the program will have a four-week trial period. At the end of four weeks a decision will be reached between the parents and caregivers as to whether the program is suitable for the child's needs. A child must be able to follow instructions set out by the staff, treat staff and other children with respect, and not physically or verbally harm another person in any way.

Summary of Things to Bring to Summerland Early Learning Centre

Please label all your children's items

Daily:

- 3 snacks, 1 lunch meal, clean water bottle (labelled)
- Diaper supplies

Daily or leave at centre:

- Set of spare clothes (labelled). Weather appropriate accessories (hats, mitts, sunscreen)

On First Day:

- 1 pair of indoor shoes labelled (runners with Velcro or slippers with rubber sole)
- 2 sets of labelled crib sheets (bottom sheet and blanket/top sheet)

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Appendix 1

Behavioural Guidance Policy

Behavioural Guidance describes the teaching, guidance and support that educators offer to children as they grow and learn appropriate behaviour. This positive and supportive guidance helps children as they learn self-regulation and find appropriate ways to express their wants, needs, views and feelings. Behavioural Guidance provides children with appropriate and positive models of behaviour and helps them to develop respect, self-confidence, and empathy as they learn and grow in a social environment. Guiding children's behaviour is an ongoing and varied process. The SELC Behavioural Guidance Policy includes prevention and intervention strategies that are based on age-appropriate child development. Consistency is important and we have laid out our Behavioural Guidance Policy in detail to assist parents/guardians to make use of these strategies at home.

Prevention strategies used by educators at SELC

- *Establish clear, consistent, and simple limits.* Limits are statements of what behaviour is appropriate (Example: "Inside we walk")
- *Say limits in a positive way rather than a negative way* (Example: "Inside we walk" rather than "Don't run")
- *Give easy to understand explanations for limits* (Example: "Sand stays down so it doesn't get in your eyes")
- *Focus on the behaviour, rather than on the child* (Example: "It's not safe to climb on tables" rather than "Bad boy")
- *Say what is expected rather than ask* (Example: "It is time to clean up now" rather than "Do you want to help clean up?")
- *Provide choices when appropriate* (Example: "Do you want to put your pants on first, or your shirt?" rather than "Do you want to get dressed")
- *Give children enough time to respond to expectations.* Children need cues and warnings ahead of time to help them prepare for change (Example: "When everyone is sitting quietly, then I will begin the story" rather than "If you don't sit down there won't be a story")
- *Ignore minor incidents.* As long as children's activities are safe, not harming others or the environment, minor incidents can be ignored
- *Reinforce appropriate behaviour with words and gestures.* Positive reinforcement helps children build self-confidence and a desire to repeat appropriate behaviour (Example: Thank you for taking turns" rather than "Good girl")
- *Encourage children to use the educators as a resource* (Example: "If you're not sure what to do, ask me and I'll help you" rather than "Don't be silly, just do it")
- *Alertness, proximity, and nearness.* Sometimes it is necessary for educators to stay close by when young children are still learning to play together

Intervention strategies used by educators at SELC

Educators are required to intervene during episodes of inappropriate behaviour. The following intervention strategies or a combination of these will be used during these episodes

- *Get the child's attention in a respectful way.* Other than in situations where children are in physical danger, educators state the child's name and get down to the child's eye level, speaking in a calm and controlled voice to ensure the child feels safe, secure and cared for.
- *Use proximity and/or a shoulder touch* as a gentle reminder that they are nearby and that the child should think about what they are doing.
- *Use simple, positive reminders to clarify or reinforce limits* (Example: "Remember, bikes stay on the bike path")
- *Acknowledge the child's feelings before setting limits* (Example: "You look frustrated. Remember to wait your turn in the line")
- *Redirect the child.* Changing the situation that is contributing to the inappropriate behaviour, such as engaging them in some other activity or offering a substitute toy (Example: "I can see you have a lot of energy today. Let's jump up and try reach the sky")
- *Offer appropriate choices* (Example: "Do you want to wait in line for your turn or do you want to find something else to do?")
- *Use natural and logical consequences.* Natural consequences are inevitable as a result of the child's actions. A statement of natural consequences clarifies the inevitable or unavoidable outcome of a behaviour (Example: "When you don't put your art away, it's difficult to find it when you go home"). Logical consequences are imposed by the educator as a result of the child's actions and are related to the problem. A statement of logical consequence can help the child understand the problem and the solution (Example: "I can see the spilled paint. Here is a sponge for wiping it up")
- *Limit the use of toys or equipment.* Educators use this strategy sparingly and only when other strategies have been unsuccessful (Example: "Since you are still having a difficult time keeping the sand low, I'm going to close the sand table until after snack")
- *Model problem-solving skills.* It's natural for children to react or get upset. Educators offer help to teach children how to problem solve by guiding the child through the problem solving steps (Example: "Tim has the bike and you want to use it. Have you asked Tim to give you the bike when he is finished? Tell Tim you would like to use the bike when he's finished. Next time you want to use the bike, you can remember to ask to have it when they are finished")
- *Provide opportunities to make amends.* Rather than encourage superficial apologies, educators offer genuine opportunities for children to restore relationships after an incident (Example: "Would you like to help Daisy pick up the dolls and put them back on their chairs?")
- *Redirecting to a calming area.* Educators will redirect a child to a calming activity if the child is in an overstimulating area that is causing or about to cause inappropriate behaviour. This strategy provides an opportunity for the child to develop self-regulation and regain control of their emotional or physical state (Example: "Daisy, please go to the audio table and listen to a CD")

If a child has a care plan that includes instructions respecting behavioural guidance, the educators will ensure that the behavioural guidance given to the child is consistent with those instructions.

A child who is in repeated conflict with SELC's Behavioural Guidance Policy may be asked to withdraw from the program, under the recommendation of the SELC staff, manager, coordinator and Board of Directors, and find a child care centre that is better suited to the child's needs.