

**Ranchlands**  
**Children Come First Association**  
**Preschool Parent Handbook**  
**2012**

**Ranchlands Children Come First Association**

**7713 Ranchview Drive NW**

**Calgary, AB T3G 2B3**

**(403) 241-3052**

Juli McManus, Director

Laura-Lee Kowal, Director

Dear Parents:

Welcome to Ranchlands Children Come First Association. Our Staff are here as a support group for you and your family. We are here to assist you at all times. Thank you for taking the time to read this handbook. We hope that you find it a useful reference. Also, located at the back of this handbook there are a series of forms. Please complete and return them promptly.

Sincerely,

Juli McManus, Director

Laura-Lee Kowal, Director

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Ranchlands Children Come First Association offers a variety of programs such as a Preschool and Out of School Care Program at the Ranchlands location and Out of School Care Programs at:

Banff Trail School

Highwood School

Cambrian Heights School

Buchanan School

**Preschool Program** Ages 3-5

Age 3 Tuesday & Thursday 9:00-11:30 am

Age 4 / 5 Monday & Wednesday 9:00-11:30am

Mixed Class Friday 9:00-11:30am

**Kindergarten Care** School Days 7:00am-12:45pm, 3:00pm-6:00pm

Non-School Days 7:00am – 6:00pm

## **What is Ranchlands Children Come First? (Kids Come First)**

We are a non-profit program with a board of directors who oversee and make decisions in the program regarding philosophy, programs, staffing administration, and guidance.

### **Mission Statement**

Children Come First is driven by its mission to facilitate a program of excellence and promoting diversity, creativity and a positive social environment.

## **Philosophy**

To provide a supplement to the home in terms of a loving, secure and stimulating environment where children can express themselves through creative activities

To provide the children with an environment that allows for freedom of choice and to accept responsibility for those choices.

To provide an environment in which children can learn to engage in positive social interactions with each other and the staff

To provide an environment in which parents and staff both feel comfortable and are able to work together in the children's best interest

## **Child Guidance Policy**

- Staff will not permit, practice or inflict any form of physical punishment, verbal abuse, emotional abuse, or deny the children any physical necessities.
- Staff will be fair, firm and caring towards each child.
- Staff will encourage the children to problem solve and deal with their own disputes.
- Staff will redirect and discuss conflict with the children and encourage them to think about the feelings and needs of others.
- Staff will talk to children privately about the behaviour.

### *Example 1)*

Two children are fighting over a castle. Staff member walks over and asks, "What is the trouble?" They reply, "We want the castle." Staff member says, "Well, this is a big castle, how could we share it?" Children decide one will use the front the other the back and they return to playing...

### *Example 2)*

If a child has hit another child the staff will encourage the injured child to voice their feelings such as, "When you hit me it hurts, please do not do that again."

## **Steps to Child Guidance**

- Discussion of the incident at the child's level in a quiet area of the room, not around other children
- Re-direct the child to another activity if they are having difficulties. Guide the child to another area, sit with them and be involved.
- Cool down Time: A child will be asked to sit out from the activity if the problem persists. The child will sit on a chair away from the activity and other children so that the child will not provoke others or be provoked. The child will not face the corner or walls. Staff will speak to the child at their level.
- Cool down is defined as a method of regaining control. When control is regained positive reinforcement of the child's acceptable behaviour will continue
- Loss of privileges: If the problem still exists, we may ask the child to leave that area and they will lose the privilege to play at that activity
- Parent Contact: We will inform parents if the problem still occurs and ask for input and suggestions. We will inform them verbally or by incident report.
- Staff will provide opportunities for the children to make amends rather than demand a superficial apology.
- Staff will offer genuine opportunities for a child to restore relationships after an incident of hurt or harm. While children may not be immediately ready to take these opportunities, they should be suggested nonetheless. Ultimately the goals of this strategy are to help the children learn that making amends requires time and good will, rather than revenge.

Any punishment used will be reasonable under the circumstance.

Use of physical restraint, confinement or isolation is not allowed.

## **Authority**

This is a non profit program which is licensed by the Province of Alberta, operating out of the Ranchlands Community Centre.

## **Rights and Responsibilities**

### Parents Code of Conduct:

*A code of conduct has been established to inform parents of guidelines/operations within the program*

Parents are required to:

- Complete the necessary documents at registration time and inform us of all medical concerns or allergies.
- Sign their children IN and OUT daily.

Parents are encouraged to:

- Introduce themselves to all staff at Children Come First
- Give feedback to the program
- Volunteer in the program
- Be a significant part of their Childs preschool program
- Share their culture

All families will be treated kindly and fairly by all Children Come First Staff. We expect that in return parents will treat the staff the same.

Children Come First has a NO TOLERANCE POLICY we will not allow any form of abuse or bullying etc.

Parents cannot address or discipline other children at the program. If you have a concern or complaint regarding someone else`s child, please feel free to approach a staff member to discuss the matter.

## **Staff**

Staff are selected on the basis of qualifications and experience. All staff are required to maintain valid first aid and current police checks. Each staff member is required to complete an online course provided through the government of Alberta that provides basic child development information.

The warm, loving, relaxed atmosphere enables children to participate in the daily program, developing their ability to make decisions, be independent, responsible, and to develop respect for themselves as well as others.

Our program is designed to provide a variety of choices including individual play, music, and dramatic play, a variety of games, books, building materials and other activities are available. Our program varies and is flexible to meet the needs of the child. Children are discouraged from bringing toys from home as they could get lost / broken.



### **Preschool Daily Schedule**

9am -945 drop off and free play we scheduled this free play time at the start of the class this way if the parents are running behind the child will not miss out on the first circle time.

Activities available during free play are craft area, painting, water table, puzzles, cognitive learn games, building toys, animals, puppets, story area, play dough, science, theme tables, dramatic play center, toy area and much more.

945-10am- First circle time during this time we do the days of the week, weather, star of the week, estimation jar for the 4 yr old class, songs, stories and finger plays in relation to our weekly themes.

10am-11am- Craft time starts with one teacher sitting with a group of 5 children. Staffs interact with the children and providing them support they may need during this activity.

10am-11am- Snack time starts with 2 tables and one staff assisting the children with hand washing and eating their snacks. When the children are done their snacks we ask them to clean up their snack and put the bag away.

1030-1115 am- Gym time starts with 10 children at a time in the gym with a teacher. During this time the children are given the opportunity to engage in large motor activities with a variety of equipment. There are activities available such as ride on toys, hoops, balls, tents, slide, balance beam, dancing streamers, bowling and much more.

1115-1130am- Second Circle Time during this time we do songs, stories, finger plays, counting and abc in a fun way, and get ready for home time. We get the children to put on their own coats and try and zip up and this will be very helpful in kindergarten

### **Communication**

Monthly newsletters are provided to families on our website [www.childrencomefirst.ca](http://www.childrencomefirst.ca). The information in the newsletter includes things such as; closure dates, community events, parent meetings etc... It is important that parents ensure they receive a copy and read it thoroughly.

Staff are asked to speak to parents about their child only and not other children and speak only of activities related to Children Come First. Staff are asked to speak respectfully to parents and listen to their comments. Staff will try to communicate to the parents in regards to situations to help solve their problem. If you feel you cannot reach a resolution please feel free to contact a director and speak with them.

## **Parent Involvement:**

It is important that parents are involved directly with their child's Preschool Program. Please introduce yourself to the staff. To allow parents to voice any concerns, suggestions or general comments pertaining to the program parents can speak to the staff.

## **Registration Process**

Parents must completely fill out a registration form prior to their child attending. It is imperative that parents inform us of all medical, behavioural and physical conditions. A deposit is required to hold a position at Children Come First. Post dated cheques are required and dated for the first of each month

## **Withdrawal from the Program**

One month's written notice on the first of the month is required to withdraw your child from the program. Parents who do not give one months notice will forfeit their deposit. We would like the opportunity to complete an exit review when you leave the program.

## **Inclusion Services**

We are able to provide care for children with disabilities. We welcome all disabilities, but ask that the parents do inform us during registration and assist us in helping their child to adjust to the program. Supported child care may be available to specific families.

We embrace and encourage diversity at all our locations by recognizing and respecting all cultures. All children have the right to be treated equally, regardless of their race, nationality or ethnic origin, religion, sex, mental or physical ability etc... We are committed to providing a welcoming environment for all children and their families.

*We can accomplish this through:*

- Having the parents and children share their cultures, and events with the program.
- The program will include special occasions and cultural events within their program planning.
- We have a great program during our Multicultural week. Children and families are asked

- to help us with the presentation of their culture to the program.
- Children with special needs can be included in all programs. We will try and accommodate different needs and will work closely with the child/ family to ensure the child is a part of the program.
- We will ensure the staff are informed and sensitive to inclusion and diversity issues.
- We will educate the children about diversity and promote positive interactions between all children.
- The staff will ensure that all information about the children and families are confidential.
- Programming will be suitable to the needs of all the children in the program.

## **Fee information**

Post dated cheques are required and dated for the first of each month

## **Fee Agreement**

Parents agree to pay monthly fees at the first of each month

## **Late Payment**

If fees are not paid on the first of each month parents must pay a late fee. Parents are responsible for NSF fees for any returned cheques.

## **Subsidy**

Forms are available upon request from the Provincial Subsidy. It is the parent's responsibility to set up subsidies and make sure subsidies are kept up to date. Applications can be accessed online at [www.child.gov.ab.ca/childcaresubsidy.com](http://www.child.gov.ab.ca/childcaresubsidy.com)

New parents must pay ½ month fees up front until subsidy application is complete and confirmed.

## **Attendance**

It is required that parents come into the building to sign children IN and OUT with the time and initials. At this time, you can check for messages or newsletters. If you are unable to pick up your child you must contact the program as soon as possible informing us of who will be picking

up your child. Your child will not be released to anyone not known by the program; identification will be required by anyone picking up your child who is on your release form.

### **Late Fee, when picking up your child:**

A late fee of \$1.00 per minute will apply if you are late. This charge is to be paid directly to the staff on duty. Please phone as soon as possible if you will be late.

### **Arrival of Children**

Be sure to sign your child in and hang up their coat and wait for the class to open before you leave your child.

## **Policy & Procedures for Parents**

### **Operating Policy**

We operate Monday to Friday 9am to 11:30am. Parents are asked not to drop off children before 9am and must pick them up on before 11:30am. There is a late policy which is included in the service plan for your review. Closure dates are posted on the parent board for the whole year and are handed out in a newsletter as well. If a child is not attending for the day, it is the parent's responsibility to inform the program.

### **Reporting Incidents, Accidents, or Serious Illness Policy**

#### **Incident Reporting Policy:**

Ranchlands Children Come First programs will report to our local child care licensing office every time a serious illness, injury to a child or any other incident occurs that may seriously affect the health or safety of a child.

The following are considered a reportable incident:

- An emergency evacuation
- Unexpected program closure
- An intruder on the program premises

- A serious illness or injury to a child that requires the program to request emergency health care and or requires the child to remain in the hospital overnight. As well if you call 911.
- An error in the administration of medication by a program staff or volunteer resulting in the child becoming seriously injured or ill and requiring first aid, or the program requesting emergency health care and/ or requires the child to remain in the hospital overnight.
- The death of a child
- An unexpected absence of a child from the program (ie: lost child)
- A child removed from the program by a non- custodial parent or guardian
- An allegation of physical, sexual, emotional abuse and / or neglect of a child by a program staff member or volunteer
- The commission by a child of an offence under an Act of Canada or Alberta, and/ or
- A child left on the premises outside of the program's operating hours.

Ranchlands Children Come First programs must report critical incidents immediately to Juli or Laura-Lee Operators/Directors and our local child care licensing office. Initial contact can be by phone, fax or email. The following information must be included in the initial report:

- The program's name and contact information
- The child's name
- The date and time of incident
- The action taken by the licence holder as a result.

Ranchlands Children Come First programs must report within two working days the incident occurrence, and completely fill out and submit the Incident Reporting Form to our local child care office. Forms will be available at each location. All Incident Reporting Forms must be reviewed by Laura-Lee and Juli Operators/Directors. All incidents will be reported annually using the prescribed forms and submitted annually to the regional child care office by Juli and Laura-Lee Operators/Directors.

Staff please be advised that if you have a situation that occurs that is a threat to the children or staff health or safety the following procedures must take place:

- Take the children inside or to a safe location
- Call the police or emergency health care.
- Call Juli or Laura-Lee Operators/Directors
- Fill out the Incident report form check the list of reportable incidents to the Government of Alberta child care licensing office.
- Fill out the proper incident form for the situation. There are 2 types of forms for incident reporting if the incident that occurs is under the reportable incident list you will use the Government of Alberta form, if not you will use the Ranchlands Children Come First form.
- Inform the parents and get any signature and or information you may need for the forms

All serious incidents will be dealt with immediately, and the parents will be contacted by a director or staff member after first aid has been given to the child. The staff that provided care for the child at this time we will fill out the proper form in regards to the incident and the parents will then be asked to sign it as well. We will keep our form on file for 2 years and parents will be given a copy.

## **Provision of Meals and Snack Policy**

It is the parent's responsibility to provide for their children an adequate snack for the day. Healthy snacks only.

## **Policy to Medication Administration**

Parents must complete a medical form which has been provided by the Province of Alberta sample forms. The medication must not be expired and in its original container showing the child's name, doctor's name and administration instructions. We will only give prescribed medications from a doctor. All medications will be in a lock box. All staff members are trained in first aid, and they will be the only ones giving medications to the child. Self administration will only take place when it is a puffer for asthma, staff will measure out all meds given to a child. Staff will sign the medication form after administration.

Children requiring First Aid will be given the care they need from a staff with current First Aid. If medication is needed to be given a staff will administer the medication and record this on the medication form. If a child is sick a staff will provide a safe and comfortable space until the parent can pick up.

Staff will ensure good hygiene when working with the children in order to stop the spreading of infection and disease.

## **Policy on Access to Licensing Reports**

Parents are welcome at any time to review licensing reports. Please ask the directors for the reports.

## **Health and Medical**

## **Potential Health Risk/Illness Policy**

If a Ranchlands Children Come First staff member knows or has reason to believe that a child is ill, the program must insure that the child is immediately removed from the program by the parent and the child cannot return to the program until the program is satisfied that the child is no longer poses a health risk. Children must be picked up in a timely manner or parent will risk their spot in program.

The definition of an ill child:

A sick child is defined as a child who is unable to participate in the child care program because he or she is:

- Vomiting has a fever, diarrhea or a new unexplained rash or cough.
- Requires greater attention than can be provided without compromising the care of the other children in the program
- Displays any other illness of symptoms that a staff member know or believes may indicate the child poses a health risk to persons on the program premises. Staff can check a child's temperature UNDER THE ARM ONLY with a digital thermometer.

If a child is sick a staff member will keep that child away from the other children until the parent arrives to pick the child up. Children can return to the program when they no longer pose a health risk i.e. symptom free for 24 hours, doctor's note.

The program will record about the child's illness on the Illness Incident Log sheet this forms are available at each location. These forms will be kept on file at the program.

Parents will be informed of our Potential Health Risk and Illness Policy through the Parent Handbook and must sign the back of the registration form that they are aware of the policy.

## **Accident or Illness**

All staff members are trained in first aid and CPR. When a child is injured the necessary first aid will be administered. If further medical attention is required, 911 will be called then the parents. Accident forms will be filled out after we have provided care for the child and contacted the parents.

- The parents must sign the form and will be given a copy.
- The person who provided the first aid to the child will fill out the form.
- All forms will be sign as well by the directors Juli and Laura-Lee.
- These forms will be kept for 2 years.

## **Incident Reporting**

We will document all incidents on our incident forms, critical incidents will be forwarded to Licensing within two days. Critical incidents include: Emergency evacuation, program closure due to any emergency, an intruder on the premises, child removed from the program by a person without parental consent, an injury needing medical attention, lost child, child left at the premises after hours etc.

Parents will be asked to sign the incident report and a director will also sign it. One copy will be given to the parent; another will be kept by the program for 2 years.

## **Communicable Disease**

If a child is ill we ask that Parents do not bring them to the program. If a child becomes ill while at the program parents will be contacted immediately and asked to pick up their child. We will remove the child from the room to a comfortable space, in order to prevent an outbreak. Parents must notify the program immediately if a child has been in contact with a contagious illness such as pink eye, chicken pox, head lice, or flu. We ask parents to check with their Doctor regarding the length of time their child must stay at home.

## **Supervised Care for Sick Children**

If a child is sick the staff will tend to their needs and remove them the other children to a comfortable location where a staff can provide them a place to rest. We will contact the parent



to pick the child up from the program. We ask that parents do not send sick children to the program in order to keep others healthy.

## **Chronic and Severe Health Conditions**

Parents must inform the program if their child has any health condition. The best way to inform us of this is on the registration form. We may require a meeting with the parent in order to have a better understanding of the health condition. If parents have any literature or information on the medications or ways of helping the child adapt that we can share with the staff it would be helpful to us and your child.

## **Sunscreen Policy**

To ensure that all children are covered up with sunscreen we have implemented a new sunscreen policy. Parents, be sure to apply sunscreen to your child in the morning during the hot months before coming to Children Come First.

## **Health Checks and Fire Inspections**

As a licensed program we have yearly checks on both health regulations and fire inspections from the Calgary Health services and Calgary Fire Department. If there are changes or recommendations we will complete them properly to keep our environments as safe as possible

## **Fire Drills**

Will occur monthly, In case of an emergency, we will leave the centre and go to the evacuation location posted on the bulletin board.

## **Nutrition**

### **Morning**

Children will not be allowed to consume an unhealthy snack in the am. The Canada Food Guide recommends 2 different food groups.

## **Outdoor Activity Policy**

Children Come First will provide a variety of outdoor activities for all children throughout the entire year. Program planning will include structured and free play activities, such as: Small and large group games, sporting activities, and independent play. Staff will ensure that the outdoor play area is safe and free from defect. The playground will be inspected frequently for wear and tear. Children may be permitted to bring out play equipment such as balls, hoops, outdoor games and, in some cases (when approved by staff,) crafts or indoor play equipment. Staff will ensure that the children are appropriately dressed for outdoor play, whether that includes sunscreen, mosquito repellent, hats or winter clothing.

## **Volunteers**

Students in the Early Childhood field may visit from time to time for observation purposes. These students will never be included in our child-staff ratios.

## **Field Trips**

Parents will be given notice regarding field trips. We will use a chartered bus; if possible, or we may walk.

## **Social Events**

Annual social events include the Family BBQ in the summer, Mothers day Tea, Fathers Kite Night, Halloween Party, and a Christmas Party. We may have other events and parents will be notified.

## **Record Keeping Policy**

All forms pertaining to the program will be kept for 2 years including registration forms, attendance forms, accident and medical forms.

## **Complaint Policy**

Verbal and written complaints will be directed to Juli and Laura-Lee (directors). N All complaints will be dealt with seriously. A verbal or written response will follow all complaints. All complaints will be kept on file for five years.

## **Transportation Policy**

Occasionally the children will be transported in our bus or a chartered bus for field trips. Parents must sign a field trip release form.

## **Media Policy:**

Employees of Children Come First are not to discuss any events or issues dealing with the programs, its clients and other employees.

All issues with the media will be dealt with by the directors, Juli or Laura-Lee

## **Abuse Policy:**

Ranchlands Children Come First is committed to providing a safe and respectful environment for all the children, staff and parents. Abuse of any kind will not be tolerated and may result in termination from the program.

### **Child Abuse and Neglect**

If a child confides in a staff an issue of abuse or neglect the staff must communicate this to the directors and we will inform the proper authorities. An incident report will be completed by the employee.

### **Rules of the Class**

Children must wear indoor shoes at all times

## **Supervision Policy**

Children Come First has implemented a “Supervision Policy” which will help keep parents informed about the supervision provided at this centre.

Direct Supervision – Staff directly supervises the children both indoors and outdoors and are interacting and ensuring all children are safe. The staff will position themselves so that they can accurately supervise the children.

*Preschool & Kindergarten children will always be supervised and not permitted to be in any room unattended by a staff.*

Staff are made aware of the indoor and outdoor physical environment while doing their daily safety checklist. When new staff are hired they are given a tour and orientation of the program so that they are made aware of the space.

Dress comfortably

Please do not bring toys from home as they tend to get lost or broken.

Bring healthy snacks and no nuts please.

Have Fun!

