



## **P.L.A.Y. Community Child Development Centre**

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### **Parent Handbook**

October 2013

**Updated October 2013**  
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## **1.0 Our Mission Statement**

P.L.A.Y. Community Development Centre (P.L.A.Y) was established to provide high quality childcare for children aged from birth to six (6) years of age. We are a not-for-profit, **parent co-operative** childcare centre that is spiritually, emotionally and physically rich; and inclusive of all regardless of economic status, gender, ability, race or age. Our goal is to create a standard of excellence in childcare, providing programs that meet the diverse needs of the Calgary community. P.L.A.Y. became an accredited childcare centre by Alberta Children's Services in October of 2006 in recognition of this high standard.

## **2.0 Our History**

P.L.A.Y. (Parents Looking after Youth) Community Child Development Centre was established by parents in 1973. It was funded by a local incentive grant, to provide quality care for their children in the Hillhurst-Sunnyside area.

## **3.0 Our Philosophy**

Our philosophy is to provide an environment that is safe, secure and supportive of children's developmental needs. We believe in providing a positive, nurturing environment that will encourage creativity, intellectual curiosity, social interactions, self-help skills, physical activity and emotional development for all children. We provide age appropriate programming that meets the developmental needs, interests and abilities of the children. We believe all children have the right to attend a quality childcare and preschool environment. We provide integrated services for children with special needs where possible and believe integration assists in the healthy development of all children. For more details on our available programming for children with special needs see section 8.2.

## **4.0 Our Home**

P.L.A.Y. exists within the Hillhurst United Church and has a long-standing relationship with the church, its staff and members. For many years now P.L.A.Y. has been a tenant in the church and the two organizations have grown together. Just as P.L.A.Y. is a vibrant centre dedicated to healthy development of children, Hillhurst United Church is a vibrant centre dedicated to the spiritual development of the community. The Church describes itself as a place of "radical hospitality" and opens its doors to many different uses by many different people and groups. P.L.A.Y. enjoys that hospitality and encourages all parents and families to understand that Hillhurst United Church is more than a church and more than a home for P.L.A.Y.

## **5.0 The People at P.L.A.Y .**

At P.L.A.Y., we recognize the irrefutable link between qualifications of childcare workers and the level of quality care provided. Our goal is to create a standard of excellence in childcare. We hire staff that genuinely enjoys working with children and their families. Staff members are encouraged to continually upgrade their skills by attending courses, seminars, workshops and conferences. Our staff have at a minimum Early Childhood Education (E.C.E.) level one certificate. The E.C.E's at P.L.A.Y. maintain current first aid and CPR certification. Furthermore, some staff members have additional education and/or speak a second language. At the time of hiring, references and a criminal record check are completed for each prospective staff.

The P.L.A.Y. Community Child Development Centre Board of Directors consists of parent volunteers who work with the Executive Director to define the purpose, objectives and scope of service consistent with this philosophical viewpoint. The Board

develops policies and bylaws and, together with P.L.A.Y management, is responsible for the fiscal well being of the Centre.

The Executive Director manages the daily operations of the Centre and coordinates the program's educational components. The Assistant Director, E.C.E's and cook make up the total compliment of staff. Volunteers, practicum students, aides and parents all form an integral part of our program enhancing the children's experience through their various special skill sets.

### **6.0 Respectful Work Place Policy**

P.L.A.Y has a respectful workplace policy. The Policy can be provided by the Executive Director and is part of the P.L.A.Y.'s employee handbook. This policy applies to all P.L.A.Y. employees, including management, casual, part-time, and contract employees, as well as practicum students. It applies to the workplace itself as well as to activities connected with the workplace. It applies to relationships and interactions between employees, and interactions between employees and volunteers, parents, and Board members. The Board members of P.L.A.Y. acknowledge and support this policy and encourage all Board members, volunteers, members and parents to conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with the objectives of this policy. P.L.A.Y. acknowledges its responsibility to assist and support those employees who may be affected by inappropriate behaviour of Board members, volunteers, parents, outside contractors or other members of the public.

Every employee can expect to be treated respectfully in the workplace. A respectful workplace is one that values:

- diversity and the human rights of others related to their race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, marital status, family status, any physical or mental disability and sexual orientation
- the dignity of the person
- courteous conduct
- mutual respect, fairness and equality
- positive communication between people
- collaborative working relationships

Board members, parents, management, and staff are responsible for supporting the existence of a respectful workplace. If an issue arises, managers and supervisors are responsible to immediately act upon any situation involving disrespectful behaviour. An informal or formal process of investigation may be required in certain circumstances at the discretion of the Executive Director.

### **7.0 Hours of operation and holidays**

The Centre is open from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., on working days from Monday to Friday. However, children in the Infant Room (0-19 months) must be picked up no later than 5:30 p.m. Please refer to the Late Pick-up Fee policy in Section 12.1.

The Centre will be closed for all general and optional statutory holidays (12 days) recognized by the Alberta Government. In addition, P.L.A.Y. will also close between

Boxing Day and New Year's Day, as well as for two Professional Development (PD) days. The Executive Director will determine the PD days at the beginning of each year. A list of closure dates will be provided to the parents on an annual basis.

## **8.0 Programming**

Our E.C.E's plan and facilitate meaningful learning experiences based on sound knowledge of children's development and on daily observation and documentation of the child's interests, needs and abilities. We implement programming that is relevant and meaningful to the children and create a safe and happy place for the children. The Executive Director, Assistant Executive Director and E.C.E's are available to meet with parents who wish to discuss programming or any other issues that may arise.

Our philosophy is to provide a predictable daily routine (that is still flexible) to instill a sense of security with enough flexibility to allow for individual preferences and independent choice. Each day will incorporate a balance of: (a) indoor and fine motor activities and combining outdoor and gross motor play, (b) quiet and active interactions and activities, (c) large group, small group and individual activities and (d) child and teacher initiated activities.

### **8.1 Accreditation**

P.L.A.Y. received its accredited status from Alberta Children's Services in October of 2006. Accreditation is a process in which the centre was assessed and was able to meet and promote standards for excellence in childcare while allowing families to find quality care and programming best suited to their child's needs. Being accredited also allows P.L.A.Y. to receive additional staff funding which is dependent on their level. Every year P.L.A.Y. will go through a yearly evaluation where we check in with the accreditation standards team and submit new plans, program changes and an evaluation of our goals. On the third year, we go through the entire process once again in order to be re-accredited.

### **8.2 Programming for Children with Special Needs**

P.L.A.Y. is able to receive partial funding for a caregiver to work specifically with children with special needs. The primary caregiver works together with the various community agencies to develop appropriate individual program plans for children with special needs. All staff and children are involved in our integrated program to ensure that the children with special needs are able to participate in the program to the fullest of their abilities. Since this can have an impact on the ratio of E.C.E's to children, such arrangements are at the discretion of the Executive Director. It is up to the Executive Director's discretion as to what services the Early Childhood Educators can provide, understanding some children's needs will not be able to be accommodated at P.L.A.Y. given the physical limitations of the facility and current training of the staff.

## **9.0 Caregiver to Child Ratio's**

We strive to provide a higher caregiver to child ratio than provincial government standards require. This means that we can provide more time with each child. The

licensing ratio required is 1-6, but P.L.A.Y. **strives** to have a lower ratio with toddlers of 1-5.

Our child-staff ratios are:

Infants	(0- 12 months)	1:3
Infants	(13 - 19 months)	1:4
Toddlers	(20 months – 36 months)	1:5
Preschoolers	(3 years - 6 years)	1:8

### **10.0 Parent Involvement**

As parents at P.L.A.Y. you have the opportunity to directly influence the quality of care your children receive at P.L.A.Y. **It is mandatory that each family at P.L.A.Y. volunteer a minimum of 12 hours per year.** This volunteer requirement can be fulfilled in a variety of ways, depending on your areas of interest and the needs of the centre, and can be done in the way that best suits your schedule. You can fulfill your parental involvement requirement either at home or at the childcare facility, depending on the task to be done. **Our parent volunteers also run a mandatory casino every 18 months and all families or a representative must participate.** Our Executive Director would be pleased to discuss this requirement with you during your initial visit to the centre. Suggestions from parents are always encouraged.

Parents are welcome and encouraged to attend monthly Board of Directors meetings. If you are interested in becoming an active participant in the affairs of the centre, then you should consider joining the Board. P.L.A.Y.'s success in providing quality childcare is deeply rooted in the interest and participation of parents, community volunteers and sponsors. We rely heavily on parental and community involvement to enable us to carry out the organization's goals and objectives.

Parents are also always welcome to participate in the activities at the centre. You can check with your child's E.C.E. and find a time to come in and read a book, share a story from your culture, talk with the children about your career, or just spend time observing your child (ren). P.L.A.Y. also holds an Annual General Meeting at which one parent from each household must attend. **Parental attendance is mandatory.**

### **11.0 Parent-Centre Communication**

We recognize that the role of the parent is that of primary caregiver, and that the role of our Early Childhood Educators is to provide care that supports and enhances the child and family. In providing this service to you, P.L.A.Y. believes that communication is essential. For this reason, we provide many avenues and opportunities for communication and strongly encourage input and feedback regarding our program and your child's place within it.

There are many opportunities for communication at P.L.A.Y. including: (a) an open door policy – our Executive Director and Early Childhood Educators are open to discussing concerns and hearing suggestions, (b) Participation on our Board of Directors in a variety of roles and (c) special notices posted for parents or emailed to parents (i.e., staff changes, special events, etc.).

P.L.A.Y. encourages an open, friendly and informative relationship with each child's family and invites your involvement. We believe that when the family and our Early Childhood Educators communicate as partners, everyone benefits – especially the child. At P.L.A.Y. we feel that it is vital to a child to get to know all our teachers, the Executive and Assistant Director.

### **12.0 Fee Payment Policy**

Fees are due on the first day of each month by preauthorized bank withdrawals. The arrangements for this will be coordinated with the Executive Director prior to your child joining P.L.A.Y. A \$25.00 administration fee will be charged for each instance that there are non-sufficient funds (NSF). If there are two instances of NSF then P.L.A.Y. has the right to ask the parents to pay fees by money-order on the first of each month.

All subsidy applicants are required to pay full fees prior to subsidy approval. If subsidy is granted then your account will be credited.

Written notice of arrears will be given by the third working day of the month. If payment for the month is not received by the fifth working day of that month then a late fee of \$30.00 will be levied. The parent will then be given a further five days to pay that month's fees, during which time a late penalty of \$10.00/day will apply. Unless prior arrangements are made with the Executive Director, unpaid monthly fees (including any late charges) after 10 working days will result in the Centre terminating its services with your family.

Refunds or adjustments will not be made for time missed (e.g., vacation) or for statutory holidays. Payment is required for a guaranteed spot in the centre.

Permanent part-time enrollments will pay their full fee for statutory holidays that fall on their regular scheduled day(s). Part-time days will not be exchanged, but additional days may be booked if there is space available. In the latter circumstance, the fees for the additional day(s) are due on the day of attendance. Credits are not issued on absent days. Days booked are considered guaranteed spaces on a month-to-month basis, and payment must be received in advance.

Drop-ins are available at the discretion of the Executive Director. **Payment for the drop-in days is due in full on the day of the drop-in, or at the end of the week for a set of drop-in days.**

Information regarding Alberta Child Welfare Services childcare subsidy is available from the management.

Please note that childcare fees are set by the Board of Directors and may be adjusted at anytime. Parents will be given adequate notification when there is to be a change in fees.

### **12.1 Late Pick-Up Fee Policy**

If you have not picked up your toddler or pre-schooler by 6:00 p.m., a late fee will be charged as follows: \$1.00 per minute for the first 15 minutes and \$2.00 per minute for the next 15 minutes. We respect our staff and expect staff to complete a full 7.5 hour day, time spent here after is the staff's personal time. The same structure applies for infants who have not been picked up by 5:30 p.m. Parents who are late will sign a slip acknowledging the time of arrival. The amount owing will be presented to the parent in writing and payment is due within seven (7) days. A late fee must be paid regardless of the circumstances; however, any late fee charge can be appealed by giving a written request to the Executive Director who will present it to the Board of Directors for its decision on the matter. The Parents at P.L.A.Y. understand that should they be late three or more times in any calendar month, the issue will be brought forth to the Board of Directors, that could result in further disciplinary action such as a penalty, or termination of childcare at P.L.A.Y.

### **13.0 Nutrition (please also see section 14.3: Allergy Policy)**

At P.L.A.Y., we provide a morning snack from 7:45-8:45 am, lunch, an afternoon snack and a late afternoon snack. Our morning snack is offered over a one hour period and children come when they are ready (Infant Room differs slightly). Lunch is only served until 12:00 noon, unless previous arrangements under special circumstances have been made with the Executive Director or designate. The late afternoon snack is provided for children who are here after five o'clock.

A very significant portion of our budget goes toward the provision of nutritious and well-balanced meals and snacks for the children in our care. Our menu at P.L.A.Y. Community has been reviewed and approved by a registered dietician. We follow Canada's Food Guide and exceed government standards. P.L.A.Y.'s 5-week rotational menu is posted on the Community & P.L.A.Y. Information Board as well as in each room. The menu is modified in the infant room to meet their needs. We believe that children fare much better with well-nourished bodies. P.L.A.Y. provides high quality snacks and meals at appropriate times and in quantities in accordance with the needs of each child. There is always enough for seconds.

Lunch is served in the child's small group (Infants eat all together). Early Childhood educators at P.L.A.Y. participate in meal and snack times. The small group setting is a time used to encourage the children to develop self-help skills and interact socially with their peers. Our caregivers in the infant room focus on the infants' needs through individualized and regular routine feeding schedules. P.L.A.Y. also accommodates the ever-changing dietary requirements of infants. In accordance with the Alberta Child Care Licensing Act, no beverages are provided to infants while they are napping.

Menu items are modified to meet the needs of those children with special dietary requirements. Parents may be charged a food surcharge or may be asked to provide alternatives depending on menu modifications that are necessary. **Any allergies or**

**intolerances and alternative dietary arrangements must be discussed with the Executive Director prior to registration and specifically described in the medical forms (Appendix D).**

**In order to protect our children with severe food allergies, no outside foods should be brought into the centre (e.g., snacks, remains of breakfast, treats, etc.).** P.L.A.Y. is a NUT FREE environment (this includes all nuts, not limited to peanuts).

### **13.1 Birthdays**

We celebrate each child's birthday at P.L.A.Y. at the end of each month. Due to food allergy concerns, we ask that you do not bring treats to the Centre on your child's birthday. Monthly birthday cupcakes will be made at the Centre for your child and will be served during the afternoon snack time.

## **14.0 Health Policies**

### **14.1 Sick Child/Communicable Disease Policy**

In order to safeguard the health of all of the children at P.L.A.Y., our philosophy is that children and staff have the right to participate and attend a childcare centre that promotes and provides a healthy environment. All children at P.L.A.Y. go outdoors for physical activity twice a day (weather permitting). If your child (ren) are not well enough for outdoor play they should be kept at home. Children are required to be kept at home if they have any symptoms of a fever over 38C, diarrhea, a new or unexplained cough/rash or vomiting.

If it has been determined by staff that a child shows any symptoms as outlined in Calgary Health Services Illness Exclusion Policy (available from office staff), then the parent(s) will be notified and asked to collect the child. The pick-up of the sick child must occur within **one hour** of being notified. An ill or contagious child will be isolated from the other children by a primary caregiver until the parent(s) or parent designate arrives.

At the Executive Director's discretion, a child returning to the Centre may be required to have a doctor's certificate if the child appears to have had a highly contagious condition. The decision to ask a parent to pick up his/her child is left to the discretion of the Executive Director. In the event that the Executive Director is not present, the Assistant Executive Director or the Centre designate shall decide.

#### (1) Immunizations:

Prior to the first day of attendance at P.L.A.Y. children must have all their immunizations up to date, a form indicating this to be correct will be kept in the child's file. If you as a parent or guardian choose to not immunize than a written documentation stating this must be kept in the child's file.

#### (2) Colds:

With a cold children could possibly show symptoms of a cough, congestion or a runny

nose. If child(ren) have any of these symptoms, it should be discussed between the parent/guardian and our Early Childhood Educator, as to whether or not the child(ren) should attend P.L.A.Y. that day. The Executive Director will be notified of all decisions. These symptoms can be quite contagious.

(3) Vomiting:

If your child at P.L.A.Y. vomits, parents/guardians or emergency contacts will be notified immediately and asked to remove the child from the centre. The parents should not bring the child again until they have been symptom free for 24 hours.

(4) Diarrhea:

Diarrhea is a repeated bowel movement that has an unusual odour or appearance, and can be discoloured or watery. When the 2<sup>nd</sup> incident of diarrhea occurs at the centre, parents/guardians will be contacted and asked to remove the child immediately from P.L.A.Y. The child may not return until the bowel movements have returned to normal (24 hours after the first occurrence).

(5) Fever:

Children with fever over 38C will be asked to be picked up from the centre. Please remember that medication for a fever only masks the child's symptoms, and does not deal with the problem.

(6) Chicken Pox:

To minimize the spread and prevent other children at P.L.A.Y., from being exposed it is our policy that, parents keep children home for 5 days after the appearance of the first spot or until the last spot has crusted over.

(7) Conjunctivitis/Pink eye:

Pink eye may be indicated when the surrounding white of the eye is red/pink. Eyes may also be scratchy, itchy and hurting. The child will often rub their eye and there could be a yellow discharge. Pink eye is highly contagious, and we ask that your child be kept home for 24 hours after starting the first dose of the prescribed antibiotic treatment.

(8) Rash:

Any new or unidentified rash should be seen and diagnosed by a doctor. A doctor's note may be required before the child may return to P.L.A.Y.

### **14.2 Medication Policy**

Medication (both prescription and over-the-counter) will be administered to your child only when a proper medication form has been completed. Parents are asked to inform the child's Early Childhood Educator of the medication and complete a P.L.A.Y. medication form noting the medication, dosage and the precise times and/or temperature elevation at which the medication is to be administered (e.g., 1:00p.m., 4:00p.m., or >37.5°C etc). The staff will note each time that the medication was administered or was required (e.g., because a fever was present). Medications must be returned to parents/guardian according to the Individual Medication Record finish date.

Prescription medication must be in its original container and the child's name must be clearly visible on the container. The prescription label must be on the container. The label must have the prescribing doctor's name, the date of issue, instructions for dosage and frequency. Only full-time staff members with valid First Aid Certificates will be responsible for administering medication to the children in their care, and two full time staff members must administer medication. Medication (including medicated creams, epipens and inhalers) will be stored in a designated locked medication box. Parents are responsible for ensuring all medication they provide has a valid expiration date. All medication that needs to be refrigerated is kept in locked medication box located in the kitchen. Forms for epipens and allergies must be completed and filled out every 6 months by parents.

Please inform your child's Early Childhood Educator when your child is taking medication at home that may affect him/her during the day.

### **14.3 Allergy Policy**

At P.L.A.Y., we take allergies very seriously. We make every attempt to ensure the safety of all children at P.L.A.Y., and pay special attention to those with moderate to severe food and environmental allergies. Our chef checks ingredients on every item prepared in the P.L.A.Y. kitchen, unlabelled products are not served and should not be found in the kitchen area. Soy or Rice Milk options are provided for children with milk intolerances, and special care is taken in the preparation of all of our meals. Our Centre makes every attempt to limit food allergens, and all parents are asked to comply with this rule by not bringing **any** snack items, birthday or holiday treats or unfinished breakfast items to the Centre.

A 5 week rotational menu is posted with every meal item detailed for all morning snack , snacks and lunches. In the event a parent of an allergic child feels uncomfortable with the meal options, they will be asked to provide an acceptable alternative while working with our cook for their child.

All meals are served with the children seated together at the tables, and care will be taken to ensure the children are not sharing food. P.L.A.Y. is not responsible, however, for any child consuming food that has not been specifically prepared for him or her.

For new children joining P.L.A.Y. with moderate allergies, a list of food items and reactions must be provided to P.L.A.Y. in writing from the parents for the child's file. Any treatments or doctor prescriptions must also be provided.

For children with severe or life threatening allergies, P.L.A.Y. requires a list of all allergies, along with a signed doctor's certificate and recommended treatment for each separate allergy for the child's file. Children requiring epipen treatment must provide this to P.L.A.Y., to be kept in proximity to the child at all times. All staff have been trained in the use of the epipen, and it will be taken with the child's supervisor from location to location within the Centre, as well as being a part of the First Aid kit that

accompanies the children on Field Trips. It is the parent's responsibility to replace an EpiPen's prior to its expiration date.

Although P.L.A.Y. makes every attempt to limit food allergens, we cannot guarantee an environment free of all possible reactions. P.L.A.Y. and its staff cannot be held responsible for any allergic reactions suffered by children in its care whether at the facility or outside the facility caused by contact with any allergen.

Parents with children who suffer from allergies are asked to sign a consent form to be kept in their child's file acknowledging P.L.A.Y.'s Allergy Policy and accepting the terms and limitations of liability within. (A consent form may be found in Appendix C of this Handbook.)

#### **14.4 Accident/ Incidents**

In the event that your child is involved in a minor incident at P.L.A.Y. (e.g., a bump or bite), an Incident Report form will be completed. The form will have the details of the accident/incident and any follow-up treatment, and will be signed by the Early Childhood Educator and the Executive Director. At the time of pickup, the parent will be required to sign the form, which will then be filed at the Centre in the child's office file. These forms are to remain at P.L.A.Y., and may not be taken home, though we are happy to provide you with a photocopy.

If the child requires medical attention, the Early Childhood Educator will inform the Executive Director, who will call an ambulance and then notify the parent of the hospital for which the ambulance is destined. If the Executive Director or Assistant Executive Director is not available, an ECE will call for an ambulance and contact the parent with the hospital information. Any costs that are incurred are the responsibility of the parent.

#### **15.0 Withdrawal and Dismissal from the Centre**

Parents must provide a minimum of one month's notice to the Executive Director if a child is being permanently or temporarily withdrawn from the program. Notice of withdrawal is to be provided by 4 p.m. on the last business day of the month, prior to the last month in which the child will attend P.L.A.Y. For example, if a child is withdrawing at the end of August, notice must be received on the last business day of July of that year. If a child is withdrawing prior to the end of the month, parents will be responsible for the fees for the entire month, and prorating of monthly fees is not allowed. If notice of withdrawal is late, parents will be responsible to pay the fees for the subsequent month. For example, if a child is withdrawing by the end of August and notice is received on or after August 1, parents are responsible to pay fees for both August and September. Payment is required to maintain a spot, in accordance with the Fee Payment Policy section.

P.L.A.Y. Community Development Centre reserves the right to withdraw any child if the Executive Director, in conjunction with the Chair of the Board of Directors, deems it to be in the best interest of the centre, the child or the family. Notice of termination

will be given in writing, signed by the Executive Director and the Chair of the Board. Fees for any unused portion of care will be refunded and included with the notice of termination.

### **16.0 Non-Compliant Behaviour Policy**

P.L.A.Y. Community Development Centre understands that occasional aggressive behaviour, including biting, is a normal part of early childhood development. However, P.L.A.Y. believes that in order to provide an environment that is safe and secure for all children at the daycare, P.L.A.Y. must set limits for persistent noncompliant behaviour. The following policy will apply to all children enrolled at PLAY:

- (1) Incident Reports: An incident report is to be completed for any situation where a child is injured. Parents of the children involved will be given a copy of the Report and will be asked to read and sign the report upon receipt. The signed copy of the report will be placed on the file for each child involved.
- (2) Meeting with Executive Director: In the event of either persistent non-compliant behaviour, or on the occurrence of one serious incident, the Executive Director will meet with the parents or guardians of the child to develop a written behaviour plan suitable to both the Executive Director and the parents.
- (3) Plan Implementation: The Executive Director will use reasonable efforts to implement the plan. To achieve this, the Executive Director may request the assistance of any daycare staff member or members.
- (4) Pickup of Child: Following any incidence of serious non-compliant behaviour (including but not limited to fighting where a child is injured, or biting where skin is broken), the Executive Director may telephone a child's parent or guardian to require that a child be immediately removed from the daycare for the day.
- (5) Notice of Permanent Removal: If a non-compliant behaviour is not resolved through implementation of a written behaviour plan, the parents may be required to make alternative child care arrangements. PLAY will attempt to provide parents with a minimum of one month's notice of such a removal.
- (6) Immediate Removal Without Notice: Notwithstanding anything previously stated in this policy, if at any time the child's behaviour causes the Executive Director and the Chair of the Board of Directors to be concerned for the safety or well being of the children or staff, PLAY may require a child to be immediately and permanently removed from the daycare.
- (7) Pro-rated Refund of Fees: If P.L.A.Y. requires that a child be removed from the childcare facility, fees will be refunded on a pro-rated basis.

## **17.0 Child Guidance Policy**

Guiding children's behavior sets the tone and is an integral part of any quality childcare program. This is achieved through intervention and prevention. Our child guidance policy is reviewed annually.

All ECE's, management and P.L.A.Y. volunteers will model appropriate social behavior for children at all times by staying calm in difficult situations and setting a positive example. All children will be treated with consideration and respect, in recognition of every child's unique qualities. ECE's will celebrate the differences in each child and will understand and respect that all children have different needs and abilities.

At the time of hiring, all staff read and acknowledge in writing that they have read, understand and agree with the written P.L.A.Y. Community Development Centre Guidance Policy.

### **17.1 Guidance for Infants**

ECE's in the Infant Room model the type of interactions that they want the children to develop. Infants are at the beginning stages of social development and P.L.A.Y. believes that modeling appropriate behaviours, redirection (i.e., engaging the infant to focus on another activity) and providing alternatives and extras of the favorite toys all contribute in assisting infants to develop positive and pro-social behaviours. Verbal redirection is phrased positively by trying to avoid the use of "No" and "Don't".

### **17.2 Child Guidance**

Discipline or any form of punishment /threats /yelling or abuse of any kind will not be tolerated at P.L.A.Y. by management, ECE's, volunteers or practicum students at the centre. Our ECE's recognize that consistent testing of limits and expressions of opposition to adults is part of developing a healthy sense of self as a separate, autonomous individual. ECE's only say "No" when the prohibition relates to children's safety. ECE's use positively worded directions (e.g., "I cannot let you climb over the tables, because you can hurt yourself. You can climb outside on the climber.") and not just restrictions (e.g., "Don't climb on the table."). Teachers model the type of interactions with others that they want children to develop. ECE's recognize that most of the time when children are aggressive, hurting, or biting other children, it is because they lack the skills or language ability to cope with frustrating situations such as wanting another child's toy.

### **17.3 Using Guidance and Setting Limits**

Behaviour we see and want to reoccur in children is praised: "I feel so happy inside that everyone used their safe walking feet on the stairs". We as ECE's must set clear limits and guidelines that are child-friendly, easily understood and concise. A concise statement is short and clear (ex: "Please put your shoes on, it's time to go"). Teachers are to avoid the use of negative statements, such as "Don't yell". Instead we focus on the positive and say, "Inside voices please". Limits and guidelines are explained logically using adult-centered ideas, "If you cannot sit by the train table without touching it, you will have to find another seat".

Children should know that teachers are readily available to help, but children are encouraged to solve their own situations/problems. Incidents that occur at P.L.A.Y. between children are dealt with immediately and in a positive manner.

At P.L.A.Y. we do not promote the use of or use time out. We focus instead on redirection, allowing the child to break away from the situation and focus his/her attention on a quiet activity. Children are praised for their accomplishments and helped to feel increasingly competent, in control of themselves and with their self-esteem intact.

### **18.0 Transitioning of children to the next age group**

A child's transition to the next age group room can be an exciting, yet scary, time. The child will be moving away from cherished friends, beloved ECE's and an environment that is known and comfortable. Therefore, at P.L.A.Y., we handle the child's transition gradually and with sensitivity. A few weeks prior to the child's expected move, the child is integrated slowly by having short daily visits with the new group, provided that ratio allows for this. Gradually, the visits get longer, as long as the child seems comfortable with the situation. No child will be forced into an upsetting situation.

Parents are invited to spend as much time as they would like in their new child's room to meet the teachers and familiarize themselves with the new surroundings and routines. A transition conference will be set up if requested by the parent so that the parent may have the opportunity to talk about changes that they may expect in the new room. All children enrolled in the Centre will be given first priority to move to the next chronological age group. Selection of priority will be based on date of birth, length of time required to save a space, and an evaluation of the child's developmental needs. Decisions will be made by the Executive Director, in consultation with the child's primary ECE and the P.L.A.Y. team, and in consultation with the parent.

In special circumstances, a group of the oldest children in either the Infant Room (babies aged 17-19 months) or the Toddler Room (children aged 30 – 36 months) may be placed in a transitional group within the setting of their next level. The Infant Group will remain at the same staff ratio (1 to 4) as appropriate for their age level, but will engage in activities alongside and, when appropriate, with the children in the Toddler room, present for most times throughout the day. The older toddlers will be at a 1:6 ratio and engaged in the Todd Pod program located in the preschool room on the stage.

### **19.0 Attendance and Security**

Parents are required to sign their child in and out each day, and to sign out in full at the end of each week. Signing in and out is mandated by licensing and ensures that P.L.A.Y. has an accurate record of attendance in each room.

In order to help your child with the transition from home to childcare, we ask that upon arrival, parents come into their child's playroom and spend a few minutes talking to the ECE. **Parents are required to notify the Centre by 9:00 a.m. if their child will**

**not be attending that day. PLAY also requires advanced notification if your child will be away on vacation.**

Prior written authorization/notification to the Executive Director and room staff is required if someone other than the parent/guardian is picking up the child. **Without this authorization, the child will not be released. Note that alternates will be required to provide identification.**

All interactions at P.L.A.Y. will be between children, staff, parents and authorized alternates only. Any community volunteer, aide or practicum student will be required to undergo the same security and interview procedures as regular staff in order to participate in the program.

**19.1 Secured Entrance**

The entrance to the facility is locked from the outside unless there is a function going on within the Hillhurst United Church. Upon enrolment of their child, parents or guardians must purchase a key fob that unlocks the front door. The cost of the initial key fob, additional and replacement key fobs is \$25.00 per key. Parents are reminded to always leave the entrance to the church secured and not to let strangers into the church.

**19.2 Procedure and Policy for Children at P.L.A.Y. after Hours**

In accordance with licensing regulations, if a child remains at the Centre after 6:00 p.m., or 5:30 p.m. for infants, and the parents have not notified the Centre they will be late, the following initial procedures will be followed:

- (1) The E.C.E. will attempt to contact all contacts listed on the child's emergency record; and
- (2) The Executive or Assistant Director will be contacted and will return to P.L.A.Y.

If the child's parent(s) or parent designate have not arrived by **6:15 pm**, the Executive Director or Assistant Director will call Calgary and Area Child and Family Services. If an infant's parent(s) or parent designate have not arrived by **6:00 pm**, a call will be placed to Child and Family Services. Child and Family Services will come and remove the child(ren) from P.L.A.Y. (**Child Intervention Services Intake Line is (403) 297-2995**. This line is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.)

**20.0 Procedure for Suspected or Known Child Abuse**

Cases of suspected or known child abuse will be documented and reported as required by law. All records shall be kept in the strictest confidence.

**21.0 Neighbourhood Walks and Field trips**

Trips to the Safeway on 10th St., the shops on Kensington Rd., Riley Park, CBC Park, and the grass area on the south side of the Bow River between the 10th St. footbridge and the heliport do not require a parental permission slip. All other destinations will be considered field trips and require approval first by the Executive Director and then by

the parents.

### Neighborhood Walks

The following safety precautions are to be taken:

- (1) Ratios must be maintained and should be verified if a child joins late.
- (2) A sign should be posted on the room door or whiteboard outlining the route taken and/or destination. Management is to be verbally informed before children and teachers leave the building.
- (3) Emergency contact cards of each child are to be taken with the group whenever the children are out of the Centre (i.e. in the church gym, in the Centre's playground or in the neighborhood).
- (4) Staff must count the children before exiting the room, again before leaving the building, upon arrival at the destination and before returning to the Centre and upon arrival at the Centre. Frequent counts should take place at alternate times throughout the walk.
- (5) Depending on the size and age of the Toddler children, they are to be "roped up" for all walks. Exceptions may be made for those children holding the hand of a teacher. The teacher should be attached to the rope as well.
- (6) Babies should be taken outside daily in strollers, weather permitting. Babies that walk should be removed from the strollers and allowed to run around in the fresh air for short periods in a safe environment.
- (7) ECE's are to position themselves appropriately among the children, with one staff at the front, one at the back, and the remainder interspersed among the children.
- (8) If the children are visiting a busy park, yellow P.L.A.Y. shirts are to be worn by each child so that they can be easily identified.
- (9) When on walks no more than 2 groups should walk together. Toddler Room will have a maximum of 10 - 12 children and Preschool Room will have a maximum of 16-18 children.
- (10) Safety rules should be reviewed with children on an ongoing basis (i.e. destination, crossing streets, talking to strangers, partners, rope).

### Field Trips

The following additional safety procedures must be carried out for field trips:

- (1) ECE's will obtain approval from the Executive Director and post a permission slip for the parents prior to the trip. Parents MUST sign allowing consent for their child to participate in the outing.
- (2) A minimum of two staff are required on all field trips. Parents may be approached to volunteer. Parents will have to read all required information and sign a consent form saying they have read and understood all P.L.A.Y. fieldtrip policies and are attending as a volunteer.
- (3) Ratio for a field trip that requires public transportation should be no more than three children per adult.
- (4) Teachers should be familiar with the destination, as well as the safety and appropriateness of its facilities.

## **22.0 Clothing and other belongings**

At P.L.A.Y., we ask that children come prepared to go outside at least twice a day for fresh air and play. Therefore, to ensure that your child can join the fun and have a comfortable day, please bring weather-appropriate clothing. A list of what your child needs can be found at the back of the Parent handbook.

Clothing worn by your child should be suitable for play and be easily laundered, as it will likely get dirty! As the children are encouraged to dress and undress themselves, clothing that is easy to remove is appreciated.

Year round, please bring indoor/outdoor footwear. Children may not wear flip flops, crocs or slippers, as these do not comply with fire regulations. Please label all personal belongings with your child's initials. Although the caregivers attempt to keep track of all items of clothing, P.L.A.Y. is not responsible for lost articles. A lost and found box is available for misplaced belongings.

We ask that children not bring toys from home. This will prevent competition and disappointment. Exceptions will be made for a "security item" or when staff plan for a special occasion (e.g., a teddy bear picnic or show-and-tell). Please see the Executive Director if you have questions regarding the exceptions.

## **23.0 Records Requirements**

### **23.1 Children's Records**

The following information will be required prior to a child's enrollment, and records will be kept in the office.

Records obtained for children's files are as follows:

- (1) Completed Enrollment Form (Name, Birthday, Home Address & Phone Number, Parent/Guardian Names, Emergency Contact Person).
- (2) Health Care Number
- (3) Child Profile
- (4) Emergency Card
- (5) Behavior Policy Agreement
- (6) Photo Consent Forms
- (7) Allergy Forms
- (8) A letter stating if a child is vaccinated or not ( this will help to avoid any mishaps, and let us inform parents whose children have not been vaccinated of a serious outbreak or vice versa)

### **23.2 Portable Records**

Each room has portable records that contain emergency contact information for each child enrolled at P.L.A.Y that include the following:

- (1) Child's name, D.O.B., Home address
- (2) Parent/Guardian (name, home address, telephone number)
- (3) Emergency Contact person (name, home address, telephone number)
- (4) Medical information (doctors name, phone number, Alberta Health Care #, allergies if any).

### **24.0 Information changes**

Please notify the Executive Director promptly in writing of any changes in address, telephone numbers, health information, emergency contacts, or pick-up persons. It is a licensing requirement that the children's information be kept current at all times. Emergency contact forms are required to be updated yearly.

### **25.0 Emergency Procedures**

In the event of a fire or other incident that requires evacuation of the building, the children will be removed according to our emergency procedure. They will be taken outside to St. John Fine Arts Elementary School, located at 15 12th Street NW. All parents will be notified and asked to pick up their children. The children will be supervised at St. John's by our staff until all children are picked up. St. John's will be used throughout the entire year in case of an emergency.

A fire drill is conducted each month, in compliance with Child Care Licensing regulations. This ensures that we are all prepared in the event of an emergency.

In cases of emergency, the Executive Director shall make all reasonable attempts to contact the parent(s) or guardian(s). If neither the parent/guardian nor the emergency contact can be reached, P.L.A.Y. shall make necessary decisions to ensure prompt and proper medical care for the child should this be needed. Any resulting expenses will be borne solely by the parent of the child.