



Student Handbook and Registration Guide

SCHOOL YEAR: SEPTEMBER 2024 TO JUNE 2025

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Friendly Forest Preschool
2505 Sunnyside Road
Anmore, BC, V3H 4Y6

Phone: 604.469.0438
www.friendlyforestpreschool.com

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Letter from the Teachers

Dear Parents,

Welcome to Friendly Forest Preschool and thank-you for entrusting us with your child's care. Because relationships with caregivers are an integral part of your child's healthy development, it is of utmost importance to us that your child feels secure and loved during their time with us at preschool. We will show your child respect and understanding, listen to them, and tailor the program to meet their individual social, emotional, intellectual, and physical needs. We promise to provide them with a program that will stimulate their senses, awaken curiosity, create solutions to problem solving, and move them forward to a deeper and more complex understanding of their world. We consider you a partner in your child's preschool education and we look forward to collaborating with you as we share the joy watching your child learn and grow.

Our Mission

To work collaboratively with parents and caregivers to build an inclusive preschool community where the social, emotional, and cognitive development of all children is valued and promoted through free play, self-expression, independence, and creative thinking. Our child centered environment nurtures exploration, collaboration, and reflection to develop a sense of wonder and awe of the natural world.

Philosophy and Environment

We provide warm responsive care to children.

We believe that professional development is crucial in growth as an educator. We have learned that play stimulates brain development, and that sensory input is vital for conceptual understanding. Play comes naturally to children. It is something that they do spontaneously.

At Friendly Forest Preschool we make sure that children have many opportunities for multi-sensory play. There is sand, water, loads of clay, paint, play dough, glue, glitter, grains and more to choose from. We prepare for their cries of "MORE!"

To increase the sensory experience and encourage creative play we have replaced many of the plastic toys with ones made from wood, metal, wool, or cotton. For children who are used to plastic battery-operated toys it can take a while for them to learn how to play with our open-ended materials such as ramps, blocks, pipes, sticks, stones, felt fabric and driftwood.

Because children need uninterrupted time to become engaged in play, we have organized the two-and-a-half-hour session to allow for a large block of time for creative play. We follow the same routine every day to keep the amount of difficult group transitions to a minimum.

The equipment is displayed on open shelves to encourage children to make a choice depending on the concept they are interested in exploring - "What do I need to build this tower" or "What do I need to make this play dough flat?"

We have removed many of the chairs in the room so that children's movement is not restricted while they play. A lot happens naturally on the floor where children can sit or lie as they work. Having standing areas around the art and play dough table also enables full body movement as the children reach and press with their entire bodies.

A shared snack is set out at a table in the playroom. During the play period the children are free to eat whenever they are hungry. They wash their hands, serve themselves and sit to eat. After they are done, they clean up their place and return to play. Some children eat as soon as they arrive,

while others eat just before going outdoors. In this way we do not have to interrupt everyone's play at the same time, clear tables, and find 20 places for the children to sit.

The day begins with indoor play (free choice of activities and centers) and ends with outdoor play. We have a beautiful natural outdoor play space with an enormous sand play area, bike paths, trees, herbs, shrubs, slides and climbing structures. Our swings and trolley are designed so that children face each other and must cooperate to get the swing or trolley to move.

We know that for children to understand what snow, rain, hail, freezing, heat and cold is, they need to directly experience the weather. We go outside EVERYDAY. We model for them to lie in the cold snow, to get wet with heavy rain, to warm their freezing fingers and to find cool shade from the hot sun and to thank the forest trees for providing oxygen for us to breathe.

"Oh good, it's raining, let's go outside to play."

"Stand outside with your mouth open wide and have a drink of rain."

An important part of our time with children is spent supporting their emotional development. Children need to feel safe, secure, and nurtured in their preschool environment. When they are able to regulate their emotions and gain independence, they will be ready to make friends and develop cognitive concepts.

Our classes run on consecutive days to allow the children to repeat an experience and make connections more immediately.

As staff, we work as equals. We are supportive and appreciative of each other and complement each other's strengths and weaknesses. We are always assessing and wondering about our practices and program and what is best for children.

We are a happy preschool, and we love working here. We welcome you and your child to share this wonderful place with us.



Early Childhood Education is a program of activities that provides children with the opportunity to grow in many areas. We have outlined the following areas of growth that are imperative in the early years of development.

Physical Development is small muscle or fine motor movement. This includes how to hold a paintbrush or cutlery, how to pull up a zipper, cut with scissors or to complete a puzzle. Large or Gross motor development includes climbing stairs, running, hopping, jumping and balance. Self-help skills are very important, such as putting on their own jacket and pants, using the toilet, washing hands, and getting a drink of water. Physical development is a daily activity throughout our program.

Cognitive Development is about the growing or developing brain. Activities in our classroom are presented to give children choices to be creative, investigate and explore. Children learn how to solve problems by participating in activities. How to build a bridge for the train to go under is a simple concept but it takes skill and practice.

By providing activities and explorations in our classroom children begin to build some general knowledge about the world around them. Children start to learn to develop concepts such as classifying, ordering, and numeracy. Children are learning about direction and spatial relationships.

Emotional Development Children learn to regulate and control their impulses and emotions. They start to express their needs and they also learn to delay self-gratification. Children will start to be aware of self and they will recognize others' emotions. Children will also be able to concentrate for longer periods of time while engaged in play.

Social Development is a key component in our program. As children's communication skills develop, they will be able to share ideas and information with their peers. This step in social development is vital to making friends. Making friends involves having a shared understanding of the play theme and being able to enter the play and have a role in the play. Example: I will be the Dad today, who would you like to be?

The other key component to social development involves knowing how to share and take turns. Children will learn how to be flexible and confident. Social development is a very complex process, and it requires a lot of guidance and modeling from their teachers.

Our Goal for your preschoolers is to provide them with an environment that is exciting and explorative on a daily basis. Children need to have a whole-body experience that encompasses meaningful play-based activities in order to develop a healthy body and mind.

What to expect at Friendly Forest Preschool - We as educators practice developmentally appropriate practice. This is an approach to teaching that is grounded by research on how young children learn and develop. We will meet the needs of young children where they are in each stage of their development. Developmentally appropriate practice is based on the idea that children learn best by doing and by being actively involved in their environment. Children build knowledge based on engaging in experiences rather than passively receiving information. We believe that this type of practice helps children make the connections they need to understand and learn about the world they live in.

Yours sincerely,

Lindsay Dureau, E.C.E. Diploma/Special Needs (Lindsay has been at Friendly Forest Preschool since 1999)

Ruth Graham, E.C.E. Diploma/Special Needs (Ruth has been at Friendly Forest Preschool since 2008)

Oliwia Twardysko, E.C.E. Diploma/Special Needs (Oliwia has been at Friendly Forest Preschool since 2017)

1.0 About Friendly Forest Preschool

1.1 Preschool History

The Friendly Forest Preschool began with a group of “Moms and Tots” who met informally in the Anmore Elementary School gym over a 15-year period. Then, when the need for a playground arose, they formed “The Belcarra Regional Park Adventure Playground Committee.” The parents raised \$14,000 and the playground was built. With this successful project under their belts, they began to organize a parent cooperative preschool in February of 1985. After overcoming many hurdles such as funding, land use, acquiring a used portable, and hiring staff, the preschool was opened in September 1985. Parent volunteers completed the project.

In 1994, we were very fortunate to have been granted over \$120,000 from the Ministry of Education for a new portable building. This project was probably the largest one undertaken by members of our preschool. Once again, our parents and teachers demonstrated sincere devotion and commitment to our preschool and today we are still enjoying a wonderful facility. Landscaping of our nature playground began in the spring of 1999. In one weekend a group of hardworking parents and teachers planted a “secret garden”, built a new sand pit structure (complete with a roof), laid new sod, and built a “boat deck” over the concrete tunnel.

In 2004, the installation of several additional play structures to our main climbing structure as well as maintaining our naturescape play space was the focus of our major multi-year landscaping plan. In 2007, a new covered sandpit area was created. 2010 brought an upgrade to our septic system, the rebuilding of our covered porch and the addition of more play pieces in our outdoor area. In 2011, we replaced our front entrance gate and in 2012 we were able to replace the preschool's flooring with financial support from a community donor. As of 2019, the building has a new roof and new structures in the playground for climbing and swinging. In 2020, new additions were added to the outdoor play space. This consisted of a hand-crafted mud kitchen, as well as weather sails which were added to multiple areas for sun and rain protection. Some wonderful additions were made to the front porch area as well, to create an all-weather usable space. We also installed a brand-new hand washing sink with triple faucets for improved health and safety measures. The preschool environment continues to grow and evolve both indoors and out thanks to the commitment and support of the teachers and many parent volunteers.

1.2 What does it mean to be involved in a “Parent Cooperative” preschool?

At Friendly Forest, all parents share duties and are collectively responsible for the operation and administration of all aspects of the preschool. The success and viability of our preschool is contingent upon **parent cooperation and support.**

To be a part of a parent participation preschool can be a very rewarding experience as it allows you greater input into the administration and operation of the school and thereby enhances your child's education. Great friendships are made and there is a wonderful sense of community among the parent community. It does, however, require a high level of commitment from parents and each family is asked to assess their ability to commit at the start of the school year. Any questions regarding time/ability to participate should be directed to the Teachers or the Executive Board. In 2012, the preschool introduced an “opt-out” for some parent duties, to provide greater flexibility for families. **Please read Section 8.0, which provides an overview of parent participation at Friendly Forest, including what is required and identifies those areas where parents have the ability to “opt-out.”**

1.3 Policies and Procedures

A copy of *Friendly Forest Preschool's Policies and Procedures* can be obtained at any time by contacting a member of the Executive Board; copies are also available at the preschool.

2.0 Class Fees and Withdrawal Policy

There are a maximum of 20 children per class with two Early Childhood Education ("E.C.E.") trained staff per class. For the 4-year-old classes, your child will be automatically enrolled in the same time slot as his/her 3 class (e.g., 3 am will be enrolled in 4 am and 3 pm will be enrolled in 4 pm). Please advise the Enrolment team if you would like to request a time change.

2.1 Class Times and Fees

Age	Class	Days	Time	Monthly Fees
3 years	Morning (3AM)	Thursday & Friday	9:15 - 11:30	*\$162
	Afternoon (3PM)	Thursday & Friday	12:30 - 2:45	*\$162
4 years	Morning (4AM)	Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday	9:15 - 11:30	*\$203
	Afternoon (4PM)	Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday	12:30 – 2:45	*\$203

*CCFRI discount provided by the Province of British Columbia which is discretionary and subject to modification or discontinuation.

Monthly Fees

The Monthly fees are paid using a Pre-Authorized Debit (PAD) transaction that will withdraw the funds from your bank account on the first of each month starting in August and ending in May. Please note you will be charged the full monthly fee amount without the Childcare Fee Reduction Initiative in August which is later applied to the June fees of the school year. The full tuition amount for 3's is \$215 and for 4's is \$255. You will be refunded the difference in June if your child is still enrolled at this time.

2.2 Joining Part Way Through a Month

If an incoming family joins part way through a month, the monthly fees for that month will be based on a calculated average daily rate that is applied to the remaining attendance days of that month. This prorated calculation will take into account whether the child is going into the 3-year old classes (which are twice a week) or the 4-year old classes (which are three times a week).

2.3 Withdrawals

Withdrawal Process

In the unfortunate event that your child needs to be withdrawn from Friendly Forest Preschool during the school year, we encourage you to review your decision/reasons with the teachers prior to withdrawal. If your decision stands, you need to email enrolment@friendlyforespreschool.com and let the enrolment team know that you will be withdrawing your child and specifying their last date of attendance.

Please ensure you understand the payment processing rules for withdrawals from the school, as outlined in the paragraphs immediately below.

Withdrawal - Before School Year

If you withdraw your child from the preschool no later than midnight on June 30th of the child's registered school year, the child will be removed from the program and no fees will be withdrawn from your account. If the child is withdrawn between **July 1st and Labour Day** of your child's registered school year, one month's fee will be withdrawn from the account (early withdrawal fee: 3's - \$215 4's - \$255 and the child will be removed from the program.

Withdrawal - During School Year (beginning the day after Labour Day)

If you decide to withdraw your child from the preschool, please note that we require **one full calendar's month** notice and the following fees will apply:

1. The fee paid in August which is later applied to the June fees of the school year will be forfeited (early withdrawal fee: 3's - \$215 4's - \$255)
2. The payment for the full calendar month following the notice of withdrawal from the program will be taken during the normal fee schedule.

Withdrawals submitted on or after **April 1st** require payment of **all** fees for the balance of the school year.

Withdrawal and Parent Duties

The preschool has implemented a parent duty security deposit of \$250 per semester, evaluated in December, March and June. If at the time of withdrawal, you have fulfilled your obligations with respect to your Parent Participation Agreement, then no further security deposits via electronic funds transfer (EFT) will be collected. If these duties have not been fulfilled, then a parent duty security deposit via EFT may be collected at the discretion of the Parent Board with input from the Teachers. Please note, any rejected EFTs will be charged a fee of \$30.00.

2.4 Non-payment of Fees Policy

When a pre-authorized debit (PAD) withdrawal is returned, a \$30 fee will be applied to the next payment and an email will be sent to notify and confirm the payment or to make another payment arrangement with the parent(s).

If the family does not respond, and/or the fees are not paid by the 15th of the month, an additional fee of \$50 will be applied with a second attempt to contact the parent(s). If there is still no response from the parent(s), and/or the fees are not paid by the final day of the month of missed fees, the next months fees may be considered the withdrawal fee and the position of the child(ren) in the preschool may be forfeited at the discretion of the Parent Board and the Teachers.

3.0 Preschool Program and Learning Activities

We have committed ourselves to implementing a high-quality, developmentally appropriate program for children to enjoy. We regularly take workshops, attend conferences, and research current issues and trends in early childhood education. Our program is continually growing and changing as we make observations and reflect on the child's perspective. Its primary purpose is to guide the child to self-regulation, emotional expression, and positive social relationships, i.e., to develop essential skills for later schooling and life.

Our daily classroom activities are a blend of teacher and child-initiated curriculum. They aim to motivate and support the child's intellectual needs and to develop their understanding of concepts, while still being playful so as to minimize stress or feelings of incapability. Transitions have also been minimized to allow for long blocks of unstructured time where children are in active engagement with the entire classroom and the materials within it.

3.1 Classroom Set-up and Activities

We aim to keep the environment aesthetically stimulating. Gifts of fresh flowers, plants or beautiful objects are always welcome. The room is divided into the following areas:

Coat room	Free choice art room
Dramatic play area	Open snack table
Sensory tables: sand, water, grain	Play dough
Quiet corner with cushions, books, and dollhouse	Light table
Open shelving with baskets or manipulative to explore	Art corner with easel
Large open area with block and loose parts for building	Woodwork table
Tabletop activities for fine motor skill development	

Art

Open shelves with an array of different art tools and materials are available for the children to choose from in order to create artwork. The emphasis is on choice, decisions, and process - not on producing masterpieces. Other open-ended art activities such as box construction, collage and ice cube, string or marble painting are also set up in this area. Exposure to the paintings of great artists such as Emily Carr and Indigenous Artists such as Bill Reid are present for inspiration.

Sensory Play

Children become scientists as they explore and experiment with the properties of sand, water, finger-paint, playdough, clay, cornstarch, shaving cream, bubbles, and colors. This play serves to soothe and calm; it also stimulates vital sensory input needed for conceptual understanding.

Cooking and Baking

Cooking and baking are regularly used to enhance the Preschool curriculum. Math, literacy, and science are some of the skills children are exposed to while participating in cooking and baking activities. Cooking and baking are also used as we explore our multicultural community of families and the celebrations and traditions that each family holds dear. In addition, the children learn about food sustainability with our garden to table exposure, as we plant, garden and harvest and then cook with our garden harvest.

Nature

Inside the classroom we have creatures such as fish, crickets, earthworms, and snails to investigate and observe. Outside, the children help to plant bulbs, flowers, seeds, and vegetables. They take care of the garden by raking leaves, sweeping the paths, watering the trees, seeds, vegetables, and flower beds, and harvesting vegetables.

Math

Children experience math in many different concrete ways throughout our classroom. They can play, count, sort, classify, match, measure, pattern, seriate, and form spatial relations with a variety of equipment and objects that are integrated into all the activity areas.

Language and Emergent Reading and Writing

Rather than using formal instruction (e.g., flash cards, worksheets) to teach pre-academic skills, we

use a developmentally appropriate approach called Whole Language which relates skills such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing to the child's interests and experiences. We help children make the connection between the written word and communication by writing down their dictated stories and then reading them at circle time. We have a print-rich environment, which is incorporated into all areas of our curriculum. Children have access to writing materials and books throughout the classroom and are exposed to a variety of literature individually and in small or large groups every day. When children show an interest in wanting to write letters and words, they are given individual support.

Music

Children enjoy many forms of musical activities such as singing songs, playing percussion instruments, dancing, and listening to different musical styles (e.g., classical, blues, rock, reggae, Celtic).

Woodwork Table

Children use real tools to hammer and saw in this area developing eye-hand coordination and problem solving. Because carpentry is seen as an adult activity, its inclusion in the classroom can enhance a child's sense of accomplishment.

Outdoor Play

We are fortunate to have our natural outdoor play space for sand and water play, bike riding, hiding, climbing, gardening and plain old running around. We take the children on walks and picnics in the forest to hug the trees and learn about forest plants and animals.

3.2 Field Trips

Field trips are used to complement our in-class curriculum and begin once the children are familiar with the preschool routine. There are typically 4 to 5 field trips for the 4-year-old classes and 3 to 4 for the 3-year-old classes. In the past, the children have enjoyed trips to the fish hatchery, Fire Hall, gymnastics, Train Station Museum, library, beaches, and parks. The duration of the field trips is 1 to 1 1/2 hours plus travel time.

It is the parent's responsibility to drive your child to and from the designated field trip destination and home again. Parents are sometimes welcome to join us on our field trips. Should you choose to stay, we ask that you be responsible for your child and their safety. We ask you to do this because with so many adults (and possibly siblings) present, it is difficult for the teachers to effectively supervise. If you do not wish to stay, please let the teachers know so that they can take over the responsibility for your child or pass the responsibility over to a parent volunteer. Some venues request that the number of adults is limited, and in that case, we will require and request a specific number of parent volunteers. Please note that "parent volunteers" may not bring siblings. We are open to - and welcome - any suggestions and opportunities for appropriate field trips. Please share your ideas with us.

3.3 Parking

A friendly reminder to returning parents and a notice to new parents that we are only allowed to park behind the preschool in the gravel parking lot and along Elementary Road (south side). We are not allowed to park in the teachers' parking lot or the fire-lane at the Elementary School. We are also not allowed to park at the Elementary School's drop-off zones/loops or along the fence by the preschool. Thank you for your cooperation on this and for helping to make it safe for all children.

4.0 Communication

We welcome and appreciate communication. **As the school is volunteer based, the onus of responsibility with respect to seeking information remains with each and every parent.**

4.1 Meetings with Teachers/Executive Board

Meetings with the Teachers can be arranged on a one-on-one basis any school day after 3 pm. In the event that you may require additional information, you may direct your concerns through your Class Representative or contact the Teachers, Executive or Enrolment directly. Please note that the Teachers will not normally answer the telephone during class times.

4.2 Email

Email remains the principal means of communication simply because of convenience and efficiency in conveying mass messages to – at times – over 80 families. Your Class Representative will act as your main contact for information. Notices, school updates, monthly calendars and newsletters are distributed by email and are available online at our website. For those without email or who do not check their email on a regular basis, hard copies are available upon request from your Class Representative.

4.3 Monthly Newsletter and Calendar

A monthly newsletter and calendar will be sent via email to each family with important program news from the Teachers and an overview of past and upcoming activities. The newsletter will have content submitted by the Executive Board and Committee Chairs. The calendar contains dates for children's birthdays to be celebrated at preschool, field trip dates, special events (e.g., Mother's Day tea), clean-up dates and parent meetings. **Please read and make a note of important information in the newsletter every month, as we rely on it as a primary communication method.**

4.4 Preschool Website, Facebook Page, and Instagram

Our website: www.friendlyforestpreschool.com

Key documents such as this handbook, preschool meeting minutes, policies and procedures, newsletters, calendars, and forms are housed on the "parent login" section of the website (the parent login password will be provided to you in September). The Friendly Forest Facebook and Instagram pages are also used as an additional means for sharing information among the parent community and alumni. Please feel free to share and repost the preschool social media posts on your own personal social media. The preschool relies on word-of-mouth advertising and social media supports regular awareness of the preschool.

4.5 Parent Meetings

Our **Annual General Meeting**, held in early September, enables parents to meet with the Teachers and the Executive Board, learn valuable information about our program and to have their voices heard. **Attendance by one parent at this meeting is mandatory.** Regular board meetings with the Executive Board, Teachers, parents and at times guest speakers are held every 4-6 weeks. These meetings are open to all parents and deal with the daily administration and running of the preschool, and all parents are encouraged to attend whenever possible.

Parent Education opportunities may be offered throughout the school year. Guest speakers will be brought in to speak on topics such as Preschooler nutrition, Child Development, behavior expectations, and management. These topics will ALWAYS align with the philosophy of the teachers and preschool and will serve parents to better understand their preschooler and their development.

5.0 Arrival and Dismissal

Punctuality is of the utmost importance! Please arrive early at preschool and encourage your child to have a run around and play with their peers on the grassy hill outside the preschool gate. Exercise is good before class starts. Movement is beneficial for brain development and learning. If your child needs to use the bathroom, please knock, and come in and then return outside. We aim to have a nice smooth calm transition into the classroom.

Once class time begins, the teachers will welcome you and open the front gates. At the beginning of the school year while the preschool is unfamiliar to your child, we ask that you assist your child onto the porch to wash their hands and then bring them into the coat room and help them find their hook and hang up their coat and backpack. You may then guide them into the classroom for free play. As your child becomes more comfortable with the preschool environment, you may say your goodbye at the gate and the teachers will assist with handwashing, etc. **Please remember to “sign” for your child in the attendance book when you arrive and when you leave.** No child may be left on the porch without an adult and **please** make sure that you close all doors and latch all gates behind you.

We encourage that you do NOT arrive too early for pick up as the children tend to stop playing as soon as they see their grown-ups arrive. Generally, 5 min before the end of class time is a good time to arrive. Once the end of class time is nearing, the teachers will welcome adults through the front gates. This can be a tricky time of supervision for the teachers with so many people coming and going, it can be easy for a child to slip out the front gates to find their caregiver. Please remain aware of the children around when you open or close the gates. If you need to speak with the teachers, we ask that you please wait until the children have been safely dismissed so that our attention is not distracted from supervising at this vital time. Once you have entered the play yard at the end of class, we assume you have assumed full responsibility of your child, this allows the teachers to supervise the gate more closely. You are welcome to stay and play after class with your child.

During playtime we will keep the door locked, especially in the beginning of the year, when new children may decide it is time to go and find a parent and wander out.

5.1 Release of Child from Preschool

Children will not be released from the preschool to anyone except:

- a) The authorized parent/guardian of the child; or
- b) A person authorized by the parent

Please ensure that your alternate pickup comes with the appropriate **car seat** for your child. In the case of late pick-up, children will be kept inside the preschool with the teachers until a parent or caregiver arrives.

Children may not be released to a parent or caregiver should they appear to be impaired or appear unable to provide safe care (due to illness, injury, etc.).

In such instances, staff will offer to call a cab, friend, or relative to drive the parent/caregiver and child home. Should they refuse and drive away with the child, the police will be notified.

If a parent/caregiver does not arrive by 5 pm and all attempts to contact parents and authorized persons fail, the staff will contact the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

5.2 Unauthorized Pick-up

A child may not be released to a person who has not been authorized by the parent (this includes older siblings). Authorization may be given in person verbally or stated on the authorized pick-up list. We cannot and will not let a child go with someone whom we are not familiar with unless we have your expressed permission. This includes spouses, grandparents, aunts, and uncles, etc.

In the event that an unauthorized person arrives, the child must remain in the company of the staff while they try to contact the parents by telephone. If they cannot be contacted, the person will leave, and the child will remain at the pre-school with the staff.

6.0 Daily Routine

Each preschool session is structured with predictable routines that provide the child with a sense of security and competence.

While the program is flexible, the same things happen at more or less the same time every day. The emphasis is on routine, however, rather than sticking rigidly to times. If changes are made the children are told beforehand so that they still feel in charge. **Once again, please be punctual for arrival and pick-up.**

The daily routine is as follows:

Arrival	Children are greeted individually as they arrive. They may stop for a hug or to tell or show us something. Parents exchange last minute information with us concerning pick up, past illness, etc. before leaving as quickly and quietly as possible.
Creative play	Children engage in activities in the different areas of the classroom, freely choosing what they would like to do. This is the most important part of the session for your child. We allot this part of the session the longest time.
Snack time - open	Children wash their hands before sitting and eating the shared snack.
Tidy-up time	Children are encouraged to help tidy the classroom and put the equipment away.
Circle time/Story time	Teachers and children gather together for circle time and story.
Outdoor Time/Gym	Rain or shine!
Departure	Parents pick up children from the outdoor area.

6.1 Clothing

Our outdoor activities require that children are dressed appropriately for the weather during pre-class time as well as during outdoor play. Our indoor program encourages active, imaginative - and sometimes- messy play. Children will use paint, glue flour, bubble-mix, finger-painting, goop, food color, clay, etc.

Please send your child to school in comfortable, washable play clothes.

We encourage the children to wear paint smocks (some paint does stain clothing), but we don't insist. Suggested clothing for preschool includes: comfortable pants and tops or dresses, rubber boots, a hooded water-proof warm coat, **Velcro shoes** (not lace-ups), and waterproof **mitten**s (not woolen and not gloves) for snow play.

6.2 Snack

At Friendly Forest, children enjoy a "shared snack." This means that the children will eat from a prepared snack that one parent has brought for the whole class. We believe a shared snack

exposes children to a wide variety of foods and promotes good nutrition. In the company of their peers, children are more willing to try foods they will not eat at home. A **'Snack Duty' calendar** will be posted and distributed by email. Extra snacks will be on hand in case someone forgets.

Finally, we encourage good nutrition at preschool. On your designated snack day, please try to send food from each of the four food groups (fruit/vegetable, dairy, protein, carbohydrate) such as fruits, vegetables, sandwiches, cheese, or home-baked goods instead of cookies, candies, and processed foods. We promote "water drinking" so **please send water, not juice** in a non-spill drink container marked with your child's name. Please do not send crackers, as children will tend to only eat these and none of the other snack offered.

We have some children with severe allergies to peanuts and nuts. For this reason, we ask that you DO NOT send any nuts or "may contain nuts" snacks to preschool. High-risk foods include commercial baked goods, granola bars, trail mixes, and jams where the peanut butter knife was also used! Thank you!

6.3 Birthdays

Each child's birthday is celebrated in a special way. Summer birthdays are referred to as "pretend birthdays" and are celebrated during the school year. **A parent, caregiver, or family member is welcome to spend the session in class on your child's preschool birthday.** Parents are asked to send a treat to preschool for your child to share with his/her classmates. We suggest home-made cookies, rice crispy squares or if you prefer, a non-sweet treat. **Please do not send cupcakes or large cakes as they make a huge mess.**

Additionally, sometime prior to your child's preschool birthday, please send 4 or 5 photos of your child spanning their lifetime to your class birthday poster parent so that a birthday poster can be created for your child's birthday. **Please put the photos in a marked envelope with your child's name, and birth date.** Your child will be able to take the poster home after the celebration at preschool.

6.4 Parents or Caregivers in the Classroom

We have an open-door policy at our school. This means that you are very welcome to come in whenever you wish to be with your child. We encourage you to do this so that you can understand your child's preschool experience and actively participate in his/her education. You may come as an observer, a participant (classroom helper) or as a comfort for your child. You may not come to judge or pass negative criticism regarding someone else's child. We feel very protective of the children in this regard. If you do have concerns regarding another child, you are encouraged to speak with us so that we can be constructive and try to meet your concerns. **Cell phone use is not permitted in the classroom.** If you need to receive or make a call or send a text message, please use the porch area.

Please do not socialize at length with other parents while you are in the classroom as this creates too much noise. The classroom is not designed for toddlers, so please supervise younger siblings, and tidy up after them - they love dumping everything!

6.5 Discipline Policy

(From the Provincial Childcare Facilities Licensing Board)

Discipline describes the teaching/learning process by which children develop socially acceptable and appropriate behavior as they grow to maturity. Its intention is to help children become self-disciplined as they learn appropriate and acceptable behavior patterns.

Discipline involves a continuous process of guiding behavior. It is offered while acceptable behavior is occurring as well as before, during, and after unacceptable behavior is displayed. The goal of discipline is to assist children to develop self-control, self-confidence, and sensitivity in their interactions with others.

STRATEGIES USED ARE:

1. Clear, consistent, and simple limits are established.
2. Limits are stated in a positive rather than a negative way.
3. Focus is on the behavior, rather than the child.
4. Minor incidents are ignored.
5. Children's attention is gained in a respectful way.
6. Problem solving skills are encouraged.
7. Natural and logical consequences are used.
8. Redirection away from problem arousing situation is used.
9. Use of equipment is limited or withdrawn.
10. The child is removed from the situation where they are unable to cope.

6.6 Outdoor Policy

We believe children need to go outdoors everyday rain or shine. They need to fill their lungs with fresh air and have space to develop their large-muscle skills. In order to understand the seasons, they need to experience them regardless of whether it's hot, cold, wet, or dry outside. The warm sun, cool wind, crackling leaves, wet rain, dry air, and the smell of green spring leaves are all wonderful. We take the children to play outdoors every day come rain or shine and we love snow! **If you do not want your child to go outdoors because you believe a cold will worsen, we ask that you keep your child at home on those days as our staff ratio requirements cannot be met if one teacher is inside with one child.** Please make sure that you always send clothing to keep your child warm and dry.

7.0 Health and Other Concerns

Due to the number of children enrolled in our preschool, it is important to have the cooperation of parents in helping to prevent the spread of communicable diseases. **A general guideline is to keep the child at home if he or she is infectious to others.** Decisions as to the significance of an illness are difficult, but are made more easily when a child:

- Is developing or has an acute cold with fever, runny nose and eyes, sneezing, coughing or has a sore throat;
- Is feverish/feeling sick, these being possible early signs of an illness which might develop quickly;
- Is vomiting or has diarrhea;
- Has infected skin, eyes, or hair; or
- Has an undiagnosed rash.

These ailments may require a doctor's confirmation as to whether the child is infectious.

If a child develops any of these symptoms while at preschool, the staff will make the child as comfortable as possible and attempt to contact the parents.

Please keep children home for 24 hours after the last of one of the above symptoms occurs or the child has been on antibiotics for a minimum of 24 hours. Otherwise, please keep your sick child at home until he or she is able to participate in normal preschool activities, **including both indoor and outdoor play**, and until he or she is no longer infectious.

We appreciate a call or email if your child will be absent from school. Our number is **604.469.0438** and our email is teachers@friendlyforestpreschool.com

If your child contracts an infectious disease, please let us know so that we can notify the other families and the Public Health Nurse.

7.1 Medication at School

Licensing regulations do not permit us to administer any medication (even Benadryl or Tylenol) without written and signed authorization from the child's parent or doctor. If your child has a life-threatening allergy or asthma, please fill out an information form available from the staff and arrange a meeting with staff to discuss the use of the EPI Pen or asthma puffers.

Please do not leave any medication in your child's coat room area, coat, or backpack. We have a locked cupboard to store medications while your child is at preschool.

7.2 Allergies

Please discuss any allergies your child may have directly with the Teachers. When necessary, the Teachers will request that children do not bring a certain type of food in their shared snack. Please respect this request.

We have some children with severe life-threatening allergies to peanuts and nuts. For this reason, we ask that you DO NOT send any nuts or "may contain nuts" snacks to preschool.

7.3 Separation Anxiety

Separation anxiety may or may not be a concern for you and your child. It is important to be aware that it isn't necessarily restricted to the beginning of the year. The Teachers will attempt to make this emotional experience as pleasant as possible. We can also meet with you to discuss the issue and make a plan that best suits you and your child.

7.4 Supported Child Development

We welcome children with require extra supports. With the help of the staff from Kinsight's Supported Child Development program, we work together to meet their special needs and ensure that the children have the same experiences as their peers. You may occasionally see our Support Consultant in the playroom visiting with the children. When needed, we may also have a 3rd program assistant in our playroom to help provide extra support when needed. This person is not a 1:1 worker. The Program Assistant wages are paid through the Ministry of Children and Youth.

7.5 Practicum Students

During the year, Early Childhood Education students from Douglas, Langara or Capilano College will be doing their *practicum* at our preschool. The *practicums* usually last 6 weeks. These students have all had criminal record and background checks done before they are permitted to start in our preschool.

8.0 Parent Cooperation

8.1 What is required?

To balance the workload among the parent community, each family is required to assist in three areas: assuming an annual parent duty; completing one clean-up duty per year; and participating in the rotating snack schedule. However, this is your preschool - if you see something needing attention (leaves that need sweeping, an area that needs tidying) kindly take the initiative to get it done. **Each family is required to share in the work of the school and become actively involved.**

Your help is mandatory in the following areas:

- **Clean-Up Duty**
Completing one clean-up duty per year (3 hours in length) or paying a "Clean-Up Opt-Out Fee" in lieu of clean-up duty.
- **Snack Duty**
Each family is required to participate in the "shared snack" program by preparing a snack for their child's class approximately 4 or 5 times throughout the school year.
- **Annual Parent Duty**
Serving on the Board of Directors or on one of five Committees and attending any meetings related to your involvement in the Board or Committees as required. Averaging 15-20 hours of volunteer time per year.

Each family is also required to attend the Annual General Meeting held in September.

The preschool recognizes that every family's ability to commit differs. To provide some flexibility, parents can "opt out" of their Clean-Up Duty. For some families, opting-out will make the most sense. You are still helping the preschool in an equivalent way with the submission of these fees as opposed to volunteering. **Please note that there is no "opt-out" available for Annual Parent Duty or Snack Duty, as these jobs are critical to the ongoing operation of the preschool.**

Details on each parent duty, how to "opt-out" (where applicable) and security deposits for non-participation are set out below.

8.2 Clean-Up Duty

Clean-ups are scheduled regularly throughout the year (approximately 8 per year). The clean-ups involve both indoor and outdoor projects such as repairs, painting, cleaning, and landscaping. Outdoor clean ups are generally scheduled on a Saturday morning, while indoor clean ups will take place on a weeknight evening. Any new outdoor play-yard projects will be incorporated into the clean-up schedule.

One adult member of each family (with the exception of Board members) must attend one clean-up during the school year. Mom, Dad, Grandparents, or any adult can represent your family. Children and siblings are welcome to come provided that one parent volunteer supervises the children while the other parent works. You will be allowed to reschedule **once** if you are unable to attend the original clean-up day you signed up for, providing that you give adequate notice to the Clean-Up Coordinator.

Clean-up Opt-Out: For those that would prefer to not participate in Clean-up Duty, you can opt-out of this duty at the time of registration by submitting a \$150.00 fee via e-transfer to treasurer@friendlyforestpreschool.com. If you decide to opt out between September and December,

you can pay the \$150.00 fee via e-transfer. If you decide to opt out between January to June, you will need to pay a \$200.00 fee via e-transfer. Please note, this opt-out is only for Clean-up Duty – not your Annual Parent Duty (e.g., Committee/Board work). Failure to complete your clean-up duty will result in \$200.00 being collected from your bank account via EFT at the end of the school year. Clean-up Opt-out Fees collected will be used to hire external help to ensure all needed work is completed. Any rejected EFTs will be charged a fee of \$30.00

8.3 Snack Duty

Each family is required to participate in the “shared snack” program. This ensures that the children will have an opportunity to eat a prepared snack that one parent has brought for the whole class. We are encouraging the children to try a variety of foods and also to promote good nutrition. In the company of their peers, children may be more willing to try foods they will not eat at home.

A “Snack Duty” calendar will be posted and distributed by the Class Representative. Each family prepares a snack for their class approximately 4 to 5 times throughout the school year. The teachers will prepare snacks for the first week for the 3-year-olds only. The children may not eat much at first but will adapt as they grow accustomed to the snack offered.

This NUT-FREE shared snack program will support efforts to provide children with fresh whole foods (rather than commercially prepared and packaged snacks) and will encourage children to try a variety of foods.

It is also the duty of the snack parent to take home and launder the hand towels at the end of the preschool session. We ask that the hand towels are washed in hot water and dried in a hot dryer and then fold and return the towels on your child’s next class day.

8.4 Annual Parent Duty

Each family is expected to participate in a yearly parent duty through participation on the Board of Directors **or** as a part of one of the five Board Committees:

1. Enrolment and Parent Coordinator;
2. Program Support;
3. Social Planning and Fundraising;
4. Communications and Marketing; and
5. Maintenance.

Parents can expect to contribute a total of approximately 15-20 hours of volunteer time for their annual parent duty (usually more for some Board positions).

The preschool adopted a committee structure in 2012 to allow better coverage and flexibility in fulfilling the key jobs associated with the administration and running of the preschool. Within the committee structure there remain many distinct roles/jobs (e.g., class photographer, classroom helpers, etc.). Additional projects/tasks may also arise over the course of the year, however, that will require support from our parent community. These special projects will be addressed on an “as-needed” basis.

Some Committee positions require a shorter time commitment on a more regular basis (e.g., program support and maintenance positions), while others require a greater time commitment at specific times of the year (e.g., social planning and enrolment positions). As well, there are positions that require being available during preschool hours and others that can be done easily from home. If you have questions about the commitment associated with specific Committees, please feel free to talk with the Board Executive, Teachers, or current Parent Duty Coordinator.

The preschool tries to remain flexible in how its needs are met and we do our best to work creatively with families to help them fulfill their parent duty obligations, placing parents wherever we can in jobs that match their skills, interests, and scheduling constraints.

Our successful school is the product of the time, energy, talents, and creativity of everyone involved: every family's contribution adds something special to our school and there is truly something for everyone. If you do not see a duty that fits your unique skills, we encourage you to offer your special talent or professional skill. For example, website duty was a job created in 2005 because a parent offered to create our website. We could quote many more examples where these initiatives have greatly helped the school.

Please read about the Board and Committees below. Specific position descriptions are found in the Friendly Forest Parent Duty Descriptions document. We will be collecting your top 3 choices once your child's spot is confirmed. Please choose a Board or Committee position that is suited to your particular skills and home/work situation. We will do our best to accommodate your choices.

There will be opportunities throughout the year to volunteer for special events. Your participation is most welcome (and needed) as most of these events are not possible without the help of our parent community.

Please note: Please note: The preschool has implemented a parent duty security deposit of \$250 per semester, evaluated in December, March and June. Failure to perform your parent duty in any of the three semesters will result in the collection of this security deposit via electronic fund transfer (EFT). Our expectation is that each family will complete their annual parent duty as assigned, in which case, this deposit will not be collected. See Appendix 1 for a detailed outline. Any rejected EFTs will be charged a fee of \$30.00.

Overview of Board and Committee Positions

	Number of Volunteers
Board Members (Voting Positions)	
President	1
Vice-President, General	1
Vice-President, Grants	1
Co-Treasurers	2
Secretary	1
Enrolment Chair	1
Committees (Non-Voting Positions)	
Enrolment Committee Includes Enrolment Chair (Board Member above) and, but not limited to, the following positions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent Duty Coordinator (1) • Enrolment Administrator (1) 	2
Communications and Marketing Committee Includes, but is not limited to, the following positions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications & Marketing Chair (1) • Website and Technical Support (1) • Newsletter and Calendar Support (1) • Class Photographers (4, 1 per class) 	7

Social Planning and Fundraising Committee Includes, but is not limited to, the following positions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social + Fundraising Chair (1) • Secretary (1) • Community Outreach (2-3) • Alumni Connections (1) • Graphics Designer (1) • Location and Decor Caretakers (2) • Food and Beverage Organizers (2) • Committee Members 	10+
Maintenance Committee Includes, but is not limited to, the following positions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance Committee Chair (1) • Committee Members (6-8) • Clean-up Duty Coordinator (1) 	8-10
Program Support Committee Includes, but is not limited to, the following positions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class Representatives (4, 1 per class) • Classroom Helpers (16, 4 per class) • Birthday Poster (4, 1 per class) • Supplies (1) • Pet/Fish Tank Maintenance (1) • Laundry & Sewing (1) • Playdough (4, 1 per class) • Administrative Support (1) <i>Classroom helpers are asked to provide support in the classroom a minimum of 8 times per year. One time per month is recommended.</i>	32

8.5 Executive Board Positions

The seven Board Member (Voting) positions will be tentatively nominated by May for final approval at the AGM in September. This allows for a smooth transition of Board duties when the current Board steps down. While the current Board will remain in governance until the new Board is installed at the Annual General Meeting, it has been our convention for the existing Board to work with those being nominated over the course of the summer. Please note that Board positions are at a minimum a 12-month commitment.

As a Board member of a non-profit organization, responsibilities include fulfilling all legal requirements, establishing, and periodically reviewing the purpose and philosophy of the childcare program, establishing, and periodically reviewing the policies and procedures of the program, and managing the finances of the childcare program.

Due to the additional responsibilities associated with Executive Board positions, these volunteers are exempt from the annual clean-up duty requirement. It should be noted that the Friendly Forest Board operates less formally than many boards, thereby promoting a highly collaborative and rewarding environment in which someone with little to no board experience can learn about governing and operating a parent cooperative.

Board positions are outlined in the Friendly Forest Parent Duty Descriptions document.

8.6 Committees

Each family is required to serve on one committee (if they do not hold a Board position). Each committee will be made up of a blend of new (3-year-olds) and returning (4-year-olds) families to ensure continuity from year-to-year. Committees, and the tasks assigned to each committee, may be changed at the discretion of the Board. Detailed job descriptions and core documents will be emailed at the beginning of the year. It is the responsibility of the Committee to maintain all core documents, issue regular communications and maintain accurate records electronically and in the Committee Binder. This is to ensure that core documentation is handed over and made available to new volunteers at the start of each year.

Each year, a Committee Chair (if required) will be selected from the returning parent community. Committees are required to meet as needed throughout the year with a Committee member reporting back to the Board at regular intervals or as needed. Some Committees have regularly scheduled responsibilities, while others operate on an “as-required” basis.

Committees are to meet within three weeks from the start of the year to identify a work plan, delegate tasks, and report to the next regularly scheduled Board meeting (usually held in October).

Committee positions are outlined in the Friendly Forest Parent Duty Descriptions document.

9.0 Friendly Forest Preschool Emergency Plan

The preschool has developed an emergency plan for the safety of the children in the event of an earthquake or other disaster situation. The Teachers are trained in first aid and are prepared to care for your children in the event of an emergency.

Parents have been requested to fill out **2 Emergency Cards and provide 2 photos (i.e., each card with a small photo of your child affixed to the back of the card – near signatures)**. One set of emergency cards will be with the Teachers at all times. It is important that the information on each form is complete, accurate and up-to-date. Emergency cards are used by teachers and possible emergency personnel to identify children in case of an emergency at the school. In addition, children will not be released to anyone not designated as a pick-up person on these cards.

9.1 In the Event of an Emergency

In the event that the Teachers and children are not able to return to the preschool following a disaster, they will relocate to:

- 1) Spirit Park Gazebo or if the school is deemed not safe;
- 2) Anmore Village Hall (on Sunnyside Road across from the Fire Hall)

Please come to the Preschool first, report to the teachers, and take your child home. Please note that no child will be released to an unauthorized person. If the children/teachers are not at the Preschool, please proceed to Spirit Park. Come as soon as it is safe to travel.

9.2 Making Contact if Phone Lines are Down

We need to collect **one “Out of Province” phone number** for each child. Please include this number on your detailed Registration Form. In the event of a serious emergency in which local telephone lines are out of order (sometimes for hours/days), the school will contact your emergency “out of province” phone contact with information regarding your child. Please call that number for an update. We will call as soon as the situation is stable, and the children are safe. Parents are encouraged to keep the “Out of Province” phone number with them at all times so that they will be able to pick up any emergency messages.

9.3 Emergency Supplies

Emergency supplies for the preschool are kept in the preschool garden shed. There is enough food and water to last for three days, a first aid kit, space blankets, plastic tarps and rope, a radio, etc.

9.4 Fire Drills and Practices

Fire drills are practiced each month and recorded in a book. When the bell rings, one teacher calls the children to follow her out of the room while the other teacher checks all rooms and looks under beds and tables. She takes the First Aid kit, Medications, Emergency cards, and attendance book and follows the group across the field away from the preschool. Children are counted as soon as they exit the preschool and attendance is taken on the field.

10.0 School Closure Policy

The Teachers and the Board of Directors will establish a tentative school calendar at the beginning of each school year. A schedule of key dates will be sent out prior to the start of the school year.

Scheduled Closures

Scheduled closures include:

1. Statutory Holidays
2. Winter & Spring Breaks
3. Curriculum Development/Planning Days - TBD each school year

Unexpected Closures

Class closures may result from unexpected events and circumstances, including (but not limited to) flooding, gas leaks, power outages, or multiple staff illnesses. Every effort will be made to contact families by phone and/or email. Monthly tuition fees will not be prorated.

Extreme Weather Conditions

In the event of extreme weather conditions, Friendly Forest Preschool may be closed. If weather conditions worsen while classes are in session, parents are encouraged to pick up their child(ren) early. In such situations, an email or phone call may be sent out to families to alert them of worsening conditions.

Forced Closures

In the case of a school closure due to Provincial emergencies, Federal emergencies, or acts of God, monthly tuition fees will not be prorated. The early withdrawal fee (as noted in section 2.2) may be retained at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

Appendix 1 – Security Deposit Agreement

Parent participation is an essential part of Friendly Forest Preschool and will be evaluated several times per year during the months indicated below. In the event that a deposit is owed, we will send a notification via email detailing the reason for collecting the deposit, as well as the amount.

Security Deposit	Conditions & Details	Month(s) Evaluated	Amount
Parent Duty	Completion of parent duty assignment. 5-6 hours of recorded participation per trimester, or completion of assigned task. Evaluated 3 times per school year.	December	\$250
		March	\$250
		June	\$250
Clean Up*	Participation in 1 clean-up session per school year	June	\$150.00 (up to Dec 31 of the school year) \$200.00 (after January 1 of the school year)
<i>*opt out available</i>			