



# CORNERSTONE CHILDREN'S CENTRE

## PARENT HANDBOOK

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**A ministry of the First Baptist Church**

# WELCOME TO CORNERSTONE!

Childcare, *is* the heart of the matter, for both Parents, Guardians and Caregivers. Cornerstone acknowledges and respects your trust in us to care for and educate your early learners.

Cornerstone recognizes the vital role that parents play in every aspect of child development, that home and family remain the centre of your child's life. We strive to complement home and family life, not to substitute it; therefore a certain amount of *parent involvement*<sup>1</sup> is expected.

Please take some time to read through this handbook, as it explains the **Policies and Procedures**<sup>2</sup> of our Centre. You will be given a **Parent/Caregiver Agreement**<sup>3</sup> form to sign that will indicate to us, that you understand and have agreed to abide by all our policies and procedures.

If you have any questions or concerns please bring them to us, your feedback is important to us.

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<sup>1</sup>  
Refer to appendix A in the Parent Handbook

<sup>2</sup>  
See page 8

<sup>3</sup>  
Form 1 found in the Parent Handbook

## OUR HISTORY

In September 1992 several mothers (from First Baptist Church) decided to start a play group for family support, child development and pleasure. In October of that year a one morning-a-week drop in program began. A men's group at the church provided seed money for supplies, donated material and built equipment to supply adequate furnishings. Initially toys were loaned to the group, with new toys being donated or purchased later.

This *Play Group* experienced tremendous success in early 1993 and the idea of a parent involvement preschool evolved, the core of which remains a vital part of our program today.

In 2000 an *After School Program* was implemented. This program ran successfully for several years until cuts in government funding rendered it unaffordable for most families, and therefore no longer financially viable for Cornerstone Children's Centre to operate.

In 2006, in response to the Childcare Crisis, we amended our license to include a *Group Daycare Program*, thus adding 20 much needed childcare spaces to our community. This program and our centre continue to grow and develop. Aided by grant monies and the generous support of many of our families we have purchased new equipment, toys and have constructed a new playground.

In September, 2012, we re-opened our School Age Care Program. This is a program for children in Kindergarten to Grade 5. We pick up children from Hume school and walk them back to the Centre for a fun 2 ½ hours. You can also make arrangements to have your children dropped off to our staff if they are attending another school. This program run all year with weekly summer camp programs in July and August.

# OUR PHILOSOPHY

The name, *Cornerstone* summarizes the history of our philosophy; that a child's home and family are the foundation of all early learning and care experiences and that each experience builds upon this foundation. Therefore at Cornerstone we seek to work together with parents/guardians to construct the best possible out-of-home care and early learning environments for all children.

Each child is recognized and valued as an individual, created in the image of a loving and welcoming God. Each child's needs, values, and culture are respected, and in this way we all learn to appreciate each other, our shared environment and our individual place in this world.

First Baptist Church welcomes all Cornerstone Families, and along with praying for us regularly, they will pass on information about special church services and celebrations. Cornerstone may be invited to participate in special church events or to sing during their Christmas Season. In this way Cornerstone keeps the members and friends of First Baptist Church informed about our Early Learning Programs. It also enables us to extend a thank-you to the Church for their years of support and encouragement in the development of our Centre.

Our Program at Cornerstone continues to evolve, striving to keep aware of the latest and most update insights and theories within the Early Learning Framework. This offers a 'footprint' to follow that places children at the centre of their learning. These philosophies challenge us think outside the box, to see children in a new and very exciting light; as beings who are capable of immeasurably more than we have historically given them credit. At Cornerstone we will endeavour to document this learning on an ongoing basis, making it visible for the kids, parents, and caregivers.

The purpose of documentation is multi-faceted; it educates, informs, helps children and caregivers reflect upon their shared experiences, enabling deeper learning experiences, and it creates accountability between caregivers and parents, and between caregivers and children. It demonstrates that we are striving to be in tune and to observe with both our eyes

and ears to the ordinary moments in a child's day, where learning and growth happen. It invokes questions and encourages us to explore and seek answers and ultimately ask more questions!

As a Centre based on Christian principles, we celebrate key festivals and calendar events associated with the Christian faith, such as Christmas and Easter. These themes will be but one layer of what happens at our Centre and will be explored in varying degrees as time and interest allows.

## **GUIDANCE**

Guidance, in this context, is defined as a supportive and non-threatening approach to children when conflict or inappropriate behavior arises. This approach preserves relationships and strengthens social skills. All staff must use the following techniques in attempt to achieve the above goals:

- develop a respectful relationship with each child.
- provide a warm, nurturing, and secure atmosphere.
- plan balanced, age appropriate activities.
- reinforce appropriate behavior.

From time to time inappropriate behavior will arise. Staff are expected to handle these situations using positive and supportive techniques such as:

- natural and/or logical consequences.
- modeling appropriate behavior, as children learn through imitation.
- diverting or changing children's activities.
- acknowledging children's feelings and helping them learn to express them in a socially conscience manner.

Any form of ‘discipline’ that compromises children’s physical and/or emotional well being is **prohibited**.

Examples of this include, but are not limited to:

- corporal punishment on the part of staff, a parent/guardian, or another child/group of children.
- deliberate harsh or degrading measures that humiliates or undermine a child self-respect.
- locking entry doors or using a locked room or structures for the purpose of confining a child.
- denying\* a child’s basic needs, such as food, clothing, or bedding.

\* denying is immeasurably different than a child refusing the these items of their own fruition.

*A word on Children with Challenging behaviors:*

Some children come with a unique set of challenges, for themselves and those around them. At times these situations can look and feel very frightening to the other children. Please do not hesitate to talk to the staff about such circumstances should they arise. Also, please be aware that in these cases, the Ministry is almost always involved in some capacity, either through Supported Childcare or Counseling, and an approved Care Plan will be, or has been, established for implementation and documentation purposes.

# **OUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

## **1.0 STAFFING**

### **1.1 BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

A volunteer Board of Directors oversee the functioning of Cornerstone Children's Centre. The members of the board consist of 5 active members of First Baptist Church and my also include up to 3 parent representatives. The Board meets approximately every 2 months to discuss current issues, such as budget, enrollment and program development. If you are interested in becoming a Parent Representative please contact Cornerstone Children's Centre's Manager.

### **1.2 STAFF**

Our staff are trained, professional, licensed Early Childhood Educators (ECE) or Qualified Assistants. Our staff have current first aid certification, have undergone a criminal records check and regularly attend seminars and/or conferences to keep current with their qualifications and education.

### **1.3 SUBSTITUTES, VOLUNTEERS, PRACTICUM STUDENTS**

Substitutes are necessary to replace sick and/or vacationing staff. Although our subs may not hold a certificate in ECE, they will all have experience working with young children, and are required to complete a minimum standard of training as set out by Licensing Regulations. It is also a requirement that there be at least one (1) licenced ECE on the premises at all times.

At Cornerstone we encourage parent volunteers. A list of volunteer jobs are listed in the hallway for parents to see and sign up for.

We continue to welcome ECE Practicum students into our centre. Historically, these students have come to us from both Selkirk College and Northern Lights College.

Our permanent staff will make every effort to introduce you to these individuals during your child's drop off and/or pick up time, but if we neglect to do so, please do not hesitate to introduce yourself and ask them who they are.

## **2.0 OPERATION**

### **2.1 DAYS AND HOURS**

We are open Monday through Friday, 7:30 am to 5:15 pm. Our staff leave the building at 5:30 pm.

Our hours of operation during Christmas and Spring Break have been based on demand. Historically we have required a minimum enrollment of 4 children per day to be financially viable. You will be asked and informed regarding your need for care, well in advance of each break.

### **2.2 CLOSURES**

Cornerstone will be closed for all statutory holidays, including Easter Monday, and for one or two Early Childhood related professional development days per year. Parents will be notified at least one month in advance of any such pro-d days. Please note that we remain operational during all public school based pro-d days and may, with prior notice, be able to accommodate kindergarten students on these days. Cornerstone will also be closed if SD8 declares a 'snow day' for the schools in Nelson.

### **2.3 DAILY SCHEDULE<sup>4</sup>**

Cornerstone strives to provide a cohesive balance of structured and free play opportunities, as well active and quiet times. Our goal is to maintain a balance of activities that foster every aspect of child development.

### **2.4 NUTRITION**

It is critical that the staff be kept apprized of any changes to your child's dietary needs and/or restrictions. Allergies and diet restrictions are taken into account, and are posted in the kitchen on the fridge.

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<sup>4</sup>

See Appendix B in the Parent Handbook

Parents are responsible for providing their own children with a balanced, nutritious lunch and afternoon snack. A charge for morning snack will be on your monthly bill. Please ensure that your child's food bag/kit is labeled. We do have a fridge for those items that need refrigeration, and a microwave to warm up food.

## **2.5 PLAY**

We encourage daily outdoor play. With the exception of extreme weather, we endeavour to get out-of-doors twice a day.

During winter months, parents/guardians are asked to provide warm outdoor clothing which includes boots, snow-pants, hat and mittens. Spring time children should have rain pants & jackets. The summer months, you are asked to provide your child with a hat and sun-screen, bathing suit & towel. Again, please label all of your child's belongings.

## **2.6 QUITE TIME**

We require that children enrolled in childcare for a full day partake in a quiet time in the afternoon. We do not expect all children to fall asleep, but we do expect all children to be on a mat quietly and rest (this includes reading a book/doing a puzzle). If the amount of sleep your child is having during the day interferes with sleep patterns at home, please let us know and we will work with you to create a healthy balance. Children are welcome to bring a special blanket and/or 'stuffy' from home for quiet time. We supply a cot or mattress, sheets, pillow & blanket for each child. We also have stuffies available.

## **2.7 FIELD TRIPS AND WALKS**

At Cornerstone we regularly engage in neighbourhood walks. These outing may include Hume School playground, Queen Elizabeth and Rotary Lakeside Parks. As these walks are within a 7 block radius we do not require a signed permission slip but request general permission for your child to participate within the Parent/Caregiver Agreement Form. A note will always be posted on our entrance door informing you of where your child is, as well as an estimated departure and arrival time, a contact name and cell phone number.

A special Field Trip Permission Form will be sent home whenever a field trip requiring bus or automobile travel is planned. Often we will require/request extra parent

supervision for these planned excursions. Volunteer drivers and staff members who plan to transport children must have a minimum of **2 million liability insurance**.

For summer care, there will be an additional Summer Parent/Caregiver Agreement Form that will include permission for walking and bus trips within Nelson city limits. There will be a monthly schedule of events posted and made available to parents.

### **3.0 PERSONAL MATTERS**

#### **3.1 TOILETING**

We accept children who are not yet toilet trained. We ask parents to bring all necessary items, ie: diapers, change pad, wipes, extra clothes. We do not have the staff to toilet train children, though we will encourage them to use the toilets.

Volunteers and students may assist with hand washing and personal hygiene that is not intimate in nature.

*Please note* that it is Cornerstone's Policy that only staff be permitted to assist with toileting needs, such as wiping bottoms, pulling up underwear and/or changing clothing.

#### **3.2 CLOTHING**

A good motto to abide by is "Dress for Mess". Please have your children come dressed in comfortable, washable play clothes. A variety of art medias are available daily, including paint. Although most companies advertise their products as being 'washable'... red is tough to get out!

Please provide us with an extra change of clothes. This is especially important for those children who stay all day.

Your child will also require a pair of inside shoes. Shoes need to have rubber soles as they love to run in the gym and the floor can be slippery and hard!

Again ... *please label all of your children's belongings.*

### **3.3 TOYS**

Children often bring toys from home, and it is our view that these items can create an important link for children between home and their child-care centre. We encourage children to be accountable for their personal items. These items will only be available for your child during Circle and rest times. Please talk to your child about putting them in a safe place when they are not being used. Please note that we will not assume responsibility for lost or damaged items, or spend extra time at the end of your child's day to look for misplaced items. It is your responsibility to label it, and your child's responsibility to be accountable for it.

Cornerstone does not permit toy guns or weapons or toys depicting destructive purposes. Imaginative games involving shooting or guns will be discouraged and children will be asked to use their imaginations in more positive endeavours.

## **4.0 FINANCIAL MATTERS**

### **4.1 FEES DUE<sup>5</sup>**

Parents will be asked to pay all fees within a week of being invoiced. Payment in cash is accepted but we *do not* keep change on the premises. You can also pay by cheque or e-transfer. Info for e-transfers are on your bill.

Fees are non-refundable unless we have post-dated cheques on file. The refund will reflect one months notice given and paid for.

We accept families who qualify for childcare subsidy. It is your responsibility to keep your subsidy application up to date and current. The turn around time for a subsidy application can be lengthy. You can call subsidy after a week to ask if your application has been approved. You will also be responsible for the difference between your childcare costs and the subsidy authorized.

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<sup>5</sup>

Please refer to Appendix C for our current rates

## **4.2 LATE FEES**

Late Payment is defined as fees not paid in a timely manner and may result in the withdrawal of your child from our programs and/or forwarding your account to a collection agency. There will be a \$15.00 charge for all NSF cheques.

## **4.3 ABSENCES AND HOLIDAYS**

If your child is absent from our program on a regularly scheduled or booked day due to illness or other circumstances, you will be charge according to the payment agreement.

We require 2 weeks advance notice of holidays. Parents may book two (2) holiday blocks, of any length, from September 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>. These holiday blocks do not include Christmas and/or Spring Break. Families may also book one (1) holiday block during summer care, July 1<sup>st</sup> to August 31<sup>st</sup>.

## **5.0 ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE**

### **5.1 ENTRY**

Parents are asked to enter the Centre at the end of the building, entering into the hall where the cubbies are located. Each child is assigned a cubby for their shoes/boots, jackets and backpack, etc and a mail pocket for communication and notifications from staff to parents. *Please check your mail pocket regularly.*

Parents must accompany their child/ren into the building for drop-off and pickup. We will not release a child to anyone under the age of fourteen and/or without written consent from her/his parent(s) or guardian.

### **5.2 AUTHORIZATION**

In the event of an emergency and/or you require someone else to pick-up your child, you are required to inform the Centre in writing. In addition, call and asked to speak to one of our staff in order to provide us with that persons name, address and phone number. We may also ask for a physical description of this person, and if your child and/or staff doesn't know or recognize them, they will be required to produce photo identification before we will release your child.

Confirmation of authorization can be e-mailed to [cornerstone@fbcnelson.ca](mailto:cornerstone@fbcnelson.ca)

### **5.3 SUSPECTED IMPAIRMENT**

Cornerstone will not release a child to *anyone* who is suspected to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol or seems unable to safely transport their child (ie: mentally or physically distressed). Staff may call an alternate adult to pick up the child as recommended by the parent.

If this authorized *person*, suspected of being under the influence, insists on leaving with the child, Cornerstone staff will notify the local police and disclose all the necessary information. We may also have to notify the Ministry of Children Families if we believe the child's safety and well being to be in jeopardy.

### **5.4 CUSTODY**

If a custodial parent requests that Cornerstone deny access to a child's non-custodial parent, we must have a copy of the *custody paper and court orders* to be kept on file. If there is an attempt by the non-custodial parent to remove the child without consent by the custodial parent, Cornerstone will deny them access and may have to telephone the local police for assistance. Without a copy of the custody paper and court orders, Cornerstone's staff can not deny the non-custodial parent access to their child.

### **5.5 MINISTRY APPREHENSION**

In the case of apprehension of a child by the Ministry of Children and Families and/or the Police, the senior staff member on duty will assume responsibility for the situation. The senior staff member will be required to ask both the social worker and/or the police for photo ID, and to record the name and title of the apprehending persons, as well as the date and time of the incident. This report will be sent to the *Senior Licensing Officer of Kootenay Health Protection Programs, Community Care Licensing of Interior Health*.

## **6.0 HEALTH MATTERS**

### **6.1 SANITATION**

All staff members will follow the universal precaution to prevent the transmission of germs /or disease.

These include:

- Washing hands with soap and water before preparing food and after using the washroom.
- Using latex gloves when encountering bodily fluids.
- Using bleach or approved sanitation solutions to clean surfaces that have come in contact with bodily fluids.
- Regular washing and sanitizing of toys equipment.

## **6.2 SICKNESS**

### **6.2.1 When is a child is too ill to attend?**

- When other children are at risk of infection.
- When attending compromises his/her comfort and safety.
- when the capacity of the Centre's staff to properly care for the child is compromised.

### **6.2.2 Do not send your child if she/he has:**

Chicken Pox, diarrhea, discharge from the eyes, fever (over 100F/37C), hepatitis, impetigo, measles, mumps, pinkeye, rash, ringworm, rubella, scabies, strep throat, tuberculosis, whooping cough, parasites, or is vomiting.

### **6.2.3 When a child becomes ill during the day:**

If a staff member deems a child to be ill, his/her parent will be notified and they will be required to collect or arrange collection of the child from the Centre.

In the event that a parent is unavailable, the emergency contact person listed on the registration form will be called.

If your child is sent home during the day, we expect that the child will remain home the following day to fully recover.

#### **6.2.4 Communicable Diseases**

Please inform the Director if your child has a communicable disease, as we are obliged to inform other parents of its associated risks and symptoms. We may also have to inform the Interior Health Office.

Please ensure that your child is free from all symptoms and risks before returning to the centre.

#### **6.2.5 Immunizations**

It is a licensing requirement that Cornerstone has updated information regarding your child's immunizations history and records. It is not a requirement that children in care have had immunizations, only that we are informed of their status.

#### **6.2.6 Medication**

Cornerstone requires disclosure of all medications being administered regularly to a child. This information may be of critical importance should an emergency arise and a parent can not be contacted.

Any medication that must be administered to the child at the Centre, must be given directly to a staff member with a filled out and signed *Consent to Administer Medication form*.<sup>6</sup>

### **7.0 EMERGENCIES**

#### **7.1 MEDICAL**

##### **7.1.1 First Aid**

If First Aid treatment is required, it will be administered by one of our qualified staff. All our staff are required to have current First Aid Certificates.

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<sup>6</sup>

Form 2 in the Parent Handbook

### **7.1.2 Medical Attention**

If medical attention is required, one qualified staff will attend while another staff contacts the parent. In the event that only one staff member is available, they will contact the Director or other staff to come in.

If parents/guardians are unavailable, we will call the child's emergency contact, and if they are unavailable, the child's doctor, and if they are unavailable arrangement will be made to transport the child to a medical facility. A staff member will accompany the child until the parent or emergency contact has been informed and is present.

### **7.1.2 Emergency Attention**

If emergency medical attention is required, the qualified staff will attend to the child, while another staff member calls an ambulance *and then contacts* the parents or if necessary the emergency contact person listed in the child's registration form. Parents are responsible for all Emergency costs.

*\*\*for any of the above situations, staff are required to complete an official Accident/Illness Report.*

## **7.2 EVACUATION<sup>7</sup>**

Building evacuation procedures are posted throughout the Centre and monthly fire safety procedures are reviewed and practiced with the children. In the event that we have to evacuate the building, parents will be called and asked to pick up their children from our predetermined, secure location.

## **7.3 UNAUTHORIZED PERSONS**

All visitors to the Centre, excluding Parents/guardians of children enrolled in the centre, must introduce themselves to the Centre staff. Visitors are not allowed to wander, at liberty, around or on the premises, and if they do so, they will be asked to leave and if necessary the local police will be notified for assistance.

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<sup>7</sup>

See appendix D, Safety Evacuation Procedures

## **7.4 ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

Suspected and/or alleged abuse or neglect of a child, by person(s) other than staff, enrolled in our programs will be documented, and if we believe a child's well-being to be at risk we are required by law to notify the *Ministry of Children and Families* and/or the local Police.

If, in the event that the *Ministry Of Children and Families* should apprehend a child, staff members do not have the power or authority to intervene.

Suspected and/or alleged abuse or neglect by a staff member, student, volunteer, will be documented and reported to the *Senior Licensing Officer, Kootenay Health Protection Programs, Community Care Licencing of Interior Health*. Cornerstone staff will cooperate with the all/any licencing investigation.

## **8.0 CONDUCT**

### **8.1 PROFESSIONALISM**

#### **8.1.1 Language and Behaviour**

As Cornerstone is a Community based organization that serves children families, all staff and persons coming onto the premises must use appropriate language and behavior. Threatening behavior and/or coercive discipline will not be tolerated or permitted anywhere in the vicinity. Staff may be required to confront, escort off the premises and/or notify the local Police regarding anyone displaying undesirable conduct.

#### **8.1.2 Smoking**

Cornerstone Children's Centre, including the parking lot and playground, is a *Non-Smoking Area*.

#### **8.1.3 Appearance**

Staff members are required to dress neatly and appropriately. They are expected to practice good personal hygiene, display healthy eating and living habits while they are on duty at the centre.

## **8.2 GRIEVANCES<sup>8</sup>**

If a parent/guardian has an issue or concern with another child and/or parent at the Centre, they are encouraged to talk to a permanent Staff member.

If a parent/guardian has a grievance against one of the Staff members, they are asked to contact the Director.

If a parent/guardian has a grievance against the Director, they are asked to contact the Chair of Cornerstone's Board. A list of Board Members is included in the *Parent Package*.

## **9.0 FEEDBACK**

Cornerstone continually strives to improve our program and to achieve a high level of professionalism within the field of Early Childhood Care and Education. Therefore, parental feedback is always welcomed and valued. We would also appreciate your time in filling out a program evaluation questionnaire when it is distributed.

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<sup>8</sup>

see Appendix D for a list of current staff board members