

Creative Expressions

Preschool

Parent Handbook

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Organization

Mission Statement

Creative Expressions Preschool is committed to providing enhanced and inspirational learning experiences in all subject areas from a Discipline-Based Arts Education (DBAE) philosophy for preschool-aged children from culturally diverse backgrounds encouraging enthusiasm for learning as well as cross cultural understanding, higher order thinking skills, advanced communication skills and creativity.

Discipline-Based Arts Education Philosophy

Creative Expressions Preschool offers instruction with a Fine Arts focus from a Discipline-Based Arts Education (DBAE) philosophy. The DBAE philosophy is a holistic approach to instruction that encourages creating, improvising, composing, performing, interpreting, discussing, writing and thinking about, reporting and valuing works of different arts disciplines. Recent studies support that fine arts experiences enrich and extend the academic curriculum but also produce higher standardized test scores, enthusiasm for learning and an increase in higher order thinking skills.

Development of Preschool

Creative Expressions Preschool is a corporation restructured in June of 2007 to offer unique and specialized instruction for all subject areas from a Fine Arts and Academic focus using the Discipline-Based Arts Education (DBAE) philosophy for 2 ½ - 5 year olds. Creative Expressions Preschool is fully licensed according to the requirements of the municipality of Richmond.

Facility Location

Creative Expressions Preschool is located within room 120 of Errington Elementary School and has been approved by group inspections and are rented from the Richmond School District on a yearly basis.

Licensing

The preschool shall maintain a license under the Child Care facility Licensing Act of British Columbia.

Insurance

The preschool shall carry adequate commercial general liability, abuse coverage, tenants legal liability and accident policy insurance through Whillis and Harding Agencies.

Instructors

Shirley Ng has a Diploma in Early Childhood Education and an Early Childhood Education License from British Columbia. She has produced the Chinese translations of the parent handbook and brochure as well as acts as the Chinese language consultant and manager of Creative Expressions Preschool.

Rajvir Sarai has Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree as well as Master Degree in Art Education. She has a Diploma in Early Childhood Education and receives Early Childhood license from British Columbia. She speaks English, Hindi and Punjabi

The Focus of the Preschool Program

The curriculum and environment of Creative Expressions Preschool is carefully organized so that the children have the maximum opportunity for hands-on experience. Administration and staff will ensure that the equipment will be accessible for children so that they can make choices, follow up interests and develop a responsibility for their own learning process. By providing a number of activities at any one time, children will be encouraged to contribute their own ideas to the planning process of developing curriculum content and activities.

At no time will obvious limitations be put upon the learning outcomes of any particular task so that the child's own individuality and integrity may be addressed and encouraged during learning experiences.

Arrival Times

Arrival Times for the morning sessions are 8:35 - 8:45 and afternoon sessions 11:50 - 12:00. This allows for parents/legal guardian to help their children with the removal of coats, changing from outdoor to indoor footwear and storage of bags or knapsacks.

Welcoming Circle Time

Staff and students will gather each morning in the circle area for calendar, stories, songs, and introduction to educational concepts, special events or projects.

Phonics

Phonics will be taught from a program called "Fun Family" which originates from White Rock, BC. This program uses a phonics story book, jumbo alphabet picture cards, rhyming book, sight words and student workbooks. Additional activities will be introduced to help children develop reading, writing, spelling and rhyming skills.

Mathematics"

Mathematics will include activities that encourage counting, shape recognition, colour recognition, problem solving, mental math skills, numeral printing skills and continued cognitive development.

Free Play

Free play will include choices of activities encouraging imaginative development such as computer use, housekeeping, listening centre activities, manipulatives, puzzles, sand or water table, stacking building blocks, science projects, art projects, and skill building or sensory development activities.

Science

Science will involve activities that encourage exploration, observations, predictions and experiments. All activities will support the cognitive development of the child and promote reasoning skills.

Social Studies

Social Studies will involve activities that encourage understanding and respect for Canada's multicultural society. All activities will promote acceptance of differences and the celebrate the ethnic backgrounds of students.

Music

Music will involve activities that allow children to develop listening skills, language skills and social skills while creating a foundation of musical skills. Students will gain musical skills through musical games, use of musical instruments, singing and combined music and movement activities.

Art

Art will enable students to develop creative thinking and problem-solving skills by experiencing media such as clay, paint, paper mache, collage, fabric and fibre arts.

Drama

Drama will encourage greater control of fine and gross motor skills through activities that reinforce cognitive development. These activities will also reinforce language and communication skills.

Snack

Snack will consist of a varied menu of nutritious foods provided by the staff of Creative Expressions. For special occasions an alternate choice of menu will be provided and parents are encouraged to contribute to special menus for birthday celebrations and ethnic foods during cultural festivals. All food allergies will be noted and followed carefully as weekly menus are presented to parents and students. A specially designated eating area for snack will be available so that students may interact in a positive manner and receive examples from the presence of administration and staff regarding acceptable behaviour when handling food items.

Outdoor Play

Outdoor play will include fresh air and exercise, a space to release energy, the opportunity to make noise, longer play sequences, a feeling of freedom and discovery of the environment. A range of appropriate equipment will be used for the development of fine and gross motor skills. Outdoor play experiences will be scheduled in the daily timetable regularly regardless of weather conditions (undesirable weather conditions might affect the actual amount of time spent outside but not deter staff from outdoor time).

Closing Circle Time

Staff and students will gather after outdoor play for a closure to the activities of the day. Activities might include songs, stories, reinforcing educational concepts taught, reminders or announcements of future activities.

Additional Information for Parents

Students Cubbies

Each child is given personal cubbies to use during the school year from September until June. Those cubbies are at the child's level so that they can put away their belongings during classes. The use of cubbies encourages the children's sense of responsibility and independence.

Clothing

Appropriate and comfortable clothing is recommended because child will develop more competent motor skills through free and unrestricted physical movement. Children will also be encouraged to participate in creative activities like finger painting, clay, sand or water use so we ask that parents provide oversized shirts as smocks for their children so that their clothing is protected.

Parent Participation

Creative Expressions offers a special opportunity for parents to volunteer in the classroom. If parents are interested in being a volunteer they should speak with staff regarding possible times or days. We also encourage parents to join us on fieldtrips or to share their strengths or talents in our classroom.

Absences

Staff would appreciate being informed if your child is going to be absent from Creative Expressions Preschool due to illness or other circumstances.

Lost and Found

It is strongly recommended that parents mark all their children's clothing and property with the child's name. Articles that can not be identified will be placed in a basket labelled "Lost and Found."

Monthly Newsletters

At the beginning of each month a newsletter will be sent home. In the newsletter parents will be informed about the activities, events and themes planned for our program.

Child Arrival and Dismissal Policy

Arrival

Creative Expressions Preschool insists that parents hand children over to staff in the classroom area. Parents are asked not to leave any children unattended in the car or parking area without adequate adult supervision. Parents are requested to bring their children on time to class to maximize the enjoyment of activities planned and minimize the disruption of lessons for other children.

Dismissal

Administration asks that parents, family members, emergency contact or legal guardians be punctual and pick up their child at the end of each session. Parents are asked to wait until the Closing Circle time is completed before assisting with their child with their belongings.

If children are consistently being picked up late a warning will be issued and documented. Following the warning if the parents/legal guardian are again late, \$1 will be charged for each minute over the time of the class session.

Release of a Child

Children will only be released to their parents/legal guardians or other individuals identified as having permission to take the child. If the situation arises forcing another individual to come, the administration shall require verbal authorization by parents before the child shall be released. In the event of an emergency an unknown individual will only be permitted to pick up a child if they supply the correct codeword. If the child seems anxious and unwilling to leave with the unknown individual, staff will check with the parents/legal guardian or emergency contacts before releasing the child. Administration will never permit a child to leave with an unknown individual without following these safety measures.

Child Not Picked Up Policy

If administration or staff is unable to contact parents/legal guardians then emergency contacts will be notified until one can come to get the child. Staff will ask parents for an explanation and record any incidents in the child's file. Repeated incidents will be discussed between staff and parents/legal guardians.

If all attempts to contact parents/legal guardians and emergency contacts have been unsuccessful than after a 45-minute period, Emergency Services will be contacted to arrange for the care of the child.

Closure Policy

There may be instances when the preschool, or Errington Elementary School can not open, such as conditions of bad weather or power outages. In the event of closure, administration will contact parents/legal guardians as soon as possible, so that the safety of children or staff are not jeopardized.

Field Trips and Outings

Regularly scheduled field trips and outings will benefit and enrich the learning experiences of Creative Expressions Preschool. Notices of the details of proposed dates and times for field trips and outings as well as permission forms will be handed out two weeks in advance. Each field trip or outing destinations will be inspected in advance to ensure that staff will be cognizant of immediate surroundings and possible safety hazards.

Permission forms will be accepted until the day before the event and encourage parents to participate in the field trips or outings as additional supervision. Any parents who do not wish their child to participate in the field trips or outings will be responsible for their child's care on that day. Volunteers participating in the field trips or outings will be given clear instructions as to supervision expectations or responsibilities, possible expenses for siblings accompanying the preschool or necessary transportation arrangements and car seat usage. Only parents that have adequate insurance and driver's licenses for their vehicles will be able to assist in transportation if necessary.

Guidance and Discipline Policy

Creative Expressions Preschool is committed to providing a secure and supportive atmosphere that encourages trust, wellbeing, caring, respect and cooperative relationships to promote good behaviour on the part of the children. Such an atmosphere will also allow children to develop the skills they require to resolve conflicts in socially acceptable ways. Creative Expressions will promote good behaviour on the part of the children by providing adequate outdoor and indoor space for each child to explore educational concepts, interact with others, play, eat and rest. The administrative staff of Creative Expressions bases its guidance and discipline policy upon an encouraging and non-punitive philosophy. Therefore guidance and discipline is used to help children change their patterns of behaviour without punishment so that they may learn how to cope with life in a positive manner as well as be sensitive in their interactions with others.

Through positive methods such as role modelling, demonstrating, communicating, reasoning, cooperation and giving choices, Creative Expressions will assist children to develop self-control, self-confidence, self-discipline and sensitivity in a variety of social interactions. The focus will always be upon behaviour rather than the character and personality of the child. Such a focus shall respect the individual child's integrity and self-esteem.

Directions or instructions given by staff to children will always be stated in a clear and concise manner reinforced by visual indications to indicate the appropriate behaviour for each activity. Administration and staff will clearly communicate to students the reasons why aggressive, destructive or violent behaviour is unacceptable. Fair and consistent boundaries of acceptable behaviour will accompany any directions or instructions and will relate to individual, class safety and protection of environment.

Discipline strategies shall vary according to situations and stages of child development. These strategies shall include distracting the child, providing more attractive alternatives, quiet reminders of acceptable behaviour, providing gentle support until a tantrum calms down, removing the child from pending danger or to a quiet space temporarily.

Creative Expressions Preschool will ensure that children are never subjected to shoving, hitting, shaking, spanking, or deprived of snack or washroom accessibility. Any removal of the child to a quiet space or 'time out' shall be used sparingly. Children would never remain longer than their age in minutes in a time out. A staff member would always remain with the child throughout the experience.

If any concerns are noted about extremes in student behaviour, observation of the ABC's of the behaviour will be conducted. Administration and staff will:

- identify the antecedent: what happens before the behaviour occurs
- identify the behaviour: the resulting behaviour either acceptable or unacceptable
- identify the consequence: the results that occur because of the behaviour is either positive or negative.

Continual observation and recording of data would be maintained as well as establish discussions with the parents/legal guardians regarding their child's behaviour.

Communications

Open Door Policy

Creative Expressions Preschool has an “open door” policy enabling parents to come and go as they wish and observe the participation of their child in preschool activities. Parents are encouraged to approach the administration or staff regarding any issues or concerns they have regarding the content of preschool curriculum, methods of instruction, disciplinary measures or other important matters regarding the policies or procedures of the preschool.

Parents are encouraged to initiate these informal discussions at any time or request private meetings to discuss these issues or concerns in greater detail.

Information for parents regarding upcoming preschool events are stated clearly in regular newsletters and well as through updated bulletin boards on a weekly, monthly and semester basis. Such events may include open houses or curriculum introduction evenings, which provide an explanation of the specialized DBEA program and philosophy. Parents are encouraged to observe their children in class and to discuss their child’s progress during parent-teacher conferences more formally.

Health and Safety

Children’s Health

Creative Expressions Preschool advises a child be kept at home if showing the following symptoms:

- is feverish or has had a fever of 100° F or 38.3° C within the past 24 hour period
- is taking antibiotics
- has a cold
- has a heavy nasal discharge
- has a constant cough
- is fussy, cranky, tired, and/or generally not herself/himself
- has diarrhea
- has been vomiting
- has a sore throat
- has severe itching of body or scalp
- has infected skin or eyes
- has an undiagnosed skin rash

In case of accidental injury, administration will make an immediate attempt to contact parents/legal guardian. If parents/legal guardian cannot be reached, the child’s doctor will be called and if necessary, administration will call an ambulance. Your signed consent form will allow the officer in charge to make necessary decisions about the care of the child. It is to your child’s benefit that all phone numbers, emergency numbers, and other pertinent information are kept up to date.

Life Threatening Allergies

Upon registration for Creative Expressions Preschool information regarding allergies is requested. Such information must include possible symptoms generated by indirect

contact with the allergy source as well as what steps need to be followed if a reaction occurs.

If the allergy is a type of food will ensure that there is a food allergy sign put on the fridge and near the snack table on the wall so that all supervising staff members are notified. Restrictions regarding food items will be established if necessary to prevent a child from being exposed to an allergy source. These restrictions will be discussed in detail with all parents and staff members to answer any possible concerns

For those children who are in danger of severe allergic reactions individual fanny packs will be used whenever the child goes outside or on a field trip. Each pack will be clearly marked with the child's name and contain the Epi pen and any special instructions and a medication form.

Medication

Creative Expressions will not administer medication that has not been prescribed by a physician. Administration and staff require parents to complete medication forms provided by the Community Health Nurse at the Richmond Health Department (604) 233-3150 that allows the administration of the medication for a child. Parents/legal guardians will be asked to have their family physician to provide the date of the medication is prescribed, description of the purpose of the medication, the correct dosage and what steps are necessary if the medication is ineffective.

Medications need to be in their original container with the name of the child and the correct dosage clearly shown. Medications that are no longer required by the child will be returned to the parents.

Medications such as an Epi pen will not be maintained as first aid supplies unless prescribed by a family physician or provided by the parents/legal guardians for a specific child.

The preschool requires written permission from the physician as well as parents to allow children to administer their own medication.

Emergency Procedures

If a sudden illness or serious accident occurs, administration and staff will administer First Aid and contact the parents/legal guardian for further instructions. If the parents/legal guardian is unavailable Creative Expressions Preschool will notify the emergency contact person. If the administrator is unable to notify either the parents/legal guardian or the emergency contact person(s), then the family physician will be called. Only in extreme circumstances or if advised by the family physician will the child be taken to hospital.

Fire Drill Policy

Creative Expressions Preschool will practice Fire drills regularly in conjunction with the staff and students of Errington Elementary Schools.

Earthquake Policy

Creative Expressions Preschool will practice Earthquake drills regularly in conjunction with the staff and students of Errington Elementary School.

Students, upon completion of the registration process, will have access to emergency supplies. We ask that parents/legal guardians supply a picture of family members for identification purposes and \$5.00. These items, with the emergency supplies, shall be kept in a large duffel bag for easy mobility during the circumstances of an fire or earthquake.

Washroom Policy

Children need to be in the process of being toilet trained to be registered in Creative Expressions Preschool. Universal Safety Precautions will be taught and supervised before and after snack or special activities (baking or art projects) and following washroom usage.

Child Abuse Policy

Creative Expressions Preschool will report any suspicions or allegations of child abuse to the Child Care Licensing Officer responsible for the area of Richmond Centre and the Ministry for Children and Family Development.

There are additional policies in place to ensure the safety of all children in the care of Creative Expressions Preschool. Please ask staff for this information if interested.