



**PLAY AND LEARN PROGRAM  
PARENT HANDBOOK**

## Welcome to the Play and Learn Program

Psychologists and educators agree that children learn through play and that during the first six years of their lives, children will learn more than at any other time in their lives. With this thought in mind, at the Play and Learn Program we prepare the environment to provide your child with many opportunities to enhance this development to the maximum. At the Play and Learn Program, we believe that children grow best in an environment that is safe and secure. We will provide a safe and secure environment to enable your child to express him or herself freely and to develop into a strong emotional, social, physical and intellectual individual.

At the Play and Learn Program, we foster the love of learning by allowing the children to experiment with open ended activities where there is no right or wrong answer. We focus more on the process than the product, which allows the children to experience success without pressure.

At various learning centers, your child will have the opportunity to experiment with different materials and at the same time practice social skills.

We encourage you to share any information that may be useful to us when working with your child. During the program if you have any concerns about your child, please feel free to contact the Facilitator. We value feedback on our program and are open to suggestions relating to your child or to program content. We like to work as a team with our families and maintain open communication. We hope you will feel comfortable sharing any pertinent information with us.

## PHILOSOPHY

The Play and Learn Program subscribes to the belief that children can create and think for themselves. During the program sessions, children are given the freedom to explore and discover through materials. The children are not pushed to intellectual accomplishments but are rather offered the tools with which to discover, explore and experience the excitement of learning. The program works on the premise that each child has the right to an individualized program where his or her own social, emotional, physical and intellectual needs can be met. The program fosters a multicultural approach and students, regardless of race, colour, nationality and ethnic origin, can access all the rights, programs and activities available to program participants.

## ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

- Your child must be the relevant age for the program. For the 3-5 year old program, your child must be 3 or turning 3 within the term he or she is registered.
- **Your child must be toilet trained and must separate with relative ease from the primary caregivers to enter into the program.**

## PROGRAM

- The Play and Learn Program is fully licensed and accredited by the province of British Columbia's Ministry of Health.
- A maximum of ten children attend the 3-5 year old program and two qualified Facilitators are present at all times.

- The program observes all public holidays.
- For new children entering into the program we set up a “gradual entry” system. If the separation from the caregiver and transition into the program is easy for the child then she/he will be invited to remain at the program for the entire 2 hours. If separation and transition are difficult for the child or his/her behaviours are disruptive to the other students, a slower entry strategy will be discussed with the parents. These procedures allow children to enter into our program with confidence and minimal anxiety.
- Marpole Oakridge Family Place reserves the right to suggest alternate programming for a child who is not, in our professional opinion, benefiting from the program or who is endangering self or peers through inappropriate behaviors.

## **SUPPLIES**

On each day your child attends the program, please send a child sized backpack that contains the following:

- a COMPLETE change of clothes.
- a pair of soft indoor shoes (canvas runners are ideal and Velcro is suggested as it allows the child to put on his/her shoes independently.)
- a healthy snack (please do not include any “treat” foods) and a water bottle for water only – no juice is allowed.

These items must be taken home after each session as there is no place to store supplies due to the room being used for multiple programs. If anything goes missing, there is a lost and found box in the coat room. At the end of each month, the box is emptied and all unclaimed items are donated. Please label all items belonging to your child.

## **STAFF**

The staff of the Play and Learn Program are qualified in the field of Early Childhood Education. Standard Criminal Record Checks are the responsibility of Marpole Oakridge Family Place and are carried out for all staff members. Substitute teachers may be called in on occasions when a staff member is unable to attend the program. All substitutes are qualified and subject to the same checks as regular staff.

## **DAILY ACTIVITIES**

The children will be greeted individually at the door by the Facilitator as they arrive at the program.

### **Please say goodbye to your child at the door.**

The children will be encouraged to remove their outdoor wear and prepare for the indoor environment independently. The Facilitator is there to help them if the need arises.

The child’s day will begin with a short circle time in which the children will look at the calendar and learn about and record the day’s weather.

During the rest of the program, the children are free to choose their activities independently. They may choose to work alone or in small groups.

The children will gather together towards the end of the session for a second circle time. During this time they will sing songs, read stories and poems, share news or study a particular theme.

As the children leave they will be encouraged to put on their coats and shoes independently. They will say goodbye to the Facilitator with a handshake.

**Please receive your child at the door of the classroom.**

### **PICK-UP AND DROP-OFF**

Pick up and drop off are to be **prompt**. Late arrivals and departures are confusing for the children and disruptive to the operation of the program.

Children will not be released to anyone other than the primary care givers or those listed on the registration or emergency forms. If it is necessary for the child to be picked up by anyone unknown to the staff please inform Marpole Oakridge Family Place in writing or by telephone.

**In the event of a late pick up – the following procedure will be followed:**

- 1. The parents/caregivers will be contacted.**
- 2. The emergency contact listed on the emergency card will be contacted if the child remains on the premises for more than half an hour and the Facilitator cannot establish contact with the parent or caregiver.**
- 3. If the child is not collected within a reasonable time, the Ministry of Social Services will be contacted to collect the child.**

### **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

If at any time a child appears to be physically or emotionally harming himself, his peers, or the program property, the following procedure will be followed:

- The child's attention will be gained in a respectful way. The child's name will be used, eye contact made, and a calm tone employed.
- The Facilitator will calmly identify the apparent problem verbally, for example, "It's frustrating to wait your turn isn't it?"
- The child will be gently reminded of the limits, rules and appropriate behaviors of the program setting. For example, "The rule is you have to wait until your friend's turn is finished before you may have a turn."
- Distractions, diversions or redirection will be used by the Facilitator when appropriate as a strategy to help solve the problems, for example, "Would you like to help me right now?"
- Choices will be offered to the child to help him or her solve the problem, for example, "Would you like to wait here for your turn without pushing the other children or over at the table with the puzzles?"
- Natural and appropriate consequences will be presented – for example, "We cannot read a book that has been ripped."; "If you choose to paint the wall it will be the end of your turn."
- These procedures will continue until full cooperation is achieved.

The Play and Learn Program Facilitators reserve the right to suggest alternate programming for a child who is not, in their professional opinion, benefiting from the program or is endangering themselves or their peers through inappropriate behaviors.

### **SNACK**

Please provide your child with a SMALL, nutritious snack each day. Please select foods as listed on the Canada food guide. A copy of the Canada food guide can be found at <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/order-commander/index-eng.php>. Please remind your child not to share their snack with their friends – this rule is to protect children who have food allergies. This rule extends to birthday celebrations.

### **BATHROOM PROCEDURE**

Your child must be toilet trained and independent with bathroom procedures when entering into the program. The Facilitator will wait OUTSIDE of the bathroom to allow the child to use the bathroom independently. The Facilitator will assist only if requested to do so by the child.

### **TOYS FROM HOME**

Please encourage your child to leave toys and other personal possessions at home.

### **BIRTHDAYS**

We will be happy to acknowledge your child's birthday at circle time by singing a birthday song. You can send pictures of your child from birth to the current year to show to his/her friends. If you would like us to do so please inform the Facilitator a few days before so that time can be allocated for this activity.

### **VOLUNTEERS**

We will occasionally ask for your help with baking or other special projects. Please look out for sign-up sheets if you would like to volunteer.

### **ABSENCES AND ILLNESS**

Please inform the program facilitator by telephone in cases of sickness or absenteeism.

If your child becomes sick during program time we will contact you to pick him/her up.

**If we are unable to contact either parent – the following procedure will be followed:**

- 1. We will contact the person indicated on your child's emergency card.**
- 2. If the emergency contact is not available we will contact the child's physician.**
- 3. If the child's physician is not available, and the child's condition warrants it, we will contact the nearest emergency services.**

**PLEASE REMEMBER TO MAKE ANY NECESSARY CHANGES TO YOUR CHILD'S EMERGENCY CARD AS CHANGES OCCUR.**

### **ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION**

If it has been agreed between the staff and the parent/caregiver to administer to the child any medication prescribed by a doctor, the Facilitator shall ensure that the medication is given according

to the amount and time of dose specified by the parent or caregiver. These instructions must be clearly written and signed and presented to the Facilitator.

### **PROCEDURE FOR SUSPECTED ABUSE**

If it is suspected that a child in the program is in danger of abuse or in an abusive situation it is our lawful duty to report the situation to the Ministry of Social Services.

### **QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS**

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your child, the staff, or pertaining to the program, please arrange a time to discuss these with the Facilitator after program hours. The Program number is 604-263-1405. Tracy Howard, Executive Director of Marpole Oakridge Family Place (the program venue) may be reached at ed@mofp.org. Please refrain from discussing your concerns during drop off and pick up times.

If the Facilitator has any concerns regarding a child's progress or behaviors the parents will be contacted to participate in an informal meeting. If additional advice, support or suggestions are required, a community health nurse or other professional may be contacted with the consent of the child's parents.

### **REGISTRATION**

The Play and Learn Program runs in three terms during the year and follows the public school system calendar.

When the parent has filled in, signed, and handed in all necessary paperwork to Marpole Oakridge Family place along with payment and have received confirmation from the Executive Director that there is a spot for the child, then the spot in the program is confirmed. Anyone interested in enrolling in all three of the terms should do so at the beginning of the program in September to secure spots in the other two terms as well.

The cost for the 3-5 year old program is \$250 per term or \$100 per month. A child may also be registered for only one day per week for the term (only Tuesday or only Thursday) at a cost of \$150. The terms are September – December, January – March and April – June.

### **NSF CHEQUES**

As the bank does charge for NSF cheques the amount charged amount will be added to your replacement cheque.

### **REFUND POLICY**

If a family enrolls in the Play and Learn Program and then decides to withdraw their child, they must give Marpole Oakridge Family Place one month's written notice before the term commences. This allows Marpole Oakridge Family Place to find another participant to fill the vacant spot.

**Once the program term starts, there is no refund of program fees.**