



**Hand
in Hand**
Child Care Society

School Age Parent Handbook

We Put the "CARE" in Child Care!

Proudly serving the Abbotsford Community since 1994

Current as of February 2026

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Welcome to Hand in Hand Child Care Society

Thank you for choosing our program!

Hand in Hand Child Care Society is a non-profit organization offering early learning and school age care; our programs fit the needs of the whole family. We believe that every child deserves high quality care that supports their social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development. With multiple fully licensed locations at public schools across Abbotsford and our affordable rates, we are able to deliver excellent care to as many children as we can. Our play-based environment is guided by the BC Early Learning Framework which supports the creation of a rich learning experience and environment that enhances a young child's natural curiosity to learn and play. Through annual inspections, Hand in Hand demonstrates a long history of meeting and maintaining the high standards set out by the Fraser Health Authority's Child Care Licensing Regulations and Community Care Facilities Act. Before and after school hours are a very important part of your child's day. We want to make sure your child is given opportunity to participate in a developmentally appropriate program that balances and complements their academic teachings and enhances their social experience at their school.

This handbook is designed for the parents/guardians to give insight into the policies and procedures that shape our child care programs. Please review the policies outlined in this handbook, if you have any questions or need clarification do not hesitate to reach out to the centre manager. Once you have read the handbook please sign the back page and submit it to the centre, this is an acknowledgement that you have read and agree to the policies that we use within our programs and organization. This page is part of your registration package and must be completed in order for your child/ren to attend. Keep this handbook as an easy reference during your child's stay at the centre.

If you have questions or concerns regarding the Society, programming, or centre operations please do not hesitate to bring them to the attention of our Centre Manager. Centre phone numbers and email addresses are listed in section 4 of this handbook as well as on our website at www.handinhand.ca. Your feedback is important to us!

We look forward to making this a remarkable experience for you and your child.

Our Vision

Hand in Hand builds a future where all children, and those who care for them, belong to learning communities that intentionally offer time and space to build relationships, contribute their voice, and realize their potential. Impacting Communities by Caring Today.

Our Mission

We nurture curious minds and kind hearts by providing and promoting child care and education. Our innovative culture values our youngest citizens, supports employees, and parents/guardians.

1. Our History

Hand in Hand Child Care Society began our journey in September 1994.

The name “**Hand in Hand**” was established with a vision that portrays images of teamwork and collaboration with parents/guardians, the school district, and other community partners as we meet the learning needs of the families we serve.

Hand in Hand operates on site at Abbotsford elementary schools where we provide early learning and school age care programs for children up to 12 years of age.

2. Our Child Care Philosophy and Values

We value and believe in...

- ☺ Having fun while building friendships with others!
- ☺ Age and ability appropriate activities.
- ☺ A safe and nurturing environment based on the adage “treating others with respect.”
- ☺ Children knowing they are valued and accepted.
- ☺ Positive role models and interactions in our staff.
- ☺ Developing social and life skills while celebrating the unique diversity and abilities of others.

3. Society Members

3.1 Families

Your annual registration fee makes you a member of the Society. After paying the annual registration fee, your family becomes a member of the society, this allows you as the parent/guardian to attend the society’s annual general meeting and to apply to become a member of the Board of Directors.

3.2 Board of Directors

Hand in Hand Child Care Society is a registered non-profit society governed by a volunteer Board of Directors comprised of parents/guardians and community members. Your annual registration fee also makes you a member of Hand in Hand Child Care Society. If you are interested in attending one of our meetings or representing your child’s centre as a Board member, please call the administration office for further information.

3.3 Annual General Meetings

As a non-profit organization, Hand in Hand Child Care Society is required to have an Annual General Meeting for our membership which is held in the fall of each school year. Board of Director elections occur at our Annual General meeting. Annual financial statements and reports are reviewed. Parental input is vital for the well-being and continuing success of the Society. We also welcome parent/guardian assistance with our fundraising ideas and efforts.

3.4 Employee Positions

The Administration Team consists of the Executive Director of Programs, and the Executive Director of Human Resources (EDs), Financial Administrator, Program Coordinator, Payroll Coordinator, Financial Assistants, Program Assistants and the Office Assistant.

The Centre Level Team that works directly with your child consists of a Centre Manager, Supervisor, and Assistants depending on the enrollment numbers for each site. For children that require the assistance of a support worker, we have a long standing partnership with various Supported Child Development Programs that helps us to assess and provide the support needed.

4. Centre Information

4.1 Centre Locations & Contact Info

- **SAC** indicates an on-site Hand in Hand school age care program
- **PS** indicates an on-site Hand in Hand preschool program
- **EL** indicates an on-site Hand in Hand full day early learning care program

Administration Office	604-859-1843	office@handinhand.ca
Aberdeen (SAC)	778-369-0114	aberdeen@handinhand.ca
Alexander (SAC)	604-852-8229	alexander@handinhand.ca
Blue Jay (SAC)	604-852-0504	bluejay@handinhand.ca
Centennial (SAC)	604-853-9376	centennial@handinhand.ca
Dr. T.A. Swift (SAC & PS)	604-859-0717	thomasswift@handinhand.ca
Early Learning Centre (PS & EL)	604-859-3830	earlylearning@handinhand.ca
Godson (SAC)	604-850-5293	godson@handinhand.ca
John Maclure (SAC & PS)	604-852-1622	jmaclure@handinhand.ca
Mountain (SAC & PS)	604-850-3609	mountain@handinhand.ca
North Poplar (SAC)	604-859-3177	northpoplar@handinhand.ca
Prince Charles (SAC)	604-853-6156	princecharles@handinhand.ca
Prince Charles (EL)	604-853-6156	pcearlylearning@handinhand.ca
Sandy Hill (SAC)	604-850-9541	sandyhill@handinhand.ca
Ten Broeck (SAC & PS)	604-870-5671	tenbroeck@handinhand.ca
Terry Fox (SAC)	604-859-5964	terryfox@handinhand.ca

Hours of Operation: Monday to Friday: Open at 7:00 am and close at 6:00 pm. Early openings (6:30 am) can be accommodated upon request at some centres.

Age Criteria: We offer before and after school programs for children between 5 to 12 years of age, attending kindergarten to grade 5.

Hand in Hand Child Care Society maintains appropriate liability insurance at all sites.

4.2 Full Day Programs

- During Winter and Spring Break, Pro-D, and other school closure days, as well as the months of July and August, we provide full day programs from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm.
- Please note we will be closed two weeks prior to school opening in September for annual prep.
- Only a few centres are opened on full days based on the needs of the families as indicated on the submitted calendars for July and August as well as the annual registration form.
- Parents/guardians will be notified well in advance of which centre locations will operate and where your child will attend.

4.3 School Closures

4.3.1 Severe Weather Closure

In the event of district school closures due to weather conditions, emergencies, utility disruption (heat, hydro etc.), Hand in Hand child care programs will also remain closed.

- In severe weather conditions the decision to close schools is made by the school district superintendent who will inform media outlets by 6 am. The Hand in Hand Executive Directors (EDs) also have the authority to make a closure decision on behalf of the Society. Factors that go into this decision include staff and student safety, road and school ground conditions and whether centres can be fully operational.
- Announcements will be posted on our website www.handinhand.ca and our Facebook page as close to 6 am as possible.
- If schools are open during extreme weather, Hand in Hand staff will attempt to arrive at the centre in a timely manner for opening times. However, employee's ability to arrive on time can be affected during adverse weather conditions. Please call the centre prior to leaving your home to ensure staff have arrived.
- Should a decision be made by the school district or the EDs during the day to close schools, our staff will contact parents/guardians to come to pick up their child as soon as possible.
- No refunds or credits will be issued for these closure days.

4.3.2 Staff Professional Development/Training

Hand in Hand will close 1 – 2 additional days during the school year to allow for staff training and professional development. Parents/guardians will be given a minimum of 60 days' notice for a closure day.

4.3.3 Unanticipated Closure of a Program

In the event of a disruption of services (hydro, water etc.) during program operating hours, the Fraser Health licensing procedure we follow is:

We will wait for one hour for the disruption to be repaired while at the same time attempting to get an update from the service provider. After one hour of no service, we are required to notify parents/guardians of the closure and the need to pick up your child immediately.

4.3.4 Permanent Closure of a Program

In the event a decision to permanently close a program is made by the Board of Directors, the parents/guardians will be given as much notice as possible to allow time to seek alternate child care arrangements. This notice will be a minimum of 60 days unless there are extenuating circumstances that will not allow that to happen. Past decisions to close a program involved financial sustainability or the school space was no longer available.

4.3.5 School District Job Action

In the event of school district job action disputes or disruption, Hand in Hand will receive direction from Abbotsford School District as to whether we are able to provide child care services. Parents/guardians will be notified in advance of centre operation changes to the best of our ability. As with Full Day programs we will combine with other Hand in Hand centres. Credits and refunds may be considered by the Board of Directors depending on the circumstances regarding the length of time with the closures and how the Society is impacted by the job action.

4.3.6 Stat Closure Days

Our programs will be closed for all Stat holidays as well as Easter Monday and Boxing Day:

New Year's Day	Canada Day	Remembrance Day
Family Day	BC Day	Christmas Day
Good Friday	Labour Day	Boxing Day
Easter Monday	Truth & Reconciliation Day	
Victoria Day	Thanksgiving Day	

4.4 Transitional Preparation Days

Hand in Hand will close all centres at the end of the school year for 3 days to allow staff preparation time to transition from the end of the school year to summer program operation and two weeks at the end of August. No child care is provided during the transition days. Parents/guardians will be given a minimum of 60 days' notice of these closure days to allow time to make alternate child care arrangements.

4.5 Respect Policy

Respect will be shown to all staff, children, families, and community members at all Hand in Hand sites.

- We show respect to children, parents/guardians, and staff by communicating considerately, keeping our voices at an appropriate level, and using respectful language.
- All communication between parents/guardians and staff should be conducted with respect and professionalism.
- Inappropriate outbursts of disrespectful language from a child or adult which is directed to staff, a child, or adult will result in a warning and possible immediate discharge from the program depending on the severity of the incident.
- This includes postings on social media deemed to be disrespectful in nature.

4.6 Addressing Concerns or Issues

Parents/guardians are to discuss concerns or grievances with Hand in Hand Managers in a respectful and professional manner.

- Parents/guardians are encouraged to provide feedback and express any concerns they may have. Share your concern with the Centre Manager or Supervisor in a discreet way, away from the children or other adults.
- If the matter has not been resolved to your satisfaction, you may choose to contact the administration office to speak with the Executive Directors, Financial Administrator, or Program Coordinator.
- If after this step you feel your concerns have not been resolved to your satisfaction, you may request that the Executive Directors forward your concerns to a delegated Board of Director member; they will contact you.

4.7 Social Media

We believe that respectful face-to-face communication is the most effective approach for addressing any problems or concerns parents/guardians may have.

- If you have an issue, please speak directly with centre staff or administration; refrain from posting on social media.
- Please act responsibly and respect the privacy of others involved, as everything you post on social media is visible to the world.
- Due to privacy considerations, staff and parents/guardians are not to post pictures of children, parents/guardians, or staff members on a social media site without consent of the persons involved.
- To prevent misunderstandings, we ask that comments regarding our centres or staff only be posted with the permission of the organization or the staff member involved.
- Even with good intentions, it's important to consider that anything you share about another person could potentially harm their image and possibly your own.

4.8 Confidentiality

Parents/guardians will be required to read and agree to the following as part of their registration. To confirm this, we ask all parents/guardians to sign the last page of the handbook and return it to your centre manager.

- To protect confidentiality, parents/guardians must not share or post any identifying information, photos, or details about other children, their families, or Hand in Hand staff. This includes anything learned through program activities, events, communications, or daily interactions.
- Staff will not share family or child information with another program or provider without written parental consent.
- Confidentiality must always be maintained. Any concerns about the release of information should be discussed with the Executive Directors.

4.8.1 Ensuring Confidential Security

All information on registered families will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the centre and online in our secure child care management program, Esikidz. Staff will not disclose registered family and/or staff member personal information without obtaining written consent to do so.

4.9 Keeping You Informed

If you have any concerns or questions regarding your child or the program, please speak with our staff. We will inform you of any concerns that we may have in regards to your child.

It is imperative to keep our Managers informed of any changes in the home environment that may impact your child's sense of well-being as this can alter their behavior and attitude. This includes parental separation, illness in the family, moving, or a similar situation.

Newsletters will be emailed to parents/guardians with information on activities, themes and/or fundraisers as well as important dates to remember, (e.g. closure days). Staff may also use Esikidz to communicate with parents/guardians through the parent app. Please take the time to read notices when received. The parent bulletin board will also post notices and information regarding the program.

5. Financial Policies

5.1 Fee Schedule – see Esikidz and our website at www.handinhand.ca

5.2 Annual Registration Fee

- To complete the registration process, the annual, non-refundable \$50 registration fee must be paid.
- This fee is per registering family and must be paid every year. The fee covers July 1st to June 30th of each year.

5.2.1 Holding a Space

To ensure fairness and reduce waitlists, families who wish to hold a space for one month or longer must continue to pay for their spot. Payment is based on your typical average monthly fees.

If you choose not to schedule your child for a full month or longer, you may attempt to book days later. However, this does not guarantee availability. In this case, your child will be considered withdrawn from the program.

To guarantee your child's space at any centre, your child must either attend or you must pay an amount equal to your average monthly fees.

5.3 Payment of Fees

5.3.1 Monthly Payments

- Child care fees are due on the 5th of the month via a preapproved PAD or PAC payment.
- If this payment does not go through, any outstanding amounts will automatically be processed on the 21st of the month.
- If your child is absent for illness, vacation, unscheduled centre closure, or withdrawal without 30 days' notice, the fees paid will still apply.
- After the due date of a calendar, removing or switching day on the current calendar cannot be made without approval from the Financial Administrator. If a change is approved, credits will not be applied until the next month.
- **We do not accept cash or cheques.**
- **Fees are non-refundable, non-negotiable and no credits.**
- **Tax Receipts** for income tax will be issued to parents/guardians through the EsiKidz Parent Portal by the end of February each year.

5.3.2 Pre-Authorized Debit (PAD) & Pre-Authorized Credit (PAC)

- PAD/PAC information must be added by the parent/guardian in EsiKidz. Your child is not registered until PAD or PAC has been uploaded.
- Parent/guardians must notify the finance department by email with a minimum of 30 days' notice of any changes to the monthly PAD/PAC payment.
- If your PAD payments are altered, parents/guardians can request a temporary approval from the Financial Administrator to make payments by credit card through our Stripe payment option on our website at www.handinhand.ca. (see section 5.3.3)

5.3.3 Stripe Online Payments via Hand in Hand Website

- Parents/guardians can make credit card payments using the Hand in Hand website at www.handinhand.ca.
- Navigate to the **"For Parents"** section and scroll down the page to **"Make a Payment."**
- Follow the prompts for the required credit card information along with your child's name and month you are paying for and select **"Make a Payment."**
- When payment has been approved a confirmation email will be sent to the parent/guardian and the admin office.

5.3.4 Third Party Payment

If fees are paid by a third party organization, such as MCFD, we will require adequate documentation upon registration.

5.3.5 Paper Calendar Processing Fee

- **Fee:** Parents/guardians who do not submit their monthly attendance calendars through EsiKidz by the deadline (10th of the previous month) will be charged a **\$20 processing fee per family**. Add on calendars will not be charged the processing fee.
- **Billing:** This fee will be added to the next billing cycle following the missed online submission.
- Special Note for July and August:
 - Calendars for July and August will continue to be submitted on paper to the centre in April.
 - These months have earlier due dates to assist with planning for program breaks, vacation coverage, and staffing considerations.
 - Adjustments to your July/August calendars will not be accepted after May 1st

5.3.6 Definitions

- **Add-on Calendar:** a calendar is considered an add-on when a family is adding days to a schedule already entered into EsiKidz, a processing fee will not be applied.
- **Late Calendar:** a calendar is considered late when it is not entered into EsiKidz by the 10th of the month prior, a processing fee will be applied.
- **Unscheduled Drop-in:** when a child/ren arrives at the program and is not scheduled to be in attendance, a processing fee will be applied.

5.4 Government Subsidy – Affordable Child Care Benefit (ACCB)

- ACCB is available to qualifying families through the Ministry of Education and Child Care (MECC).
- It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to ensure that all ACCB forms are submitted to the government.
- It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to ensure that all ACCB is renewed before the ACCB has expired. Parent/guardians will receive notification from MECC a month prior to ACCB expiry. Parents/guardians may need to submit a new child care arrangement form please see Centre Manager for guidance.
- Subsidized parents/guardians must submit their monthly calendars on time to reserve their space.
- The parent/guardian must pay the ACCBs portion of monthly fees until ACCB authorization is approved and payment is received from MECC.

- Once the ACCB payment has been received, child care fees paid by the parent/guardian will be credited to their account.
- Parents/guardians are responsible for paying the difference between the subsidy authorization and the program's fees.
- Parent payment portions will follow the same policy as Section 5.3 above, including back payments owing to Hand in Hand from MECC.
- ACCB coverage is based off of days scheduled and can vary from month to month. Please speak to your Centre Manager for clarification.
- ACCB does not cover the \$50 annual registration fee or the cost of field trips. Parent/guardians are responsible for these additional fees.

5.5 Late Fee Charges

- All childcare fees are due on the 5th of every month unless an approved Special Payment Arrangement is in place.
- If fees are not paid within 5 business days after the 5th of the month, parent/guardians may incur a \$20 Late Payment Fee.
- All outstanding monthly fees will be charged on the 21st of the current month unless there is a payment arrangement plan in place.
- If payment is not received by the due date, childcare services may be discontinued at the discretion of the Financial Administrator, until payment is received in full or a payment plan is in place.

5.6 NSF Charges

- All NSF payments will incur a **\$30 Service Charge**.
- If a PAD or PAC payment is returned as NSF, the payment will be reprocessed on the 21st through automatic withdrawal.
- If a parent/guardian has more than three (3) NSF payments, future payment may only be accepted in the form of debit, credit card, PAD, PAC or online via Hand in Hands website.

5.7 Drop-In Service

- Some centres are able to accommodate a last minute drop-in service depending on space availability and staffing.
- We require as much notice as possible to ensure proper staff/child ratios are adhered to.
- Do not send your child to the centre without confirmation from centre staff.

5.8 Late Pick-Up

- If you know you will be late picking up your child, please inform the centre as soon as possible so we can reassure your child that all is well. Your estimated arrival time and/or giving verbal authorization for an alternate pick-up person is required.
- **If late pick up is a recurring problem, (i.e. 2 times in a 30-day period) continued participation in the program may be at risk.**

5.8.1 Late Pick Up Charges

- After 6pm a late fee charge of \$10 for every 15 minutes will apply.
- Fees are due upon pickup and must be paid with the debit machine at the centre.
- If payment is not made at the centre, late pick up fees will be added to the next applicable invoice.

5.8.2 Late Pick-up with No Contact from Parent/Guardian

If there has been no contact by 6pm from the parent/guardian, staff will carry out the following procedure:

- A call will be placed to the parent/guardian(s) soon after 6pm to inquire about arrival time.

- If no contact by 6:15 calls will be placed to all emergency contacts.
- If your child has not been picked up 30 minutes after centre closure time (6:30 pm) and there has been no contact with a parent/guardian, the staff member is obligated to inform the local authorities.
- Late fee charges will apply as per policy 5.8.1 – Late Pick-up Charges.

5.8.3 Scheduled Absence from Program

- It is imperative that you notify the centre prior to the afternoon bell time if your child is scheduled to attend Hand in Hand after school and they have been picked up during school hours or at dismissal time.
- If no notice has been received, your child will be considered a “**missing child**” by the centre staff. Unnecessary time and stress is spent searching the school grounds without this communication from you.
- If your child does not arrive within 15 minutes after dismissal time on a scheduled day and it has been confirmed the child is not on school property, the Centre Manager will notify the parents/guardians.
- If the parents/guardians cannot be reached, individuals listed as emergency contacts will be called.
- Our **Missing Child Policy** (Section 6.9) will be implemented which will include calling the police and the admin office team to assist in the search.
- If a parent/guardian repeatedly fails to communicate their child’s absence to the centre, our policy will be:
 - 1st Offence A verbal warning regarding our policy which will be documented in your child’s file.
 - 2nd Offence A **\$20 surcharge** will be applied for any occurrences after that.
- If “No Notice” is a recurring problem, (i.e. 3 times in a 60-day period) continued participation in the program may be at risk.

6. Program Elements

6.1 Arrival

All parents/guardians are required to sign their child in upon arrival using the tablet at the centre.

- Hand in Hand is not legally responsible for your child without an adult signing them in and a staff member receiving them at the door.
- If your child will not be attending on a scheduled day, please notify the centre.

Sharing private information with our staff that may impact your child’s time at the centre helps us to relate better to a change in their behavior or reactions while with us. Something as simple as a rough start to their morning or an upset at home can impact their day.

6.2 Departure

Parents/guardians are required to sign their child out at the end of the day, using the tablet at the centre. If your child will be picked up by someone other than yourself, **you must notify the centre ahead of time.**

- If you have not notified us of a change in the regular pick-up person, your child will not be released to them. Ensure the alternate adult comes with photo ID as staff is required to confirm their identity.
- For liability reasons, staff is not permitted to drive children in their personal vehicles.
- Children will not be sent home in taxis, allowed to walk home alone or be released to anyone under the age of 19 years of age

6.3 Custody and Access

It is the responsibility of the enrolling parent/guardian to provide a copy of a relevant Court Order or Separation Agreement or pertinent other custody information that may deny or “legally restrict” access by the child’s other parent/guardian or another family member.

Without a copy of a court documentation on file, Hand in Hand staff has no right to deny one parent/guardian access over the other. If this situation arises, the staff will notify the enrolling parent/guardian.

It is the responsibility of the enrolling parent/guardian to inform centre staff immediately, in writing, of any changes to the original submitted documents and to provide a copy of any amended court orders.

6.4 Unauthorized Pick-Up

If anyone other than the enrolling parent/guardian will be picking up your child, you must inform the centre, even if the adult is listed on your authorized pick-up list.

- If you have not notified the centre of a change in the regular pick-up person, your child will not be released. Ensure the alternate adult comes with photo ID as staff is required to confirm their identity.
- Verbal authorization from the enrolling parent/guardian will be allowed via the telephone if a situation suddenly arises.
- Photo ID will be required by a pick-up person to confirm identity with centre staff.

6.5 Alleged Impaired Pick-Up

When it is alleged by a staff member that the pick-up person is impaired, it is the staff's legal responsibility to do everything possible to prevent the alleged impaired person from leaving with the child. If a staff member has reason to believe that this adult is unable to adequately care for the child, the staff member will offer to call a relative or friend to pick up the adult and child **OR** offer to call a cab.

If the alleged impaired person chooses to get in the car with the child, the staff member will inform the person that we will immediately notify the police as they are endangering the safety of the child. If the staff member is worried that the child may be at risk or in need of protection a call must also be placed to the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

6.6 Registration/Re-Registration

All Registration packages and payments are managed through our online child care program called EsiKidz. **All parts of the registration package must be completed, including setting up payment information, prior to a child's acceptance in a program.**

An EsiKidz Parent Portal invitation will be sent to the parent/guardian. If this link is lost or otherwise unavailable, please contact your centre manager.

- It is the parent/guardians' responsibility to ensure that their child's EsiKidz profile, including financial information, is completed prior to their child starting in the program.
- We require a current headshot photo of your child for identification purposes as per licensing requirements, this can be added directly to your child/rens profile on EsiKidz.
- To ensure fairness and reduce waitlists, families who wish to hold a space for one month or longer must continue to pay for their spot. Please see section 5.2 for more info.
- Re-registration for the next school year will take place starting January 1st.
- Registration of new families will be accepted after February 1st.

6.6.1 Annual Registration Form

- Parent/guardians must complete an **Annual Registration form** to complete their registration.
- This form outlines the parent/guardians "requested" child care needs for the school year and is used for enrollment projections only; it is not a guarantee of acceptance for the requested space.
- If the parent/guardian wants to adjust their initial approved schedule, they must submit a new updated Annual Registration Form with the requested changes to the Centre Manager.
- If the Centre Manager finds that the requested care schedule is not available, they will offer the option of what part-time care is available. The parent/guardian must resubmit the form to confirm the agreed upon revised schedule.
- **To confirm registration, the annual non-refundable registration \$50 fee must be paid** (see section 5.2 for more info).

6.6.2 Registration/Re-registration Priority List

Re-registration of families for programs that operate at or near the licensing enrollment capacity, including a new admission of siblings, will follow the priority procedure below:

1. Families currently attending full time.
2. Siblings of current full-time children.
3. Children attending part-time and increasing to full-time enrollment.
4. Siblings of current part-time children.
5. A transfer from another Hand in Hand centre.
6. Wait-list children, full time.
7. Wait-list children, part time.
8. Drop-ins based upon availability.

** New families requiring more days of care will receive priority. E.g.: 4 days/week versus 2 days/week. **

6.7 Monthly Calendars

- Parent/guardians are responsible for submitting their monthly calendars in EsiKidz.
- Calendars open on the 1st of the month prior and close by the 10th. (Eg. Oct calendars open Sept 1 – 10)

6.7.1 Child Care Funding Reduction Initiative (CCFRI) - Kindergarten and Grade 1-5 Calendars

- Hand in Hand has been approved by the government to participate in the CCFRI funding program. This program gives parents/guardians a fee reduction on their monthly fees.
- Children must have the correct program selected for Kindergarten or Grades 1-5, as the reduction amount will differ.

6.7.2 Calendar Adjustments

- Revisions cannot be made online to schedules after the 10th, please contact your Centre Manager to request adjustments.
- Parent/guardians who do not submit their monthly calendars through EsiKidz by the deadline will be charged a processing fee of \$20 per calendar. Please see section 5.3 for more info.
- If you need assistance with entering your calendar on EsiKidz please contact your centre manager.
- Any late calendars are subject to availability and are accommodated on a first come, first served basis.
- **Switching or canceling days is not permitted.**

6.7.3 July and August Calendars

- July and August calendars will be submitted in springtime via paper calendar to the centre. Calendars submitted by the listed due date on the paper calendar will not be subject to the \$20 processing fee.
- Summer months have an earlier due date to allow for planning for staff vacation and break requests, as well as which centre locations will be operating.
- Any late calendars are subject to availability and are accommodated on a first come, first served basis.
- Changes to summer calendars will not be accepted after May 1st. This allows for accurate summer planning.

6.8 Children Requiring Support

Some children need extra support to help them in a child care setting. These services are provided through a partnership with numerous outside developmental agencies. They provide funding for children with developmental delays or disabilities in their physical, cognitive, communication or social/emotional/behavioral development. If your child has received support at another centre, you must inform the centre manager prior to registration. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to reach out to the appropriate agency to confirm funding.

6.9 Parent/Guardian’s Request for Withdrawal

If parents/guardians choose to withdraw their child, written notice must be submitted to the Centre Manager. Please note that if notice is submitted after days have been selected in EsiKidz for the upcoming month, payment will still be required for those days.

If you are not satisfied with our program and/or we are unable to accommodate your child’s needs, withdrawal from the program may be in the best interest of the child and family. In this case the notice requirements will be waived.

6.10 Centre’s Request for Withdrawal

- If your child has a diagnosis that can affect their ability to self-manage or if there is a history of behavioral concerns where support was required in school or in another child care setting, it is the parent/guardian’s responsibility to inform the Centre Manager at the time of registration. This will help the manager decide if a support plan needs to be put in place.
- It is essential that parents/guardians share information upon registration with the Centre Manager that may impact your child’s successful experience at Hand in Hand. Every effort will be made by staff to meet the needs of your child. All information shared will be kept confidential.
- If we notice a change which causes concern regarding your child’s behaviour, we will share this with the parent/guardian. We may ask for permission to speak with your child’s teacher as we try to determine if the concern is centre based or is also occurring in other settings. We will work collaboratively with parents/guardians and the school to try to find a resolution to the concern.
- If after these steps have been followed, and after consultation with the Executive Director(s), it is determined that the well-being and safety of your child, other children or staff is being jeopardized, the parent/guardian will be required to withdraw the child.

6.11 Social Agreement – Behaviour & Discipline

It is our goal to help your child acquire social and life skills, including self-management in a group setting. Our guidance and discipline techniques will be in the form of redirection along with consistency in setting clear limits and expectations of behavior to support your child’s growth toward independence and social awareness.

We believe in an open door policy with our families. Parents/guardians are encouraged to share concerns or ask questions if you are unclear about the handling of an incident in the centre. Staff will be happy to hear and answer your concerns and questions.

6.11.1 Social Agreement (SA)

The purpose of a Social Agreement (SA) is to assist the children, individually and as a group, to agree on how they are going to treat each other while at any Hand in Hand centre.

- At the beginning of each school year and the start of our summer program, each centre will develop a Social Agreement for the school year or summer session with input from the children.
- The Centre Manager will lead group discussions on behavior expectations and potential outcomes if the Social Agreement is not followed by a child.
- The agreement will be posted in the centre to be referred to as needed.
- A copy will be sent home with each child to review with their parents/guardians.

6.11.2 Behaviour Guidance Policy

The purpose of this Behaviour Policy is to ensure that our program provides a safe, respectful, inclusive, and supportive environment where all children feel valued and are able to enjoy their time at Hand in Hand. We

recognize that school age children are still developing emotional regulation, social skills, and self-control. Our approach focuses on guidance, positive reinforcement, and teaching appropriate behaviour.

Children are encouraged and supported to:

- Treat others with kindness and respect
- Follow instructions from staff
- Use appropriate language and behaviour
- Care for equipment, materials, and the environment
- Keep hands and feet to themselves
- Participate positively in activities
- Ask for help when needed

Staff will use the following strategies to support positive behaviour:

- Clear and consistent rules explained in child-friendly language
- Positive reinforcement (praise, encouragement, recognition)
- Redirection to appropriate activities
- Problem-solving discussions
- Supporting children to express emotions appropriately
- Teaching social skills such as sharing, turn-taking, and cooperation

When challenging behaviour occurs, staff will respond in a **calm, respectful, and consistent manner**. Strategies may include:

1. **Reminder of expectations**
2. **Redirection** to another activity
3. **Calm discussion** about choices and consequences
4. **Time to calm down** in a safe, supervised area
5. Supporting the child to rejoin the group once ready

Serious or Ongoing Behaviour Concerns

Examples of serious behaviour may include:

- Physical aggression
- Bullying or intimidation
- Repeated refusal to follow safety rules
- Damage to property
- Behaviour that places the child or others at risk

In these situations:

- Staff will intervene immediately to ensure safety
- Incidents will be documented
- Parents/guardians will be informed- may be asked to pick up early
- A behaviour care plan may be developed in collaboration with families
- Additional support services may be recommended if needed

Consequences for Serious or Ongoing Behaviour

For behaviors that are serious, unsafe, or repeated, additional consequences may apply:

- Immediate removal from the activity to ensure safety
- Increased supervision
- Incident documentation
- Communication with parents/guardians
- Development of an individual behaviour care plan
- Temporary suspension from the program
- Support may be recommended or required in order for your child to return to the program

In rare cases, and only after all other strategies have been attempted, ongoing unsafe behaviour may result in temporary or permanent withdrawal from the program, in line with service policies and regulatory requirements. This decision will be made by the Executive Directors and/or the Program Coordinator, in collaboration with the centre manager.

6.11.3 Program Suspension

- Suspensions may be 1 – 5 days depending on the severity of the situation and if it is a repeated offence.
- Suspension will be immediate. The parent/guardian will be called to pick up your child as soon as possible.
- If the Social Agreement and/ or the Behaviour Guidance Policy is continuously being broken and suspensions have not had an impact on the child, Hand in Hand has the right to implement the Request for Withdrawal policy (Policy 6.9.2)

6.11.4 School Suspension

If your child has been suspended from school or is attending classes on a part-time basis due to a disciplinary situation at the school level, they will not be able to attend the Hand in Hand program until they are permitted to return to school for full days.

6.12 Missing/Wandering Child

Missing After School: In the event a child does not arrive at the centre within 10 minutes after school bell time, a search for the child will be implemented following the procedure below:

1. A call will be placed to the school secretary to inquire if the child was in attendance OR if the child was picked up during the day by a parent/guardian. If the child was in class at bell time, the secretary will page the child through the intercom system to report to Hand in Hand.
2. A staff member will go to the child's classroom to confirm that the child was released by the teacher at bell time.
3. The school building & grounds will be searched with assistance from school personnel.
4. If the above is unsuccessful and the child has not been located, a call will be placed to the parent/guardian. If the parent/guardian confirms that their child should be with HinH, a call will be placed to the police.
5. If contact has not been made with the parent/guardian, calls will be made to the emergency contact before calling the police.
6. The administration office will also be contacted to provide assistance with the search.
7. Once the child has been located all parties involved will be contacted.

Wandering Child: In the event a child wanders away from the group or “chooses to walk away” from the program, the following procedure will be followed:

1. A search of the area to locate the child will be implemented.
2. If unsuccessful, a call will be made to the police.

3. Parents/guardians will be informed after the call to the police is placed.
4. The administration office will also be contacted to provide assistance with the search.
5. Once child has been located all parties involved will be contacted.

6.13 Extra-Curricular Activities

If your child is participating in a school based extra-curricular activity, before and/or after school, parents/guardians are required to complete our Extra-Curricular Activity form. This includes activities on the school premises and/or an outing or event off the school premises

- Hand in Hand is not responsible for your child after their early departure in the morning or before their arrival to the centre after school.
- By giving permission for your child to attend an extra-curricular school activity, they may be unescorted to and from the activity.

6.14 Clothing and Personal Possessions

The children will spend a portion of every day in outside play, except in severe weather conditions.

- Please ensure that your child is prepared for outside play according to the season and weather conditions. E.g. – coats, boots, mitts, summer hats, sunscreen, etc.
- Appropriate and comfortable clothing and footwear which allows for free play and participation in games and sports activities are recommended.
- **Warm Weather Wear:** Summer clothing should allow for your child to get wet or dirty. Please send “non-aerosol” sunscreen, a bathing suit, towel, and sun hat along with a change of clothes. Please put your child’s name on clothing and personal possessions.
- **Objects from home (“No-Techno”) Program:** Electronic games or personal items/toys from home will not be allowed at the centre. Hand in Hand will not be responsible for lost or damaged personal property.
- Each centre has a “lost and found” bin in the main entry area. Items that are not claimed by the end of each school term will be donated to a local charity.

6.15 Dress Code

Children’s clothing and attire is expected to promote safety and respect for all people. Jewelry and hats are also considered attire.

Unacceptable clothing/attire can include, but are not limited to:

- Clothing promoting racism, sexism, violence and/or showing illegal product use.
- Clothing with inappropriate slogans and/or pictures.
- **Please note: children are not allowed on playground equipment wearing flip-flops** as they have proven to be a safety hazard on the equipment.

6.16 Nutrition & Health

N.B. It is vital that parents/guardians indicate food allergies on the registration form.

A list of children and the severity of allergic reactions will be posted in a visible area.

We appreciate the co-operation of other parents/guardians if a centre has been deemed a “Food Allergy” centre.

Nutritional food choices support your child’s ability to sustain needed energy throughout their busy day. All Hand in Hand centres follow the school district policy and are **“NUT FREE ZONES”** to safeguard children at risk. Your cooperation and diligence by ensuring that only “nut free” food items are sent in with your child is appreciated.

Parents/guardians are asked to send in foods that are ready to eat and that your child is able to manage with little adult assistance.

- Staff will not heat, cook or do food preparation for a child’s lunch or snack.
- Food will not be warmed in the microwave for safety reasons.
- Lunches will not be stored in the centre refrigerator.
- Staff will encourage your child to eat what you have prepared for them.
- We gratefully accept donations to our snack cupboard as we may provide daily snacks for children. Suggestions for donations would be fruits, vegetables, crackers, pretzels, yogurts, apple sauce etc.

Breakfast: If your child has not had time to eat at home, parents/guardians may send breakfast to the centre. We request that your child can manage the meal on their own or with minimal assistance. Inform staff when you arrive that your child has not had breakfast.

Full Day Programs: Parents/guardians are to send a lunch as well as sufficient snacks to last through the day.

6.17 Field Trips

During full days – seasonal breaks and school closure days – the staff may plan an off-site field trip.

In order for your child to participate in a field trip, a permission form must be signed and returned to the centre. The permission form will indicate:

- The destination of the field trip and mode of transportation being used.
- The date and time of departure and arrival from the centre.
- Any associated costs for the field trip must be paid prior to the outing in order for your child to participate.
- If a child arrives after the group has left for a scheduled trip, your child’s participation and/or our ability to provide child care may be impacted.

Impromptu walks in the immediate neighborhood may occur on any day. We will post a notice on the entry door to inform parents/guardians of our estimated time of return. Parents/guardians have signed to acknowledge that children will participate in “outdoor activities” as part of the online registration package.

6.18 Active Play

The Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines recommends that children 5 years and older should participate in at least 60 minutes of active play daily. Active play promotes healthy growth and development and supports body control and movement.

After School

During school hours, children should be getting a minimum of 40 minutes of outside play daily; HinH programs requires all centres to provide a minimum of 30 minutes of physical activity daily. This active play will take place outside on the playground/field or indoors in the school gym.

Full Day Programs

During full day programs the children will get a minimum of 60 minutes of active play daily which will be spread out over the course of the day. Time will be spent on the playground, playing group games or taking a walk. Please ensure your child arrives dressed for the weather.

6.19 Screen Time

Hand in Hand is a techno free zone – No cell phones, tablets, iPads, video games, or iPods will be allowed. Children have access to an array of toys, board games, arts and crafts materials as well as play activities.

Full Day Programs

On occasion during a full day program, centre managers may decide to show a movie with a “General” rating. Movies will be pre-approved by the Program Coordinator prior to the showing. During the movie other play activities will be available for the children who do not wish to watch the movie.

7. Health and Safety

7.1 Medical Information

It is vital that parents/guardians share your child’s medical history with us at the time of registration (i.e. allergies, asthma, special medication, etc).

- The online EsiKidz registration package will be filled out by the parent/guardian to indicate that a child has been identified with an allergy or if they require daily medication administration.
- We must be kept informed of any changes to your child’s medical history after enrollment.
- All enrolled children are required to have a declaration of their immunization status included in their registration package.

7.2 Allergies

Some children are identified with a life-threatening allergic reactions. It may be an allergy to food items; while others are at risk with insect sting allergies.

7.2.1 Food Allergies

All Hand in Hand centres follow the school district policy and are “**NUT FREE ZONES**” to safeguard children at risk. Your cooperation and diligence by ensuring that only “nut free” food items are sent in with your child is appreciated. Children identified with food allergies will be posted in a visible location in the food prep area in the centre for all staff to be aware of.

7.2.2 Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan (AEP)

Anaphylaxis is a severe and very quick allergic reaction for a child that is a result from exposure to foods, insect stings, latex, medications or other substances that has been identified as a severe danger to that child. Anaphylaxis can lead to death if not treated immediately.

- If your child has an AEP in place the enrolling parent/guardian must provide a copy of the care plan and we will ensure that all staff is trained to respond in the event of an exposure event.
- The AEP must include a recent headshot, description of the allergy, emergency procedure, contact information, and consent to administer medication.

7.3 Medication

A Medication Administration form **must** filled out and signed by a parent/guardian for any medication (prescription and non-prescription) to be given to a child while at the centre.

Procedures that must be followed:

- Medication must be handed directly to a staff member.
- The medication **must be in** the original dispensed container or original packaging for non-prescription medicine. E.g. Tylenol, Benadryl.
- The medication form must be filled out completely and signed by the parent/guardian including the name of medication, the dosage and time to be given.
- A non-prescription medication form will be used if you feel your child may develop symptoms and you may want us to administer that medication. We will call the parent/guardian prior to giving the medication. We do not dispense cough drops to a child.

Do Not Send Medication in Your Child’s Backpack. This includes asthma puffers.

Please Note: If medication does not come in the original dispensed container or original packaging or the medication form is not filled out completely, **we will not** administer the medication.

7.4 Immunization

Fraser Health Licensing regulations require that all children registered must have a current copy of their immunization records as part of their registration package. If your child is not immunized parents/guardians must indicate this on the registration form.

- In the event a child is not immunized and there is an outbreak of a communicable disease in the centre, the parent/guardian will be contacted and informed right away. It is up to the parents discretion on whether or not they pick up their child early.

7.5 Illness

Communicable Disease: If your child contracts a communicable disease, **you must notify the centre immediately** as we are required to alert other families. Please keep your child at home, if they are not well enough to participate in program activities, both indoor and outdoor. Any of the following symptoms requires them to be at home:

- An acute cold, with coughing, sore throat or a runny nose with green liquid discharge.
- A fever of 101° F/38.3° C or above.
- Difficulty in breathing – wheezing or a persistent cough.
- A stomach ailment, including diarrhea, cramps, loose stool, nausea / vomiting.
- Pain – any complaints of unexplained or undiagnosed pain
- Infected skin, eyes or an undiagnosed rash. Severe itching of body and scalp.
- Children with known or suspected communicable diseases.

All children who exhibit symptoms of illness must remain at home. They may return to the program after being symptom-free for 24 hours.

In the event that your child arrives at the centre or develops any of the above symptoms while in the program, the parent/guardian will be called to pick-up their child as soon as possible. We will isolate and care for your child, however, we are not equipped to keep a sick child for an extended period of time.

7.6 Head Lice

Head lice are common in group settings and can affect anyone. For more information on head lice, and how to treat it at home please visit the Fraser Health website.

- If it is confirmed by a parent that their child has lice, the child must stay home until the first treatment is completed, or
- If staff confirms that your child has lice while in the centre, the parent/guardian will be contacted, and will be recommended to pick up their child.
- With confirmed live lice cases, begin the recommended treatment. The child may return to the centre after the first treatment is completed.

7.7 Injury

Minor Injury: If your child sustains a minor injury while at the program, we will provide first-aid and will report the incident to you. Depending on the treatment required, a minor incident form may require your signature for our records.

Major Incident: In the case of an injury requiring medical or dental attention, the child's parents/guardians will be notified immediately. If we are unable to contact a parent/guardian, the alternate contact person will be called.

- If contact with the parent/guardian or alternate contact has been unsuccessful and it has been deemed that medical treatment and/or emergency transport is necessary, we will call an ambulance for assistance.

- If transport to a medical facility is required, a staff member will accompany your child to the nearest emergency facility. Any expenses incurred in this situation will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian.

7.8 Emergency Procedures

Our staff maintain current first-aid certification.

Emergency procedures related to fire, earthquake, and evacuation of the premises are practiced monthly.

In case of a fire, long-term power failure, extreme weather conditions, or an evacuation of the centre due to a real situation, parents/guardians will be notified as soon as possible of the alternate location of where to pick up your child. Parents/guardians will be notified when possible or by a notice posted at the centre.

7.9 Suspected Child Abuse

If a Hand in Hand staff member has reason to suspect abuse of a child may have occurred at the centre involving staff or a volunteer.

- The alleged person will be removed from the centre immediately.
- This will be reported to the parents/guardians, the Executive Directors/Program Coordinator, Fraser Health Authority – Licensing Facility and The Ministry of Children and Family Development.

If a staff member has reason to suspect abuse or neglect of a child has occurred outside the Hand in Hand centre (e.g. at home or by a relative).

- This will be reported to the Executive Directors/Program Coordinator and the Ministry of Children and Family Development as required by law.
- It is our legal responsibility to report suspicions/disclosures to the appropriate parties, not to determine if abuse has occurred.
- Our primary concern is for the health, safety, and well-being of the child.

8. Pandemic Policy

8.1 Health and Wellness Measures

Hand in Hand has developed its epidemic or pandemic response under the guidelines of Fraser Health Authority, and the Ministry of Health. Our Health and Safety policy continues to be applicable during a pandemic or communicable disease outbreak. Any temporary changes to our health and safety policy during a pandemic/outbreak will be communicated via email, our website, and social media and will link to the authorized source of information that our temporary change is based on.

As a licensed child care centre we are required to follow all directives given to us by the above legal authorities, including a mandatory order to close our centres for public health reasons. Their decision overrules any decision to stay open. Notice of all closures will be posted on our website, social media and Facebook page.

Our Hand in Hand plan is to emphasize the most important goal in our centres – **Prevention.**

8.2 Prevention Planning

Hand in Hand follows guidance from Fraser Health surrounding prevention planning.

Some examples of how we work to prevent the spread of diseases:

- Good hygiene practices are taught and reinforced, including handwashing and covering coughs/sneezes.
- High-touch surfaces are cleaned and sanitized regularly on a set schedule.
- Children who become ill during the day will be separated from others and sent home as soon as possible.
- Food provided by the program is served directly by staff.
- Outdoor play is prioritized whenever possible.
- Air purifiers are used in program rooms.

8.3 Staffing / Ratios

Child to staff ratios as per the provincial child care licensing regulations is required during operations, regardless of a pandemic or communicable disease outbreak. If there is a shortage of staff available to work (E.g. – staff being asked to isolate), Hand in Hand may be required to reduce our operating hours, or rotate days of space availability, or perhaps close a centre temporarily. This decision would be made by the Executive Directors, with guidance from the Board of Directors. Any alterations to operating times/days will be communicated to parents/guardians via our website, social media, and email to the best of our ability prior to the changes being made.

8.4 Individual Exclusions

If it has been recommended by the Ministry of Health for an individual to quarantine, Hand in Hand will require all family members, including other children, to comply with this recommendation. Please share this information with your Centre Manager **asap**. If this occurs, we will contact Fraser Health and, at the direction of Fraser Health, we will share this information with other families in a confidential manner. These exclusions will apply equally to all children, families, and employees.

Your child's safety is our first priority.

Thank you for taking the time to read our Parent Handbook.

Please sign the Parent Agreement Form (next page) and return to the centre



Parent Handbook Agreement

This sheet must be signed and returned to the centre prior to your child attending in a Hand in Hand program.

Child's Name: _____

Centre: _____

I have read and understand the policies and information outlined in the Hand in Hand Child Care Society School Age Care Parent Handbook.

By signing this document, I hereby agree to abide by the policies and information in this handbook.

Parent/Guardian Comments:

Parent/Guardian Name (please print): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Centre Manager Signature

Date