

WELCOME TO THE SPARE TIME CHILD CARE CENTRES

This handbook will introduce you to the operations and policies of our centres. Included are registration forms and a parent agreement for you to sign and return to your centre supervisor.

Please read this handbook carefully. If you have any questions, please feel free to phone or drop by one of our centres to speak to the supervisor.

Thank you for choosing the Spare Time Centres for your child care needs.

SPARE TIME CHILD CARE CENTRES

Spare Time Bobolink

David Oppenheimer School
2421 Scarboro Street
Vancouver, BC V5P 2L5
Phone: (604) 325-5733
Fax: (604) 325-5703

Oliver Szeto, Supervisor

Spare Time Connection

David Livingstone School
315 East 23rd Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5V 1X6
Phone: (604) 875-1331

Pauline Yang, Supervisor

Spare Time Challenge Club

Kingsford-Smith School
6901 Elliott Street
Vancouver, BC V5S 2N1
Phone: (604) 325-1010
Fax: (604) 325-1039

Astrid Visscher, Supervisor

Spare Time Treehouse - Preschool

David Livingstone School
315 East 23rd Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5V 1X6
Phone: (604) 875-1331

Alona Ben-Yacov, Supervisor

Spare Time Clubhouse

General Wolfe School
4251 Ontario Street
Vancouver, BC V5V 3G8
Phone: (604) 875-1818
Fax: (604) 875-1882

Alona Ben-Yacov, Supervisor

Spare Time II

Sir Wilfred Laurier School
7350 Laurel Street
Vancouver, BC V6P 3T9
Phone: (604) 713-4930

Julie Harris, Supervisor

PROFILE OF THE SPARE TIME CHILD CARE CENTRES

Spare Time began in 1974 with a non-profit school age child care centre at David Lloyd George Elementary School. The need for high quality, affordable school age child care grew steadily and, in 1979, Spare Time II was opened at Laurier School, followed in 1982 by Spare Time Clubhouse at Wolfe School, Spare Time Kids Club in 1984 at McBride School, Spare Time Challenge Club in 1986 at Kingsford-Smith School, Spare Time Bobolink in 1988 at Oppenheimer School, and Spare Time Kids World in 1992 at McDonald School.

As the Spare Time Society grew, it became apparent that in order to better serve the individual communities, administrative changes would be required. This led to the decision to form a second Spare Time Society; in 1993, the Spare Time Child Care Society was established. The Spare Time Child Care Society includes Spare Time II, Spare Time Clubhouse, Spare Time Challenge Club, Spare Time Bobolink, and Spare Time Connection, which opened at Livingstone School in 2009.

In addition to offering regular before and after school programs, the Spare Time Child Care Society operates pre-school and integrated special needs programs. Spare Time takes great pride in providing programs designed to meet the individual needs of each child. These programs nurture positive growth and self-confidence in children by offering a wide variety of age-appropriate challenges and choices.

DEFINITION OF PROGRAMS

Morning Care (Before School Care)

All Spare Time centres operate morning care programs for children from Kindergarten through grade seven. The centres open at 7:30 am and close when the school day begins. Children attending this program are involved in quiet activities for the first hour. After 8:30 am, when school staff is on supervision duty, children may choose to play outside or take part in school-related activities. Kindergartens remain indoors to be supervised by Spare Time staff. If you wish your child to remain in the centre all morning, please advise your centre supervisor. Breakfast is available for a nominal fee for children who want it.

After School Care

This program operates from school dismissal to 6:00 pm and from 7:30 am to 6:00 pm on non-instructional days and school breaks. The after school care program is available at all the Spare Time centres and serves children from kindergarten to grade seven. Children are encouraged to participate in a wide variety of activities that are designed to nurture their social, emotional, intellectual and physical development. Your centre supervisor will have a copy of the specific programs and activities available at your centre.

Preschool

This program is currently available at Spare Time Treehouse located at David Livingstone Elementary. Preschool is open between the hours of 9:00 am to 1:00 pm, and is designed to meet the particular needs of children in this age group. Our goals are to nurture the social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development of young children prior to their entry into kindergarten.

Spare Time Special Needs

With funding from Provincial Government, the Spare Time centres were among the first school age child care centres to offer specialized programs for children with a variety of individual and unique needs. This program is an integrated one and operates in conjunction with all our other programs. Children in our special needs program are included and encouraged to participate in all the programs offered at the centre. Specially trained staff members work with children on an individual basis to guide them through activities and to ensure that their need for creative, stimulating and fun experiences is met.

Spare Time Leaders Clubs

Children nine to twelve years old may participate in the Leaders Club at their centre. As this program is designed in part by the children themselves, specific programs for this age group vary from centre to centre. Children are encouraged to participate in the design and implementation of activities for their own club. Programs challenge their intellectual, physical and creative skills while building independence and self-esteem. Please speak to your centre supervisor for more information on the Spare Time Leaders Club at your centre.

REGISTRATION

Registration documents are available from your centre supervisor. Please read these documents carefully and fill them out in detail. Once these documents have been completed and signed, return them to the centre. Your child may begin attending the program once the documents are received and checked by the centre supervisor. Due to licensing regulations and for the safety of your child, we cannot accept any child without completed documentation. The centre supervisor may request a brief meeting with you and your child prior to enrolment in the centre. Please contact your centre supervisor if you would like to register a child that has extra support needs as the waitlist process is different. A deposit of \$100.00 is required upon registration. Full monthly fees are due at the beginning of each month. The deposit will be held by the centre until your child is withdrawn with one month's notice from the centre. Please ensure that your registration documents are kept up to date. It is the responsibility of the parent to advise the staff if there are any changes to be made in the child's file.

SUMMER REGISTRATION

Parents wishing to register their children in the summer program must do so before the end of May. Priority will be given to children currently registered in the centre and their siblings. Spaces not filled by the end of May will be made available to those wishing summer care only.

Fall spaces will be guaranteed to those wishing to take their children out of the centre for the summer, providing a deposit is on file with the centre.

FEES

Child care fees are set annually by the Board of Directors. All fees are due on the first day of each month. Fees paid after the 10th day of each month will be subject to a 10% service charge. If fees are paid late more than three (3) times you may be requested to withdraw your child from the centre. The Ministry of Children and Family Development provides child care subsidies for families who qualify, for typical children and for children with special needs. Please check the MCFD website for further information.

<http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare/application.htm>

If you wish to take your child out of the centre during the school year for a holiday, the full monthly fee is still payable. There are no refunds for absences.

Written notice is required on the last day of the month one month prior to withdrawing your child from the centre in order to be refunded your deposit.

ARRIVAL AND PICK UP OF CHILDREN

Children are expected to come directly from school to the centre. They must check in daily on an attendance sheet to let the staff know they have arrived at the centre. It is important that you call the centre and leave a message if your child will be absent from the centre that day. If your child has not arrived at the centre within a reasonable time, you will be notified by the staff.

During the summer break and on other full days, please inform the staff at the centre when they should expect your child to arrive. On days when field trips are planned, your child should arrive at least fifteen minutes prior to the group's departure.

The centre closes promptly at 6:00 pm. Only the custodial parent and/or those people listed as having your permission to pick up your child will be permitted to take the child from the centre. Parents who arrive after 6:00 pm will be charged a late fee of \$10.00 up to the first 15 minutes and \$5.00 for each additional 5 minutes. If you are going to be late, please call the centre and, if possible, have an alternate person pick up your child. If your child is picked up late from the centre more than three times, you may be requested to withdraw your child from the centre.

Children may walk home at the end of the day, provided we have **written** instructions from you. However, **no child under the age of nine** will be permitted to go home on their own, and no child will be permitted to walk home after dark.

If you are late and we have not heard from you, our procedure is as follows:

- 1) A staff person will phone your home, mobile phone, and/or place of employment.
- 2) If you cannot be reached, the person whom you have listed as your emergency contact will be called.
- 3) If no one is available, and as a last resort, the Children's Aid Society will be called to pick up your child. You may contact them at 604-660-4927 to learn the whereabouts of your child.

TRANSPORTATION

Our Variety Club vans are fully equipped with booster seats, safety belts, as well as first aid and other safety equipment. All of our drivers have a Class 4 commercial license. From time to time we will also use public transit or larger rental buses. In an emergency, a staff member may use their personal vehicle to transport children. Seat belts are always used except on public transit and school buses.

CENTRE PROGRAMS

All of our programs are designed with the safety and happiness of each child in mind. Each centre offers a wide variety of programs on a daily basis. Children may choose from staff-directed or self-directed activities. Excursions outside the centre are pre-planned and well supervised. In order to ensure that programs are geared towards the interests and needs of the children, individual centres design their own schedule of programs and activities. Your centre supervisor will have a copy of the program schedule of your centre.

CLEAN UP

All children and staff are responsible for keeping the centre clean and tidy. Please keep this in mind when picking up your child. Children are required to put away their games or equipment before they leave the centre. Please encourage your child to tidy up before you take him/her home.

LUNCHES AND SNACKS

The center provides a nutritious snack daily. Lunches are provided on non-instructional days and during the school breaks. If your child has any food sensitivities or allergies, it is important that you notify the centre supervisor so that arrangements for snack and lunch can be made. Preschool children are provided with lunch daily. Please contact your centre supervisor for the lunch menu.

ILLNESS

Please do not send an ill or contagious child to the centre. If your child becomes ill at daycare, your child will be kept comfortable away from other children and you will be asked to pick your child up, or send one of your emergency contacts to pick the child up as quickly as possible.

MEDICATION

Medication will only be administered by the staff with a doctor's prescription and signed parental permission. Please do not send your child to the centre with instructions to take medication on their own (even children's aspirin). If you are sending your child with medication, please inform the centre that they have it with them.

PARENT MEETINGS AND FAMILY EVENTS

All of our centres have an open door policy. Communication between parents and centre staff is important. Our programs are based on input from children, parents and staff. Please feel free to set up an appointment at any time with your centre supervisor. If the need arises, your centre supervisor will contact you and set up an appointment for a discussion or consultation.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Spare Time Child Care Society is a non-profit child care society. The operations of the society are governed by a Board of Directors. These Directors are elected annually by the membership (ie. you, the parents). Any member may be nominated to stand for election in the society. The Annual General Meeting is held each year in the Spring. ALL MEMBERS (PARENTS) ARE TO ATTEND. The meetings are short but informative and provide an opportunity for parents to become more informed and involved in the care of their child. You will be notified fourteen (14) days prior to the meeting. If you wish to stand for election, please inform your centre supervisor.

GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE POLICY

Each centre establishes its own specific rules of conduct. These rules have been developed with the safety and well-being of all children as the top priority.

Consequences for infractions are based on the following guidelines:

- Consequences must be natural and logical. The mistreatment of a toy will result in the child not being permitted to play with that particular toy for a determined length of time. Poor behaviour on a fieldtrip will result in the child being suspended from the next trips.
- Consequences must be appropriate for a child's age. A five year old involved in a fight might get a "time away" and a brief review of how to handle situations without fighting; an eleven year old may get a much longer "time away", with a loss of certain privileges as well as a discussion on how the situation could have been better handled.
- Children will be approached in a respectful way. Establishing eye contact, using the child's name and speaking in a controlled tone of voice will usually help to defuse situations. In a situation where a child is losing self control, the closeness and touch of an adult can often help the child to re-establish it. Sometimes it is necessary for a staff member to hold a child in order to maintain the safety of that child or other children in the vicinity.
- Children's feelings must be acknowledged. In order for the child to perceive the staff as supportive and helpful, they need to know their feelings are recognized and understood.
- Discipline at each of the centres is dealt with in a positive manner. Guidelines and rules are in place for children to follow at each centre. If a child's behaviour is inappropriate and requires staff intervention, the child may be asked "time away" for a designated period of time or removed from the activity. Children may also be assigned tasks or be excluded from participation in an activity for a period of time. A discussion with the child may follow.
- If the behaviour becomes a serious concern, you will be notified by the centre supervisor and an appointment will be made to discuss the concerns with you.

NUTRITION POLICY

Spare Time Child Care Society will provide well-balanced and nutritious snacks/meals to children attending our programs. We will provide meals and snacks consisting of the four healthy food groups: fruit/vegetables, grains, milk products and meat/alternatives, following suggestions from the Canada Food Guide and the Vancouver School Board nutritional guideline.

All allergies, food sensitivities, and dietary restrictions will be taken into consideration. We will encourage “nut free” awareness and make every effort in our environment to be nut free. Allergy lists will be posted in the kitchen, noting all children allergies and sensitivities. Efforts will be made to provide a variety of choices in our snacks/meals, and we will promote healthy eating and encouragement to children to try new food.

All snacks/meals are planned in advance and parents can be provided meal schedules upon request.

CHILD SUPERVISION POLICY

Spare Time Child Care Society is committed to providing quality child care in a safe, healthy, and fun environment. Our promise to our families is to:

- Ensure that the minimum staff to child ratio as outlined in the Child Care Licensing Regulation is maintained at all times
- Appropriately enhance the staff to child ratio to accommodate the needs of children who require additional support
- Enhance the adult to child ratio for field trips and/or challenging activities
- Orient and train all staff in supervision procedures/techniques
- Ensure that children are supervised at all times – except where intermittent supervision forms are signed by parents
- Ensure all guidelines and legislation set out by Licensing and MCFD are followed

Sign In/Out & Authorized Pick Up

- All children upon arrival and departure must be marked in or out on the daily attendance sheet, indicating the time of arrival or departure. This will be done at the time when the child is released from the parent/guardian to the receiving staff upon arrival or from the supervising staff to the parent/guardian upon departure
- Daily attendance sheets will record all children that are absent, on vacation, or absent due to illness
- Authorized pick up persons will be verified by the supervisor

Incident Reports & Illness

- All accident/incident forms for injuries will be logged and reported to the Licensing Officer
- Parents will be notified of all accidents and injuries pertaining to their child
- Staff will monitor children's health to identify early signs of sickness (example: fever, illness, or unusual behaviour)

Centre Safety

- Ensure all areas are visible, accessible and free of potential hazards
- Regular safety checks of the program around the premises and equipment, removing hazards and arranging equipment in a safe manner
- Able to immediately locate emergency medication, first aid kits, and emergency contact information

Staff Supervision

- Ensure that supervision is **active** and **interactive** with children
- Use techniques that promote effective supervision practices and create safe care environments
- Headcounts will be conducted throughout the day and will be completed before and after a transition with a group of children from one activity area to another (example: Centre to Playground)
- In addition to headcount, when a group of children are in transition from one activity area to another, staff will retain close visual supervision of the children at all times during the transition (example: Children not running ahead of the group)
- If children are divided into small groups for activities/trips, each staff will have a list of the names of children in their group
- Children will be supervised in all areas of the program, and all areas in use will be appropriately supervised (example: multiple areas – centre, playground, gym)
- Children will notify staff and use magnetic boards/sign up lists when leaving the centre for an activity or heading to the washroom

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN

If you have any problems or concerns about the care your child is receiving, please discuss them with the centre supervisor. If you are unable to do so or you do not get a satisfactory response, or if it is the centre supervisor you are having difficulty with, please contact the Spare Time Child Care Society Administrator. If you do not get a satisfactory response or it is the Administrator you are having difficulty with, please contact the Board of Directors. There is a current list of the Board of Directors posted at each centre. **board@sparetimesociety.org**

LIMIT OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR STAFF MEMBERS

The Spare Time Child Care Society is responsible for staff conduct during regular centre hours or centre-run activities only. The Society is not responsible for the activities and conducts of staff members outside of centre hours and accepts no responsibility for any such activities or conduct.

ASSESSING YOUR CHILD CARE CENTRE

1. Staff Interaction

How staff members interact with each other, with children and with parents is a critical factor that distinguishes a mediocre program from one of high quality. The personal qualities of warmth, flexibility, enthusiasm, and sense of humour are all part of appropriate modelling. Staff members should also have a repertoire of knowledge, skills and abilities that are interesting and engaging to school age children. Meaningful conversations between staff and children are important.

2. Child Centred Approach

In a child-centered centre, self selection, rather than staff selection, of experiences, activities and playmates predominates. Staff members facilitate rather than direct or instruct. Children can initiate their own activities without waiting for adults to direct them. Staff members respect the decisions of children to participate or not in activities.

3. Atmosphere

What does the program feel like? Do the staff members enjoy interacting with the children, watching them, listening to them? Are the children relaxed, involved in activities, enjoying themselves? Are the staff members having fun? Or, on the other hand, do the staff members look bored? Are the staff members congregating in one area, ignoring opportunities to be involved with the children?

4. Balance

Providing a balance of experiences and fulfillment of needs is very important. The school day is often fairly structured and requires a great deal of participation, providing little opportunity for self direction and free choice. To balance this, children require many experiences at the other end of the control and structure continuum. Self selected activities are important and should be balanced and varied.

5. Positive Guidance

Members of the staff guide children in a positive way by:

- Heading off problem behaviours
- Encouraging, modelling, and praising positive behaviours
- Responding with logical consequences if rules are broken or problems arise giving children the opportunity to solve their own conflicts, helping when needed to clarify issues and work on compromise or negotiation

6. Staff Relationships

Members of the staff should:

- Greet parents warmly and view them as partners in the program; keep them informed
- Exhibit support for each other by listening and responding to each other
- Work well together by communicating frequently and being clear about who is responsible for which tasks

7. Staff Ratios

Licensing requires staff ratios as follows:

- 1:11 for children in grade one and younger
- 1:18 for children in grade two and older

Group sizes should be small enough that children do not have long waits to get staff attention or to use materials and equipment. Small group sizes ensure that children are not being moved around like large herds.

8. Meeting Staff Needs

- Are salaries and benefits adequate to attract and keep quality staff?
- Are the staff given adequate support to provide quality care in the program?
- Do the staff have adequate time to consult with the supervisor and with other staff members, to plan programs, to set up space for activities, to communicate with parents and to evaluate the program and set goals?
- Do the staff have adequate opportunities for training and use of resource materials and books?
- Are staff meetings satisfying the range of staff needs for problem solving and the sorting out of policies and procedures?

9. Sense of Humour

Staff need to maintain a sense of humour as they go through the day. Humour is one of the keys to a successful program.

SPARE TIME CHILD CARE SOCIETY PARENT AGREEMENT

I have read the Spare Time Child Care Society Parent Handbook and I agree to the following:

1. If my child will be absent from the centre, I will notify the staff prior to the beginning of the program.
2. I will notify the staff in writing of any change in my child's after school programs, ie. attending extracurricular activities, visiting a friend's house, etc.
3. I will ensure that my child is signed out each day before leaving the centre.
4. I will notify the staff in writing or by telephone of any changes in my child's pick up instructions. I understand that my child will not be released to anyone not listed by me on my child's pick up instruction form.
5. I understand that my child must be nine years of age before being allowed to walk home alone and that my child will not be allowed to walk home alone after dark, regardless of age.
6. I understand that the Spare Time Child Care Society and the staff at the centre are not responsible for my child once my child leaves the centre.
7. I understand that the centre opens at 7:30 am and that neither the Society nor the staff are responsible for my child if he/she arrives at the centre prior to that time. I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the centre is open and the staff have arrived before leaving my child there.
8. I understand that the centre closes promptly at 6:00 pm. I agree to ensure that my child is picked up before that time each day. If I am late in picking up my child, I agree to pay the late fee charge as set out in the Handbook. I understand that if I am late more than three times, I may be asked to withdraw my child from the centre.
9. I agree to pay the child care fee as set out in the fees schedule each month, by the 10th day of each month. I understand that a 10% surcharge will be levied on overdue amounts.
10. I understand that I must give the centre notice in writing one month before withdrawing my child from the centre. If I fail to give notice I will forfeit my deposit.
11. I agree to inform the centre in writing if I do not wish my child to participate in a field trip or an activity.

12. I agree to allow the centre to transport my child in any one of their Variety Club vehicles, rental buses, public transportation and occasionally in personal vehicles, providing adequate safety measures have been taken.

13. I agree to not send an ill or contagious child to daycare, and to pick my child up promptly if they become ill during the day.

14. I agree to inform the staff at the centre in writing of any medical concerns or conditions my child may have, ie. allergies, diabetes, special medication, etc. If my child requires any medication I agree to inform the staff in writing as to the dosage and time the medication is given. I understand the staff will only administer medication with a doctor's prescription.

15. I agree to inform the centre staff if my child will be bringing any medications with him/her to the centre. This includes non-prescription medications.

16. In an emergency requiring immediate medical or dental attention, I agree to allow the child care staff to take my child to the nearest medical facility for treatment.

17. I agree to ensure that my child's medical emergency card and all pertinent information regarding my child are kept up to date.

18. I agree to inform the centre staff of any events or changes in my child's life which may affect my child's behaviour at the centre.

19. I understand the centre's guidance and discipline guidelines and agree to support the staff regarding disciplinary decisions made during centre hours.

20. I agree to discuss any concerns regarding my child with the centre supervisor and will attend meetings set up for that purpose.

21. I agree to attend the Spare Time Society's Annual General Meeting. I understand that if I am unable to attend I must inform the Society in writing 7 days prior to the meeting.