



# Parent Handbook

(Updated March 2020)

# Roberts Creek Childcare Society - Parents Handbook

[Updated: March 2020]

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# **WELCOME TO RCCCS**

## **Introduction**

Welcome to Roberts Creek Childcare Society (RCCCS). We have been proudly serving the Sunshine Coast community for over 30 years. We look forward to having your family join our society, and to a creative, fun-filled year of programs with your child(ren).

This information handbook has been designed to introduce families to our three licensed programs: Rainbow Preschool, Treehouse After School Program and Treehouse Camps. In certain sections, we lay out information separately for each program; however, for the most part our policies and procedures are the same across all programs. A full copy of our comprehensive policies manual is available for reference at the school. It is maintained by RCCCS staff and Board.

If you have any questions regarding the information contained in this handbook, please don't hesitate to talk to any member of RCCSS staff or Board.

## **Mission Statement**

RCCCS aims to provide safe, affordable, and high-quality childcare for preschool and school age children. We strive to create programs that continually meet the developmental needs of each child, while simultaneously benefiting other children, their families, and the larger community.

## **Philosophy**

At RCCCS we promote a legacy of limitless possibilities by inspiring a love of life, learning and laughter. By creating environments that engage, excite, and embrace, we foster the acquisition of skills necessary for a balanced and successful life. We focus on educating the whole child with a curriculum that supports the many domains of child development (social/ emotional, cognitive, physical, communication/language, and self-help).

We nurture relationships and value respect for self, others, and the world. We nourish self-awareness and peace within. We value the outdoor environment and what it brings to childhood. We take advantage of nature both inside and outside the classroom, as we lead children to learn about the amazing world they are part of. We hope to inspire innovative thinkers who will become responsible citizens, both locally and globally.

## **History**

RCCCS came to fruition in 1980, through a very resourceful group of parents looking to connect with and learn from each other in regards to children and family. For this purpose, a small childcare centre, which later became Rainbow Preschool, was developed and housed at Camp Douglas and completely run by a volunteer staff of parents.

In 1990, the community group was incorporated as the Roberts Creek Childcare Society. Shortly thereafter, a group of parents began searching and fundraising for a new larger location to house Rainbow Preschool.

After a rather fruitless search for a new location, the parent group lobbied School District 46 (SD #46) for a piece of land next to Roberts Creek Elementary School, where they could build a building.

After a successful joint RCCCS and SD #46 application to the Ministry of Education for funds, a prefabricated building was erected behind the Elementary School.

A dedicated volunteer team organized the building site and fundraised for extra funds for landscaping and other expenses.

RCCCS took occupancy of its new location on September 12, 1995.

Two years later, a need for after school care for Roberts Creek Elementary School students was identified, and RCCCS developed the Treehouse Program. In the years since then, there have been various changes to the RCCCS programs, as the organization adjusts to meet the changing educational and care needs of families in the community.

## **Staff**

RCCCS prides itself in having an exceptional team of staff, who embody our philosophy and mission statement, and continuously work to better the lives of all children in our program. All of our staff have criminal record checks and all hold valid up to date First Aid Certificates.

The RCCCS Operations Manager, who is onsite during the majority of programs, has a background in Early Childhood Education.

All preschool teachers are trained and certified as Early Childhood Educators or Early Childhood Assistants. They meet all the requirements outlined in the BC Childcare Licensing Act.

All Treehouse After School Program staff are experienced working with children, and are considered 'responsible adults' according to the BC Childcare Licensing Act.

In our camp programs, we also occasionally employ a junior staff member, who is under the age of 19. Individuals in this position provides valuable support to the more senior staff, but are never left alone with the children.

Substitutes are brought in when necessary, following our licensing guidelines for temporary staffing.

## **Board**

A volunteer Board of Directors runs RCCCS. The Board directs the operations manager, sets fees, implements policy's, budgets, fundraises and volunteers their individual areas of expertise to help improve the programming. The Board meets once a month at the Centre. The RCCCS Board has anywhere from three to nine volunteer members; including the Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary. Board members come from a variety of different backgrounds and bring a range of experience. Many of the Board members are parents of children in our programs, however this is not a requirement. Board members are elected annually at the RCCCS Annual General Meeting in October, and may serve anywhere from 2-6 years on the Board.

If you are interested in sitting on the Board, please introduce yourself to the Operations Manager and/or to our current Board members. Identify your areas of expertise or aspects of the Board you are interested in.

Our annual general meeting is in October each year and is a fabulous way to meet the current Board and become involved.

## **Getting Involved**

We are always looking for energetic parents to help with the operation of the Centre. Volunteer involvement is very flexible and always welcomed. Aside from being active on our Board, there are many great ways to be involved. Check out our volunteer notice board and let us know if you'd like to help.

## **Contact Information**

Site Address: 1150 Timberland Road (behind Roberts Creek Elementary School)

Mailing Address: PO Box 146, Robert Creek, BC, V0N 2W0

Email: [admin@robertscreekchildcaresociety.com](mailto:admin@robertscreekchildcaresociety.com)

Phone: 604-885-0163

## GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

### Program Structures

#### Rainbow Preschool

Rainbow is a structured but flexible preschool program. Play is the main focus, and it is used to support learning and express feelings. The program follows a daily routine that includes both teacher led and non-teacher directed time.

Typically, our day begins with a group circle and welcome, followed by free-play and exploration. Children then have a snack and more time to play independently, often outside. Our day usually ends with lunch and closing group circle. Following a loose routine helps every child develop a sense of security and well-being.

Each month, different seasonal themes are used as inspiration for our activity centres. These centres include a creative play area, art, blocks, dramatic play, library, sand and water, light table, science, puzzles, and play dough. Other activities such as outdoor play will be enjoyed in small and large groups. Through these activity areas, children receive opportunities to gain new skills, values, and stimulating experiences, in safe and healthy environments.

#### Treehouse After School Program

Staff meet children enrolled in Treehouse at Roberts Creek Elementary School. Kindergarten children are picked up directly from their classroom, and older children meet in the primary hallway at the bench.

After pick up, the program typically spends time outside at the school playground. The group then returns to the Centre for a snack and inside play. Our schedule is a mixture of inside activities, on-site outdoor play, and fieldtrips. When playing outside, Treehouse makes use of the sports field, basketball courts, and forested areas throughout the SD #46 property, as well as the wider Roberts Creek community.

#### Treehouse Camps

Each week a different theme is used to inspire our camp programming, which includes a mixture of outdoor play, fieldtrips, and inside activities.

### Staff-Child Ratio

According to the Child Care Licensing Regulation in BC's *Community Care and Assisted Living Act*, we are required to maintain the following staff to child ratios:

- Rainbow Preschool (children 3-5 years): 1:10
- Treehouse After School Care & Camps (school aged children): 1:12

## **Supervision of Children**

RCCCS prioritizes the safety of both children and staff. While it is not a licensing requirement, given the relatively isolated location of the RCCCS building, we believe it is important, whenever possible, to have a minimum of two staff working at any given time.

## **Program Ages**

### *Rainbow Preschool*

3-5 years (children must turn 3 by Dec 31<sup>st</sup> of the year of enrolment)

### *Treehouse After School Program*

5-12 years of age (typically K-grade 4).

Please contact us to discuss exceptions made for older children.

### *Treehouse Camps*

5-12 years of age (typically K-grade 4).

Please contact us to discuss exceptions made for 4-year old's and older children.

## **Hours of Operation**

### *Rainbow Preschool*

Rainbow runs Monday through Friday from 9am until 1pm. Children may either attend 2 days (Tuesday/Thursday) or 3 days (Monday/Wednesday/Friday) per week. Classroom doors open at the designated start time. If you arrive early, please take advantage of our covered deck space. In order to facilitate a smooth good-bye transition, please arrive at the Centre at least five minutes prior to pick-up to greet your child.

### *Treehouse After School Program*

When Roberts Creek Elementary school is in session, Treehouse runs from 2:45pm until 5:30pm. Children can attend from 1 to 5 days per week.

If you arrive early to pick up your child, and the group is offsite, their location and a contact phone number is posted on the board outside the door.

When the elementary school has early dismissal, Treehouse begins at 1:40pm (when the school day ends). Treehouse is not offered on SD #46 Professional Development Days.

### *Treehouse Camps*

Camps run from 8:30am until 5:30pm, most days of the SD #46 summer, winter and spring break vacations. Children can attend from 1 to 5 days per week. Children have the option of attending for half days only, from 8:30am until 1pm.

Please note, in the summer we are always closed the last two weeks of August, in preparation for the coming school year.

## **Program Closures**

Below are some general guidelines about when you can expect our programs to be closed. Please refer to our current program calendar for more detailed information and dates.

### *Gradual Entry (Rainbow)*

We appreciate that starting preschool (both for the first time, and after a long summer break) can be a big transition for both children and parents. In order to help with this, our first week of preschool is gradual entry, with shortened classes from 9-11am. The reduced class length helps children to have positive first experiences, and reassures those anxious about being left that they will be picked up soon. At RCCCS, we believe that shortening the day, rather than having parent participation on the first day/week, gives an opportunity for children to independently familiarize themselves with the play centres, routines of the day, their playmates and the teachers. Children starting the program at other times of the year, have the option to begin with shorter days too,

### *Statutory Holidays*

RCCCS is closed for all statutory holidays in British Columbia: New Year's Day, Family Day (BC), Good Friday, Easter Monday, Victoria Day, Canada Day, BC Day, Labour Day, Thanksgiving Day, Remembrance Day, Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

### *Pro-D Days*

Rainbow does not operate on SD#46 Professional Development days, however Treehouse After School Programs do.

### *School Vacations*

Both Rainbow and Treehouse After School Programs do not run during SD #46 vacation closures. Treehouse camps are in operation for some of the vacation periods.

### *Inclement Weather & Unforeseen Circumstances*

While we do our best to provide a reliable service to families, our programs may be cancelled if inclement weather or other situations affect the safety, welfare and comfort of students and staff. Closures may happen when circumstances are immediately problematic (e.g. power outages from storms prevent us from heating and lighting our Centre or a gas leak) or when safety concerns are



anticipated (e.g. road conditions are becoming treacherous and it would be safer to drive home sooner than later).

If SD #46 closes Roberts Creek Community Elementary School, RCCCS will also follow suit. If SD #46 cancels their school bus service, we will also close our Centre. Inclement weather can prevent staff from driving safely to and from the Centre, and typically public transit services are also limited at these times.

SD #46 decisions regarding bus cancellations and full day closures are usually made by 7am, and posted on the SD #46 website and broadcast on CKAY FM. Decisions to close the school early may be made at any point during the school day, and are noted on the website.

As an independent organization, RCCCS also reserves the right to close programs independent of SD #46. This includes days when our programs are in operation but the Roberts Creek Elementary School is closed (Pro-D days & school vacations), and days when the elementary school is open, but RCCCS are still concerned for the safety, welfare and comfort of our students and staff.

In the event of any RCCCS program closure, prior to it's scheduled start time, RCCCS staff will make every effort to notify all families ahead of time via e-mail and/or phone. In the event of any RCCCS program's early closure, parents will be called or emailed to pick up their child(ren) earlier than scheduled.

PLEASE NOTE: Refunds will not be given for days lost due to unexpected program closures.

## **Registration & Waitlist**

### *Rainbow Preschool*

Rainbow Preschool registration has two phases: **early registration** and **general registration**.

#### **Early registration:**

Takes place until April 17th each year and is for:

1. Children of staff working in the program
2. Children already in the program that wish to return the following year
3. Siblings of children already enrolled in the program
4. Children of RCCCS Board members
5. Children remaining on the waitlist from the previous school year

#### **General registration:**

Is for all other applicants and takes place in April. Details of the specific general registration dates each year, will be posted on our website and advertised through social media. Those on the "Registration Information" email list will also be notified.

Increasing demand for our preschool program means that unfortunately we are not always able to accommodate every family interested in attending Rainbow. If there are more applicants than available spaces, a lottery system will be used to assign spots.

PLEASE NOTE: It is not possible to pre-register or be placed on a waitlist prior to general registration, however interested families can leave their contact information with the Operations Manager and ask to be added to our "Registration Information" email list. Those on this list will be contacted in the early spring to remind them about important general registration information.

### Treehouse Afterschool Programs

Treehouse After School Programs Registration is on going year-round. We have yet to find this program at capacity, however the same waitlist procedure as Rainbow Preschool would be followed were this to be the case. When considering "all other applicants", priority would be given to any children needing a full-time spot (Monday-Friday).

### Treehouse Camps

Treehouse Camps registration takes place mid-June. Anybody inquiring about programs prior to registration opening can have their name placed on a list, and they will be contacted once it has begun.

In order to secure their child's spot in any of our programs, families must have completed the following payments and registration documents.

1. Annual Membership Fee
2. Registration Fee
3. Child Care Registration Form
4. Emergency Consent Form
5. Field Trip Consent Form
6. Immunization Records (copy)
7. Parental Agreement Form
8. Photo Release Form
9. Current Photo of your child
10. A photocopy of your child's birth certificate or passport
11. Emergency Card

PLEASE NOTE: Both the Registration & Membership fees must be paid in order to hold your preschool spot for the following year.

PLEASE NOTE: ALL registration paperwork must be complete in order for your child to attend any RCCCS programs.

PLEASE NOTE: If your child is already enrolled in one of our programs, you will not be required to re-complete all the paperwork for each new program they attend. As needed, the Operations Manager will confirm with you that your information is accurate, and have you re-sign any pertinent forms.

### Waitlist

If a given day/program fills up, a waitlist is maintained should a space become available. Only children old enough to enrol in that particular school year may be placed on this waitlist. In order to ensure that RCCCS grants spaces in a fair and equitable manner, the following priority system is used for offering available spaces to those on the waitlist.

1. Children of staff working in the program
2. Children already in the program that wish to return the following year
3. Siblings of children already enrolled in the program
4. Children of RCCCS Board members
5. All other applicants in the order they were placed on the waitlist

When a space becomes available, the person at the top of the waitlist will be contacted by phone. If a voicemail is left, the applicant will also be contacted by e-mail (if an e-mail address is on file). The applicant will have 48 hours to respond to the offer of enrolment, before the next person on the waitlist is contacted. Applicants who do not respond to an offer of enrolment or who decline the space, but request to remain on the waitlist, will be removed from the list after a second offer is declined or not responded to. If an offer of enrolment is accepted, the family have 7 days to complete any registration paperwork and payment.

If a child is registered in a preschool class for the start of the school year (registration & membership fees paid and paperwork completed), but the parent decides they are unable to attend due to not being adequately potty trained yet parents have two options:

1. They can reserve a space by paying monthly program fees, and at any point when their child is ready to attend, they may enter the program.
2. They can give up their space, and be placed on the waitlist, on an ongoing basis, until their child is ready to attend. If choosing this option, it is important to be aware that space may not be available until the following school year.

PLEASE NOTE: It is the waitlisted applicant's responsibility to notify RCCCS of any changes in contact information.

PLEASE NOTE: We cannot hold a spot for waitlisted applicants who have not completed their registration paperwork and payment within 7 days of being offered a place.

### **Field Trips**

#### Rainbow Preschool

Rainbow regularly takes children on outside excursions within the SD #46 property that we are located on. This includes into the forest area immediately behind our Centre, and down to the Roberts Creek Elementary School

playground. In the event that an offsite field trip is planned, parents will be notified at least two weeks prior to the trip, and volunteer parent chaperones will be recruited.

### Treehouse After School Programs

Treehouse occasionally schedules fieldtrips to places such as the ice rink, swimming pool, beach or golf courses. If necessary, they use public transit for transportation. Parents are given at least 24 hours notice of planned fieldtrips. For more information on how we communicate 'special information' with parents, please see the 'Communication' section of this handbook.

### Treehouse Camps

Camps take multiple fieldtrips every week. The schedule for offsite activities is usually determined several weeks before any given camp, however it is always subject to last minute changes. At the time of registering for camp, parents can inquire about planned fieldtrips.

PLEASE NOTE: All parents/guardians are required to sign a field trip consent form when they register their children for any of our programs.
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PLEASE NOTE: There is no extra charge for field trips. All costs are included within program fees.
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## **Special Guests**

Throughout the year we may have special guests visiting our programs. Examples include the Sechelt Children's Librarian; local health nurses; Roberts Creek Fire Department; and, various other community members who we feel enhance our curriculum. We will do our best to give you adequate notice of when these visits will take place.

## **What to Bring**

In order to ensure your child's full participation in the variety of activities planned, it is required to send the following items each day:

- **Casual and Washable Clothing** – Parents are encouraged to dress their child in comfortable and easy to handle clothing that will allow their child to move around freely. Spills, paint, glue, dirt, and other minor accidents are all a natural part of a child's life.
- **Complete Change of Clothes**
- **Indoor Shoes or Non-Slip Slippers** – Please send your child with a pair of indoor shoes or non-slip slippers. Please try to find a pair that is easy for your child to put on and take off. This helps to develop the child's independence.
- **Outdoor Clothing** – RCCCS strongly promotes outdoor education and believes that outdoor play is essential for children's health and well-being. Please ensure your child has proper attire to participate in outdoor

activities (i.e., rain/winter jacket, rain/snow pants, boots, mittens, hats, etc.).

- **Nutritious Snack, Lunch, and Water Bottle**- Please send your child with both a healthy snack and lunch. See our health and nutrition sections for snack ideas.
- **Sunscreen** – It is required that parents apply sunscreen to their child prior to dropping them off. Please send along a bottle of sunscreen so we can re-apply.
- **Supportive Outdoor Shoes** – For safety reasons, we require all children to wear supportive outdoor shoes. These are running shoes or other close-toe shoes, rain boots, or snow boots depending on the weather.
- **Bathing Suit & Towel** – During Treehouse Summer Camp we enjoy a lot of outdoor water play. If your child would like to bring his/her bathing suit, they are welcome to.
- **Protective Hat** – Please send your child with a sun hat or baseball cap to help shield your child’s face and head from the sun.
- **Bikes** – Children are more than welcome to bring their bikes or scooters. Unfortunately, we do not have storage space to keep them overnight. RCCCS is not responsible for lost or stolen bikes.

RCCCS strongly advises you **not to bring** the following items:

- **Electronic Devices** - Please do not send your child to RCCCS with any electronic devices; the children will not be permitted to use these items during program hours.
- **Toys** – Please do not send your children with personal toys. Children have a hard time sharing these items, and it is extremely difficult for the staff to keep track of them.

## FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

### Fees

#### Membership Fees

As non-profit society, we are required to charge a membership fee each year.

Annual RCCCS Membership	\$10/family.
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#### Registration Fees

Annual registration fees include the cost of registration paperwork, administration, and staff planning and preparation time.

Rainbow Preschool	\$90
Treehouse Afterschool Care	\$30
Treehouse Camps	\$5*

\* Camp registration fee does not apply to those already registered in Treehouse After School Care.

PLEASE NOTE: In order to reserve your spot in our program, BOTH the registration and membership fees must be paid in full.

Program Fees

Rainbow Preschool			
Standard Daily Rate	9am-1pm	\$35	
Treehouse After School Care			
			drop-in*
Standard Daily Rate	2:45-5:30pm	\$18	\$20
Early Dismissal Rate	1:30-5:30pm	\$25	\$28
Treehouse Camps			
Full Day Rate	8:30am-5:30pm	\$35	
Weekly Rate	9am-5pm	\$160	
Half Day Rate	8:30am-1pm	\$20	
Half Day Weekly Rate	8:30am-1pm	\$90	

\*any booking made less than a week ahead of time is charged the drop-in rate

Fee Deposits

Rainbow Preschool - Prior to starting Rainbow Preschool or Treehouse Afterschool Care, parents/guardians must pay a deposit equalling one full month's fees. At the end of the school year, if a family has no outstanding debt, RCCCS will use the deposit towards the fees for the child's final month (usually June) at Rainbow

Treehouse Programs – Prior to starting our afterschool care program, in addition to registration and membership fees, parents/guardians must pay a fee deposit of \$100. If a family has no outstanding debt, RCCCS will use this fee deposit towards the fees for the child's final month at Treehouse (usually June).

Penalty Fees

NSF Cheque	\$25
Overdue Account Charge	\$25
Late Pick Up (per 10 minutes)	\$10
Failure to Notify of Absence (Treehouse only)	\$5
Additional Tax Receipt Copy	\$25

NSF Cheques

A \$25.00 penalty will be charged for any NSF cheque received by RCCCS.

### Overdue Account Charges

If an account balance has not been paid within seven (7) days of the monthly invoice, a \$25.00 late payment charge will be applied to the amount owing.

### Late Pick Up

If your child is not picked up on time at the end of the scheduled day, parents will be charged \$10 for every ten minutes the child remains past the program end time.

### Failure to Notify of Absence (Treehouse Afterschool Care)

Before the elementary school's dismissal, parents/guardians with children in Treehouse Afterschool Care **must** advise RCCCS staff if their child will not be attending that day. Failure to do so will result in a charge of \$5.00 per day in addition to that days' fees.

### Income Tax Receipts

A \$25 cost will be levied for all duplicate tax receipts requested.

## **Payment Procedure**

### Monthly Fees

RCCCS will issue a fee invoice at the end of each month. Payments are due 7 days after the invoice is received. Payments may be made by cash, cheque, money order or e-transfer.

If an outstanding account balance has not been paid within 7 days of the monthly invoice, or if a post-dated cheque returns NSF, a \$25.00 late payment/NSF charge will be applied to the amount owing. Continued late payments, without explanation, may result in your account being referred to the RCCCS Financial Committee for review and/or your child(ren) losing their placement within their RCCCS program.

As Rainbow Preschool's monthly fees can be accurately calculated for each month of the year, parents/guardians are encouraged to provide post-dated cheques for each month to the end of term. Once registration is complete, parents/guardians will be provided with a monthly payment schedule for the school year. These totals are subject to change only if the number of days registered changes.

RCCCS prefers to not take post-dated cheques for Treehouse Afterschool Care, as afterschool care needs can change unexpectedly and children may not attend the exact number of days for which they have originally registered. However, upon request, we are happy to provide parents with a pre-calculated monthly fee estimate,

### Treehouse Camps

In order to be able to attend camp, fees must be paid by the first day of camp each week. Children, whose fees have not been paid, will not be able to attend.

PLEASE NOTE: It is your responsibility to inform the administrator if you have changed chequing accounts, and your post-dated cheques will be NSF. It is your responsibility to provide current information and/or updated cheques.

PLEASE NOTE: We recognize that challenges arise for families, so please speak with the operations manager if you wish to discuss alternative financial arrangements or to apply for short-term financial aid for any of our programs.

PLEASE NOTE: For all of our programs, parents/guardians are responsible for having government subsidy in place **prior** to the start of the program. Unless formal short-term financial aid arrangements are in place, RCCCS will not cover program fees until subsidy is approved. For more information, please see the 'Financial Aid' section of this manual

## **Overdue Accounts**

### *Treehouse Afterschool Care & Rainbow Preschool*

If an account balance has not been paid within seven (7) days of the monthly invoice, a \$25.00 late fee will be applied to the amount owing. Continued late payments without explanation may result in your account being referred to the RCCCS Financial Committee for review.

If an account becomes more than thirty (30) days overdue, parents/guardians will be given fourteen (14) days' written notice to meet their financial commitment and the RCCCS Financial Committee will be notified of the situation. If full payment is not provided within fourteen days (14) of the given notice, access to RCCCS services will be terminated.

## **Financial Aid**

### *Government Subsidy*

The British Columbia Child Care Subsidy Program is a childcare subsidy or allowance to help low-income families with the cost of licensed childcare. Families do not need to be receiving social assistance to be eligible for subsidy. The BC Child Care Subsidy is income tested and available to all BC families who are eligible based on their income. Depending on a family's circumstances and income level, they may be eligible for full or partial subsidy. If you are planning to apply for subsidy, please speak with the Operations Manager to get a completed Child Care Arrangement Form.

Families receiving subsidy are responsible for:

- Paying Registration & Membership Fees (subsidy does not cover this).
- Having their subsidy in place **prior** to the start of the program.
- Paying any difference between their subsidy rate and monthly fees.
- Keeping track of when their subsidy expires and needs renewing.



- Paying any outstanding balances if subsidy payments are not paid for any reason.

For more information, please visit the BC Government website

[http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/child-care/financial-assistance-for-child-care#funding\\_amount](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/child-care/financial-assistance-for-child-care#funding_amount)

### Short-Term Financial Aid

RCCCS knows that financial issues arise unexpectedly within families that may make it difficult for parents/guardians to pay RCCCS program fees on time. RCCCS aims to accommodate reasonable requests for short-term financial aid wherever possible.

Parents/guardians who need more time to pay some or all of their outstanding fees, or who can foresee a delay in paying upcoming fees, can put in a formal request for a short-term loan of no more than \$200. Interested parties must arrange to meet with the Operations Manager to confidentially discuss their request for Short Term Financial Aid and complete a Request for Short-term Financial Aid form.

If the request for short-term financial aid has merit, the Operations Manager will work with the parents/guardians to agree on the terms by which the loan will be repaid. Together they will outline these details on the form. All applications for loans of over \$200, or payments extending beyond that school year, must be approved by the RCCCS Financial Committee, before the operations manager can sign off on them. Once the payment terms are agreed and recorded on the Request for Short Term Financial Aid, the Operations Manager and the parents/guardians must sign and date the form. The Operations Manager will give a copy to the parents/guardians, and store the original securely along with RCCCS's other confidential financial documents.

The Operations Manager or the Treasurer will report to the RCCCS Board on the status of its short-term financial aid at regularly scheduled Board meetings at least once per quarter, or on request. The reports will protect the identity of families and students.

If the terms of the Short-Term Financial Aid contract are breached, parents/guardians will have 30 days to settle all outstanding account balances or access to RCCCS programs will be terminated.

### **NSF Cheques**

An NSF payment must be paid in full within three business days once the family has been notified of the NSF cheque. A \$25.00 penalty will be charged for any NSF cheque received by RCCCS. This amount will be automatically charged to your account and must be paid within 14 days.

## **Income Tax Receipts**

In February each year, RCCCS will issue a yearly tax receipt, for all payments made January 1 to December 31 the previous year. A \$25 cost will be levied for all duplicate receipts requested. This amount will be automatically charged to your account and must be paid within 14 days.

## **Program Withdrawals**

### *Withdrawal by parent*

Parents/guardians wishing to withdraw a child from, or make alterations to their child's days of attendance in any RCCCS program (excluding camps), must provide thirty (30) days notice **in writing** to RCCCS. The Operations Manager can provide a template form for families in these circumstances. If 30 days written notice is not received, the monthly fees will be billed to the parents/guardians.

### *Withdrawal by the Society*

RCCCS reserves the right to an immediate withdrawal of a child at any time in the event that:

- The child engages in any unacceptable conduct (which is defined as behaviour that creates unsafe conditions but not limited to acts of bullying, physical violence, and illegal acts).
- Fees remain outstanding after fourteen days written notice is given.

## **Refunds & Credits**

Refunds will be offered under the following circumstances:

- If a parent has pre-paid in advance for several months, and withdraws their child from the program with at least 30-days notice, refunds will be given for any pre-paid monthly fees.
- If a child is unexpectedly unable to attend the program for medical reasons, and parent's requests to withdraw them, a full refund for any pre-paid fees will be given upon presentation of a valid doctors note. In this instance, 30 days notice is not required.
- If a parent pays the full monthly fee prior to being authorized for Child Care Subsidy. Upon approval of Child Care Subsidy, the parent will have the option to request a refund in the amount covered by subsidy, or have their account credited the subsidized amount.
- If RCCCS programs are unexpectedly closed for an extended period of time, refunds may be considered by The RCCCS Board.

Account Credits are valid for 6 months from the date of issue, and will be offered under the following circumstances:

- If parents/guardians decide to scale back the number of days their child is attending any program, any overpayments for that month will be applied to their account as a credit. (30 days)
- If a child is unexpectedly unable to attend any pre-registered and pre-paid day(s) or week(s) of Treehouse Camps, a program credit will be given as long as 24 hours notice is given to RCCCS of absence.

## **COMMUNICATION**

RCCCS strongly promotes open and honest communication between parents/guardians and all RCCCS staff. We believe that such communication builds a foundation of mutual trust and provides the support necessary to work together towards the best interest of the child. Below are some specific examples of communication that we feel is especially important.

### **Late Pick Up**

If you are going to be late to collect your child from any of our programs, please contact RCCCS to let the staff know. If your child is not picked up on time at the end of the scheduled day, parents will be charged \$10 for every ten minutes the child remains past the program end time. This amount will be automatically charged to your account, and must be paid within 14 days

RCCCS reserves the right to waive the late fee in extenuating circumstances.

### **Absences**

#### *Rainbow Preschool*

Please communicate with our staff if you will be arriving late or collecting your child early from preschool. It is helpful for staff to know in advance, so they can manage the flow of the day. We do not expect that parents/guardians of Rainbow children to inform us every time a child is unable to attend, however we greatly appreciate when you take the time let us know of any absences.

#### *Treehouse Afterschool Programs*

Parents with children in Treehouse **must** advise RCCCS staff before school dismissal if your child will not be attending that day. Failure to do so will result in a charge of \$5.00 per day in addition to that days' fees. If your child does not arrive at the Centre when expected after school, RCCCS will attempt to contact you or confirm the child's attendance at school. However, if the child's whereabouts are not confirmed within 15 minutes, RCCCS will report the child as missing to the RCMP.

### Treehouse Camps

Unless late arrival has been communicated with RCCCS staff, we will assume that your child is not attending camp if they have not arrived within 15 minutes of the scheduled start time.

### **Parent-Teacher Meetings**

We understand the importance of working together with families to provide children with a positive, enriching, early learning experience that is unique to each child. Parents/guardians are encouraged to discuss any concerns they may have with the staff. Parent teacher conferences can be arranged to take place via phone call, before or after class time, or by appointment.

### **Curriculum Calendars**

Each month families will be provided with a monthly calendar including the themes and concepts we are loosely focusing on in Rainbow Preschool & Treehouse Afterschool Program. These are subject to change depending on the children's interests. Treehouse Summer Camps have weekly themes, which are communicated on a summer schedule.

### **Birthdays**

At all RCCCS programs we celebrate each child's birthday by honoring their life and accomplishments through a "Celebration of Life". Please speak with the teachers to get more information on the celebration.

### **Special Notices**

RCCCS is aware that important information may need to be communicated to parents/guardians throughout the year. Depending on the nature of the information, communication may happen through the following methods:

- Bulletins posted in the Centre
- Email
- Letters sent home with children
- Phone
- In-person conversations

### **Parent Information Night (Rainbow)**

During the first few weeks of September, we hold a parent information evening. Attendance is strongly encouraged by a representative of each family. We use this opportunity to introduce our staff, school routing and environment. It is also a great opportunity for parents to ask questions and raise concerns. The date of this parent evening will be communicated to parents prior to the start of the term.

## HEALTH & NUTRITION

### Snack & Lunch

Eating nutritious food is an important part of a child's health. We encourage each child to bring a healthy snack and lunch each day. Please avoid sending items such as chewing gum, highly sugared drinks, and hard candies. If you are looking for snack and lunch ideas please refer to Health Canada's *Canada's Food Guide*, see

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/order-commander/index-eng.php>

Children may not share their snacks or lunches with other children due to the risk of potential allergies.

### Allergies

#### Food Allergies

Parents/guardians must fill out allergy information forms provided in the registration package. When notified of a child's food allergy diagnosis, RCCCS will work in collaboration with the parents/guardians to build and implement an individual health plan and emergency care plan to address the health care needs of the child.

#### Anaphylaxis

Anaphylaxis is a sudden and severe allergic reaction, which can be fatal, requiring immediate medical emergency measures to be taken. The school maintains records and has the *Allergy Anaphylactic* forms for identified children posted in the office and the kitchen areas of the Centre.

#### **Parents/Guardians are responsible for:**

- Notifying school when a child is diagnosed as being at risk of anaphylaxis
- Providing school with updated medical information annually or whenever there is a significant change related to their children
- Providing appropriate (current and up-to-date) medication for their child to keep at school
- Providing parental consent for medication administration, which includes direct instructions for medications (dosage and timing)

#### **RCCCS is responsible for:**

- Ensuring all staff training is current in the administration of EpiPen's and Twinnerix
- Storing emergency medications in an easily accessible area known to all staff

- Informing all RCCCS families by email and/or letter that there is a child allergic to specific food/foods at the school and to refrain from sending foods containing such ingredients in snacks and lunches. **Please note that food restrictions are made on a case-by-case basis and may change in any given school term.**
- Requesting that all families carefully check all packaged food before sending it in children's snacks/lunches to ensure that they do not contain any trace amounts of specified allergens
- Ensuring that children's lunches do not include foods containing specified allergens. Should food contain allergens it will be set aside to be sent home
- Ensuring that children wash hands with soap and water when entering the building as a precaution

### Illness

Good health and safety practices are at the heart of our quality program for children. RCCCS is sensitive to the stress that a child's illness may cause; however, we are not licensed to care for children when they are ill.

Parents are required to keep their child at home, or the child will be sent home, if the child has any of the following:

- Fever of 37.8 °C (100 °F). The child may return after the fever has subsided on its own **without the aid of medication.**
- Diarrhea or vomiting. The condition must have stopped for 48 hours before returning.
- Undiagnosed rash, skin infection, or ear/eye discharge. A visit to the doctor is recommended. If the condition(s) require treatment, the child must be using prescribed medications for 24 hours before returning.
- Pink eye (conjunctivitis). The child must be on an antibiotic cream or drops for 24 hours before returning.
- Communicable disease, or infection. The child must remain at home for seven (7) full days, or until the disease progresses beyond its infectious stage.

Parents/guardians must inform the RCCCS Operations Manager should their child be diagnosed with a communicable disease. This is particularly important when reporting diseases, which may endanger others. Measles, Bacterial Meningitis, Viral Meningitis, Mumps, Pertussis (Whooping Cough) and Rubella are all examples of reportable diseases in British Columbia. RCCCS will notify the medical health officer within 24 hours of being made aware of a child enrolled at RCCCS that has a communicable disease.

PLEASE NOTE: Children who are not vaccinated will be excluded from RCCCS programs if an outbreak occurs.

- *Symptoms of Cold or Flu.* Symptoms include, but are not limited to, sore throat, watery eyes, persistent sneezing or coughing, and/or a constant runny nose. The child must be kept home until major cold symptoms have subsided.

In general, any child too ill to participate in the normal activities of any of RCCCS program should be excluded from those programs. If the child should not be exposed to rain, cold temperatures, or outdoor activities, then he/she should not be in attendance. Each case will be dealt with on an individual basis, balancing the needs of the child, family, and RCCCS.

If a child becomes ill during a program, staff will immediately separate the child from other children and contact the parent/guardian, or, if necessary, the emergency contact person. The child will be given a comfortable, quiet place to rest. Parents/guardians need to be prepared for the possibility of their child becoming ill by having a plan in place should illness occur.

## **Vaccinations**

All childcare facilities in BC are required by law under the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act* to keep a record of each child's immunization history. These records are required to be made available to Vancouver Coastal Health Authority (VCH) medical health officers for public health programs.

An *Immunization (Vaccination) Information for Childcare* form for each child attending RCCCS programs must be completed. The information you provide on this form will be used to update your child's health record at VCH in order that: medical health officers may respond if a disease outbreak occurs in your childcare facility; public health staff can recommend immunizations which your child may be missing; and VCH is able to provide better care to your child as part of its public health programs.

Should a disease outbreak occur at RCCCS, any child who is not immunized for that disease will be excluded from all RCCCS programs.

## **Head Lice**

Head lice do not carry disease and do not have anything to do with cleanliness. The only harmful effect from head lice is the way children and adults react. Negative reactions to head lice can harm children's self-esteem and result in their isolation from others. Therefore, RCCCS staff will exercise tact and discretion in dealing with children who are identified as being affected by the problem.

In view of the difficulties inherent in controlling an outbreak, RCCCS believes the key responsibility for the control of head lice rests with the parent/guardian. Should an active lice problem be identified at RCCCS notice will be sent home to

all parents/guardians informing them that they should maintain vigilance in screening and, if necessary, treating their own children and those living in the same household.

If detected at school, the child may stay until the end of the school day. Parents/guardians will be notified that their child has head lice.

When cases of head lice are confirmed, parents/guardians will be asked to do the following:

- Contact the school, if discovered out of school time
- Treat the child at home
- Remove all nits
- Freeze, dry clean, or high-heat launder clothing, bedding, and personal items
- Check other family members and treat if head lice are found
- Refer to Public Health information regarding timelines for follow-up treatment and other preventative methods

The child may return to school the next day after the first treatment with a pharmaceutical lice treatment.

### **Medication Administration**

A staff member can administer medication to a child only when it is prescribed by a doctor. Parents/guardians are required to fill out a *Medication Administration Form* before **any** medication can be administered to a child.

Staff will ensure that the medication is administered to the child in the amount and at the times specified by the child's parent/guardian or in the child's record or care plan. Staff will keep a detailed record of medication given including the dosage and time.

Prescription Medication must be provided in the original container, with the prescription label on it indicating the child's name, name of medication, dosage of medication, and instruction for storage and administration time, verifying their knowledge that the medication was given.

All medication must be taken home by the parent/guardian each day, except in the case of medications required for life threatening situations (e.g., asthma medication, Epi-pens, etc.) or pain reliever for infants (e.g., Infant Tylenol). These medications must be checked monthly for expiration dates.

#### Storage and access to Medication

All medication will be stored in the RCCCS office, out of reach of the children. It will be accessible to all of the staff.

A child may have access to his or her own medication, under the supervision of RCCCS staff, if:

- a. the child's parent/guardian has indicated on the *Medication Administration Form* to permit this, and



- b. the nature of the child's medication is such that, without immediate access to the medication by the child, the child's health will be significantly at risk.

RCCCS staff, who supervise a child who self-administers medication, will document the administration of the medication in the child's care plan.

### **Toileting (Rainbow)**

All children enrolled at Rainbow Preschool must be toilet trained and working towards managing all aspects of toileting independently. Staff are available to help as needed, and naturally, as mishaps and accidents do occur, the staff will handle these situations with sensitivity.

### **Screen Time**

RCCCS provides an activity-focused early learning environment. We believe children learn best through active participation, hands-on experiences, interactive conversation, and exploration. RCCCS follows the recommendations established by Vancouver Coastal Health, which has found that too much television viewing has been linked to poor performance in school, overweight children, and the establishment of poor dietary habits. As such, children at RCCCS will not have access to television viewing, which includes watching videos, or DVD's, playing with video games, and using the computer. On the very rare occasion, our Treehouse Afterschool Care Program and Treehouse Summer Camp will have a special Movie Day. Parents will be given advance notice

### **Physical Activity Guidelines**

RCCCS recognized the importance of physical activity for young children. We will ensure that children in care are supported and encouraged to engage in active play and develop fundamental movement skills. RCCCS encourages all children to participate in a variety of daily physical activity opportunities that are appropriate for their age, that are fun and that offer a variety. RCCCS will provide preschoolers and school age children (ages 3 through 12 years' old) with at least 90-120 minutes of daily outdoor active play opportunities across 2 or 3 separate occasions. We will increase indoor active play time so the total amount of active play time remains the same if weather limits outdoor time.

## **BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT**

### **Guidance**

At RCCCS, our program promotes self-confidence and supports children in exploring their learning environment to gain self-awareness, while building social and emotional connections with others. We have created an emergent inspired program that promotes and engages children in their love of learning through

play-based learning and discovery-based learning. We believe play fosters strong social and emotional skills, encourages children to learn and use self control, cooperate and have respect for others—which are all key components in building a caring and diverse community.

We have gathered ideas and concepts from all aspects of early childhood education including the techniques and fundamental principles of Reggio Emilia, Waldorf, and Montessori. Our program offers a way for teachers to harness children's natural curiosity and creativity by encouraging them to work on projects that interest them. Parents are also encouraged to be actively involved in all aspects of the school and their child's learning. Most importantly, our educators see children as full of potential, competent and capable of thinking for themselves.

#### KEY POINTS USED IN OUR PROGRAM

- Problem-solving approach to learning
- Use of small groups in project learning
- Communal activity and sharing of culture
- Reciprocity, exchange and dialogue.
- Repeat key experiences.
- Documentation of children's work and dialogue.
- Re-examination of and experimentation with projects and work.
- Artistic impression through drawing, painting, collage, sculpture and clay work.
- Other modes of expression through dramatic play, music and building.

#### **Management**

At RCCCS, we aim to provide a stimulating environment in which children develop self-discipline and self-esteem. We believe in working towards managing behaviour rather than the discipline of a child. Clear, consistent boundaries are set regarding behaviour, taking into account the age and stage of development of the child. Children are made aware of the need for goals and boundaries and specific expectations for their behaviour in ways appropriate to their levels of understanding.

Positive methods of guidance are used. We acknowledge and reinforce good behaviour and encourage respect for others. We encourage responsibility. Adults intervene and redirect, if necessary, to prevent disagreements developing that children cannot handle. Physical punishment is never used, nor is practices that humiliate or frighten children. Any incidents of unacceptable behaviour are handled in a calm and controlled manner. Persistent problems with unacceptable behaviour are promptly and accurately recorded, then reported to parents, colleagues, or professionals, as appropriate, and advice sought. In extreme cases, children may have to be removed from the program. It is always made clear that it is the behaviour, not the child, that is unwelcome.

## **CHILDREN'S SAFETY & SECURITY**

### **Authorized Pick-up**

On the RCCCS *Child Care Registration Form* parents/guardians can list all persons authorized to pick-up a child. It is important that this list is kept up to date, and you may update it at any time.

### Unauthorized Person

An unauthorized person is anyone who is not clearly stated on the registration form and/or any person who is incapable (intoxicated) of caring for your child.

If an unauthorized person arrives to pick-up your child, access will be denied. Your child will remain under the supervision and custody of RCCCS staff while they arrange for a different authorized person to pick-up your child. If an emergency situation arises during the day, alternate arrangements can be made over the phone with RCCCS staff.

### Rainbow Preschool Sign-In/Sign-Out Procedures

For the safety and security of your child, it is essential that RCCCS staff is aware of when your child is dropped-off and picked-up. A *Sign-In/Sign-Out* sheet is available for parents/guardians and must be completed each day.

Please inform RCCCS staff, verbally and in writing on the *Sign-In/Sign-Out* sheet, if a person other than those mentioned on the *Child Care Registration Form* will be picking up your child. If RCCCS staff does not know the person picking-up your child they will be required to show photo identification.

### Treehouse After School Program & Camps Sign-Out Procedure

For the safety and security of your child, it is essential that RCCCS staff is aware of when your child is picked-up. A *Sign-Out* sheet is available for parents/guardians and must be completed each day.

Please inform RCCCS staff verbally and/or by email if a person other than those mentioned on the *Registration* form will be picking up your child. If RCCCS staff does not know the person picking-up your child they will be required to show photo identification.

### **Custody and Access**

RCCCS expects that all information provided by the enrolling parent or legal guardian is accurate and up to date. If a family has a custody agreement or court order, a current copy of all legal documents must be placed in the child's file. RCCCS staff will follow the written custody agreement or court order at all times as they relate to your child and their legal guardians or parents.

### **Supervision of Children**

The Board of Directors and staff of RCCCS are committed to providing a safe, healthy, individualized quality childcare program with both indoor and outdoor

learning environments. Our program License requires that children in a facility are supervised at all times by an appropriately qualified staff member. When taking the children on field trips away from the center, the Educators at RCCCS will implement thorough supervision strategies to ensure the health and safety of all children at all times.

### **Missing Child**

In order to keep all children safe while in an RCCCS program, no child is ever left alone and children are accounted for at all times. In the unlikely event of a child going missing, staff will immediately check all areas of the Centre and property. If the child cannot be found the police will be called immediately and the child's parents/guardians or emergency contact person will be notified.

### **Emergency Plan**

In any emergency parents will be contacted as soon as possible. If evacuation is necessary our designated meeting place is either Roberts Creek Elementary School or, if the school is deemed unsafe, Roberts Creek Community Hall. The children will be cared for by RCCCS staff until a parent, guardian, or other authorized adult is able to pick them up.

All RCCCS programs will, in accordance with the Licensing Act, conduct monthly fire drills. Classes will practice evacuating the building as well as talking about fire/earthquake safety.

#### Fire

In the case of a fire the building will be evacuated as quickly as possible with a staff member leading the children to the designated assembly area where they will wait until parents/guardians can be contacted and come to pick up the children.

#### Earthquake

Staff will calmly and clearly instruct the children to carry out the earthquake procedures practiced during drills to ensure safety in whichever environment they are located at the time (indoor and outdoor hazards taken into account). If evacuation is deemed the best course of action the children will be taken to a designated location.

#### Other Emergencies

For all other emergencies, the Operations Manager and other staff will carry out and follow detailed procedures, as set out in the 'RCCCS Emergency Plan', which is reviewed and updated each year, and can be found in the office.

## **Children's Records**

It is the responsibility of the enrolling parent or guardian to keep all children's records up to date and inform RCCCS of any changes. This includes:

- Child Care Registration Form
- Emergency Consent Form
- Immunization Record

All written information that is confidential will be stored in a secure place within RCCCS. No information will be released about a child or family without the consent of the enrolling parent or legal guardian. (Exceptions include: situations related to child protection or when the court subpoenas the information).

## **Digital Image Use**

The goals of digital image use within RCCCS programs is to enhance learning, share experiences with families and other children in RCCCS programs, assist with assessment of a child's development through play and activities, and contribute to the sense of community that the children build with one another. Digital images recorded at RCCCS as part of regular programming are taken using a digital camera and are only taken by members of the staff team.

Digital images may also be taken of children in the course of special events, (e.g., Mother's Day Tea). In such cases, images may be taken by an outside photographer or parent volunteer(s), who are specifically commissioned by RCCCS for the task.

No images shall ever be used for monetary gain by any party; nor will they be created without the signature permission of the parents/guardians who are enrolling in any of RCCCS's programs.

We ask that parents/guardians understand that digital images are a standard and routine occurrence within our programs, especially in those that utilize photographs for display and learning purposes. Therefore, RCCCS will obtain permission at the time of enrollment, through the signing of a "Digital Image Waiver". Note that this permission may be revoked at any time by the child's parent/guardian.

Should a parent/guardian prefer that their child not have their image taken or recorded, they may indicate such at the time of registration. Parents/guardians may also request at any time that any existing images of their child be deleted.

Note that individual children will not be included in events involving recorded imaging if written permission is not given. In such cases, RCCCS staff will ensure that the child is provided with other activities.

For those children whose image may not be recorded, staff will take precautions to ensure that they are not inadvertently recorded when photo/video sessions are in progress, by:

- reviewing the list of children who cannot be imaged before each pre-arranged or spontaneous session;
- removing those children from the areas being imaged for the duration of the session.

It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to inform RCCCS when the circumstances regarding digital images of their child changes. In this event,

- RCCCS shall destroy the signed "Photography Waiver" and, upon request, all copies of digital images, or
- if digital imagery of the child becomes permissible, ask that the parents/guardians sign a "Photography Waiver."

### Uses of Digital Images

Digital images of children may be

- displayed within the RCCCS building for educational purposes,
- emailed to their parents/guardians, and
- on occasion, used to market the Society. This includes, but is not limited to, use on the Society's website, Facebook page, or in published RCCCS reports. **In these cases, additional authorization from parents/guardians will be sought.**

The child's name and/or identifying information will not be used in any publication or social media use of their image. The child's name will only be used in classroom displays within the RCCCS building, in the creation of their scrapbook, celebration cards, and/or goodbye cards for the child's family.

### Parent/guardian use of digital imaging devices at RCCCS

To respect privacy concerns, we ask that parents/guardians and visitors refrain from sharing any digital images of children, other than their own, taken at RCCCS events. This includes all social media and public forums.

### **Suspected Child Abuse**

We are required by law to immediately report any suspected or disclosed abuse or neglect of a child to a child welfare worker at the Ministry for Children and Family Development. After the report is filed it is up to the child welfare workers to choose the response that is least disruptive to the child and which will keep the child safe.

RCCCS reserves the right to make additions or changes to the policies in this handbook at their discretion. Parents will be given 30 days notice of any such changes.