

TOFINO NATURE KIDS

Policies and Procedures Handbook

2024



Address: PO Box 1321

Tofino BC

V0R 2Z0

Phone: 250-413-7813

Email: info@tofinonaturekids.com

Website: www.tofinonaturekids.com

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Philosophy

At Tofino Nature Kids we believe children should have fun and experience hands-on learning. We provide children with an environment where they feel comfortable to explore their learning at their own pace. We strive to create a deeper connection with nature, using the outdoors as our classroom and Mother Nature as the Facilitator.

At Tofino Nature Kids we believe a teacher's role is to help guide children in their learning. Children are born with the desire to learn, and as teacher's we are here to help them fulfill this desire. We help facilitate children's curiosities, expand their imagination and safely guide them on adventures. We believe that a combination of child and teacher led activities help the children develop their social, cognitive, physical and emotional skills. We hope that every child in our program feels safe and nurtured as they grow from the inside out.

Children learn best through play. As Maria Montessori said, "Play is the work of a child". When children are playing, some areas where they are learning include, developing their problem-solving skills, discovering their limits, and practicing fine and gross motor skills. Our focus will be on nature based activities where we will provide the materials and environment necessary for your child to explore their interests and learn new concepts and ideas.

We have a strong belief in embracing diversity and welcome children with all different personalities, learning styles, special needs and cultures etc.

We believe that it is important for children to develop a connection with nature and their surroundings. We use a combination of Emergent-Curriculum, Montessori and the Forest School Philosophies. We tune in to children's interests and support them by following their lead. We weave literacy and numeracy into daily activities and take advantage of on the spot learning opportunities.

We have a deep respect for children, their opinions and their learning. We believe that they play an integral role in approaching behavioral issues that may occur. We will use positive guidance strategies that include, listening attentively, setting limits, teaching more helpful behaviour, conflict resolution and how to manage their emotions responsibly.

We have an open-door policy. We welcome you to join us at any point should you like to see how our program is run, or to spend time with your child in our program. You know your child best, so we would like to keep an open line of communication to ensure that we are able to provide your child with the best care possible. You are welcome to approach any of the facilitators face to face, by phone, or email with anything you would like to share with us.

We believe in teaching your children how to be brave, independent, strong and creative. We support your children in taking chances and trying their best. We help them develop a respect for the environment, a sense of wonder and adventure. We help them grow into caring, compassionate human beings.

Goals

We strive to...

- Foster an environment of respect, care and compassion for other humans and nature
- Provide a warm, caring and diverse environment
- Inspire children to explore their creativity and their imagination
- Create an environment that fosters a child's autonomy and strengths
- Help support children in developing a sense of wonder and adventure

Service Offered

Specialty Nature Based Program for ages 3-12.

Child to Staff Ratio

3-5 year old's: 8:1

5-12 year old's: 15:1

Learning Environment

Tofino Nature Kids strives to create an environment of respect. This includes respect for all cultures, ages, genders, interests and abilities. This also includes respect for all living things. We aim to speak and act with kindness and compassion toward each other.

Child Support Policy

Tofino Nature Kids strives to provide social, emotional, cognitive and physical support for all children enrolled in our program. Children requiring extra support are welcome in our program. We are an inclusive program that strives to provide flexible programming that can meet the needs of each unique child and group. We would like to work with you to determine how to best care for your child.

Each child who attends our program must be physically able to take part in the program activities or have a support person who is capable of helping them participate. All children must be able to respond to a request of "stop". If you think that this might be a challenge for your child, we would like to collaborate with you to create a plan to best support your child. If we find that an individual child's need for support is greater than the instructors can provide, we will work with you to look at additional care options for your child.

These may include:

- You could hire a support person to attend with your child

- You could have a friend or family member attend. Any adult who attends the program regularly must submit a criminal record check.

Administering Medication

Prescription drugs or prescribed medication with a doctor's note, must be in the original container and be labeled with the following information: name of medication, name of child and doctor, and the date, time and amount of medication to be administered. Parents must sign a permission form before medication can be administered. All medication is stored with the program's first aid kit.

We do not administer non-prescribed medication.

Arrival (parent sign in)

Your child's arrival and departure time will depend on your schedule and program selection. In order for your child to get the maximum benefit from our programs, it is strongly suggested that they arrive at the program start time.

If your child will be absent, please notify the lead instructor as early as possible to inform them of their absence as the space may be filled by a waitlisted child. Please refer to our cancellation policy for information.

Children must be signed in and out of the program every day.

Children must be signed in by a responsible adult upon arrival. After school programs will be signed in by the lead instructor. When signing in, please relay any information to the staff that you feel is important to your child's adjustment to the day (i.e. your child's evening, sleep, breakfast etc.).

Please inform staff if someone else will be picking up your child and ensure that they are named as an authorized pick up person on your child's registration form. Any authorized adult must be prepared to provide government-issued identification upon pick-up. Staff must be informed of any change to the pick-up schedule.

Departure (parent sign out)

At pick up time, please speak directly to a staff member so they know you are signing your child out of the program and into your care. If someone is picking up your child who is unknown to staff, even if they are listed as an authorized pick up person, they will be asked for government-issued photo identification before a child will be released to them.

Please check in with the lead instructor to see if they would like to relay any information from the day.

Safe Release

Should you or an alternate person fail to pick up your child 15 minutes after pick up time, the program policy is:

- staff will immediately phone your home/business/cell phone
- if no one answers, the staff will phone all the emergency contact persons listed on your registration form
- if no contact made with an emergency contact person after a period of 45 minutes, The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) will be contacted to pick up your child
- a note will be placed on the beach shack door notifying you of the whereabouts of your child and a late pick-up penalty fee will be charged

This course of action is severe, only implemented if absolutely necessary. We are legally obligated to follow this protocol. We would appreciate your support in avoiding this scenario.

If someone whom we deem incapable of providing safe care arrives, or someone not on your approved pick up list arrives to pick up the children, they will be refused and you or your authorized alternate will be called to pick up the child. If an alternative cannot be reached within a reasonable length of time, Ministry for Children and Family Development will be called. If it appears that you are incapable of providing safe care, we will suggest we call an authorized alternate to pick up your child(ren). If you insist on taking the children, we will release them to your care and call the RCMP.

Clothing and Personal Possessions

Play clothes that are comfortable, washable, suitable for the weather and easy for your child to dress and undress independently are best. Please remember that play is messy and children worrying about their clothes being spoiled impedes the learning process. Children should come dressed in clothes that can be lost to the worthy cause of learning! Save the good clothing for home and special family events.

Please ensure your child has the following:

- one complete change of weather appropriate clothing
- winter wear including a warm jacket, rain pants, toque, lined boots and mittens or gloves
- summer wear including a sun hat and a labeled bottle of sunscreen

Ensure that you label all your child's belongings to make sure that they do not get lost or mixed up.

Toys from home

Please avoid bringing toys from home to our program. We want to make sure that they do not get lost/dirty/broken. We also want the children to be interacting with the environment and toys can distract from that goal. If a child is set on bringing a toy to a program then oftentimes

we ask them to show it when they first arrive to everyone and then the toy leaves with the parent/caregiver when they leave.

Communication with Families

We encourage families to communicate openly with staff face to face, by phone or email. If the time does not seem practical to discuss any issues during drop off or pick up time, please email or arrange for a phone meeting.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality in our program applies to all verbal and written information about potential, currently, and previously enrolled children. Staff are required to fulfil their obligation to respect protection of privacy and shall ensure that no private or personal information is revealed. No information will be released about a child and the enrolling parent without first receiving permission from the family, except in special circumstances where the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) or the RCMP are involved. We recognize that as a program with an open-door policy, parents may at times observe situations which may include children known to them. Should this circumstance arise, we require parents adhere to our strict rule of confidentiality and take any concerns to their program leader.

Custody and Access

A child's parent or emergency contact must always be available to be contacted while the child is in our care.

The children will not be released to an unauthorized person or anyone whom we deem incapable of providing safe care. Please provide us with any custody agreements, so that we have all information necessary to allow for your child to be safely picked up.

Only people who have been previously authorized to do so, will be allowed to pick up children from the program. If, in an emergency situation, you need to send someone else to pick up the children, please call in advance with the name and description of the person who will be coming. We will require identification. The person should then be added to the list of people authorized to pick up the child.

If children are not picked up at the agreed upon time, the authorized alternate will be called. If you or an authorized alternate cannot be contacted, and a reasonable amount of time has passed, we will consider the child abandoned and call the appropriate Ministry.

If someone whom we deem incapable of providing safe care arrives to pick up the child/children, they will be refused and you or your authorized alternate will be called to pick up the child/children. If an alternative cannot be reached within a reasonable length of time, the Ministry for Children and Family Development will be called. If it appears that you are incapable of providing safe care, we will suggest we call an authorized alternate to pick up the

child/children. If you insist on taking the child/children, we will release them to your care and call the RCMP.

Family Involvement

We value your opinion and encourage family involvement when it comes to program and policies, observations, participation, guests, program review process and shared resources. Please contact the program leader with any input you would like to share for the program either face to face, via phone or email.

Fees

Wickaninnish Inn Fees 3-12 Program: 9:00-2:00 = \$50/ day

Wickaninnish School Fees 3-12 Spring Break Program: 9:00-2:00 = \$50/ day

Fees are due upon registration. Full fees are charged on any day of absence (i.e. sickness, vacation, etc.). If it is not feasible for you to pay for the semester in full, inquire about creating a payment plan.

Scholarship Program

At Tofino Nature Kids we try to make our programs accessible to everyone. Depending on the season, we may provide a limited number of needs based scholarships to families who would otherwise not be able to attend the program dependent on funding availability.

Late Pick up Policy

Please have your child signed out at your pick up time. We will try to keep all their items organized in their bags, but please do scan around the area to ensure that all your child's belongings are making it home with you. Some children are really good at spreading their items far and wide and sometimes the facilitatorss do not have enough arms to control it all.

Should you meet with an emergency and cannot communicate with us or arrange for an alternative person to pick up your child within 15 minutes after pick up time, the programs policy as per licensing regulations is:

- staff will immediately phone your home/business/cell phone
- if no one answers, the staff will phone all the emergency contact persons listed on your registration form
- if no contact made with an emergency contact person after a period of 45 minutes, The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) will be contacted to pick up your child
- a note will be placed on the storage bin notifying you of the whereabouts of your child and a late pick-up penalty fee will be charged

This course of action is severe, only implemented if absolutely necessary. Please understand this is a licensing requirement, and even though our program is not licenced we follow this protocol. We would appreciate your support in avoiding this scenario.

Late Fees

If a child is picked up after your designated pick up time, you will receive a notification letter reminding you of our late fee policy. Should you be late a third time, a late fee of \$1.00 per minute will be charged, payable immediately. You will not be permitted to drop your child off at the program until this fee is paid.

Fire Drill/Evacuation Process

In the case of a fire we will evacuate to our emergency evacuation location.

If we must evacuate, we plan to go:

From North Chesterman Beach:

Walking - to 4th floor of The Wickaninnish Inn

Address: 500 Osprey Lane, Tofino, BC V0R 2Z0.

Wickaninnish Inn # 250-725-3100

From Wickaninnish Elementary School

To the basketball courts near the parking lot.

Address: 431 Gibson Street

Tofino, British Columbia, V0R 2Z0

Tel: 250-725-3254

First Aid

At least one employee at all times will hold a valid First Aid and CPR certificate, is knowledgeable respecting each child's medical condition and is capable of effectively communicating with emergency personnel. All staff and volunteers require a criminal record check with a vulnerable sector check.

First Aid kits are readily accessible to all employees in the facilitators's backpack.

If your child is injured or involved in any serious conflict during the program, your facilitator will let you know at the end of class. Please be aware that sometimes, small injuries that a child did not react to will go unnoticed in the business of the play. We assure you that you will be informed of any injuries that your child reacted to, including but not limited to anything requiring first aid or any injuries to the head or neck.

Medical Emergency Policy

If your child is injured or becomes ill during the program, staff will quickly assess the situation to decide what action/attention is required. Outlined below are three procedures that may be followed:

1) If First Aid Treatment is required, staff will:

- Provide first aid treatment
- Acknowledge child's feelings
- Provide close supervision to ensure child does not require further first aid or medical attention
- Inform the parent/guardian when they come to pick up the child
- Complete the Incident Report and process

2) If Medical attention is required, staff will:

- Provide first aid treatment
- Acknowledge child's feelings
- Contact parent/guardian, then emergency contact(s) if the parent/guardian is not available
- Contact the child's doctor if the parent/guardian and emergency contact(s) cannot be reached
- If a child's doctor is not available, staff will proceed as if it is an emergency medical situation
- Take child to medical facility via ambulance
- Accompany the child if parent/guardian/emergency contact(s) is not available for pass off, to the medical facility
- Provide information to the doctor and parent/guardian/emergency contact(s)
- Support the child and parent/guardian/emergency contact(s)
- Complete the Incident Report and process

3) If Emergency Medical attention is required, staff will:

- Call and request ambulance
- Administer First Aid until ambulance attendants arrive
- Contact parent/guardian, then emergency contact(s) if the parent/guardian is not available to meet staff at the emergency facility

- Accompany the child if parent/guardian/emergency contact(s) is not available for pass off, to the medical facility
- Provide information to the doctor and parent/guardian/emergency contact(s)
- Support the child and parent/guardian/emergency contact(s)
- Complete the Incident Report and process

Guiding Policy

Guidance and discipline techniques practiced are age and developmentally appropriate, non-threatening, positive, consistent, and respectful so that we can promote each child's inner self-control, build self-esteem and encourage problem-solving and independence.

Staff at Tofino Nature Kids follow the guidelines set out in the B.C. Child Care Licensing Regulations to ensure that, while under our care, no child is subjected to any of the following:

- confinement or physical restraint by an employee, except as authorized in a child's care plan
- shoving, hitting or shaking by an employee or another child, confinement or physical restraint by another child
- harsh, belittling or degrading treatment by an employee or another child, whether verbal, emotional or physical, that could humiliate the child or undermine the child's self-respect
- spanking or any other form of corporal punishment
- separation, without supervision by a responsible adult, from other children, deprivation of meals, snacks, rest or necessary use of a toilet as a form of punishment

If your child has a care plan that includes instructions respecting behavioural guidance, we will ensure that we are consistent with those instructions. If the behavioural guidance includes the use of restraints, we will ensure that restraints are only administered by a person who is trained in the use of, and alternatives to the use of, restraints.

Physical Play

At Tofino Nature Kids, we understand physical play as an important part of child development. This may include building, running, climbing, "rough housing" and working together in imaginative play. We encourage the children to engage in imaginative play in nature.

Sticks can have many different uses, including becoming weapons. We do not ban weapon play. We honor a child's instinct for play and welcome this type of play as an opportunity to talk about different comfort levels, consent and empathy. If any children are particularly uncomfortable with this type of play, we may decide on "rules" as a group so that we can play in a way so that everyone feels comfortable and safe.

Transition and Separation

We understand that children who are new to the program may need some time to transition into the program. During the first weeks of the program, parents/caregivers are welcome to stay with their child for the first hour if necessary. After they leave, we then ask that they stay close by in the event that the child is having a hard time transitioning.

Tears may happen upon departure. Our facilitators are accustomed to children's separation anxiety and will work at engaging the child in a variety of activities to calm them down. This strategy generally works, however if your child doesn't settle within 30 minutes we will call you to come and take them home and will try again the next class.

Health and Illness Policy

This policy was created to be used as a guide for parents and caregivers to outline the rules and expectations for what to do in the case of an illness. This policy will help keep the illness from spreading to other children and caregivers in the program. At Tofino Nature Kids we like to share, just not our illnesses.

If your child becomes ill or injured while in the program, we will notify the parents or emergency contact as soon as possible. We will provide your child with a quiet and clean resting place until someone is able to come pick them up.

When to keep your child at home:

We advise that you keep your children at home if they are experiencing any of these symptoms that will cause them to be unable to fully participate in our programs.

- Pain - any complaints of unexplained or undiagnosed pain.
- A common cold with listlessness, runny nose and eyes, coughing and sore throat. Once the child's temperature, well being and energy have returned to normal, the child may no longer be contagious, and may be able to return to the program even though coughing and runny nose may persist. Generally speaking, a person who catches a cold can spread it to others for one day before symptoms appear, and about five days after the cold symptoms (above) begin. If the symptoms (runny nose and eyes, coughing) are caused by a known allergy (e.g. hay fever, asthma) the child is not contagious and does not have to be excluded.
- Difficulty in breathing - wheezing or a persistent cough.
- Fever (100 degrees F/38.3 degrees C or more) accompanied by general symptoms such as listlessness or sluggishness may be an early sign of an illness that requires a doctor's attention.
- Sore throat or trouble swallowing.
- Infected skin or eyes, or an undiagnosed rash.
- Headache and stiff neck (should see physician).
- Unexplained diarrhea or loose stool (may or may not be combined with nausea, vomiting or stomach cramps). These symptoms may indicate a bacterial or viral gastrointestinal infection

which is very easily passed from one child to another via the fecal-oral route. The child should be kept home until all symptoms have stopped.

- Nausea and vomiting may be early signs of illness.
- Severe itching, dry skin of either body or scalp if caused by head or body lice or scabies.
- Children with known or suspected communicable diseases.

If your child has experienced any of the following symptoms, please keep your children at home until the symptoms subside, the infection is fully cleared, and a minimum clear 24-hour period has passed.

Common Reportable Diseases (Reportable to Public Health Unit)

Please inform us if your child or someone in the family has been diagnosed with any of the following reportable diseases within 24 hours. This will enable us to inform parents and hopefully prevent the illness from spreading any further.

- food borne illness (all causes, e.g. Salmonella)
- diphtheria
- giardiasis
- hepatitis A, B and C
- measles
- German measles (rubella)
- bacterial or viral meningitis
- Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (the E. coli toxin of Haemorrhagic Colitis or hamburger disease)
- meningococcal disease (bacteraemia or meningitis)
- mumps
- pertussis (whooping cough)
- tuberculosis
- sexually transmitted diseases (need to be reported due to abuse issues)
- waterborne illness (all causes)

Your child can still come to program if:

- They have a runny nose or cough caused by allergies
- If they have the energy to participate fully in the program including outdoor activities
- They have a rash that has been diagnosed from a doctor and shown that it is not contagious

Your child may return to program if:

- Once your child is no longer infectious and free from symptoms listed above under the “keep your child at home” section
- They feel well enough to participate fully in the program including outdoor activities
- If your child experienced a serious illness, we require a doctor’s approval to return to the program

We hope that everyone stays healthy this year, and by following these guidelines it will help prevent the spread of illness to other people within the program. We appreciate your cooperation. Please do not hesitate to ask if you have any questions or concerns about our Illness Policy.

Unvaccinated Child

In the event of an outbreak of a communicable disease within the program, unvaccinated children will be asked to stay home until the outbreak has cleared. Please Note: Any outbreak of communicable disease within the program will be communicated to parents in writing.

Toileting

Due to the nature of our program, it is an expectation that your child is potty trained. We understand that accidents do happen, so please do send a full change of clothes. Please assist your child at learning how to do a “nature pee” before the program if possible. The facilitators will be patient, understanding and supportive while assisting the child when necessary. There is a porta potty available for poop.

Hours and Days of Operation

We will be closed for all statutory holidays including Easter Monday. We will be closed for 2 weeks during the Christmas Holidays following the school district 70 schedule. Closure dates will be posted each year.

Meals/Snacks

Please send your child with a healthy lunch and snacks to ensure that they have the proper nutrition to function fully throughout the program.

We will ensure that the food and drink given to your child is sufficient in quantity and quality to meet the development needs of your child, taking into account the child’s age, number of hours they are in care, food preferences and cultural background.

If we see that there are deficits in your child’s lunch, we will then notify you with some suggestions on what to add to your child’s lunches.

We are an allergy and nut aware facility and work with parents to provide suitable choices for children with special dietary needs. Please talk to your program facilitator regarding your child’s

particular needs. There will be no sharing of snacks between children, not only to respect food sensitivities/allergies, but also so parents are aware of how much children have eaten during the day.

Lunch is eaten family style which means that an facilitator is seated at each table/picnic blanket with a group of children to encourage conversation, the practice of good table manners, and to aid children in helping to clean up after themselves. We follow a no fruit or vegetable juice policy to avoid high sugar and/or salt intake, to reduce recycling waste, and to encourage water intake. The goal is for children to develop an awareness of their own appetites, self-regulate and learn healthy eating habits that will stay with them throughout their lives.

Refund Policy

Tofino Nature Kids has implemented the following cancellation policy based on the time, resources and staffing that goes into planning our programs. We cannot recover these expenses if you cancel. Cancellations made on short notice can also prevent others from attending. If you cancel for any reason: Cancellations/transfers made at least 14 days prior to the first day of a program will receive a full refund. Cancellations/transfers made between 11 and 14 days prior to the first day of a program will receive a refund of 50% of the total program tuition. Cancellations/transfers made 10 days or less prior to the first day of a program, or after the start of a program, are not refundable.

Extreme Weather

Tofino Nature Kids may be canceled or ended early on occasion due to extreme weather. If the weather is hazardous to families traveling to the program or for the children playing outdoors, the classes will be canceled.

If the class is being canceled because of bad weather, an email will be sent out no later than 7:30am on the day of. If the class is ending early because of extreme weather a text message will be sent to all parents followed by a phone call if no response comes within 10 minutes. Please respond to email or text so that the facilitator knows that you have received the message.

If School District 70 has a snow day or is closed for extreme weather Tofino Nature Kids will not operate.

facilitator illness

In the event that the Facilitator is ill, we will attempt to contact a substitute facilitator to provide coverage for the day. If class is canceled due to an facilitator illness, we will try to offer a make-up class later in the term or a refund upon request.

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted on the property.

Staff Qualifications

At minimum one staff member will have Standard First Aid and CPR 'C'. Caleb Harding, the lead instructor, has Standard First Aid, CPR C, AED training, Bronze Cross LifeSaving, Red Cross Water Safety and the National Lifeguard ticket. Mr Harding also holds a B.A in Political Science.

Suspected Child Abuse Duty to report

We are required by law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect to the Ministry of Child and Family Development (MCFD). Please be advised that when a report is made, staff are not permitted to contact the parent unless specifically directed to do so by MCFD. It is not our responsibility to determine whether or not any abuse has occurred; it is the responsibility of MCFD.

Termination of Services

Staff are committed to providing a caring and supportive environment for all families. However, termination of services may be required if:

- fees for services are not paid according to the financial policies and suitable arrangements cannot be agreed upon
- a family does not abide by expectations in the Family Policy Handbook and successful resolution of the differences is not achieved
- a family member harasses, threatens abuse or commits a violent act towards staff, child or another family involved in the program
- the program is unable to satisfactorily resolve problems of late pick-up with a family
- the child's behaviour is severely disruptive or physically threatening to the well-being and safety of other children or staff and additional supports to accommodate the child are unavailable

Termination of services is a last resort. Before the program determines its decision, all steps will be taken to accommodate the child's needs. Steps include:

- working with the family to identify other more suitable programs and resources
- consulting with professional support resources
- requesting increased staffing through Supported Child Development or The Ministry of Children and Family Development
- referring to appropriate services for staff training or intervention with the child and/or family

If termination of services is required, the program will support the family to access other programs and resources.

Withdrawal from the Program

One full calendar month's written notice on the 1st of the month is required to reduce days or to withdraw from the program. Payment of one month's fees will be charged in lieu of notice.

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