COLUMBIA

Childcare Centre

Parent Handbook

A caring, nurturing, and educational environment where joy, play and learning are celebrated.

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Table of Contents

Welcome **3**
General Information **4**
Hours of Operation **5**
Mission Statement 6
Vision Statement 6
Columbia Childcare Centre Philosophy 7
Diversity Statement 7
About Our Programs **8**
Program Goals and Objectives 9
Meeting Children's Developmental Needs 9
Physical Needs 9
Social Development 10
Intellectual Development 10
Creative Development 11
Emotional Development 11
Program Descriptions 12
Licensing and Policies **13**
Licensing 14
Policies & Procedures 14
Meals and Snacks 14
Clothing, Diapers, and Toys 14
Toilet Training 15
Behaviour Guidance Policy 16
Behaviour Guidance Strategies 18
Reporting 20
Administration **21**
Enrollment Inquiries 22
Columbia Childcare Centre Fees 23
About Our Fees 23
Affordability Grants 23
Alberta Childcare Subsidy 23
Payment Policy 23
Termination of Service 24
Operational Procedures **25**
Arrival and Departure Procedures 26
Arrival (drop-off) 26
Departure (pick-up) 26
Late fees 27
Release to Authorized Persons 28
Privacy Statement 28
Health, Safety & Emergency Policies **29**
Potential Health Risk Policy 30
Accident or Illness Policy 31
Administration of Medicine Policy 32
Smoking Policy 32
Use of Technology 32
Unscheduled Closures of the Centre 33
Emergency Evacuation 34
Additional Information **35**
Community Complaints 36
Resources for Parents 37

Welcome

Welcome to the Columbia Childcare Centre! I am eagerly looking forward to building a caring and professional relationship with you and your family. It is our hope to foster a connection that will be long-lasting and mutually beneficial.

Dedicated members of the Columbia College community have spent many years establishing a reputation for superior educational programs and achieving excellence in our learners' outcomes. We are committed to extending this level of dedication to our childcare programs, aiming to exceed expectations wherever possible.

The policies and guidelines outlined in this Parent Handbook are designed to nurture the creative and collegial atmosphere that has attracted outstanding individuals to Columbia College. I am confident that the addition of your family will enhance our community and continue to make Columbia College a vibrant and rewarding environment for learning — especially for our youngest learners.

Sincerely,

Columbia Childcare Centre

General Information

General Information

Columbia Childcare Centre is conveniently located on the Columbia College Campus at 802 Manning Road NE, Calgary, and is accessible from the south entrance. Upon arrival, you will find several 15-minute loading zone stalls adjacent to the Centre's main entrance, designed to facilitate quick drop-offs and pickups. For longer visits exceeding 15 minutes, please use the Visitor Parking located at the north entrance of Columbia College, within the same building. Note that all visitors are required to obtain a parking pass from Daycare management.

For information regarding registration, waitlisting, or other inquiries, please contact the Centre's Director, Candy, at (403) 648-2270 or by email at candy.tsoi@columbia.ca

Hours of Operation

The Childcare Centre is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM. We operate year-round, except on statutory holidays as recognized by Columbia College. The Centre will be **CLOSED** on the following holidays:

- **New Year's Day**
- **Family Day**
- **Good Friday**
- **Easter Monday**
- **Victoria Day**
- **Canada Day**
- **Heritage Day**
- **Labor Day**
- **Thanksgiving**
- **Remembrance Day**
- **Christmas Eve**
- **Christmas Day**
- **Boxing Day**
- **New Year's Eve**

Specific dates for these closures will be prominently posted within the Centre, detailed in our monthly newsletters, and reminders will be posted to all parents as these dates approach.

Additionally, please be advised that the daycare will close for two weeks during the Christmas holiday period, with specific dates to be announced in the November newsletter.

Mission & Vision

Mission Statement

The mission of Columbia Childcare Centre is to deliver superior childcare within a nurturing, inclusive, and multicultural environment. Our goal is to support the development of children—socially, emotionally, physically, intellectually, and creatively—and to inspire them to become lifelong learners.

Vision Statement

Columbia Childcare Centre envisions a child-centered community where children, families, educators, and staff collaborate closely. This partnership fosters a trusting, nurturing, and mutually supportive atmosphere where joy, play, and learning are celebrated. Recognizing parents as the child's first teachers, we are committed to sharing responsibilities and working together to ensure our children's success

Columbia Childcare Centre Philosophy

Columbia Childcare Centre is dedicated to providing high-quality childcare with enriched learning opportunities in a nurturing, inclusive, and multicultural environment. We support children in their social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development through age-appropriate, play-based activities, aiming to inspire them to become lifelong learners.
Our programs offer a blend of structured and spontaneous activities, allowing our staff to respond to each child's individual interests and facilitate their exploration of the world in a warm, friendly, and safe environment. Children are encouraged to express their preferences and make choices, fostering their independence. We particularly encourage older children to engage in family-style eating, where children and teachers sit together at meal times, serving themselves from communal dishes. This setup promotes social skills such as taking turns, passing food, and using polite language, while also encouraging children to try new foods and engage in conversations about nutrition and healthy eating habits.

We actively encourage parents and families to participate in various activities and recognize them as primary caregivers. Our staff is continually supported and encouraged to enhance their knowledge and skills in delivering quality service. Staff, parents, and children are crucial in cultivating a respectful, multicultural community where diversity is celebrated.

Diversity Statement

At Columbia College, we believe that diversity in opinions, cultures, and customs among our students, staff, and faculty enriches our community. It challenges us to deepen our understanding of one another, fostering greater acceptance and making us stronger citizens, more compassionate learners, and effective leaders both locally and globally.

We welcome, value, celebrate, and respect individuals from all races, ethnicities, genders, ages, disabilities, and religions. We are dedicated to treating everyone with dignity and respect in an honest, open, fair, and friendly manner.

Our commitment extends to maintaining the highest standards of civility and decency towards all. We strive to create a learning environment where everyone can thrive in a safe, secure, and supportive atmosphere free from fear, bias, discrimination, and other negative influences.

We affirm the right to freedom of thought and expression, within the bounds of courtesy, sensitivity, responsibility, and respect for those with differing views. Through education and constructive methods, we aim to foster understanding and respect among individuals and groups, addressing misunderstandings and resolving conflicts effectively.

We uphold the laws of our country and are dedicated to developing and enforcing policies, programs, and practices that support the realization of these principles.

About Our Programs

Program Goals and Objectives

- **Learning Environment:** To create a child-centered, play-based learning environment.
- **Child Development:** To provide a positive, stimulating environment that supports all areas of child development—social, emotional, physical, intellectual, and creative.
- **Choice and Preference:** To support children as they learn to make choices and express their preferences.
- **Program Flexibility**: To provide a program that is flexible and responsive to the needs and interests of the children.
- **Transitions:** To ensure smooth transitions from one routine or activity to another, aligning with the established routine and daily rhythm.
- **Independence:** To encourage independence among young children.
- **Parent Involvement:** To encourage active parent involvement in the program.
- **Staff Engagement:** To maintain staff who guide behaviour, extend children's play, and plan engaging programs that meet developmental needs.

Meeting Children's Developmental Needs

In the application of our programming, we will strive to find a healthy balance between emergent, play-based learning activities and adult-lead experiences based on the interests of the children. We will strive to meet the developmental needs of every child in our care through some of the following ways:

Physical Needs

- We will strive, at all times, to provide for children's physical needs such that each child is offered regular opportunities for growth and development, enhancing the health of their physical body in a safe and developmentally appropriate, stimulating environment. For example, staff will provide opportunities for physical development in the following ways:
- Providing delicious and nutritious meals and snacks for children at regular meal times, according to the Canada Food Guide to Healthy Eating.
- Providing a comfortable, quiet, darkened napping environment where children feel safe and secure.
- Providing shelter from the sun and weather, warmth, and cooling.
- Ensuring children are properly clothed at all times for indoor and outdoor play, with proper foot protection.
- Providing opportunities for fresh air, daily (weather permitting).
    - **Cold Weather/Winter:** The children will not engage in outdoor play when the temperature combined **with the wind chill is lower than -17 degrees Celsius**, as measured by the Calgary Weather Forecast at the time of scheduled outdoor play. During winter, outdoor time may be limited to 15-20 minutes at a time.
    - **Hot Weather/Summer:** During extreme heat, outdoor time may be limited to 20-30 minutes at a time. Our educators will ensure that children are well hydrated at all times and will be reminded to stay under the shade.

Providing regular opportunities for physical activity

- Aiding children in developing an awareness of their bodies in space, how their bodies move, and the effects of their movements on the environment, through both structured group activities and independent play.
- Providing adequate space for gross motor activities, both indoors and outdoors.
- Aiding in the development of gross motor skills through activities such as climbing, lifting, pushing, crawling, walking, running, jumping, and catching.
- Supporting the development of fine motor skills, such as manual dexterity and hand-eye coordination, and clear speech through games, activities, and crafts that involve skills like coloring, holding a fork, grasping, buttoning, cutting, weaving, painting, color matching, lacing, zipping, and sorting.
- **Field Trips**: Occasionally, our center may plan a field trip to a location chosen based on our children's interests.
    - Children who are 3.5 years and older may join a field trip provided that a parent's consent form is properly completed and returned to the center prior to the day of the trip.
    - If your child is not participating in the field trip, you will need to arrange alternative childcare for the duration of the trip, as our educators cannot remain at the center to supervise those not attending.
    - Educators will prepare the children to go on the field trip by explaining where they are going, why they are going, whom they should listen to, and what rules need to be followed.

Social Development

Stimulating the social development of children involves helping them to develop the ability to trust others and engage in meaningful interactions with peers, parents, siblings, family, and caregivers. To meet the social development needs of children, we will:

- Allow children to experience 'safe' conflicts, providing opportunities to learn peaceful resolution.
- Support children in learning to share space, toys, and materials with others while demonstrating and receiving respect.
- Aid children in developing empathy by teaching them to cooperate, share, wait for their turn, and make compromises.
- Notice, acknowledge, praise, and encourage positive behaviour in social interactions.

Intellectual Development

Intellectual development for young children centers around play and exploration. Creating an intellectually stimulating environment not only prepares them for schooling but also aids their social and emotional development. We will support each child's intellectual growth by:

- Providing opportunities to experience various textures and sensations with toys and activities that offer different sounds, colors, textures, and densities to promote exploration through movement.

- Maintaining a developmentally appropriate library of books and a stimulating collection of toys designed to spark children's imaginations and develop their understanding of object relationships. Toys such as building blocks, nesting toys, puzzles, games, and mirrors will help children understand how the world works.
- Facilitating activities and opportunities for self-directed play and exploration, guided by the children's interests.
- Providing opportunities for all children to hear clear English language through storytelling, songs, poems, clear directions, meaningful questions, praise, encouragement, and developmentally appropriate conversations.

Creative Development

Creativity is crucial to a child's overall development as it relates closely to self-expression, communication, innovation, and problem-solving. To foster creativity, we will:

- Provide self-expression opportunities through access to imitative and dramatic play accessories and dress-up clothes, enabling interactions and emotional expression among children.
- Offer creative, open-ended opportunities for arts and crafts using various materials such as paints, crayons, colored paper, pipe cleaners, clay/play dough, sand, molds, and string.
- Encourage and praise children's efforts as they explore new materials and engage in creative play.
- Allow children to experience pride as their artwork is displayed in the Centre.
- Offer choices in activities so children can express their preferences.
- Provide opportunities to sing and dance.

Emotional Development

Emotional development transcends simply dealing with 'feelings.' A child must first feel safe and secure in their environment and relationships with adults. To support each child's emotional development, we will:

- Ensure children are protected, safe, and healthy, contributing to a feeling of security.
- Develop strong, positive, and secure relationships with children, partly by assigning a 'lead' staff member to each group to maintain consistency and trust.
- Be attuned to children's cues and communication, reflecting on their meanings and responding appropriately.
- Help children identify, communicate, and express emotions effectively.
- Remain approachable, accessible, and available to children, both emotionally and physically.
- Maintain a pleasant and positive emotional tone throughout the day.
- Respond calmly and comfortingly to children's distress and emotional outbursts, aiding them in regulating their emotions and developing inner behavioural controls.
- Recognize, encourage, and admire each child's strengths, interests, and new skills, helping them develop positive self-worth.
- Appreciate each child's development and uniqueness, helping them feel valued for their individuality.

Program Descriptions

Our programs are designed to enhance school readiness in young learners and support the continuous development of crucial skills as they progress through school. We focus on early learning and life skills development, such as making sound decisions, effective communication, and cooperative teamwork.

— 12 months to less than 19 months (Little Angels)

For our youngest learners, our program aims to foster a sense of belonging and provide loving care to support their growth into healthy individuals. Recognizing each child as an emerging individual with unique abilities, desires, and emotions, our curriculum is tailored to meet the individual needs of each child, offering developmentally appropriate educational experiences. These experiences are designed to stimulate visual, language, auditory, social, and motor skills, capitalizing on the natural curiosity of young children.

Our highly qualified and professional staff guide and support your child at every stage of development, ensuring open and thorough communication with every family to provide quality care and enrich early learning experiences.

— 19 months to less than 3 years (Rainbows and Dinos)

For toddlers, our rooms are designed to provide stimulating experiences that allow children to learn through their own inquisitiveness. The focus is on building self-confidence and nurturing the natural curiosity toddlers possess. Our environment includes a variety of play materials and creative centers where children can engage in activities such as painting, coloring, building with blocks, and imaginative play.

Our staff provides the care, warmth, and patience essential to this young age, helping children feel secure and respected, thereby fostering a lifelong love for learning.

— 3 years to not yet in Kindergarten (Little Blossoms, Twinkling Stars, Flames)

For children in this age group, our program is structured to prepare them comprehensively for future educational challenges, promoting independence, responsibility, and confidence—key traits for success in kindergarten and beyond. The program offers concrete, hands-on activities that encourage children to explore and learn actively.

Our classrooms are strategically arranged to create an optimal learning environment. This setup allows children easy access to educational toys, materials, and books, encouraging them to initiate and expand upon their activities autonomously. Areas are designated for block play, manipulative toys, arts and crafts, dramatic play, reading, and group activities.

Licensing and Policies

Licensing

Columbia Childcare Centre is a licensed day care and adheres to, and exceeds the minimum standards set out by the province of Alberta.

The Child Care Regulation sets out the minimum standards that must be met in a licensed childcare program to ensure that the health, safety, and developmental needs of children are met. Child and Family Service Authorities (CFSA) license, monitor, and issue enforcement actions.

Any childcare program provided for seven or more children for four or more consecutive hours in each day the program is provided and operates in accordance with Schedule 1 of the Child Care Licensing Regulation

Policies & Procedures

Meals and Snacks

- Morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snacks are provided by Columbia Childcare Centre, developed in accordance with Canada's Food Guide by Health Canada. We ensure that all children receive meals and snacks at appropriate times and in sufficient quantities to meet individual needs. Morning snacks are served between 8:30-9:00 AM, lunch from 11:15 AM-12:00 PM, and afternoon snacks from 2:30-3:00 PM.

- Parents of infants requiring breast milk or formula are responsible for supplying these, clearly labeled with the infant's name.

- In cases of severe allergies, we enforce a strict policy that prohibits outside food from being brought into the Centre. If a child has special dietary needs due to religious beliefs, allergies, or medical conditions and cannot eat from our menu, parents must coordinate with Centre staff to arrange for appropriate food storage and handling. All containers should be clearly labeled with the child's name.

- Due to potential severe nut allergies, we ask parents to avoid sending any food items containing nuts. We require all children to wash their hands before and after eating and remind them frequently not to trade or share food.

Clothing, Diapers, and Toys

- Please provide at least one extra set of clothing (shirt, pants, underwear, socks) for your child each day. Whether due to creative activities, outdoor play, mealtimes, or unexpected events,

changes of clothing may be necessary. Soiled clothing will be bagged and placed in your child's cubby to bring home at the end of the day.

- For outdoor play, please supply appropriate clothing such as sweaters, splash pants, snow pants, mittens, and hats. Ensure all your child's belongings are labeled to prevent mix-ups. Also, check that your child has their correct shoes and clothing when you leave each day.

- Each child should have both indoor and outdoor footwear at the Centre. For safety, we recommend running shoes or boots for outdoor play.

- A space is designated in each room for your child's diapers and creams. You will receive a note when supplies are low. Special sleep toys or blankets are welcome for nap time, but all other toys should stay home except on special days like Show and Share. Please note that the Centre is not responsible for lost personal items and does not permit offensive or violent toys.

Toilet Training

- When you believe your child is ready for toilet training, we encourage starting this process at home during a weekend or vacation. We will support your efforts by encouraging your child to use the toilet while at our care.

- Your child should show signs of readiness and remain in pull-ups during training. Active play can distract your child from responding to the need to use the toilet more than at home, so we will continue to use pull-ups until your child consistently indicates they need to use the bathroom and can control their bladder and bowels for a short time after doing so.

- Please provide at least three extra full changes of clothing during toilet training, including socks and pull-ups. Soiled clothes will be returned in a plastic bag at the end of the day.

- We emphasize a supportive and positive approach during toilet training and will never punish a child for accidents.

- It is recommended that children are fully toilet trained by the age of 3, as the classroom is not equipped with a changing table.

Behaviour Guidance Policy

This Behaviour Guidance Policy will be communicated to staff members prior to their hiring and shared with parents via our Parent Handbook and website. Where developmentally appropriate, children will also be made aware of relevant aspects of this policy through verbal communication and the proper modeling of positive behaviour.

At Columbia Childcare Centre, we focus on influencing rather than controlling a child's behaviour. We prefer the term "behaviour guidance" over "discipline," which often implies reward and punishment, as it encompasses all forms of behaviour, not just those considered "negative." Our approach aims to help children develop problem-solving skills, a sense of autonomy, and the self-esteem necessary to transform unhelpful behaviour patterns.

Our staff adopts a holistic approach to address a child's behavioural needs. It is crucial to understand factors influencing a child's behaviour, including any personal life changes or mood variations observed throughout the day. All staff involved with or asked to intervene in a child's behaviour will consider these circumstances.

Columbia Childcare Centre strives to provide an environment that supports each child in strengthening their self-concept and self-esteem, fostering caring and respectful relationships with others, and aiding in the development of self-regulation and self-control. Any disciplinary action taken will be reasonable and considerate of the circumstances.

Young Children and Stress

Stress results from the demands placed on us and our ability to meet them. These demands can originate externally from family, jobs, friends, or school, or internally, often related to discrepancies between our expectations and our actual capabilities.

Children, too, can feel overwhelmed. Many lead busy lives that may not allow ample time for creative play or relaxation. Stress in children can be magnified by factors such as illness, death of a loved one, or divorce, which disrupt their primary security system—their family. Understanding and managing these pressures is critical because even amicable family changes can deeply affect them.

Recognizing Stress in Children

It is not always easy to identify stress in children. Indicators can include short-term behavioural changes like mood swings, acting out, changes in sleep patterns, or toileting accidents. Physical symptoms may include stomachaches and headaches, while some children might become withdrawn or spend excessive time alone. New habits such as thumb sucking or hair twirling may emerge, and older children might begin lying, bullying, or defying authority.

When children are distressed, it is crucial to wait until they calm down before engaging with them. Staying nearby and maintaining a calm demeanor helps; speak only when they are ready to listen.

Helping Calm a Child

1. **Color/draw:** This can serve as both a distraction as well as a way to express oneself. With very young children you may just want to set them up with some paper and crayons. For children a little older, they can draw a picture of what made them upset, or a picture of a time when they were feeling calm and happy.

2. **Music:** Music can be used in many ways. If your children are more active and need to get some energy out, maybe they can have a 3-minute dance party. Other ways to use this strategy include listening to a favorite song or playing calming instrumental music.

3. **Drink water or have a snack:** Being hungry or thirsty can certainly contribute to our emotional state (no matter how old you are!).

4. **5 deep breaths:** (Diaphragmatic breathing or "belly breathing"): True relaxation breathing is a strategy that takes practice. To begin, have your little one take deep breaths so that their stomach is pushed out upon inhale and relaxes during exhale.

5. **Bubbles:** Closely tied to strategy number 4, blowing bubbles can help children feel calmer on a few different levels. First, for very young children, simply seeing and popping bubbles can be distracting enough from whatever originally triggered the upset. For children a bit older, blowing bubbles can encourage the deep breathing that will help bring about a sense of calmness.

6. **Bear hugs:** Your little ones can be encouraged to wrap their arms around their body and give themselves a hug. This can feel comforting for young children, and it can also serve as a reminder to be kind to oneself, especially during times of stress.

7. **Soothe with a sensory activity**: Putty, sand, Play-Doh, or similar materials can also serve as effective calming tools.

8. **Change the scene:** During a tantrum (or even a less intense state of agitation), kids can become stuck. Move to another room or another area of the classroom, while pointing out things that may be of interest to the child.

9. **Take a break:** We all need a break sometimes, and children are no different. If it's a particular task that becomes too frustrating (for example, a puzzle), encourage the child to walk away from it and return at a later time.

Once Calm is Achieved

When children are stressed, they are likely that way because they have no control in their lives. As an educator, you can empower them by offering choices.

- There will be times that simply offering a child a choice is enough to move the situation forward.
- Ensure that you offer the child a real choice (are you ready to get dressed to go outside, or would you like to sit out front with me?), not a "non-choice choice (would you like to put your hat on first or your jacket?
- Older children can tell you what they need to move forward (I need a drink of water; I need a hug.)

Behaviour Guidance Strategies

The following is a list of strategies that will be used to positively guide behaviour at Columbia Childcare Centre:

- **Substitution:** When two children want the same toy, another similar toy will be provided for one child. We will present the new toy in a positive, cheerful way.
- **Redirection:** Same principle as substitution, but instead a child will be moved along into a different area or to a different activity.
- **Encouraging the use of Language:** Children need to learn to express verbally and need to feel understood. By listening to children and showing them, they are being understood can prevent frustrations coming out in other, less desirable ways.
- **Physical Proximity:** By circulating throughout the classroom and staying close to the children, our staff will prevent many problems before they start.
- **Activities:** By providing a wide variety of challenging, diverse activities, the day will run much smoother. The children will be busy in a constructive way.
- **Appropriate Expectations**: By knowing what to expect (and what cannot be expected) of children at certain ages, staff will avoid creating a situation ripe for frustration.
- **Praise and Reinforcement:** Children want to please adults. Staff will encourage, reward, and build upon appropriate behaviour.
- **Modeling**: Staff will model the manners and behaviours children need to see.
- **Environment:** Staff will ensure that the arrangement of the room and schedule are working for the children and will be responsive to the children's needs.
- **Consistency:** Whenever possible, Staff will be consistent within the practices of the Childcare Centre, and with any special rules from home. Communication is essential!
- **Rapport:** Staff will get to know each child and develop meaningful relationships. Staff will strive to know each child's preferences, what they respond to, what agitates them, etc. Staff will develop a relationship with the children and families based upon mutual trust.
- **Supervision**: Toddlers, especially, need to be closely always supervised and are very quick and extremely curious! Childcare Centre Staff are aware of this fact of nature and will keep warm, but attentive eyes on young ones at all times.

Staff at Columbia Childcare Centre will never inflict or cause to be inflicted any form of physical punishment, verbal or physical degradation or emotional deprivation. Staff will never deny or threaten to deny any necessity or use or permit the use of any form of physical restrain, confinement or isolation.

Using Natural and Logical Consequences

Natural Consequences

Natural consequences occur automatically as a result of actions. Natural consequences are things that happen to the child as a result of his or her behaviour, *without adult involvement*. Natural consequences do not require adults to actively inject themselves into the situation. Adults can simply allow the natural consequences to occur. Natural consequences let the child learn, personally, sometimes the hard way.

Examples of natural consequences:

- A child who refuses to wear mittens will get cold hands.
- A child who insists on keeping their shoes on the wrong feet will get sore feet.
- A child who doesn't play cooperatively will be excluded from future play.

Natural consequences should not be used in the following cases:

- When the natural consequence is dangerous or harmful. (Allowing the child to bolt from the group during a walk.)
- When the natural consequence is delayed for a long period of time after the child's action or behaviour. (Child insists on keeping a sippy cup of milk in his cubby, but it will be spoiled by the end of the day.)
- When the natural consequence is not isolated to the child. (Child will not hold hands while walking, so the entire class cannot go on a field trip.)

Logical Consequences

Logical Consequences are imposed by the adult. However, logical consequences are different from punishment in some important ways:

- Logical consequences are planned in advance by the adult. They are not reactive or angry responses.
- Logical consequences are often planned with input from the child.
- Logical consequences make sense in relation to behaviour. They are "logical."

Guidelines for Developing Logical Consequences

- Logical consequences should be developed in advance of behaviours, when possible. Developing the consequence might occur after a misbehaviour, but in advance of the next re-offense. (The next time you put sand on the floor, you will need to sweep it up.)
- Logical consequences should make sense when viewed in relation to the behaviour. (It is more logical to have a child choose another Centre to play in if they are throwing blocks than to make the child forbid a child from riding a bike outside because they were throwing blocks.) The latter does not make sense in relation to the misbehaviour.
- Logical consequences should occur as soon as possible after the misbehaviour. Don't

delay them to the point where they become too far disconnected from misbehaviour.

- Logical consequences should be applied consistently. Consistency is a critical element of logical consequences. Inconsistency sends the message that sometimes there are no consequences for misbehaviours. The child gets intermittent reinforcement for “getting away” with the misbehaviour. Intermittent reinforcement is a powerful force in perpetuating behaviour.
- Logical consequences should be appropriate for the child's age.
- Logical consequences are not threats. Threats teach children to be afraid rather than problem solve and reason-out the connection between behaviours and consequences.
- Logical consequences should not be cumulative. Piling-up restrictions only serves to make the child see the consequence as beyond his or her control. This can lead to more misbehaviour, rather than teaching the child to take responsibility for behaviours

Reporting

All Columbia Childcare Centre staff are required by law to report any suspicions of child abuse to the proper authorities.

Section 4(1) of the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act states: "ANY PERSON who has reasonable and probable grounds to believe that a child is in need of intervention shall report the matter to a director under the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act or a person who has the director's delegated authority.

The Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act places the obligation to report child abuse by a parent/guardian or another person with any individual who has reasonable grounds to believe abuse has occurred. This responsibility includes caregivers in Childcare Centers. This obligation is not discharged until the individual has reported directly to a caseworker. Caregivers are familiar with the procedures set by the Child and Family Services Authority.

Administration

Enrollment Inquiries

Interested families can approach the Centre in person, via phone or via email. A staff representative will make an appointment to meet with the family. During this appointment, the family will be given a full tour of our facility.

If the family is interested in enrolling their child one of two things will happen.

1. Wait List

If all spaces are full, a wait list will be maintained by the Centre administration. Parents on the wait list will be contacted when a space opens in the age group they require. Open spaces will be held for 24 hours before being offered to the next family.

Registration priority is given as follows:

- Children currently enrolled who are waiting to be placed in an older classroom
- Siblings of registered children
- Children of learners, faculty, and staff at Columbia College
- Members of the public

2. Registration

Upon acceptance of the offer of space available for your child, you will receive an appointment to complete the registration process. During registration you will

- Meet with our Director
- $100 non-refundable deposit ($100 will go to first month tuition)
- Receive and bring home registration package
- Discuss fees, payment options, policies
- Arrange a visit for your child (see Orientation below)

Orientation

We encourage your family to visit our Centre prior to his/her first day. This provides an opportunity for you and your child to participate together and feel more comfortable with the surroundings; staff will help familiarize your child with his/her classmates. You may also ask our staff any questions you may have. This visit will help to ensure that your child's first day goes as smoothly as possible. A gradual entry process is recommended during the first and second week of enrollment, if parents are available to participate. This approach supports a smoother transition for the child into the program

Columbia Childcare Centre Fees

Effective April 1, 2025. Subject to change.

Age	Monthly Fee	Affordability Grant	Parent Portion (Before Subsidy)
12M to less than 18M	**$1,600**	**$1,273.75**	**$326.25**
18M to less than 3Y	**$1,281**	**$954.75**	**$326.25**
3Y to less than 4Y	**$1,203**	**$876.75**	**$326.25**
4Y to not yet attending Kindergarten	**$1,190**	**$863.75**	**$326.25**

About Our Fees

- The fee for care will remain the same each month regardless of the number of working days, public holidays, family holidays, or College breaks. The College normally closes for all National and Provincial holidays. Exact dates will be posted in the Centre, and in monthly newsletters.
- All fees are due on the first working day of the month. Late payments will be subject to a $5.00/day penalty, which must be paid at the same time as the child care fees.

Affordability Grants

The Alberta government offers the Childcare Affordability Grant to help reduce the cost of childcare and support quality services. This grant is part of an initiative to make childcare more accessible and affordable for families, aiming to reduce fees for parents and increase operational support for childcare providers.

Alberta Childcare Subsidy

Important changes to the Alberta childcare subsidy program:

The Alberta Government is eliminating the income-based Child Care Subsidy Program. All existing subsidies will end on **March 31, 2025**, and rates will transition to the universal monthly fee structure. Starting **April 1, 2025**, parents with children up to kindergarten age attending full-time licensed daycare facilities and family day home programs across the province will be eligible for a flat parent fee of **$326.25** per month, equivalent to **$15 per day**.

You can learn more about the changes to Alberta's Childcare program at:

- alberta.ca/child-care-subsidy
- alberta.ca/federal-provincial-child-care-agreement

Payment Policy

- A non-refundable deposit is required to hold your child's spot once confirmed. The deposit will be credited to your child's first month's tuition fee. A refund will not be issued if you choose to withdraw your child before their scheduled confirmed start date.
- All monthly fees will be paid in full by the first of each month. Unpaid fees are subject to immediate suspension or termination of care unless reasonable arrangements are made and accepted by the Columbia Childcare Centre.
- Fees are based on booked days, not attendance, and parents are responsible for fees whether, or not, a child attends. Therefore, there is no exemption from fees for absence due to illness, vacation, or for any other reason. No credits can be given for days missed.
- Pre Authorized Payment forms must be submitted for automatic debit withdrawal on the first day of each month. Personal cheques will not be accepted.
- It is the responsibility of the parent to inform the Centre if banking information has changed.
- A fee of $30 will be added for non-sufficient funds or failure to update banking information.

- Families are required to provide at least one month's written notice when they wish to withdraw their child from the Childcare Centre. More notice is preferable. Written withdrawals are to be submitted to the Director via email.
- Giving proper notice is crucial as most families on the waitlist have their children placed in care at other locations and are required to provide one month's notice at their current facility. If you provide less than 30 days' notice (calendar month), you will be required to pay an additional month of fees.

Termination of Service

The Columbia Childcare Centre can terminate services for a family under the following circumstances:

- Fees for services are not paid in full and on time and suitable arrangements cannot be agreed upon
- The Centre is unable to resolve a problem with a family
- If a family member harasses, yells, uses offensive language, offensive gestures, inappropriate or offensive written comments, threatens or commits a violent or unlawful act toward a staff member, child or other family involved in a program.
- If, according to the assessment of the day care staff, a child is unable to manage safely in a group of children within the given adult-to-child ratio. In this case, termination of services will be a measure of last resort

Operational Procedures

Arrival and Departure Procedures

Key Fobs

Parents are required to make a $20 refundable deposit for daycare key fob. This key fob allows you to access the daycare to drop off and pick up your child(ren). A refund will not be issued if you lose the daycare key fob.

Arrival (drop-off)

****IMPORTANT**** each parent must notify the teachers so that the teachers can sign-in/sign-out your child on the tablet.

- The center opens at 8:00am each morning. We encourage children to arrive by 9:30am so they may fully participate in the morning activities. Parents must always accompany their children in and out of their classroom.
- Upon your child's arrival and departure, please be sure a staff member is aware that you are present and are either dropping off or taking your child home. At the same time, staff members will sign-in/sign-out your child using ***Timesavr*** *(an online system we use to keep track of all attendance records)*
- Since attendance forms will be used to verify the presence of children in an emergency, parents must follow this sign-in/sign-out procedure each day. This practice is legally required by the Alberta Government. Any person who is not the child's caregiver and is signing a child in or out must be 18 years of age or older. Before a child is released to any person, the Centre must have record that the individual is authorized to pick up a child.
- Regular routines for pick up and drop off help reassure children. When you arrive, we suggest the following routine:
    - First let staff member know that you are here
    - Help your children with his or her belongings
    - Help your child wash his or her hands when you arrive at the Centre to help prevent spread of infection and disease
    - Remove jacket, change indoor shoes
    - Take your child to join his or her group

We understand that mornings can be busy for families. In such cases, it is acceptable for children to be dropped off in the foyer, provided they are received directly by an educator at Columbia Childcare Centre.

Departure (pick-up)

****IMPORTANT**** Each parent must notify the teachers so that the teachers can sign-in/sign-out your child on the tablet.

- Parents/guardians are asked to ensure all children are picked up by 6:00pm. To support educators in completing end-of-day cleaning and preparation tasks for the following day, we

kindly request that all children be picked up by 6:00pm Please call the Centre if you are not able to pick your child up in time and ensure appropriate emergency contacts are up-to-date so another person is authorized to pick up your child if you are not able to.

Late fees

- Parents/guardians will be charged a late fee of $5.00 per child for the first minute and $1.00 every minute after that. Parents are required to complete a Late Pick-Up Form at the time of pick-up. A cash payment must be made directly to the staff member who remained on-site to supervise the child(ren) beyond scheduled hours. For example, if you pick up your child at 6:10pm, you need to pay $14 to the educators who stay with your child.
- Parents/guardians will be called if a child has not been picked up within 5 minutes of the Centre's closing. If parents/guardians cannot be reached, emergency contacts will be called to help locate parents.
- Emergency contacts can pick up a child if parents/guardians cannot be reached (See Release to Authorized Persons below). If parents/guardians and emergency contacts are not able to be reached after 1 hour of the Centre's closing, staff are required to call Family and Children's Services and notify the Director immediately.
- In the event that a child is late more than three times, a meeting with management will be scheduled to address the concern. Continued lateness exceeding five occurrences may result in termination from the program

Separation

Separation can be stressful for parents as well as children. We are here to help in this sometimes difficult, but very common, developmental process. Sometimes children are upset during their first few weeks, and some do not express anxiety until a few weeks later when they feel comfortable enough to do so.

Staff at Columbia Childcare Centre are sympathetic to feelings of anxiety over separation and will be available to help make this new situation manageable for you and your child. A joint effort by parents and staff should promote a relatively smooth adjustment. The way you feel about your child attending the Childcare Centre for the first time significantly affects your child's adjustment. The following suggestions may help:

- Think and speak positively to your child about beginning care, as your feelings will affect how your child adjusts to the separation
- Make sure you inform your child that you will be departing; attempts to slip away unseen will increase your child's level of anxiety on subsequent occasions
- Assure your child that you will return
- Bring a family photograph so that your child can see their family
- Bring along a favorite stuffed toy or blanket that can be used to comfort your child

Release to Authorized Persons

Authorized persons are individuals that the parent has listed on their enrollment form. Please inform the Centre of any changes.

- No child is to be released to any person other than parents/guardians without parental consent. Parents are required to notify the Centre by phone or written documentation if a child is to be released to someone other than the parents.
- Staff are to make a record of any verbal permission (in-person or by phone) for pick-up and to share this information with other staff members if siblings are involved. Should an authorized person pick up a child, staff are required to record the time of pick-up and note who picked up the child.
- A person who has been given authorization by the parent, verbally or in writing, but is unknown to a staff member is required to present identification before the child will be released.
- If a parent fails to notify staff that someone else (not listed on authorized pick-up list) will be picking up their child, staff must contact parents and receive verbal consent and make a record.
- Emergency contacts will only be called to pick up a child if parents cannot be reached.
- **Car Seats:** Parents (and/or any individual who has been listed as an emergency contact who can pick up a child) must have an appropriate car seat to transport a child safely home. If one is not available, they must find other means to transport the child safely. Columbia Childcare Centre is not responsible for providing or ensuring that the person picking up your child has a car seat.

Changes to Personal Information

It is very important that the Childcare Centre has the most up-to-date contact information, including telephone numbers, address, student timetables, and people authorized to pick up your children. Please inform staff of any changes to your personal information.

Privacy Statement

Columbia Childcare Centre is committed to protecting your privacy and the confidentiality of your family's personal information. We adhere to these policies and the provisions of the Alberta Personal Information Protection Act. We collect personal information to provide your child with childcare services. Personal information is any piece of information that identifies an individual. Furthermore, any information regarding a child will only be shared with outside agencies and/or individuals with expressed parental consent.

Our commitment to privacy means that we will not collect, use, or disclose you or our children's personal information for any purpose other than those identified to you, subject to exceptions permitted by law. We take our responsibility to respect and protect your personal information seriously. If you have any questions about our privacy policy or practices, or if you would like to review your personal information, please contact our Child Care Director.

Health, Safety & Emergency Policies

Potential Health Risk Policy

Please advise the Centre if a child will not be attending due to illness. A child who is ill (e.g., fever, infection, diarrhea, communicable disease, or any other type of illness that may be passed on to others, with the exception of the common cold) must be kept at home to protect the well-being of other children, families, and Centre staff.

- The key to preventing the spread of contagious illnesses is early detection, and communication between parents and staff is crucial for the well-being of the children. Parents are urged to report any symptoms or concerns to staff upon arrival, and staff will monitor children closely for signs of the conditions listed above. Staff will also maintain good communication with each other, reporting concerns to any and all staff working directly with a particular child under observation.
- The Program Supervisor will be notified immediately when a child becomes ill to participate in the program, the child will first be moved to an area as far away as is practicable from other children and will remain under direct supervision/observation of a primary staff member. The child will be encouraged to lay or sit on a personally assigned cot and every effort will be made to ensure the child is as comfortable as possible until a parent or emergency contact arrives to pick up the child.
- Parents will be notified immediately by phone and arrangements must be made to pick up the child from the Centre as soon as reasonably possible. If the parents cannot be reached after a period of 20 minutes or are unable to pick the child up in a reasonable amount of time, those listed as emergency contacts will be called to pick up the child. Staff will continue to try to contact the child's parents (or emergency contacts) until someone is reached.

If your child is going to be absent, you must notify the center no later than 10 am that day. If your child is not feeling great, please notify us as to the nature of the illness, particularly if it is contagious. Please note that **24-hour symptom free** is a requirement before your child can return to our daycare center safely.

Signs or symptoms of illness exhibited by a child as defined by the Alberta Child Care Licensing Regulation include:

1. vomiting, having a fever (a temperature greater than 38 degrees Celsius), diarrhea, or a new unexplained rash or cough
2. Requiring greater attention than can be provided without compromising the care of other children in the program
3. having or displaying any other illness or symptom the staff member knows or believes may indicate that a child poses a health risk to persons on the program premises

Families will be notified of any confirmed cases of a communicable disease through a health notice posted in the front entry of the Centre, advising parents of specific symptoms and measures to be taken if symptoms are present. Parents will be directed in-person to this notice upon pick-up or drop-off of each child.

Accident or Illness Policy

Columbia Childcare Centre, as a license holder is required to report to Child and Youth Services serious illness of or injury to a child that occurs while the child is attending a program and any other incident that occurs while a child is attending a program that may seriously affect the health or safety of the child. Incidents that require reporting include, but are not limited to:

- Death of a child
- Allegation of abuse
- Missing or lost child
- A young person involved in crime
- Child removed from a program without permission
- Emergency evacuation
- unexpected program closure
- Intruder on premises
- Illness or injury requiring emergency medical services and hospitalization
- Error in the administration of medication
- Child left on premises after hours

Even in the safest environments accidents and injuries do occur. Any accidents that may occur at the daycare are recorded by staff on an **Incident Repor**t. If your child has been injured during the day you will be required to sign and date the report indicating that you have been made aware of the incident / accident.

In the event of a more serious injury or illness parents may be contacted to pick up their child. A program supervisor will be notified and will supervise any first aid procedures. Parents will be notified immediately if the accident/incident is of a serious nature or if the child is highly distressed. If a child requires immediate medical attention, 911 will be called and the parents will be notified as soon as possible. Any medical expenses incurred will be the parent's responsibility.

Incident Report forms will be filled out with as much detail as possible and contain the following information:

- Child's name
- Age
- Date
- Time of incident
- Description of how incident occurred.
- Treatment given / action taken
- Part(s) of the body affected
- Treatment given by whom
- Part(s) of the body affected
- Treatment given by whom
- Time parents are notified
- Equipment involved
- Child's level of participation
- Name of parent notified
- Corrective action needed to prevent recurrence
- Signature of staff and date.
- Signature of supervisor and date.
- Signature of parent and date.

Each report will be reviewed and signed by a Centre supervisor or designated CDS in charge. Parents may request a copy for their own records. The original will be kept on file in the daycare office until the child leaves the program.

Administration of Medicine Policy

Should a child under our care require the administration of any medication, staff at Columbia Childcare Centre will administer medication to a child only when all of the following criteria are met:

- written consent from the child's parent has been obtained
- the medication is in the original labeled container
- if the medication is prescription, it has the child's name on the label
- the medication is administered according to the labeled directions

Any time medication is administered to a child the following information will be recorded:

- the name of the medication
- the time of administration
- the amount administered
- the initials of the person who administered the medication

All medication at the Centre will be stored in a locked container that is inaccessible to children. All medication that may be needed in an emergency, such as an EpiPen or asthma medication, will be stored in a location that is inaccessible to children, but immediately available to staff, i.e., in an easily accessible container that remains unlocked.

Smoking Policy

No person shall smoke on the program premises, and no staff member shall smoke at any time or place where childcare is being provided.

Technology

Parents and staff sign children into care and out of care using **Timesavr.** This program was developed in Alberta by an Albertan to meet the unique reporting needs of our Provincial government. Parents would notify the teachers in the room so teachers can sign in/out for the child(ren), using the actual time the child was brought into care.

Columbia Child Care is pleased to be able to offer families **Lillio** (previously HiMama) as a communication tool between home and childcare. Parents can directly communicate with their child's teacher and in turn, the staff can report on children's activities, developmental growth, send reminders home, share pictures/video, menu changes and program planning. Parents are sent this information via email, and they also can create their own Lillio account so that the information can be shared with trusted family members.

Unscheduled Closures of the Centre

It would be on quite a rare occasion when city schools or buses shut down, and as such, we do not anticipate ever having to close due to cold or inclement weather. If a weather advisory is sent out regarding severe weather, children will remain in the Centre. Columbia Childcare Centre will follow the weather forecast given on the Environment Canada website: http://weatheroffice.gc.ca/forecast/canada/index_e.html?id=ab.

Additionally, if we experience any other circumstance that prohibits us from providing a safe and healthy environment, such as a water main break, loss of electricity, loss of indoor heat, and the like, Columbia Childcare Centre will close.

Columbia Childcare Centre has policies and procedures for dealing with emergencies. In the unlikely event that an evacuation is necessary, children will be relocated to an alternative site and parents/guardians will be notified as soon as possible. Evacuation plans are posted on the main entryway of the Centre.

In the unlikely event that management determines the Centre must close during normal hours of operation, parents will be called and required to pick up their children as soon as possible.
Please be aware that if the Centre is closed or should close prior to regular closing hours, there will be no reimbursement or credit of childcare fees.

Fire Drills & Emergency Preparedness

Our Childcare Centre maintains a comprehensive Fire Safety Plan and follows all applicable requirements established by Alberta Health Services, Child Care Licensing regulations, the Alberta Fire Code, and local fire authorities.

To ensure children and staff are prepared in the event of an emergency, fire drills are conducted once every month where weather permits. During each drill, educators practice safe and orderly evacuation procedures with children and escort them to the designated outdoor muster point. A detailed record of every fire drill is maintained on-site, including the date, time, and the length of time required to safely evacuate all children, staff, and visitors from the building.

Parents and/or guardians are welcome to contact the Centre at any time with questions about our fire safety procedures. Upon request, families may review our fire drill log, Fire Safety Plan, or learn more about the emergency preparedness measures we have in place to help keep every child safe.

Emergency Evacuation

In the event of an emergency evacuation, staff and children will gather in the Nursing Lab (Room 171) in Building 4. The address of this location is: **Building 4, room 171 Manning Road NE Calgary, Alberta T2E 7N8**

Emergency Evacuation Diagram

Additional Information

Questions and Concerns

As a childcare center, we are a community of children, parents, and staff, all interacting and sharing our lives together. In a community, people work closely together and, ideally, interactions are positive, helpful, kind, and understanding. However, it is natural that conflicts, concerns, and difficulties may arise from time to time.

When a parent has a concern about some aspect of our childcare program, we will take every step to resolve the issue promptly, always prioritizing the safety and well-being of the children and staff.

It is in everyone's best interest to maintain harmony and goodwill within the Center. Therefore, the Center reserves the right to ask a family to withdraw for the benefit of the children, the family, and the staff. At times, we must accept that our Center may not be the right fit for every child and family.

Parents are encouraged to discuss any questions or concerns about our children's programs or procedures with the Program Supervisor or Center staff. If a conflict arises, our goal is to resolve differences and find solutions that are acceptable to all involved. We are committed to providing a caring and supportive environment for our children and families.

Community Complaints

All concerns should be addressed to the Center Director or the Designated Supervisor. Depending on the severity of the complaint, the President of Columbia College will be immediately informed or will receive information in a timely manner. The Center Director will attempt to resolve the issue with the individual involved.

An accurate record of all interviews conducted for complaints will be maintained. The Director will keep the complainant informed about the investigation, if requested. All parties are required to respect the confidentiality of the issues raised and maintain a respectful relationship. As such, names or identifying details will not be disclosed to the complainant.

If an individual feels that their concerns have not been adequately addressed or if an unsatisfactory situation persists, they will be referred to:

Calgary Region Children's Services
Westmount Regional Services Office, 4820 Richard Rd. SW #140 Calgary T3E 6L1, 403-297-8033

Any complaint made in writing must also receive a written response. This response must be drafted by the Center Director in consultation with the President of Columbia College.

Parent Advisory Council

The Columbia Childcare Centre has a Parent Advisory Council; its general purpose is to:

- Provide feedback on policies and practices in an on-going effort to support continuous improvement.
- To assist the administration with strategic planning by providing parental viewpoints and unique expertise on issues that affect the Centre.
- To know about the Alberta Child Care Licensing Handbook and to understand the Centre's mission Statement, Vision Statement, Personnel Policies, annual licensing checklists and the Centre's Code of Ethics.
- To work with the Centre's administration to review important issues, and activities such as teacher retention, fund-raising, food service, facilities, family events, extracurricular activities, and changes in procedures of services.
- To oversee the structure of any special parent sub-committees, ensuring each has clear charges and leadership in place.
- To communicate with the Centre families and staff, for example, provide a regular report in the Centre's newsletter.
- Parents who wish to join the council should speak to the Centre Director.

Resources for Parents

Resource	Website
Alberta Child Care Licensing Handbook	Child care licensing handbook: Facility-based programs
Government of Alberta Child and Youth Services	Children and Family Services | Alberta.ca
Canada's Food Guide	food-guide.canada.ca/en/
Bully Free Alberta	Bullying prevention – Resources | Alberta.ca
Family Support for Children with Disabilities (FSCD)	alberta.ca/fscd-supports-and-services
Healthy Alberta	www.healthyalberta.com
Canadian Pediatric Society	www.caringforkids.cps.ca/
Canadian Pediatric Society Recalls and Safety Alerts	recalls-rappels.canada.ca/en
Calgary & Area Child and Family Services	
Children and Family Services offices | Alberta.ca 300 - 1240 Kensington Road NW Calgary, Alberta T2N 3P7 calgaryareacfsa.info@gov.ab.ca	403-297-6100 (Calgary Office) 1-800-387-5437 (Child Abuse Hotline) 1-877-644-9992 (Alberta Support) 310-1818 (Bullying Help Line) 1-800-668-6868 (Kids Help Phone) 403-310-1818 (Family Violence Info Line) 403-297-2995 (24-hr Child Intervention Line)

This handbook is intended to provide you with the information necessary for you and your child to be enrolled in our program. Please retain it for future reference. If you have any questions, concerns or ideas at any time please do not hesitate to speak to us.