

CITY OF PORT COQUITLAM

CITY Preschool

FAMILY HANDBOOK

CITY
PRESCHOOL



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Our licensed preschool provides a warm and nurturing environment informed by children's natural curiosity. Following an emergent curriculum, our play-based program is responsive to children's interests and ideas. Through child-initiated and educator-supported activities and experiences, children develop socially, emotionally, physically, and cognitively.

OUR EARLY LEARNING PHILOSOPHY

The City of Port Coquitlam's preschool programs strive to provide an inclusive, positive, and high-quality early learning environment that promotes the health, safety, and well-being of each child.

Our preschool programs are based on the understanding that play is essential to children's learning, well-being, and overall development. We appreciate the complex, collective, and holistic nature of learning and provide children with opportunities for exploration, engagement, and expression. We respect children for their unique contributions and see children as capable co-learners who are full of potential.

We value diversity and acknowledge the central role that families play in supporting children's learning and well-being. We work together with families to create an early learning community that is respectful, safe, and accepting. Positive, reciprocal relationships are foundational to our preschool programs.

Our program philosophy emphasizes the importance of creating an inclusive, bias free early learning space with equitable access that is responsive to each child's individual needs. We believe that learning takes place in welcoming, joyful, caring, and enriching environments where every child feels they belong.

We support learning in the context of community, and our programs are designed to include opportunities that enhance children's learning as they engage with different materials, people, and places. Our preschool offers community gardening, visits to our senior center, and field trips into the local community that include ice skating, swimming, art programs, and library time.

OUR CURRICULUM

Our play-based, child-centered preschool programs are guided by the British Columbia Early Learning Framework. The framework focuses on children from birth to Grade 3 and provides a continuum as children transition between early learning programs and school.

Children are active participants in the learning process and curriculum development. Our preschool programs bring educators and children together in learning and combine child-initiated and educator-supported activities and experiences. We strive to provide intentional and meaningful learning experiences that are responsive to the children's interests, strengths, and learning styles. By listening to the children's voices, we aim to provide a preschool program that supports a sense of belonging, nurtures a positive self-image, and inspires a life-long love of learning.

We understand that learning happens indoors and outdoors and provide opportunities for active play and educator-facilitated group experiences and activities. Our curriculum is developed to support each child's social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development and aims to help children develop abilities to problem solve and self-regulate. Positive communication is central to our curriculum to promote kindness, compassion, and respect.

DAILY PLAN

WELCOME – We start our preschool day by warmly welcoming children and families: children place their belongings in their cubbies, change into indoor shoes, and wash their hands to get ready for class. Parents can share information about their child with preschool leaders.

WELCOME MEETING: Children come together with friends and preschool leaders to plan their preschool day, discuss important classroom topics such as kindness, and share knowledge.

EXPLORATIONS: Our Preschool Leaders combine child-initiated and educator-supported activities and experiences daily. Children can explore a variety of classroom activities such as art and engage in free-play with peers. Children have the opportunity to take part in small and large group activities, such as science experiences, or pursue individual activities like drawing. Our programming supports positive peer interactions and helps children grow their social, emotional, cognitive, and physical skills.

SNACK: City Preschool provides a daily snack that follow Canada's Food Guide and supports healthy eating. Children will come together to share table space with their friends and socialize. Snack may also involve group learning activities such as smoothie making.

OUTDOOR PLAY: City Preschool follows Child Care Licensing Regulations and Canada's Movement Guidelines to ensure that children get the required amount of active play daily. Preschool leaders will offer facilitated and unstructured activities to support fundamental movement skills and promote physical literacy. Outdoor time may also involve group activities such as gardening.

LUNCH: Parents provide lunch for their child attending the M,W,F class. Snacks are provided for all classes. Children and preschool leaders eat together in a welcoming atmosphere that supports social skills and table manners.

GOOD-BYE CIRCLE: Children and preschool leaders gather to reflect on the preschool day, share stories, dance, make music and say good-bye. Our afternoon preschool session normally switches outdoor play to before exploration time. Depending on the weather, the morning preschool classes may also go outside for active play first.

DAILY PLAN

DAILY PLAN M,W,F MORNINGS 9:15 AM - 1:15 PM

9:15 – 9:30 am	WELCOME
9:30 – 9:45 am	WELCOME MEETING
9:45 – 10:45 am	EXPLORATIONS
10:45 – 11:15 am	SNACK AND TRANSITION TIME
11:15 am – 12:15 pm	OUTDOOR PLAY
12:15 pm – 12:45 pm	LUNCH
12:45 pm – 1:15 pm	BOOK TIME AND GOOD BYE CIRCLE

DAILY PLAN TU,TH MORNINGS 9:15 AM - 12:15 PM

9:15 – 9:30 am	WELCOME
9:30 – 9:45 am	WELCOME MEETING
9:45 – 10:45 am	EXPLORATIONS
10:45 – 11:15 am	SNACK AND TRANSITION TIME
11:15 am – 12:00 pm	OUTDOOR PLAY
12:00 pm – 12:15 pm	GOOD BYE CIRCLE

DAILY PLAN TU,TH AFTERNOON 1:30 - 4:30 PM

1:30 – 1:45 pm	WELCOME
1:45 – 2:00 pm	WELCOME MEETING
2:00 – 2:45 pm	OUTDOOR PLAY
2:45 – 3:15 pm	SNACK AND TRANSITION TIME
3:15 – 4:15 pm	EXPLORATIONS
4:15 – 4:30 pm	GOOD BYE CIRCLE

LICENSED PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

Our licensed preschool programs for children aged 3-5 years follow the SD43 school-year calendar and currently operate for 10-months from September to June.

REGISTRATION

Registration for the September preschool program opens in February of the same year. To register or waitlist for a City Preschool program, families can go to portcoquitlam.ca/register or contact Customer Service at **604.927.7529**. For registration after program start, please contact citypreschool@portcoquitlam.ca or call **604.927.5294**. At the time of registration, parents/legal guardians will have to complete the Preschool Participant Information Form and Photo Release Form. This information is collected for all City programs.

To comply with BC Child Care Licensing regulations, families will be provided with a link to complete a Registration Form, a Child Immunization Status Declaration, and an Emergency Consent Card prior to program start. All forms need to be completed and emailed back to citypreschool@portcoquitlam.ca before the first day of class.

Additional forms and documents, such as an Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan, Care Plan, Medication Administration Form, Custody or Court Orders may have to be submitted to City Preschool prior to program start.

Parents/guardians are required to update City Preschool about any changes to their registration form information (e.g. address, contact number, custody/court orders) and their child's medical condition.

Please contact citypreschool@portcoquitlam.ca to update your information.



FEES AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

MONTHLY FEES

A payment plan is available with unequal monthly payments based on the number of sessions each month. The first month payment is due when registering. Additional program fees will be processed on the first of every month. To process online monthly payments, your credit card expiry date must be the last month of the program or later. Total cost and monthly program fees are listed on the registration receipt. Please note that program fees are set based on external funding provided by the BC Provincial Government and may be subject to change.

To update your payment information, please contact Customer Service at **604.927.7529**.

CHILD CARE FEE REDUCTION INITIATIVE

To provide families with access to affordable, quality, and inclusive child care, City Preschool is participating in the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative (CCFRI) through the Ministry of Education and Childcare.

Families do not need to apply to CCFRI program and savings for child care fees are passed on directly by City Preschool through reduced monthly child care fees.

The CCFRI Estimator is an online tool available to help families estimate their child care savings. The estimator can be found here <https://mychildcareservices.gov.bc.ca/ccfri-estimator>

AFFORDABLE CHILD CARE BENEFIT PROGRAM

After enrollment into the City Preschool Program, families can apply to the income tested Affordable Child Care Benefit (ACCB) program through the Ministry of Education and Childcare.

To find out if you are eligible for ACCB, please refer to <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/child-care-benefit/qualify> or contact the Child Care Service Centre at **1.888.338.6622**.

City Preschool will provide you with the Child Care Arrangement Form for your paper-based ACCB application or verify your child care arrangement through My Family Services online applications.

Once approved, the applicable ACCB amount will be refunded for any prepaid program fees to the payer's City account and proactively deducted in the registration system for any future monthly program fee payments.

MÉTIS NATION CHILD CARE BENEFIT PROGRAM

The Métis Child Care Benefit Program is a service offered by the Métis Child Care Navigation and Support Program, for families with Métis children from birth to 12 years. Through the Métis Child Care Benefit Program, families can access additional funding, bridging the connection to the Affordable Child Care Benefit. For more information see <https://www.mnbc.ca/work-programs/programs-services/mettis-child-care-benefit-program>

ASSISTANCE THROUGH THE CITY

For recreational programs, eligible individuals and families may apply for support from the Financial Assistance Program. Please note that the licensed City Preschool program is excluded from the City's Financial Assistance Program as the preschool is part of the CCFRI and ACCB programs.

WITHDRAWAL AND PROGRAM FEE REFUNDS

Parents who need to withdraw their child from the preschool program have to provide written notice, including the parent's name, child's name, and class to citypreschool@portcoquitlam.ca before the first of the month, **one month prior to withdrawal from the program**. For example, notice to withdraw on Nov. 1 must be received the latest by Sept. 30.

Program withdrawals and refunds are not available for the month of December, March, May, and June.

Failure to provide the appropriate amount of notice will result in the parent/guardian being charged for an additional month.

No refunds will be issued if a child does not attend preschool classes because of a short-term sickness, a vacation, or other absence (e.g. doctor's appointment).

No refunds will be issued for a one-day emergency program closure due to circumstances beyond our control such as a snow day.

AUTHORIZED PERSON PICK-UP

Your child's safety is our priority: When completing the registration paperwork, parents/guardians will designate at least three individuals who are authorized to pick-up their child. **A child will only be released to an authorized adult.**

If an unfamiliar individual is picking-up, preschool staff will check picture ID and cross-reference the person's name with the child's authorized persons list. If the person is not authorized, staff will contact a parent/guardian for approval.

In an emergency, parents/guardians can designate an alternate pick-up in writing to citypreschool@portcoquitlam.ca or inform City Preschool staff.

Children will not be released to a person who appears incapable of providing safe care.

Parents/guardians are responsible to inform City Preschool about any updates to their authorized person list and must inform City Preschool about any Custody and Court Orders.

To update your list of authorized persons, please contact citypreschool@portcoquitlam.ca

LATE PICK-UPS

Parents/guardians are responsible for picking up their child at program end time. If you are running late due to an emergency, traffic delay etc., Please inform City Preschool staff by calling [604.927.5379](tel:604.927.5379) or [604.908.3744](tel:604.908.3744).

If children are not picked-up on time and we have not been informed of a delay, staff will contact parents/guardians and authorized pick-ups in order.

If all authorized persons have been contacted and no one has confirmed that they will pick up the child, staff are obligated to report the unattended child to the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

EMERGENCY PLAN

Preschool staff are trained in emergency procedures and will conduct monthly fire drills and an annual emergency evacuation together with the class as per Child Care Licensing Regulations.

During a fire drill or an emergency evacuation, preschool leaders will lead the class out of the building to the designated assembly area. In the event of an emergency, preschool staff will contact parents/guardians or authorized persons to pick-up children. Unless directed otherwise during an emergency, the usual assembly area for City Preschool is at the south corner of the Terry Fox Hometown Square at the corner of Kelly and Mary Hill Road.

We store emergency food and water rations for each child in the program room.

GRADUAL ENTRY

Good beginnings are important: We want to make sure that the transition into the City Preschool program is a positive experience for your child and you. Gradual entry allows you and your child to get to know the preschool leaders and classroom routines. Children can explore their classroom environment, meet new friends, and establish positive relationships with educators. Parents/guardians can ask questions and share information with us.

Your child will begin with staying for half of the program on the first day and transition to the full program length. The start times for the half-day class will be staggered to keep the child to teacher ratios low. This will allow for a more individualized welcome and teacher interaction for each child. To ensure that your child is comfortable during gradual entry, you may have to stay until your child is settled. You will receive your child's gradual entry schedule prior to program start.

GUIDING CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR

We understand that guiding behavior is an ongoing process and approaches will vary depending on the individual child's age and development. Our preschool programs are a safe, respectful, and nurturing environment, and we guide children in a positive, supportive, and respectful way that upholds children's dignity. Our Caring Code of Conduct states that we Respect ourselves, Respect others, Respect the environment

Preschool leaders use the following guidance strategies:

- Prevention: such as using positive reinforcement and setting clear, simple and consistent classroom limits
- Intervention: such as redirection and logical and natural consequences to help a child understand the problem and solution and clarify an unavoidable outcome of a behavior

For challenging behaviors, preschool staff will connect with parents/guardians to discuss a collaborate approach to support the child. A care plan may be required. In case of a serious behavior incident, preschool staff may contact parents/guardians to pick up their child for the day.

ACCESS AND INCLUSION

City Preschool is committed to provide an inclusive early learning environment that supports the individual strengths and needs of each child and allows meaningful participation by all.

If your child has additional support needs, for example developmental delays due to a medical condition, please contact citypreschool@portcoquitlam.ca or call **604.927.5294** for more information about potential program supports. We collaborate with Supported Child Development Programs such as Kinsight and Spirit of the Children Society for classroom support.

If you are currently not working with a Supported Child Development Consultant and have concerns about your child's development or your child has a physical, intellectual, communicative or social skill delay or challenging behaviors related to delays in development, you can contact the following programs for support and information:

Kinsight Supported Child Development Program: 604.525.8242

Aboriginal Supported Child Development Program Spirit of the Children Society: 604.524.9113

To best support a child with additional needs, a care plan will be created by preschool staff and parents/guardians prior to program start.

Additional funding may be available for children with designated special needs and extra support requirements through the Affordable Child Care Benefit Program or Autism Funding through the Government of BC at <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/managing-your-health/child-behaviour-development/support-needs/autism-spectrum-disorder/autism-funding>

ACTIVE PLAY

City Preschool programs follows Child Care Licensing Regulations and is guided by Canada's 24-Hour Movement Guidelines, Live 5210, and Appetite to Play. Our preschool program provides structured and unstructured physical activities to support children's development of foundational movement skills and helps to establish motivation, confidence, and competence to be physically active.

As per Child Care Licensing Regulations, children will have daily access to active outdoor play for a minimum of 30 minutes for the Tu/Thu morning and afternoon programs and a minimum of 40 minutes for the M,W,F class. In case of an official weather warning that prohibits children from playing outside, children will have access to active play indoors.

Being physically active not only supports overall wellbeing and motor skills, but is also an important factor in brain development, physical growth and social skill development.

To promote physical literacy, we will also offer a Skating and Swimming Adventure Day for families.



SCREEN TIME

City Preschool programming is informed by best practices and follows Canada's 24-Hour Movement Guidelines. For preschoolers, sedentary screen time should be no more than one hour per day, and activities such as reading and storytelling are preferred to screen time when sedentary. As such, there will be no screen time offered to children at City Preschool. The use of technology will be permitted if it is to support access for children with diverse abilities and is a part of their care plan. Preschool leaders may use technology to enhance learning, for example by providing music during movement activities.

HEALTHY EATING GUIDELINES

City Preschool programs promote food literacy in a positive, social environment to help children develop healthy eating habits.

We provide a daily snack that aligns with Canada's Food Guidelines. The snack menu for the day is posted next to the classroom entrance. We will serve water to drink.

EXAMPLES OF SNACKS PROVIDED ARE:

- Apples slices, grapes, and whole grain cereal
- Carrot sticks, cucumber slices with dip and whole grain crackers
- Banana slices and mini whole-wheat sandwiches with WOWBUTTER.

For the M,W,F program, parents/guardians are responsible for providing a lunch. Please pack cold lunches with an ice pack and warm dishes in an insulated food container.

Children and preschool staff will eat together as a group to support social/emotional and communication skills.

Children will not be forced to consume food or drink, and food and drink will not be used as a form of reward or behavior guidance strategy.

If you would like to send treats for birthdays or other celebrations, please ensure that the treats are free of allergens. Treats will be handed out by the preschool leaders at the end of class.

ALLERGY AND FOOD RESTRICTIONS

The safety and well-being of the children attending our program is our priority: Parents/Guardians are responsible to inform and update City Preschool staff about their child's allergies and food restrictions.

City Preschool is an allergy aware program and will restrict certain types of allergens such as peanuts, tree nuts, dairy etc. when a child at risk of Anaphylaxis attends. Parents/guardians will be notified of allergen restrictions in writing and a notice will be posted by the program entrance.

If your child is at risk of Anaphylaxis, you must complete an Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan and Medical Administration Consent Form and provide any required medication prior to program start.

HYGIENE, HEALTH, AND MEDICATION

As children are growing and developing, so are their immune systems. Young children have lower resistance to infection and communicable disease and illness, such as respiratory infections, are often inevitable.

For the safety of all and to reduce the potential spread of illness, we ask that parents/guardians:

- Provide their child's immunization records to the preschool prior to program start
- Support their child in developing good hand washing habits
- Keep their child home if the child is not well.

As staff cannot care for a sick child and give them the support they require, parents/guardians must find alternate care arrangements if their child:

- Is not well enough to participate in all regular preschool activities, including outdoor play
- Is vomiting or did vomit in the previous 24 hours
- Has diarrhea or had diarrhea in the previous 24 hours
- Has a fever of 101.3° F/38.5° C or higher
- Exhibits Covid-19 symptoms such as fever/chills, cough, shortness of breath, body aches, headache, loss of taste/smell or sore throat
- Has symptoms of a respiratory infection such as severe and persistent coughing, yellow nasal discharge
- Complains of any unexplained or undiagnosed pain, including headaches
- Has difficulties breathing
- Complains about a sore throat and has trouble swallowing
- Has infected skin, eyes or an undiagnosed rash
- Complains about severe itching of the body or scalp
- Has or is suspected of having a communicable disease such as Chicken Pox, Conjunctivitis (pink eye), Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Pertussis, etc.

If a child falls ill at preschool, staff will contact parents/guardians or authorized persons to pick up the child as soon as possible. We will call 911 if necessary.

Parents/guardians will be informed about any injury that their child may sustain at preschool, for example a scratched knee. Our staff are trained in first aid and will attend to minor injuries.

Parents/guardians must inform City Preschool if their child is diagnosed with a communicable disease or if the child had to see a physician due something that occurred at preschool.

If your child requires medication, please reach out to preschool staff to complete a Medical Administration Consent Form. Please note that we need a written prescription even for over-the-counter medication to prevent medication errors. We will not administer medication without a prescription, expired medications and or any medications that the child has not been given before.

If your child has specific medical care needs, please reach out to preschool supervisory staff to set up a care plan. Parents/Guardians are responsible for training staff if specific skills are required to support a child's medical care needs.

FIELD TRIPS AND SPECIAL EVENT

Parent/guardians will be informed in advance about on-site adventure days, off-site field trips, and special events.

As part of our preschool program, we offer at least one off-site field trip and three on-site Adventure Days:

- a parent-participation Skating Adventure Day
- a parent-participation Swimming Adventure Day
- a library visit with story time.

Short on-site visits to the community garden, the seniors centre, and the Terry Fox Hometown Square are part of our regular programming.

Scheduled special events include the City Preschool Winter Concert & Potluck and the City Preschool Graduation Ceremony. Other special events may be scheduled, and we invite families to share their cultural celebrations with us.

SHOW AND TELL

Starting in February of the preschool year, we offer Show and Tell as part of our classroom routine. Children can choose a special toy or item from home that they would like to show their friends during Good-Bye Circle. Show and Tell allows the children to get to know more about each other, build confidence, and practice communication skills.

CONTACT INFORMATION

General Inquiries: citypreschool@portcoquitlam.ca

Recreation Specialist – ECE: 604.927.5294

Children's Services Coordinator: 604.927.5182

Customer Service: 604.927.7529

FAQ

Where is the Preschool located in the Port Coquitlam Community Centre?

- The preschool programs run in Playroom 2 of the Children Centre located on the east side of the building across from the Purple Arena.

What is the best place to park at the Port Coquitlam Community Centre?

- You can park in the underground parking. The closest entrance to the Children Centre is on the east side of the parkade by the arenas.

What do I need to do before my child starts preschool?

- All required registration paperwork has to be completed and sent back to City Preschool before program start.
- Contact us at 604-927-5294 if your child requires additional support.
- Attend the Parent Welcome Meeting/Open House in early September. Registration information will be emailed to you prior to the event.
- Prior to program start, consider participating in one of our community early-years programs such as Ready Set Go, Playschool Prep or summertime Tons of Fun camps: portcoquitlam.ca/recreation

My child is new to preschool, can I stay to assist them during the first class?

- We will have a gradual entry period at program start in September. During that time, you are welcome to stay and support your child with the transition.
- You can connect with preschool staff to discuss any separation anxiety concerns.
- If your child joins the program later in the preschool year, we can discuss an individual gradual entry schedule.

What does my child need to bring to preschool?

- Clothing and footwear that is appropriate for the weather as we go outside daily rain or shine. Please label clothing and footwear with your child's name
- A backpack for your child's belongings
- A pair of inside shoes
- A change of clothes
- A water bottle
- A lunch for the M,W,F program.

Can my child bring toys from home to preschool?

- We kindly ask that children do not bring toys from home.
- Children will be able to share a special toy or item from home during their Show and Tell day starting in February of the preschool year.

Does my child have to toilet trained?

- Yes, your child needs to be able to independently use the bathroom.
- If your child has a care plan, toileting requirements will be adjusted accordingly.

FAQ (CONTINUED)

Do I need to provide a snack for my child?

- We will provide a daily healthy snack that aligns with Canada's Food Guide.

Will my child play outside?

- According to Child Care Licensing Regulations, we will provide children with the required active outdoor play time daily. In the event of extreme weather conditions (e.g. forest fire smoke, extreme heat or cold), we will provide active play inside. Rainy days are not considered an extreme weather condition and we will play outside rain or shine.
- To set your child up for success, please ensure that your child has weather-appropriate clothing and footwear, such as muddy buddies and rain boots, available when needed.

Will you offer field trip or special events?

- Yes, we offer on-site parent-participation swimming and skating Adventure Days, library visits, and an off-site field trip. Special events include cultural celebrations, a Winter Concert and Potluck, and a graduation ceremony.

What if I have to withdraw my child from the preschool program?

- Parents/guardians who need to withdraw their child from the preschool program have to provide written notice, including the parent's name, child's name, and class, to citypreschool@portcoquitlam.ca before the first of the month, one month prior to withdrawal from the program. For example, notice to withdraw on Nov. 1 must be received the latest by Sept. 30. Withdrawals for the months of December, March, May, and June are not permitted.
- For questions please contact 604-927-5294.

My contact information has changed. Who do I contact?

- For any changes to your contact information, please contact us at citypreschool@portcoquitlam.ca or call 604.927.5294.
- Please also update your contact information with Customer Service at 604.927.7529

My payment information has changed. Who do I contact?

- Please update your payment information with Customer Service at 604.927.7529.
- If you are on a monthly payment plan, please ensure that your credit card information is up to date so payments can be processed on the first of the month

My child's medical information has changed. Who do I contact?

- Please contact us at citypreschool@portcoquitlam.ca or call 604.927.5294.

I have questions about ACCB or Supported Child Development Programs. Who do I contact?

- Please contact us at citypreschool@portcoquitlam.ca or call 604.927.5294.

Do I have to notify City Preschool if my child is not attending preschool for the day?

- Please email citypreschool@portcoquitlam.ca or text the City Preschool cell at 604.908.3744 if your child is not able to attend.