



Parent Policy and Information Handbook

Introduction

Welcome to Upper Lonsdale Preschool! As a new member family you are joining a tradition dedicated to the social, emotional, intellectual and physical growth of our preschool children. We hope that your association with the preschool will be a long and happy one.

This document is intended to introduce you to the history, philosophy, policies and procedures of Upper Lonsdale Preschool. Parents of each registered child are required to read and sign acknowledgement that they have read this document. Please raise any questions, concerns or comments that you may have with one of our teachers or a parent on the Executive Board.

A Brief History

Upper Lonsdale's history dates back to the fall of 1954, when Mrs. Hazel Woodham started a preschool in her basement. Eight children came five mornings a week and Mrs. Phyllis Sweeney was the teacher. In the fall of 1955 the preschool moved to the basement of 106 West Kings Road. There were 25 five-year-olds coming every weekday morning and 15 three and four-year-olds coming three afternoons a week. At this point there was a three-year waiting list. Some of the tables and chairs still used at Upper Lonsdale today were built by the families in 1955!

1960 saw a move to North Lonsdale United Church, with an enrolment of approximately 40 four and five-year-olds. The two classes alternated between the upstairs gym area and the downstairs class area and came five mornings a week. An afternoon class of four-year-olds was added in 1966 and they came three days a week. It was decided to cut the second class of five year olds in 1972, leaving one class of twenty- one. Mrs. Pat Morris taught them and a class of 19 three and four- year-olds three afternoons a week.

By 1973, all the public schools had kindergarten for five-year-olds, so the preschool operated for three and four-year-olds, although some five-year-olds also attended. Since 1974, Upper Lonsdale generally has had one class of three-year-olds coming three mornings a week and one class of four-year-olds coming three afternoons a week.

Until 2012, the preschool operated as a Parent Participation Preschool (PPP). The roots of this philosophical basis are deep and treasured, and our history makes our school unique and special. The preschool switched from the PPP model to our current one: a family-involved, play-based preschool. As a Parent Involvement Preschool (PIP), ULP is a board-run, non-profit preschool, overseen by Vancouver Coastal Health and regulated by the Government of British Columbia, Ministry of Education and Childcare.

Although we no longer operate as a conventional Parent Participation Preschool, parents and families are encouraged to participate in ways that work for their families.

Pat Muller was the sole teacher at Upper Lonsdale Preschool from 1986 to 2012, when Erin Tommasi (a former ULP parent) was hired as assistant teacher. Pat retired in June 2015, and Erin is our current head teacher, with Lenora Moore as our assistant teacher effective September 2017.

As we watch our children grow and learn, we grow and learn ourselves and hope that some of the friendships we have made here will last as long as those formed in the early days of Upper Lonsdale Preschool.

Mission Statement

Our mission at Upper Lonsdale Preschool is to offer a play-based program where all children are welcome to explore, learn and grow together.

Preschool-aged children have the opportunity to develop their social, emotional, physical and intellectual selves in a safe and caring child-centered environment that encourages self-esteem and independence; where tolerance, respect and consideration are given to all family members.

Our Teachers' Philosophy

We believe that play is the primary occupation of the child. Play stimulates the physical, social, intellectual, emotional and creative development but is also the primary means by which children explore the world.

We feel that children learn best through play. We encourage curiosity, discovery and problem-solving, which allows for individual growth and development of a positive self-image.

We support the developmental levels of the individual child and give them the freedom to fail, learn from mistakes and celebrate successes.

We aim to foster independence and a strong sense of self through an atmosphere of trust and safe supportive guidance.

What is Play?

Adults call the activities of children play - but for the child it is some of the most serious learning the child will ever do. Play is children's response to life; it is their way of learning about themselves and the world around them. Since much of the child's learning is done in the early years, quality play is of great importance to the development of the child.

All children have an inner drive that compels them to run, jump, push, pull, climb, poke, taste, touch, smell and energetically explore all that is around them. For children to be achievers, to meet with confidence all their future will bring, to cope with the great complexity and rapidly increasing technology and change of our society, they must be able to play.

Play provides flexibility and adaptability to problems: "That way of building didn't work - maybe if I try this". Play provides suppleness of muscles: "I can lift these blocks; I can wiggle like a snake".

Play provides for the transition from physical expression to feelings and the verbalization of such feelings: "That makes me mad!" It allows for self-expression, dramatic interaction, and provides for the coming to terms of adult roles: "I'm the dad and you are the sister".

Play provides for an appreciation of the beauty of our natural world, such as feeling the warm sun and watching a caterpillar crawling, and for the beginning of a scientific mind: "How much water can I get into this bucket, why does popcorn pop?"

Play provides for the development of social skills, sharing, caring, cooperation, enjoyment of other people's ideas and achievements, and appreciation of cultural customs as holidays and the seasons are observed.

Play provides for creativity; it allows the child to do their own thing in their own way whether using art material, blocks, sand or their own body.

Play is all these things and more. These are just a few of the things that are happening as your child plays, whether it is at home or at school.

The preschool years when you play and learn with your child are an investment in your child's future; they can and should be rich and rewarding for both child and parent.

Just Playing

When I'm building in the block room, please don't say I'm "Just Playing". For you see, I'm learning as I play, about balance and shapes. Who knows, I may be an architect someday.

When I'm getting all dressed up, setting the table, caring for the babies, don't get the idea I'm "Just Playing". For, you see, I'm learning as I play; I may be a mother or father someday.

When you see me up to my elbows in paint or standing at an easel, or molding and shaping clay, Please don't let me hear you say, "He is Just Playing". For, you see, I'm learning as I play, I'm expressing myself and being creative. I may be an artist or an inventor someday.

When you see me in a chair reading to an "imaginary" audience, Please don't laugh and think I'm "Just Playing". For, you see, I'm learning as I play. I may be a teacher someday.

When you see me combing the bushes for bugs, or packing my pockets with choice things I find, Don't pass it off as "Just Play". For, you see, I'm learning as I play. I may be a scientist someday.

When you see me engrossed in a puzzle or some "plaything" at my school, Please don't feel the time is wasted as "Play". For, you see, I'm learning as I play. I'm learning to solve problems and concentrate. I may be in business someday.

When you see me cooking or tasting foods, Please don't think that because I enjoy it, it is "Just Play". I'm learning to follow directions and see differences. I may be a cook someday.

When you see me learning to skip, hop, run and move my body, Please don't say I'm "Just Playing". For, you see, I'm learning as I play. I'm learning how my body works. I may be a doctor, nurse or athlete someday.

When you ask me what I've done at school today, and I say, "I Just Played", Please don't misunderstand me. For, you see, I'm learning as I play. I'm learning to enjoy and be successful in my work. I'm preparing for tomorrow.

Today, I am a child and my work is play.

Written by Anita

Taken from the Early Childhood News magazine

What Will the Preschool Offer My Child and Our Family?

The primary function of a good preschool is to help each and every child to have fun in a safe environment so that they can achieve their fullest development potential. Successful experiences in preschool will serve as the readiness bridge to the primary grades.

By providing a rich variety of play materials, similarly aged playmates and a teacher skilled in developing a program suited to the best of the child's needs, your child will grow and mature.

Children will learn to use their bodies effectively, to express themselves imaginatively, to cope with their own feelings, to get along with others, to solve problems and to satisfy their curiosity.

The cooperative concern of the teachers and parents make for a harmonious school in which your child will surely flourish. Our parent run preschool is a natural first step for your child making this first educational experience a happy one.

General Information and Policies

Participation

Upper Lonsdale Preschool values the role of the family in participating in the child's preschool experience. As a Parent Involvement Preschool, each family has a "family involvement role" which assists in some way with preschool operations. Family involvement roles are valuable in so many ways:

- They keep tuition fees lower. Without parents helping with the preschool, tuition fees would have to increase to cover the cost associated with outsourcing and/or hiring an administrator.
- They help build community. Roles are a wonderful way for families to connect with each other, and the preschool is constantly being refreshed and energized as new families join with new ideas and skills.
- They model engagement and involvement with your children. It is incredibly valuable for children to learn, from a young age, the value of volunteerism - they also love to see their family involved in what they are doing at preschool!

The roles have been created to ensure that all families can find something that fits with their time commitments. Some require little bits of work throughout the year, while others require a focused commitment for one or two days only.

Parents are invited to enjoy time with their children by attending special class events scheduled each term through the year. These cornerstone events are child centered and give families a special way to connect with their child's school experience and the school community. A schedule of seasonal events will be sent to families. A typical year may include (Autumn) Halloween event, (Winter) Christmas event, Valentines Mailbox Walk, (Spring) Chick Hatch Day, Fire Fighter Visit, Year End Picnic.

Parents may also volunteer as a group time special parent visitor if they have something they would like to offer the class; family or cultural traditions, special skills or passions (varies as family interest). Additionally parents can connect at the parent run Fall Parent Night, while volunteering at the community run Tree Chip Fund Raiser, at the parent run family Spring Fling picnic and after school playing at the park.

Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled twice yearly in November and April, and the teachers are always available if you wish to speak with them about your child for any reason.

Fundraising

Our preschool is a not-for-profit society. The operating money for our preschool is obtained from tuition fees. Any money needed for extra activities, improvements to the preschool, or any new equipment/ appliances not in the budget, must be raised by our parent groups.

At the annual general meeting (AGM), held each September or October, a budget is presented and discussed. The books are open to all families.

In order to keep fees low, the preschool operates fundraising initiatives to keep the budget on track. Past fundraisers have included raffles, hanging basket/plant sales, stainless steel containers, coffee beans, as well as others. Our annual Christmas Tree Chip is traditionally our most lucrative fundraiser, in addition to being a community institution!

All families are encouraged to help with fundraisers in order to ensure that tuition fees are kept as low as possible. If you have a great fundraising idea or would like to lead a fundraiser, then step up and volunteer! Aside from the monetary aspect, fundraising activities give parents the opportunity to work together in a variety of ways and to get involved in the community.

Guidance and Discipline

Ultimately, the goal of guidance is the development of responsibility, self-confidence, and self-control. Safety and the rights of each individual child are of the utmost importance. Our teachers guide the children in a positive manner, being as gentle as possible, firm when necessary, and always with respect.

Effective guidance is necessary to eliminate behaviour difficulties so that the children can be safe, child-to-child aggression will be minimized, and therefore a foundation can be built for the children's future participation in society.

Teachers use the following types of language in the classroom:

1. Phrase statements in a positive way. Children do need the reinforcement of what they can do rather than what not to do.
2. Phrase statements clearly. If it's time to wash up for snack - state that. (If you ask it as a question, the child has the option to say no.)
3. Explain why. We all like to have an explanation - it does make it easier to understand.
4. Focus on the behaviour, rather than on the child. This is very important in terms of self-esteem. The action is what is not acceptable, and not the child.

5. Acknowledge children's feelings: I know you really want a turn on the bikes, but right now they're all being used. You could ask if you could have a turn when she/he's finished.

The "rules" at Preschool are few: safety, respect for self and others, respect for equipment. Together, we encourage responsibility, self-confidence, and self-control in the children in a respectful manner. At all times children are treated with respect and offered positive guidance. Children are never subjected to any harmful actions as listed in Division 2, Section 52, of the Child Care Licensing Regulations.

Care and Supervision Policy

At ULP, our teachers use active and positive supervision to ensure enjoyable play and to promote learning opportunities. The teachers are continually monitoring what is happening in the classroom in order to provide instant intervention to protect our children's health and safety.

In order to maintain a high standard of care for all children our teachers follow these procedures:

- The staff to child ratio is maintained at all times
- A head count is always done before and after transitions
- Monitors and other devices are not used in place of supervision
- If children who require extra support or have a diagnosis attend the program, support teacher or care aide is required. Limits are set to the number of children in each activity area to allow positive interactions between children and maximum supervision
- Extra staff or volunteers are included in the program for field trips
- Preschool staff are continually scanning all areas
- If aggressive behaviour is occurring, the teacher is close enough to intervene to promote acceptable behaviour, and protect the other children
- A staff member will be situated at the south end of the outdoor play space to ensure adequate supervision

At ULP, we actively promote inclusive practice in order to best meet the needs of children and families. For children requiring extra support, support teachers or care aides should be discussed upon enrollment and in place prior to the student's first day in the classroom. A current care plan will be kept on file including a diagnosis relevant to the child's requirements for extra support as determined by health care professionals. Parents cannot act as support teachers or care aides. To provide the best possible care for all children in the class, each class will accept up to one student requiring an aide per class. Students requiring an aide must have one consistent, designated aide. If a student

is awaiting assessment, support staff options will be discussed with the family and determined by ULP teachers and Executive on a case-by-case basis.

Enrolment and Class Composition

To be eligible for September enrolment, children must be 3 years old by December 31st of that year. Children who turn 3 before the end of March and are ready to start preschool, are welcome to start in January.

Each class is licensed for 20 children. The number of children enrolled in each class will, in most cases, be 16 children or less. However, the total number of children per class will be set by the teachers in consultation with the executive based on factors including class dynamics.

Fees and Registration

Once you decide to register for the year, provided that we have space in the class of your choice, you will be invited to fill out an on-line registration form. There will be limited time to complete the registration form and make payments by e-transfer or cheque.

To register your child, we require a non-refundable Registration Fee of \$90.00 and a non-refundable Tuition Deposit of one month of tuition fees per child. The Tuition Deposit will be applied to your June tuition fees. Together, these two non-refundable payments hold a place for your child in our preschool.

The remainder of the year's tuition fees must be paid by 9 post-dated monthly cheques. These cheques must be received on or before June 1st preceding the start of school in September. Failure to provide payment and all associated paperwork on or before June 1st will forfeit your child's spot in the preschool. Please note there is a \$40.00 charge for returned cheques.

Returning Families

Returning families will be given preference in enrolment for the following year until January 31st, as space permits.

Gradual Entry

Home visits will be made by the teachers to each of the new children. Individual visits as outlined in your welcome letter, indicating a specific time to come with your child to preschool at the start of the year is a way of introducing the children to their preschool. Plan to stay about 15-20 minutes.

During gradual intake, children come to school in small groups for abbreviated sessions. The purpose of slow intake is to allow the children to adjust gradually to a new environment and routine, and is very important in building their comfort level. Each child adjusts at a different pace.

You will be contacted in August regarding the time and dates for your child to attend. For those beginning in January, your child will also receive a home visit. Gradual intake for children starting other than in September will be child dependent and will be at the discretion of the teachers.

Withdrawal

If it becomes necessary for a family to withdraw a child in the school year, the family must provide one month's written notice on the 1st of the preceding month (i.e. November 1st notice for December 1st withdrawal) to either the Head Teacher or Enrolment parent. All post-dated cheques will be returned. If any child is withdrawn after January 31st, fees for the balance of the year may be forfeited, at the discretion of the executive.

Drop off and Pick up

The person picking up the child must be on the authorized pick up list that is kept on file at the preschool.

If informed, in person, of a change in the pick-up person ensure that their name is added to the authorized pick up list on their registration form and that it is recorded on the daily sign in sheet. Do this while the parent/guardian is still present and have them sign the consent.

If informed, by phone, that an unauthorized person will pick up the child, the parent must email the preschool a letter of consent before the child is released from care. The person picking up must present a photo ID before the child is released.

If no one comes to pick up the child:

If no one has arrived at Upper Lonsdale Preschool by 11:45 for the am class or 2:45 for the pm class, a phone call will be made to the authorized pick up person for that day. All authorized phone numbers will be kept on file.

If unable to reach the authorized pick up person, and it is the child's guardian, a call will be placed to the child's other parent/guardian. If parents cannot be reached calls will be made to the emergency pick up people on the child's registration form.

If everyone is unreachable and after 1 hour, contact will be made to the Ministry of Children and Families to discuss the situation with them.

A child cannot be released to an unaccompanied taxi driver or be allowed to walk home on his/her own.

If the authorized pick up person is unable to provide safe care:

If the pick-up person falls ill while picking up their child (including going into labour) a call will be made to the child's other parent/ guardian or another authorized emergency pick up person.

If there is suspicion that alcohol or drugs have been consumed and/or the pick up person is in an emotional state confirm who is driving home. Offer to call another pick up person to drive and supervise the child. These situations will always be approached with perspective to the safety of the child.

If alcohol/drugs are involved and the pick up person insists on driving the child home, a call will be placed to 911.

Any unsettling/unusual situations will be recorded in the incident book located at preschool.

School closures

If one teacher is unable to work and a substitute is unavailable, the school must close for that day. If a partial month of classes is canceled due to unforeseen circumstances, tuition cheques will continue to be deposited. If more than half a month of classes is canceled, then tuition will be prorated.

Health

Parents are requested to keep any child at home who is not well or who shows signs of any communicable disease, vomiting or diarrhea. The child should be symptom free for at least 48 hours before returning to preschool.

Parents must notify the teachers when their child has been exposed to a communicable disease, if a communicable disease appears and/or if their child is vomiting or has diarrhea.

The teachers are empowered to contact parents and send a child home if they consider the child too ill to attend preschool. In the event of an emergency, the teachers are empowered to obtain medical aid for the child. In these circumstances, parents and emergency contacts will be contacted as soon as possible.

We follow guidelines for child care licensing regulations in British Columbia. Should you require more details on our health policy please consult our teachers. A handy resource for parents can be Sneezes & Diseases, distributed by Vancouver Coastal Health: http://www.vch.ca/media/Sneezes_And_Diseases_December_2014.pdf

Active Play

ULP is committed to daily active play and has a full 30 plus minutes of daily outdoor active play in addition to gym and biweekly yoga. When possible, we open the main preschool door to provide an indoor/ outdoor classroom.

Child's Belongings

Please provide your child with the following:

- One complete, labeled, change of clothes, full set of wet weather gear (layers are key) and including, if possible, a change of footwear – please put this in a bag that will be kept in your child's cubby
- A photo of family members with out-of-town emergency contact phone numbers on the back for our class earthquake kit
- A reusable mask

Note: please send your child to preschool in suitable play clothes: playing, painting, art, and experiments can be messy! Please identify your child's belongings by marking his or her name clearly on the above articles as well as on outdoor clothing and boots. We require children to wear rubber-soled, closed-toe shoes for our gym portion.

Seasonal Class Event Days and Group Time Special Parent Visitors

Parents are invited to enjoy time with their children by attending special seasonal Class Events scheduled each term through the year. These cornerstone events are child centered and give families a special way to connect with their child's school experience and the school community. A schedule of seasonal events will be sent to families. A typical year may include (Autumn), Halloween event, (Winter) Christmas event, Valentines Mailbox Walk, (Spring) Chick Hatch Day, Firefighter Visit, Year End Picnic.

Parents are also invited to volunteer as a Group Time Special Parent Visitor if they have something they would like to offer the class during group time; family or cultural traditions, special skills or passions, any small project that excites you, science, art etc. (varies yearly dependent on families interested).

Additionally parents can connect at the parent run Fall Parent Night, while volunteering at the community run Tree Chip Fund Raiser, at the parent run family Spring Fling picnic and after school playing at the park.

Snack Days

Snack will be provided by the preschool taking into consideration all food allergies and sensitivities. Snack typically includes cut fruits and vegetables and crackers.

Of Note: Twice a month, families who decide not to participate in the prepaid snack fee are required to supply a nutritious, ready-to-serve snack of sliced fruits and vegetables for the entire class (food preparation must take into account all class allergies outlined by the teachers at the beginning of the year). This thoughtfully chosen snack can be shared among all the children, promoting a sense of community and healthy eating habits.

We provide tap water for the children to drink (our water has been lab tested). The water is offered to the children in small easy to pour containers and the children pour from these into their individual cups.

Snack time is a social interaction. Children are not coerced to eat but we do all sit down together to share this time together and to show respect to those that are eating. The teachers provide positive role modeling. The children choose what they would like to eat, or if they would like to eat, and how much. They are encouraged to take one piece at

a time into their mouth. They are encouraged to try new foods and if they don't care for it they can put the remainder of their piece on the compost plate.

Parent/Teacher Communication and Conferences

If the teachers feel that your child requires support developmentally, socially or physically they will contact you privately to discuss the concern. Otherwise, you may be assured that your child is progressing positively. If you have any comments or concerns regarding your child's development, please do not hesitate to contact the teachers.

Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled twice yearly in November and April, and the teachers are always available if you wish to speak with them about your child for any reason.

It is very rare for conflicts to arise at ULP, but where they do occur, the school will follow the Conflict Resolution Plan of Action found at Appendix A to this handbook.

Website

We have an amazing website that is designed to be a hub of communication and information. The website is <http://upperlonsdalepreschool.ca> - spend some time becoming familiar with the website!

In addition to the website being a communication tool for current and prospective families, it provides information to new families about our preschool community. It is also a storage place for current information about our program and events.

Part of our website is visible to the general public, but current members can view additional information after logging into the site. Personal information such as email contacts, photo albums, schedules with phone numbers are only visible to members after logging in.

Members can join the website by registering a login. Once the login is approved, members can access the Family Portal section of the website.

Use of the website is subject to website policies and regulations, including, but not limited to, the ["Terms and Conditions"](#) and the ["Privacy Policy"](#). We invite you to familiarize yourself with them.

Library

Our preschool has an amazing library of children's books and a Parent Education Library. Please talk to teachers if you are interested in borrowing any books.

Parent Acknowledgement Sign Off

Please print, sign and return to school

I have read and understood:

The Parent Policy and Information Handbook for Upper Lonsdale Preschool

The Upper Lonsdale Preschool COVID-19 Handbook and Resource.

*I understand that until further notice in any instance where there are differences between The Parent Policy and Information Handbook for Upper Lonsdale Preschool and The Upper Lonsdale Preschool COVID-19 Handbook and Resource, the Upper Lonsdale Preschool COVID-19 Handbook and Resource applies.

Child's Name: _____

Parent Signature: ___ Date: ___

Parent Signature: ___ Date: ___

Appendix A

Conflict Resolution Plan of Action

Each year, the ULP Executive Board identifies members of the board (the “Executive”) and/or the parent body (the “Designated Person”) who are available as point persons for conflict resolution in order to:

- Aid Teachers as necessary in any conflict that may arise;
- Be available to families to approach should a family feel uncomfortable approaching Teachers directly;
- May be included on emails regarding any active conflict; and
- May be included in any meeting regarding any active conflict.

Conflict here is defined as: a serious disagreement between the Teachers or school and parents/guardians of a family attending ULP or anything Teachers feel they need additional help with in resolving. Such scenarios maybe include, but are in no way limited to:

- Parent or family concerns regarding the operations of the school
- Parent or family concerns regarding ULP policy
- Parent or family concerns involving their child/a student in attendance at ULP, specifically a child in their care
- Discussions with the Teachers of any concern a family may have that is unresolved after 7 days or more

In the event of a conflict, a file will be opened and all emails and meetings will be documented.

In the event of a conflict at ULP, the following 5-step timeline will guide interactions to achieve conflict resolution:

1. Teachers begin conversation with parents/families:
 - The conversation can be via email, telephone, or in person.
 - Emails will be shared with the Executive and the Designated Person as necessary at the discretion of the Teachers.
 - The Executive and the Designated Person may be brought into the discussion at any time as the Teachers see fit in order to:
 - a. Help clarify the issue(s)
 - b. Bring involved parties together to talk (via email or in person)
 - c. Create a solution
 - d. Monitor and follow up on the conflict.
2. If after 5 days a solution has not been achieved, a third party may be brought in to contribute ideas or to mediate if deemed appropriate by Teachers and the Executive.

Such third parties may include but are not limited to: professionals working with either party; support staff; counselor; play therapist, etc. Such meetings will also include at least one ULP Executive Board member.

3. If after bringing in a third party (or if Step 2 is not applicable), the conflict will be escalated to the Executive to handle after 7 days (1 week). The Executive are voted in by the families at ULP each year and they are mandated to oversee all operations at the school. When the conflict is escalated to the Executive, a panel of at least two members, including the President and one of the following will convene:

- ULP Vice President
- Any executive member who has applicable experience
- Any executive member not involved in the conflict

The Designated Person will also sit on this panel. The panel will come to a determination on how best to conclude the conflict and will communicate the determination to the parties involved in the conflict. There is no appeal from this determination.

4. Once a determination has been reached, a meeting will be held to review the file and to create a final summary document. This meeting will include 2 parties who may include:

- Teachers
- ULP President
- Any involved ULP Executive Board Members
- Any Designated Persons

5. Steps 1-4 contemplate an optimal timeline. However, the timeline may be adjusted if deemed necessary or applicable at any time by the Teachers and the Executive. Such adjustments will be made in the spirit of fairness and with the aim of achieving a resolution to the conflict.