Parent Policy and Information Handbook 2026-2027

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 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.

At ULP we respectfully acknowledge that we work, play and learn on the unceded ancestral territories of the Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) and səl̓ilwətaʔɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

A Brief History

Upper Lonsdale Preschool's history began in 1954, when Mrs. Hazel Woodham started a small preschool in her basement with just eight children and Mrs. Phyllis Sweeney as the teacher. The preschool grew quickly and moved to 106 West Kings Road in 1955, eventually relocating to North Lonsdale United Church in 1960 where the school was taught by Mrs. Pat Morris. Over the following decades, the preschool continued to evolve, primarily serving three and four-year-olds.
From its early years until 2012, Upper Lonsdale operated as a Parent Participation Preschool (PPP).

In 2012, the preschool transitioned to its current model as a family-involved, play-based Parent Involvement Preschool (PIP). Today, ULP is a board-run, non-profit preschool overseen by Vancouver Coastal Health and regulated by the Government of British Columbia, while continuing to encourage family participation.

Pat Muller was the sole teacher from 1986 until her retirement in 2015. Erin Tommasi, a former ULP parent, joined as assistant teacher in 2012 and became head teacher following Pat's retirement. Lenora Moore joined as assistant teacher in 2017.

Today, Upper Lonsdale Preschool continues to build on its long history by supporting children's growth, learning, and the lasting friendships formed within its community. 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 parents and 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-centred 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 feeling: "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, encouraging atmosphere in which your child will surely flourish. Our family-inclusive, open-door preschool is a natural first step for your child. Parent and child are supported to take this first step together, thus 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.

Fundraising

Our preschool is a not-for-profit society. The operating money for our preschool is obtained from tuition fees and grants. 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, 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.

As a community, we must work together with the teachers to offer a positive, safe environment for the children. When parents volunteer in the classroom, they must:

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. Always have an adult in close proximity to the children - especially during free choice time. It's important to move nearby if you anticipate a difficulty about to arise.
6. 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.

Very rarely, the teachers will decide to give a time-out to a child. This is something that parents should leave to the teachers. When a child receives a time-out, a Teacher will take the child to a quiet area and explain to the child what behaviour they were engaging in that was not acceptable and why.

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 enrolment 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. 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. **There are exemptions for this.*

Each class is licensed for 20 children. The number of children enrolled in each class will, in most cases, be 18 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 $47.00 charge for returned cheques. **Returning families will be given priority registration for the following year.**

Gradual Entry

Home visits will be made by the teachers to each of the new children. **Individual visits,** as outlined in your welcome letter, are a way of introducing the children to their preschool. Plan to stay about 15-20 minutes and bring siblings if desired. 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 later in the school year 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 Registrar. All post-dated cheques will be returned. If any child is withdrawn after January 31st, fees for the balance of the year are due in full. Exceptions may be considered only in cases of relocation, medical necessity, or documented financial hardship and must be submitted in writing to the Executive Committee for review.

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, that an unauthorized person will pick up the child, please 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 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 3:25 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 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.

Active Play

ULP is committed to daily active play and have 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, labelled, 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

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.

Snack and Lunch

Snack time is an important part of our learning curriculum. It provides children with opportunities to develop independence, practice self-help skills, explore a variety of foods, and engage in positive social interactions with their peers and teachers.

We provide tap water for the children to drink (our water has been lab tested). Water is offered in small, easy-to-pour containers, allowing children to practice pouring their own water into individual cups.

Snack time is a social experience. We all sit together to share this time and to model respectful mealtime behaviours. Children are never coerced or pressured to eat. Children may choose what they would like to eat, whether they would like to eat, and how much they would like to eat. Teachers provide positive role modelling by enjoying a variety of foods and demonstrating healthy and respectful eating habits.

Children are encouraged to take one piece of food at a time and to eat at their own pace. They are also encouraged to try new foods. If a child tries something and does not care for it, they may place the remainder of their piece on the compost plate.

As part of our curriculum, the classroom provides a regular snack for the children. **Families are responsible for providing their child's lunch each day.** We kindly encourage families to send nutritious and well-balanced lunches. **Our classroom is nut-free.** Please ensure that all snacks and lunches brought from home are completely free of nuts and nut-containing products. Families will be notified if additional food allergies or dietary restrictions arise that require us to avoid other ingredients in the classroom. We appreciate everyone's cooperation in helping us maintain a safe and inclusive environment for all children.

Children may bring a special treat to celebrate their birthday. Birthday treats are offered after the regular classroom snack has been eaten and should also follow our nut-free requirements.

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 in the Fall and Spring, and the teachers are always available if you wish to speak with them about your child for any reason.

Inventory/Annual Spring Clean-Up

An inventory of all preschool property is maintained for insurance purposes. At the end of each year the inventory list is updated at approximately the same time that an annual preschool clean up is conducted. During the registration families will be required to pay a cleaning fee which will be waived if they participate in the clean up.

Website

Please familiarize yourself with our website http://upperlonsdalepreschool.ca

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.

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: