



Where Imagination Takes Flight 

Serving the 4 Wing Community for Over 30 Years!






EARLY LEARNING CENTRE HANDBOOK

UPDATED MAY 2024



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Contents

- WELCOME 1
- Welcome to 4 Wing MFRCS First Flights Early Learning Centre 1
- First Flights Early Learning Centre Philosophy 1
- First Flights Inclusion Philosophy 1
- Centre Code of Conduct..... 2
 - Guiding Principles for Appropriate Behaviour..... 2
 - Developmental Capabilities of Children 2
 - Appropriate Use of Technology..... 2
 - Proactive Strategies..... 2
- Parent Code of Conduct..... 3
 - Social Media 4
 - Policy for Handling Parent Concerns 4
- Curriculum Framework Statement 5
- CENTRE OPERATIONS, ENROLLMENT & FEES..... 7
- Hours of Operation 7
- Enrollment and Waiting List..... 7
 - Selection process for the Waiting List 7
 - Process for Accepting a Space by Parent/Guardian 7
- First Flights Early Learning Centre (Casual – Day Time) 8
- Child Care Fees 9
 - Child Care Subsidy 9
 - Child Care Space Deposit per family - \$500 9
- Fee Payment..... 10
- Requested Times of Care..... 10
- Returned payments, Late Charges & Outstanding Accounts 10
- Closures or Diminished Services..... 11
- Notice of Termination of Enrollment 11
- Termination of Care..... 11
- PROGRAM POLICIES & PROCEDURES 11
- Court Orders Affecting Enrolled Children..... 11
- Attendance 12
- Arrival, Departure & Notification of Absences 12
 - Arrival 12
 - Notification of Absence 13
 - Departure..... 13

Release of Children Policy	14
Suspected Intoxication/Drug Abuse.....	14
Late Pick Up.....	14
Child Supervision	15
Child Guidance Policy	15
Aggressive Behaviour	16
Biting.....	17
Child Abuse Reporting Protocols.....	17
Managing Ill Children.....	18
Accident/Serious Illness Policy	20
Prescription Medications	20
Lice Policy	20
Mixed Age Group Policy	21
Physical Activity and Outdoor Play	21
Weather Conditions	22
Field Trips and Outings	23
Rest Time.....	23
Toilet Training	24
Kissing Policy	24
Clothing/Items from Home.....	24
Snack/Lunch Policy.....	25
Food From Home Policy.....	25
Allergies/Anaphylaxis (Life-Threatening Allergies Policy/ Individual Medical Needs)	26
Special Events	26
First Flights Early Learning Centre /Volunteer Screening Policy	27
Personnel Policy	27
Smoking/Vaping	27
Boundaries.....	27
Photography/Videography Policy.....	27
Building and Emergency Procedures	28
Parent/Guardian Expectations.....	28
Lines of Communication.....	29
Parent/Guardian Contract and Acknowledgement of Understanding	30

WELCOME

Welcome to 4 Wing MFRCS First Flights Early Learning Centre

We hope you and your child will enjoy participating in our program and that your experience here will be happy and meaningful.

The policies outlined in this manual have been established with careful thought and planning to meet the needs of the children and the parent/guardian, as well as to allow for the efficient operation of the Early Learning Centre.

All parents/guardians are required to read and understand the policies contained in this manual. A form is included in the registration package that is to be signed and returned to acknowledge that you, the parents/guardians, have read, understood, and agree to comply with all policies in this handbook. The entire registration package must be completed and returned, along with applicable payments made prior to your child starting to attend our Centre.

From time to time, the Handbook will be updated, and parents/guardians will be required to re-sign the acceptance form.

First Flights Early Learning Centre Philosophy

First Flights Early Learning Services goal is to provide a holistic play-based inclusive learning environment for all children who attend our programs that meets the developmental needs of children in all developmental areas; physical - gross and fine motor, social, emotional, intellectual, and language. We recognize that children learn best in environments that focus on play and are based on children's interests, abilities, and needs. The environments will guide children to self-initiated learning and discovery, this will allow children to have control of their experiences and create their own knowledge and understanding of their world. Children will be provided with a rich array of materials and equipment.

We see the Educator's role as being the co-learner, co-researcher, co-imaginer of possibilities in their daily interactions with children, nurturing the child's disposition to learn and working within a practice of relationships with children and families.

We believe we are a place where "imagination takes flight."

First Flights Inclusion Philosophy

We believe all people are of equal value and that all First Flights Early Learning Services staff members have the responsibility to make high quality, balanced provisions for all children to help them to achieve their full potential.

We believe inclusive early childhood care and learning environments are an effective way to combat discriminatory attitudes and contribute toward the creation of welcoming and inclusive communities. We believe that all people benefit from the opportunity to participate and learn in inclusive and diverse communities. We recognize the right of all children and families to participate regardless of ability, gender, race, religion, culture, sexual orientation, or economic status.

We strive to ensure that young children and families in our community have access to a quality early learning and care environment that is developmentally and individually appropriate regardless of differing abilities and needs.

We believe successful inclusion is based on increasing participation by removing barriers, building bridges, and celebrating human diversity.

Centre Code of Conduct

At First Flights Early Learning programs, we strive to provide a safe, caring, learning environment for children, staff, and families. We believe in equality and respect diversity.

Guiding Principles for Appropriate Behaviour

Be Respectful

We are respectful of ourselves and other people. We are respectful of the ideas and feelings of others. We are respectful of the environment, equipment, and materials.

Be Safe

We work and play safely to help keep ourselves and others from getting hurt.

Be Cooperative

We solve our problems by talking and listening to each other respectfully to find a solution. When we cannot solve a problem ourselves, we ask for help.

Be Supportive of Learning

We learn to the best of our abilities and support the learning of others.

Developmental Capabilities of Children

We understand that it is normal for children to display inappropriate behaviour at times for a variety of reasons. The developmental capabilities of each child will always be considered when determining both expectations for behaviour and consequences of inappropriate behaviour.

Appropriate Use of Technology

All children, parents, staff, and others involved in our Centre must use e-mail, electronic devices, and the Internet according to our policies. This protects people's privacy and the confidentiality of information.

Proactive Strategies

We actively strive to create an environment that supports the health, safety, and well-being of the children by:

- Having realistic and developmentally appropriate expectations for behaviour.
- Setting up the environment and materials to encourage appropriate behaviour and reduce potential for inappropriate behaviour.
- Planning a program based on children's interests and developmental needs.

- Establishing consistent yet flexible schedules and routines that help children gain trust, security, and self-control.

We create a positive environment for children, parents, staff, and others involved in our Centre by:

- Developing positive relationships, including making time to talk and listen.
- Establishing clear, consistent, simple limits.
- Stating limits in a positive way and periodically reminding people.
- Providing explanations for limits.
- Working together to solve problems.
- Modelling and encouraging appropriate behaviour.

Parent Code of Conduct

The First Flights Early Learning programs always require the parents of enrolled children to behave in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy, and respect. One of the goals of the Centre is to provide the most appropriate environment in which a child can grow, learn, and develop. Achieving this ideal environment is not only the responsibility of the employees of The First Flights Early Learning programs but is the responsibility of every parent or adult who enters the Centres.

Parents are required to behave in a manner that fosters this ideal environment. Parents who violate the Parent Code of Conduct may have their child care space(s) terminated.

1. Swearing/Cursing

No parent or guardian is permitted to curse or use other inappropriate language on First Flights Early Learning program property at any time, whether in the presence of a child or not. Such language is considered offensive by many people and will not be tolerated. If a parent or guardian feels frustrated or angry, it is more appropriate to verbally express the frustration or anger using non-offensive language. At **NO** time shall inappropriate language be directed toward members of the staff.

2. Threatening of Employees, Children of Other Parents, or Adults Associated with the First Flights Centre

Threats of any kind will not be tolerated. All threats will be reported to the appropriate authorities and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Parents must be responsible for and in control of their behaviour at all times.

3. Confrontational Behaviour with Employees

While it is understood that parents will not always agree with the employees of the First Flights Early Learning programs, it is expected that all disagreements be handled in a calm and respectful manner. Confrontational behaviour includes but is not limited to; being argumentative with employees, speaking to employees in a manner that is harsh or belittling, non-verbal body language such as eye-rolling or hand gestures, and actions that make an employee feel unsafe or can cause harm to another person. Responses to parents being informed that their child is required to be picked up from the program due to illness or behavioural concerns must be met with respectful behaviour and acceptance. Concerns regarding these incidents can be brought to the Child Care Coordinator after the child has been picked up.

Social Media

This social media policy applies to parents, employees, students, and The Board of Directors of The First Flights Early Learning programs.

This policy includes (but is not limited to) the following technologies:

- Social networking sites (i.e., Facebook, Snap Chat, Instagram)
- Blogs
- Discussion forums
- Collaborative online spaces
- Media Sharing services (i.e., You Tube)
- Micro-blogging (i.e., Twitter)

As part of our duty to safeguard children it is essential to maintain the privacy and security of all of our families and employees. We therefore require that:

- No photographs taken within the Centre or at Centre special events and outings with the children, are to be posted for public viewing, except those of your own child.
- Parents are advised that they do not have a right to photograph anyone else's child or to upload photos of anyone else's children. (This excludes those photographs taken by staff for the children's online learning journal, which are sometimes used for display in the setting, for use on The First Flights Centre website and in other advertising material if parental permission is given).
- No public discussions are to be held or comments made on social media sites regarding The First Flights Early Learning programs or First Flights children, staff, or Administrators (except appropriate use for marketing fundraising events) or that could be construed to have any impact on The First Flights Early Learning program's reputation or that would offend any member of staff or parent using the program.
- If a parent names the First Flights Early Learning programs on any social media platform, they must do so in a way that is not detrimental or derogatory to the Centre.
- Parents are not permitted to set-up private or public social media (i.e., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) accounts/groups related to the First Flights Early Learning programs without expressed written consent from the Executive Director.

Violation of the Social Media Policy

Any parent found to be in violation of the above or by posting remarks or comments that breach confidentiality, bring the First Flights Early Learning programs into disrepute or that are deemed to be of a detrimental nature to the First Flights Early Learning programs, its employees, or other children could result in immediate dismissal from the program the child(ren) is enrolled in.

Policy for Handling Parent Concerns

At First Flights Early Learning programs we take parent concerns seriously and strive to ensure parent concerns are addressed in a respectful and timely manner. Parent concerns are generally related to areas that directly relate to their child, but there are times when a parent may have a concern or issue about another child and family in the program or other members of our staff besides the classroom Educators.

When a parent has a concern that directly relates to their child, he/she should first discuss it with their child's classroom Educators. If the Educators and parent cannot resolve the concern together and to the satisfaction of both, the matter should be brought to the attention of the program's Child Care Coordinator. If the Child Care Coordinator and parent cannot resolve the matter together to the satisfaction of both, the matter should be brought to the attention of the Child Care Manager. A three-way conference may be arranged at this time. If a resolution is not reached, the matter will then be brought to the attention of the Executive Director.

When the parent concern involves any other child, family, or other members of our staff, the parent is required to bring their concern to the attention of the Child Care Coordinator or Child Care Manager. At no time should a parent be seeking out or contacting a child, family members of a child, or other members of our staff to directly inform them of the concern or issue.

If parents/guardians have a complaint that involves the safety of the children or a concern about child care practices, you may also contact Child Care Connect at:

General email box cs.childcareconnect@gov.ab.ca
Toll-Free Phone Number 1-844-644-5165

Curriculum Framework Statement

First Flights Early Learning programs utilize FLIGHT - Alberta's Early Learning and Care Framework as a foundation for incorporating curriculum into our early learning and child care programs.

We use curriculum as a way of thinking about what children are doing in relationships of care, play, learning, and development. We embrace children's everyday experiences as the sources of curriculum, meaning making with a focus on the holistic play-based goals:

- well-being,
- play and playfulness,
- communication and literacies,
- and community and social responsibility,

while nurturing children's dispositions to learn:

- I/we are playing and playful,
- I/we are seeking,
- I/we are participating,
- I/we are persisting,
- And I/we are caring.

Educators support the curriculum by valuing each child as a mighty learner and citizen of our early learning environments and use opportunities to learn about what the children know and what they want to know.

Educators will use their knowledge to create safe, positive environments that promote exploration, experimentation, and children's ability to play, be curious, imagine, problem solve, create, and share ideas and information with others. Children will be provided with a rich array of materials including items that are purchased, natural, recycled products, and loose parts. These materials offer children multiple ways to use them in open-ended activities and play experiences, both practical and imaginative.

Children are guided by Educators in their daily interactions with language and role modeling that supports self-regulation skills such as adapting behaviours, building attention span, managing/labelling emotions, and expressing thoughts to what is happening around them both verbally and non-verbally.

Educators keep Centre routines flexible and based on the needs of the children at that time. This allows for enhanced play experiences, giving children time to fully engage with other children, material, Educators, and their environment. Visual schedules outlining the Centre's daily routine are used, allowing children the security of knowing what will come next, as well as the respect and the right to be informed of the events in their day.

Children are supported with opportunities to develop healthy relationships with peers and Educators through having choices about who they interact with and when, knowing that it is alright to have time alone. Educators support the development of emotions and emotional regulation through the practice of labelling emotions children are experiencing and allowing children to express those emotions in a safe, secure, and non-judgmental environment. Children are shown that they are capable, lovable, and belong through the Educator's empathic responses and use of strategies when needed to provide guidance.

Children are provided with experiences to explore the community/world we live in, the differences and uniqueness of all people, and the opportunity to learn about the differences between each other. Educators create environments that are welcoming, support exploration and conversation while observing children for their understanding of the community/world around them. Educators build upon the information gathered from those conversations and observations to help children celebrate the uniqueness and differences of each child.

Educators work within a practice of relationships, encouraging and inviting families to participate in the program, share their cultural practices and traditions while recognizing and respecting the family connection to the well-being and sense of belonging for the children. Educators incorporate materials that are representative of children and families in the environments and play spaces whenever possible.

Educators are supported in their role as being the co-learner, co-researcher, co-imager of possibilities in their daily interactions with children to create responsive environments, co-constructing knowledge together versus transmitting their knowledge to the children. Educators use a process of reflective practice and documentation of learning stories to make children's learning visible in programs. These learning stories are shared with children and their families, giving the children an opportunity to revisit their experiences and celebrate their accomplishments in learning and play.

CENTRE OPERATIONS, ENROLLMENT & FEES

Hours of Operation

The First Flights Early Learning Centre is open 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday to Friday, twelve months of the year. The Centre is closed on all statutory holidays. There is also a two-week period of closure in the last week of December and first week of January.

Exact dates once available will be sent out by October 1st. Written notice of any planned changes in the hours of operation will be given a minimum of five working days in advance of the change whenever possible.

Enrollment and Waiting List

First Flights Early Learning Centre is approved by the Province of Alberta to operate an Early Learning Centre for children under the age of six years. We accept children as young as ten months and up to five years of age.

Parent/guardians can apply to be put on the waiting list. If a family meets the criteria, they will be placed on the waiting list. This does not mean that a space is secured for child care, rather that their child(ren) are on the waiting list. Only after a space is offered, accepted, Registration Forms are completed, and deposit paid is a child considered enrolled in the Early Learning Centre.

Selection process for the Waiting List

There are several factors that determine how a child is selected for the next available space. The criteria for being on the Waiting List includes the priority selection, then application date, date needed and age group availability.

1. Families will be prioritized according to the descending criteria.
 - a) Current First Flights and MFRCS Staff member's child
 - b) Siblings of current children attending
 - c) Dual Military Families
 - d) Defence Team
 - e) Other
2. Application Date for Waiting List - the earlier the date, the higher on the wait list.
3. Date needed for child care - your preferred start date must be within 60 days of when a space is available for you to be offered a space.
4. Age group of available space - staff will work to move existing children to other classrooms to accommodate those next on the waiting list, although staff to child ratios may prevent a space being available at every age level. The wait list will be sorted into three age groups: 10-19 months, 19-36 months, 36 + months.

Process for Accepting a Space by Parent/Guardian

1. If you have been selected for the next space available, you will be contacted by phone and/or email. Once contact has been initiated by First Flights Early Learning Centre staff, the parent/guardian will have until the end of the next business day to respond before the staff will offer the space to the next family.

2. Families may be contacted to accept an opening space up to 60 days prior to their preferred date. If the parent/guardian accepts the offer they will be required to begin to pay for the space when it is open. i.e., a parent/guardian has requested a space for April 1st and a space comes open for March 1st. The parent/guardian, if they accept the space, will begin to pay for the space March 1st, even if the child does not attend.
3. If a family does not reply within five (5) business days after the first notice, they will be removed from the waiting list. They can reapply if they desire.
4. **Children who are not yet 10 months of age.** To provide the 60 days prior acceptance opportunity for parents/guardians to secure a space, parents/guardians will be asked if they would like to opt-into or out of the option to have a space offered 60 days prior to their preferred start date. If parents/guardians choose to opt-in to this option, once a space is offered and accepted, the fee must be paid from the time the space is available to hold the space even though the child cannot attend until they are 10 months old. If parents/guardians choose to opt-out of this option, a space will not be offered until their preferred start date if a space is open at that time. Parents/guardians should select their preferred start date with this in mind.
5. Parents/guardians can change their preferred start date up to 60 days in advance of their last request by emailing the First Flights Child Care Manager. Once a parent/guardian has been contacted with an offer of a space within the 60 days prior to the preferred start date and decline the offer, they will be moved to the bottom of the waitlist in their priority category. If they decline a second offer, they will be removed from the wait list and will need to reapply if they desire.

When a space is available for your child, the parent/guardian and child are requested to come for an orientation interview with the First Flights Child Care Manager, or First Flights Child Care Coordinator. At this time any questions you have will be answered, and both you and your child will have the opportunity to view the Early Learning Centre. **This interview will be scheduled at the parent/guardian's convenience, but it is strongly recommended that the orientation be held prior to your child being registered in the program.**

The First Flights Early Learning Centre Parent Handbook is to be fully read, and the Parent/guardian Contract and Acknowledgement of Understanding and the Registration Form, are to be completed by the parent/guardian and brought to the Centre before the first day your child attends the program. All areas of all forms must be completed for your child to be enrolled. **The deposit and applicable fees must be paid prior to the first day of care or acceptance of the child care space, or care will be denied.**

First Flights Early Learning Centre (Casual – Day Time)

Casual Care Rate **\$58.00** per day for 10–19-month-old children.
 \$47.00 per day for over 19-month-old children.

Requests for casual care can be made over the phone or by email. The availability of casual care is dependent on space availability in the correct age group for your child.

Casual Care fees are due at the time of booking. Parents/guardians will be charged the full casual care daily fee. If the child is picked up early, this will not reduce the fee. To follow Alberta Child Care Licensing Standards, we must always follow an appropriate staff to child ratio. Therefore, the child will be scheduled to attend according to the requested times of care (limited to nine hours) requested at the time of booking. Late pick-up rules (page 6) will apply if the child is not picked up on time.

Once a casual care day is booked and paid for, no refunds will be given.

Child Care Fees

The First Flights Early Learning Centre is a non-profit organization. In the Early Learning Centre, parent/guardian fees pay the expenses to provide child care spaces for each child. The Early Learning Centre budget is prepared for one full year and includes the two (2) week winter closure as well as the costs assessed to the parent/guardian divided into 12 equal monthly payments. **Fees remain in effect regardless of absences due to illness or vacation.**

Our Centre participates in the new Federal-Provincial Child Care Initiative to reduce the monthly fees of child care for all families. We collect the Affordability Grants from Alberta Child Care, which are applied directly to the monthly fee as listed below.

Age	Fee	Affordability Grant	Parent Fees
10 – 19 months	\$1,250.00	-\$883.00	\$367.00
Toddler (under 36 months)	\$1,007.00	-\$709.00	\$298.00
Preschool (36 months & up)	\$1,007.00	-\$626.00	\$381.00

Child Care Subsidy

Families that enroll their child(ren) in a licensed child care program have access to the Alberta Child Care subsidy program. This program covers a portion of child care fees for any families that meet the eligibility requirements. Parents/guardians can visit the Alberta Child Care website at <https://www.alberta.ca/child-care-subsidy> to find further information regarding this program.

It is a parents' responsibility to apply for and manage their child care subsidy at all times, including expiry dates. Once a family receives approval for the child care subsidy and the program receives notification of the approval, including timeframe and amount, it will then be deducted from the monthly child care fee. The parent is responsible for the whole child care fee until such confirmation of approval is received.

If an approved subsidy expires and we have not received notification of a further approval period, the subsidy will be removed from the monthly child care fee and the regular fee payment will be withdrawn. Children who do not meet the required hours of attendance for their full child care subsidy to be paid, will have the amount not covered by the subsidy program added to the child care fee account. Parents will be notified by email of the amount not covered by the subsidy program that is being added to the child care fee account for withdrawal on the next month's fee payment.

Child Care Space Deposit per family - \$500

Upon the acceptance of a space in the Centre, a deposit of \$500.00 needs to be paid to hold the space. This deposit will be held on account until the child care space is terminated with the Centre. If more than one child from the same family attends the Centre, the deposit will be held until the last/youngest child's space is terminated. Once the child care fee account is finalized with the last subsidy payment received from Alberta Child Care, if applicable and is in good standing, the deposit will be refunded to the parent/guardian. If the family does not have an approved subsidy on file, the deposit will be used towards the last month of child care fees.

If the child care fee account is left with a balance owing or any subsidy claims for the child are not fully paid, this deposit will be used to cover those amounts plus any applicable fees. The balance of the deposit will then be refunded to the parent/guardian.

Fee Payment

1. The First Flights Early Learning Centre full-time fees are due on the first business day of the month. Casual care fees are due at the time of booking.
2. Child care fees will be deducted automatically from your chosen bank account. Pre-authorized Debit Agreement Forms are available for you to complete, and a 'VOID' cheque or a Direct Withdrawal Form from your bank must be included. **This will be the only payment method accepted for full-time Early Learning Centre fees.**
3. Families who are applying for subsidies are responsible for paying the full fee in advance until notification of subsidy amount is obtained. Care will not begin until full payment or written notification of subsidy is received.

Requested Times of Care

All families are required to have an up-to-date Requested Hours of Care form on file at all times. All child care spaces are based on a nine (9) hour window of care. We use these timings to ensure the required Educator to child ratio is maintained at all times, so we ask parents to complete the typical drop-off and pick-up times for their child(ren) for each day. If a parent needs to change their requested times of care, please provide two weeks' notice to the Child Care Coordinator for your child's classroom.

If your child needs to be dropped off 15 minutes or more before the scheduled time or picked up later, please provide 48 hours' notice to ensure there will be adequate Educators to meet the required staff to child ratio. If no prior communication has been received from a family for alternate drop-off or pick-up times on any given day, children may not be accepted for care if they are dropped off earlier or parents will be contacted for pick-up if the child is there later than the requested times of care on file. If a parent requires extended hours of care due to his/her work schedule, a request can be made, and an exception may be made.

Returned payments, Late Charges & Outstanding Accounts

1. An NSF fee of \$40.00 will be added to any monthly child care fee that is declined from the financial institution.
2. A notification will be sent by email informing the family that the payment was declined from the bank. It is the responsibility of the parents to keep their email address up to date on the child's registration profile and to check regularly for communication.
3. Payment must be received by the third business day of receiving notice from the MFRCS that the payment was declined. If payment is not received on or before the third business day, the family will be contacted to arrange payment and care will be denied until the declined payment is received.
4. If the account is still outstanding after 30 days, a late payment charge of \$50.00 will be added to the account. The child care space will be terminated.
5. Failure to resolve the outstanding account will result in a late payment charge of \$50.00 being added each month that the account remains in arrears. After 90 days of a parent fee account being in arrears, further action will be taken. The user's account and personal information will be forwarded to a collection agency.

6. If fees are outstanding from one entity under the auspices of the 4 Wing MFRCS, the users will be denied access to any other service, program or activity until the existing outstanding fee is paid or a diligent effort is being made to make payments.

Closures or Diminished Services

There are times that the First Flights Early Learning Centre may have to close or diminish services due to circumstances beyond our control, such as but not limited to; power outages, loss of heat and/or water, sewer issues, pandemic impacts or health related emergencies that affect our ability to maintain adequate child to staff ratios due to significant decrease in staff. Our goal would be to remain as operational as possible, but we may have to look at; closure of a room(s), asking families to pick up children who may be affected by the situation, asking families if they have alternate child care options they can access for a short period of time, or other options that are deemed appropriate for the situation. During these times, we would work closely with the 4 Wing Air Base to access support to reduce the overall impact to all families that use the Early Learning Centre.

In all situations beyond the First Flights Early Learning Services reasonable control, no reimbursement will be given.

Notice of Termination of Enrollment

Should you no longer need child care, the parent/guardian must give one month's written notice as of the end of the month, when withdrawing their child from the program for any reason or there will be a charge for one month's fees of care.

Termination of enrollment notices must be made in writing and emailed to the First Flights Child Care Manager at FF.Manager@4wingmfrcs.com. Termination of care notices will not be accepted if sent through the program communication app (Lillio) as they easily get missed with the volume of communication that is received each day.

Termination of Care

Immediate termination from the Centre will take place under the following circumstances:

- Abuse of any kind against First Flights staff, or children in the Centre.
- The child's ability to cope with the program is showing no signs of adjustment.
- The Early Learning Centre staff is unable to meet the specific demands and/or expectations of the parents/guardians.

PROGRAM POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Court Orders Affecting Enrolled Children

In cases where an enrolled child is the subject of a Court Order (i.e., Custody Order, Restraining Order, or Protection Order) The First Flights Early Learning program the child is enrolled in must be provided with a copy of the most recent Order and all amendments thereto. The Orders of the Court will be strictly followed unless the custodial parent(s) requests a more liberal variation of the Order in writing. In the case where both parents are afforded shared/joint custody by Order of the Court, both parents must sign the request for more liberal interpretation of the Order.

In the absence of a Court Order on file with the First Flights Early Learning program the child is enrolled in, both parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. Any First Flights Early Learning program cannot, without a Court Order, limit the access of one parent by request of the other parent, regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to their child, the First Flights Early Learning program suggests that the parent keep the child with them until a Court Order is issued. If conflicting Court Orders are presented, the most recently dated Court Order will be followed. The First Flights Early Learning program will report any violations of these Orders to the proper authorities.

Attendance

The first month of a child's attendance and participation in the Early Learning Centre is probationary. This enables the First Flights staff, parents/guardians, and children to determine if the Centre setting is the appropriate child care setting for the child. **After the initial probation period, if a child becomes continually aggressive or unmanageable, the probationary period may be reinstated.** A decision to ask the parents/guardians to withdraw their child from the program is always a last resort. This decision will only occur if:

- The child's ability to cope with the program and group care is showing no signs of adjustment.
- the Early Learning Centre staff are unable to meet the specific demands and/or expectations of the parents/guardians.
- The child care fees are not being paid on time.

Arrival, Departure & Notification of Absences

Arrival

Upon arrival at the First Flights Early Learning Centre, everyone, adults, and children, are required to remove their outdoor footwear on the entrance mats. This keeps the Centre floors clean, safe, and free of water, mud, and sand/dirt.

Parents are required to help their child(ren) put away their personal belongings in their assigned cubby and put on their indoor footwear. For safety requirements, it is prohibited to sit children on top of the cubbies for any reason.

The parents or the adult dropping the child off must sign the child into care either using the Centre's electronic screens or paper attendance record. Children are required to be escorted by their parent or the adult dropping them off, to their designated classroom.

Children are required by licensing regulations to be supervised at all times while in the Centre, so parents must ensure children remain with them at all times. It is also recommended that parents do not leave a sibling or other child in the car unattended while they drop off their child.

First Flights Early Learning programs discourage parents from sneaking out of the building in an attempt to avoid separation issues with their child. Some children exhibit separation anxiety when it is time for their parent to leave. First Flights Early Learning programs believe it is best for parents to tell the anxious child upon arrival, that after all of the child's things are put away, the parent will kiss, hug, and say goodbye to the child. This will prepare the child for their departure. The Educator present in the classroom will comfort and assist the child through the anxious time. Parents are asked to leave after saying goodbye. The longer the parent of an anxious child drags out the departure, the more anxiety the child is likely to feel. The Educators and Child Care Coordinators of the programs are available to discuss other options if the child does not settle into the arrival routine after a reasonable period of time. First Flights Early Learning programs do not serve or provide breakfast in the morning. Parents are required to feed their child breakfast prior to arriving at the program.

Notification of Absence

If your child will not be attending the Centre on any given day or will arrive late, please call, send us a message, or use the attendance feature on the program communication app (Lillio) before 9:00 a.m. If your child is ill, we request that you notify the program not only of the absence, but also of the nature of the illness.

Monitoring the expected daily attendance of children allows First Flights staff to manage staffing levels. In order to keep costs low, Educators may take advantage of lower-than-expected attendance to take longer breaks or leave early. **If you arrive after 9:00 am and haven't advised us, we may be forced to turn you away if we do not have enough Educators on site to accommodate the child-to-staff ratio required for your child's age group.**

Departure

The parents or the authorized adult picking up the child off must sign the child out of care either using the Centre's electronic screens or paper attendance record. Once a child is signed out, the parent/authorized adult is then solely responsible for supervising their child while on the First Flights premises. The parent/authorized adult may not allow a child to wander through the hallways, bathrooms, other classrooms and/or playground. Parents or authorized adults are required to assist their child with storing all belongings being left at the Centre in the child's assigned cubby and to remove all items that need taken home, including notes, artwork, dirty/soiled clothing, and any items from home.

Parents are required to sign any incident/accident reports from the day at pick-up. The classroom Educator will be able to briefly discuss the matter with you or another authorized adult at pick-up. However, should you feel it necessary to have an in-depth discussion, it is most appropriate to schedule the discussion for a later date because the Educator is responsible for supervising the remaining children in the classroom. A telephone conference may be scheduled for later in the day or for the next day at nap/rest time.

Release of Children Policy

The First Flights Early Learning Centre staff shall release children in child care only to the parent/guardian or guardian of the child, or to persons designated on the child's registration form. If a parent/guardian wishes to designate any person(s) not identified on the child's registration form to pick up a child, the parent/guardian must communicate this by sending an email to the Child Care Coordinator, sending a message to the Educators through the program communication app (Lillio), or sending a handwritten, signed note at drop-off/pick-up time, to this effect, including appropriate identifying information before release is to take place.

Suspected Intoxication/Drug Abuse

The staff of First Flights Early Learning programs will not release a child to a parent if the parent appears to the staff of the program to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. In such a case, the staff will call the other custodial parent or emergency contact named on the child's registration form, to which they may release the child.

If the parent who is suspected to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol is not willing to cooperate with the staff, the Military Police and/or Alberta Child Intervention will be contacted.

Any other authorized person who attempts to pick-up a child and appears to the staff of the First Flights Early Learning program to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, will be denied access to the child. The staff of the First Flights Early Learning program will contact the child's parents, Military Police, and Alberta Child Intervention to notify them of the situation.

Late Pick Up

To follow Alberta Child Care Licensing Standards, we must always follow an appropriate staff to child ratio. Therefore, the following steps will be taken.

If you have not arrived within 15 mins of your Requested Times of Care and no communication received:

- Educators will call or send a message through the program communication app (Lillio) for an update on pick-up time for your child. They may ask that an alternate person be sent to pick up the child if the appropriate staff to child ratio cannot be met.
- Educators will inform the Child Care Coordinator and if needed, the Child Care Coordinator will review the Requested Times of Care hours with the family to ensure the hours listed are still current.

If you pick up your child late: (after Centre closing at 5:30 p.m.):

1st time: After an initial 15-minute time period, the staff will call the parents/guardians and complete a late pick-up form. If parents/guardians cannot be contacted, the emergency contact person will be called. Should staff be unable to contact any of the listed emergency contacts or the parents by 6:00 p.m., the staff person will inform the Child Care Coordinator or Child Care Manager and then proceed with contacting the Military Police to request assistance in locating the parents/guardians of the child. A 'Late Pick Up' form will be given to the parent/guardian to sign. **A \$20 late pick up fee for every additional 15-minute interval past 5:30 p.m. will be charged.**

2nd time: The above steps will be followed. The First Flights Child Care Coordinator will contact the family to discuss the incident. The First Flights Child Care Manager will be notified.

3rd time: The above steps will be followed. The First Flights Child Care Manager will arrange a meeting to discuss the incident with the family. Care can be denied.

Child Supervision

Children at all times are under supervision that is adequate and effective in ensuring their safety, well-being, and development. Based on Provincial requirements, each child care program will maintain adequate child/staff ratios at all times, both indoors and outdoors, and during field trips.

Staff will become involved and familiar with the children in their care. As children's needs change, effective supervision will also need to change depending on the particular child care setting and ages of children. Staff observes children's play and behaviour directly and by closely monitoring children when carrying out activities that may involve some risk, such as playing near water, or during transition times when children may gather in larger groups.

Staff observes play and anticipate what may happen next in order to assist children and intervene in the event of potential danger. Head counts will be done periodically including during transition times, when children are taken outside or when children leave and return to the facility.

Child Guidance Policy

In all First Flights Early Learning Services, children's behaviour will be guided in a positive manner while maintaining a safe, healthy, respectful environment, and adhering to Provincial Child Care Licensing Regulations.

Staff will use preventive strategies to guide children's behaviour:

- State limits in a positive, rather than negative way.
- Focus on the behaviour rather than the child.
- Staff members are to be consistent in following through when limitations are not met.
- Positive redirection and positive reinforcement are two behaviour guidance strategies which may be used.

Staff will intervene promptly when aggressive actions or bullying occurs, or if a child is endangering him/herself or others by:

- Gaining a child's attention in a respectful way by using proximity and touch.
- Removing from activity or Centre.
- Acknowledging feelings, distract or redirect when appropriate.
- Depending on age and developmental level of child, the behaviour is discussed, and staff and child problem solve together.

Physical punishment, verbal or physical degradation, emotional deprivation, and time out is not allowed by staff. Staff must not deny or threaten to deny any basic necessity. Any form of physical restraint, confinement or isolation must not be used as a form of discipline (only on rare occasions if it is for the safety of a child).

Parents/guardians are asked to abide by the policy when they are in the facility.

In cases where the behaviour by one child interferes with the safety and well-being of other children or staff, the following procedure is followed:

1. An incident report is completed by a room staff member. The incident is reviewed with parents at pick-up time and signed. Staff will discuss strategies for managing the behaviour with the parent. The report then goes to the First Flights Coordinator/Manager for review and is then placed in the child's file.
2. Another incident report will be filled out by room staff. The report will be reviewed with parents at pick up time and signed. Staff will further discuss strategies for managing the behaviour with the parents. The report then goes to the First Flights Child Care Coordinator/Manager for review and is then placed in the child's file.
3. Another incident report will be completed by a room staff member, and he/she will personally review the incident with the First Flights Child Care Coordinator/Manager. Dependent on the behaviour, the Child Care Coordinator/Manager will contact the parents to discuss behaviour, advise parents that the behaviour will be monitored closely, and that if the child continues to interfere with the safety and well-being of others, the parents will need to meet with the Management team to discuss further actions. This may include the possibility of the parents being asked to withdraw the child from the program. The report will be signed by all parties and placed in the child's file.

First Flights Early Learning Services reserves the right to withdraw a child if the safety of another child has been compromised, or the program as a whole has been affected by a child's inappropriate behaviour. However, all efforts to set the child up for success will be exhausted and all other options, where there are any, will be made available to the parents before this action is taken.

Aggressive Behaviour

Aggression can be part of a child's behaviour when he/she becomes frustrated or angered. Should your child have an aggressive episode involving another child or staff member:

1. He/she will be removed from the group for the safety of all involved and given time to calm down in a safe environment. The Educator will inform the Child Care Coordinator and request assistance if required. If the child is unable to calm down and safety is still a concern, the parent/guardian will be called to pick the child up.
2. Parents will be notified of the incident, including what guiding behaviour strategies were used, how the child/ren is/are feeling, and how/if the incident was resolved. Incident report will be completed, signed by parents and a copy will be placed in child's file and given to parents.

If the situation does not improve:

1. The parents may be asked to remove the child from the program for the day.
2. First Flights management team will meet with parents to discuss behaviours and possible avenues of support for the child. This may include referrals to community resources or health professionals, meeting with the MFRCS Family Liaison Officer.

We believe that every child has a right to feel safe at First Flights Early Learning Services programs. We also feel that all staff have the right to feel safe from harm during their workday. It is our collective responsibility to support and ensure the safety of all children and staff so when a child's aggression **becomes habitual and constantly disrupts the activities and routines of the day**, either by taking staff time away from others, or making other children afraid, then we need to review our capabilities.

First Flights Early Childhood Educators are not designed to, nor equipped for, dealing with habitually, physically aggressive children. At this point, **the aggressive behaviour may result in the permanent withdrawal of your child from the program.**

If a child needs to be withdrawn, the decision to refund the parent will be at the discretion of the First Flights Management Team along with the Executive Director.

Biting

Biting can be a normal behaviour based on the developmental age and level of the child. Children bite in order to cope with a challenge or fulfill a need. For example, a child may be biting to express a strong feeling (like frustration), communicate a need for personal space (maybe another child is standing too close) or to satisfy a need for oral stimulation.

When biting occurs at the First Flights Early Learning Centre,

- A staff member will stop the action quickly and will tell the child that this is not acceptable behaviour.
- The bite will be washed with mild soap and water and covered if needed.
- The parent/guardian of both children involved will be notified of the incident by the completion of a written incident report. If the skin is broken, the parent/guardian of the child that has been bitten will be called, the parent/guardian of the child who bit will also be called. It is recommended that all human bites that break the skin should be seen by a doctor.
- The identity of each child will be kept confidential.

Staff will try their best to understand the underlying cause of the biting and develop effective responses. They will then work with parents to ensure the same consistent messages and actions are being used by both parties in all environments. This makes it more likely to be successful in eliminating the behavior as learning a new behaviour in place of the biting takes time and consistency.

Child Abuse Reporting Protocols

Under the provision of the Child, Youth, and Family Enhancement Act, any person who suspects, or is party to any conversation or behaviour that leads them to suspect that a child may be abused or neglected has a moral, ethical, and legal obligation to report the matter immediately to the Child and Family Services Authority.

The staff of First Flights Early Learning programs are not required to discuss their suspicions with parents prior to reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities, nor are they required to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behaviour, or condition prior to making a report. The Child, Youth, and Family Enhancement Act is designed to protect the welfare and best interest of all children.

This information is included during the First Flights Child Abuse Reporting Protocol training workshops which are scheduled at least twice a year.

Managing Ill Children

Due to the nature of their play and their lower resistance to infection, children are generally more susceptible to illness. Alberta Early Learning and Child Care Regulation 8(1) states, when a staff member knows or has reason to believe that a child is exhibiting signs or symptoms of illness, the First Flight ELC must ensure:

- That the child's parent arranges for the immediate removal of the child from the Early Learning Centre.
- That the child must not return to the program until the program is satisfied that the child no longer poses a health risk.

Parents are required to notify their child's Educators or the Child Care Coordinator if their child is sick and the nature of the sickness by 9:00 a.m. each day.

A **sick child** is defined as a child who is **unable to participate** in the Early Learning Centre Program because he/she is:

- Vomiting, has a fever, diarrhea or a new unexplained rash or cough.
- Requires greater attention than can be provided without compromising the care of other children in the program.
- Displays any other illness or symptom that a staff member knows or believes may indicate the child poses a health risk to persons on the program's premises.

Once having determined that a child needs to be sent home due to illness, the child's educator will contact the parent and:

- The **child's parent/guardian** arranges for the **immediate** (defined as within 30 minutes of initial contact) removal of the child from the program premises.
- While waiting for the parent/guardian's arrival, the sick child will be kept comfortable and must be kept as far away as is practical from the other children and directly supervised by a primary staff member or provider.
- An illness form will be completed by staff, signed by parents, and kept on site in the child's locked file.
- The child does not return to the program until the child no longer poses a health risk to persons on the program premises or if the parent/guardian provides a physician note indicating the child does not pose a health risk to the persons on the program premises.
- Medical assistance will be obtained when necessary. Parents/guardians are responsible for paying any medical expenses incurred.
- If the child's illness requires emergency health care and/or requires the child to remain in the hospital overnight, the First Flights Child Care Manager and/or the MFRC's Executive Director will be notified immediately, and the Accident/Serious Illness policy will be implemented including notifying the Children's Services' licensing office by completing the incident reporting form for submission.

Children not in attendance due to illness must be kept home **for the day of onset of illness and the entire day following onset. Any child must have symptoms resolved for a complete 24 hours before returning to the program.**

Common illness conditions that require exclusion from the program but are not limited to the following:

- **High Temperature:** When a child's temperature reaches 38.1 C, parents will be contacted to pick up the child. **If your child requires Tylenol or Advil to control a fever, they are not to attend the child care centre.**
- **Undiagnosed Skin Rash/Skin Condition:** The rash must be diagnosed, and proper treatment begun.
- **Diarrhea:** A change in the normal pattern of bowel movements, resulting in a substantial increase in the number of stools and change in consistency of the stools to watery or unformed. After the second incident within a period during the day, staff must send the child home. Staff may ask that the child is taken home after the first incident if accompanied by other signs of illness. (Infants will be considered on an individual basis and will be at the discretion of Infant Educator and Child Care Coordinator)
- **Vomiting:** The child must be taken home after the second incident in one day. Staff may ask that the child be taken home after the first incident if accompanied by other signs of illness. (infants will be considered on an individual basis and will be at the discretion of the Infant Educator and the Child Care Coordinator)
- **Conjunctivitis (commonly known as Pink Eye):** Can affect one or both eyes, children can experience redness and/or itchiness in one or both eyes, have a discharge in one of both eyes, tearing and sensitivity to light. Staff will ask for the child to be taken home when one or more of these symptoms are present.
- **Ear Infections:** A very common illness in children. Child may show signs such as pain, fever, fussiness, tugging on ears, and fluid or blood coming from the ears. Staff may ask for the child to be taken home when the child is presenting with symptoms and requires greater attention than can be provided without compromising the care of other children in the program.
- **Common Cold:** Contagious viral infection of the nose and throat, symptoms include stuffy and/or runny nose, sneezing, cough, fever, sore throat, and/or decreased appetite. Staff will ask for the child to be taken home if they have a fever, a persistent cough (cough may include choking or vomiting), if other symptoms present are excessive and/or if the child requires greater attention than can be provided without compromising the care of other children in the program.
- **Impetigo:** A common and highly contagious skin infection that usually appears as reddish sores/blisters on the face especially around the nose and mouth and on the hands and feet that ooze fluid and form patches of crusty sores that may look yellow, gold, or brown. Staff will ask for the child to be taken home when one or more of these symptoms are present.
- **Croup:** Is a common contagious viral infection that causes noisy breathing, a raspy, hoarse voice, and a barking cough in young children. Staff will ask for the child to be taken home when one or more of these symptoms are present.

Communicable Disease Outbreak: An outbreak occurs when there are more cases of a communicable disease than are normally expected in a specific time and place. Child Care operators are responsible to protect the health of children under their care, and staff working in their facilities. Child Care facilities are required to report outbreaks and other communicable diseases to Alberta Health Services (AHS). AHS collaborates with child care facilities to prevent an outbreak of disease and responds when notified of potential outbreaks. This includes preventing the spread of respiratory, gastrointestinal (GI), rash, and any other unusual illnesses identified within a child care facility. Further guidance will be provided to families on when it is safe for your child to return to care in these situations.

Accident/Serious Illness Policy

In the case of accident or serious illness in the Early Learning Centre:

1. A staff member or support staff with First Aid/CPR will attend to the child and ensure that the child receives medical assistance.
2. The child's parent or guardian will be promptly notified.
3. An ambulance will be called if necessary and the child will be taken to the hospital in the ambulance. A staff member or support staff with First Aid/CPR will accompany the child in the ambulance and until such time as the parent/guardians are in attendance.
4. Parent/guardians are responsible for paying any medical expenses incurred including ambulance fees.
5. Incident/Accident forms will be completed by a staff member; these stay in the children's locked file at the program.

All First Flights Early Learning Centre Staff in our Centre are expected to hold a valid First Aid/CPR certificate or to obtain one within three months of employment.

Prescription Medications

Administration of medication to a child can only occur where written consent of the child's parent/guardian is obtained prior to administration.

Prescription medications must have the following information clearly visible on the label:

1. child's name
 2. name of medication
 3. date prescription issued
 4. doctor's name
 5. pharmacist's name
 6. dosage amount and frequency (i.e., 3 x daily)
- No prescription will be given to a child if it is old medication leftover from a previous illness.
 - No prescription medication will be given unless it is in the original prescription container.
 - No medication will be given to a child if the parent/guardians' written consent does not match the label directions without a doctor's note.
 - All medication will be stored in a locked container that is inaccessible to children.
 - Medication that may be needed in an emergency is stored in a place that is inaccessible to children.

Lice Policy

If a parent/guardian reports that a child has a confirmed case of lice, the child will not be permitted back into the program until there are no lice or nits (eggs) in the child's hair. The child must not return to the program for a period of 48 hours from the time of pick up. Parents/guardians will be informed through information sheets from the Health Unit and by discussion with the program staff as to what steps they must take to ensure the child is free of lice and nits prior to returning. Checks of the child's hair will be completed by staff prior to the child entering the program area. Letters and information from the Health Unit will be sent home to all parent/guardians informing them of the confirmed case of lice.

If program staff suspects a child has a case of lice or nits, the staff will conduct a check of the child's hair. If lice or nits are found, the child is immediately removed from the vicinity of other children and the parent/guardian will be called to pick him/her up immediately. The child must not return to the program for a period of 48 hours from the time of pick up. The staff will do a check of each child's hair that would have come into contact with the child in the service.

Mixed Age Group Policy

Within our Early Learning Centre's, we have three individual programs operating. The infants (10 – 19 months), toddlers (19 months up to 3-year-olds), and the preschoolers (3 years and up). During the majority of the day, these groups of children are separate but there are times when children from one program may join a group in one of the other two programs.

- When Centre operations require two age groups to be together in a classroom, (for example older toddlers who are not yet three years of age with preschoolers who are three years of age), Educator to child ratios will be determined by the age of the majority of children present in the classroom. Materials and toys will meet the developmental needs of both age groups.
- Before 8:00 a.m. and after 4:30 p.m., we combine age groupings of children to wait for Educators to come in to start their shift or allow Educators who have completed their shift for the day to leave. This may be infants and toddlers mixed and/or toddlers and preschoolers mixed. Educator to child ratios will always be determined by the age of the majority of children present in the classrooms.
- When required, an infant, toddler, or preschooler may have to join another play group, for example when the program is short an Educator for a period of time or entire day and the Educator to child ratios cannot be met in the classroom. When this occurs, the child is always moved to the next closest age group. For example, the oldest infant is moved to a toddler play group, the youngest toddler moved to the infant play group or oldest toddler moved to the preschool group and the youngest preschooler moved to the toddler play group.
- Whenever possible, a child who has an identified allergy or medical condition will not be moved from their usual classroom unless one of his/her main Educators is moving as well.

Physical Activity and Outdoor Play

First Flights programs believe that outdoor play is a vital part of the children's day. Research suggests that children learn best through play, and the best place for play is outdoors where children connect with nature, explore their physical abilities, spark their curiosity, and develop a sense of place and belonging in the world.

The children at the Early Learning Centre play outdoors nearly every day, children will remain indoors only in cases of extreme weather. **If your child is too sick to go outside, they are too sick to come to the program.** If your child is not dressed appropriately for outdoor play, you will be called to drop off appropriate items or to pick up your child. Parents/guardians are required to ensure that their child is dressed appropriately for all weather conditions:

1. Winter: warm lined boots, toque, scarf, snow pants, warm coat, snowsuit, mittens, sweater or sweatshirt, complete change of clothing.
2. Spring/Autumn: hat, raincoat, "puddle" pants, rubber boots, complete change of clothing, sweater or sweatshirt.

3. **Summer:** sun hat (not “visor”), sunscreen, long sleeve shirt, complete change of clothes, t-shirts, shorts, lightweight long pants, bathing suit and towel.

We will be using the “Get Outside and Play - Outdoor Play Recommendations for Child Care Settings in Alberta” and the “Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guideline for The Early Years” guidelines as a guide for physical activity and outdoor play in our early learning and child care programs.

The Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines offer clear recommendations for physical activity:

- Infants (Less than 1 year) being physically active several times in a variety of ways, particularly through interactive floor-based play—more is better. For those not yet mobile, this includes at least 30 minutes of tummy time spread throughout the day while awake.
- Toddlers (1-2 years) get least 180 minutes spent in a variety of physical activities at any intensity, including energetic play, spread throughout the day—more is better.
- Preschoolers (3-4 years) get at least 180 minutes spent in a variety of physical activities spread throughout the day, of which at least 60 minutes is energetic play—more is better.
- School-Age (5-12 years) - need at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity each day.

Educators will incorporate The Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines into their daily plans for children while in attendance at our program. This guideline will be met with both indoor and outdoor physical activity opportunities.

Research shows that children move more and sit less when they play outside. Increasing outdoor time will increase physical activity. First Flights programs will use the Get Outside and Play - Outdoor Play Recommendations for Child Care Settings in Alberta as a guide for daily outdoor play time:

- **Infants** - 0–12-month-olds will get outside two times a day, 30 minutes each period.
- **Toddlers** - 13–24-month-olds will be outside two to three times a day for a minimum total of 90 minutes, minimum 45 minutes each period.
- **Preschoolers** - 2–5-year-olds will be outside two to three times a day for a minimum total of 120 minutes, minimum 60 minutes each period.
- **School Age**
 - 5–12-year-olds - Regular school days will be outside one to two times a day for a total of 60 minutes, minimum 30 minutes each period
 - 5–12-year-olds - No school days will be outside two to three times a day for a total of 180 minutes, minimum 90 minutes each period

Weather Conditions

While attending a First Flights program, children will not be taken outside when the weather conditions are a threat to the health & safety of the children.

Sun Safety

The following precautions are in place at First Flights programs to prevent children from overexposure to the sun:

- Time outdoors will be limited between the hours of 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
- Sunscreen will be applied to children prior to their time outdoors (parent must provide for their child)

- Children will be provided with water to drink during their time outdoors.
- While outdoors, shaded areas of play will be provided for the children.

Wind Chill/Cold Temperatures

If the temperature is -25 degrees Celsius or colder, including the Wind Chill Factor, all children will remain indoors for Gross Motor Play.

- If the temperature is between -20 to -24 degrees Celsius, including the Wind Chill Factor, the amount of time children will play outside will be reduced.
- Children under the age of 19 months will stay indoors for gross motor play when the temperature is higher than -15 degrees Celsius, including the Wind Chill Factor.

Air Quality Index

The air quality index will be taken into consideration during times of outdoor play when the air quality index rating is considered high. As air quality index conditions being experienced at any given time can fluctuate throughout the day, the decision about outdoor play time will be made based off the conditions being experienced in the outdoor environment at our Centre locations when children are planning to go outside for any potential health hazards. When conditions are not suitable for children to be outside, then outdoor play time will be re-scheduled.

Field Trips and Outings

Field trips are a part of the Centre's enhanced programming component. Families will be informed of field trips and outings by a letter handed out in advance, a posted letter in the Centre, or by distribution of consent forms. Consent forms must be signed by you if you would like your child to attend the field trip. **If the consent form is not signed prior to the trip, you will be called to pick up your child.** Children are prepared before every outing: reminding them of the rules, the adults in charge, and emergency procedures. **Parents/guardians may be asked to volunteer as additional supervision. Parents/guardians are welcome to accompany us on all field trips.** Staff will take portable records for all children on all field trips and outings.

Rest Time

The children are active from the time they arrive at the Centre until they sit down for lunch. Most of the children become tired and need a period of time to rest. Therefore, if a child falls asleep during rest time it usually indicates that the child is physically in need of sleep and the staff will not force the child to stay awake.

Cot and crib sheets are provided by the Centre. Sheets and blankets are washed weekly, and cots are sanitized after each use.

Children who no longer require afternoon naps will join the non-napping group of children to be taken to a different space when possible or be allowed to do quiet activities in the classroom.

Our programs rest or quiet time is between 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. (depending on the room they are in). We ask that families **avoid dropping off or picking up** their children from 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m., as this can become very disruptive to the other children in the program.

Toilet Training

The Centre is ready to work cooperatively with parents when your child is ready to start toilet training. A child may be ready to start toilet training when he/she:

- Knows he is “going to the bathroom.”
- Can tell you that she needs to “go.”
- Can take down and pull up his pants.
- Can understand simple instructions.
- Wakes up with a dry diaper.
- Can stand up and sit down by herself.

Most children are ready to begin toilet training when they are between two (2) and three (3) years old, but every child is different.

- The Centre will take your child to the toilet at scheduled times of the day for training. The Educator will praise the child’s success and change any accidents in a positive manner while reminding them to go on the toilet.
- The parents will be asked to keep their child in disposable diapers or pull-ups (that can be redone up at the sides) until the child has shown that they can be successful in their training at the Centre.
- Many children will take longer to be successful in the busy Child Care Centre than at home.
- Accidents are common until about five years of age. Do not punish shame or blame the child.
- Parents of children in **diapers and pull-ups** are responsible to bring these supplies.

Kissing Policy

In the First Flights Early Learning Centre, staff are to make every effort not to kiss children as this could lead to the spread of disease. Other methods of showing warmth should be attempted such as hugging the children.

Clothing/Items from Home

Children are involved in many types of play and activities throughout their day at the program both indoors and outdoors, some of these activities can be messy and dirty while some require children to be active and moving lots. We ask that children be dressed in seasonally appropriate, comfortable clothing each day. The Early Learning Centre will not be responsible for any stains, tears, or dirt on children’s clothing.

All items brought from home must be labelled with your child’s name, including all clothing items, outdoor wear, footwear, food containers, lunch bags, water bottles and nap blankets. First Flights Early Learning programs are not responsible for lost or stolen articles, please label well.

- Children must at all times have a complete change of clothing available at the Early Learning Centre (shirt, pants, underwear, socks and running shoes).
- Children who are not fully toilet trained are required to have a sufficient supply of diapers and wipes at the Centre at all times.
- A pair of shoes are required for indoor play.

- During the warmer months, sunscreen, bug spray, hat, bathing suit, and towel are required to be kept at the Centre for outdoor play.
- All children must bring a labeled water bottle each day to use for water. These will be sent home at the end of each day to be cleaned and sanitized appropriately.
- Upon enrollment each child that naps must provide a labeled blanket to remain at the Centre. The First Flights Early Learning Centre staff will launder and care for it, ensuring that it is kept exclusively for your child.
- The Early Learning Centre has an adequate supply of toys. It is **not recommended that children bring toys from home to Centre**. If your child brings an item to the centre, it will be placed in the child's backpack or cubby for home time.

Snack/Lunch Policy

The Early Learning Centre provides two nutritious snacks - morning (8:30 a.m.) and afternoon (2:30 p.m.) as well as lunch at 11:15 a.m. for infants and toddlers, and at 11:45 a.m. for preschool-aged children. Children must be in attendance at the Centre during these times to participate in snacks or lunch.

Food items on the menu are based off four food categories – vegetables and fruit, protein/meat, dairy/alternatives, and grains. Snacks have a minimum of two food groups and lunches have all four food groups.

The manner in which children are fed is appropriate to their age and level of development, by regulation all children are required to be seated while eating. Each serving is small enough so that children can experience the success of finishing their meal and provide them the opportunity to practice asking for more. Children are encouraged to taste each of the foods that are served but will not be forced to eat.

If the menu contains an item that your child cannot eat due to the age of infant, an allergy, food sensitivity, or family preference, an alternate item must be sent in its place. Educators will contact a family to bring an alternate if one is not provided for the day. Families of infants and/or toddlers are required to provide all bottles of milk/formula.

No beverages will be given to napping children. Infants having a bottle prior to nap time will be given it while they are seated or will be held by Educators during that time.

Food From Home Policy

All containers with food, cups, and bottles brought to the Centre must be labelled clearly with your child's name. Items that are not labelled cannot be served to your child. If a family chooses to provide alternate snacks and/or lunches from home for their child, we ask that any snacks and/or lunches provided meet the same food groups as our Centre provided menu - vegetables and fruit, protein/meat, dairy/alternatives, and grains. Two food groups for snacks and all four food groups for lunch. A healthy drink must also be sent. Some foods present more of a choking hazard in young children, so we ask that all fruits and vegetables are cut into appropriate bite sized pieces for your child (i.e., mini carrots or grapes cut in half lengthwise).

Nutrition Guidelines

- Drinks – please send water, milk, flavoured milk, or 100% fruit juice – no pop or Kool-Aid please.
- Foods – please do not send any products containing nuts, candy, gum, chocolate covered items such as granola bars or wagon wheels, gummies, or sweets – we like to reserve sweets for special celebrations.

Foods containing peanut or nut products are **NOT** permitted at First Flights Early Learning Centre, First Flights Pre-school, and First Flights Out of School Care.

If a child arrives with peanut or other nut products the parent/guardian will be called to provide a nut free alternative for their child.

When providing baking for the Centre for parties, your child's birthday, or fundraisers please remember that foods containing peanuts or other nut products are not permitted in the First Flights Early Learning Centre. This allows for a safer environment due to the severity of these allergies.

Allergies/Anaphylaxis (Life-Threatening Allergies Policy/ Individual Medical Needs)

if needed, the supplemental forms for allergies and medical conditions must be completed

First Flights Early Learning Centre strives to provide an environment that reduces the risk of exposure to allergens and anaphylactic agents, but even despite our best efforts it is not possible to provide an environment that is guaranteed to provide no exposure to an allergen. The following procedures will be followed in our Centre:

- Parents/guardians will inform the Centre in writing on the enrollment form of any serious medical conditions or if the child is at risk of anaphylaxis.
- A list of known allergies of enrolled children will be posted in classrooms and portable child records.
- Educators and kitchen staff will be informed of the foods/causative agents. Depending on the severity of that allergen, these items may not be used in food prepared for the Centre if possible.
- Parents will be notified of any foods/causative agents that are not allowed in the Centre.
- The parent/guardian of an enrolled child with an anaphylactic allergy or serious medical condition will assist with the development of an Individual Health Care Plan and Emergency Response Plan for their child. This is important as it notifies all staff on the proper procedures and responses to your child's health needs, especially in the event of an emergency.
- All staff employed in the Centre will participate in an annual review on the use of Epi-pens and inhalers as well as review on how to handle seizures. Any other medical conditions will be reviewed on an individual basis and specific training will be provided if required.

Special Events

Special parties are planned by the staff for holidays and other celebrations. For these events, parents/guardians are requested to send in a snack for all children for the afternoon snack. The Centre staff will work with you to determine what to bring. When volunteering for this it is asked that you keep allergies in mind. Staff can assist you in finding out what allergies are present.

Each child's birthday is celebrated at the Centre. Parents/guardians are welcome to send a special birthday treat for their child and classmates. The birthday treat is usually eaten as the afternoon snack. Parents/guardians are encouraged to join the children if they are able.

First Flights Early Learning Centre /Volunteer Screening Policy

All staff and volunteers working directly with children and/or vulnerable people will have a Criminal Record Check and a Children & Family Services Authority Intervention Record Check completed at the onset of employment and a mandatory update every three years.

Personnel Policy

The MFRC Board of Directors has adopted the Canadian Forces Personnel Support Agency Human Resources Policy and Procedures in its entirety.

All First Flights Early Learning Centre staff hold a Level One Early Childhood Educator, Level Two Early Childhood Educator or Level Three Early Childhood Educator certificate. They also must have a First Aid Certificate or are required to have one within three months of employment.

Smoking/Vaping

No person is allowed to smoke or vape on the Centre's premises. At no time will any staff member be allowed to smoke or vape where child care is being provided.

Boundaries

We strive to have close yet professional relationships with the families that we serve. Please respect the personal boundaries of Management and Early Childhood Educators by not asking to "friend" or follow them on social media sites or asking for their cell phone or home phone numbers.

Photography/Videography Policy

Photographs and videos are an important way of documenting your child's experiences in our programs. Please only take videos/photos of your child at any time in attendance at our Centres, including any special events that families are invited to attend. Taking photos or videos of other children **is strictly prohibited** and may result in a restriction of all photography/ videography in our Centres. Posting videos/photos of other children on social media is also strictly prohibited for safety/security reasons. Please be aware of who may be in your photo/video before you shoot.

Building and Emergency Procedures

1. Fire drills are practiced on a monthly basis to prepare the children for such an event. Fire Drills are conducted at various times during the day, including during the rest period. Educators and children will exit through the nearest exit door and proceed to the muster point at the Canex Mall, attendance will be taken once there. If a parent/guardian is in the Centre at the time of a Fire Drill, the parent/guardian is also required to actively participate in the drill. If a parent/guardian arrives at the Centre while the children are going outside or are waiting outside for clearance to return to the building, the parent/guardian may not enter the building in advance of the children. The Fire Safety Checklist is posted beside the fire extinguisher in the cubby area.
2. Other emergency drills such as lockdown and shelter-in-place drills are practiced periodically. These drills are practiced in a manner to best avoid upsetting the children in the classroom. Educators will inform parents through a message on the program communication app (Lillio) that a drill was practiced on the day of. If a parent/guardian is in the Centre at the time of a lockdown or shelter-in-place drill, the parent/guardian is also required to actively participate in the drill.
3. In the event of a power outage, loss of water, or sewer back-up, the following guidelines are implemented:
 - If the power outage lasts for more than one hour, the building loses heat, and the emergency lights go off. The Early Learning Centre staff will notify the parent/guardian by telephone that they must pick up their child as soon as possible, and not more than one hour after the call is placed. In the summer when the weather is nice and we can run the program outside, an exception may be considered.
 - If the Wing Commander orders a stand down due to a power outage, all parents/guardians are required to pick up their children within one hour of the start of the stand down.
 - If water is cut off for more than an hour, unsanitary conditions arise. Personal hygiene cannot be maintained. Every effort will be made to relocate, however if this is not possible, the parent/guardian will be called to pick up their children.

Staff will take portable records for all children in the event of an emergency evacuation.

Parent/Guardian Expectations

1. Notify a staff member when your child arrives and when your child leaves the Centre.
2. Remember to sign your child in and out on the attendance record each day.
3. Please drop off/pick up your child according to your Requested Times of Care. If your child is not picked up within 15 minutes of your requested time for care, staff will follow the Late Pick-up Policy.
4. Inform the First Flights Child Care Manager or Coordinator if another person will be picking up your child. Children are not released to any person other than those indicated on their authorized pick-up list. Please inform any new pick-up persons to bring a piece of picture ID.
5. Let your child's Educators know of any situations at home that may cause your child to behave differently than usual (lack of sleep, parent/guardian out of town, death in the family).
6. Please notify the Centre if your child will be absent or arriving later than usual. It is very important that you drop your child off at the Centre before 9:00 a.m. to account for lunch and staff ratios. If you arrive late and haven't advised us, we may be forced to turn you away if we do not have enough Educators on site to accommodate the child-to-staff ratio required for your child's age group.
7. Update the child's information records every six months. These are used in offsite trips, or excursions, or in the event of an emergency. It is crucial that we have the most up-to-date information possible.

8. If your child will be away from the Centre for an extended period of time, please let us know at least two weeks in advance. Fees remain in effect regardless of absences due to illness or vacation.
9. Parents are asked to have reliable and accessible alternate care for their child at all times. This person should be the first person listed as the emergency contact person.
10. Please fill out all forms accurately so that we may reach you if necessary. It is very important that we are aware of any changes such as change in address, phone, emergency contact, etc. Parents should inform the Centre if they will be away from their place of employment or out of town at any given time. We must have a way of contacting you if there ever was an emergency.

Lines of Communication

The First Flights Early Learning Centre maintains open lines of communication with families, children, staff members, schools, and community members. Parents/guardians are requested to notify the staff of any emotional upset or accident the child has experienced prior to their arrival. This will enable the staff to deal more effectively with their behaviour.

Parent/Guardian Contract and Acknowledgement of Understanding

I,

(Parent or Guardian name)

have read and understood the policies and procedures outlined in the First Flights Early Learning Centre Parent Handbook, and have received an orientation to the Centre that applies to my child:

(Child's name)

I have also been given the opportunity to ask questions and have been notified that I can communicate with the staff any future questions or concerns that may arise.

Signed:

(Parent or Guardian signature)

(Date)

(First Flights Child Care Coordinator signature)

(Date)