

Friends Together Childcare Cooperative

Family Handbook

Revision October 2024



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Friends Together Childcare

Mission Statement

Since its opening in 1980, Friends Together Childcare has had the joy of providing quality and affordable childcare to thousands of children and families in Saskatoon. Please take a moment to review our mission statements so you know where our values lie.



At Friends Together we,

Teach children through play and exploration;

Encourage our children to Appreciate and Respect the Diverse Nature of Humanity and the Environment;

Believe in Tolerance, Inclusion, and Open-Mindedness;

Encourage Co-operation more than Competition;

Listen and Respect each other's Thoughts and Opinions

Resolve disagreements or misunderstandings by clarifying the situation with Logic and Empathy;

Encourage children to become Responsible for their actions by using a system of Logical Consequences;

Provide a Nurturing, Safe Environment and the opportunity for each child to develop to their fullest potential. This includes socially, emotionally, creatively, physically, and cognitively through a balanced program of activities and nutrition.



Hours of Operation

Monday to Friday, 7:00 am – 5:45 pm

Friends Together Childcare Cooperative is closed for all **Statutory holidays**. If a Statutory holiday falls on a Saturday, we are closed the previous Friday. If it falls on a Sunday, we are closed the following Monday, thank you.

Our center closes at 5:45 pm. Parents are encouraged to arrive by 5:30 pm to have enough time to dress their child and pick up any items needed (water bottle, clothing, blanket, craft items). If an unforeseen matter arises, please contact the center well before 5:30 pm to let them know you are running behind a few minutes.

After 5:45 pm, you are considered late.

The following fees will be charged when a child is picked up late:

1. Between 5:45 pm and 6:00 pm, a late charge of **\$40**
2. Between 6:01 pm and 6:15 pm, a late charge of **\$50**

Upon pickup of your child, you will be asked to fill out a late slip. The late slip will include the time you picked up your child and the fee amount you will be charged. A copy of it will be kept in your file. The late fee must be paid before you bring your child to the Childcare Centre again. Families cannot accumulate late fees on their account.

If at 6:15 pm, you or your emergency contact person(s) cannot be reached, your child will be taken to the Saskatoon Crisis Nursery. An additional \$1 per minute will be added onto the \$40 until your child has been transported to Crisis Nursery.

Fees and Payments

We accept children aged 18 months up to 7 years, a child is no longer eligible for the parent reduction program after 6 years of age. (families still receive funding for the month the child turns six, their birth date month)

Parent fee: \$217.50/month or \$10/day (child attends less than 10 days per month)

Toddler age -	(19 mos. – 30 mos.)	\$845.18 per month
Preschool/School-age -	(31 mos. – 72 mos.)	\$787.03 per month

The Ministry of Education will provide fee increases to help support inflationary costs. A one-month advance notice will be sent to families, please note a fee increase will not affect your parent portion of \$217.50/month.

Security Deposit: Families must pay a security deposit of \$200 to secure their childcare space. The Deposit is 100% refundable when you withdraw your child from the centre (or you can opt to use the reimbursement as part of last months fee).

Membership Fee: Families must pay a one-time, non-refundable membership fee of \$100. Funds will go towards covering administration costs, as well as costs for outings, programming activities at the daycare centre (Balloon artists, puppet shows, magicians, other events) throughout your child's time at the Cooperative. This fee is not optional and is not refundable under any circumstances.

Drop-in Fee: \$50 per day (Families must call in advance for spacing availability)

Our Centre offers (40) licensed full-time spaces. We do not offer part-time or casual spacing. This means, if your child attends part time or you have holidays during the month, you are still required to pay the full monthly fee, or you could lose your space. You can request a drop-in space, but they are not guaranteed. You must call the morning of to ensure a space is available. We must adhere to staff/child ratio guidelines. Your child must attend within two months of the provided start date. Failure to attend on the given start date will result in losing your childcare space. The signed childcare agreement will be terminated immediately, and you will not receive a refund for your security deposit.

- Your security deposit can be used towards your last month's fees when you provide one month's notice of withdrawal. *Most Childcare Centers follow the same policy.

For our program to run smoothly, it is imperative that parents pay their fees on time each month. The monthly childcare fee is due in full on the first business day of the month (unless prior arrangements have been made). A \$40 NSF charge is applied to all returned cheques - where an NSF occurred, the centre will no longer accept cheques from this individual.

A late penalty will be charged if an account is unpaid five days after the first of the month, or a payment plan has not been arranged with the Director. A late fee of \$15.00 is charged per day up to the 14th day of the month. If the balance, and late fee are not paid by the 14th business day of the month, childcare services will be terminated the following day.

Parents who leave the center with an outstanding balance will have 30 days to pay their remaining balance. If payment has not been received within the 30-day period, you must have a payment plan in place with the Director. Failure will result in your account being sent to the Collections Bureau of Canada. If the arranged payment plan is not being followed, the account will be sent to Collections, No Exceptions.

Withdrawal Policy

A one-month written notice (email is acceptable) is required from either party (Parents or Early Learning Centre) indicating withdrawal of services from the daycare. Notice of withdrawal must be provided before the first day of the last month that care is required. You may refer to your original Childcare Agreement for more details. Failure to provide notice will result in the family paying next month's fee and losing their security/membership deposit.

Zero Tolerance Policy

Swearing, threats or any act of violence, harassment or intimidation of any kind will NOT be tolerated. Mistreating ANYONE at the centre will result in immediate termination of services and they will be asked to leave the premises. Anyone deemed to be in violation of this policy will be asked to leave the center without a one month's notice and will not receive their security deposit/membership refund.

Early Childhood Educator Month

May is Early Childhood Educator Month recognized by the Minister of Education. The staff work hard each day to ensure your child has a fun, rewarding and safe environment for their development, and each year we celebrate and show our gratitude for the Early Childhood Educators that provide quality childcare for the children at the center. Each parent is encouraged to show their appreciation in ways they feel appropriate – a kind 'Thank You' goes a long way.

Holidays and Celebrations

We celebrate many holidays as secular rather than religious events. We will work with families to respect and honor the traditions of all families in attendance.

Staffing/Roles at Friends Together Childcare Centre

At Friends Together Childcare, we have dedicated and loving staff with Early Childhood Education and years of experience. The following describes the roles and responsibilities of the people working with or at our Centre.

Early Learning and Childcare Consultant (ELCC): all childcare Centers and licensed childcare homes receive the support of an Early Learning and Childcare (ELCC) Consultant. The role of an ELCC Consultant is to promote quality childcare services and enforce The Childcare Act and The Childcare Regulations, 2015. These pieces of legislation set the standards for licensed care in Saskatchewan. Please refer to the end of the handbook for more information on our consultant and her role.

Board of Directors: They oversee the Centre, its procedures, and ensuring, health and safety guidelines and legal regulations are being followed. The board consists of parents

from the Centre who are liable for the Childcare Centre and how it operates. They manage the decision process, make financial policy decisions, and create policies for general day to day operations; these include but not limited to, health and safety policies, management of children's behavior, and staff or parent concerns. The Board will manage licensing issues or investigations and decide how they are resolved. The list of our members always changes. The current list of names and contact information is posted by the front entrance of the Centre.

Director: is responsible for ensuring that our Centre is implementing the mission statement and policies as well as fulfilling licensing requirements. The Childcare Director prepares budgets, financial statements, organizes fundraising, applies for grants, and develops partnerships with external organizations under the supervision of the Board of Directors. They are also responsible for overall day-to-day operations of the center and supervision of staff.

Assistant Director: helps the Director with day-to-day procedures within the center. They are also in charge of the Centre and its operation as well as supervision of staff while the Director is away.

Early Childhood Educators (ECE): are responsible for the overall care of the children. They are fully trained in Early Childhood Education with a minimum Level I Certification (there are 3 levels). Each employee is encouraged to continue their education towards a Level II or Level III, as well as attend appropriate Children's Workshops. There is a minimum of two staff in each room and we all work together as a team to provide quality childcare throughout the entire Centre.

Cook: Our chef provides nutritious meals and snacks for the children. Our menu is approved by the Ministry of Education, Early Learning Years, during our yearly licensing review. The menu provides protein, grains, fruit and vegetable options, milk, and water.

Please note, we are a peanut-free facility, the cook and Director ensure peanut free products are served daily. We ask families not to bring outside food items as we cannot monitor children sharing with others.

Practicum Students: are a set of extra hands throughout the year We always welcome students to come into the center to observe, interact, and engage with the staff and children. Our students may come from secondary/high school programs, ESL programs and the Polytech Early Childhood Educators practicum program. If you see one in your child's room, please make them feel welcome.

Summer Student(s): are here to work with the children during the summer months when we have extra children. Although they are just temporary, they do hold most (or all) of the same qualifications as our senior staff. Please

make them feel welcome and address any concerns or ideas you have with them. They provide support during our busiest time of year and are very much appreciated.

Volunteers: are seen in the Centre from time-to-time to get acquainted with the children and offer staff whatever help may be required. All volunteers must provide a recent CPIC (Criminal Records Check), resume or other documentation and referrals. Volunteers can be anyone, including parents, community members and new people to our city. We appreciate volunteers and our doors are always open for them. If you are interested in volunteering or know someone, please speak with the Director.

Behavior Consultant and Speech and Language Therapist

Friends Together Childcare is fortunate enough to have access to a Behavior Consultant and a Speech and Language Therapist. If you and/or staff have any concerns with regards to your child and his or her development, families of the centre can use these resources free of charge. A consent form must be filled out by the parent prior to your child being seen by one of the specialists. **Please note**, the sooner your child begins therapy, the greater the success – if you have any questions or concerns, please speak with the Director for more information.

Child Guidance

Each room/age group will have a variety of guidance depending on the development levels of the children. Our goal for child guidance is to develop healthy self-esteem and individual coping skills through strategies provided by the educated staff, as well as the Ministry of Education, Early Learning and Childcare Consultant. (each licensed childcare centre is provided with a consultant)

It is important that children begin to learn self-regulation, attitudes, and skills to become competent, caring, confident and responsible individuals at an early age. Child guidance is not just about helping children to stop inappropriate behaviors. It is about helping children learn appropriate behaviors to continue as they grow.

We focus on positive methods of Child Guidance, and will NOT permit the following methods of child management in our Centre:

- a. Corporal punishment.
- b. Physical, emotional, or verbal abuse.
- c. Denial of necessities.
- d. Isolation.
- e. Inappropriate physical or mechanical restraint.

Examples of positive methods that encourage and include positive reinforcement, reward systems, and redirection of behavior.

Child Abuse Protocol: we follow the Saskatchewan Child Abuse Protocol to protect children from abuse and neglect, and our Centre staff will support the Government of Saskatchewan, and Police services to enable them to prevent, detect, report, investigate cases of child abuse and support children who are abused.

Confidentiality Policy

All our staff and board of directors must sign and abide to the Confidentiality Policy based on *The Childcare Regulations, 2015*. This policy:

- preserves confidentiality with respect to Personal information and records with respect to a child or a child's parent; and
- disallows disclose or communication any information with respect to a child without the permission of the child's parent to any person except:

- (I) As required for the health or safety of that child or any other child; or
- (II) As required by law

For more information, please refer to *The Childcare Act* booklet at the front entrance of the Centre.

Toilet Training Policy

- Toilet training will be provided in a positive manner when the child is developmentally ready. Your child will be supported to learn the skills required for healthy toileting and independence. Most children are ready to begin toileting between the ages of 2 and 3 years old.
- Children beginning at the centre, at the age of 3 ½ or older, **MUST** be potty trained before their 'start date' at the centre. If it is determined that the child is not potty trained, it will result in termination of services
- If immediate termination of services, the daycare will keep the family on the waitlist until the child is fully potty trained (they will have priority over others on the waitlist to return). Your security deposit will be returned with one month's notice.
- Children in the preschool room (Bumblebee room) will not be able to advance to the school-age room (Dragonfly room, 4 years +) until they are fully potty trained.

Please remember that accidents do happen so please always have an extra set of clothing for your child. You may speak with the room staff in your child's room to make a toileting plan and address any questions or concerns you may have.

Nap/Quiet Time

We try to achieve a balance of active and quiet activities throughout the day. All rooms observe a quiet time between **12:00 and 2:30 pm**. Therefore, we kindly ask parents to try and pick up and/or drop off children outside of these hours. We understand sometimes this is unavoidable. Each room may vary in activities (some children do not nap but are encouraged to rest on their mats) and policies, please check with your child's ECE room staff for any specific needs during this period.

Drop Off / Pick Up Policy

Each child will be accompanied to and from their assigned rooms within the facility by an adult. The guardian is required to ensure the staff are aware that the child has been dropped off or picked up at the end of day. Children will only be released to guardians whose names are listed in the child's emergency contact file. The family may ask an alternate adult to pick up their child or children, however, the centre must be informed prior to pick up for approval to release the child in their care. Staff can ask to see photo identification to ensure it is the person contacted.

***Please remember to keep your emergency contact information up to date**

Parking

We acknowledge that parking can be limited at times, we kindly ask parents to try not to take up more than one parking space or block neighbors' driveways. This is for the safety of our children and all other residents in the neighborhood. We are fortunate to have 5-minute loading zone in front of the property – this helps provide parents with parking access and traffic flow.

Parental Involvement

Ongoing communication is vital to the success of our programs. We encourage parents to address any concerns or to share ideas with the educators in their child's room. Please take the time to read all posted info.

notices, information sent via email, and written documents provided to you. Parents are also encouraged to come on outings with the children when we have field trips or volunteer during events and activities at the Centre. Your support makes a big difference and is greatly appreciated not only by us, but by your child(ren) as well.

Friends Together Childcare Cooperative – Website, Facebook Page

The director and staff members regularly share updates, guidelines, policies as well as fun programming events, activities, excursions, photos, for families to enjoy. Please visit,

<https://friendstogetherchildcarecooperative.com>

www.facebook.com/friendstogetherchildcare

(AGM) Annual General Meeting

All parents are welcome to attend the Annual General Meeting (AGM). The AGM is intended to provide families with the opportunity to address any questions, concerns, or suggestions that could improve our services. The AGM meeting is usually scheduled for end of November - following completion of the centre's annual financial review/audit. Supper will be provided, as well as childcare, if required. Families are welcome to join the Board of Directors committee, a board package will be provided outlining guidelines and obligations. Board meetings are held once a month, excluding July, August, December months. The number of meetings will be determined by the Board of Directors, there is no minimum or maximum regulation by Ministry of Education or financial auditors.

Field Trips and Excursions

All rooms go on various outings and excursions during the year. Documentation detailing times, locations, clothing required, monetary amounts and volunteers required will be posted and parents will be notified. Excursions will be developmentally appropriate. We may use City Transit, bus rentals or walking as a means of transportation. During the hot summer months, we require all children wear a hat in outdoor environments and excursions. We require this to protect the children from direct sun exposure and to reduce the risk of heat/sun stroke.

Safety and Emergency Procedures

Our centre provides a safe and nurturing environment, however, with a busy centre full of active children, accidents can happen. If a minor injury occurs, our trained staff ensure the child is unharmed and moved to a safe location to receive treatment (administer first aid, band aid, ice pack, or whatever minor treatment is required for specific incident) Once the child(ren) receive treatment, the staff will fill out a minor injury form. The form will be shown to the guardian to explain what happened, location of injury, and what first aid was administered to treat injury. The minor injury form requires the attending staff member's signature, parent signature, and Director's signature to ensure everyone is aware of the incident. The form is placed in the child's record file.

This procedure is the same while the children are on a field trip or participating in activities off daycare premises. Staff place each child's emergency card information in their first aid kit for all field trips and walks around daycare. When a serious injury occurs, a staff member would call 911 (if required) while another staff member attends to other children. When children are on field trips, there are usually more staff/volunteers available for extra supervision and safety. However, the staff to child ratio depends on where the children are going. The situation and destination will be assessed by Director and staff to determine if extra staffing and/or volunteers will be needed.

Our emergency procedures also include monthly trial fire drills with the children. In case of a real fire emergency, all children and staff must exit the facility in safe manner. They may be required to walk to Fountain Tire at the corner of the 8th street and Argyle Avenue to ensure everyone is at a safe distance from the building. The Director or staff in charge will call 911 immediately and contact families of the situation. Fire safety booklets are checked monthly; one Fire Safety Booklet (red color) is placed at each exit door.



illness

A child's day should be stress-free and fun! When a child is ill, their day can become stressful, and even painful. Children need to feel well enough to actively participate in the daily routine, both indoors and outdoors. Children that are ill often require one-on-one care to manage their symptoms and disinfect their areas of play. This makes it difficult for the room staff to attend to other children in the classroom. Please remember that bringing a sick child into the childcare centre exposes other children, adults, staff, and their respective families to the illness. The sick child may also experience a relapse of symptoms if they return before they have fully recovered.

If your child becomes ill or experiences an allergic reaction throughout the day, the Director or a staff member will contact a guardian on the pick-up list to come pick up the child as soon as possible. Your prompt cooperation is appreciated, to prevent others in the centre from becoming sick, and to avoid any additional stress or discomfort for the child. The child(ren) will be made as comfortable as possible until you arrive.

If you are trying to decide if your child is well enough to come to daycare, please review the following list of symptoms that are frequently associated with infectious diseases in childcare settings. If your child has ANY one of the items listed below, a parent/family member will be contacted, and it is encouraged that he/she stays home from daycare.

- Fever of 37.8°C/100°F or greater
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- New onset of cough that is atypical for your child
- Frequent sneezing associated with green/yellow mucus (not seasonal allergy-dependent)
- Itchy/painful rash or lesions. Child may return when their rash has crusted over or cleared
- Inflamed and/or discharging eyes

Before returning to the centre, your child must be free of symptoms **which pose a risk for the contagious transmission of illness to others.** We require (mandatory) that children with open and/or oozing eyes, sores and wounds (as might be seen with Pink Eye, or Hand-Foot-and-Mouth Disease) be absent from daycare for a minimum of (2) days. **We require that 24 hours have passed since the last episode of fever, vomiting or diarrhea without the aid of medication, including Tylenol.** The Director and/or staff member, at their discretion, request that the child's return be delayed if the above or other symptoms persist that interfere with the child's daily routine. In some circumstances, a doctor's note may be required for your child to return to the centre.

The Saskatchewan Health Authority has published a patient information and educational resource guide '[Is My child Too Sick to Attend School](#)', which describes many of the above

symptoms and provides guidance on when to return to school or daycare after an illness. Please review and call the health line 811 for 24-hour health advice and information.

Covid-19 and other respiratory illnesses: If your child and/or a member of your household tests positive for COVID-19 or influenza on either a PCR or rapid antigen test, it is strongly recommended that your child(ren) self-isolate for **five days** and not attend daycare for the duration of the self-isolation period, or until the affected person is no longer displaying symptoms. Children who are in close contact with cases outside their homes may continue to attend daycare but should be monitored for symptoms. Search the link for Government of Saskatchewan [Living with COVID, Schools and Daycares](#).

To assist in making decisions regarding the control of communicable diseases, the Saskatchewan Health Authority has published a [Communicable Disease Control Guideline for school and childcare centres](#) in an easy-to-read format. Please refer to this table for some of the common communicable diseases and their exclusion criteria. The Director or other staff members may refer to this document and/or call the Health Hotline 811 for illness-related decision support regarding exclusion and return to daycare.

Medication Policy

Over-the-Counter Medication: These medications need to remain in the original packaging or container and be labeled with the child's full name, expiry date and specific legible instructions for administration and storage. Note that the Centre will NOT administer Tylenol. If a child develops a fever while at the centre, he/she will be sent home.

Prescription Medication: These medications must remain in the correctly labeled pharmacy issued container. The label must contain the child's full name, medication name, dosage, and expiry date along with the proper storage information.

Administration: A medication form must be filled out completely and signed by the child's parent/guardian for the Centre's staff to give medication. Details on the form must be identical to those on the label of the medication.

Minor Scrapes and Bruises

Full-time staff members are required by the Ministry of Education to hold a valid First Aid/CPR Certification. Casual substitutes must have a valid First aid certificate to work in the room alone with the children. Otherwise, a staff member must always be in the room with them. First Aid kits are in each childcare room and kitchen area. A First Aid kit must be taken on excursions or any event away from the daycare. If a minor injury occurs, a report will be filled out by the witnessing staff member and shown/explained to the parent for signing. In the event of a serious occurrence, a parent will be notified immediately by a staff member or

Director, while the child receives medical attention. If an ambulance is required, a staff member will accompany the child to the hospital and wait for the contacted guardian to arrive.

Nutritional Guidelines

We provide healthy and nutritious snacks that follow the Canada Food Guide. Our cook prepares a morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack. Our snacks consist of two food groups with one being a fruit or vegetable, and our lunches consist of all four food groups. Children are encouraged to try the meals provided, but no one is forced to eat.

We are a peanut controlled center, and we ask that if you are bringing a snack from outside the center that it is **peanut-free**. If your child has any food allergies, or dietary restrictions, please inform the Director as soon as possible. The staff and cook will be informed of these restrictions, and update children's files.

Birthday Snacks

Parents are welcome to bring a birthday snack for their child's room, please ensure you have informed the room teachers or the Director ahead of time to arrange celebration. All treats must be **peanut-free**. Birthday cake, cupcakes, and cookies are welcome for Birthdays only. In addition to any birthday snack, the children will be served nutritious items from our daily programming menu.

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted at the childcare centre or on the grounds. We ask that adults do not smoke on the sidewalk, within fenced areas, or directly in front of the childcare centre. We would like to remind family members that smoking in a vehicle with children under the age of 16 is against the law in Saskatchewan.

Friends Together is a non-profit charitable organization. We kindly ask parents to volunteer to sit on the Board of Directors and/or plan fundraising events throughout the year. Parents will be notified well in advance of an event or activity requiring volunteers. Funds help support purchasing educational resources, renovations, toys, playground equipment, etc.

If you have any questions or concerns with regards to any of the information provided, we ask that you please speak with the Director, or any Board Member. Board Member names and phone numbers are posted in the front entrance of the Childcare Centre.

Thank you for considering Friends Together Childcare Cooperative! We are committed to providing a positive learning experience for your child with many happy memories!



Information for Parents of Children Attending Licensed Childcare Facilities

Role of the Early Learning and Childcare Consultant



What does an ELCC Consultant do?

ELCC Consultants provide a variety of supports to your child's centre or childcare home. Consultant's support childcare home providers, centre staff, directors, and boards of childcare centres to implement best practices in the care and education of your child.

Consultants also:

- complete a licence review annually to ensure that a basic standard of care is in place
- conduct a minimum of two unscheduled monitoring visits per year to ensure licensing requirements are maintained.
- attend two board meetings per year for parent operated childcare centres, and one parent advisory committee meeting and one board meeting per year at other centres.
- address non-compliance when observed or when reports are received; and,
- Facilitate grants.
- ELCC Consultants support licensed Centre's and homes to implement quality programs. *The Childcare Act and The Childcare Regulations, 2015*

When should I contact the ELCC Consultant for my childcare facility?

You may contact your ELCC Consultant for any question you have, or to share information about your child's program.

Examples of when you may contact your ELCC Consultant include:

- You would like to share strengths and successes you have observed about your child's program.
- You have a concern about the quality of care your child is receiving.
- You would like further clarification about *The Childcare Act and The Childcare Regulations, 2015*.
- You have a question about the services offered by Saskatchewan's early learning and childcare program or would like additional information.

Who is the ELCC Consultant for my childcare facility?

Bronwen McRae
ELCC Consultant
Early Years Branch
Ministry of Education

Ministry of Education, Early Learning Years
3rd Avenue North
Saskatoon, SK S7K 2H6
Business: 306-933-5037
Fax: 306-933-7082

Thank you for your support, we will continue to reach out to parents as information becomes available to us, provided by the Ministry of Education and our Board of Directors. Our centre is committed to implementing and following strict safety guidelines and providing an enjoyable environment for little ones to grow, learn, and engage in creative exploration and discovery.

- *Friends Together Childcare Cooperative, Director*

