

Aspen Lakes Discovery Center

Holistic childcare for children age one to six



“Children are not things to be
molded,
but people to be unfolded.” - Jess

Parent Handbook 2022

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Philosophy, The Environment, and The Importance of Play

Our Mission

We provide high quality early education by building character in children through allowing them opportunities to explore the natural world, the people around them, and themselves in a safe and caring environment. They are respected and seen as equals in the collaboration that is their education. Children will feel empowered to grow in a natural way that embodies the principle that children learn through responsive relationships. Their well-beings are nurtured and they are encouraged to learn alongside others.

Who are we? What do we believe?

Aspen Lakes Discovery Center is a warm and loving space that supports learning through exploration and play in young children aged 1 to kindergarten. We are inspired by the Reggio Emilia Approach to early childhood education and create an environment where education is promoted through observation, positive interaction, and active participation. With a program based on mutual respect for each other, oneself, and the space, as well as the understanding of the child as a competent being, parents can feel comfort that their children will be learning through hands-on activities that are tailored to their specific interests and needs.

We believe in supporting the learning of the ‘whole child’ by providing an enriching and appropriate environment that meets all areas of development. We create a space for children that is comforting and supports their inquisition and implement a curriculum that is based on their interests and needs. We value and practice equality, respect, and eco-conscious living through building relationships with the environment, inside and out. We understand the importance of a sense of ‘community’ and building Blackfalds as ‘home’.

We believe that there are more than just one teacher in early childhood: parents, the natural environment, peers, educators, and of course, the child themselves. It is in this type of environment that we are able to support the children in the exploration and discovery of the world around them. Children at an early age will learn, as they grow, to love and respect themselves, each other, the people who care for them, living creatures, and the earth (through reusing, recycling, growing, conserving). Through this they will gain knowledge and discover who they are as well as learning so much more along the way.

Wondering what Reggio Emilia is?

The Reggio Emilia philosophy is an educational approach founded by Loris Malaguzzi in Reggio Emilia, Italy, developed after World War 2. This innovative approach to teaching is rooted in the belief that children speak ‘one hundred or more languages’, and that children have the right to as many opportunities as possible to develop their potential. It puts the importance of strong relationships at the center of its philosophy.

The Reggio Emilia philosophy is based on the following set of principles:

- Children must have some control over the direction of their learning;
- Children must be able to learn through experiences of touching, moving, listening, and observing;
- Children have a relationship with other children and with material items in the world that children must be allowed to explore;
- Children must have endless ways and opportunities to express themselves.

The Role of the Teacher

Educators at Aspen Lakes Discovery Center are not only ‘teachers’! They serve as collaborators, co-learners, observers, and role models. (And professional players)! Staff provoke thought and enquiry by asking questions and actively engaging in the activities that they plan based on the children’s interests. For example, an educator may plan a theme and activities about HATS after observing interest from a child in wearing different types of hats. Instead of planning the activity and watching it play out, the educator is in the heart of the activity, mutually participating with the children and learning alongside them, watching for cues of new interests or skills to build on, while asking questions and making comments that inspire wonder, imagination, and creativity. All of our staff are educated in Early Learning and Childcare, and partake in ongoing learning. Each employed staff will have an 8-week training program specific to Aspen Lakes Discovery Center’s standards of excellence. All staff have valid First Aid and current criminal record checks.

The Role of the Environment

Indoor Environment

The environment, in Reggio Emilia, is often referred to as ‘The Third Teacher’. It is our goal to provide an environment that is calm, comforting, and natural, without overstimulating lights or colors. Being Canadian, we know that natural light is absolutely key to feeling our best, especially in our winter months! We try our best to stay away from unnatural materials and plastic as best we can. Air quality improving plants will be found throughout the center and children are encouraged to touch, smell, and explore them all they want. Developmentally appropriate toys and materials will be in every room and at child’s level. Aspen Lakes Discovery Center brings nature inside with a variety of materials from the outdoors. Loose parts (items that can be interpreted in many different ways) are found in all rooms and allow children to use their imagination to guide their learning.

Outdoor Environment

We ask for your patience and cooperation as we develop our outdoor area. Our vision is to have a garden in the summer months that the children are actively caring for and tending to. We will grow vegetables that will be used in our everyday meals come harvest time. We will keep a compost bin that the children will add to and help maintain. Anything that can be accessed inside, will also be accessible outside. Art, block play, sensory, and the arts are all included in outdoor play as well.

Please be understanding that our outdoor time may include many trips around the area and surrounding neighborhoods, looking for new parks, or going on nature walks. Please understand that being outdoors and exploring is important to us, and that you may be dropping off or picking up at a location that is not the daycare. When weather permits, the children will spend as much time outside as is appropriate. Due to this, please ensure

your child always has an extra outfit or 2, and all types of outdoor gear. We do not go outside if it is -25 (with windchill) in the winter season or +25 in the summer season.

The Role of the Parent

A child's parents are his/her first real compasses in life. You know your child better than anyone, and we know that this child is the most important person in your life (and you in theirs!) This is why we HIGHLY encourage parent participation in our classrooms. We work together with families to have a shared understanding of decisions made on behalf of the children and ask parents to openly communicate with staff as often as possible. Communication is cooperative and collaborative. If your child is passionate about something, or your family is learning about anything, please, let us know and we may be able to further expand on that topic in your child's classroom!

We Believe All Parents Have 3 Basic Rights:

The right to feel safe: that their child is being cared for

The right to feel that they belong to their child's educational community

The right to feel they are honored for who they are and who they are not

Inclusion and Diversity

Aspen Lakes Discovery Center takes pride in being a diverse, inclusive educational community. We practice equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practices for children, families, and staff. Families of all races, ethnicities, religion, or social background are welcome here. Children with various disabilities and abilities are included in our program. Individual differences and abilities are celebrated. All children are involved in the decision-making process which in turn helps enhancing their confidence and social abilities.

Staff support and foster children's pride in their heritage by incorporating foods, language, songs, games, folk tales, dances and clothing that reflect individual children's family and other backgrounds in a way that makes these a part of the everyday program. Parents are encouraged to come and share a story, costumes and a dance from their culture, if they wish to.

We encourage staff to know the cultural and religious values and beliefs of each child in their group by daily verbal communication with families. This information is essential as that may influence what each individual expects from others and how an individual communicates and behaves. Please share anything you find will be helpful and we will incorporate it into our program to include your family.

We teach children early on that discriminatory behavior is hurtful and unacceptable. We avoid stereotypes or derogatory images in books or other visual stimulation.

Daily Flow, Enrolment, and Fees

Schedule and Hours

The center is open from 7:00am to 6:00pm. **We are closed every statutory holiday including Easter Monday, August long weekend, National day for Truth and Reconciliation, and the week between Christmas day and New Year's Day. If a holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday we will close the following Monday. Each year we will close at 4 PM on Christmas Eve.**

Each room has a routine, but it is flexible and can change based on the processes and explorations of the children. If they are deeply engrossed in an activity, teachers will document and observe, and find the best time to interject a transition. (within 15-20 minutes)

Child-led free play, communication with parents

8:30am morning snack

Morning meeting

Outdoor play

Daily activity, centers

11:30am lunch

Rest

Child-led free play

2:30pm afternoon snack

Outdoor play

Afternoon meeting

Child-led free play, communication with parents

Enrolment

Each child entering the center **must first provide:**

- Registration fee and first month's tuition
- Registration Form with authorized pick up persons
- Signed permission forms
- Agreement of policies and procedures
 - Any changes in address, phone number, employment, etc. must be given to the Director in writing.

We do not 'reserve' spots for children on any waiting lists unless the spot is being paid for. We will accommodate families on any waiting list first given that there is room for that child in that month. We can NOT guarantee a spot for your child without 30 days' notice and have the right to fill spots with families who need care soonest.

Tuition Payment

Payment Due Date: Childcare fees are due and payable in advance on the first business day of each month. Payment can be made by cash, cheque or debit. We can keep post dated cheques in your child's file. Please make all checks payable to Aspen Lakes Discovery Center. Each year prices may increase to keep up with the constant raising prices in the economy.

Fees

Full Time:

Registration Fee:	\$100.00
Babies (1-2 years):	\$1,075.00 per month
Toddlers (2-3 years):	\$1015.00 per month
Preschool (3-5 years):	\$955.00 per month
Out of school (Kinder):	\$930.00 per month

Full Time Half-Days:

Mornings (8:00-11:30am)	or	Afternoons (2:30-6:00pm)
1-3 years:	\$515.00	
3-6 years:	\$415.00	

Part Time:

We offer a 2 choices for part-time care.

Part-Time 2 days/week: Tuesday & Thursday

Part-Time 3 days/week: Monday, Wednesday, & Friday

Registration Fee:	\$100.00
Babies (12-24 mo):	\$73.00/day
Toddlers (24-36 mo):	\$63.00/day
Preschool (3-5 y/o)	\$58.00/day
Out of School:	\$53.00/day

Monthly Fees starting on February 1st 2022

Full Time:

Registration Fee:	\$100.00
Babies (1-2 years):	\$1,105.00 per month
Toddlers (2-3 years):	\$1045.00 per month
Preschool (3-5 years):	\$980.00 per month
Out of school (Kinder):	\$955.00 per month

Full Time Half-Days:

Mornings (8:00-11:30am)	or	Afternoons (2:30-6:00pm)
1-3 years:	\$530.00	
3-6 years:	\$430.00	

Part Time:

We offer a 2 choices for part-time care.

Part-Time 2 days/week: Tuesday & Thursday

Part-Time 3 days/week: Monday, Wednesday, & Friday

Registration Fee:	\$100.00
Babies (12-24 mo):	\$75.00/day
Toddlers (24-36 mo):	\$65.00/day
Preschool (3-5 y/o)	\$60.00/day
Out of School:	\$55.00/day

We do not accommodate inconsistent schedules as this is difficult for staffing and enrolling other families. Part time care is offered based on availability (each room has a designated number of openings for part time care). Rebate care or refunds are not given for days not used. You may request to add or switch days if needed by calling the center ahead of time and we will do our best to accommodate you!

Any family enrolled in part time care will be required to pay for a minimum but is not limited to 8 days throughout each month.

Drop-in Care:

Drop-in care is provided on a per day basis and is offered solely based on availability of the day requested. Fees are to be paid prior to your child coming to the center.

Registration Fee:	\$20.00
Morning drop-in (7:30-11:30am)	\$40.00
Afternoon drop-in (2:30-6:00pm)	\$40.00
All day drop-in (up to 8 hours)	\$60.00

Holiday/Vacation Policy

Any holidays throughout the year that consist of a month or more off of care will be required to pay the full months fee to hold that spot for the child. If families choose not to pay for their child's spot, that families spot will not be guaranteed when they return from holidays.

Siblings

Each additional full-time sibling enrolled in the center will receive \$100.00 off their monthly fees. Each additional part-time sibling enrolled will receive \$50.00 off their monthly fees!

Subsidy

Aspen Lakes Discovery Center accepts subsidy. A copy of subsidy approval may be requested upon registration to confirm your subsidy status. Renewing and updating subsidy is the parents responsibility. If subsidy expires or there is a change/reduction in subsidy, the remainder of the months fee will be added immediately and parents will be expected to pay the entire months fee.

Late Fees

If your child has not arrived at the center after 30 minutes of their scheduled drop off time, and you have not called the center, they will be marked absent. This is to encourage consistency for both the child and center. We schedule our staff based on how many children we have in each time period to achieve absolute efficiency and maximum amount of time children spend with their primary caregiver.

After 6:00PM, you will be charged \$20.00 for every 10-minute interval that your child is at the center, as we are not licensed to provide care after 6:00PM. You will be required to pay this within one week of that day. If we are unable to contact a parent or emergency contact to arrange prompt pick up of your child(ren) within 30 minutes, we are required to call the RCMP and Child and Family Services. Regular tardiness in pickups may result in termination from the program.

All fees are due on the 1st of the month (or 1st business day). A \$25.00 late fee is added after 6:00pm on the 1st.

Referrals

If a full-time or part-time family joins the center and mentions that you referred them to us, you will receive \$50.00 off your fees the following month!

Notice of Removal from the Program

A written notice is needed 30 days prior to exit if your child is going to be removed from the program. All payments will need to be settled at that time. We will miss you!

Hellos and Goodbyes

Supplies

Parents are responsible for supplying:

- Diapers & Wipes if applicable
- A full change of clothing (or 2. or 3.)
- Any other supplies your child may need
- Comforting blanket for during quiet times
- Water bottle
- Pictures of your child's family, pets, friends
- All personal belongings must be labeled with child's name, including food & beverages.

Please understand that getting dirty is a part of childhood learning, and use patience when bringing home dirty clothes. We promise, it's worth it! We teach pride in our creations and it often involves getting messy. ***Their work IS play.*** Staff will let you know when more supplies are needed for your child.

Diapers

If a staff has informed you with ample notice that your child needs diapers, and has left a note on their cubby, and diapers have not come to the center, we will buy diapers for your child and the cost will be applied to next month's fee.

Aspen Lakes Discovery Center accepts all forms of cloth diapers. If a teacher is not familiar with the style, simply show them.

- Please provide a sealed, airtight container for staff to place soiled clothing and diapers in.
- Soiled clothing and diapers must be taken home from the center daily
- Please clean and sanitize the container daily.

Communication

Communication for news is mainly through e-mail in order to limit the amount of paper that the center consumes. This will keep you informed of any policy changes, days we may be closed, upcoming outings, resources on child development and stages, and upcoming events in the center and community. We provide parents with a daily report that will share what your child ate, when they slept if applicable, what we did that day, notes, any pictures from the day, what your child was interested in, etc. via Brightwheel app. In keeping with our eco-friendly mindedness, we try to keep communication electronic, combined with our other efforts to aid in reducing our carbon footprint and overall impact on our earth.

Parent Teacher Nights

Each year we will host 2 parent teacher nights, once in the fall and once in the spring. These evenings will be scheduled appointments with your child's educator to review how things are going in the classroom and give an opportunity for parents to ask any questions they may have.

Daily Arrivals and Departures

Drop off times are from 7:00AM - 9:30AM (with exceptions). During rest, from 11:30-2:30, we lock our doors. (A quick call, text, or Himama message will let us know you are here or will be here later). Please do not drop your child off or pick them up between 11:30AM-2:30PM unless urgent, as these are designated quiet times and we request as little interruptions during these times as possible.

Upon arrival, *you must accompany your child directly into their classroom.* Let us know: how was your night? Morning? How are you doing? Any changes in routine or daily life? This can help the staff to better understand and plan for your child's day. Give yourself plenty of time to talk with your child's educator and ensure a non-stressful drop off for your child. When children see a healthy teacher-parent relationship, it acts as the best form of role-modelling of teamwork. Do not 'drop off and run'. If you will be dropping off outside of your regular schedule by more than 30 minutes, earlier or later, please contact the center and let us know. We will schedule our staff around these times.

Any serious discussions should not happen at drop off or pick up times. Little ones hear and understand everything. Please speak with a director and we can communicate any information with room staff.

Please drop off and pick up consistently, and follow the schedule you provided as closely as you can, as our staff

are scheduled based on parents provided hours. We assume children are absent after half an hour without contact from a guardian. **Your child must be picked up by a guardian or an authorized pick up person listed on their registration form with a valid piece of identification.** Let your child and your child's teacher know if someone other than yourself will be picking them up.

Curriculum

Educators teach each age group through child-led activities, exploration of the environment, and by having a flexible, interest-based curriculum. Planned topics will be categorized into themes. Themes will last as long, or as little time as they need to, from 1-8 weeks. Planned activities throughout the week are structured to accommodate all areas of development: social, physical, intellectual, creative, and emotional. Each classroom's planning is posted in every room, and parents are **welcome and encouraged** to suggest ideas and possibilities!

Activities are planned to allow children express their ideas in different ways:

- games
- books
- songs
- science experiments
- creative art
- projects
- spontaneous investigation
- cooking & gardening
- fine and gross motor activities
- active and restful play
- mathematical graphs/charts
- sensory exploration and a variety of materials
- loose parts: a collection of items that children can interpret into many different creative possibilities
- small and large group work

Documentation

Pictures, videos, and other forms of documentation are crucial for children's self-reflection. Around the center you will find learning stories about activities or crafts that your child's class has done. We take a lot of photos as documentation and may occasionally post on social media. Included in your registration will be a photograph permission and Facebook permission form.

Community

Community plays a role in the lives of children every day. Building a sense of community in young children stems from their family's role in their growth and development and their partnership with the center. We encourage families as much as possible to be a part of their children's care in any way you can. Whether it is communication through daily activity tracking, or documentation you will see all over the walls, we will include parents and families as much as possible into the daily events and activities that happen at Aspen Lakes Discovery Center. Whenever possible, we will try to actively participate in community events and functions as

well. *Please* feel free to stay and play with your child and their friends at pick up time!

Protecting our Environment

We take pride in being an eco-friendly childcare center for the use of our environmentally friendly products, commitment to recycling, reusing, composting, gardening, healthy local food, and limiting waste. We also avoid unnecessary toxins and chemicals through the use of metal/BPA free plastics/glassware for food storage and consumption, and limiting plastics whenever we can. We prefer to buy toys and materials gently used, locally sourced, or handmade if we can; if you have something you think the center could benefit from that your child has out grown, please bring it on in!

Policies and Procedures

Please know that our policies are always open to suggestions and ideas from parents, and are not set in stone. If you have an idea, we want to hear it.

Review of policies

At the end of each year, we will review our policies, procedures and parent handbooks. We will conduct a parent survey prior to this to include parents in our decision making around policy changes. We will share all updated policies and procedures with parents prior to the end of the year.

Open Door Policy

Parents who have children enrolled in Aspen Lakes Discovery Center can feel free to stop by anytime during the day (excluding nap time). However, please remember that when you visit, your child may expect to leave with you, and to prepare for this. We support breastfeeding mothers if you would like to come in on your breaks during the day.

Volunteer Policy

We enjoy visitors and volunteers; if a relative or family friend would like to join your child for a part of the day, please know that this is allowed and encouraged. All volunteers in the center will be required to provide a criminal record check including a vulnerable sector search. When volunteering or visiting, you are responsible for your child when you are here so as not to cause confusion, although our rules must still be followed. You will still receive daily communication for your child about everything we did that day.

Please contact a director if you are interested in volunteering in the classroom or if you or another family member have a set of skills you would be willing to share with us (such as: gardening, sewing, building). This hands-on, real-life education helps to share within our community, and to encourage the children to 'learn by doing'.

Discipline Policy

Appropriate rules and boundaries will be employed in every room and enforced through positive reinforcement. Children will be given the time necessary to adjust to these rules.

Ensuring that a child feels respected at school is VERY important to us. When necessary, children will be removed from the group if they need to be talked to 1 on 1, instead of being singled out or embarrassed in front of peers. Staff will get down to their level, and speak in a respectful, calm tone.

We will not:

- Use or permit the use of physical restraint, confinement or isolation
- Inflict or cause to be inflicted any form of physical punishment (including spanking, verbal degradation or emotional deprivation)
- Deny or threaten to deny any basic necessity such as food, bathroom, or water

We will:

- Provide positive reinforcement in a consistent manner throughout the day
- Model attitudes and behavior patterns as expected of the children
- Avoid power struggles with the children

Discipline will be:

- Reasonable in the circumstances
- Appropriate to the development level of the child
- Implemented as soon as possible after the incident
- Designed to assist the child to learn appropriate behavior

Steps to be taken for behavior management:

- Verbal positive re-direction to another activity, (give gentle reminders)
- Offer choices
- Use active ignorance (ignore the behavior, not the child)
- Provide reinforcement
- Provide time to make positive choices

We will do our best to treat any undesirable behavior with the approach that if the child is set up for success and the adult team is proactive and preventative, this will solve a lot of the problems before they even begin. Replacing any triggers with positive reinforcement, encouragement, and attention for attempts and/or completion of the desired activity. Difficult transitions will be simplified with songs, and games to make them less stressful. We may change or modify the environment or classroom schedule if something isn't working.

If a child is seeking negative attention, and is not harming themselves, peers, or materials in the classroom, they

will be actively ignored. This means that we are ignoring the behavior, *not the child*. Staff will continue to check in with the child and offer to include them back to what they were doing as soon as they are feeling ready.

If there is a situation that needs adult intervention, we will address that situation through the use of redirection, narration, and supporting a child's ability to problem solve. We do not force an apology as this would not be sincere. It was not initiated by the child, nor does it come from his or her own problem-solving abilities. We will give them the tools to figure out their own way to help a friend feel better or improve the situation independently. We will never remove the child from a room without supervision.

We do not do 'time-outs'. We will never exclude a child from a group but may ask them to cool down with a book or puzzle until they're ready to rejoin in an appropriate manner. This time away from the situation can help them think of how they can solve the issue or make another child feel better. If a child is unsuccessful during a play activity, they may simply be asked to find a different place to play or find another classmate to play with.

We encourage children to 'let their feelings flourish' and will never expect or command that a child stop crying, calm down, or 'put their tears away'. We encourage self-regulation, self-expression and using calm-down strategies like taking deep breaths, asking for a hug, or finding a soft toy. Staff support children's emotional development by acknowledging and validating their feelings.

While we do not discourage the use of toys as 'guns' or any other 'weapons' and understand children do play and have rough play, we encourage kindness and monitor situations. Teachers will redirect any extreme behaviors or hurtful (either mentally or physically) interactions to a friendlier scenario.

Illness Policy

At Aspen Lakes Discovery Center, we have a policy to protect the health of every child in our space, our children, and our staff. Your child may not attend school/will be sent home if he/she displays any of the following:

- diarrhea (3 or more occurrences)
- vomiting
- fever of 38.0 Celsius or higher
- body rash that is spreading, or sore
- if they have been on antibiotics for less than 24 hours
- green mucus that is hindering their ability to function normally
- eye discharge or redness
- any illness that requires an excessive amount of individual adult attention or severely impacts the child's ability to play and learn
- lice or nits - Children with lice may not attend care until there are no signs of nits. Before your child attends, an adult will go through their hair to ensure there is no risk for it to spread before okay-ing their attendance.

Children must be kept home for a minimum of 24 hours after the last episode of vomiting, diarrhea, fever, or other symptom of a contagious illness or disease. Parents must notify provider upon arrival if child has been given any medication (over the counter or prescription - this includes Tylenol and Motrin) within the last 12 hours and/or has had any injury or medical problem within the last 24 hours. Please note that children with any undiagnosed skin rash may not attend school until the rash is diagnosed and you have a note from the doctor clearly stating it

is not contagious.

We report increased cases of illnesses to Alberta Health Services to monitor illness outbreak and follow protocols in the event of an outbreak.

Storing Medication

We will store and administer prescribed inhalers and epi-pens, non-prescription topical medications and EMERGENCY oral medications (i.e. Benadryl) with parent's consent. An authorization form, which must be signed by an authorized prescriber & parent is available at the center.

The form includes information such as:

- The child's name, address and birth date
- The drug name
- The prescribed dosage
- The method of administration
- The time to be administered
- The side effects
- The prescriber's name and address

Medications must be in their original container and clearly labeled.

All medications will be locked in the office cabinet or the locked box in the refrigerator. Non-prescription medication will be allowed to be stored in the locked containers with signed permission by parents. Topical medications must be stored in the original container and be labeled with the child's name and directions for administering.

ALDC will keep accurate documentation of all medications administered. Included in the documentation are:

- The date the medication was administered
- The time it was administered
- The dose that was administered
- The signature of the staff administering
- Any comments

We do not give medication on an 'as-needed' basis, with the exception of inhalers and emergency medications.

Sleep

Babies, toddlers, and preschool room children have a rest time midway through the day, from approximately 11:30AM-2:00PM, but this is flexible. They are given time to nap or just relax and take a break from the busy day they are having. We do not accept requests that children only sleep for 'x' amount of time or requests to wake a sleeping child. If a child is asleep, it is because they need it. We will never force a child to sleep or expect them to sleep. The children sleep/rest on child sized mats.

Toilet Learning

When the time presents itself, we will gladly help with toilet learning. Consistency is key, so when your child shows signs of readiness we will discuss the strategies you are using at home and continue them throughout the day as fitting with our daily routine. What we will not do is potty train your child for you. We will absolutely work as a team but the training must begin at home. When toilet training your child please send plenty of extra sets of pants and underwear as mistakes are a part of the process. Thank you!

Reporting Injury or Illness

Any injuries, incidents, or illnesses will be written in an incident report to be signed by parents and returned to the Director of the center. We categorize and report them at the end of the year. If you have any questions about an injury or illness, please don't be afraid to ask. We would be happy to provide you with a more detailed report or a photocopy of the document.

Toys from Home

Please keep toys from home, at home. Aspen Lakes Discovery Center provides a wide variety of toys for each age group. If there is a special attachment to a small stuffed animal, we are happy to have your child use this toy during quiet time or during times of stress. Bringing toys from home could limit the children's interest to explore other materials or lower their level of participation in new daily learning opportunities. During your child's Mighty Learner week, they may bring special toys, pictures, family members, cultural items, or a treat for their class!

Please make sure that your child does not bring any gum, candy, coins, or other small items when they come to school. These items are choking hazards to children.

Broken Toys

Aspen Lakes Discovery Center will repair or replace any broken toys or equipment due to regular wear and tear. Any damage or destruction of daycare materials that are willfully caused by your child will be replaced or repaired at the cost of the parents. You will be notified of the cost and it will be applied to your next month's fee.

Aromatherapy

We occasionally use (very) diluted essential oils in diffusers or scented wax to create a welcoming aroma in the center. If this bothers you in any way or if you or your child are sensitive to a particular blend, please let us know and we will not do it.

Abuse and Harassment

Any act of abuse or harassment committed by or against any staff, family member, child, volunteers, and all who enter our facility is unacceptable conduct and will not be tolerated. Any problems that arise inside or outside of the daycare can be brought to the Director's attention, who will then decide the appropriate disciplinary course for those involved.

Child Abuse Reporting

Created March 2018

Revised December 2021

Aspen Lakes Discovery Center - Parent Handbook

Be aware that in Alberta, it is the **law** that anyone dealing with children in a professional relationship who suspects child abuse is obligated to call Alberta Child and Family Services. Alberta Child and Family Services will offer advice for the center to follow. Aspen Lakes Discovery Center does not investigate, lay blame or give legal advice. We simply report and follow Child and Family Services advice.

Food and Nutrition

Our Menu: Healthy Foods and Natural Choices

What we put into our bodies affects our mood and energy levels as well as nutrition and energy our body needs to function properly. We encourage the children to participate in meal preparation when appropriate. This allows them to have the opportunity to try new things while having fun, and aids in developing a sense of pride while learning basic cooking skills.

Self-feeding is an exciting developmental experience for young children and one they really enjoy. We encourage kindness and table manners as well as encourage independence and responsibility by having them clean their area after eating. Please be aware that mealtime can also be a messy time. For these reasons, please provide several sets of extra clothes and appropriate for the season to be left in your child's cubby so they can be changed when necessary.

All children will eat together at a child-sized table. Children will serve themselves independently - be it by themselves completely or hand-over-hand with a staff. Children value adult tasks and love to emulate those experiences. The children are encouraged to independently clean up after themselves after meal times. If you are bringing a replacement meal, we ask that you bring healthy food without excess packaging, clearly labelled with your child's name and the date.

Our menu has been carefully created by the directors and a licensed nutritionist. Our meals, we promise, meet and exceed the Canada Food Guide recommendations. We take GREAT pride in the fact that our food is FRESH, hand/homemade, multicultural, and seriously delicious. We are constantly learning new recipes and are switching up our menu - we will post any changes on our posted menu.

Please also keep in mind that children are learning what they like and do not like. It's important to us that we provide meals that are familiar and unfamiliar. They may say they do not like a meal that they have tried only once, however studies show that it takes us eating something 15-20 times before we can truly decide! Please give them time to get used to our menu before being quick to provide replacements.

We update our menu every few months for seasonal changes. We try to include any ideas parents may have and families will be updated on the change prior to the new menu being posted.

WE ARE A NUT-FREE CENTER. LET THE STAFF KNOW OF ANY DIETARY CONCERNS YOU MAY HAVE.