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A Note from the Owner of Parachute Express Playschool

Hi there! I opened Parachute Express in the Fall of 1993, and it has been my passion ever since!! I have been blessed to have shared in the lives and learning of so many children and their families over the past 20 years, and will continue to do so for many, many more.

I possess a Bachelor of Education Degree (with Psychology Minor) and an Early Childhood Education Certificate, as well as certification in Emergency First Aid. My teaching experiences have included kindergarten to grade 4, Montessori Kindergarten, Special Needs programs in both elementary and preschool classrooms, teaching Early Childhood Education to adult learners at the college level, as well as operating other childcare facilities as an Assistant Director and Director.

Circle Time is one of my most favourite times of the day, as I love to share music, dance, puppetry and flannel board storytelling with the children. I am eager to share my passion with students from Camosun College's Early Childhood Care and Education Program in the role of a Sponsor Educator, and help to evaluate and supervise students from that program in our classroom each year. As well, I have further experience as a College Practicum Supervisor, arranging quality sites for ECE students to gain practical experience and then evaluating their progress as they work with young children.

Much of the children's learning in our classroom stems from thematic and developmentally appropriate program planning and the creation of motivating curriculum materials for all of us to enjoy, from the art area to dramatic play, to the science, math, language, literacy, social studies and sensorial activities that we participate in. The teachers of Parachute Express Playschool continually monitor each child's progress, in terms of observational and anecdotal reports, and age appropriate developmental milestones.

Parachute Express Playschool is a fully inclusive centre, in that our program is designed to meet every child's unique needs, whether they are typical in development or requiring special assistance. The teacher/child ratio at Parachute Express Playschool is one teacher per eight children at all times throughout our day.

Parachute Express Playschool operates in accordance to all Provincial Licensing Regulations as set out by the Vancouver Island Health Authority. Parachute Express works co-operatively, as well, with Queen Alexandra Centre for Children, Community Integration, Ministry of Social Services and the Ministry of Child and Family Development.

This handbook is designed to familiarize parents with the policies, routines and procedures of Parachute Express Playschool. Hopefully, this handbook will clear up any questions you may have upon registering your child, and will prove to be a useful reference for the future. However, if further questions or concerns arise, please do not hesitate to speak to one of the educators at Parachute Express.

*Please sign and date the final page of this handbook within the first week of your child's enrollment at Parachute Express, and return it to a teacher

Welcome to our happy and busy little classroom!!

Natalie Shoemaker, B. Ed., E.C.E.





The Early Childhood Education Curriculum at Parachute Express

The preschool curriculum at Parachute Express Playschool is organized and planned in such a way as to stimulate the growth and development of the whole child. Specific developmental areas are carefully considered during the implementation of our theme-based lessons. These areas include guiding and assisting the child in Physical, Intellectual, Language and Social/Emotional areas.

Physical skills are important for future tasks in reading, writing, scientific explorations and math. For example, when children string beads, line up shells, or complete a puzzle, they are refining their eye-hand coordination, fine motor skills, sense of directionality and strengthening their pincer grasp. Physical development also affects social/emotional development. As children learn what their bodies can do, they gain self-confidence. The more they can do, the more willingly they try new and increasingly challenging tasks. This positive attitude means that children are more willing to try out new physical skills without fear of failure. This increased self-confidence positively influences their attitude toward learning in other areas of development.

Intellectual or cognitive development is the process of learning to think and reason. Preschool age children are developing cognitive skills that prepare them for content work in all of the disciplines. They are becoming skilled observers and questioners and learning how to organize and represent new information. In the early childhood years, children are not only gaining knowledge, skills and concepts, but also acquiring the “**learning to learn**” skills that are so important for the future.

A solid foundation in language development gives children the skills they need to become successful learners. Children who have rich language and literacy experiences in early childhood are more likely to develop strong language and literacy skills. These skills---the ability to listen, speak, read and write---develop interdependently in children. At Parachute Express Playschool, we foster this development by presenting many different types of language experiences throughout our day, from puppetry, to flannelboard stories, to library books, songs, fingerplays and creative movement.

The preschool years are a prime time for developing social and emotional skills that are essential to children’s well-being and success, in school and in life. Three major social/emotional objectives include “Sense of Self” (how children feel accepted and valued by others), “Responsibility for Self and Others” (developing habits and character traits such as independence, self-direction and following rules and routines), and “Pro-Social Behavior” (traits that will help children get along in the world, such as empathy, sharing, taking turns). At Parachute Express, one of our most important tasks is to promote and reinforce positive relationships between preschoolers. We fulfill this role by empowering each child to make positive choices, supporting positive behavior and helping the child to begin to understand the natural and logical consequences that each behavior holds.



PARACHUTE EXPRESS PLAYSCHOOL

Supports an OPEN DOOR COMMUNICATION POLICY, which means:

- ❖ Parents are welcome to drop in and observe our program at any time, or join circle time activities with their child. If consultation with a teacher is desired, please let us know ahead of time so we can give you our undivided attention.
- ❖ Parents are encouraged to join us fun on field trips, if at all possible.
- ❖ Telephone communication and parent/teacher meetings are encouraged. Please check with your child's teacher regarding mutually convenient times.
- ❖ Parents can expect ongoing communication with teachers concerning:
 1. Their child's progress
 2. Program activities
 3. Special events
- ❖ Parents can expect relevant parent education opportunities to help them understand their child's development and the program we offer.
- ❖ Parents can expect information about community resources.
- ❖ Parents are asked to make themselves familiar with the Parent Handbook that states the policies and procedures for our school.
- ❖ Teachers welcome feedback from parents on any aspect of our program.
- ❖ Parents concerned with any incident or aspect in Parachute Express Playschool are urged to speak to their child's teacher.
- ❖ There are only two occasions throughout our entire school year in which parent participation is an absolute requirement (although we do welcome and encourage parental help at other times in our classroom as well!!). A minimum of one month notice will be given as to the time and date of these two events, so that parents can adequately plan and prepare to share this time with their child at our school.
- ❖ **Please Note:** *At both our Christmas Party in December and our Year End Party in June, one parent must be present for the entire party time with their child.* More information will follow as these family oriented events approach.



Philosophy

The philosophy of Parachute Express Playschool is designed to provide numerous and varied opportunities to facilitate and guide children in physical development, intellectual development, language development, emotional development and social development, in accordance with each child's unique needs. The philosophy of our school is based on the following three tenets:

1. The importance of play as a learning tool
2. Allowing children the freedom to make their own choices
3. Ensuring that each child possesses the rights to which they are entitled, emotionally, socially, intellectually and physically.

Play, both indoors and out, acts as a vehicle to children that cultivates their minds and their bodies by helping them to understand their world and become active participants in it. Through play, children develop their fine and gross motor skills, and learn appropriate ways to socialize and utilize personal relationships. They learn about their culture and society. They learn how to cooperate and share with others. Play encourages positive attitudes and motivates children to take risks and become more adventurous. Play inspires innovation and work through personal problems and to sort out feelings. In essence, play is the child's tool for learning all about life.

Throughout the play experience, the teachers at Parachute Express Playschool will encourage the children to choose their own activities, allowing them time to play spontaneously and to make decisions and choices for themselves. A child given this type of freedom in play will develop independence and self-reliance, which, in turn, will promote a positive self-concept, self-confidence and self-esteem.

Within our school, we will strive to meet the emotional, social, intellectual and physical rights of which all children are entitled. A child in our setting shall be entitled to the emotional right to:

- feel supported, whether feelings are positive or negative;
- to feel accepted, secure and loved;
- a sense of order, routine and consistency;
- realistic expectations, clear limits and positive guidance, with encouragement toward self-responsibility for actions;
- respect for individual ethnic and cultural differences;
- courtesy and support for his/her parents, as well as opportunities for parental input and access to parent resource materials.

A child in our setting shall be entitled to the social right to express his/her ideas, views and opinions and to have real input into the program. They will also have ample, varied and changing



play materials, teachers who serve as good role models, opportunities for both group and individual learning experiences, and freedom from pressure to be busy and/or participating at all times.

A child in our classroom shall be entitled to the intellectual right to a quality education geared to his/her developmental level, based on learning through play, and focusing on the whole child. We offer a varied and challenging program including areas such as science/nature, math, social studies, language, literature, sensory play, manipulative/fine motor play, dramatic play, music, art and physical education. Our program, which incorporates spontaneous, self-chosen play exploration, as well as teacher planned and organized activity, is structured so that each child can progress at his/her own rate and reach his/her fullest potential.

A child at Parachute Express shall be entitled to the physical right to close supervision, at all times, to ensure safety. A child has the right to feel physically safe and supported, to good nutrition, clean conditions and a comfortable, invited, well-designed classroom to provide enriched sensory experiences and a large play area for big muscle activities.

Throughout the year, the teachers of Parachute Express Playschool will evaluate and re-evaluate our program and our philosophy to ensure that optimal opportunities are being presented to encourage the play experience, freedom of choice in play and to ensure that the children's rights are being fully supported.

Guidance Policy

The word "guidance" describes a teaching and learning process by which children develop socially acceptable and appropriate behaviour as they grow to maturity. Guidance is something that adults do "with" children and "for" children, rather than "to" children. The goal of guidance is to assist the child in establishing inner control, making decisions, and taking responsibility for his/her own behaviour. Guidance is understood to be motivated by care and the desire to correct the child's behaviour, not to punish a child for misbehaving.

The teachers of Parachute Express Playschool recognize the importance of individualizing guidance strategies, as each child is unique. Two important aspects are taken into consideration when dealing with the task of guiding children's behaviour:

1. Prevention of misbehaviour.
2. Appropriate intervention when misbehaviour does occur.

The prevention of misbehaviour is a crucial goal in Early Childhood Education, as it helps to create a positive climate in which children feel love, respect, security and acceptance in order to promote self-confidence and self esteem. In this manner, opportunities are maximized for desirable behaviour by incorporating the following strategies throughout a child's day:

- ❖ Establish clear, consistent and simple limits in the classroom.
- ❖ Offer straightforward verbal explanations for limits.



- ❖ State limits in a positive way (focus on what to do, rather than what not to do) e.g. use “Use walking feet!” instead of “Don’t run!”
- ❖ Focus on the behaviour, not the child.
- ❖ State what is expected, rather than pose questions.
- ❖ Allow time for children to respond to expectations.
- ❖ Observe children in play, to anticipate potential problems.
- ❖ Positively reinforce appropriate behaviour with both words and gestures.
- ❖ Encourage children to use the teacher to guide and help them when problems arise.
- ❖ Encourage the children to use their words to solve problems.
- ❖ Reinforce concepts such as “Hands are for helping”.

Intervention strategies ensure that guidance is supportive, rather than punitive when unacceptable behaviour does occur, and includes, the following:

- ❖ Remind children of acceptable behaviour, to clarify and reinforce limits.
- ❖ Be supportive to the child by acknowledging child’s feeling before setting limits.
- ❖ Redirect child to another appropriate activity, which meets his/her needs.
- ❖ Offer the child appropriate choices to clarify expectations or reinforce limits.
- ❖ Use natural and logical consequences.
- ❖ Remove a piece of equipment from a child’s play limits, if necessary (especially for safety’s sake).
- ❖ “Time to Renew” - will be used when a child persistently refuses to abide by the rules of safety/cooperation/friendliness in the classroom. This repeated behavior results in the child not being able to manage in a group situation at the present time, and so the expectation is that the child spends a few minutes on their own to “renew”, in the form of thinking about their behavior, how it affected their classmate and the importance of listening to the teacher's words. When the “time to renew” is completed, the child and the teacher discuss what the child could do differently next time, and/or how that problem could have been solved in a friendlier way. Remembering always to focus on the child’s behaviour, rather than on the child.

By utilising both prevention strategies and intervention strategies in the guidance process, children learn appropriate behaviours, inner control, and responsibility for self, in a warm, gentle and supportive atmosphere, which is conducive to a healthy, happy and secure childhood.





Confidentiality Policy

Information about your child, verbal or written, will only be released under the following circumstances:

1. In case of emergency or injury to your child, information may be released to the police authorities or medical staff attending the child.
2. At the request of a legal guardian of the child.
3. To the teachers of Parachute Express Playschool, in order to provide the best possible care for your child, and to deal with your child with greater understanding.
4. In case of suspected abuse, to the appropriate Ministry of Children and Family Development Department, as we are instructed by law to do so.

Hours & Days of Operation

Parachute Express Playschool operates the 4 HOUR preschool program between the hours of **8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.** The four hour preschool program is closed on the following dates:

- ❖ Labour Day
- ❖ Thanksgiving Day
- ❖ Remembrance Day
- ❖ Christmas Break (similar to the public school calendar of closures)
- ❖ Family Day
- ❖ Good Friday
- ❖ Easter Monday
- ❖ Victoria Day
- ❖ Canada Day
- ❖ B.C. Day
- ❖ Last day of preschool classes in June – T.B.A. (but is usually during the third week of June)

We trust that by giving parents plenty of advance notice, we can alleviate any undue problems that may arise from these closures dated. Notice of these closures will also be posted at the school in advance.



Monthly Fee Schedule

PRICES IN EFFECT SEPTEMBER 2016 TO AUGUST 2017

(Enrollment begins at a minimum of two classes per week.)

❖ 4 Hour (half day) Preschool Program:

1 half day per week (4 hours each) \$120.00 per month

2 half days per week (4 hours each) \$230.00 per month

3 half days per week (4 hours each) \$330.00 per month

❖ Full day Preschool Program:

1 full day per week \$185.00 per month

2 full days per week \$370.00 per month

3 full days per week \$545.00 per month

4 full days per week \$720.00 per month

5 full days per week \$875.00 per month

****PLEASE NOTE: ACCOUNTS OVERDUE WILL BE SUBJECT TO A FINANCE CHARGE OF 2% PER MONTH****

There is an additional charge per month for those children registered at Parachute Express who are under 36 months old, as well as for children who are in diapers/pull-ups (regardless of age), to reflect the individualized teacher attention that is typically required for a child at this stage of his/her development. For children under 3 years of age, and for those in diapers/pull-ups, and who are enrolled in our full day program, Monday thru Friday, the extra charge is \$60.00 per month (extra \$3.00 per day). For children under 3 years of age, and for those children who are in diapers/pull-ups and who are enrolled in our 4 hour program, the extra fee is \$25 per month for two classes per week, and \$30 per month for three classes per week.

Our monthly fees are calculated according to 4 weeks in a month. However, when multiplying 4 weeks per month by 12 months of the year, you will note that we only actually charge for 48 weeks of the year. A year being 52 weeks long, discrepancy will be compensated by charging the regular monthly fee for the month of December, although Parachute Express Playschool will be closed for about a 12 day period between Christmas and New Year's.

Unlike most preschools, our monthly fee includes the cost incurred by supplying a lower teacher/child ratio of 1:8. A Registration Fee of \$25.00 is charged upon the enrollment of your child, in order to save that particular program space exclusively for you. This fee is non-refundable if you decide not to enroll your child, and is a separate fee which does not affect the monthly fees. A registration fee will be charged each September if your child does not attend during July and August, to hold his/her space upon his/her return.



****UPON ENROLLMENT, POST-DATED CHEQUES DATED THE FIRST OF EACH MONTH, SEPTEMBER TO JUNE, ARE REQUIRED.****

Additional Costs:

Costs over and above the monthly fees which will occur throughout the school year, include the following, if you wish to participate in these activities:

- ❖ Christmas party fee (which includes the cost of supplying Santa, a magician and a gift for each child – usually \$10.00 per child).
- ❖ Class/Individual Pictures (professionally done in April or May).
- ❖ Year End Party fee

****Please contact a teacher on an individual basis if these costs are not financially viable for your family.**

Financial Arrangements

Fees are due at the beginning of each month and are to be submitted in the form of post-dated cheques, dated September 1st – June 1st and are due upon enrollment. Please make cheques payable to Parachute Express Playschool. Additional cheques will be collected for July and August if your child is enrolled in the summer program.

Returned Payment Charge

If fees are returned NSF, (non-sufficient funds) there is a \$25.00 administration fee to cover bank service charges, as well as a \$5.00 late payment charge for each day the payment is delayed from the time the parent has been notified of the NSF cheque.

Late Pick-Up Charge For Full Day Classes

Please be prompt. Parachute Express Playschool closes at **5:00 p.m.** A late fee of \$25.00 per 15 minutes (or part thereof) will be charged. This fee is directly payable to the teacher on duty, to compensate for that teacher's overtime.

Late Pickup Charge for 4 hour Classes

Please be punctual in picking your child up at the end of his/her class. Late pick-ups will be charged \$5.00 per 15 minutes or part thereof. It is imperative to our teacher/child ratio that your child is picked up promptly at 12:30 pm.



Absence Policy

Monthly fees must be paid regardless of whether your child is present or not, if you wish to reserve your child's place in our program. Parachute Express Playschool will NOT decrease or refund monthly fees when a child is away from school due to a holiday, illness or other absence, as we must still reserve your child's particular days, until he/she returns. Failure to pay monthly fees during your child's absence will automatically forfeit your child's space, which will be filled, in turn, by another child.

Parachute Express feels that monthly fees are similar to "renting" your child a special place at Playschool. And despite whether your child used that "rented" space or not, it is still reserved exclusively for that child, and full monthly payments must be made. (Similarly, if you are renting an apartment, rent must be paid in full each month, regardless if you've been out of town for a week.)

Parachute Express Playschool is not able to "bank" days which your child does NOT attend (that is, if your child misses two classes, we will not give you an additional two classes at a later date free of charge, to make up for the missed classes).

Switching Days

Once in a while, if you wish to switch one of your child's regularly scheduled days for a different day, the switch must take place within the same week, and only if the Licensing Regulations permit. Please inform your child's teacher in advance as per your request.

Notice of Withdrawal

Notice of withdrawal of your child must be given on the first day of a month, as our fee schedule runs from the beginning of one month to the next. Notice of withdrawal must be submitted in writing. Fees for the month of notice must be paid regardless of whether your child will be attending Parachute Express Playschool during that time. Post-dated cheques for subsequent months will be returned following this time period.

Notice of withdrawal must be given on the first day of the month, Refunds will NOT be given for part of a month. For example, if a parent gives notice on October 24th, the one month's notice actually begins on the first day of the following month – November 1st, and full fees must be paid for all of October and November.

Notice of Termination



Parachute Express Playschool reserves the right to forfeit this period of notice in the event of a child putting other children in jeopardy. In such a case, immediate termination may be deemed necessary.

Emergency Drill Procedure

Emergency drills will be performed on a monthly basis with the children. These drills will be documented and recorded. Children will be educated as to safety during an emergency and what is expected of them during an emergency drill. Here is the procedure that we follow:

When the alarm sounds, children immediately STOP what they are doing, and WALK to a teacher. One teacher retrieves the Daily Attendance form, leads the children in a line to the designated safe spot (parking lot), and will perform a head count. Meanwhile, the head teacher checks the bathrooms and other areas in the classroom (where frightened children may hide), retrieves the First Aid Kit and the Emergency Records (and calls 911 in the event of a real emergency). The head teacher then meets the children in the designated safe spot, performs a head count, and individually calls out each child's name. Children respond to their name with a loud, "HERE!"

In the event that Parachute Express Playschool is not safe to house children in an emergency situation, all children will be evacuated to our alternate emergency location within the neighbourhood. The specific address of this alternate location is posted at both school exits for your information. It is important that you keep this address in an accessible place in your home. The emergency address may change from year to year, so please revise accordingly.

PLEASE REMEMBER...in the event of an emergency, it is crucial that your child is signed in upon your arrival. Also, it is essential that your child has a pair of indoor shoes or slippers on his/her feet everyday!! Emergencies and emergency drills are spontaneous and regardless of weather!!!

Parking Lot Safety

Please park in the designated parking lot area in front of the portable buildings. Motorized vehicles are prohibited from parking in the gravel area in front of and beside our school so that we can maintain a safe pedestrian walkway for our families.

Should you ever arrive at Parachute Express and find the chain across the entrance to the parking lot, it means that our parking lot is closed due to icy conditions. In this circumstance, follow these directions to find your way to us:

- *Park alongside the school on Canora Road (the road that runs in front of our school)
- *Park as close to the end of our playground as possible (where the large roofed area houses our big climbing tubes and sandboxes) to reduce walking*Access the community gate



which is located just behind our sandboxes/climbing tubes (you will see a small grassy area between the end of our fencing and the building next door – the gate is there)

*Follow your way to the school entrance normally used for drop off

Emergency Preparedness at Playschool

As we are all aware, the incidence of an earthquake on the Saanich Peninsula is a REAL possibility. No matter where we are, we need to be adequately prepared, especially so if your child happens to be attending Parachute Express Playschool at the time. Our emergency preparedness plan involves parent participation, and we sincerely thank you in advance for your help.

We are asking your co-operation and participation in creating a **COMFORT KIT** for your individual child. The comfort kit is designed to provide additional food as well as items that will help to make your child's stay at Playschool more comfortable, in the event that an emergency should occur. The comfort kit will be used to augment the supplies that we have on hand, which includes packaged water and dehydrated food portions. In addition, each kit should have a personalised message to the child from the parent, to give the child some reassurance in what could be a distressing situation.

Your child's comfort kit should be contained in a large size (27 cm X 28 cm) ziploc bag, clearly labelled with your child's name, and with the following items:

- ❖ Completed Emergency Consent Form
- ❖ 6 non-perishable food items, such as granola bars, sesame snaps, snack pack cereal boxes, crackers, cookies, power bars, etc.
- ❖ A personal reassuring note from you, along with a family or favourite picture.
- ❖ A small toy or game, such as a deck of cards, crayons and notebook, minigame, or a small plush animal.
- ❖ A small package of Kleenex
- ❖ A small package of Wet Wipes/towelettes
- ❖ 6 bandaids for minor scrapes or cuts, primarily for comfort purposes.
- ❖ 2 large orange garbage bags (emergency rain jacket and ground sheet).
- ❖ 1 plastic grocery bag for emergency rain hat.
- ❖ One drinking box (250 ml size).
- ❖ Any medication your child needs on a daily basis. Please send a 3 days' supply if practical, along with clear instruction for use and any special storage requirements.

****PLEASE NOTE THAT ALL ITEMS MUST FIT IN THE ONE ZIPLOC BAG.**

The comfort kit which you have prepared will be returned to you when your child leaves Parachute Express Playschool, and can be passed on to their next school.

For those children returning for an additional year at Parachute Express, comfort kits will be sent home each September to have the food/drink items refreshed. Please return the kit as soon as you have done so.



If you have any questions, concerns or comments please share them with your child's teacher(s), and again, thank you for your participation.

Registration Information

Your child's Registration Package for enrollment at Parachute Express Playschool will include the following items:

- ❖ Registration Form with 3 photos of your child
- ❖ Getting to Know Your Child Inquiry
- ❖ Field Trip and Photograph Permission Form
- ❖ Immunization Schedule to complete with immunization dates
- ❖ Emergency Consent Cards (of which there are 3 – one for our office files, one for our Emergency Kit files and one to remain in our first aid kit). Please note that each child registered requires all three cards to be filled – front and back please.
- ❖ Emergency Preparedness Note/Comfort Kit

Please ensure that all registration information is updated and revised when changes occur. Parachute Express Playschool will not be held responsible for false or deleted information.

Upon your child's first day at Parachute Express Playschool, all registration information must be complete and available before your child will be accepted for enrollment.

What Does My Child Need to Start School?

Upon securing your child's space at Parachute Express Playschool with a \$25.00 Non-Refundable Registration Fee, your child will require the following items to begin their preschool experience:

- ❖ Shoes or slippers (for inside wear only, and labelled)
- ❖ A complete set of extra clothes (to stay at school)
- ❖ Splash pants and rubber boots on mucky days
- ❖ A blanket and stuffy if your child comes for 4 hours or a full day
- ❖ Lunch and juice if your child comes for 4 hours or a full day
- ❖ Registration Package completed in full (this includes 3 photos of your child, 3 completed Emergency cards, completed registration form and immunization records).
- ❖ Series of Post-dated cheques dated to the end of June
- ❖ Sharing Snack for each class
- ❖ Completed Emergency Comfort Kit



- ❖ Pull-ups and wipes if needed
- ❖ ****PLEASE LABEL ALL YOUR CHILD'S BELONGINGS****



Your Child's Arrival and Departure

Upon arrival at Parachute Express Playschool, please have your child take off his/her outer clothes and shoes and put them on his/her cubby hook. Encourage your child to put on his/her slippers or inside shoes, and join the teacher in the classroom. Please allow your child to do as much as possible by him/herself to promote self-confidence and self-esteem.

***Please ensure that your child has been signed in on the Daily Attendance Form, and is likewise signed out upon your child's departure at the end of the day.**

If you wish your child to attend Parachute Express Playschool on a day not regularly scheduled, please inform a teacher of your request, as we **must** ensure that our teacher to child ratio is correct. We will strive to accommodate you.

If your child will not be attending on a particular day, please call us to let us know. We appreciate this courtesy very much.

Please inform a teacher, as well, if your child is to arrive or depart at different time than regularly scheduled. If you are having difficulties meeting your scheduled pickup and drop off times, we will try to help you make other arrangements. When leaving school, please encourage your child to tidy up their play area. Thank you!

Authorization to Pick Up your Child

Under no circumstances will a child be released to a person not authorized by a parent to pick up the child. All persons authorized to pick up your child must be included on the space marked accordingly on the Registration Form. However, if on a particular occasion, a person with whom we are not familiar will be picking up your child, please give us **written authorization** for this type of change. We will only accept written consent by a parent to release their child to a person not listed on the "Authorized Pick Up" section of the child's registration form. **Phone calls, emails or verbal consent will not be accepted and the child will remain in the care of our licensed child care facility, until written permission is received.** As well, on an occasion such as this, the teachers of Parachute Express Playschool require a physical description of the person allowed to pick up your child, and will require the individual to show proof through identification.

If you are aware of a potential problem with a person not authorized to pick up your child, but will try to do so (as in a custody dispute), **please pass on this pertinent information** to a teacher and complete that section accordingly on your registration form. We will require copies of court records to limit access by a parent.



Release of a child from Parachute Express Playschool:

Upon the event that a child is left at Parachute Express after 5:00 p.m., the teacher in charge will proceed as follows:

- ❖ At 5:05 p.m., the teacher will call the parent/guardian. If at this time the parent/guardian is unavailable, the teacher will proceed to call the list of “Authorized Pick Up” persons, according to the child’s registration form, to arrange immediate pick-up of the child.
- ❖ If an authorized person is unavailable, and the parent/guardian has **not** been in phone contact with the Playschool, the teacher will contact the Ministry for Child and Family Development, after one hour of time has elapsed (at 6:00 p.m.).
- ❖ If the parent/guardian **has** contacted the Playschool before 6:00 p.m., and has arranged to pick up the child him/herself, or has arranged for an alternate person to pick up the child, the teacher will wait at the Playschool for their arrival.



Please see the “Late Pick-up Charge” policy in the Parent Handbook for additional fees, which is applicable and payable by the parent/guardian.

Alleged Impaired Authorized Pick Up

It is the teacher’s legal responsibility to the extent that this is possible, **not** to release a child to an authorized person who is unable to adequately care for a child. If a teacher believes that a child will be at risk, the teacher in charge will:

- ❖ Call a relative or friend of the authorized person to pick up the person and child.
- ❖ And/or contact the Ministry for Child and Family Development.
- ❖ If the person in question is driving a vehicle, and the teacher suspects drugs or alcohol has been consumed, the teacher will explain that driving under the influence is against the law, and that the teachers of Parachute Express Playschool Ltd. are obligated to ensure the safety and well-being of the child. If the presumed impaired person chooses to drive, with, or without the child, the teacher will immediately notify the police. The teacher will also call the Ministry for Children and Families for the protection of the child.



Daily Schedule at Parachute Express Playschool

4 Hour Preschool Program

8:30 a.m.	4 Hour Preschool Program begins. All developmental areas are open for play and exploration. Creative art activities are offered.
10:25 a.m.	Clean-Up bell rings. Children help in the clean-up process to keep their playschool tidy.
10:30 a.m.	Puzzle Time
10:40 a.m.	Snack Time
10:50 a.m.	Circle Time
11:10 a.m.	Outdoor Play
12:00 p.m.	Lunch Time
12:30 p.m.	4 Hour Preschool Program ends.



How We Help with Separation Anxiety at Parachute Express Playschool

At Parachute Express Playschool, we understand how difficult transition times can be in a child's life. Entering into a new environment, like preschool, with unfamiliar adults and children is certainly a tricky transition for some preschool aged children, and with valid reason.

At Parachute Express, when separation anxiety occurs, it can be in the form of tears, withdrawal or anger at being away from the "comfort zone and unconditional love" of a parent or guardian. Sometimes children will kick and flail, try to run to the door to get outside, scream, shout and hit out.....all of these are reactions that we have seen before, and will see again throughout our years of being in Early Childhood Education. These behaviors are not foreign to us in the least, and we do not frown upon their expression, but rather seek ways to enable the child to gain confidence and cope in a more appropriate manner. Parents often feel embarrassed at how their child is coping with separation, but know that your child's behaviors are not unique.....we have seen all sorts of different expressions of separation anxiety!!!! Surprisingly, separation anxiety does not always occur on the first day. Sometimes it is a delayed reaction, and can occur several weeks later.....and sometimes children will re-visit separation anxiety during other stressful times in their lives, even when they are familiar and settled into an environment.

Over the years we have found several strategies, and employ them at Parachute Express, to help parents and children through this difficult time of development.

As a parent, you can help us help your child by considering the following guidelines when dealing with separation anxiety:

- * A child needs to feel that school is a positive place to be. Have a calm and positive attitude when talking about preschool. Encourage your child by talking about the happy things that will happen that day at preschool. Reinforce that you will always come back to pick him/her up.
- * Establish a good-bye ritual. We use a waving window at our school which allows the child to blow those extra kisses or make a silly face to start the day off on the right foot. Your good-bye ritual should be about 5 minutes long.....long good-byes just prolong the inevitable (that Mom or Dad is leaving) and can, in fact, create a heightened sense of worry and anxiety in the child.
- * Ensure that you do say "good-bye" so that your child will not feel anxious that Mommy or Daddy might just sneak off without warning.



- * Qualify your child's feelings.....do not negate how they are feeling by saying "You're too big to cry" or "Don't be so silly!". Make sure that he/she knows the importance of expressing those feelings. Respond instead by "I know you are feeling sad, but you are going to have such a fun day! I will miss you too!"
- * Understand that sometimes the stress of a new situation, like adjusting to preschool, might create a bit of anxiety in your child's sleep pattern.....they may begin to feel anxious on the weekend or in the evening, prior to returning to school. This is very natural as children are sensitive little souls, and this too shall pass!
- * Avoid repeated goodbyes.....once you say "I'm leaving now" and go through the established goodbye ritual, then go. Stalling confuses the child and can create even more fear and anxiety. Not following through on the goodbye begins to create an even bigger concern.....the child learns that you don't really mean it, and if he/she fusses enough, that negative behavior creates the desired effect.....and voila, Mommy or Daddy **does** stay longer!
- * If you are feeling very anxious yourself after dropping your child off at preschool, please feel free to phone us to get an update on how your child is feeling.

As teachers, we can help in the following ways:

- ❖ We will always respectfully get the parents permission before we scoop your child up.....but know that sometimes it is a necessary part of separating if a child is clinging to a parent.
- ❖ We will cuddle, read stories, sing songs, give a back rub and speak in a quiet, positive fashion to soothe your child.
- ❖ We will hold your child in a gentle manner if he/she is having a tantrum and we are concerned about your child's safety or the safety of those around him.
- ❖ We will re-direct your child to all sorts of enticing play features in our classroom, and encourage social play with others.
- ❖ We will call you in an appropriate length of time if your child is still very upset.....we will request additional ideas from you to help us help him/her.
- ❖ We will respect that oftentimes when upset, a child may need space and time to be on their own.....not all children like to be cuddled. Our library area is a cosy spot for a child to sit and look at books, enjoy a taped story with a headset in the listening centre or play with the soft puppets and felt board figures.



- ❖ We understand that overcoming separation is an ongoing process.....and is sometimes a slow process.....little by little, bit by bit we will see your child successfully overcome their anxiety. Reinforce those positive moments!!!
- ❖ Keep your child coming to school even when separation anxiety is at it's worst.....perhaps shorten the length of your child's day, but keep the school routine consistent.....having extra days off between regular classes will only make the return to school even harder.

- ❖ Sometimes we understand that no amount of cuddling, talking, re-directing, reading, playing, soothing, etc. etc. is helping, and at that point we respect that a child may need to work their feelings out on their own, and just have time to themselves to feel better. This is not a bad thing!!!! Children develop all sorts of wonderful coping skills and strategies by relying on themselves to work through an issue, and we certainly foster self-reliance at school. After all, the external world can only do so much for a person, it is the intrinsic strengths and skills that carry us through from preschoolhood to adulthood!

- ❖ And sometimes we see that the attention that we are giving a child is working against us!!!.....the child decides to engage in the sad or mad behavior even longer because we are reinforcing it with our attention. In this situation, we take a step back, and merely observe and supervise, without giving undue attention to behaviors that may be escalating. When this is the case, the removal of our attention quickly illustrates to the child that carrying on with a negative behavior is not giving him/her the desired effect, and consequently, he/she notes that less attention is being given. We often say to the child in a situation such as this, "When you are ready to put your tears away, I would love to play a game with you and some of your friends. Let me know when you're done."

And just know, that you are not alone in this, separation anxiety happens to most parents, and although at the time it seems (and truly feels!) like the end of the world, this part of childhood will **not** last forever, and next week you can look forward to a neat new part of growing up that will take its' place!





Nutrition Policy

The Sharing Basket is our method of providing snack for the children and it is located in the cubby room for both morning and afternoon arrivals. Parents are requested to participate each day that their child attends by depositing into the basket one of the child-sized portions from the following recommended list of acceptable snack ideas:

- ❖ A fresh fruit (apple, orange, banana etc.)
- ❖ Crackers
- ❖ A muffin
- ❖ Cookies (low sugar please! e.g. Arrowroot, Digestive)
- ❖ Raisins
- ❖ Cut up veggies
- ❖ one litre of juice to share
- ❖ cheese
- ❖ rice cakes

If your child attends for a full day, he/she will be participating in a morning and an afternoon snack time, so please supply two child-sized snacks each day. At snack time, we offer cold bottled water to each child as a beverage.

Prior to snack time, the contents of the “Sharing Basket” will be prepared and distributed onto large platters for each table of children to share. Please note that your child may not necessarily consume the entire snack that you put into the “Sharing Basket”. All of the food items will be shared amongst the children, and so please ensure that the snack you bring is able to be easily split amongst many (for example, pudding or yogurt is too tricky to share amongst a group of 24!)

We thank you in advance for your participation in our snack routine which helps us to maintain a healthful Early Childhood Education environment.

Children are well supervised by the teachers during snack times and lunch times, and will be encouraged, but never forced to consume food.

For your information, a list of snack foods offered to the children each day will be readily available beside the sign in/out sheet.

Allergy Information

It is the policy of Parachute Express Playschool to strive to be a "nut-free" environment for our preschool children. Parents will notice prominently displayed signs within the school reinforcing this policy. Snack and lunch foods which have a nut item in the main ingredient list will be kindly asked to be eaten at home, rather than at school, and a nut-free substitute food will be offered to the child.

Allergy lists are posted in the food prep area to alert educators to each child's particular needs.



Your Child's Health

Please notify Parachute Express if your child is ill and will not be attending school on a particular day. Accordingly, Parachute Express will phone parents if their child becomes ill or injured, while at school. If a parent or Emergency Contact can not be reached, and immediate medical attention is required, the school shall call an ambulance, and/or take the child to the nearest emergency service, The Saanich Peninsula Hospital. The child will be accompanied by an Educator and the child's Emergency Consent Card.

Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) guidelines will be used in determining when an ill child will be excluded from, and accordingly re-admitted to, Parachute Express Playschool. Alternate care will be arranged by parents when their child exhibits symptoms such as generalized rashes, vomiting, diarrhoea, chronic cough or persistent fever, until a clear diagnosis is established. As well, children diagnosed with a communicable disease such as measles, mumps or chickenpox, must stay at home until no longer infectious, as per VIHA guidelines. Please note how important it is to have an alternate or emergency person who can take care of your child in the event of an illness.

A child will be excluded from our program if the illness prevents the child from participating in our preschool activities, or the illness results in greater need for care than the teachers can provide without compromising the needs of the other children. The final decision, as to whether an ill child can remain at school, ultimately belongs to the teachers, as we must take into consideration what is best for all of the children in our classroom. An ill child will be well supervised in a quiet and comfortable area while awaiting pickup.

Parents will be notified by phone as soon as possible in the case of their child being involved in a minor incident at Playschool. Any incident that requires first aid will be reported to the parent.



When Your Child Requires Medication

If you wish the teachers to administer medication for you, the “Permission to Administer Medication Form” must be completed and signed by the parent, and an accurate measuring tool must be supplied.

Parachute Express will not administer a non-prescription drug (i.e. aspirin, cough medicine, decongestants etc.) unless it is accompanied by a note from your physician.

All medication must be in the original dispensing bottle.

We will not administer prescription drugs if they are out of date.

Medications will be kept in one of our locked boxes, either in the refrigerator or on a teacher accessible shelf.

Medication should NEVER be left in a child’s lunch kit, backpack or cubby, for obvious safety reasons. Parachute Express Playschool will maintain and keep an accurate record of administration.

Emergency Medication

Emergency medication, in the form of, but not limited to, ventilators, bronchodilators and epi-pens will be stored unlocked and within immediate and accessible reach of adults at Parachute Express Playschool.

These emergency medications will be stored away from the reach of a child at all times whether at school or on a field trip.

Emergency medication of any kind must NEVER be left unattended by a parent in a child's lunch kit or backpack.

A "Permission to Administer Medication" form must be signed and completed by the parent and kept on file for emergency purposes.



The teachers of Parachute Express Playschool may go on a field trip during the year, in and around Sidney. A field trip is another tool to give your child further learning experiences within the community, and, field trips are FUN! Information will be given out to families prior to the field trip via a newsletter indicating:

- ❖ Destination
- ❖ Time Period involved
- ❖ Special clothing or equipment needed
- ❖ Time of departure and return
- ❖ Volunteers required

The method of transportation may be by parent drivers. All vehicles must be in good repair and have no less than \$1 million liability. Naturally, seatbelts and car/booster seats are mandatory, and children are not allowed to sit in the front seat of any vehicle. Children who do not have a car seat provided will be unable to attend the field trip. A first aid kit, a cell phone and emergency forms with photographs for each child will be taken by the teachers as safety protocol on all field trips. When convenient, public transportation may be used. Please ensure that the Field Trip Permission Form has been signed to allow your child to participate. Join us if you can!!

What to Wear to School

At Parachute Express, we strive to increase your child's sense of independence and self-confidence. In accordance, we would appreciate your child wearing clothing and footwear that he/she can put on with minimal assistance. **Teachers love velcro, especially considering the 24 pairs of little feet that we have each class!**

In outfitting your child, keep in mind the changeable weather, your child's comfort, and the types of activities he/she will be involved in throughout the day (painting, gluing, outdoor play, climbing etc.) Belted pants with tricky fasteners prove to be a huge hindrance to a preschooler during those immediate bathroom trips!

Birthday Celebrations

At Parachute Express Playschool, your child is special, and accordingly, we want to make your child's birthday a very special event. We would like your child to celebrate his/her birthday with his/her friends, and a party atmosphere will be created for this event. Party hats, a musical activity and a birthday card will be provided by Parachute Express Playschool. We ask that parents provide a birthday cake or cupcakes for their child's birthday to share with the rest of the children (approximately 25). Thanks in advance for your co-operation!

Toys From Home

The teachers of Parachute Express encourage all toys to be kept at home with your child to prevent undue problems arising. Toys may get lost, broken or cause disputes between friends. We have LOTS of toys at school to share with all the children.

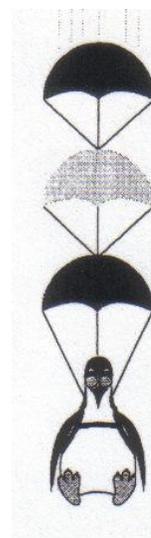
If a child does bring a toy from home, he/she will be asked to put that toy in their cubby until pick up time.

Items such as books or tapes that can be shared with all children are welcome.



Helpful Hints

1. Please label all your children's belongings.
2. Please keep an extra set of clothes at school.
3. Please keep a pair of slippers or "inside only" shoes at school.
4. Please sign your child in and out on the Daily Attendance Sheet upon your arrival and departure.
5. Please check your email for upcoming events and information in our monthly newsletters.
6. Please encourage your child to dress and undress themselves.
7. Please encourage your child to tidy up their play area upon leaving the school.
8. Please discourage your child from bringing toys from home.
9. Please discourage sending candy and gum with children.
10. Please remember to bring a birthday cake or cupcakes for your child's birthday, to share with his/her friends.
11. Please empty your child's art cubby regularly.
12. Please do not hesitate to speak to an educator if you have any questions or concerns. We want the Parachute Express experience to be a positive one for both parent and child!





Consent Form

Please sign and return this sheet within the first week of your child's enrollment at Parachute Express Playschool.

I have read and understood all the points in the Parachute Express Playschool Handbook and agree to conform with the policies stated therein.

Parent(s)/Guardian Signature(s)

Date

