



EXPLORE LEARN GROW

Locations:

Browne Creek Wetlands

Rotary Trail

Fairfield Island

Updated: July 24, 2022

Leap for Joy Open Air Learning
Parent Policies and Procedures Manual

Philosophy

Leap for Joy Open Air Learning is a nature-based education in which the child's educational experience involves all the senses with a focus on building a strong understanding of their place within their world. It involves a deep immersion into a child's surroundings where the children are the leaders of their own experiences.

Teachers act as active participants within the child's play and discovery, observers of activities, safety monitors, creative connectors of learning and supporters of expanding exploration and engagements.

Leap for Joy Open Air Learning provides optimal physical activity developing fine and gross motor skills in a way that is natural and individualized. Climbing rocks, balancing on logs, picking flowers and scooping water are tangible ways for a child to develop at their own pace.

While most preschools focus on kindergarten readiness, Leap for Joy Open Air Learning focuses on quieting the mind and body, developing the inquisitive nature of a child, large and small motor skills, developing self-discipline, building resiliency, relieving stress, social responsibilities and giving children a strong connection and understanding of their world and community. With all this in place children are physically, socially, emotionally and cognitively prepared to enter school with minds that are ready to absorb, learn and retain information taught in kindergarten and beyond.

Although learning opportunities are provided with lessons that are connected to nature, the seasons and our world (salmon spawning, nocturnal animals, habits, flora and fauna, hibernation and other adaptations) the most important element is building your child's confidence, finding their individuality, learning to regulate emotions as well as physically and socially developing into active contributors of our group and beyond. We are an inquiry-based philosophy following your child's interests and needs. Setting the stage for a life of learning.

While we do follow a routine including games, warm up time, nature connection circles, clean up, snack, nature craft time etc... We are always open to spontaneous activities because our park and classroom often offer moments that we must take advantage of. Ex: An eagle eating a salmon above our play space, a deer wondering into our classroom during snack or Fisheries telling us about a special place we need to visit to watch the salmon spawning.

The biggest contributor to Leap for Joy Learning's educational philosophy is a child's imagination! So, bring them prepared and watch them grow and learn! I know you will become just as excited as they are when they share with you the adventures they have gone on.

Class Schedule

8:50-9:10/12:20-12:40-----Arrival, Attendance, Safety and Equipment Check
9:10-9:25/12:40-12:55-----Welcoming Circle, Warm Up Game, Yoga, Group Discussion
9:25-9:35/12:55-2:05 -----Wandering, exploration and discovery to our designated play space
9:30-10:30/1:00-2:00 -----Play, Discovery, Exploration and Spontaneous opportunities for learning
10:25/1:55 -----Transition warning for snack, hand washing station is set up.
10:30-10:35/2:00-2:05 -----Hand washing
10:35-10:55/2:05-2:25 -----Snack time and tea is poured
10:55-11:10/2:25-2:40 -----Teatime, Group Gathering, Themed Nature Circle, Skills Game or Sit Spot
11:10/2:40 ----- Prepare for departure and gather backpacks
11:15-11:30/2:45-3:00 ----- Wander and Exploration back to pick up location
11:30/3:00 ----- Good-bye, Dismissal and Attendance Record

Fees

One Day per Week ----- \$95.00/month
Two Days per Week AM Classes----- \$185.00/month PM Classes ----- \$170.00/month
Friday 4-hour preschool program----- \$135.00/month
Friday 4-hour School Age Program ----- \$125.00/month

Fees are due on the first of the month. Parents may choose from 3 payment options. Cheques must be post-dated for the first of each month made out to Leap for Joy. Make sure to change the year in January. Cash must be paid before or on the 1st of the month. It is a parent's responsibility if paying by cash to make sure that you pay on the class previous or on the first of the month. E-transfers can be made to my email address nkleapforjoy@shaw.ca E-transfers must be made on the first of the month. **Please make sure to mark your child's name and class on any etransfer, cheque or envelope.** A late notice may be issued if payment is not made by the 5th of the month. Late fees may be issued if payment becomes a routine problem. Late fees are \$5 for every day late after the first of the month. I will send out a reminder to any families that have not paid by the 5th though.

Fees are due regardless if your child attends or not. A space is held for your child in their absence. If fees are not paid due to holiday or absence their space will be given up to the next child on the waitlist. No notice is required for loss of space due to negligence of fees.

Late fees may be charged to a parent if a parent is late for pick up. Staff must be paid past their allotted work hours to remain with a child if a parent is late. A late fee charge is issued at a payment of \$7 for every 15 min. late. This payment goes directly to the staff that remains at the site.

A registration fee is charged to help offset the cost of insurance and to hold your child's spot. Each child is insured while in attendance, without a parent. A registration fee is due upon registration. The registration fee is \$75. This is non-refundable and must be paid to hold your child's spot. If a spot is not available, the registration fee will be returned. **The registration fee is not returned if a parent chooses to drop out of a class.**

If **withdrawing** one month's notice is required or one month's payment in lieu of notice. All cheques are deposited on the first of the month starting in Aug. Sept. payment is made a month in advance which means that there is no payment required in Sept. if paid in Aug. The school year runs from Sept. to the end of June.

Registration

For your child to be considered registered and a spot reserved for them you must have completed the following:

- Filled in a registration form with all information (no line may be left blank)
- Signed a form for proof of immunization provided on the registration form.
- Signed a financial contract
- Signed a waiver form
- Pay the \$75 non-refundable registration fee
- Give a post-dated cheque (dated Aug. 1st) which is non-refundable once deposited. Made out to Leap for Joy or make a payment by e-transfer on the 1st of Aug. (this can be set up as an automatic withdrawal from your bank)
- Have the Emergency form filled out and signed (both sides) Please bring this form on the first day of class. It will be available on our website to print up. We carry this form, with us, with a photo of your child at all times.
- Provide a current photo of your child. (We will also take photos the first day of each child)

We cannot guarantee classes requested. All opportunities to give first requests will be made but to maintain class dynamics we require all families to make two choices of classes. You will be notified as to what classes are being offered to your child.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Role of the Parent: Parent Obligations

-To maintain contact information is up to date. (Due to the nature of this type of education parents must remain easily accessible to the program). A change in weather conditions could require an earlier pick-up time or a change in location. If the weather is deemed risky to be outdoors. (i.e. lightening, thunder, high winds or low temperatures) then class will either be canceled, or another location will be issued. No refund is made due to class cancellations because of weather. We do try to offer a few make up days through the year if cancellations become numerous. Typically, we only have cancelled a couple classes per year.

-To make sure that arrival times and departure times are respected. There is a 10-min. window for drop off and pick up times. Please be respectful and be on time. Any delay will result in a late fee if staff must remain at the park longer than their paid shift. (See section on fees for late dues)

-To make sure their child is well equipped for time spent outdoors. Children will encounter many safe elements of nature. This means that they will be playing in mud and water in all kinds of weather. Appropriate clothing is a must. A safety check will be conducted prior to a parent leaving. If a child is not well equipped, they may be asked to not attend that day or for a parent to remain with their child. (See section on Child Required Daily Equipment for a list)

-To make sure that monthly fees are paid on time. For a program to operate smoothly monthly fees need to be paid by the first of the month on a regular basis regardless of a child's attendance. If a child is away for any length of time fees remain the same to hold their spot. If a child withdraws due to a lengthy absence their space will be given up to children on a waiting list. Parents who are registered the previous year will be given first opportunity for registration the next year. (See section on fees for monthly amount and registration requirements)

-To be aware of all Leap for Joy Open Air Learnings policies and procedure. It is important that families are fully on board with the philosophy of the program. This is a unique form of education that requires families to be excited and engaged in their child's learning. Understanding the ideas and concepts of this type of education will make you and your child's experience successful.

-To know and communicate your child's strengths and limitations. Children are taught and given a sense of responsibility for themselves, their class peers and their community. Because of this, children need to be able to gage their level of risk taking while under the watchful eye of instructors. Children are encouraged to take healthy risks. Ex: Climbing on logs, playing with sticks or wading into shallow water. Teachers are always vigilant and close at hand to gage risk taking. They are there to offer encouragement, support and guidance.

-To be responsible for daily communication. It is important that parents remain in contact with the instructors. This means you must keep your cell phone available. In the case of an emergency parents may be asked to come back and pick their child up early. This could be the case if there is an injury that requires an ambulance, a sudden weather change or a child that becomes sick.

-To be available to attend classes if requested by an instructor. Parent participation is encouraged if a child is having difficulty adjusting to the routine. Feel free to join our class at any time. At the beginning of the year, while the children are settling into a routine, parents may be asked to volunteer some time to assist teachers. It is important for parents to be actively engaged in their child's learning experience,

to connect with other parents and to become involved in their community. If a child is exhibiting behavior that is a concern to instructors a parent may be required to remain with the program for their child's safety until the behavior is deemed safe. (See Parent Participation for more information)

-To be aware of risk factors that your child may be in contact with. Due to the fact, that we are outdoors in a natural environment your child may encounter some risk factors that are less avoidable. Some of these factors are plants like stinging nettles or thistles, insects like bees or wasps, shallow water, thicker vegetation, wild animal encounters and thorns or slivers from sticks or plants. All safety risks are taken into factor before entering a location. Staff are always aware of safety factors and dependent on the location will deem if a higher level of observation, limitations, expectation or interactions are required. Staff child/ratio is at a lower ratio to provide a safe experience for the child and parents. Children are taught during the year about these safety factors. Ex: While in an indoor preschool center, instructors perform fire drills. Outdoors we will perform wild animal encounter drills. If a parent is at all concerned that their child may not be able to handle the risks for that class, they are welcome to stay to assist their child. Ex: on days that are deemed campfire days or paddling days.

The Role of Staff: Staff Obligations

-To maintain safety always. This is our biggest priority. We want you and your child's experience to be a positive, beneficial and educational one. Safety is of the utmost importance. Parameters are established at each location that we enter. (See Safety Parameters for more information) All staff know that it is a team effort in observing children's locations and activities. All children must remain in constant sight of staff. Limits are set prior to exploration so that children are aware of their surroundings and can fully explore the designated sight safely.

-To observe and educate oneself on indigenous relationships and reconciliation. To observe land acknowledgment whenever possible and appropriate. To share in reciprocity with community members, children, families and staff.

-Observe children for learning opportunities. Open Air learning is an inquiry-based, emergent and experiential form of learning which requires teachers to be fully engaged. It is a teacher's role to observe children, spark engagement by modeling enthusiasm, learn alongside the children, which requires backwards teaching (see section on Backwards Teaching to understand it more fully), to maintain safety and to create and provide opportunities for connections or further exploration.

-Connect and maintain a relationship with the City of Chilliwack or the Province (Parks and Recreation), volunteers and other community groups we will encounter. A connection with our community is one of the goals and rewards of Open Air Learning. Children that are actively involved in their community are more likely to continue to respect their surroundings and environment as they grow into teens and young adults.

-Provide equipment that will enhance the program, offer educational components and provide daily equipment and first aid kits. Staff will keep on them a list of emergency procedure and contact information always.

-Ensure that each child is well equipped to spend a day outdoors in a variety of weather. It is for the safety and enjoyment of all participants that everyone is well prepared.

-Uphold all policies and procedures.

-Maintain risk assessment forms. These are done on a seasonal, monthly, weekly and daily basis. They are used to recognize, address and deal with our changing environment and the risks that may develop.

-Fill in any incident records or an incident report and communicate with the parent to ensure transparency of accidents minor or more serious.

The Role of the Child

-To be physically and emotionally capable of participating in an Open-Air Learning environment. Children must be able to listen and follow instructions respectfully, walk for a lengthy period and carry their own backpack. All staff understands that children are at different developmental levels and may require occasional guidance and discipline but for the safety of the group children who demonstrate certain behaviors may be asked to withdraw from the program. (Ex. Running away from the group, aggressive behavior or disrespect to staff and park)

-To be curious and inquisitive. To ask questions, to be engaged with all five senses and to enjoy exploration.

-To carry their own back packs. A list of required items will be given. Each child will learn the responsibility of taking care of their pack. We will teach what all items are for so that children have a strong understanding of their responsibilities for safety while in the forest or park.

Licensing

It is important to note and understand that Leap for Joy Open-Air Learning is an unlicensed program. Due to its nature, location and lack of a physical facility most outdoor programs cannot be licensed. The government is working on changing licensing regulations so that we can be licensed but, now, we are unable to do so. Because of this we are unable to access grants, subsidy and extra funding that most childcare facilities receive.

Weather

Open Air Learning is operational in all **types of weather**. Children and staff must dress for any weather changes. In the case of weather that is deemed unsafe, high winds or the chance of high winds, thunder and lightning or extremely low temperatures class may be cancelled, shortened or moved. If the weather report is questionable you will be notified by a text in the morning or even the evening before.

If the weather changes suddenly while we're at the open-air location a safe alternative will be provided to the children until parents can pick them up. This will be a shelter or open space. It may require that the pick-up be at a different location. If the weather is deemed too high-risk parents will be contacted to pick their child up. Cancellation of classes due to weather are non-refundable. If schools are closed in Chilliwack or Abbotsford, then the program will be closed as well.

Our emergency shelter is located at the Browne Rd. entrance. It provides an open field that will keep us away from trees and a shelter to get out of the weather. In the case of an evacuation. Parents will be notified, with a phone call and group text, of the need to pick their child up and the location in which we will meet. Each location has an emergency location as close to the parking lot as possible away from any danger. Rotary Trail on windy days we will go to the parking lot away from trees as well. Staff are trained to note changing weather and to have a back up plan in all locations in case of evacuation.

High wind locations:

Browne Creek Wetlands – Large open area near the river off Bergman Rd, sheltered area with large field at Browne Rd and Sheltered area with small field or large gravel area off Giesbrecht Rd.

Rotary Trail – Large gravel field off Hopedale Rd, large farmers field off Lickman Rd and Webster Park at Peach Rd.

Fairfield Island- Every park has a large open area or safe sheltered area that we will head to in the case of high winds or lightning.

Illness Policies and Procedures

Children should not attend Leap for Joy if they are not well enough to be actively involved in the program. Due to the nature of outdoor learning children will fortunately be in contact with fewer illnesses. If your child has shown any signs of illness in the past 24 hours such as vomiting, diarrhea, cough or green discharge from the nose it is recommended that they remain at home. The outdoor atmosphere does help with the spread of germs but can be an irritant to some illnesses. Please leave message by text or phone my cell if your child will not be attending. I will check my phone before we enter the forest each day for messages. If your child has been in contact with a communicable illness, please inform the staff ASAP. The sooner we know the easier it is to contain the spread. In some cases, the Health Unit may have to be informed.

Any medication administered by a staff member must be prescribed by a doctor and in the original pharmacy container with full instruction. Medication will be kept in a staff member's backpack except for an epi-pen or inhalers, which must remain with the child who it is to be administered to in the event of contact with a known allergy. See section on Allergies for more information. It is a parent's responsibility to obtain medication at the end of the class. Parents must fill in a medication form before any medication may be administered. In the case of any adverse reaction to medication a parent will be contacted, and an ambulance may be called.

Staff Sick Days

If a staff member is sick a sub will be called to replace them. If ratios cannot be met classes may have to be made smaller to maintain ratios or cancelled. 2 classes per year are non-refundable due to staff illness. All avenues will be explored before cancellation of class. All families will be sent a text as soon as possible. I will also post cancellations on the Facebook page. Parent's are asked to make themselves available to sub or volunteer at least once a year. We will only ask this if a sub, from our sub list, is unavailable. If you are interested in being placed on our sub list, please inform Mrs. Knelsen

Staff Child Ratios

Staff to child ratios are kept at a smaller ratio than regular preschool programs. Due to the nature of the program I like to keep the ratio 1 staff to 7 children. Class dynamics may require that the ratio be smaller or may even allow us to make the ratio a bit higher. We never exceed 1 staff to 8 children. Preschool centers have a ratio of 1 staff to 10 children. Our prices reflect this ratio. If you are at all concerned about the ratio please contact me so that another class time, that has a smaller ratio, may be offered. We also have practicum students from the university, but it is important to note that they may not be counted as part of the staff ratio. Please speak with me if you have concerns. Afternoon classes are smaller classes and so keep the 1/7 ratio. If fees allow a third staff member, one will be hired to

maintain a safe ratio. We always start our year with a lower ratio and then add new students in January if the class is deemed safe to increase the class size.

Allergies

All staff must be made aware of any allergies. Parents will be notified of any allergies that may affect snacks. Allergies must be listed on the registration forms and emergency cards. Any child with an allergy that requires an Epi-Pen or inhaler must provide one for the facility. It must be kept in a small plastic container in their backpack always. All medication must be prescribed by a doctor and have the pharmacist label on it. Any medication will only be given to a child if a medication form has been filled out. Any child with a life-threatening allergy will have a red tag placed on the outside of their bag listing allergies, reaction and response. This helps to visually identify children with an allergy for new staff or volunteers. Please note that an allergy is not a sensitivity. We will respect all sensitivities to the best of our ability. Ex: gluten, dairy and vegetarian. I carry on my backpack a list of all known allergies and sensitivities. Please note that being outdoors the chance of encountering bees is greater. If you child is allergic there is a greater risk to them. If there is a peanut allergy all classes affected must respect the need to not send anything with peanuts. It is important to get into the habit now of not sending nuts to school as this often is the case once, they enter elementary school. If you are sending baking, please inform staff of any ingredients that may be of concern. Staff are trained to ask about home baked goods. Some parents write the ingredients on the zip lock bag. A yellow tag is placed on the outside of a child's backpack to inform staff of any special diets.

Arrival and Departure

A child must be dropped off and picked up by an approved adult on your registration form. If someone not on the form is picking up, please inform a staff member with a note or necessary information. If someone picks up, we do not recognize and have not been informed of we will make a phone call to a parent to confirm before a child may be released. Any child that is part of a custody agreement requires legal documentation if they may not be released to a parent. Please make a note on the registration form of anyone not entitled to pick up your child. This will be highlighted.

All parents must have verbal contact with a staff member before dropping off a child or leaving with a child at pick-up time. All children must be signed in and out with the name of the person who is picking up or dropping off. Attendance is taken each day for emergency reasons. Please make sure to park and walk your child to the designated adult.

If a parent arrives after we have entered the forest, please place a phone call to a staff member so that we may let you know where we are. All parents will be given a tour of the route to base camp. If a map is available all parents will be given a map to keep in their vehicle. Our schedule will not be held up due to late arrivals. There is a 15-min. period in which we check dress code and have a welcoming circle. Once this has been completed, we will enter the forest. If there is an emergency, please phone one of the staff member's cell phones. A staff member will then accompany a child to you. Due to child/staff ratios he/she will need to bring other children with them so only use this if it is an emergency.

Please respect our safety zone around the parking lot. The children are taught to not enter the parking lot unaccompanied by an adult. Do not encourage your child to walk towards you to your vehicle. Rather come to the gate so that we may dismiss your child to your loving arms. If your child does enter the parking lot unattended, please ask them to go back to the safe zone.

Snack (Individual snack is packed at the moment)

Parents must provide one nutritious shared snack. (Please see Covid policy as we do individual snacks now until further notice) All parents will be made aware of any allergies. Peanuts are not allowed if there is a peanut allergy. Upon arrival a teacher will place your child's snack into the trays provided and return your container. You only need to provide a small portion size. Ex. One piece of fruit cut up, 8 strawberries cut in half, 12 raspberries, 1 granola bar cut up, one small container of fishy crackers or 3 muffins cut in quarters. We encourage healthy choices. You do not need to provide one item for each child. Once all the food is combined, we have a nice nutritious assortment. Remember 12-18 children are combining food so large portions are not required. Examples are fruit, vegetables, cheese, crackers, muffins, granola bars, cold meat. When a non-nutritious item is brought it is limited by making each portion smaller and divided between trays.

Hands are washed prior to snack. Hot water is carried in. Please provide a small water bottle. Tea, Hot Chocolate or Hot Apple Cider is served during the cold months. Please make sure your child has a mug attached to their backpack. Sensitivities will be respected as much as possible. If you would rather provide your child's hot drink, please inform staff.

Advertising and Facebook

Throughout the year photos taken during class may be used on our Facebook page or in advertising. Please inform the facility if you do not want your child's photo included in either of these on the registration form. There are two Facebook pages. One is our general with public access. The other is one only open to parents of the program. Please ask to be a member of our Leap for Joy Open Air Parents Facebook page. We will post at the top of the entry as to location and class so you can watch your child's learning and documentation.

Newsletters

A monthly newsletter is provided. Staff carry paper copies if you prefer this method. As well the monthly newsletter is posted on our website under your child's locations. This newsletter marks special events, gives monthly updates, provides weekly locations and gives any important information regarding your child's classes. Please save or print this photo for easy reference. We post it on the Facebook Private Parent Page as well.

Private Parent Facebook Group

Leap for Joy Open Air Parents – Please join so that you can receive information. Join by answering the question.

Fieldtrips and Parent Participation Days

Parent Participation is seen as a valuable component of a child's learning. Regular opportunities for participation are given so that parents can see their child's growth, share in their child's learning experiences and bring new ideas and skills to early learning opportunities. It is important to stress though that while parent participation is vital it is also vital that children have the opportunity to learn away from a parent. Learning to trust another adult, fully engage with peers successfully, take instruction from other trusted adults, learn to follow new guidance and discipline techniques and learn to become self-sufficient and independent fostering a sense of self-empowerment can only occur when in the trust of

an Early Childhood Educator as part of a program. For this reason, it is encouraged that children be given the opportunity to experience the program on their own. (Please see section on Separation Anxiety if concerned about your child's first few days)

If you will be a regular participant or volunteer, it is required that you obtain a criminal record check. This will be yours to obtain from the RCMP or City Police.

Fieldtrips and parent participation days are a wonderful opportunity for parents to be included in their child's learning. Leap for Joy Open Air Learning will go on a few fieldtrips per year. Parents or another responsible adult must remain with their child. Siblings may be welcome at most of our fieldtrips but must remain with a parent and not disrupt the activities. Rules will be discussed with the children prior to attending. It is a parent's responsibility to remember dates and times. A newsletter will go home each month to highlight any important dates on your calendar. Your child is welcome to attend with another family if this has been pre-arranged, and that parent is fully responsible for your child. **Our insurance does not cover your child while on fieldtrips.**

Cameras are welcome but please receive permission before posting photos of other children on Facebook.

Concerns of Child Abuse

If while your child is in care at any childcare facility it is your right to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect. Any concerns may be brought to my attention as the owner or/and the attention of authorities. All cases will be taken seriously. Any staff will be put under an investigation and if deemed necessary a suspension will be issued until deemed otherwise. The number to call is 1-800-663-9122.

All staff are required to complete a criminal record check and it must be kept on file. Any regular volunteers and students must also have a criminal record check on file. Only regular paid staff may assist children with bathroom duties.

Any disclosure of abuse or suspicion of abuse, made by staff, shall be reported. It is important to note that it is not our job to determine if abuse has occurred but to report suspicions. We are not required to disclose to a family if a report has been made. This is left up to the authorities.

Dress

Please take the time to educate yourself on proper attire for various forms of weather. The children will be out in sun, rain, snow and wind so it is imperative that they are dressed for all types of weather. For class to be successful and for your child to be comfortable you will need to make an investment in clothing. If you buy right though you should only need a few quality pieces. It may be pricey but with buying a size up your child can wear their gear for 2 years (possibly not the muddy buddies) and anything can be sold as necessary on our parent Facebook page.

Fall will require a pair of muddy buddies. One-piece suits or 2-piece suits. Take your child with you so they can choose what they feel most comfortable in. Oakiwear and MEC are some of our favorite brands. Oakiwear will give 10% off if you use our promo code. If you check Mommypow on Facebook, you may find them for cheaper. Rain boots are another must. They need to be high enough for wading into water. Kid Orca is a brand to look at although we have had a few issues with holding up for the year. The taller the better. Bogs are great as well. If you can find ones with removable liners, they can be worn all year. A

hat for protection from tics is a must. A few cheap pair of mitts from the dollar store is recommended for the fall. Warm socks are handy both on their feet and in their backpack.

Winter will require a good base layer. Visit MEC. The important thing to remember with a base layer is that it cannot be made from cotton. Polyester or Merino Wool is best. Polyester is cheaper, and I find works for me. The base layer is the layer closest to your skin. They will require a bottom and a top. Next comes their regular clothing, a pair of pants and a long-sleeved top. Then a good fleece layer (Old Navy offers this). Lots of parents have found success with putting on a pair of Walmart muddy buddy pants under their regular muddy buddy suit. A toque is a must. Lots of children love their balaclavas or neck warmers, they are highly recommended. Mittens are our most difficult purchase. 4-6 pairs of dollar store mitts in a Ziplock bag are highly recommended. These are perfect for a base layer and for quick changes during play time. The top mitten is recommended to be MEC or Kombi. Try them on your child. Make sure they go on easily and quickly. The ones with elastic around the upper arm work great. If you struggle to get them on, we will too! If you can find waterproof ones even better. Winter boots are good for snow days but not for the rainy weather so if their rain boots have liners, they work best the entire year. Purchase a good pair of warm socks. Cold feet are one of our biggest complaints and something we are unable to change. You may also purchase reusable hand warmers or Costco sells boxes of them as well. Feet warmers are sold too for those very snowy cold days.

For the most part the poor weather takes time for them to climatize and get accustomed to how to stay warm and dry. This is all part of the program. It teaches resiliency and perseverance. When getting them dressed don't make it a choice. Wearing their gear right from the start helps them to be successful. We will not limit your child due to inappropriate attire. If they are not wearing muddy buddies, we still let them go in the mud and water. Save their clothing and keep them warm by insisting that they wear all their gear. Being responsible for their own comfort is a good lesson to learn.

Each child will require a backpack. This must be size appropriate, waterproof and have a chest strap. Online shopping can provide many options from Mountain Equipment to MEC. On the outside of their backpack they are required to have hand sanitizer and a small towel. They must keep a small water bottle and a mug for teatime inside or on the outside of their backpack. Carabiners are perfect for hanging things on the outside. Inside they must have a change of clothing including socks in a zip lock bag and an empty zip lock bag for wet items. They are also required to have extra mittens and a notebook and pencil for journaling. The children are responsible for their backpack so making sure it is manageable and not too big is important.

Please check their backpack every day to ensure they are well stocked. This will be their daily essentials. **A child that is not equipped properly may be asked to not attend that day.** If a child is not properly equipped a parent may also be asked to remain with them to ensure their child's safety and comfort.

A list will go out of items to purchase on our Facebook pages. Reminders will also be listed on newsletters.

Bathroom Breaks

Please ensure your child uses the bathroom before they leave home. If they are not toilet trained, please ensure that you have a spare diaper in their backpack. Only BM diapers will be changed if deemed necessary. An outhouse is provided at the parking lot. Forest Pees and BMs are our method.

Only staff will assist the children with bathroom duties. Privacy is respected. The child's dignity is always the most crucial factor. Please ensure that your child understands the need to use the forest if toilets are not available. Most children adjust very quickly. Some would rather wait till home and we may see a few accidents until they get used to the idea. In the case of a child not adjusting it may be necessary to withdraw from the program, but every effort will be made to make the child as comfortable as possible. Please speak with me if you have any questions or concerns. We follow a leave no trace policy. So, BMs and wipes are packed out and disposed of. Hand washing is always completed after bathroom breaks.

If deemed necessary, a staff member may accompany a child to the closest washroom but in order to maintain staff/child ratio they may be required to take a group with them. If needed a portable toilet may be provided if we see that using the forest is not an option.

Handwashing

A washing station is provided by staff. A water jug is always carried with us. In cold weather the water is warm. Biodegradable forest friendly soap is provided by the facility. Individual small paper towels or a child's individual towel (hung on their backpack) is used to dry hands. Hand sanitizer, wipes, rubber gloves and masks are always carried with us.

Discipline Policy

Discipline is a continuous process of guiding behavior. It is used while reinforcing appropriate behavior, as well as during and after unacceptable behavior has been displayed. It is our goal to assist children in developing self-control, self-confidence, self-discipline and sensitivity in their interactions with others. To reach this goal all staff will:

Model problem solving skills	Limit the use of equipment if safety is an issue
Plan for positive outcomes	State limits in a positive way
Establish clear, consistent and simple rules	Be aware of minor incidents
Communicate clearly	Remind children of their limits
Point out natural consequences	Offer appropriate choices
Reinforce appropriate behavior	Redirect and Focus on behavior rather than the child

"Time Out": It is Leap for Joy's policy to limit the use of time out. It may only be used in the case that a staff member may not be able to attend to a child regarding discipline or guidance techniques. Ex: A child is injured and may need help first or a child is disruptive during a time that is important to group learning (gathering times) It is our policy that there are more immediate methods that are directly related to guidance practices that may be lost in the process of a time out. For this reason, time out is used only if necessary. All parents will be notified of any discipline issues that may have occurred during the day that is of concern. Communication with parents of our method is explained so that consistency between home and school may be beneficial.

The program will NOT use unacceptable childcare practices including leaving a child unsupervised, verbal abuse, intimidation or harsh discipline (spanking, hitting or confinement).

Emergency Planning

All staff are trained and prepared for emergencies. Some such emergencies could be earthquake, loss of a child, injury of a child or staff member, encounter with an animal or sudden change of weather. Children are also trained in order to be prepared to know what to do in the event of one of these emergencies. Staff have their First Aid or Wilderness First Aid. The facility retains copies of all staff's certification.

Earthquake

In the event of an earthquake staff and children will be instructed to get down on all fours, move together as a group towards the nearest tree or an open safe space (depending on location). Once the shaking stops a head count will be conducted, injuries assessed, and the group will head to the nearest parking lot. Once at the parking lot another head count will be conducted, injuries will be dealt with and phone calls to parents will begin. If we must remain at the site emergency supplies will be utilized.

Loss of a Child

In the event of a child getting lost an immediate head count will be completed. All children will be instructed to head to the secondary Instructor who will have the children sit quietly around her and keep them calm and reassured. The other staff member/members will then start to call out the missing child's name. All children are equipped and have been taught to use their whistle as a form of communication if they get separated from the group. The children have also been taught to stay in one place, to make themselves noticed, to stay away from water, to sit by a tree and to use their whistles. If within 1-2 min. the child has not been located a call to 911 will be given. A parent will be contacted, and a search will continue. Upon arrival of emergency personnel parents of the remaining children will be contacted to pick up their child.

It must be noted that every action will be taken to ensure the safety of children in care from constant observation, regular head counts conducted, boundaries laid out anytime we stop to explore, and limits set and maintained. Children must always remain within eyesight of staff. Orange flaggers tape or orange pilons are set out to be a visual reminder of boundaries until we deem it safe.

Injury of a Child or Staff Member

All staff have a current first aid certificate. If an injury occurs one staff member will perform first aid while one staff member will observe and reassure the other children. First aid will be performed, and a parent will be contacted if necessary. 911 will be contacted if an injury requires immediate care by a doctor. Parents must sign a waiver giving staff permission to call an ambulance. One staff member will accompany the child in an ambulance while the other children remain with the other staff member/members. Parents will be notified immediately to come pick their children up. It is asked that the first parent on scene remains at the park to assist staff until ratios are smaller.

Anytime an event occurs that is deemed an emergency, children are gathered, and a head count is conducted. Children must remain with a teacher as a group. They will be reassured and kept occupied until parents arrive.

Animal Encounters

All children have been taught what to do in the encounter of animals.

Dogs: Children have been taught to not approach any dogs. We can greet a dog from a distance and will only pet a dog if instructed from a teacher. If a dog is off leash children have been taught to not run, to walk back to an instructor, to say, "Good dog, go away!" and to not make steady eye contact with the dog. Instructors will then tell the dog to go if the dog doesn't respond on their own. Children are also taught to not swing sticks but rather to place sticks on the ground until the dog leaves.

Bears and Cougars: Children will be taught what to do in the case of meeting a wild animal. Regardless of whether we meet an animal or not preparing the children alleviates anxiety and prepares children for the chance encounter. Any encounter with a wild animal the children are taught to make themselves appear larger (standing up and raising their arms). In the case of a bear children are taught to back away slowly, join the group and say, "Hello Bear, you can stay, we will find a new place to play!" We also teach the children to loudly, as a group say, "Go away bear!" We routinely do this as we are walking and before we enter any forested area. In the case of a cougar children are encouraged to make eye contact, to find a stick or rock and to be prepared to hit the cougar on the face. Children are also taught to roll into a ball in the case of an attack. Wild animals are the reality of our surroundings, children are taught in a fun way that should minimize fear and worry. Please feel free to talk to staff about any child's reaction after instruction has occurred so that stress can be monitored and worked through. We live in a beautiful province with nature at our backdoor but along with this comes wild animals. Having children that are prepared empowers a child to feel safe in their surroundings.

All children are taught that a larger group is more threatening to a wild animal and so remaining with the group or rejoining the group upon an encounter is one of the safest ways to protect yourself.

Boundaries

Children are taught and instructed on a regular basis to respect boundaries set before them. All children must stay within the sight of staff and volunteers. While walking and hiking children must remain within the sandwich boundaries: meaning an adult at the front and an adult at the back. Any extra staff or volunteers will walk amongst the children. When playing boundaries will be set before play may begin. A site safety survey is conducted first, limits are set, and boundaries will be marked (if necessary) with flaggers tape. Head counts are conducted routinely by all staff. Before we exit or enter a new location head counts are conducted. Any volunteers are instructed on the routine and will need to be actively participating in the staff roles. Anytime we encounter water, rules are reinforced. If playing in shallow water the children must be with an adult in order to play. If near a running or rapid river all children will be required to remain right beside teachers. We only approach the river if there is an educational reason. We only play near water that is deemed safe in depth and speed. Anytime a location is deemed too high of a safety risk, children will be removed from that location. Any child that is unable to play and explore within the boundaries may be assessed as too high of a risk to partake in the program. Staff will discuss concerns with parents before any withdrawal from the program may be initiated. We may require a parent to remain with their child for a class or two to help reinforce boundaries. It is our goal to teach children healthy risk taking to give them a sense of independence and self-confidence, but safety is always our first goal!

Play boundaries are also explored. Playing with sticks and climbing are encouraged but limits must be maintained in order to play safe. Children are taught limits; height restriction are set to avoid falling injuries and aggressive behavior with sticks is redirected. This will maintain a safe environment for all.

Backpacks

Contents of backpacks need to be checked before leaving home.

Please ensure your child's backpack has:

- 1 sturdy rugged backpack that is water resistant. Please place a recognizable marker (name tag) on their bag.
- 1 change of clothing including socks and underwear in a Ziploc Bag.
- 1 healthy snack to share
- 1 tin mug
- 1 whistle with a small carabiner attached to it, which the center provides. (This is provided on the first day at our first day ceremony)
- 1 empty Ziploc bag for wet clothing or treasures.
- 1 small leak proof water bottle (filled)
- 1 small hand sanitizer hooked onto the outside of their pack
- 1 small towel hooked onto the outside of their pack
- 1 journal with a pencil or other writing material (in a Ziplock bag)
- extra mittens (dollar store is a great place to purchase)

The facility will provide:

Soap

Tea, Hot Chocolate or Hot Apple Cider (please notify staff of any preference) this is only for colder weather. Water is served to children whose parents do not want them having any one of these. Tea is herbal. Hot Chocolate and Hot apple juice are limited, tea being our preferred drink.

Extra water for drinking and washing

First Aid Kit

Extra food or items in the emergency pack

Exploration materials

Extra clothing for those who may require it

Communication

Communication is done through various methods. It is your job as a parent to stay current with planned events. A newsletter is sent out at the beginning of the month. If you did not receive one or lost it, please ask for one. Extras are placed at the front of the sign in/out and communication book. Messages are sent through texts as well. Please make sure when receiving a text to send a thumbs up or a got it note. If you are not receiving texts, please let staff know. Reminders are sent down before a change in location or a fieldtrip. Reminders will also be given verbally to the class before an event but

due to different pick up times a parent may miss this so please make sure to read your newsletter. Newsletter and reminders will be posted on the parent Facebook page so make sure you are a member. Leap for Joy Open Air Learning Parents, you will be asked a security question as only registered families may be a member. After 1 year of leaving the program you are taken off the parent page but may still access our Facebook general page. We also post newsletters on my Website – www.leapforjoyopenairlearning.ca under your child's location.

Backwards Teaching

Backward teaching is a concept that encourages child led experiences. The teachers act as facilitator to the educational curriculum watching and observing what the children are showing interest and intrigue with. Teachers will then bring in materials that will enhance, expand and develop further learning for the next class or immediately if available. This may include circle time story books, pictures, activities, felt board, clothesline stories or story stones. Material for further exploration like magnifying glasses, ropes, buckets, nets etc. Art, science and social activities may also be brought into further education. Children are taught that learning is ongoing even as an adult. If a question is posed by a child that cannot be answered by a teacher then utilizing books, community experts or computers will be brought forth so that children learn the valuable tool of resources. Community experts will be encouraged to partake in our day to give a sense of wonder thus role modeling to the children. Backwards teaching is child led so sometimes planned units or activities will be tossed aside to accommodate a child led experience. These moments tend to be our most memorable.

When communicating with your child about their day make sure to ask specific questions. A general, "What did you do today?" may not elicit much response. Instead ask meaningful questions that elicit more than a yes or no response. Ex. "What story did your teacher read today?" "Did you go to the classroom or did you explore?" "What animals did you see today?" "Who did you play with today and where did you play?" These questions will start conversation that will lead to more questions and discussions. Always feel free to ask staff good thing to ask your child that may be more directed to their time in the forest.

Art and Science

Art and Science are provided to enhance the educational experience. This may include painting, gluing, building or experimenting. Everything is done with a nature perspective. This is done by utilizing materials from nature. This will not be done daily but as an expanded learning opportunity that the children have shown an interest in, or to take part in a special part of what is seasonally going on in our forest. We do try to complete one/two nature crafts a month, one/two art experiences a month and one nature art experience (large group activity often shown with a photo on Facebook afterwards).

Loose parts

Children are encouraged to use their imagination to its fullest potential! Maximizing the use of readily available tools requires that they utilize anything at hand. This includes rocks, sticks, dirt, water, logs, leaves, flowers, mud and trees. Opening the mind up to abstract thought is a huge basis to later success in school and life. In the young child this is evident in the ability to see an object as something it is not. A

stick becomes a sword or a wand. A rock becomes a plate or a loved pet. Leaves become a salad and a log a boat. Fallen trees become a bus. This is the wonderful life of childhood!

Stick play is encouraged. Children are taught how to carry a stick to minimize injury to themselves or others. The heavy part of the stick is carried at one end while the other end is drug behind them. Smaller sticks, while walking must be used as a walking stick. Children are taught to be mindful of their stick as well as the sticks of their peers. When swinging sticks children are encouraged to be aware of their stick circle (blood bubble). A circular spin will dictate your safe space. If someone enters that space the children are taught to give a safety reminder to their friend.

Some stick injuries are expected as we learn to navigate our responsibilities. Any child that is demonstrating unsafe play will be reminded, guided and if necessary, a no stick time limit will be set.

Do be prepared for your child to become attached to their sticks. They are often their first connection to nature. Some families find a place close to the parking lot to store their sticks, some keep a treasured stick in their car, and some have a special basket outside their front door for their child to keep their sticks in.

We do encourage the children to leave nature in nature as much as possible, but we also recognize that a connection with a rock or stick sometimes is very valuable to their connection with their world.

Tool Use

Tools like saws, hammers, drills, knives and flint and steel are regularly used. All these implements are used under the watchful eyes of an instructor. Some tools are used on a one/one ratio particularly at the start of the year.

With any activity that involves risk we designate a specific area and cone it off for a visual reminder. Children are instructed on safety rules. In many cases we level children up from smaller simpler tools and as they gain skill they may move up to more difficult tools. Some tools are reserved for school age children only.

Any child not respecting boundaries and expectations may be asked to not use the tools until they can follow procedures.

In the case of fire and flint and knives each child must remain in their own safe space.

We take tool training seriously and if a child is not respectful, they are immediately removed from the tool area.

Any safety equipment is provided by the staff and all students must receive 2-3 times of instruction from a staff member before they are deemed able to use freely under the watchful eye of a teacher.

Most tool equipment is always done with a teach present in the small designated area. We carry copies of rules if you would like to view them.

Leap for Joy Library

The program has some books available to parents who may want to learn more about the open-air philosophy and history. Feel free to talk to me about borrowing a book or two.

Fires

Throughout the year we have 3 - 4 campfire days. Most days we meet at the Vedder Campground where we pay for a tenting sight. This allows us to be in the safety of an organized campfire pit. A parent or two will be asked to volunteer for these days to lower our staff/child ratio. Some campfire days are on a fieldtrip, so all parents are present.

Safety is our biggest concern. Children are taught strict rules regarding fire. A clear safety zone is stressed. Mats are set out around the fire to make a clear circle formation and a visual boundary. The children are taught what is the inside of the circle (danger zone) and the outside (safe zone). Movement is only aloud on the outside of the circle. All children must be sitting while around the fire. If a child approaches the fire it will only be with one on one assistance of an adult.

Adults are always present. The fire is never left unattended. If it is deemed time to finish the fire is extinguished. During the winter months a portable propane fire may be brought out for warmth. The same rules apply. We teach Stop, Drop and Roll and it is reinforced regularly.

It is Leap for Joy Open Air's policy for children to experience all the 5 Elements of Nature: Air, Water, Earth, Fire and Space. For children to have a deeper connection with their world and their needs. It is always stressed to parents that if they have any concerns about safety, they are welcome to stay to assist their child.

Food may be cooked over or near the fire. Some things we enjoy cooking are bannock, pancakes, baked apples, hot dogs (sliced length wise for safety), and marshmallows. Older students will do more cooking including soups and stews.

Risk Assessments

Risk assessments are done on a yearly, monthly, weekly and daily basis.

During the summer staff discuss risk factors that came up the previous year. A risk assessment form is completed and filed. Codes of conduct are planned to either remove the risk or lessen the risk factor. Ex: Snags in the forest are checked, poisonous plants, steep embankments, child behavior.

Each month as seasons change risk assessments are evaluated. Risk assessment forms are filled out and discussed to minimize risk further. Ex. Maintaining warmth, tree snags, frozen water, rushing water, level of water, wild animal encounters.

Each week risk assessments are checked. Over the weekend our location may have changed. If deemed necessary, a risk assessment form may be filled out. Ex: garbage, snags, water level, plants.

Daily, risk assessments are conducted. Before we enter a new location, a staff member does a quick visual assessment. As we play staff are always on the lookout for any risks. If something is deemed a risk a quick verbal risk assessment is completed. If necessary, a risk form is filled out for later reference. This form will be filled out at the end of class.

Facebook

Leap for Joy Open Air Learning has both a Facebook page and a Facebook parent only page. Please follow both. You will be asked a security question for the parent page. Leap for Joy Open Air Learning Parents. If you do not want your child's photo on either of these pages, please notify staff.

Class Schedule Break Down

8:30-9:00: Staff arrive. Wagon is loaded up with the days required materials (discovery bin, washing station, extra water, hot drinks, mats, stools). Backpacks are laid out and checked. Backpacks contain daily required materials (first aid kit, hammock, changes of clothing, emergency contacts, bear banger, bear mace, allergy information, wipes, Kleenex, propane stove, tea makings, circle materials). Daily schedule is discussed, and risk assessments discussed. Parent drop off area set up (sign in and out booklet, newsletters, lost and found, snack trays). Clothing check of staff. Prepare for the arrival of children. Please be respectful of start times. Staff will not sign children in until class drop off time at 8:50. We use the morning to discuss class schedule, program planning etc.

8:50-9:10: Children start to arrive. One staff member remains in the parking lot at the sign in and out location. They make verbal contact with parents. Discuss child's morning, place snack in snack tray and sign child in. A clothing check is done. It is a parent's job to have children properly dressed for the day. If a teacher deems is necessary a parent may be asked to remain with their child, due to improper clothing (ex: too few layers on a cold day). A few extra layers are provided by the center. If a parent requires more clothing, they are provided with extra that is returned at the end of the day. If a child is inappropriately dressed, staff have the right to refuse the attendance of a child for that day. Before joining the group, this staff member must complete a day's head count to be relayed to the other staff.

One staff member heads down to our meeting location. This staff members roll is too make sure that all children stay as a group, assist children with separation from their parent, make sure children do not go back up to the parking lot, keep a head count, creatively engage with the children. (ex: start a scavenger hunt, discuss the weather, notice changes within our forest). Conduct a Greeting Circle (Hello song, warm up game, discuss child led ideas for the day)

If a third staff/volunteer/student is present, they take up a middle position at the gate. Their role is to make sure no children enter the parking lot without an adult. They assist children with their goodbyes and keep a head count.

9:10-9:20: Greeting Circle is conducted. Welcoming songs are sung. This is our opportunity to prepare children for the expectations of the day. We also use this time to do a warmup activity if it is cold. Children are then given the opportunity to have a say in how they want their day to proceed. Exploration day or Forest Classroom day. Rules are given or reminded of.

9:20-9:40: We head off for the day. One adult always remains at the front of the group and one at the back with any additional adults in the middle. Time is taken to explore and notice things that we find along the way.

9:40-10:25: Free Play or Free Exploration. Children are given the opportunity to have as much hands-on experiences with their environment as possible. Safety is our first concern. Children are given free opportunity to choose their activities. Teachers act as facilitators, following the child's lead. Continual scanning is done by all adults to make sure children remain in the designated play space. If near a water

source a teacher is always present. Nature crafts or special activities are completed. Head counts are routinely conducted.

10:25: 5 min. Warning for snack

10:30-10:35: Clean up. Washing station is set up and all children must wash their hands. Environmental soap is used.

10:35-10:50: Snack time. Allergies are noted. Children must remain seated while eating. Tea is served, on cold days.

10:50-11:10: Nature Circle time. A short circle is conducted. A story is told, songs sung, nature felt board stories are brought out. Story telling is a huge component and the children are encouraged to add to our story telling experience. Tea may be brought to circle if not finished at snack time.

11:10-11:15: Prepare to head home. Backpacks are put on. Lost and found is presented. Mittens or outerwear is given out.

11:15-11:30: Exit the forest. Exploration is encouraged on the way back. Children must wait at the sitting log till all children are accounted for. Once all children are present, one staff goes up to the parking lot with the sign out forms. Then children are dismissed one by one to their parent. Once most of the children have left the last teacher takes the remaining children to the front to wait for parents.

Head Counts

Head counts are conducted at the start of class. All staff are notified of the daily headcount. Head counts are conducted before we enter a trail and before we exit a trail. Anytime we pause a head count is done before we start again. While at play head counts are conducted on a regular interval. If the children are spread out a teacher will call out her head count and the other teacher will respond with her head count. Numbers are totaled to make sure that all children are accounted for. Regularly we do head counts out loud so that all adults are aware of the total at any given moment. Head counts are also done before and after we enter a play space.

Photos and Videos

Photos and videos are done regularly. Parents love to see what we do during the day. These are posted on Facebook (our best method of advertising) or on the parent page. Only Mrs. Knelsen has access to the Facebook page, but everyone can post on the parent page, as a security question must be answered to join. If you do not want your child's photo taken or kept off Facebook, please note this on your registration form.

Photos and videos are used as a form of documentation. Please refer to our Facebook private pages and public page to view any documentation that supports and shows evidence of the benefits to forest schooling. Staff do some beautiful write ups and post some amazing photos.

Lost and Found

A lost and found bin is kept in staff vehicles. If you are missing something, please look in the bin. Labeling items is very helpful. We also sometimes post photos of lost items on Facebook.

To avoid the loss of an item we strongly recommend labeling everything. You can purchase labels (Loveable Labels, use a Cricket machine or a permanent felt)

Mud Play, Water Play and Risky Play

Play is essential to a child's development. It is the foundation to their cognitive, physical, social and emotional well-being. It is the most natural way for a child to grow. The child's right to play must be protected. Being outdoors with minimal toys encourages a child to be fully engaged. Their imagination, their senses and their boundaries are theirs to control. A child is only limited with regards to safety. The rest is left up to them.

Mud play is one of their favorites. They may stomp, pat, roll, squish, and slide in it. The sensory significance of mud play is vital to a child's development. Our connection to the earth is developed when we are young. Direct hands on experiences shapes how we see our world. Play in mud helps physical development like balance, sensory development, cognitive development like using descriptive language and emotional development like being able to handle getting dirty. Expect your child to come out of the forest wet and muddy some days. If you are a parent who may not like the thought of your child's boots being caked in mud this program may not be for you. We are not neat and tidy about our play. As we like to say, "Be happy that someone else is willing to do and go where you may not be comfortable." Some of our most memorable days have been our messiest! Embrace it!

Water play follows the same significance. Cold weather times are the only times that we limit water play. The Soup Kitchen bin and fishing are their favorite activities. Both are encouraged. The one rule we have is that when near water a teacher must be present. A child is never left unsupervised near water. Any body of water that is deemed too deep or too swift is not approached as an area for play. Children are taught how to assess water safety. If children get wet feet, we will only change their socks when they request it. Often, they may get wet feet but still be warm.

Be prepared for a required change of clothing at the end of the day. Parents have been very creative in how they deal with muddy and wet clothing. Some suggestions are: 1. Keep a change of dry clothing and shoes or slippers in your car. 2. Keep a mat for them to step on in the back. A good one is a one of IKEA's big shopping bags. You can store their spare clothing in it and when they are wet or muddy you just set the clothing to the side, have stand in the bag and take their clothing off right into the bag. Then a quick change and everything is contained in the bag ready to go in the wash.

Risky play is also encouraged. This will include crawling across logs, climbing trees and rocks, wading in water and using sticks. Accidents do happen (slivers, slips and falls). Teaching children to gage their own safety is vital to later success and failure while on playgrounds etc... unsupervised. Obviously, limits are set for safety but more often you will hear us asking a child if they feel safe and secure rather than telling to not do something. Everything is done with adult supervision and is constantly being gauged and risk assessments done.

Separation and Separation Anxiety

For many children this is their first experience away from Mom or Dad. Some difficulty with separation is expected. Please do not confuse your child's tears with separation anxiety. A couple minutes of crying when you leave is normal and shows a strong bond with you, but it does not mean they suffer from separation anxiety. How we deal with separating from our child is what often can lead to them having a more difficult time saying goodbye. When we send mixed messages, we leave a child with the impression that there is a need for them to be nervous. Instead a positive, upbeat and matter of

fact attitude from you will serve them far better than your hesitation. So, leave your emotions at home and come with confidence.

Please do not worry about us, the staff. We all have years of experience in helping children to adjust. Your child will be lovingly taken care of. Their feelings will be validated, and they will be reassured and comforted. One of us will take them under our wings and help to build a trust with staff and peers. Before long, you will see them bud into a confident and active participant of the class. But we can only do this when given the opportunity to work with your child without you. We all understand how hard it is to let go but by choosing our program, you are taking the first steps to letting them form their own necessary autonomy.

Having parents stay until their child adjusts has proven time and again to just prolong the inevitable and creates an environment of mistrust. Remember for your child to learn to trust you they must be put in a situation that will foster it. This cannot happen if a parent is ever present.

If your child shows anxiety at home or in the car, please speak with staff. There is a difference between separation anxiety and the need for control. Working through this together we can determine which one of these it may be. The two are very different and by getting to know your child, observing them during the class and seeing how they interact with you we are pretty good at determining the route we need to take to help your child adjust. If we are at all concerned and feel your presence will help, we will notify you and arrange a schedule that will help your child be more successful.

We want what you want and that is a happy, well-adjusted and thriving individual. It is our goal and together we can make this year or two memorable and helpful in your child's developmental and formative years.

Child Development Center

Through the year we work with the Child Developmental Center. If a child requires a support worker, a consultant will visit us on a monthly basis. They interact with the children but are there for guidance and support of the designated child.

If you have any concerns about your child's adjustment or development, please speak with a staff member. We can arrange for a child to be observed and forms filled out with CDC. The sooner we can get CDC on board the sooner your child will receive the services they require.

Concerns could be with speech, emotional, cognitive or physical development or behavior. CDC's involvement can go a long way in providing necessary services, support at preschool or transitions to kindergarten but they must be in place early. So please do not hesitate to speak with a teacher.

Breaks and Closures

We follow the school calendar. We are closed for Christmas Break and Spring Break. Our year is from Sept. to June with registration starting in January for the next year. We are closed for all statutory holidays but are open on Professional Development Days. Staff receive one professional development day per year. If we are all going, then the center may be closed for this day as well. Fees remain the same each month as the payments are prorated for the year.

We will offer summer camps at an additional cost. The two middle weeks of July and Aug. Our Summer Camps are for children 6 and up.

We will offer an extension of our yearly program in a Summer Semester for children 3-5.

Environmental Sustainability

It is Leap for Joy's policy to have as little impact on the environments we spend time in. We teach sustainability, we watch for our footprint and maintain to minimize our impact. We utilize the city programs, provincial programs and programs with fisheries to make sure that we leave our forest, play spaces, streams and rivers as healthy as possible. Plants may be planted with the help of the city, learning opportunities provided and if deemed necessary a space will be given time to regrow to maintain a healthy balance. We know that areas we play in will eventually look like a space that has shown wear, but we limit this space. It is a balancing act and one that staff, and children take seriously.

In all cases the children are made to feel a part of any decision making that goes on. They may help to take down a beaver dam, plant local native species of plants or help to clean up an area of garbage.

Our motto is to leave our space better than when we entered it.

We do follow an Honorable Harvest teaching. Feel free to look this up on the internet to be aware of our teaching.

Communication with Concerns

Please always feel free to call me, Nadine Knelsen, with any concerns you have. I pride myself on full transparency and we want to lovingly support our families with any concerns they may have, no matter how minor it may be. There is always room for growth, but we can only do this if parents inform us of their ideas or concerns. Whether it is to do with the program or with staff we are open to discussions. My love for my program and what I have created is my life and breath. So please know your child's experience will not be impacted if you have concerns. Nadine Knelsen 604-556-8714