

*A parent's Guide to
the services of the*



**Unicorn
Children's
Centre Inc.**

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Revised September 2005

Unicorn Children's Centre Inc.

"A Great Place to Grow"

PURPOSE AND VISION

The Unicorn Children's Centre is a place where all children are accepted and encouraged and where "kids can be kids". It provides an environment that is creative, entertaining and enriching. The Unicorn focuses on the whole person by nurturing the value of learning in a non-pressured environment.

The Unicorn offers affordable child care that provides the flexibility necessary to address the changing needs of the children, their parents and the staff. The Unicorn will excel in the development of the whole child by ensuring that it's staff are current, competent and capable. The Unicorn provides an enriching environment for children to grow and a fulfilling environment for the staff to work.



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Welcome to the Unicorn Children's Centre

The Unicorn began providing child care services in 1982 and moved to its present location on Cleveland Avenue in the summer of 1986. The first after school program was added in the fall of 1989.

In September 1994 the Unicorn became the first child care centre in the Greater Moncton Area to obtain integrated status and has continued this commitment to meeting the needs of every child.

All childcare professionals employed at the Unicorn Children's Centre are chosen with the highest standard of care. We strive to hire experienced Early Childhood Educators who have either completed or are taking courses in Early Childhood Care & Education (or an equivalent program). We are dedicated to continued professional development and attend, whenever possible, various conferences and seminars, which facilitate our ability to provide quality programs and care for, the children enrolled in our programs.

The Unicorn is also a member of the Canadian Child Care Federation as well as a local coalition Childcare Connexions garde a l'Enfance. These memberships affirm that we care enough about children to work in a united effort with other childcare organizations to improve the status of children in New Brunswick.

The Unicorn Children's Centre acts as a model for Early Childhood professionals in training through Cooperative Education Programs of various educational organizations. Therefore, one may occasionally see students from various institutions, observing and interacting within our various programs.

Finally, the Unicorn Children's Centre Inc. is a not-for-profit educational centre for both pre-schoolers and school aged children, run by a volunteer board of directors.

UNICORN PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

The following statements describe the beliefs, values and principles, which guide the development of all programs developed and offered at the Unicorn Children's Centre.

- ✎ A Child's development of values, such as respect, trust and honesty, is promoted when the significant adults in their lives model these values by demonstrating them consistently with both children and adults.
- ✎ A child's development of autonomy and self-confidence is enhanced when he/she is consistently and appropriately challenged and encouraged to strive for her/his highest level of achievement.
- ✎ A child development of self-esteem thrives when he/she is given opportunities and encouragement to develop and perform according to her/his own unique needs and abilities.
- ✎ Quality programs include a variety of activities through which children experience physical, social, emotional and moral growth.
- ✎ Quality programs focus on how children learn and develop within an environment that is stimulating, caring and nurturing.
- ✎ The formative years (birth to five) are crucial to child development. High quality childcare experiences significantly increase a child's potential for later success.

- ✎ Children benefit from a “**Whole Child Approach**” to teaching. Through which, each child’s unique social, emotional, physical, cognitive and moral qualities and differences are valued.
- ✎ Parents need to know their children are safe and happy.
- ✎ Parents’ participation is valuable and should be encouraged in any possible capacity.

SECTION A OPERATION

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

All children may be dropped off at the main Centre after 7:00 a.m. each morning and must be picked up by 5:30 p.m. each day. Late closure, until 6:00 p.m. is available for an additional fee of \$ 5.00 per week (arranged in advance). Your child must be escorted by an adult to and from the centre. ***This means bringing your children into the Centre and to their respective classroom teachers before leaving.*** Please make eye contact with the teacher so you are assured that they know that your child has arrived or has left.

LATE FEE

There will be a **\$5 charge** per child for every 15-minute intervals after 5:30 pm that the parent is late in picking up their child. There is a maximum late charge of \$20.00. This money is paid directly to the staff member who stayed late with your child.

Should you require service between 5:30 pm and 6 pm on a regular basis, the office can arrange to have your child added to late service at a charge of \$5/wk.

SIGN OUT SHEET

For the safety of your child, your child will not be permitted to leave the Centre with any unauthorized person. If you are unable to pick up your child, please contact the Centre with the name of the person who will be accepting responsibility for your child that day. That person will be required to **sign a SIGN -OUT sheet** before they leave with your child. If this person is someone that our staff have not met before they will be asked to **present photo identification.**

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

The Unicorn Children’s Centre is closed on public holidays with regular fees charged for these days (fees are prorated for the year). Public holidays include:

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| ☺ New Year’s Day | ☺ Labour Day |
| ☺ Good Friday | ☺ Thanksgiving Day |
| ☺ Victoria Day | ☺ Remembrance Day |
| ☺ Canada Day | ☺ Christmas Day and Boxing Day |
| ☺ New Brunswick Day | |

The centre ***will be open*** on Easter Monday if the number of children warrants it. A notice will be posted asking parents if they require service.

EARLY CLOSURE ON CHRISTMAS EVE

The Centre will close at 3:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve as a gesture of respect to the families who await our dedicated teachers and staff.

FIX UP DAY

One week day in May of each year will be assigned to the general repair of the classrooms. The Centre will be closed on that day and the parent's will be notified at least 4 weeks in advance of the closure. (** Established program rates include this Fix Up Day*)

CLOSURE POLICY

When School District #2 is closed, so are all our Playschools. The children, who attend Junior and Senior Super Kids Club, are to go directly to St. Paul's United Church for the full day (i.e. March break, storm days, in service days, etc.). All other children are to meet at the Unicorn's Main Centre.

The Unicorn Children's Centre will make every attempt to offer service regardless of the weather and other circumstances but does recognize that circumstances beyond our control may arise from time to time and we reserve the right to close the centre should we experience loss of power, no running water, fire exits are not clear, storm makes weather conditions dangerous for staff to travel home. Parents will be given ample time to make arrangements to pick up their children.

GIVING THANKS

The Unicorn Children's Centre believes and promotes the philosophy of encouraging children to give thanks for their food and Teachers use this as a teaching tool to:

- ✓ Teach respect for
- ✓ Increase language development (rhyming, sequence)
- ✓ Expose children to music
- ✓ Help children during a high stress transition time

Teachers will be responsible for the frequency and choices in their individual classes but will be encouraged to use graces that are fun, challenging and non-denominational.

SECTION B REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

REGISTRATION

A non-refundable registration fee of \$25.00 will be charged upon registration of each child in any program at the Centre. Playschool children who have been previously registered in a program without interruption can re-register for the following fall with a \$10 non-refundable fee to hold their spot.

Each parent should receive a parent policy manual, child profile and a rate sheet upon registration in any Unicorn program. Parents must then complete and return the Child profile prior to the child's start date along with a copy of their immunization record. Parents are required make changes and update their child's file as needed.

CHILDCARE FEES

The Board of Directors sets childcare fees annually, having regard to the budgetary needs and the non-profit status of the Centre. We are sensitive to the need for affordable childcare as well as our objective of not compromising the high quality of care provided. Reasonable notice will be given prior to any change in fees.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE – amendments Sept. 2005

Childcare fees are required in advance of services rendered; in the form of cheques or cash and may reflect a weekly, biweekly or monthly payment, as may best suit the member's needs. If paying by cheque, three months postdated cheques are requested.

Delinquent accounts will be subject to a **\$5/week charge** retroactive to the last week the account was in good standing.

N.S.F. CHEQUES

The Centre will charge a fee of \$25.00 for N.S.F. cheques. All other fees charged from the bank will be the responsibility of the parent.

RECEIPTS

Receipts are issued upon each payment when paying by cash and by request when paying by cheques. Your official childcare receipt will be issued annually to accounts that are in good standing.

DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS – additions Sept. 2005

- Notification to replenish post-dated cheques will be issued. If cheques/cash are not received within two weeks an official letter will be issued to the parent requesting payment of overdue account indicating they have one (1) week to bring the account up-to-date or their child(ren) may be required to leave the centre. Should they wish to return they will have to wait for a spot to become available.

- Where delinquent accounts are not rectified before the child(ren's) departure from the facility the matter may be referred to a collection agency at the discretion of the Executive Director. Any fees associated with the recovery of funds owed to the centre will be the responsibility of the parent.

MULTIPLE PAYMENT ACCOUNTS – created Sept. 2005

- The Unicorn Children's Centre will only create one account per child. Therefore if there is more than one person responsible for paying childcare fees all parties must sign a release that gives permission to share information about said account to all payees (ex. separated parents).

- In the event that parents not wish to agree to the sharing of information the parent who registered the child will be required to make all payments on the account and all correspondence (ex. receipts, balance, payment information) will be made with **ONLY** that person.

HOLIDAY TIME

- ➔ Holiday time is to be taken between September 1 and August 31
- ➔ Vacation weeks are to be taken as full weeks (Monday to Friday)
- ➔ Holiday time is **not** eligible to be carried forward to the next year.

Only after children have signed a contract at the Centre is the child's family entitled to two or four free weeks of holiday time. This means the weeks without charge but the child must not attend the centre during this period.

School Age children who register for the program after September are required to purchase vacation weeks and buy into the contract. This contract must be selected upon registration in the program. Some extra fees and conditions will apply should the start dates be after September.

TWO-WEEK NOTICE OF DEPARTURE

Two weeks notice is required prior to the removal of a child from the Centre. Should you fail to provide the two weeks notice you will be charged two weeks fees in lieu of notice.

TRANSPORTATION – Additions September 2005

The Unicorn has a 15 passenger van and an 8 passenger vehicle which they use for drop off and pick up at the local schools, and outings. We also make use of the Codiac transit system, VIA Rail and other carriers to transport our children on special outings. All drivers who transport children hold a valid Class 4 Driver's Licenses, have had a recent medical and must be over the age of 25.

SECTION C HEALTH AND SAFETY

WHEN TO KEEP YOUR CHILD AT HOME – amended 2005

A child with a contagious illness is required to be kept home as per **new Provincial standards and regulations**. Your child will be required to be picked up **within the hour** should they develop symptoms of illness during the day. In such a case, will we attempt to isolate the child from the group and the parent/guardian will be contacted. Should we not be able to contact parent/guardians we will then begin to contact the emergency contacts.

KEEP YOU CHILD AT HOME IF HE/SHE HAS:

- < Fever
- < Persistent dry cough
- < Heavy nasal discharge
- < Symptoms of a communicable disease (these are redness in the eye and/or discharge from the eye, sore throat, headache, rash, abdominal pain, fever).

Children are expected to take part in all activities at the Centre, including outdoor play. If they are unable to participate due to sickness, they are **not** well enough to attend the Centre. In the case of a communicable disease the parent is to notify the Executive Director of the diagnosis provided by the child's physician as soon as possible so that the Centre may notify the other parents of their child's possible exposure to the disease, in compliance with the Department of Family and Community Services Standards. You are required to inform the centre of the signs & symptoms your child is exhibiting during illness for our records.

Please refer to the Managing Illness in Child Day Care Facilities Parent's Role and New Brunswick Child Day Care Facilities Exclusion Reference Guide.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION

Medication (over the counter and prescribed) that has been brought into the Centre by a parent/guardian may be administered to a child. Written authorization from the parent/guardian must be obtained before *any* medication will be administered.

A medical form must be completed and signed by the parent/guardian *each time medication is administered*.

All medication must:

- < **Be in the original container with original label,**
- < **Be identified with the dosage and name of the child for whom the medication is intended,**
- < **Prescribed medication must have the name of the physician, instructions and time period of the use.**

No medication other than Acetaminophen, for which we have consent can be administered to a child via a phone call. You must come in person to sign the consent form in the event your child becomes ill at the Centre and requires medication. We regret any inconvenience this may cause in your day but it is for the safety of your child.

ABSENCE DUE TO ILLNESS

If your child is absent due to illness you will be charged regular fees. If it is an illness of 5 or more consecutive days, you may submit a **doctor's certificate** and the office will credit your account for **half of the regular fees for the days absent**. This is special consideration and is available once per year per child.

NUTRITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Weekly menu plans of the daily meals and snacks are prepared in accordance with Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating and Child Day Care Facilities Operator Standards. The menu plan for a four week period is posted outside the kitchen and entry way.

Snack's are provided every day in both the morning and the afternoon programs, other snacks need not be brought to the Centre. Please do not allow your child to bring in junk food, candy or gum.

NUT PRODUCTS - amended September 2005

- The Centre will make all reasonable efforts to eliminate nuts or nut products from the menu **when we have a child attending the centre who is identified by a doctor as having an ANAPHALACTIC nut allergy. Should a child have such a severe allergy identified by a doctor we will make all possible efforts to eliminate that nut product from the centre.** Should there be no children with anaphylactic nut allergies attending the centre the ban will be lifted.
- Further, the Centre will require the parents and guardians of other children attending the Centre to refrain from bringing such food products into the Centre when the ban is on.

SCENT FREE ENVIRONMENT

It is strongly encouraged that staff, as well as parents and guardians of children attending the Centre, refrain from wearing scented products (i.e. perfumes or colognes) at the Centre.

CHILD ABUSE

If the staff of the Centre has reason to suspect there is a possibility of child abuse, they will immediately advise the Director. We, the staff, will record what we find and take steps to report it to the Screening Unit at the Department of Family and Community Service.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

The Unicorn Children's Centre emphasizes the provision of well planned programs which meet the individual needs of all children, thereby, greatly reducing the frustration or boredom which so frequently leads to disruptive, inappropriate behavior.

Children will learn, through interaction with their teachers, other children and his/her environment, that he/she is capable of success and self-control.

All interactions at the Unicorn, including those that are disciplinary in nature, will provide the children with learning experiences and opportunities to develop an understanding of moral values and a sense of security and will promote the development of a positive self-concept.

Appropriate and consistent limits will be set, based on the children's ages and development abilities, in order to ensure a safe and healthy environment for both the children and our staff.

Our Early Childhood Educators will optimize the development of self-control and minimize cause for inappropriate behavior by:

- Providing a sufficient number of interesting and stimulating activities
- Giving advance warning about transition times so the children will know what to expect
- Being aware of the environment and interactions occurring within the classroom and redirecting inappropriate behaviors
- Providing positive reinforcement for all positive behaviors in order to promote the children's recognition of which behaviors are expected and encouraged
- Allowing children to make choices as often as possible, while making expectations clear when it is not a matter of choice
- Using proximity and touch to remind children that they are available to help them through a difficult situation;
- Providing clear, consistent and appropriate limits based on the children's needs and developmental levels, preventing confusion as to which behaviors are expected;
- Providing age-appropriate explanations and reminders, for the limits that have been established, in order to promote the children's development of independent self-control;
- Consistently modeling appropriate and acceptable behaviors such as respecting the children's needs for personal space, using manners and abiding by the same "rules" as have been established for the children;
- Ignoring minor incidents, as long as no other individual is at risk, in order to avoid negatively reinforcing an inappropriate and unacceptable behavior;
- Focusing on the behavior rather than the child and establishing limits in a positive and specific manner i.e. "put your feet on the floor please, chairs are for sitting";
- Using "time outs" appropriately and **only** when **absolutely** necessary. Time outs will not exceed one minute per age of child.

We will **NOT**:

- Under any circumstance, threaten or punish any child physically, verbally or emotionally;
- Withhold food from a child due to misbehavior.

Parents will be kept informed of their child's behavioral development and notified of any behavioral incidents. Information regarding your child and your cooperation in determining the causes and the best possible solutions for your child's inappropriate behavior is both appreciated and expected. We, as your partners, in your child's early childhood care & education need and appreciate your support in helping your child to develop into a confident, respectful and caring individual.

DISMISSAL

If a child's disruptive behavior (either physical or emotional) continues after attempts by staff to work, together with parents, to resolve the difficulties, childcare services may be discontinued. Should we contact you about your child in this situation you can obtain a more detailed format of the steps implemented at the office.

EVACUATION PROCEDURES

Should an emergency arise at the main centre, the rally point will be St Paul's United Church. Should an emergency arise at either the Super Kids Club or the Junior Super Kids, the rally point will be the Unicorn Children's Centre. Parents will be contacted by telephone in the event of an emergency.

SECTION D

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

As a member of the Unicorn Children's Centre, parents are encouraged and welcomed to participate in the Centre. Examples of ways for parents to become involved are:

- Donations of toys and/or supplies
- Financial donations (charitable receipts can be issued)
- Simple maintenance jobs
- Baking for special events
- Attending Annual General Meeting in January.
- Attending Parent/Teacher Meetings
- Joining your child's class for lunch
- Providing suggestions for overall improvements
- Serving on the Board of Directors
- Helping with fundraising
- Serving on the fundraising committee
- Serving on the phone committee
- Assisting with Fix Up Day
- Speaking to your child's class
- Help during our Silent auction

ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting is held in January of each year. The new Board members will be elected at this time as well as information concerning the growth, development and financial standing of the centre. All parents are encouraged to attend.

PARENT/TEACHER MEETING

Twice yearly a report will be prepared by your child's teacher to give you an opportunity to review you child's developmental progress. Once a year, parent/teacher meetings will be held to give you an opportunity to speak to your child's teacher in an informal and less harried time in the evening. However, please feel free to speak to the teachers about your child and the program at any time.

COMMUNICATION (GRIEVANCES and SUGGESTIONS)

If at any time you have a question with respect to your child, please speak to your child's teacher. If she/he is unable to answer your concerns they will speak to the Executive Director and get back to you with the requested information. If you feel there is a problem, which the teacher cannot address, or you have a question about your account or policies please speak to the Executive Director.

Also, the names and telephone numbers of the Board of Directors are posted for your convenience in the entryway. The Board of Directors meets on the second Monday of each month. Please advise the Executive Director or the Chairperson of the Board in advance of the meeting if you wish to address a specific issue at a board meeting.

We have an "open Door" policy concerning parents/guardians visits at the Centre. We encourage you to stop in any time to visit the classroom or speak with your child's teacher but please understand that certain times of the day are more chaotic and difficult than others and that your child's group may be out of the centre.

It is important to us that we maintain open communication with each parent/guardian on all matters affecting their child. This is achieved through personal contact, monthly newsletters, and information meetings.

FUNDRAISING

When you enroll your child at the Unicorn Children's Centre you become a member of a not-for-profit registered charity. As a result you will be asked to support the fundraising efforts of the centre from time to time in order to keep our child care fees as low as possible. Each fundraiser is designed to require minimal effort on your part (i.e. selling one box of bars, selling tickets, saving pennies, bringing in Sobey's receipts, etc.)

Some families prefer to make an annual lump sum donation and receive a charitable receipt rather than participate in the fundraisers. The average family donates approximately \$125.00 by way of fundraising efforts in a one-year period.

Privacy Policy – New March 2005

The Unicorn has adopted a universal privacy policy (3.1.4) which will serve to protect the private information the centre collects for its use. We will retain such information for 2 years following their end date. The Unicorn's Privacy officer is our Executive Director, Katherine MacIntyre.

SECTION E ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

LOST OR DAMAGED ITEMS

The Centre cannot be held responsible for the loss or damage of personal items brought from home.

AMENDMENTS

Amendments to these policies may be made at the discretion of the Board of Directors. Parents will be notified of amendments with a notice or memo posted at the centre, on the

website, in the newsletter or sent home on their child's locker.

COMMUNITY LIAISONS

The Unicorn Children's Centre Inc. Has established a number of community liaisons throughout the years. Each helps to provide a well-rounded program for your children.

Library	Frank L. Bowser	Co-Op
Real Atlantic Superstore	Centennial Park	United Commercial
R.C.M.P	Public Health Nurses	Travelors
Town of Riverview	S.P.C.A.	Block Parents
Fire Department	St. Paul's United Church	Royal Court
School District #2	Magnetic Hill Zoo	Moncton Hospital
VON "Safe Kid" Program	Bowling Alley	Moncton Kinsmen Charities
Poison Control	Crystal Palace	Kiwanis
Dental Technician	Sobey's	McDonald's

The Unicorn Children's Centre Board of Directors and all of our staff aim to provide the highest standard of early childhood care & education for your child and your family.

We hope the information in the Parent Handbook has been helpful and informative. Please remember that this is a condensed version and should you want more information on a particular policy the official Policies and Procedures may be obtained at the office or from a Board Member.

Please feel free to contact the office if you have any questions or would like any further information on any of our programs.

Thank you for taking the time to review this Document and joining the Unicorn family!

We are here to serve you!