

Parent Handbook

It's a **BLAST**



Lethbridge Community Out of School Association

Revised: JUNE 2011



IT'S A BLAST PROGRAM

Lethbridge Community Out of School Association Parent Handbook

The vision of the Lethbridge Community Out of School Association, IT'S A BLAST program, is to become the premier out of school care program in Lethbridge.

In fulfilling this vision, our mission is to:

- ✚ Treat all children as individuals by fostering creative expression and enhancing self confidence.
- ✚ Develop life skills by providing new opportunities to learn and succeed.
- ✚ Build leadership skills through our Senior Blaster program.
- ✚ Promote the value and importance of a healthy lifestyle.

The purpose of the Parent Handbook is to give you a brief orientation to the IT'S A BLAST program. Aspects such as program locations, fees and registration dates, which may change from year to year, are posted on our website at www.itsablastprogram.com.

ACCREDITATION

All of our Before and After School programs are currently accredited. Through the accreditation process, we are continually striving for a higher quality of programming for the children as well as improvements to our organization's policies and procedures.

ACCIDENTS

When an accident or injury occurs, the staff (trained in First Aid) will deal with it to the best of their ability and training. Parents will be informed and an 'Accident Report' will be filled out when required. If further medical attention is required the staff will contact the parent to pick up their child to take them to the doctor. Based on the severity of the injury and contact with the parent, an ambulance may be called (if deemed necessary) to transport the child to hospital.

BULLYING

In our program, we focus on the prevention and education of bullying. This is done through Circle activities and discussions, scenarios, books, posters, etc. If an incident of bullying occurs, our staff will intervene immediately and deal with the situation accordingly.

CANCELLATION OF SERVICES

If childcare is no longer required, the registering parent must contact the office six (6) working days prior to the end of the month to cancel. **If the registering parent does not call six business days before the end of the month, they will be charged for the following month.**

CHILD GUIDANCE

Program staff are responsible to use sound judgment and appropriate language including mannerism, tone and volume when dealing with guidance issues.

Inappropriate behavior is managed according to the child's age, developmental ability and the circumstance using the following techniques: redirection, mediation, contracting and time out / taking a break (if needed). Staff will discuss behavioral concerns with the parent and work together to come up with a technique that will work for each individual child. Any concerns or suggestions are appreciated, please talk to the Team Leader at your location.

CHILD TO STAFF RATIOS

Licensing regulations set our maximum ratios for programming, based on the location of the activity. For activities that are in our base room or on the school grounds (playground, field), the ratio is one staff for fifteen children (1:15). When the activity is on an offsite (away from the school grounds), it is one staff for six children (1:6). Kinder Kare ratios are one staff to 10 children (1:10).

CLOTHING & NECESSITIES

Our day to day programming is very active, especially during the summer months, and it is essential that all children are coming prepared for the weather and activities.

- During the Spring and Summer each child should bring their own hat, water bottle, sunscreen & bug spray (can be left at program and shared with a sibling), proper footwear for walking / running (runners or sport sandals) and proper clothing for the weather (i.e. sweater in backpack).
- During the colder months, please ensure that children are dressed appropriately for outside activities (boots, gloves, toques, scarves).
- Many schools have the 'two shoe' rule or the 'no boots in the hallway' rule. When children are in our programs, they **MUST** have footwear on at all times; please ensure your child has a pair of shoes that can be worn inside. For specific information, speak to the Team Leader at your location.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

As part of our programming, we encourage the children to learn about their own heritage as well as that of their peers. This is done through *Friday Frolic* activities which can include a presenter from the community to a parent or grandparent coming in to enlighten us. We have also incorporated cultural and diverse items into our toys and equipment.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION AND FIRE DRILLS

In the case of a situation where it is unsafe to stay at the school, each program has an Emergency Evacuation location. In this extreme circumstance, the staff will walk all children to this location and call the parents to advise them of pick up from there. Fire Drills are practiced on a monthly basis at each program.

FULL DAY / HOLIDAY PROGRAMS

Full day programs may be offered during Professional Development / Learning Days, Parent – Teacher Interviews, Christmas, Easter, Teacher’s Convention and school district planning days. As programs may not be offered on all days or at your particular school, please check the Parent Board for notices on dates and locations.

HAND WASHING

We encourage the children to wash their hands before snack, lunch and after using the bathroom.

LATE PICK UP CHARGES

Our programs end at 6:00 p.m.; therefore, all children **MUST** be picked up by then. Any parent, or other person, arriving to pick up between 6:00 p.m. and 6:15 p.m. will be given a ‘Late Slip’ and a Late Charge of \$25.00 will be incurred. An **additional \$25.00**, for every **5 minute increment** after that, will be charged until the child is picked up. Late pick up charges must be paid within **five (5) business days**. Your child care service will be in jeopardy for repeat late offences.

LICE

When lice are discovered on a child, the parent will be notified to come and pick up their child and treat the lice. Children cannot return to program until they have been treated and are free from nits.

LUNCH & SNACKS

Lunch is not provided in any of our programs, parents are required to send it with their child. Due to food allergies, children are not allowed to share or trade food items. Children are encouraged to take home whole food items, instead of throwing them away, allowing parents to monitor what their child is eating. Our staff encourage children to eat their lunch but do not make them eat it.

Snacks are planned according to the Canada Food Guide and focus on nutrition and portion size. Snack menus for each week are posted at each program on the Parent Board. If a child has medical or dietary restrictions where they require special snacks, parents may want to speak to the Team Leader about allowing their child to bring in their own snack.

As of July 1, 2011 we will provide the afternoon snack for Full Day programs (PD days, Holidays, summer). If your child requires a morning snack, please send it with them.

Refrigeration is not available for your child's lunch at any of our programs but microwaves are available at each location.

MEDICATIONS

In order to be in compliance with our Licensing regulations, and ensure the safety of all children and staff, medication requirements are as follows:

- A **'Medical Information'** form must be filled out.
- Medication must be in the **original labeled container** with the **child's name** and **proper dosage** listed.
- Medication must be stored based on their severity – as either Emergency or Non Emergency. Please do not send pills / medication with a child in their lunch kit; give it directly to the Staff.
- If your child has a severe allergy, please speak with the Team Leader to ensure staff are made aware of the condition.

MISSING CHILDREN

If a child is registered and booked to attend the After School program and does not arrive, we initiate our emergency procedure as follows:

- Staff will contact the registering parent or guardian in order to establish the whereabouts of the child.
- If the parent / guardian cannot be reached, we will attempt to reach one of the Emergency Contacts listed on the registration form.
- If after all attempts to reach anyone have failed, the Executive Director may enlist the help of the police.

OFFSITE ACTIVITIES

As part of our programming we go offsite for numerous activities throughout the year. In order for your child to attend these activities you will be required to sign a 'Waiver' form. The 'Waiver' form will detail the location, type of activity (i.e. swimming, special event, etc.), date, staff child ratio, transportation (walking, charter bus) and any other special requirements. Whenever possible, waiver forms will be included in the Registration process. For summer program, a Calendar of Events detailing the planned activities will be available by the first day of the program. Parents are welcome to attend these activities and can see the Team Leader if they are interested in coming.

PARENT BOARD

A Parent Board is provided for all parents at each program location. Information regarding menus, program planning, Child & Family Service's monitoring reports, collaborative programming locations and upcoming events will be posted.

PARENT FEEDBACK

To ensure that we are providing quality service, we have a process in place for parents to share their concerns, opinions, accolades or offer suggestions. For issues regarding programming, please speak to the staff at the program. Should you feel that you have not received a satisfactory response, or if you aren't comfortable speaking directly with the program staff, please call the Executive Director. In the event that your concern is still not resolved, the Board of Directors will be consulted, if required

All forms of feedback are appreciated. Parents and children are encouraged to use the Suggestion Box located at each program, participate in surveys and interviews. As well, parents can phone or send emails to the office.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

In order to provide the best child care experience for your child, it is essential that we work together. Parents are encouraged to get to know the staff and be aware of what is going on at the program and how they can be a part of it. Some areas where parents

can be involved are coming in and sharing cultural traditions and items with the children, attending Community presentations, going on an Offsite, donating toys or equipment and contributing to community awareness events (i.e. fundraisers or food bank collections). Please check the Parent Board at your location for more information.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- To sign your child in and out daily
- To keep us informed of any changes to your child's booking schedule
- To keep your child's registration information current (i.e. phone numbers, addresses, medical concerns, etc.)
- To read the Parent Board for information regarding the program
- Communicate with program staff any concerns regarding your child
- Ensure that your child understands and follows the program's rules and behavior expectations
- To understand that any abusive behavior (physical contact, swearing, threats, etc.) towards staff and other children in the program will be considered grounds for terminating childcare
- To treat staff with respect at all times
- To keep payment of fees current
- To participate in program evaluations through completing surveys, interviews, etc.

PAYMENT POLICY

Childcare fees must be paid, in advance, by cash, pre-authorized credit card dated for the first (1st) day of each month or pre-authorized debit dated the first (1st) day of each month or the twentieth (20th) day of the **preceding** month (i.e. August 20 for September fees). A \$25.00 NSF fee will be charged if a payment is rejected or returned, and must be replaced by cash, debit, credit card, certified cheque or money order including the service charge within five (5) business days. Failure to do so will result in the termination of all services.

PICK UP (RELEASE) OF CHILDREN

For the safety of all involved, we only release children to authorized people listed on the Registration form. When someone arrives to pick up a child, and the staff does not

know them, they will be asked to provide photo identification. This ID will be compared to the names listed on Registration Authorized Pick-Up List. If the name matches, they will be asked to sign the child out on the Attendance sheet prior to being allowed to take the child. If the name is not listed on the Registration form, staff cannot release the child until they have confirmation from the **registering parent** that it is okay to do so.

- Please ensure that when you send someone different to pick up your child that they are listed as an authorized person for pick up on your Registration and that they have their photo ID.
- In the case where it is a one-time pick up, please call the BLAST office with the correct spelling of the first and last name, and the message will be relayed to the program.
- Changes to your pick up list must be made through the office; they cannot be done at the program.
- When we have Full Day programs, please be prepared to show your photo ID. It will not always be the case that the usual staff will be working when you arrive to pick up your child.
- If a person arrives to pick up a child and they appear to be unable to care for the child (i.e. under the influence of drugs or alcohol), another authorized pick up person will be called. The Executive Director will be called if further support is required.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

- IT'S A BLAST implements collaborative programming where two or more programs combine at one location due to staffing or location availability issues. It is required that children attend the program location that is designated for your particular school. Locations are chosen based on school availability and every attempt is made with the schools to try to rotate locations on a consistent basis.
- IT'S A BLAST programs may be closed on other days such as preparing for school year and summer programming (usually the day before the new program begins). Our programs may also be closed when there is a school closure. Program location changes and closures are posted on the Parent Board.

SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS

The Lethbridge Community Out of School Association programs work closely with each school. As such parents, children and staff are asked to follow school rules and respect the staff, school building and equipment at all times.

SICK CHILD

If a child is sick and unable to be part of programming, parents will be called to come and pick up their child as soon as possible.

SIGN IN / SIGN OUT

All children must be signed in when they arrive and out when they leave by their parents or authorized pick-up. It is a requirement that the **exact time** and **signature** of the person dropping off / picking up be recorded on the attendance sheet.

SMOKING

As part of our regulations, children in our programs are not to be in the area of people who are smoking. This includes the school grounds, entrances to the school or program and offsite locations.

SPECIAL NOTIFICATION & RELEASE

In special circumstances, children nine years or older may be allowed to arrive or depart the program without the accompaniment of a parent or guardian. Prior to this happening, the parent or guardian must complete and sign a 'Special Notification and Release' form and be authorized by the Executive Director.

STAFFING

Each location has a designated Team Leader who is responsible for program administrative duties, licensing and accreditation requirements, and is the onsite contact person. As a parent, if you have a concern, the Team Leader at your location is the best person to discuss it with. Positions and location of staff are based on qualifications, experience, availability and size of the program.

STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

- To provide a safe and fun environment for your child

- To provide qualified staff to create quality programming
- To supply a daily nutritious snack that follows the Canada Food Guide
- To be a support to families by reinforcing your child's positive behaviors
- To provide a variety of activities and supplies to meet your child's needs
- To treat parents and children with respect at all times
- To inform parents in regards to daily programming
- To provide information about events so parents can attend

STATUTORY / PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

IT'S A BLAST observes and will be closed on the following holidays. In the event that a holiday should fall on a weekend, a day in lieu of will be taken.

- New Year's Day
- Family Day
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- Victoria Day
- Canada Day
- August Civic Holiday
- Labour Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Remembrance Day
- Christmas Day
- Boxing Day

SUBSIDY

To assist parents with the payment of childcare fees, a subsidy may be available through funding from Southwest Alberta Child and Family Services. Parents can apply online at www.child.alberta.ca.

SUPPORT WORKER

Children who require one on one attention are welcome in the BLAST program with the aid of a support worker. These support workers are under contract with the parents and an agency in the community (i.e. Greystoke, RCD)

The Executive Director will work together with the parents, the contracted agency, the support worker and the BLAST Team Leader to provide an orientation to the program to ensure a smooth transition. The parents and support worker will work closely with the Executive Director and Team Leader communicating information about the child to assure the child's success in the program.

Children with a support worker are considered to be in ratio and under the care of IT'S A BLAST staff. When the support worker and child choose to leave and return to the program, the support worker must sign the child in and out. A child is not allowed to attend the program without their support worker unless previous arrangements have been approved by the Executive Director.

TERMINATION OF SERVICES

The Lethbridge Community Out of School Association, IT'S A BLAST program, staff are committed to providing a caring and supportive environment for all children and families. However, termination of services may be required if:

- Fees for services are not paid according to the contract and payment policy and suitable arrangements cannot be agreed upon.
- The family does not abide by the expectations in the Parent Contract and successful resolution of the differences is not achieved.
- The child is no longer in the custody of the registering parent or guardian.
- A family member harasses, abuses, commits a violent act or threatens a staff, child or other family involved in our program.
- The Association is unable to satisfactorily resolve problems of late pick-ups with a family.
- The child's behavior is severely disruptive or physically threatening to the well being and safety of other children or staff and additional supports to accommodate the child are unavailable.
 - If a child is not adjusting well, recorded observations will be discussed with the registering parent.
 - Procedures will be planned and implemented to help the child. If the child is not responding, the family will be consulted. Other options may be explored with the family. The Association may have to request that other arrangements be made for the child.

TOYS AND EQUIPMENT

Children should not bring toys or equipment to the program from home. The Lethbridge Community Out of School Association and its employees are not responsible for lost, stolen or broken toys or equipment brought from home.