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December 16, 2024

Hello Discovery Early Learning & Care Immaculate Site Families,

Thank you for taking the time to join us during our recent registration evening. We are excited to get to know you and your children better. For families we haven't met in person yet, welcome! If you have any questions or need assistance, please reach out to our Leadership Team as we prepare for this new chapter together.

We understand you may have many questions, and we hope to provide some clarity regarding our program, staffing, and policies as we move forward.

Staffing Updates

We are thrilled to introduce Tracy Newell as the new Program Supervisor for the Immaculate Site. Tracy brings 14 years of experience with Discovery Early Learning & Care, including 11 years as a Registered Early Childhood Educator. She is dedicated to creating a sense of belonging for children, staff, and families. Her office door will always be open to discuss any comments, concerns, or celebrations during this transition.

The Learning Hearts Daycare team members who are joining us have been hired, and we are finalizing their employment packages. Upon your return after the holiday break, you will be greeted by familiar educators in the learning environments. As we collaborate with the team and recognize their unique contributions, some adjustments may occur.

We plan to hire a Lead Educator in the New Year to support Tracy in her leadership role.

In addition, our Leadership Team, including the following members, will support the program:

Tracy Saarikoski, RECE, BA, AECEO – Executive Director (Main Site Office) Phone: 705-693-5282 | Cell: 705-690-3684 | Email: tsaarikoski@discoverycare.ca

Jess Carroll – Executive Administrator (Main Site Office) Phone: 705-693-5282 | Email: admin@discoverycare.ca

Tracy Newell, RECE – Program Supervisor (Immaculate Site) Phone: 705-897- 7779 |
Email: immaculate@discoverycare.ca

The Program Supervisors from our other sites will also be supporting in program including, Lacey Carroll, Tamara Taillefer, Tina Madore and Christina Sitko. They are assisting in licensing, registration of families, hiring and setting up the learning environments.

Our Pedagogical Leaders, Jil Dittburner and Tanya Taylor, will also mentor educators and support the program in ratio as needed.

Hours of Care

Your current hours of operation with Learning Hearts Daycare, of 6:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. will continue and then change to 6:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. on Monday, March 31, 2025. We will continue to monitor staffing and family needs to ensure compliance with Ministry of Education licensing requirements and maintain a full ratio of educators to children.

Transition Timeline and Personal Belongings

To prepare the space for your children, we kindly ask families to remove all personal belongings by December 20, 2024. The school board will be refreshing the spaces with cleaning and a new coat of paint during the Christmas closure. We will begin setting up the environments on December 20.

Opening Day

When you return on Monday, January 6, 2025, you will notice some changes:

Boot Room Elimination: The boot room will be replaced with a carpeted hallway for outdoor footwear. Boots will be stored under assigned cubbies, which will feature your child's name and a photograph to help with identification. Parents/guardians are invited to keep their outdoor footwear on in the cubby hallway and in the play environments.

Personal Items: Please bring the following items for your child:

- Outdoor clothing
- Change of clothes
- Diapers, wipes, and creams (if applicable)
- Indoor shoes
- Any medications, including epi-pens
- Comfort items or blankets, if needed
- Wet bag for soiled clothing

Learning & Play Environments

The children's learning environments will remain in their current spaces but will have a refreshed look and feel. We have eliminated the doorbell access to the play environments and invite you to walk in at any time. We encourage families to linger, read documentation as it is posted, and connect with educators.

For private discussions or concerns, we will arrange meetings to ensure uninterrupted communication. Incident reports will be signed and filed as required by the Ministry of Education.

Communication and Leadership Support

We believe strong communication is key to collaboration. You may receive calls during the day to update you on an incident report or if your child is unwell.

Tracy Newell's office is located to the left of the program's entrance, and a second office down the hall will serve as a meeting and storage space.

Our Mission

"Discovery Early Learning & Care is a not-for-profit charitable organization dedicated to providing children, families, and professionals with opportunities to learn through relationship building, collaboration, inquiry, and play."

We hope you feel a sense of belonging as we embark on this new journey together. I would also like to thank Mary Chernenko, and the Learning Hearts team for their support during the transition.

Looking forward to welcoming you back in January!

Kind regards,

Tracy Saarikoski

Executive Director