



# Parent Handbook Summer Fun Program





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## Our Focus

**Community awareness:** We promote community awareness of the abilities and needs of children with various disabilities.

**Preparing for the future:** We provide a quality training program for young adults considering a career in this field.

**Peace of mind:** We provide families with respite and peace of mind, knowing that their child is being cared for in a safe, secure and fun environment.

The Delta Life Skills Society believes that every participant, camper and staff has the right to feel safe, secure and happy.

Accountability is important to fulfil this belief:

- On the part of the staff to do their best to provide a nurturing and safe environment
- On the part of the child to exhibit acceptable behaviours
- On the part of the parents to work with and maintain communication with staff

## Our Three Cooperative Goals

1. To encourage mutual respect, cooperation and communication among campers, parents and staff members.
2. To promote positive social interactions and to set a good example for each other.
3. To provide a safe environment that encourages campers to be responsible and concerned for each other wherever possible.

Positive behaviours are encouraged and reinforced daily in our Summer Fun Program, and the staff focuses on positive social interaction, mutual respect and cooperation. The Delta Life Skills Society and the front line staff, along with the Program Director, work together to create a safe, secure environment for the children.

## The Summer Fun Program

The Summer Fun Program provides children and youth aged 6–20 with a large variety of recreational activities that promote essential life skills reinforcement in a relaxed and stimulating atmosphere.

Our program runs for six consecutive weeks starting in July each year.

Our program goals are as follows:

1. To ensure that the valuable life skills lessons learned by the children are maintained throughout the summer, so that they don't have to start over again every September
2. To promote the inclusion of our children within their own community
3. To provide recreational activities for children who otherwise have limited access to community programs and services due to their disabilities
4. To provide the parents and siblings of our children with much-needed respite throughout the summer months

All our programs are free-play based and provide children the opportunity to develop their skills in all areas. We believe children learn through interacting with others and experimenting with different mediums. Our environment allows children to explore the world around them in a safe and predictable setting. Children are encouraged to be independent, make choices and tap into their own style of learning. As children all learn differently, we strive to work with each child as an individual while also guiding them to work responsibly in a group setting.

In addition to learning cognitive concepts, fine and gross motor skills and creativity, we feel that the child's emotional life is crucial at this time in their development. Our staff is committed to supporting your child as they learn to negotiate and interact with others. Children need positive reinforcement and encouragement as they explore their own feelings and the feelings of others. Children deserve respect and patience as they begin to develop a sense of empathy.

## Arrival and Departure

Summer Fun Programs run weekdays from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The parent/caregiver will deliver the camper directly to the classroom and arrive at the classroom for pickup so that we are aware of who is picking up your child. We ask that you drop your child off at 9:00 (not before), as staff meetings take place from 8:45 to 9:00. This is also when staff teams discuss their strategies for the day. This often involves confidential discussion and it is not appropriate for children to be in attendance at this time. The day is always full and busy, and it is important that staff members have time to work out the details of each day during this time in the morning.

At the end of the day, we will not release a child to a person that we feel is unsafe or unfit to be transporting your child. If you have called ahead of time to inform us of someone picking up your child that we are unfamiliar with, please advise them to bring along identification.

If your child is able to arrive at or depart from camp independently, written notice of permission must be signed by both parents. In the event that a child who walks to camp does not arrive by 9:30 a.m., we will call the police.

Late fees will be charged at a rate of \$20 per each 15 minutes if you are late picking up your child. Staff ensures the program is finished by 3:00 p.m., and they are asked by custodial staff at each school to be out of the building by 3:15 p.m. so they can lock up. If you cannot make it by 3:00 p.m., then please make alternative arrangements. Call your Site Leader at their designated phone number and we can help make arrangements if appropriate and possible. We appreciate you picking up your child on time. It is often hard for a child to wait when all the other children have left.

## Emergencies and Illnesses

It is extremely important that the leaders are informed about your child's allergies. As some children may have life-threatening nut allergies, please note that **ALL our program sites are NUT RESTRICTED ZONES**. Please check items for any nut products before you send them to the program. Nuts include peanuts, walnuts, hazelnuts, cashews, etc.

Children who are not well enough to participate in the normal daily program or who have an infectious disease must remain at home. Please do not send your child to the program if they have a fever or have vomited that morning. It can be stressful for the child and puts other children at risk. Although we understand the difficulty in finding alternate care for your child, it is important to keep sick children at home. If your child is diagnosed with an illness that is contagious, please advise the staff immediately so we can ensure other children are not at risk.

Although lice are not a safety concern, we would appreciate if you could notify us if your child has lice. Lice are very common and do not reflect cleanliness or hygiene. They spread very easily, but if your child has lice we can recommend a very easy treatment for you.

If at any time during the program a staff member feels your child is not well enough to attend, you will be called and asked to pick up your child. In the event that you cannot be reached, the alternate contact person will be called. Please ensure that someone is available at all times in case of emergency.

Also, please let the leaders know if your child is receiving any additional support (for example, a behavioural interventionist). We are here to support your child and family, and can work with your support network to ensure consistency in routine and in approach to solving problems.

## Health and Wellness Policies

When children arrive at Summer Fun, there is an expectation that they will be ready for the day. This not only means that they come equipped with their sunscreen, water bottle,

lunches, etc., but also that the children will arrive showered, with fingernails clean to avoid infection from scratches, teeth brushed, toileting done and deodorant applied, if applicable. We also expect that children arrive in clean clothing, with an extra set in their backpack in case they get dirty either from playing or from washroom accidents. Staff do not have time to shower or bathe children, or launder their clothing.

If your child has a bathroom accident during the day at Summer Fun, we will of course clean them up and change them into clean clothes that have been provided in their backpack. Any soiled clothes will be rinsed out and sent home in a plastic bag for laundering.

If your child does not come prepared for the day, staff will send the child home. Your child is more than welcome to return when they are fully prepared. If it is a field trip day, then you will be required to meet the group at their destination for the day.

The following policies are in place for the wellness of all children in the program:

<b>SYMPTOMS</b>	<b>POLICIES</b>
Temperature of 38°C or above	Child must be picked up immediately. Child may return after eight hours of normal temperature without medication (such as Children’s Tylenol, etc.).
Untreated eye infection (pink eye)	Child must take an antibiotic for a full day before returning to camp.
Rashes	Unidentified rashes need a doctor’s written confirmation that they are not contagious. If treatment is needed, child may return after 12 hours.
Scabies/Lice	Child may return 24 hours after treatment.
Diarrhea	Child may return after 24 hours of no repeat incident or with doctor’s confirmation that the condition is not contagious.
Vomiting	Child may return 24 hours after last vomit incident.
Chicken pox	Parents will be notified for exposure. Child may return five days after the onset of the rash.
Strep throat/Tonsillitis	Child may return after 24 hours of treatment with medication.

## Aggressive Behaviour

Over the course of the summer, we may run into aggressive moments when your child is frustrated, tired, hungry or cannot express their needs. To a point, aggression is an accepted behaviour when dealing with developmentally delayed children. When a child's aggression becomes **habitual and constantly disrupts the activities of the day**, either by taking staff time away from the others or making other children afraid, then we need to evaluate our capabilities. Summer Fun is not designed nor equipped for dealing with habitually physically aggressive children.

Although we have some very skilled and experienced staff working with our children, we also have some less-experienced staff members. This is part of our program's philosophy to help develop and train employees looking for a career in the social services field. **We also believe that all staff has the right to feel safe from harm during their workday.** It is our collective responsibility to support and ensure the safety of our staff. **Please review the Accountability Procedures and Behaviour Management Guidelines below, as well as the Behaviour Management Policy.** We would love to be able to meet all the needs of all the children all the time, but some of our children's needs are beyond what our staff capabilities are, and go beyond what Summer Fun is designed to offer.

### **Accountability Procedures and Behaviour Management Guidelines**

1. In the case of a child showing **repeated** aggression toward a staff, you, the parent, will be informed both verbally and in writing. The incident will be written in your child's communication book. The Program Director will also be informed.  
Aggression toward staff will be evaluated on an individual basis, as each staff person has a different set of tools to deal with aggression and a different opinion on what is acceptable and what is not. If the aggression becomes habitual and is deemed to be disruptive to the group, or takes up too much staff time, your child may be withdrawn from the program. A pro-rated refund will be issued at the sole discretion of DLSS.

**We also believe that every child has a right to feel safe at Summer Fun.**

2. In the case of a child being aggressive toward another child or children, you will be informed verbally and in writing through your child's communication book, and the Program Director will be informed. If the aggression comes to a point where other children become afraid or we feel their right to enjoy Summer Fun is compromised, we will be required to remove the aggressor from Summer Fun, and you will be given a pro-rated refund at the sole discretion of the DLSS.

## Delta Life Skills Society: Behaviour Management Procedure

After the Summer Fun Program has started, and in a few cases where behaviour is inappropriate — meaning the behaviour interferes with the safety and well-being of other campers or staff — the following procedure is practised:

1. An incident report will be filled out. One will be put in the camper's file and a copy will be given to the Program Director and the parents. Staff will discuss strategies for managing behaviour with the parents.

If the behaviours are repeated:

2. Another incident report will be filled out, one put in the camper's file, one given to the Program Director and the last one given to the parents. Staff will discuss further strategies of managing the behaviour with the parents.
3. The Program Director, depending on the behaviour, will contact the parents and advise them that the behaviour will be monitored closely and there may be a possibility that if their child continues to interfere with the safety and well-being of others, they may be asked to withdraw from the program.
4. The Program Director will contact the board executives and advise them of the situation, and together they will come to a decision.
5. The Program Director will then contact the parent and advise them of the decision made by the committee.

The Society, or representatives thereof, reserves the right to withdraw a child from the program if the safety of another camper has been compromised or if the program as a whole has been affected by a child's inappropriate behaviour.

However, all other options, where there are any, will be made available to the parents by the Program Director. All efforts will be made to set the camper up for success, which may mean a short suspension or a change in placement.

If a child needs to be withdrawn, the decision to refund the parent will be at the discretion of the board. Refunds are not guaranteed, as staff will not be let go if a child is withdrawn.

Please note that if you know your child has a safety plan in place at school, a copy of this needs to be given to the Program Director so that we can plan ahead for your child to have a successful summer.

## Day Camp vs. Health Care

As you are aware, Summer Fun is designed as a day camp for children with special needs and varying abilities. As with behavioural situations, staff may find themselves in a

difficult position, where the medical needs of the child cross the line from recreation to health care.

When a child is in school and in need of more complex care, such as feeding tubes, trachea tubes, catheters, colostomy bags, etc., in most cases a staff person working with that child receives some specialized training that is signed off by health care professionals, who ensure that staff has the capacity to care properly for a child's specialized need.

At Summer Fun, we do not have this kind of service from the Health Board, and DLSS is not prepared to require staff to have to deal with these delicate issues without proper certified training from a nurse or other health care professional. This does not mean, however, that if your child requires such help, they cannot attend Summer Fun. What this does mean is that you will be asked to provide your own worker to either:

1. Be hired by Summer Fun as an employee to look after your child at Summer Fun wages.
2. Provide extra support staff at Summer Fun at your expense, as some of these needs require two staff to attend to the child.
3. Be hired by Summer Fun, but if they require a higher wage than is currently being paid by Summer Fun, then any top-up in wage will be negotiated with the staff and paid by you to Delta Life Skills Society so that the staff can be compensated at the appropriate rate.

## Toileting Expectations

We recognize that many of our children need help with toileting, changing, etc., and this is an accepted and expected part of our everyday routine. We also understand that some of our children are in various stages of trying to become independent in their toileting routines.

We understand that some parents are trying not to use disposable briefs, but it needs to be recognized that we are in the community much of the time and often don't have ready access to facilities in case of a toileting accident. This means that you may be asked to pack whatever diapering product you choose, so that your child can maintain dignity and respect in public places, such as on transit or many of the destinations that we visit.

We acknowledge that some parents feel that this may be a regression of a child's progress, but it is far worse that a child be embarrassed or humiliated when toileting accidents occur while they are among the general public. We always have our children use the washroom before leaving the sites and before getting on the bus when returning from a field trip, and anywhere in between when a child has the need to use a washroom.

We have also encountered a concern when it comes to bowel movements. We expect children to have bowel movements while at Summer Fun. However, there have been

instances where children have had three or four accidents in a day, which have required staff to shower and change the child each time. It often requires more than one staff to clean and change a child when this occurs, meaning that another child is losing the attention of their assigned staff. That is a significant portion of another child's day that they do not get to spend with their assigned buddy when multiple staff must attend to a child with ongoing intestinal upsets.

Should we encounter this concern, you will be notified and together we will try to come to a solution. We will want to know if this is common at home, how you handle it, whether it is diet related, if your child is sick, etc. If we cannot find the source of the intestinal upset and your child continues to require repeated showering and changing every day, we may ask that you find someone that you can send to the program as an extra hand at your own expense until the concern can be resolved. This runs parallel to our concerns with our policy on day camp versus health care.

## What to Bring Each Day

- ✓ Water bottle
- ✓ Sunscreen
- ✓ Hat
- ✓ Spare change of clothes\*
- ✓ Lunch — if lunch is being bought we will let you know through your communication book
- ✓ Snacks
- ✓ Communication book\*\*
- ✗ Please don't send spending money unless it is a spending day. This will also be made known through your communication books.

\*As day camp can be a messy place, your child should be dressed in clothes that can get paint, glue, dirt, etc., on them. Through experience, we have found that wearing smocks usually ends up with even more paint on the child. The clothes should allow your child to move freely and comfortably. We want children to have the freedom to explore and create. Please encourage your child to wear running shoes as we do gross motor activities each day.

Also, please send your child with a full change of clothes (pants, shirt, socks, undies) in case of bathroom accidents, water splashes and paint explosions!

\*\*We do our best to inform you on a daily basis through communication books and by giving you a calendar of the summer events. It is important that you read the book each day in case there is a special request, such as potluck items, theme days, etc.

## Items from Home

We ask that children refrain from bringing toys or electronic equipment from home unless it is necessary (such as communication devices). Items from home can get lost, broken or soiled. It may also cause issues around sharing and ownership. **If you do choose to send toys or games from home with you child, Delta Life Skills will not be responsible if they are broken, lost or stolen.** Thank you for your cooperation.

## Field Trips



Field trips are an important part of the Summer Fun Program. We believe it is beneficial for campers to participate in excursions to provide different experiences and contact with people in our community. Children will be transported in school bus vehicles and driven by staff members with a valid Class 4 driver's licence.

If you are going to be late or your child has an appointment on a field trip day, feel free to meet the program at the destination or pick your child up from there. This helps the rest of the campers enjoy a full day at their destination site. Similarly, if your child needs to be picked up early, you may be required to meet the group at the destination site so that the group is not forced to return home early.

## Visitors

Students from local colleges may come as part of their practicum if they are taking a child-related study program. Observations for specific children will not be permitted without a signed consent form from the parent prior to the observation.

We feel that parents have the right to drop by the program, join a field trip, ask questions and offer suggestions. We want you to feel welcome at your site. Please feel free to talk to your leaders. We are committed to making your child's Summer Fun experience as positive as it can be for your camper and your family. We would like to extend to you and your child a warm welcome to Delta Life Skills Summer Fun Program. We are happy to have you!

## Contact Information

Please be sure to get your Site Leader's telephone number or contact the Program Director, Callum Lynch, at 604-992-1417 or by email at [programdirector@deltalifeskills.net](mailto:programdirector@deltalifeskills.net) for any information you may require.

Alternatively, additional contact information can be found at [www.deltalifeskills.net](http://www.deltalifeskills.net).