



StrongStart Caregiver Guide

Our StrongStart Centres

Grauer StrongStart
4440 Blundell Road
604-295-6429

Walter Lee StrongStart
9491 Ash Street
604-295-4306

McNeely StrongStart
12440 Woodhead Road
604-295-6431

Thompson StrongStart
6211 Forsythe Crescent
604-295-6428

**Blundell StrongStart
Outreach**
6480 Blundell Road

**Currie Early Learning
Centre**
8220 General Currie Road
604-295-6415

Welcome to StrongStart!

Where caregivers and children have fun together!

StrongStart BC programs provide rich learning environments designed for early learning development – language, physical, cognitive, social, and emotional. Qualified early childhood educators lead learning activities where children find opportunities to make friends and interact with others of similar ages.

Participate with your young child (aged birth to five) in play-based early learning activities – including stories, music, and art. At no cost to families, this early learning program helps prepare children for transition to Kindergarten. We offer support, information, resources, and a chance to meet other caregivers.

The programs follow the school year and are closed on school holidays.

To keep our centres' spacious for an optimal learning environment, we ask that only ONE adult attend with their child and to book an appointment in advance.

Please limit your attendance to 1-2 sessions per week and to register at no more than 2 centres.

Please use the booking site found on our website to select the day and site you wish to attend.

StrongStart is funded by and supported by the Ministry of Education and Child Care and School District No. 38.



StrongStartBC

StrongStart Program Time

General Program Time Description

Morning: 8:45am - 11:15am Afternoon: 12:15pm - 2:45pm	StrongStart Program Time A guided session led by an Early Childhood Educator, where families engage in hands-on activities designed to foster learning and development. It's an opportunity for children to explore, create, and grow in a supportive and interactive environment.
Morning: 11:15am - 11:30am Afternoon: 2:45pm - 3:00pm	Community Connections A dedicated time for families to ask questions, seek support, and engage with resources that help them navigate early learning and parenting. It's a welcoming space to connect one-on-one with staff if requested.

Outdoor StrongStart Program

Our Outdoor StrongStart program is offered in the outdoor learning spaces at Grauer Elementary. This program offers opportunities for young children and their caregivers to play, learn, and explore in the natural world. The program runs entirely outdoors and in all weather. All families are welcome to attend!

The educator will provide more details at your arrival.



Guidelines & Registration

General Guidelines

Attendance: Sign in and out everyday (first and last name with birthdate).

Wash Hands: WASH your hands and your child's hands before you begin to play.

Hang Belongings: Hang your jackets and personal belongings on the coat hooks

Inside shoes: Please remove outside footwear at the entrance when entering our StrongStart Centres. Bring inside shoes to change into (i.e. slippers, or other clean-soled shoes). Thank you for helping us keep our spaces clean for our little learners!

Clothing: Paint smocks are available and we try to use washable materials but clothes may get dirty. Outdoor clothing is needed for fresh air adventures.



Screens: Cell phones must be silent and used only for emergencies. If you need to take a call, please take it outside the classroom and remember to take your child.

Snack time: A Healthy snack is an important part of StrongStart every day. Adults and children must wash their hands before eating and handling food.

Water Bottle: Please bring a water bottle for your child.

No smoking on school grounds or on any StrongStart activities off site.

Strollers: Park strollers in designated areas.

Hallways: When in the hallway, please be quiet and show respect for others in the school.

Washrooms: Parents and caregivers must supervise their children in the washroom.

Leaving the room: If you need to leave the classroom for any reason, please take your child with you.

Registration

Before your child's first time visiting a Richmond StrongStart, register here:

<https://sd38-strongstartregistration.powerappsportals.com/Welcome-Page/>

The following documentation will be required to register:

> Proof of Child's Birthdate (Canadian Birth Certificate)

Your child's birth certificate is required for registration.

To book an appointment, please visit:

<https://outlook.office365.com/owa/calendar/StrongStartAppointments@sd38.bc.ca/bookings/>

Book an appointment to attend StrongStart . If you are unable to attend your appointment, please cancel your appointment.

Adult Participation & Roles

Adult Participation

Adult involvement in StrongStart BC early learning centres and outreach programs is fundamental to the purpose of the program.

Research tells us that caregivers who are active partners in their children's education and development increase the chance of children's success. Adult participation in the program is mainly through the adult interaction with your child but can also take additional forms, such as welcoming new families, assisting with snack preparation, assisting with clean-up, providing suggestions for new program ideas or materials, or participating in some other way that feels meaningful to you.



- ▶ away and tidy up before moving to something else; take turns and share; listen to others and use a quiet indoor voice.
- ▶ Come prepared to play, laugh, and have fun with your child

Role of Participant and Educator

Research shows that parent/caregiver involvement in early childhood settings supports positive outcomes for children.

Role of the Parents/Caregivers

- ▶ Participate in all activities with your child(ren)— circle time, play activities, clean up and serving a healthy snack.
- ▶ Guide your child(ren) to— be kind, patient and curious; put toys

Role of the Early Childhood Educator

- ▶ Encourage adult and child participation.
- ▶ Create learning environments and activities that positively influence children's learning.
- ▶ Model strategies that can be used by parents and caregivers to support children's learning.
- ▶ Provide information to foster adults' understanding of children's development and learning.
- ▶ Maintain a welcoming, kind, inclusive atmosphere that is safe and nurturing.
- ▶ Connect families to other community supports and services.

Wellness/ Illness

It is our collective responsibility to protect the children that are attending our StrongStart Centres. Please keep your child home when ill.

- ▶ Flu like symptoms such as: vomiting, diarrhea, fever, chills, etc.
- ▶ Pink eye or head lice and have not had proper treatment.
- ▶ Any communicable disease such as chicken pox. Call your Public Health Office for further information.
- ▶ Coughing, sneezing or runny nose
- ▶ Not feeling well enough to participate actively in the program.

Child Support and Play

Child Guidance

At StrongStart we practice positive guidance strategies which...

- ▶ help children develop the skills to understand their feelings and express them appropriately
- ▶ builds respect between children, caregivers, and StrongStart Educators
- ▶ creates a positive atmosphere and encourages desirable behaviour

Positive guidance strategies include:

- ▶ Establishing clear, consistent, and simple limits in a positive way.
- ▶ Offering straightforward explanations for limits
- ▶ Reinforcing appropriate behaviour with words
- ▶ and gestures
- ▶ Gaining a child's attention in a respectful way using proximity or touch, before reminding of expectations
- ▶ Redirecting
- ▶ Observe and note children's interests, moods, hunger, thirst and things that are challenging/not challenging to effectively meet their needs
- ▶ Acknowledging children's feelings, and supporting healthy expression
- ▶ Modelling problem solving skills.
- ▶ Offering age appropriate choices



The Importance of Play

Play is a child's way of exploring, discovering and learning about the world. StrongStart provides age appropriate materials and activities to promote learning. Programs are designed to support each child's emotional, social, physical, cognitive and early literacy development.

Some of the play activities that you may enjoy at StrongStart include:

- ▶ Building— blocks, Duplo, trains etc.
- ▶ Story time and books
- ▶ Singing and music
- ▶ Science exploration
- ▶ Arts and crafts
- ▶ Hands-on with water, sand, dough and other sensory materials
- ▶ Role play— kitchen centre, doll house and dress-up...
- ▶ Puzzles and Games
- ▶ Gym and outdoor adventures



"Play with your children and show them that they are loved."

Mary Gordon

Activities & Opportunities

Circle Time

Circle time, a large-group time led by the educator, should be a daily scheduled activity at each StrongStart Centre. Educators use the Early Learning Framework to help reflect on and plan their circle times. Circle time is typically a gathering time to share poems, songs, stories and action games.

This activity builds literacy skills through use of big books, puppet play, story reading, and storytelling. Music and numeracy activities can also be incorporated into circle time. Demonstrations of new equipment, modelling ways to support children's learning, and offering parenting tips can occur during circle time. Both adults and children participate in circle time together.

Creative Art/Project Time

Most young children take a natural delight in art. They love to be creative through manipulating materials such as paint, clay, and glue.



Adults explore alongside their children. Art materials are experienced by children using all their senses. Educators model the value of providing open-ended, sensory art materials, and using open-ended questions to help children describe what they are doing, seeing, feeling, and thinking. Open-ended questions to encourage children to talk and think about art include:

- ▶ How does the clay smell?
- ▶ How does the finger-paint feel?
- ▶ Tell me about your drawing.
- ▶ Can you think of a different way to use a paint brush?
- ▶ How did you make the orange paint?
- ▶ How did you make the clay look like that?

Share a Book Time

Shared book time encourages adults and children to bond while reading books. Shared book time is a joyful time for both the adult and child.

Adults are encouraged to use strategies that have been modelled by the educator at circle time or during their individual one-on-one book times with their child.

Snack Time

Offering healthy and nutritious snacks are a requirement of the StrongStart BC program. Routines like hand washing, serving, using manners, and interacting with the group can all be learned and practiced during snack time.



Snack time connects to several learning goals in the British Columbia Early Learning Framework:

- ▶ Learn about ways to keep themselves healthy, including nourishment, sleep, and physical activity,
- ▶ Understand and follow routines,
- ▶ Build healthy relationships with both adults and children,
- ▶ Learn to appreciate diversity.

Snack time is a language-rich activity. Informal conversation occurs between children, and between adults and children. Interaction is important during this time, so we encourage all children to join in.



Activities & Opportunities

Learning Centre Time

Interactive play occurs when adults and children

explore the learning centres together.

Learning centres are designated areas of the room where materials and activities are arranged to guide children's learning.



Learning centres are created with intention and with various materials to explore, including:

- ▶ natural materials with “found” objects
- ▶ loose parts
- ▶ sand table
- ▶ water station
- ▶ light table
- ▶ dramatic play with puppets
- ▶ play dough
- ▶ blocks & puzzles

Some learning centres have a literacy and numeracy focus for children to explore (i.e. assorted books, paper, crayons, pencils, felts, stationery, magnetic letters, flannel board, dice, counters etc.). Play at learning centres is exploratory, with a “hands on/minds on” intention. Adults support and encourage alongside.

Gym Time

Gym time for large-muscle activities is important. Many children and adults do not have regular opportunities to move within such a large, indoor space. Gym equipment for children age 0-5 years includes balls, hula hoops, scarves, bean bags, parachutes, and cones for navigating around.

Our centres will have gym time at times that work with the schedule of the school. Adults play alongside their child.

Outdoor Time

StrongStart programs use the outdoor spaces available at the school, especially during good weather. We provide the opportunity to pause, look, wonder and be curious of our beautiful spaces. We believe that nature will guide us in our learning “Children can experiment, investigate, and inquire in ways that are relevant and meaningful to them”

Since programs go outside when possible, please dress for the weather and for outdoor play and learning! Most children are curious explorers, so you don't need to do much to cultivate their nature connection— just join them outside (rain or shine) and get out of their way!



Good Bye Time

Goodbye time is an important social ritual and routine at the end of the StrongStart session. This transition time can be challenging for some children. Educators aim to organize routine ways to signal the end of the session to make it easier for families to leave the program.

Routines include gathering art projects, dressing in outdoor clothes, or a good-bye song. Children learn that they can return to the program on another day and their favourite activities will still be in the program. Some families arrive and depart at various times throughout the session and may leave before goodbye time.

Educators will often quick ritual or activity for these families, such as a special goodbye wave and message.



Consent and Confidentiality

Photo Consent

Providing adults and children with photos of themselves and placing photos of the children around the program makes participants feel involved, and may also help adults and children to gain a better understanding of a child's learning.

However, permission must be obtained from the parent or guardian before using pictures of children in blogs, posters, websites or other social media.

Do not take photos or videos of other children or families during your time at the StrongStart.

Confidentiality

StrongStart programs ensure confidentiality of information for families attending the program.

Educators are compliant with school district policy regarding confidentiality. All paperwork that contains personal information is stored in a safe, secure manner.

Child and family names are not be mentioned in newsletters or other methods of communication, to protect privacy.

Should you need to discuss sensitive matters with an educator arrange a mutually convenient time to discuss the matter away from other families.

Locations

