

***Parent Handbook:
StrongStart Early Learning Centres
Langley School District***



***No-Cost Parent and Child Early Learning
Program for Children Ages 0 – 5
Located at Nine Elementary Schools in Langley***

***Douglas Park
James Hill
Langley Meadows
Nicomekl***

***604-533-4491
604-530-0251
604-530-4101
604-533-1468***

***North Otter
Parkside Centennial
Simonds
West Langley***

***604-856-3355
604-856-7775
604-530-2361
604-888-6444***



Ministry of
Education

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF STRONGSTART PROGRAMS?



The goal of StrongStart centres is to provide parents/caregivers and their preschool children with the opportunity to play, learn and grow together. The centres are operated in school settings so you and your child can become an important part of the school community before your child enters kindergarten. Together with a qualified Early Childhood Educator, you help your child to develop important oral language and early literacy skills, and physical, intellectual and social skills, preparing them to successfully transition into Kindergarten learning.

HOW DO THE STRONGSTART CENTRES OPERATE?

Centres are open Mondays through Fridays, except on school holidays and Pro-D days, when centres are closed. Weather or power outage? Call the school before you come. Regular program times are:

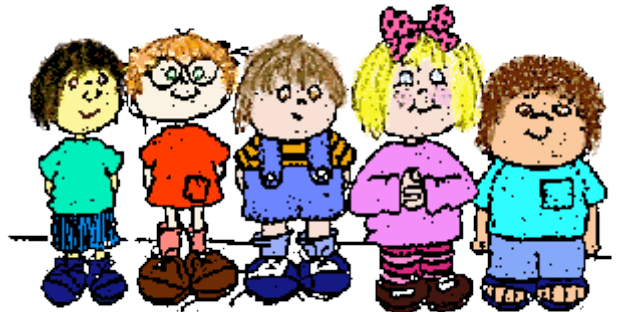
Langley Meadows:	9 am – 12 noon
Nicomekl:	9 am – 12 noon
North Otter:	8:30 am – 11:30 am
Parkside	8:50 am – 11:50 am
Simonds:	9 am – 12 noon
West Langley:	9 am – 12 noon
Douglas Park:	12:30 pm – 3:30 pm
James Hill	1 pm – 4 pm

Parents/caregivers play with their child and other children, and share ideas about parenting. They learn methods, games, songs, rhymes, books, story-telling and reading techniques that are used by the Early Childhood Educator in the Centre

Parents/caregivers bring children for part or all of the daily session, having quality adult and child play time to help their child develop and grow.

ARE THERE ANY COSTS?

No. Nutritious snacks, use of toys and materials at learning centres are provided free of charge. StrongStart Centres are funded by the Ministry of Education and are open to all parents in the entire community.



WHAT DO MY CHILD and I DO AT THE CENTRE?

StrongStart Centres are places full of fun, with many play/learning centres, materials and stimulating activities for children ages 0 - 5.



EXAMPLE OF A TYPICAL DAILY SCHEDULE

(This will vary at different centres)

* **NOTE:** parents with children in both age groups are welcome to drop in at any time, or stay throughout the entire Centre session for the day.

* **NOTE:** there are baby change tables in the closest washrooms. Also, every child must be accompanied to the washroom by their parent/caregiver.

First hour: - children explore at play centres, chosen from list below; clean-up & put away lead into song/rhyme and then snack time

Second hour: - some babies and toddlers may at this time go home for a morning nap
- after snack time: reading and circle time; free play

Third hour: - free play and creative art activities followed by goodbye circle/singing time



With **regular StrongStart attendance**, young children will develop good social skills and form trusting play relationships with other children. Over time, children become prepared to successfully learn in a Kindergarten setting as they gradually learn to communicate their wishes, listen to others, share toys, and sit and focus at circle or story-reading time. They are involved in a safe and happy environment where they develop self-confidence. Together with their parent/guardian, children can play with other adults and with other children. Both parents/guardian and children engage in the following:

- use costumes to play dress-up
- play with puppets, clay, puzzles
- pretend play with trucks, tractors, trains, cars, dolls, little people, animals
- hear and participate in story-telling and story reading
- play at sand and water tables
- sing songs, do rhymes, finger plays
- work with a variety of art media
- play with natural and real materials
- develop large and small motor skills and coordination

WHAT ARE THE EXPECTATIONS FOR STRONGSTART CENTRES?

Health and Safety:



Do not bring your child to the Centre if they have an infectious illness, fever, vomiting or diarrhea. Please care for them at home until the symptoms are gone and they are able to fully participate in the activities of the Centre.

ALSO:

- Remember on the sign-in list, please print the full legal names for you and each of your child/ren attending.
- Take full responsibility for the supervision of your child/ren at all times.
- Please do not allow your child to wander around the classroom, eating. Have them sit down to eat, and please supervise them while they eat.
- Please do not smoke on the school grounds.

Behaviour Expectations:

- Your children look to you and learn by example, so they'll **need your support** at the Centre.
- For the older children, you can help your 4 and 5 year-olds to **prepare to enter the school environment** by reminding them to use indoor voices, walk in the hallway, play gently, clean up toys and materials.
- Set simple and **clear expectations** for your child, be consistent.
- State limits in a **positive** way, focus your child on **what to do**, instead of what NOT to do.
- Acknowledge your child's feelings, **listen** to them, **respond** to them.
- Give your child alternatives, **choices that are appropriate**, and do this in a non-threatening way.
- **Redirect your child** at times when situations may cause inappropriate behaviour to occur (refusing to share, etc.)
- Give your child **cues and directions** prior to changing from one activity to another.
- There are plenty of opportunities for **you to connect** with other adults, pick up pamphlet resources for adult to adult discussion, offer a kind word or two, and create new adult to adult friendships.

Thank you, parents/caregivers, for actively participating in your child's play, for working together to help the Early Childhood Educator to establish and maintain routines such as Snack Time, Circle Time, Story Time, etc. with the children. Thank you for cooperating with other parents and caregivers in gently guiding the play and learning of the children in the Centre.

WHAT IS THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE CENTRE?

We believe that:

- parents and caregivers are children's first and most important teachers.
- everyone is special and unique and has a lot of knowledge to share with others.
- the experiences of the first five years in a child's life set the stage for success in life.
- children learn through discovery, exploration, and play.



HOW DO I REGISTER MY CHILD TO PARTICIPATE?

- All children ages 0 – 5 can register to attend StrongStart at one of the nine Langley locations most convenient for your family. Simply bring your child to the StrongStart Centre. When you arrive, you will be greeted by the Early Childhood Educator, and given a registration form.
- Upon completing the form with all contact names and numbers, you will then be asked to provide a clear photocopy of your child's birth certificate (so we have the official spelling of their name, and their official birth date and birthplace). A photocopy can be taken at the School if you bring in the original document. You're now registered to drop in to the Centre and participate in playing and learning with your child on any days that are convenient for you.



IMPORTANT: Each day that your child attends you will be asked to sign in using your full name and your child's full name. The Ministry of Education requires that we keep daily attendance records in each centre.