

# Safe Spaces

## Dear Families,

Safe Spaces is a bullying prevention program for preschool aged children and was developed by Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre in Vancouver. While it is not appropriate to refer to preschool-aged children as bullies, we often see behaviors of concern that if not redirected, might be precursors to bullying later on. These behaviors are the type that might cause physical or emotional discomfort to others. The Safe Spaces program promotes the use of basic guiding and caring techniques to address these types of behaviors. The Safe Spaces program includes all children participating in an early childhood program, not only those who exhibit behaviors of concern. The main focus of the Safe Spaces program is to teach young children the social and emotional vocabulary and skills that have been identified as essential in preventing bullying behaviors now and in the years to come. Learning empathy, emotional literacy and positive problem solving skills at a young age can reduce the emergence of bullying behaviors that may occur in some older children. The Safe Spaces program takes about four months to complete and has four modules:

1. Safe/Not Safe
2. Friendly/Not Friendly
3. Four universal feelings
4. Fair/Not fair and the Conflict Resolution ABC's.

## Safe/Not Safe

The three most important things to remember in the Safe/Not Safe module are:

- My body is safe
- My feelings are safe
- My work is safe

In the introductory week of the Safe Spaces program the children will be introduced to a poster with photos of safe situations which they can identify themselves. This will be followed by a brainstorming session of the children's ideas as to what will make their classroom safe. Their ideas will be recorded and posted on the Safe Spaces area in the classroom. There will also be a number of activities performed at group time. These will include learning sign language for Safe/Not Safe, a Baby Gallery with their own photos, stories such as Five Little Babies and Hands Are Not For Hitting, the Baby Song and many more.

The Safe Spaces program will be taking place at least once a week in all the preschool classes and will also be taught in the daycare at BCC. There is a DVD available on a lending basis for families to take home and learn more about the program. Please make some time to watch it so that you will understand the Safe Spaces program. If you would like further information on the other modules, please reach out to us.