



PARENT HANDBOOK

A GUIDE FOR FAMILIES AND CAREGIVERS

COMOX VALLEY
Child Development Association

CVCDA.CA

Welcome to the Comox Valley Child Development Association

This guide will give you a brief overview of our organization and the services we offer. If you have questions after reviewing this, please do not hesitate to contact us for clarification. Additionally, you can visit the glossary on page 11 of this handbook for assistance with terminology.

A Little About Us

The Comox Valley Child Development Association (CVCDA) is a non-profit agency established in 1974. Our mandate is to support children, youth and adults with diverse abilities and their families.

Our primary location is downtown Courtenay at the corner of Third Street and Cliffe Avenue. However, there are some programs located off site. You can find these locations with maps and directions on our website via our [Find Us](#) page. Our work also takes us into schools, homes, Early Learning Centres and other parts of the community.

Please see our web page at www.cvcda.ca and feel free to comment on our services either through our website, on the annual survey, or at any other time. We welcome your input, and we welcome you to our services.

Operation Hours

Monday to Friday: 8:30am – 4:30pm
Weekends and Holidays: Closed



CVCDA News & Updates

If you would like to stay up to date on all of our CVCDA news and events, please visit our website or social media accounts through Facebook and Instagram. Additionally, there you can find the [subscribe button](#) for our quarterly newsletter, the CVCDA Circle.



Family-Centered Service

What is Family-Centered?

All of the services at the CVCDA are family-centered.

This means that we recognize that you know your child best and play the most important role in their life.

- We will support you to make decisions about your child's service;
- we will respect your values, beliefs and cultural background;
- we will provide flexible options for support;
- and we will make sure you have the information you need to make choices for your child.

At the CVCDA, families are equal partners with us in the provision of service.

If you have any questions or want to give feedback please contact either
Family Advocate: advocate@cvcda.ca OR Executive Director: cindy@cvcda.ca.

Everyone's Rights

We believe everyone has the right to expect:

1. Respect for their individual human worth, dignity and privacy
2. To be told about all available services
3. To have control over their own lives and have a say in the services that they want
4. To participate in decisions about the type of help being offered and the way it is delivered
5. That personal information will not be shared with anyone without their consent
6. To be able to read written information about themselves in the agency's files (and to correct information that is wrong)
7. To receive quality services regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, language, religion, family status, ability, sexuality, or age
8. Help that is reliable, of high standard, that is culturally relevant, and is communicated in a language that they understand
9. Appropriate help that is flexible in response to the family's changing needs and wishes
10. A way to make complaints and have them resolved fairly without changing the services they are receiving

Steps to Receive Services

Referral

Programs at the CVCDA accept referrals from a variety of sources (family physician, public health nurse, social worker, daycare providers). Families are encouraged to self-refer if they have any concerns about their child.

Referrals to the Community Integration Program, CYSN Family Support and Behaviour Consultation are made by MCFD. TAP eligibility is through a formal diagnosis of ASD.

As you enter services at the CVCDA, you will become acquainted with the range of services available and will be encouraged to seek those services that will best meet the needs of your child(ren) and family.

CVCDA services for families include a Family Advocate to provide orientation to the CVCDA, its programs and services. She is also able to help connect families to community resources and programs where appropriate as well as provide support to families in navigating through services.

Intake

All referrals are handled by the Family Advocate at the CVCDA who receives the 'Application For Service' information over the phone, in person, or from written applications from your health/social service providers. The Family Advocate will help you identify the services that best meet the needs of your family and your child(ren).

Agency Orientation

Once your referral has been received by the Family Advocate, she will arrange for an orientation appointment at a time and place that suits you. The Family Advocate will review the services available, your concerns about your child, your child's medical history, and ensures that all of the information that we have is correct.

Accommodations

Families will be offered accommodations based on their needs. The CVCDA can offer appointments in person, via Zoom or by phone. Additionally, some after hours appointments can be scheduled upon request.

Consent Forms

During your orientation, you will be asked to sign a Consent for Service, and an Authorization to share information. Release forms are required so that information gathered – assessments, medical records, plans – may be forwarded to or received from other relevant agencies. You may also indicate on the form if there is an agency or service that you wish to exclude from receiving information

The Family Advocate will also review important agency information that will help you to understand your rights and responsibilities and other important information. A Quick Start Guide and this Parent Handbook will be left with you. It is our hope that you will feel comfortable and knowledgeable about the CVCDA when the orientation visit is complete and, most importantly, that you feel welcomed to our services.

Waitlists

Waitlists are maintained when the demand for services exceeds the availability of the service. Therapy services, in particular, often have a waitlist due to high numbers of children requiring support. Effort is made to be clear with parents who are seeking service regarding the wait time involved prior to either an assessment, or direct therapy services. Please feel encouraged to inquire about the waitlist situation, or any other aspect of our service delivery, at any time.

Supported Child Development Program is also required to prioritize service requests due to budget constraints.

Service Coordination

Often families receive services from more than one program at the CVCDA. Program staff work together with parents and each other to plan for children and to ensure that services are coordinated and complementary.

Individualized Service Plan

An Individualized Service Plan (ISP) identifies strengths, challenges, likes, dislikes and your family's goals for your child. Parents and staff work together to create an ISP for each child. The ISP is updated at least once per year, and more often if needed to ensure that everyone is working together to support your child and family in meeting your goals. Parents will receive a copy of the ISP.

Overview of Services

Family Advocate

Services for families at the CVCDA include access to our Family Advocate. She will usually be the first person you meet when you come to the CVCDA. Our Advocate provides information about CVCDA services and supports family in linking to other community services they might need.

Programs

Programs offered through the CVCDA:

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| • Infant Development Program (IDP) | – birth to 3 years |
| • Occupational Therapy (OT) | – birth to kindergarten eligibility |
| • Physiotherapy (PT) | – birth to kindergarten eligibility |
| • Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) | – birth to kindergarten eligibility |
| • Early Years Community Outreach | – birth to 6 years |
| • Early Years Wellness | – birth to 6 years |
| • Aboriginal Supported Child Development | – birth to 12 years |
| • Supported Child Development (SCD) | – birth to 12 years |
| • The Autism Program (TAP) | – birth to 19 years |
| • Behaviour Consultation | – birth to 19 years |
| • CYSN Family Support | – birth to 19 years |
| • Pathways to Healing (PTHP) | – birth to 19 years |
| • Project JumpStart Preschool | – 3 to 5 years |
| • Community Integration Program (CIP) | – 13 to 19 years |
| • Friendship Project | – 19 to 35 years (CLBC eligible) |
| • Project Inclusion | – 19 to 35 years (CLBC eligible) |

Co-Located:

The following program shares our building but is not administered by the CVCDA.

- PacificCARE Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR)

Programs in Partnership with Upper Island Women of Native Ancestry (UIWONA):

The following programs are administered by the CVCDA but managed and operated by UIWONA.

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| • Aboriginal Infant Development Program | – birth to 6 years |
| • Aboriginal Speech & Language Program (ASLP) | – birth to 7 years |

Family Support Groups

Several support groups are offered through our various CVCDA programs or in partnerships with outside community groups and affiliate organizations, some of which use the CVCDA spaces as their home base. Please visit <http://www.cvcda.ca/groups> to learn more about these various supports available.

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|---------------------------------------|---|
| • Circle of Security Parenting Series | • Mothers for Recovery Group |
| • Comox Valley Autism Support Groups | • Playgroup for children with Down Syndrome |
| • Grandparents Raising Grandchildren | • Premie Support Group |
| • Infant Massage Group | • Touchpoints Parenting Program |
| • Infant Playgroup | |
| • Island Dads Group | |

Program Descriptions

Please read on for an introduction to the programs offered at the Comox Valley Child Development Association (CVCDA). You may obtain more detailed information for each program at www.cvcda.ca/programs.

Infant Development Program (IDP)

The Infant Development Program is a home-visiting program. IDP works with families of children from birth to three years who are at risk for developmental problems or who have a diagnosed disability. The aims of the program are to help families to: make best use of available services; increase their understanding of their child; and learn skills that will help them to encourage the development of their child.

Aboriginal Infant Development Program (AIDP) at UIWONA

AIDP supports families and young children with Indigenous ancestry who are at risk of or have identified delays in one or more areas of development. AIDP offers in-person visits, information sharing, strengths-based activity planning, and developmental/family needs screenings in culturally sensitive and meaningful ways. AIDP can also help families in accessing other health, social and community services.

Early Intervention Therapy (EIT) Program

Early intervention therapies work with children from birth to five (Kindergarten eligibility). Therapies includes:

1. Occupational Therapy (OT)
2. Physiotherapy (PT)
3. Speech-Language Pathology (SLP)
4. Aboriginal Speech-Language Pathology (ASLP)

Occupational Therapy (OT)

Occupational Therapists are healthcare professionals trained to help children engage in everyday living, including play, self-help and family and childcare routines. These activities can include independence in self-care tasks such as eating, dressing and bathing, taking part in play across environments, and learning. Areas they may focus on include fine motor skills, sensory processing, self-regulation, and picky eating.

Physiotherapy (PT)

Physiotherapists work with families to help their children develop functional mobility. Within a play-based approach, they provided support to promote motor, balance and coordination skills. This process often includes checking strength, joint range, muscle tone and equal use of limbs. Physiotherapists also provide positioning strategies to address flattening of the head and help secure specialized equipment (e.g., walking aids, standing frames, wheelchairs, orthotics, etc.).

Speech-Language Pathology (SLP)

Speech-Language Pathologists work with families to help their children become the best communicators they can be. They provide support to promote increased understanding of language, use of language and connecting with others socially and in play. They also provide strategies to help improve oral motor functioning which helps improve speech and feeding. SLPs will also help your child speak more smoothly (i.e. decrease stuttering) and will explore alternative ways to communicate (e.g. sign language, electronic talkers).

Aboriginal Speech & Language Program (ASLP) at UIWONA

ASLP seeks to offer a strengths-based, collaborative and culturally minded approach to supporting families and children with Indigenous ancestry. ASLP can support families in learning ways to nurture their child's growth and development in many areas of communication including social interactions, play skills, language understanding and expression, speech sound development, voice, fluency, early literacy, and assistive and augmentative communication (AAC). ASLP services may include consultation, monitoring, screening/assessment, and intervention at a place and time that best works for each family.

Early Years Community Outreach

The goal of this program is to make it easier for Comox Valley families with young children (0-6yrs) to access information, resources and supports.

Early Years Wellness Program (EYW)

The Early Years Wellness Program aims to help families encourage good mental health and wellness in their children. We support parent-child relationships while providing positive parenting tools. Funding for our services are covered through the A Pathway to Hope initiative.

Supported Child Development Program (SCDP)

SCDP helps each child involved in the program to successfully participate in their Early Learning setting, supporting the staff with resources, suggestions and strategies. The heart of both SCDP and ASCD are the philosophies of "inclusion" and "family centred practice".

Aboriginal Supported Child Development (ASCD) Program

ASCD helps each child involved in the program to successfully participate in the childcare setting of their family's choice while ensuring cultural safety and cultural sensitivity for First Nations, Metis, and Inuit children and families.

JumpStart Preschool

Jump Start Preschool is a community based program located in Courtenay Elementary in partnership with School District 71. The program offers enriched learning through play for ages 3 through 5 years old.

The Autism Program (TAP)

TAP provides individualized services for children and youth with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder. Services include one-to-one support, social groups, and a summer camp for teens. Services are guided by individual behavioural plans. The program is funded by individualized Autism Funds.

Community Integration Program (CIP)

The Community Integration Program is for teens with diverse abilities, and offers support through celebrating individual strengths. Referrals must be made by a CYSN social worker.

Behaviour Consultation

The Behaviour Consultant works in partnership with families to assess behaviour and develop individualized Positive Behaviour Support plans to address the family's goals. The goals may include decreasing challenging behaviour and teaching the child new skills related to communication, social interaction, self-help, and independence. Referrals must be made by a CYSN social worker.

CYSN Family Support

The CYSN Family Support program provides individualized support to families that have children or youth with diverse abilities. The Family Support Worker meets with families in their homes and in the community and provides assistance in the form of information, advocacy, planning, guidance, and problem-solving. Referrals must be made by a CYSN social worker.

Pathways to Healing (PTHP)

A specialized team who recognizes the incredible challenges many families face. We focus on helping people who have experienced difficulties such as:

- Poverty
- Homelessness
- Physical or Mental Health Challenges
- Abuse or Neglect
- Exposure to drugs or alcohol in pregnancy
- Exposure to domestic violence

The Friendship Project (FP)

The Friendship Project works in partnership with the Comox Valley community to support young adults with diverse abilities. The goal of the program is to increase these adults' confidence and competence and to assist the participants to lead fulfilling connected lives. Must be eligible for CLBC services.

Project Inclusion (PI)

Project Inclusion is made up of young adults living with diverse abilities who work on setting individual goals for life skills, job readiness, socializing and being active members in our community. Must be eligible for CLBC services.

PacificCARE Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR)

PacificCARE offers programs that support strong quality care and learning environments for children.

Learn more at pacific-care.bc.ca

General Information

Cancellation of Appointments

If it is necessary to cancel a scheduled visit with CVCDA staff, please notify the CVCDA as soon as possible. You may leave a message on the answering machine if you call after hours.

Please cancel an appointment if your child or yourself are ill.

If it is necessary for a CVCDA staff member to cancel a scheduled appointment with you, you will receive a call as soon as it is known that an appointment cannot be kept. We appreciate hearing from Early Learning Centres if a child is absent who was expecting a scheduled visit – we can often intercept a staff member and prevent them from an unnecessary trip.

Confidentiality, Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act provides guidelines regarding the gathering, storage, and release of information held by a public body and prevents others from seeing your information without your consent. It also gives you the right to access any information about you or your child that is kept on file at the CVCDA.

Confidentiality and respect for privacy are universal rights and principles that we uphold at the CVCDA. Detailed agency policies and procedures related to confidentiality are available for your review.

If you feel that you would like to discuss the Privacy, Confidentiality, or Freedom of Information Policies of the CVCDA, please contact our Family Advocate, Beth Fraser.

Complaint Procedure

If you have a complaint or concern arising from services offered at the Child Development Association, we ask that your first discuss it with the person involved. It may be useful to offer your comments in writing. In our experience, most concerns are resolved at this stage.

If you are still concerned, please follow these steps:

1. Discuss it with the supervisor of the employee. Again, sometimes written notes are helpful. Please call reception to get the name and contact information you need.
2. In the event that a solution is not reached, please direct your concern in writing or call the Executive Director. The Executive Director will reply in writing outlining the actions to be taken to address the concerns.
3. We are committed to resolving your concerns.

Remember: You have the right to express your concerns knowing that the services that you receive will not be negatively affected.

Please always feel welcome to ask a friend or relative to accompany you for support at any stage of the process. Community advocates are also available to assist you. For information contact our reception, or the Family Support Institute can link you to a Resource Parent: www.familysupportbc.com or (604) 540-8374.

Custody and Guardianship Concerns

It is important that the CVCDA be alerted in the event of a change in custody, especially if it involves a custody dispute. If there is a change that involves releasing children to a designated responsible parent, it is imperative that the CVCDA staff receives notification.

Parents should also be aware that the CVCDA will follow legal custody and guardianship protocol and is unable to support one parent's application over the other parent – we remain neutral in these situations.

Emergency Procedures

Please ensure that we have your current phone number and emergency contact information. CVCDA staff have been trained in Child Safe First Aid, and the facility is equipped with First Aid Kits and an external defibrillator. Our Occupational Health and Safety Committee ensures that we keep up to date with emergency standards and practices. Emergency Procedure information is posted throughout our facility.

Guidance and Discipline

Consistent with our approach to discipline and our relationship with children please be advised that any form of hitting, abusive language, ridicule, or harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment is against our philosophy. These behaviours are not permitted to take place at the Child Development Association, nor in any of the programs offered through the CVCDA.

Questions and Concerns

Please feel free to direct any questions that you may have about the CVCDA operations to our office staff or Family Advocate. They will refer your question to the appropriate staff member if they are unable to help you.

Resources

The following programs have resources of interest to parents, caregivers and students: Infant Development, Supported Child Development, and PacificCARE Resource and Referral. Books, videos, magazines, toys and equipment are available for loan.

Staff

Our therapists and various service providers are all licensed to practice in British Columbia, and are members of their respective professional bodies. Other professionals on staff at the CVCDA meet the required qualifications for their positions, including certificates, diplomas, degrees and/or professional designations. Ongoing professional development is an important aspect of employment at the CVCDA.

Students and Volunteer Involvement

We welcome the opportunity to serve as a resource for practicum students from the Early Childhood Education and Human Service Worker programs at North Island College, and national and international universities around the world. Student interns are regarded as CVCDA staff during their practicum.

We welcome volunteer participation in many of our programs. There is a volunteer application package that we ask you to complete if you have an interest in working with us. Volunteers are valued as members of the CVCDA team, but are never substituted for paid employees.

Parents are strongly encouraged to participate in activities involving their children. If you wish to volunteer, please discuss your desire with a staff member.

Annual CVCDA Children's Telethon

Each year, as our major fundraiser, the Association hosts the annual CVCDA Children's Telethon in support of our services. Volunteers are welcome to support the work of the Telethon Committee.

Surveys

Surveys are an essential tool for helping us to respond to your needs, and for measuring the effectiveness of our services. You may be asked to complete a brief survey with us, and you will be asked to participate in annual surveys. You will receive an online link to our Exit Survey when you exit our services. This will only take you a few minutes to complete. Thank you in advance for your understanding, interest, and support.

Accreditation

The CVCDA is accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Rehabilitative Facilities (CARF). Accreditation is granted for up to three years and is dependent upon an extensive number of standards being met. Written documentation, policies and procedures, case files, and organizational plans all form part of the preparatory work for CARF. A site survey is conducted that consists of a review of all prepared documentation and interviews with various stakeholders.

The Role of the Board of Directors

The CVCDA is a registered, non-profit society conforming to all requirements of the Societies Act, BC. The Board of Directors is elected from a Membership for a two year term of office at the Annual General Meeting held every year in September. The Board is a governance, decision-making entity with jurisdiction over all organization planning and policy. The Board has fiscal and legal responsibility for the agency. It is the goal of the agency to have an active, visionary board representing a wide variety of interests and knowledge.

Membership

As a registered non-profit, membership is encouraged and open to anyone upon payment of a nominal annual fee. Please contact our Executive Director if you would like to become a member.

Glossary

Acronyms and Commonly Used Terms

ASD – Autism Spectrum Disorder	HEABC – Health Employers of British Columbia Association
AIDP – Aboriginal Infant Development Program	HSA – Health Sciences Association (Employees Union)
ASCD – Aboriginal Supported Child Development	IDP – Infant Development Program
ASLP – Aboriginal Speech & Language Program	ISP – Individualized Service Plan
CARF – Council for the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities	LNR – License Not Required
CCRR – PacificCARE Child Care Resource and Referral	MCFD – Ministry for Children and Family Development
CDBC – Complex Developmental Behavioural Conditions	MDT – Multi-Disciplinary Team
CLBC – Community Living British Columbia	MSD – Ministry for Social Development
CMFRC – Comox Military Families Resource Centre	NIC – North Island College
CRA – Courtenay Recreation Association	OT – Occupational Therapy
CVCDA – Comox Valley Child Development Association	PT – Physiotherapy
CVCDCS – Comox Valley Children’s Day Care Society	PTHP – Pathways to Healing Partnership
CVFS – Comox Valley Family Services	SCD – Supported Child Development
CVTS – Comox Valley Transition Society	SLP – Speech-Language Pathology
CYSN – Children and youth with support needs	SW – Social Worker
ECEBC – Early Childhood Educators of British Columbia	TAP – The Autism Program
EIT – Early Intervention Therapy	UIWONA – Upper Island Women of Native Ancestry
FASD – Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder	VICAN – Vancouver Island Children’s Assessment Network

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