



# WHISTLER CHILDREN'S CENTRE SOCIETY

## Child Care Waitlist Frequently Asked Questions

We manage 74 child care spaces for children 3 months to school age. Due to the limited number of spaces we have an extensive waitlist. The length of the waiting time is different for each age group and type of care. The longest waitlist times are for children under 3 years old. Our Infant and Toddler Programs have a waitlist ranging from 18 months to 2+ years. Our 3 – 5 year old programs do not generally operate with as long of a waitlist but are busy throughout the spring and fall.

### **Q. Why is the waitlist so long?**

**A:** A recent study from the Child Care Resource and Research Unit in Toronto showed that British Columbia has enough regulated child care spaces for only **22.7%** of children in the province. The Canadian average of regulated child care spaces available is **24%**. This clearly illustrates that the lack of child spaces in Whistler is not a Whistler problem, or a Provincial problem. The lack of child care spaces is a problem across our country. And, there is no easy or immediate solution.

### **Q. Is there a waitlist fee?**

**A.** Yes, the waitlist fee is \$50. This is a non-refundable fee.

### **Q. How is the waitlist managed?**

**A:** The Whistler Children's Centre has guidelines surrounding the management of the waitlist. It is the goal of the Executive Director is to fill as many spaces as possible by following the guidelines below. When a space becomes available in a program, the following Admittance & Advancement policy is followed:

1. Licensing regulations regarding allowable age.
2. The child of a Whistler Children's Centre staff person.
3. Any children within the existing program who wishes to make changes to their current enrollment (add days) and/or any children, currently-enrolled in the Whistler Children's Centre, who are aging out of a younger program and are ready to move/advance to the next program.
4. A child from the Whistler Children's Centre waitlists.

### **Q. What happens when a space becomes available?**

**A:** When a space becomes available, the Executive Director reviews the waitlist and identifies the next eligible child using the Admittance & Advancement policy priorities listed above.

1. The parent is notified by phone and email of which day(s) are available
2. The parent is given 48 hours in which to accept or refuse the space.

3. If a parent does not respond within the 48 hours they will remain in the same position on the waitlist and this will be considered one refusal of care. After 3 refusals of care a child will be removed from the waitlist. **It is important that you inform of us any changes to your contact information.**
4. We will continue to offer the space to the next eligible child until the space is accepted or until the middle of the preceding month, whichever comes sooner.

**Q. What happens if I turn down a space when it is offered?**

**A.** If you decide not to accept the space you will remain in the same position on the waitlist. After refusing **three** offers of child care space the child will be removed from the waitlist. If you no longer need a child care space, please contact us so we can remove your child from our waitlist.

**Q. Do I have a specific waitlist number?**

**A: No.** When an application is received the information is entered into our database with critical information being the child's age and date of application. When a space becomes available it is filled according to WCC policies. A search is done in the database pulling up all children in order of their application date with matching criteria to the space being filled. Because spaces only become available when a current child changes days, withdraws from a program, or moves to the older program applicants are not assigned a number as it is not a simple 'first come first served' system.

**Q. If I turn down an infant space, what are the chances of getting a toddler space when I need it?**

**A:** Due to the limited number of toddler spaces available, it is unlikely that you will be offered a toddler space if you turn down an infant space. Children who are enrolled in our infant programs always have first priority for getting a toddler space. When a toddler space becomes vacant, we first look at all children who are enrolled in the infant programs and who are the correct age and developmentally ready to move to the toddler program.

**Q. Once my child is in a program, am I guaranteed a child care space in the next age group?**

**A:** Yes. Once a child enters the Centre they will transition throughout the programs unless a parent requests otherwise. But please note that movement is based on the availability of days, child's date of birth, and developmental readiness of the child.

***Although we empathize with how difficult it is to not have a timeline, due to the high volume of applicants and low turnover of spaces we are unable to respond to phone calls and/or emails regarding where your child is on the list or predicting when a space will become available.***

***Rest assured we will contact you as soon as a space becomes available for your child in their respective age grouping.***

If you are interested in advocating for more high quality child care spaces that are affordable for parents, please visit the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC website at [www.cccabc.ca](http://www.cccabc.ca)