



## AMCS Daycare Parent Testimonials

**Shulamit Kraukner (current parent of child attending AMCS Daycare)**

“My daughter has been going to aboriginal mother daycare for 6 months and we are both completely thrilled. She looks forward to going every day. I am so impressed by the range of experiences she has had, from learning a song in a First Nations language, to excursions to the library and field trips. It has been wonderful to see how much she has learned from play, arts and crafts, and daily activities. Most importantly, the warmth and loving care she gets from the caregivers has made us both feel so at home.”

**Naomi Jules (current parent of child attending AMCS Daycare)**

Re: Parent Testimonial

“Aboriginal Mother Centre Daycare is a second home for my daughter Ahlaina. Words cannot express the thanks my family and I have for the loving care and guidance she receives from her teachers and staff at AMCS. I love seeing her progress through the time she has been with the daycare, and I love the exposure she is getting to art, music, dance, language, and healthy food.

It isn't easy working full-time and sending my little precious girl to daycare, but having Aboriginal Mother Centre Daycare as the place she goes to every day eases my mind. I want to thank the staff for taking such great care of my little princess. I will definitely recommend AMCS Daycare to my friends and family.”

Sincerely,

Naomi Jules

**“My name is Alison Maira.** My daughter, Elisabeth Maira-Zobac, age 4, attended The Aboriginal Mother's Centre Daycare. AMCS Daycare has been a wonderful experience for Elisabeth and our family.

I applied at AMCS Daycare in June 2016 after picking up their brochure at my local Vancouver Public Library branch. It looked like a nice place, with qualified teachers and good facilities. To my delight, I got a call a few weeks later from Lindsie Manywounds, the AMCS manager. We met Lindsie for a chat in her office and a tour of the daycare. Lindsie was friendly, calm, and professional as we discussed Elisabeth's needs and our concerns. In July 2015 Elisabeth was diagnosed with epilepsy and this was our first experience talking to a child care professional about our daughter's special needs and our first experience leaving Elisabeth in the care of adults other than our parents. We were shown around the daycare and saw happy kids getting dirty and playing outside, calm, gentle teachers, and a classroom that looked organized and well equipped – but not too perfect, it looked like children lived there. It reminded us of our house, actually, a comfortable, safe place for a kid and that was a major selling point for me.

We jumped at Lindsie's offer of a space for Elisabeth and I began the preparations necessary before her first day. There were many forms to fill out, regarding a first aid seizure response plan, anti-seizure medicine administration, information about Elisabeth's treatment plan from her physiotherapist,



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occupational therapist, speech therapist and neurologist at Children's Hospital. I was nervous about a major seizure happening at the daycare, but I was also impressed by how thorough AMCS's policies were, and how the information about Elisabeth was being shared with the other teachers so everyone knew her situation, what to expect, how to administer her medicine, and how to respond to a seizure.

We followed AMCS's gradual entry procedure starting on September 1, 2016 and two weeks later Elisabeth was going to daycare for 7-8 hours a day Tues-Wed-Thurs with no problems and with increasing enthusiasm. She has connected well with all of the teachers and has had many exciting 'firsts' that have enriched her life: trips to a pumpkin farm, the Remembrance Day Veteran's Parade, Stanley Park, Vancouver Aquarium, and performing in the Christmas concert, to name a few. She has learned about friendship and how to play with other children. She is often so eager to be with the teachers, toys, and other kids when I drop her off that she runs away before I can kiss her goodbye (which produces an intense mixture of heartache, pride, relief, and happiness in her poor mother). In short, AMCS Daycare is where she is being introduced to the world beyond her front door and it has been a wholly positive experience, for her and for our family.

I hope I can say this without sounding trite or naive, but the First Nations cultural component at AMCS is important to us. We are not indigenous people. But we still want our child to learn about First Nations culture and history. I believe that giving my child the chance to learn from and be cared for by aboriginal people, for her to naturally be friends with First Nations children (she accepts this of course as completely unremarkable) is important in light of the Truth and Reconciliation Report's findings. Going forward for this country, in my opinion, requires a lot of listening and learning on the part of non-aboriginal people, as well as forming relationships between aboriginal and non-aboriginal people. All of this is available at AMCS Daycare and I believe it is one of its most precious and remarkable offerings. If all Canadian children from preschool to grade 12 had the experience that is offered by AMCS Daycare; to play, learn, eat, and sleep alongside First Nations children and learn about aboriginal culture from First Nations teachers, Canada would be a fairer, more compassionate, more unified country in one generation.

In closing, I would like to say that AMCS Daycare is a hidden gem in East Vancouver, one of the city's best kept secrets. Many times, I have listened as other moms have described their child's daycare experience and I think, wow, AMCS is way better than that. The gentle and intelligent teachers, the private outdoor playground, the nutritious snacks, hot lunch, and the field trips are a few things that apparently are not that easy to find elsewhere. No matter what time of day I pick Elisabeth up, the teachers are calm, smiling, and in charge. The kids are playing happily. There is no chaos and the classroom is always clean and safe. There is the noise of small children of course, but I have never seen exasperation or frustration on the part of the teachers, which I think is pretty amazing because 3-5-year old's can be very exasperating people!



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It is my hope that Elisabeth and I can maintain our connection with AMCS after our time at the daycare is done in August by volunteering and helping in some small way the women who have created this beautiful, healthy place for young children. “

With warm regards,

Alison Maira