

EDITH HUTCHINS



PURE PLAY CHILD CARE – MATSQUI, BC

The air is full of energy as a line of children head outside to play. This is the Shaughnessy branch of Pure Play Childcare, one of two childcare centers owned and operated by Edith Hutchins. Each center (Shaughnessy and Riverside) is over 6,000 square feet, with a large playground and five classrooms (three for babies and two for the three-to-five age range). Between the two centers, there are approximately 160 children enrolled.

Edith's love of children started at a young age as she babysat for family members. "My inspiration was my family, and my love for children. I love being around children." Before having a daycare, Edith tried several different types of work and eventually became a glass cutter and a glass temperature oven operator, making windows and shower doors. However, when she had her own child, opening a home daycare to allow her to earn money while being home with her child, seemed logical. "My husband and I decided that I'd go back to school. I went back for Early Childhood Education, and that would allow me to open a business in our house. I could create a daycare in the basement and still have my children attend while I watched other children. I love what I do and get paid for it."

When they purchased the house, they considered the requirements for having the daycare in the home. While they had to do some construction, they were able to make it work. In addition, to help them meet the municipal

requirements, they bought a Fraser Health book to guide them on licensing in-home multi-age daycares.

After seven years of running a center out of her house, Edith felt it was time to expand as her children were older and they could make better use of the space in the house. In addition, she felt she was outgrowing the home business. "I wanted to be around more people because when you work on your own, it's just me and the children. After seven years, I wanted a little bit more interaction with other people, and I wanted to grow what I love."

It took time to move to a full center, as there were many more requirements to be met. It also meant finding a location, having playgrounds, parking, staff, etc. but with perseverance, she was able to meet the development challenges.

Edith shares the value of delegation and assistance. For the first Center, in trying to save money, she did a lot of the work herself, but for the second Center, she outsourced more of the work. "When we opened the second one (childcare center), we learned that we could spend a little bit more for us to have a little time and have somebody else do it." This philosophy is being adopted into her management of the Center. "I do a good chunk of everything myself. I just hired a new manager to help me with my business end-of-enrollment, parent tours and stuff like that. And I hired a new bookkeeper to take over my receipts now. So, she is now taking over my

receipts and my payroll. It's a little less on my plate and more on other people's plates now."

For all three ventures, Edith is appreciative of the support she has received from the Tale'awtxw Aboriginal Capital Corporation.

Edith smiles as she talks about the benefits of her work. "I'm proud of being able to raise my family at home and enjoy that time until they, you know, turn to school. I'm still working long hours, but I get a lot of downtime with my family still and I'm able to do stuff with them. Another one (benefit) is also seeing all these little ones that have started with us, been with us for a year, seeing their growth and how happy the families are. I love it. It's nice to see the children come in. They're smiling; they're happy."

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