

PARENT HANDBOOK



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Welcome

Since 1977, the Peninsula Recreation Commission has been providing active living opportunities in an effective and efficient manner to the municipalities of Sidney, North Saanich and Central Saanich. Panorama Recreation Centre is the primary venue for these services, which include fitness, weights, aquatics, racquet sports and arena programs. Off-site facilities, such as Greenglade Community Centre provide a variety of programs and activities to accommodate the growing community. Panorama is excited to be expanding early years programming to offer a full day preschool at Greenglade Community Centre for families of the Saanich Peninsula.

This information package has been provided to introduce you to our program, to answer some of your questions and inform you of the policies and procedures that guide our preschool operation.

Contact Information

Early Childcare Educators

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Panorama Recreation Reception

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Guiding Principles

Emergent Curriculum

Our preschool philosophy is centered on the belief that children learn the foundations of logic, reasoning, communication and problem solving from engaging in active play. Learning in the classroom is supported through an emergent curriculum where educators observe the children and respond to their inquiries by offering new materials or learning opportunities that extend play. Meaningful guided activities and materials are woven in throughout the program to match the skills, interests and needs of the specific children in the program. The emergent curriculum involves the whole child; meaning the social, emotional, cognitive, and physical realms of development and learning.

Elements of Reggio Emilia and Forest School philosophies are incorporated throughout the program and we will explore meaningful events in our world and in the lives of the children in our program.

BC Early Learning Framework supporting the development of the whole child:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/early-learning/teach/earlylearning/elf-a-guidefor-families.pdf>

Pedagogical Narration

Pedagogical narration is a process our educators will use to document and explore the learning taking place in the classroom, it is sometimes referred to as 'learning stories'. Educators use narrations as a tool to deepen our own understanding, to identify new potential offerings for the children, and to make learning visible for families. Educators will collect traces of learning using photos, quotes, notes and present these to families through a variety of mediums. Narrations will be shared with families digitally (when possible) and in the hallway outside our classroom.

Classroom & Space

The environment is seen as the third teacher; a well-designed environment promotes exploration, social play and creativity. Our classroom design is open, engaging, whimsical and visually soothing. Materials are offered in a response to the needs of the children and are changed regularly with an eye to sustainability and natural products.

We offer ample opportunity for dramatic play, building and design, small worlds, and an open art area in which the children are encouraged to direct their own creative projects. Games, puzzles, and educator led activities are offered on our main tables daily. We are fortunate to have access to additional space within Greenglade for yoga, dance, physical activity and pottery. The outdoor space consists of a fenced play yard with turf, wood chips, sand, and varying natural elements for imaginative play. In addition, there is a beautiful forested area and field surrounding the property.

Staff

Preschool staff are certified Early Childhood Educators or Early Childhood Educator Assistants and meet all licensing requirements. Staff must provide a clear criminal record check, hold a standard first aid certificate, provide professional and character references, and a doctor's note of good health prior to their employment.

We follow a ratio of 1:8 caregivers to children at all times.

Fees & Registration

Fees are due on the 1st of each month and can be accepted in the form of post-dated cheque or scheduled payments on credit card. All dishonored payments will be subject to a \$15 service charge that will be added to your account and may prevent future transactions until paid.

There is a nonrefundable registration fee of \$75 to confirm your child's spot in the preschool. For new families payment is due 1 month prior to your start date. For example, if your child is starting in September 2023 your first payment will be taken August 1 2023.

Full Time (September 2023): \$1072/month, \$527/month

Tuesday/Thursday (September 2023): \$460/month, 356/month

Monday/Wednesday/Friday (September 2023): \$675/month, \$390/month

Childcare Subsidy

Preschool fees are eligible for the Affordable Child Care Benefit offered by the Province of British Columbia. Funding differs for each family based on factors such as: household income, number of children in care, and the type of care.

As a licensed child care centre, we are eligible to accept provincial child care subsidy for eligible enrolled children. The following are expectations that our program has for families utilizing child care subsidy.

1. Parent/Guardians are ultimately responsible for all fees as registrants to our program.
2. Parent will be responsible for fee payments until subsidy authorization has been received by our program. Please note that subsidy application processing can take 6 to 8 weeks.
3. Parents are responsible for paying any parent portion remaining after the deduction of subsidy from the program fees.
4. Parents are responsible for renewing subsidy authorization before it expires.

For more information about this program visit

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/familysocial-supports/caring-for-young-children/child-carefunding/child-care-benefit>

Priority Registration

Priority registration for upcoming vacancies will be offered to siblings of current preschool participants. If you have a younger child who will soon be 30months (minimum age) please email us at jshand@panoramarec.bc.ca and we will add the child to our waitlist for upcoming vacancies.

Full time preschool participants who are and transitioning into Kindergarten will receive priority registration in our Out of School Care (full time only).

Withdrawal

To withdraw your child from preschool, you must give one months' notice in writing before the first day of the month. For example, notice must be given before September 1st if withdrawing for October 1st. Failure to provide sufficient notice will result in the upcoming monthly fee being charged.

Termination of Services

Every effort will be made by our staff to meet the needs of each family. We will work with families to resolve issues to their mutual satisfaction, provided the arrangement does not:

- Compromise the Mission and Values of the Peninsula Recreation Commission;
- Compromise the quality of programming for other participants;
- Endanger staff, the child or put other participants at risk.

All situations are dealt with on an individual basis taking into account the specific needs and circumstances of the family. After working with the family and making every attempt to resolve the situation, the staff in consultation with a supervisor may come to the decision that it is not appropriate for the child to continue in the Preschool program. Situations where this may be the case include: behavioral concerns, inappropriate conduct, unresolved custody differences, philosophical differences, late pick-up issues or non-payment of fees.

Preschool Schedule

The preschool program will operate 12 months of the year, 5 days a week from 8:00am-4:45pm with the exception of the following closure dates:

Closures, early dismissals, and parent/teacher meetings for 2023 - 2024 are:

- November 8, 2023 (Parent/Teacher Meetings 5:00pm – 6:30pm)
- December 27th 2023 – Jan 3rd 2024 - Winter Closure
- February 16th 2024 – 2pm closure for staff meetings
- May 17th 2024 – Closure for Professional Development
- July 2nd – 5th 2024 – Summer Closure
- August 29 & 30th – Annual Maintenance Closure

Daily Schedule

Below is a general outline of the typical schedule for the preschool. Please note that this is subject to change.

8:00-9:30am: Arrival and free play

9:30-9:45am: Morning snack (indoor or outdoor weather dependent)

9:45am-10:00am: Circle

10:00am-12:15pm: Outdoor time (trail walk, Kelset Creek, outdoor play yard)

11:15am-12:15pm (M/Th): Specialty activity (kindergym, dance, yoga, pottery, baking, music)

12:15pm-12:45pm: Lunch

12:45pm-1:00pm: Transition to quiet time

1:00-2:30pm: Quiet time or nap (Those that do not nap or are not asleep after 30 minutes will be guided to play outdoors as a group or be offered a quiet table activity such as painting, puzzles, and mixed media art.)

2:30-3:15pm: Gym time

3:15pm-3:30pm: Snack

3:30pm-4:45pm: Outdoor play

Unscheduled Closures

In the event Panorama Recreation and/or Greenglade Community Centre is having to close due to reasons beyond our control (including but not limited to extreme weather, snow days, power outage) you will be notified prior to the start of the program. If the program is in progress you will be contacted to pick your child up immediately. **Program fees will not be reimbursed in the case of these closures.**

We follow the winter weather closures for school district 63. On days of inclement weather, the school district will announce closures prior to 6:30am via CHEK news, local radio, and the school district Facebook page and website. If schools are closed due to weather and road conditions, the preschool will also be closed.

Pick-up & Drop-off

Upon arrival our educators will greet you and sign your child in.

Pick-up will be outside at the fenced play yard on most occasions. At pick-up, please wait outside the play yard, our educators will greet you and sign your child out. Verbal and visual conformation that your child is being picked up is imperative; this is required to ensure the safety of your child. Please ensure that your child is picked up promptly by the end of program.

At least once per week please check inside for your child's artwork for pick-up. When projects are ready to be taken home, they will be hung just outside the classroom doors with your child's name on it.

Late Pickup

If a guardian has not picked up a child or called by the end of the class session, staff will try to contact them and alternative contacts on the child's registration form. If none of these people are available and it has been over 30 minutes staff will notify the Ministry of Children and Family. There will be a charge of \$15 for each 5 minutes for late pickup. If late pickup is an ongoing issue and effort has been made to resolve it, notice of termination of services may be given.

Unauthorized Pickup

If your child is being picked up by someone other than listed on the pick-up list, please inform us in writing. Please note that staff will ask to see identification for all individuals they are unfamiliar with.

If you decide to share drop-off and pick-up with another preschool family, please notify the educators prior and ensure the family names are on the authorized pick-up list. Please let the educators know via written communication (text and/or email) alongside verbal communication that someone else is picking up your child. Owls Nest will not permit a child to leave unless these steps have been confirmed.

Custody and Court Related Orders

If there is a custody order in place, please provide a copy so we can include this in your child's file. If there are no legal documents, the enrolling parent must provide information on access. Staff will follow information provided.

Please provide us with a photo of anyone with a custody or no contact order in place prior to your child starting at preschool.

Alleged Impaired Pickup

It is the educator's responsibility to not release a child to an authorized person who is unable to adequately care for the child. If the staff believe the child is at risk, they will offer to call a

relative or friend to pick up the person and child or call a cab to pick them up. If the person is driving a vehicle, the staff will explain that driving while under the influence of alcohol or drugs is against the law and that they are obligated to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child. If the presumed impaired person chooses to get into the car with or without the child, the staff will immediately notify the police and provide a description of the car and geographic vicinity. If the staff believe that the child is in need of protection, they will call the Ministry for Children and Families.

Health & Safety

Emergency Information

Emergency forms and completed registration packages are due two weeks prior to your child's start date or other specified date provided. As per licensing regulations we cannot provide care to a child unless we ensure the child's parents/guardians or emergency contacts can be contacted while the child is in our care.

Emergencies

All staff are trained in Panorama Recreation Emergency Procedures, including those for fire, earthquake, and other major emergencies. Fire drills will be carried out by the preschool class each month, and an earthquake drill is performed once per year according to Childcare Licensing Regulation.

Fire and/or Site Evacuation: In the event we need to evacuate the building, parents will be notified where to pick up their child.

Earthquakes: In the case of an earthquake, if possible we will remain on site. If the centre is badly damaged, emergency crews will relocate us to the nearest emergency centre.

Shelter in place: A shelter in place may need to be implemented should there be an external threat and it is safer for participants and staff to remain inside the building than out. The objective of the shelter in place is to isolate building occupants from potentially dangerous substances such as an external threat. Parents will be notified and kept up to date on the status of the situation and notified when pick-up is safe.

Medical Emergency: If a child has a medical emergency and requires urgent care and transportation by ambulance, an educator will travel with the child and wait until a caregiver has arrived. Caregivers will be contacted immediately and the assigned educator will be the point of contact until the caregiver has arrived.

Earthquake pack: Each child will have their own earthquake/emergency pack onsite at the preschool. Caregivers are responsible to send the following in a large Ziploc bag: comfort item, juice box or water bottle, fruit leather or non-perishable snack bar, and a warm change of clothing.

Health & Sickness Policy

We are committed to providing a safe and healthy place for each child in our program and children with a communicable disease must be kept at home and must be symptom free before returning to preschool. Please refer to the following illness list for guidance:

- **Communicable disease:** This includes chicken pox and measles. Cases must be reported to program staff as soon as they are diagnosed. As each situation can be different, Island Health will provide information in regards to how long the child should be excluded from care.
- **Acute cold:** Contagious with obvious discharge of infected green or reddish-brown mucus. Child may return when discharge is clear.
- **Cough:** Difficulty breathing or persistent cough (3-5 times per hour). Child may return once coughing subsides.
- **Fever:** 38C or 100F or over. Child may return when fever has remained at 37C (98.6F) for 24 hours without medication.
- **Vomiting:** Child may return 24 hours after the last bout of sickness.
- **Diarrhea:** Child may return 24 hours after the last bout of sickness and bowel movements have been solid.
- **Infected skin/eyes/rash:** A doctor must examine undiagnosed skin irritations and provide clearance prior to child's return to care. Eye infections such as Conjunctivitis (pink eye) is contagious and must be treated. Once the eyes are clear, child can return to care. Hand, foot and mouth disease is also contagious and can remain contagious for 7-10 days after initial breakout. Returning to care is permitted once blisters are healed and no other symptoms remain. Please note this may be at the discretion of the staff team based on location of sores.

If a child becomes ill during the day, parents will be called to pick-up their child. If they cannot be contacted, we will call their emergency contacts to pick-up their child. Educators will separate children who are ill from the main group if possible until pick up for the health of the whole class. Children picked up ill from Owls Nest at 12pm or later will be permitted back to the program after 2 days. For example, a 12pm send home on a Monday will permit a child back on Wednesday.

If your child has been exposed to a serious illness or communicable disease, including exposure via other members of the home, please share this information with the educators. All personal information will be kept confidential, and the only information shared with other families is the name of the illness and not where or whom it came from. In this way, we can prevent the spread and keep the educators and children safe.

Additional cleaning protocols via our maintenance and educator team will be enforced in the event of a serious illness exposure. This includes but is not limited to:

- Removal of soft toys, blankets, cushions, etc... to be laundered.
- Removal of shared sensory play items (ie: play dough, sensory bins, etc...)

- Increased sanitation of high touch surfaces such as doorknobs, taps, tables, counters, and hard toys.

Head Lice

If your child contracts head lice, please inform the educators immediately. Children may return to care once they have been treated with lice treatment and all lice and nits have been removed. We will notify all families should a child in the program contract lice and will ask for frequent head checks of all children at home for the upcoming two weeks. It is important that we contain the spread of head lice, enhanced cleaning will be completed and all soft items/dress up clothing will be washed.

Food & Nutrition

Parents are required to send two nutritious snacks and a lunch for their child. For items that are required to be eaten warm, we recommend sending in a thermos. Educators do not have access to facilities necessary to warm food or to keep refrigerated.

★ TIP: Bento Boxes are easier for small hands than multiple smaller containers. Please practice opening containers with your child prior to the first day of class.

Packaged items such as fruit or yogurt cups can be difficult for small hands to maneuver – and quite messy! Please consider placing these items in an alternative container. For items such as granola bars please pre-cut the package to allow children to open these independently.

Children are encouraged to self-regulate their food intake. Educators may provide gentle encouragement but ultimately it is the child's choice what to eat from their lunch and when.

Water is available at all times, please do not send juice. Please send a water bottle with your child each day that can be brought home and cleaned daily. This will ensure your child's continued health and safety.

Medication

Doctor prescribed medication in its original container can be administered by our educators. The container must state the child's name, dosage and time to be given. Please review with our educators and complete a permission to administer medication form.

If you have provided your child any medication prior to drop-off, such as anything for allergies, cough, pain, etc., please be sure to inform our staff at drop-off.

Allergies

It's essential that we provide a safe environment for your preschooler and staff. If it is brought to our attention that there is a child attending preschool with a life-threatening allergy (Anaphylaxis) concern, the following guidelines will be implemented:

- The identified food items will not be permitted at the preschool.
- Notification of the identified allergy will be given to families via email, parent newsletters and in person conversation with families.
- If an item from a child's bag is in question, it will be sent home.

- When programming involves cooking or special food items, parents of children with allergies will be notified so they can provide an alternative product or arrangement.
- Anaphylaxis Action Plan will be completed by the ECE and posted for all staff. All staff are trained in emergency first aid.

Sun Safety

During the warmer months, please send your child with sunscreen applied, ready to play outdoors. Educators will reapply sunscreen prior to returning to outdoor play in the afternoon. Please ensure your child attends preschool with a hat and sunscreen labelled with his or her name. Broad-brimmed hats that shade the ears and back of the neck are recommended. We do not provide shared sunscreen: please send a bottle of lotion marked with your child's name to be kept at preschool. Please note that due to fumes and slippery residue left on surfaces we are unable to apply aerosol spray sunscreen – please provide a lotion.

Physical Care (toileting)

Children must be able to use the toilet independently prior to starting the program. If this is a newly acquired skill our educators are able to assist with hygiene if required, with encouragement towards independent skill development (i.e. check wipes, talking them through the skill, using visuals if needed).

We understand that even toilet trained children will occasionally have accidents or a set-back when in a new environment. By definition, 'accidents' are unusual accidents and should happen infrequently.

A toilet trained child is a child who can do the following:

- Communicate with the educators that they need to use the restroom before they need to go
- Alert the child to stop what they are doing to go and use the restroom
- Pull down their clothing and get them back up with limited assistance
- Get on/off the toilet without assistance
- Wash and dry hands

We understand that each child arrives at this milestone differently and we will allow 4 weeks from start date for your child to demonstrate accomplishment of this goal. A child will not be considered toilet trained for our preschool if there is continued toileting accidents after these 4 weeks (2 or more/week).

The following policies will be in place for children with recurring toileting accidents:

1. Parents/guardians will be notified each time a child has a toileting accident.
2. Educators will keep a record of toilet accident.
3. Educators will document the efforts that have been made to help reduce bathroom accidents.

4. Educators will discuss with parent/guardians interventions to help improve bathroom success.
5. If toileting accidents are habitual, parents/guardians will be required to participate in a parent-teacher conference. During the conference, the educators and parents/guardians will form a toileting support plan to address the issue. The toileting support plan will outline the steps the staff will take to improve bathroom success along with the steps the parents will take.
6. If improvements are not evident after implementing this plan, the educators and parents/guardians will discuss other available options such as time away while the child becomes successful with toileting or withdrawing and placing the child's name at the top of the waitlist.
 - Improvements would include one or two accidents per week, the child independently chooses to use the toilet 2x/day, the child uses the toilet independently when guided by an educator during transitions (i.e. from inside to outside), and can change clothing independently.

If there are continued toileting accidents after 4 weeks, the following will be in place:

- If 2 or more accidents occur in one week, the parents will be notified with the understanding that the issue needs to be addressed further and corrected.
- If 3 or more accidents occur in one week, the parent will be notified and will be asked to keep their child home at least one week or until he/she is toileting independently.

If a child with support needs requires assistance with toileting please discuss with educators or staff in advance so we can ensure this is part of the care plan for your child.

Clothing

Weather appropriate clothing that can get dirty and messy for rain or shine play! Children should have the following items that are clearly labelled with your child's first and last name:

- Indoor non-marking shoes (no laces please, children must be able to put their indoor shoes on and take them off. Crocs or Natives work well).
- Rain boots
- Winter boots OR extra/wool socks for the colder months
- Winter hat & gloves (although ski gloves are warm, they are often difficult for children to play in – a few pairs of thinner gloves that can get wet and be changed are often better)
- Rain pants and coat OR muddy buddy/rain suit (separate rain pants are preferred for children who have recently learned to toilet independently)
- Sunscreen & summer hat (send to preschool by April 1st)
- One extra change of clothes
- Two extra sets of socks and underwear

Field Trips

Excursions into the community provide valuable learning experiences for preschool children. Follow-up discussions, stories and activities may enhance the learning from these experiences. Staff will prepare safety plans and communicate with families for any planned outings. Staff are all trained in first aid and always carry first aid kits with them along with all contact information and the preschool phone.

Field trips may require the use of our recreational bus. The bus will be driven by someone who holds a valid recreational bus license (Class 4), and each seat is equipped with seat belts. In preparation of any trips, the staff will go over safety rules for riding on the bus with class to ensure a safe and fun ride.

Screen Time

The preschool program has a zero screen time policy however exceptions may be made for a special event or holiday, these exceptions will be communicated to parents in advance.

Phones, tablets, and video games should be left at home. If a device has been accidentally brought to school educators will put it away until the end of the day, unless this device is related to communication or other specific needs and a care plan is in place describing the purpose of use.

Please do not send toys from home unless previously discussed with staff.

Active Play

Physical activity and physical literacy is an essential part of our preschool program. Children will spend a minimum of 3 hours outside each day developing motor skills, we will have access to the gymnasium and yoga studio weekly to provide a variety of opportunities to develop these skills.

Exceptions to our outdoor play policy will be made when inclement weather is severe enough to make prolonged exposure unsafe for the children. Atmospheric smoke, strong wind, or severe cold may necessitate a change to indoor play. In the event of inclement weather, additional active play opportunities will be available indoors. Please ensure children attend with weather appropriate clothing daily as the goal is to be outside rain or shine!

Guidance & Discipline

Behavior is communication: our educators will seek to understand the root of challenging behavior through close observation of the children in relationship to one another and their environment. Children will be guided within the program through positive behavior support techniques including visuals, social stories, sign language, and respectful verbal prompts. The educators recognize that each child is unique: we seek to meet each child where they are at.

If there are questions or concerns about your child's behavior, please let the educators know and we will make a time to discuss your concerns privately. It is our goal to work collaboratively with families.

Measures such as 'time outs' will not be utilized in our early learning environment. Children who require a break for self-regulation will be offered an alternative activity until they are regulated and able to return to the previous activity in a safe fashion. Educators provide clear, consistent, respectful limits.

If educators have concerns or questions about a particular behavior parents may be contacted to enhance understanding and work on a plan collaboratively. By working together, we are able to provide the best support for your child.

In circumstances where a child is intentionally hurting others or staff, parents will be notified and in approximate circumstances be asked to pick-up their child if the safety of others is a concern.

We believe children:

- Are deserving of respect
- Have a right to physical and emotional safety
- Are capable of making their own choices
- Communicate their needs with 100 languages

Our expectations

- We treat one another kindly
- We do not hurt ourselves or others
- We respect all living things

Our guidance strategies include:

- Clear, consistent limits
- Positive language
- Verbal redirection
- Listening to and validating feelings
- Whenever possible offering choice
- Guiding and supporting children to solve their problems together

Suspected Child Abuse

The safety of the children in our care is our top priority. As a requirement by law under the Child, Family and Community Services Act of British Columbia is to report suspected abuse, disclosed abuse, or neglect. Reports would be filed with the Ministry for Children and Family Development who would follow up the parent/guardian. Staff are trained in Panorama's Child Protection Policy and would follow this process for any suspected child abuse or neglect.

Communication

Communication between caregivers and staff is essential to ensuring your child is having the best experience as possible at preschool. For communication regarding your child being absent, unwell, or general questions please email us at preschool@panoramarec.bc.ca or text our preschool cellphone at 250-216-5861.

Educator observations of learning and play within our group will be documented with pedagogical narration. Narrations will be displayed in the art pickup area outside the classroom door. Additional monthly communication will go out to families via email. If important information is required for the following week, educators will send a notification via email or letter home in a child's backpack.

Educators are available to privately discuss the needs of children and families when concerns arise. If you would like to speak to our educators about concerns, you have for your child please let us know and we will arrange a time for a meeting or phone call.

Developmental Supports

Educators are committed to inclusive care and have basic knowledge of alternative communication strategies such as sign language and positive behavior support visuals. We are proud to offer a program that supports all children in physical, intellectual and emotional growth. All children are unique and occasionally a child may require more services than typically available in a childcare program. If you have developmental concerns about your child please let us know as early as possible; preferably prior to the start of the program year. Educators will collaborate with you to develop an individual care plan for your child (if required) and are able to guide you through the process of initiating early intervention services (provincially funded).

If required, a care plan will ensure consistent care for your child. Care plans are a collaborative process and are reviewed at least once a year with family input and approval. Elements of a care plan may include behavior, communication, safety, hygiene, or developmental support.

Additional staffing support funding may be available for a child with identified support needs through the Supported Child Development Program. It is important to seek these services as early as possible to reduce potential wait times. Panorama is committed to providing quality child care for all children. Please contact us with any questions you may have.

Final Checklist – what to bring!

The following is a summary of items listed throughout this handbook that parents/guardians are required to provide for their child. Please label everything.

- Water bottle – please no twist off caps. Straw/small opening bottles are best.
- Two snacks
- Lunch
- Comfort item and small blanket for nap/quiet time
- Family photo

- Rain pants and coat or muddy buddy/rain suit
- Rain boots and/or winter boots
- Hat and gloves (winter)
- Sunscreen and summer hat (spring/summer)
- Indoor shoes that your child can put on and take off
- Medication if applicable
- Emergency kit in a large Ziploc: comfort item, juice box or water bottle, fruit leather or non-perishable snack bar, and a warm change of clothing.
- Extra change of clothing with two pairs of socks and two pairs of underwear in a large Ziploc labelled with your child's name.