

# CHILD CARE SERVICES NEWSLETTER GUIDE

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Your guide to creating quick, easy and effective newsletters for families at your child care centre.

Produced by SHCS Marketing and Communications

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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Student Housing & Community Services

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## Program goal

The goal of the CCS family newsletter program is to empower educators to more easily send out regular, high quality newsletters to families at their CCS program/location, allowing us to provide valuable and timely information, help build and maintain a strong connection, and enhance our positive reputation with our families—along with providing a glimpse into their children’s experience and education at CCS.

## What is a newsletter?

Since it’s worth starting with the basics, here’s a quick definition:

A newsletter is any digital or print communication published and distributed periodically, which contains updates, information, stories, promotions, etc., relevant to a particular audience.

## Traditional newsletters

Traditionally, we tend to think that a newsletter is a document, like a PDF or print newsletter, often letter-sized (8.5”x11”).

## Today’s digital newsletters

Today’s newsletters are typically digital, “mobile-first” newsletters—for example, HTML emails (from a platform like Mailchimp), standard emails, blog posts, or even messages in an app.

## What does “mobile-first” mean?

Mobile-first means that the content is primarily built to be read on a phone or other mobile device, but can also be read equally well on a tablet, laptop, or a desktop computer. Think of a website you’ve been to, which looks great on your iPhone, but equally good on a laptop or desktop computer.

# What do CCS families want to receive?

**“I like that the staff are trying to keep us all connected!”**  
— families survey respondent.

Great communications are centred on the audience. They’re written and produced with a focus on:

- What is important, engaging, and interesting to the audience.
- The format or delivery method that is best suited to the audience.
- The types of devices the audience uses.
- When the audience is most likely to read/view the communication.
- Any important demographic considerations, such as location, age range, language, etc.

## Families survey

With that approach in mind, in 2021, we surveyed families to help give us insight into what kind of newsletters will work best for them. From this survey, we received an incredible 271 responses!

Plus, we asked you, our CCS Educators, to complete a survey about what’s working, what’s not, and how to improve things moving forward.

From these two surveys we learned a lot, which helped us determine the type of newsletter program that will best serve our families and make the newsletter production process more streamlined, consistent across locations, and hopefully a bit easier for each of you.

## Survey conclusions

**Devices:** Most parents/guardians will read CCS newsletters on their mobile phones.

**Format:** Most parents/guardians want to receive newsletters by email, with primary content in the body of the email—rather than as an attached document.

**Timing:** Families will check it out the moment they receive it (after receiving a notification or checking their email inbox) any weekday, any time of day—but are most likely to spend time reading it in the evening.

**Frequency:** A preference for monthly newsletters, with a secondary preference for newsletters once every two months.

**For more details from the families survey, please see [Appendix III](#).**

# YOUR NEWSLETTER GUIDE

How to create an awesome email newsletter—easily!

**“It creates a sense of community. Love the videos and photos and storytelling.”**  
— families survey respondent.

## Approach

**For this guide, we’re going to focus on creating an email newsletter.**

This approach is based in current communications best practices and is aligned with the survey responses from our CCS families.

## Guiding principles

- **Method:** Send your newsletter by email.
- **Timing:** Send it any weekday or time you like.
- **Frequency:** Send a newsletter out once every two months (rather than monthly—to ensure the program is sustainable long-term).
- **Content:**
  - **Primary content goes in the body of the email.** Readers can easily access this content on any device. This content is shorter-form and includes urgent, important, and need-to-know info/news/updates or stories, anecdotes, quotes, single images, etc. It might also include highlights from any supplementary content.
  - **Supplementary content can be attached as a PDF or other document, as desired.\*** This content is longer-form, such as reports, in-depth storytelling, photo collages, video, etc. It allows your reader to go more in-depth if they want to/are able to.

**You can find an example newsletter in the newsletter toolkit files.**

\*Alternatively, if supplementary content is stored online / in the cloud, provide a link to it in body of email.

# Quickstart guide: part 1

If you have just a few minutes to figure this out, or as a checklist and guide for future reference, here's your newsletter quickstart guide.

## Newsletter production checklist

### 1. Writing

- ✓ **Write your email newsletter:** Write your newsletter text in a separate word processing program. Don't forget to write your subject line in advance too!

### 2. Building and formatting

- ✓ **Open your email program:** Either Microsoft Outlook, Apple Mail, Zimbra (mail.housing.ubc.ca), UBC FASmail (mail.ubc.ca) or another approved email program.
- ✓ **Copy/paste your text:** Remember to paste as plain text if you're copying from another program, otherwise the formatting can get a little funky.
- ✓ **Add your subject line:** Copy/paste your subject line into the subject field.
- ✓ **Format your text:**
  - ✓ **Fonts:** Use Calibri or Arial only.
  - ✓ **Use headings and subheadings to break up the text.**
  - ✓ **Add links/hyperlinks.**
- ✓ **Add your header and footer images:** These images are supplied in the newsletter toolkit.
- ✓ **Add attachments:** Attach any documents you want to include.

### 3. Review and approvals

- ✓ **Internal review:** Get someone at your centre to proofread your text and review the formatting.
- ✓ **Program Manager review:** Then send it to your Program Manager for final review and approval.

### 4. Sending

- ✓ **"From" Email Address:** Make sure you're sending the email from your centre's email address\* (i.e., sitka.staff@housing.ubc.ca). *Send from the same email address every time.*
- ✓ **"To" field:** Add your your centre's email address\* (i.e., sitka.staff@housing.ubc.ca).
- ✓ **"BCC" field:**
  - ✓ Add **ccsnewsletter.archive@ubc.ca** to the "BCC" field.
  - ✓ Add your location's listserv email address\* to the "BCC" field. (Save this step until last, so you don't accidentally send before your newsletter is ready to go!)
- ✓ **Take a deep breath:** You've got this!
- ✓ **Double-check:** Review your send fields (To, From, BCC field, and subject line).
- ✓ **Hit send.**
- ✓ **Celebrate!**

Download a copy of the family newsletter guide and all toolkit files at [childcare.ubc.ca/family-newsletter](http://childcare.ubc.ca/family-newsletter).

*\*You can contact the CCS Associate Director, Operations for your centre's email address and listserv email address.*

**Pro tip! Print and post this page for quick reference.**

# Quickstart guide: part 2

If you have just a few minutes to figure this out, or as reference for future, here's your newsletter style guide.

## Style guide

### Font type

Use either **Calibri** or **Arial** in your newsletter, but use only one font throughout your email.

### Font colour

Use either black text or UBC Blue text, but use only one colour throughout your email.

### UBC blue specifications



- HEX: #002145
- RGB: Red: 12 / Green: 35 / Blue: 68

### Font size and weight

**Heading 1: Size 16 (Bold)**

**Heading 2: Size 14 (Bold)**

**Heading 3: Size 12 (Bold)**

Body text: size 11 (Regular)

There is no need to underline or *italicize* your headings or subheadings.

### Double spaces

You do not need to add double spaces after a period.

### Links and hyperlinks

Use your email program's default settings for the style and colour of links and hyperlinks.

### Images

#### File formats

Use either **.jpeg/.jpg** or **.png** file formats. You can identify the file type by referring to the file name (i.e., "forest-walk.jpeg").

#### Orientation

Use **landscape orientation photos** whenever possible.

#### Width

Images shouldn't be any wider than about 660 pixels, the standard width for images in email.

#### Alignment

Use the default alignment for images—to the left-hand side of the email. Don't centre or right-align images.

#### Word wrap

We suggest you don't use word wrap—which causes problems on mobile devices. Instead, keep your images positioned above or below text, not beside it.

**Download a copy of the family newsletter guide and all toolkit files at [childcare.ubc.ca/family-newsletter](http://childcare.ubc.ca/family-newsletter).**

**Learn more under [Formatting](#) (pg. 19) and [Images & Graphics](#) (pg. 21) in the full newsletter guide below.**

**Pro tip! Print and post this page for quick reference.**

## The in-depth guide

**In this guide, we'll cover the process for creating a great email newsletter:**

- **Writing your email newsletter.**
- **Reviewing and revising your draft.**
- **Building and formatting your email newsletter.**
- **Including images and graphics.**
- **Review and approvals.**
- **Sending your email.**

Remember: for this guide, we're mainly focused on the steps to produce an email newsletter—with content in the body of the email. But we'll also cover documents that you can attach to your email, such as PDFs with storytelling content or photos, in a later section.



# WRITING

## Writing your email newsletter

Writing a great newsletter can seem like a daunting task, but keeping a few basic principles in mind will help you write a clear, simple, and engaging email that families will find useful and enjoy reading.

### Write it first

The writing often comes easier when you create your draft in a separate document, rather than in your email program. Doing so also allows you to take advantage of the spelling and grammar tools in those programs.

We recommend that you write your draft in the word processing program/app on your device.

- **Microsoft Word on a PC or Mac.**
- **Pages on an iPad or Mac.**
- **Microsoft Word via [office.com](https://office.com)**—a service provided by UBC, also known as Sharepoint or OneDrive. Log in with your CWL username and password.

Later, once you've finalized and proofread your text—and you're ready to start building your email—you'll copy and paste the content into your email draft.

## Online and AI writing tools

There are increasingly-powerful online writing tools (i.e., Grammarly) and artificial intelligence (AI) tools (i.e., ChatGPT) available, which you may consider using to assist you in writing your newsletter.

### Best practices

- Use the most common and well-known tools or platforms.
- Use the online version (i.e., in a web browser); avoid downloading and installing apps or browser plugins, which may give the program broad access to data and content across your device.
- Avoid entering any personally-identifying data or information about others when working with AI tools (e.g., full names, birth dates, etc.).
- Set the tool to Canadian or UK grammar settings; for AI, once the AI tool has output text you're happy with, ask it to convert the text to Canadian spelling and grammar rules—or even UBC's writing style guide, which ChatGPT, for example, is able to access.

# WRITING

## Plain language

To make your newsletter easy to write and easy to read, use a plain language approach.

## Use simple, direct sentences

Simple, direct sentences help us effectively and efficiently communicate in a newsletter format.

## Be specific

- ✗ “We went outside and looked at nature”
- ✓ “We took the children on a nature walk and found interesting fir cones, watched squirrels playing, and even spotted a Bald Eagle.”

## Avoid fancy words

They might seem perspicacious, but they’re probably just obfuscating what you intend to impart.

## Avoid using jargon or specialized terminology

Words that mean something to us, within a particular field or area of expertise, won’t have the same meaning to others. At best, these words confuse your reader; at worst, they alienate them.

An example from IT: “We’ve recently experienced a high degree of latency on our company’s Zoom calls” doesn’t mean much to us; instead, it could be written as “We’ve recently experienced a delay between audio and video on our company’s Zoom calls.”

## Avoid acronyms

Similar to jargon, acronyms can leave readers confused and alienated. For example, while we might get away with writing “the patient is in the ICU,” it will leave some readers behind. Instead, we could write “the patient is in the Intensive Care Unit” or “the patient is in intensive care.”

## Use standard punctuation

- Use commas, periods and question marks.
- Use colons if you’re confident.
- Avoid semicolons altogether.
- Exclamation points are great! But use them sparingly!! Otherwise it’s way too exciting!!!

# WRITING

## Be direct and keep it brief

People don't read emails the same way they read books or articles. Instead, they scan or skim them. So keep your content brief and get right to the point. Just like we've done here.

Your reader has limited time, energy, and attention, so give them the information they need and move on.

## Short paragraphs

Just like in this guide, keep your paragraphs to one or two sentences. And leave a full line of white space between each paragraph.

Keeping your paragraphs short, with sufficient space between them, allows the reader to quickly scan to the information they want to review.

## Use the inverted pyramid

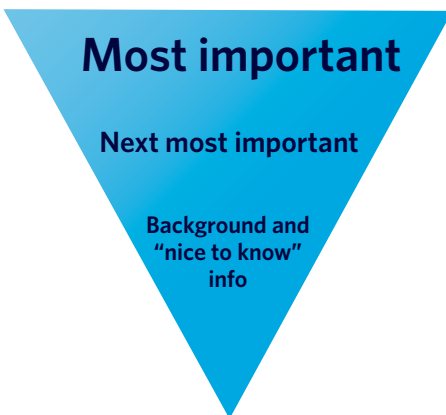
This is a fancy way of saying, put the most urgent, important, current, or relevant information first, then add additional background info, context, or detail afterwards. That way, if someone has time to read just one sentence, they'll get the message.

### Example

**Traditional structure:** My family loves to get outdoors, even if it's raining. We've got all the wet weather gear we need. This past weekend, the weather was torrential, but we threw on our rubber boots and rain jackets and went on a great hike in Lynn Canyon.

**Inverted pyramid structure:** This past weekend, I went on a great hike with my family in Lynn Canyon. The weather was torrential, but we threw on our rubber boots and rain jackets, since we love to get outdoors, even if it's raining.

This useful approach is borrowed from journalism. The next time you're reading a news article, pay attention to how they structure the information. You'll see the inverted pyramid in action!



# WRITING

## Calls to action

Is there anything in your newsletter that you are asking families to do or to take action on?

Make sure this information is clear, direct, and prominent. Don't bury your request in the middle of a paragraph or at the bottom of your newsletter.

Clearly communicate:

- what the action is
- how or where to take the action
- what the deadline is
- why it matters (briefly).

If you're asking them to complete something online, turn your link into a call-to-action as well!

## Examples

- ✓ **Craft supplies needed!** Do you have an egg carton or empty milk jug that you could spare? If so, please send it with your child by July 3, so we can use it for Robot Week (July 7-11). Thanks!
- ✓ **Donations wanted!** Do you have any old or outgrown kids shoes you would like to donate to the University Neighbourhood House? If so, please [visit their website](#) by Tuesday, July 3 to learn more about their shoe donation campaign. The University Neighbourhood House provides important services to under-resourced families in the university community. Thanks!  
[DONATE TODAY >](#)

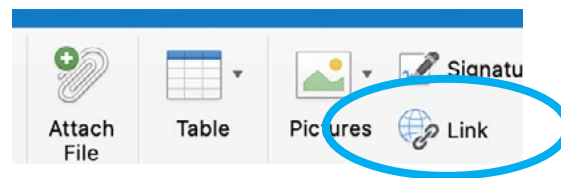
## Links and hyperlinks

**This is a link:** <https://childcare.ubc.ca>. A link is the URL or web address itself.

**This is a hyperlink:** [UBC Child Care Services](https://childcare.ubc.ca) (linked to <https://childcare.ubc.ca>). A hyperlink is clickable text that links to a web address.

## Hyperlinks

Hyperlinks are the preferred format for email. To create a hyperlink, use the chain icon in your email formatting bar, which may look like this.



## Writing hyperlinks

When writing the text you are going to hyperlink, use descriptive text or actionable text (that starts with a verb).

- ✗ “[Click here](#) for more info.”
- ✓ “[Visit UBC Child Care Services](#) for more info.”  
or “Visit [UBC Child Care Services](#) for more info.”
- ✗ “Next week we are going to be learning about clouds. Over the weekend, go to <https://youtu.be/yod3wMbFHUY> to watch a fun video about different types of clouds with your child.”
- ✓ “Next week we are going to be learning about clouds. Over the weekend, feel free to [watch a fun video](#) about different types of clouds with your child.”

## Links

There are times when we may prefer that the URL is visible. For example:

“Please visit [childcare.ubc.ca](https://childcare.ubc.ca).”

This is OK on occasion. Just make sure you remove any extra characters, such as “<https://>” that just add clutter to your text.

- ✗ “Learn more at <https://childcare.ubc.ca/>.”
- ✓ “Learn more at [childcare.ubc.ca](https://childcare.ubc.ca).”

# WRITING

## Headings and subheadings

Use headings and subheadings, like we're doing in this document, to help your reader scan the email more easily and get to the content that matters most to them.

For example:

### **This is a heading**

#### **This is a subheading**

This is your text.

When writing headings and subheadings, keep them short and direct. They're mainly there to help your reader navigate the email.

You'll find more info about how to format headings and subheadings in the formatting section of this guide.

## Table of contents

If your email newsletter is quite long, you may want to include a Table of Contents near the top of your email, but this is not necessary.

To create your table of contents, you would use the headings that you created for each section.

### Examples

#### **What's in this newsletter?**

- Birthdays
- Thank you
- Bedding bags and lunch kits
- Late arrivals
- Snowy weather

#### **Table of contents**

- Birthdays
- Thank you
- Bedding bags and lunch kits
- Late arrivals
- Snowy weather

## The subject line

The goal for our subject lines is to simply let our readers know what type of email they are receiving and who it is from.

To help increase consistency across all our CCS locations, please use the following standardized subject line template.

### Subject line template

Your <Location> Newsletter | <Month> <Year> | UBC Child Care Services

**Example:** Your Raven Newsletter | March 2023 | UBC Child Care Services

## Signature line

A strong signature line has a salutation that communicates the appropriate emotional tone of the email, indicates who is sending the email, and provides applicable contact information.

Here is a recommended signature line.

Sincerely,

Your <CCS location> team  
*Educator first names*

[Footer graphic]

Sincerely,

Your Raven team  
*Terry, Gemma and Kai*

[Footer graphic]

Please note that for personal email signatures, for non-newsletter purposes, continue to use the UBC email signature generator at [brand.ubc.ca/e-mail-signature-generator](https://brand.ubc.ca/e-mail-signature-generator).

## Additional writing resources

To learn more about writing at UBC, visit the UBC Brand writing guide at [brand.ubc.ca/guidelines/writing](https://brand.ubc.ca/guidelines/writing).

## Creating content for your email newsletter

What kind of content should you include in your newsletter?

In 2021, we polled families on the kind of content they feel is most important.

### What families want to hear about

Here are the types of content that families ranked from most important to least important for regular child care newsletters.

*This list is meant to help us understand what families collectively think is important and serve as a general guide—or even a source of inspiration!*

#### Topics

1. “Need to know” notes from your program (e.g., info about drop-offs, weather/clothing needs, etc.).
2. Highlights/anecdotes/stories from your child’s program.
3. Photos of children / program activities and highlights.
4. Notes about your program’s teaching methodology and values.
5. Important dates and deadlines (program-specific).
6. Program/location updates.
7. General Child Care Services news.
8. Information about upcoming CCS activities/events.
9. Important dates and deadlines (CCS general).
10. Childrens’ birthday announcements.
11. Resources / internet links.
12. Introduction/opening greeting.

Other content families indicated they are interested in receiving:

- Educator introductions/profiles and staffing changes/updates.
- Quotes from children.
- Photos of art/work/crafts produced by children.
- Ways to support the program, like parent council information.

Outside of the newsletter specifically, some families also expressed a desire to receive a list of class names.



# CONTENT

## Key differences

**Notably, families and educators provided a consistent ranking for the first three items.**

However, there were a few key differences—some quite surprising!

- Families ranked the introduction/opening greeting #12, while Educators ranked it #4.
- Families ranked childrens' birthday announcements at #10, while educators ranked them #8.
- Families ranked general Child Care Services' news #8, while educators ranked it at #11.

## Summary

This data gives us valuable insight into what our CCS families care most about, to help you inform the structure and types of content you include in your newsletter.

Knowing what is most important to our audience can help us decide what content to prioritize or make more prominent than other content. It helps us decide what goes first, what goes last, and what content we might not want to include at all.

However, it doesn't necessarily mean we don't include, for example, an opening greeting. Instead, it can help us decide to spend less time on that section and keep it short.

## Additional content considerations

You might consider adding the following notices at the bottom of your email newsletter. Feel free to revise so they are in your own voice.

### Forwarding to spouse/partner

"Only the primary parent or guardian for your family receives this newsletter. Please forward it to a spouse or partner."

### Sharing images of children

"While this newsletter may contain images of children other than your own, we ask that you do not forward or share these images, especially on social media."

## Reviewing and revising your draft newsletter

Writing is a process, and no writer gets it right on the first draft. Keep in mind, we're not aiming for perfect writing—we're aiming for writing that works, writing that gets the job done.

### Read it out loud

If you're able, read what you've written out loud—even quietly. Anything that's difficult to say out loud will probably be difficult to read. If you find any spots where you run out of breath, it usually means a sentence is too long. Break it into shorter sentences.

If you find that you're getting lost in the middle of a paragraph, it might have too many sentences. Break it into two or more paragraphs.

### Find a beta reader

Ask one of your colleagues to read the newsletter for you. They don't need to be a grammar expert or walking dictionary. You're looking for what's called a "beta reader"—someone who can let you know, from a reader's perspective, if anything seems confusing, awkward, incorrect, etc., and provide you with general feedback on the content.

### Use an online tool or platform

You might consider using an online tool or platform to help review and revise your newsletter text.

- **Writing and editing tools:** [grammarly.com](https://www.grammarly.com) or [hemingwayapp.com](https://www.hemingwayapp.com) are great options for reviewing and revising.
- **AI tools:** tools such as ChatGPT are not only good at generating text, they're helpful companions for reviewing and revising. Just enter your text and ask the tool to revise for readability, clarity, reading level, spelling, grammar and more.

*Note: please refer to the best practices at the bottom of page 6 for using online and AI tools—for important info about how to use these tools safely and to make sure your text uses Canadian spelling.*

## Check your spelling and grammar

Spelling and grammar is important because it supports clear, understandable communication, not just because of what's right and wrong or good and bad.

### Tools for checking your spelling and grammar

Check your writing in the grammar and spell check tool in your word processing program or using an online tool:

- Microsoft Word on PC/Mac or Pages on iPad/Mac.
- Microsoft Word via [office.com](https://office.com)—a service provided by UBC, also known as Sharepoint or OneDrive. Log in with your CWL username and password.
- Online tools such as Grammarly or ChatGPT. Just be sure to adhere to best practices for information security (see page 6).

#### Notes:

- In Word, you'll find the spelling and grammar checker under "Tools".
- In Pages, you'll find the spelling and grammar checker under "Edit".
- Make sure you're checking both grammar and spelling.
- If you're able, set your program to check for Canadian spelling. Most default to US spelling—i.e., color (American) vs. colour (Canadian).

### What about online dictionaries?

There are lots of great online dictionaries for checking a word's meaning or to verify the spelling.

[Dictionary.com](https://dictionary.com) and [thesaurus.com](https://thesaurus.com) are two popular online resources.

These and other online dictionaries and language resources are fine for our purposes, but typically default to US spellings—if you're unsure whether it's "cheque" or "check", for example, a quick google search will usually help you clarify.

## Building your email newsletter

Once you've written, reviewed, and revised your email content, you need to build your email.

If you've drafted your text in your email program instead, you can skip ahead to the section about formatting your email.

### Copy/paste the right way

Whatever word processing program you're using to write your newsletter has invisible formatting. When you copy/paste your content into your email program, some of that formatting comes along with it.

To avoid a formatting mess, you have a few options, depending on which email program you're using. So, once you've selected and copied the text, do one of the following—according to your device and programs.

### Copy/paste options

- **Option A:** Paste your content into a plain text document (e.g., Notepad or TextEdit), then select all, copy your text again, and paste into your email window.
- **Option B:** Use right click or the toolbar edit feature to either "Paste as plain text" or "paste and match style."

Now that your content is in your email window, save your draft!

**Plus, don't forget to add your subject line. 😊**

# FORMATTING

## Formatting your email

Now that your text is copied and pasted into your email window, it's time to format it. In addition to making it look nice, our goal is to make it easy for readers to quickly scan for the information most relevant to them.

Make sure to click the save button frequently, so you don't lose your work!

## Formatting the text

### Fonts

To enhance readability, set a professional tone for our newsletters, and ensure consistency across all of our locations, please stick to the following font guidelines in your email newsletters.

#### Font type

Use either one of the following fonts, but use only one font throughout your email.

- **Calibri**
- **Arial**

It's easy to get carried away and use unique or more creative fonts in an attempt to increase the fun factor, but often these alternate fonts can make content harder to read.

Plus, we want to convey a professional tone and maintain a consistent look and feel across all of our email newsletters.

#### Font colour

Use black text throughout your email.

Alternatively, if you are comfortable adding a custom colour, you could use UBC Blue, UBC's official colour. Here are the colour specifications you need:

- Red: 12 / Green: 35 / Blue: 68
- HEX #002145

As with the font type, stick to one colour throughout your email.

# FORMATTING

## Font size and weight

**Heading 1: Size 16 (Bold)**

**Heading 2: Size 14 (Bold)**

**Heading 3: Size 12 (Bold)**

Body text: size 11 (Regular)

## Headings and subheadings

Use the formatting above for the size and weight (i.e., bold vs. regular) of your headings and subheadings.

There is no need to underline or *italicize* your headings or subheadings.

## Links and hyperlinks

Use your email program's default settings for the style and colour of links and hyperlinks.

See the above writing section for more detail on how to write and format links and hyperlinks.

## Images

You can incorporate images into your email newsletter in a variety of ways.

- In the body of your email
- As attached files
- In an attached document (e.g., a photo collage or storytelling PDF)

We'll cover formatting and adding images to your newsletter in the next section.

## Pro tip!

Avoid double spaces after a period. This convention was necessary on typewriters, which used what are known as "monospaced fonts" (like `Courier`) but computers use proportional fonts that maintain readability without the double-space.

### Example

👍 Mark visited the aquarium to see the sharks.\_They were fin-tastic!

👍 Mark visited the aquarium to see the sharks.\_\_They were fin-tastic!

# IMAGES & GRAPHICS

## Including images and graphics

To add an image to your email, you have a couple of options:

- **Drag and drop** the file to the spot in your email where you want to place it.
- **Insert the image** using the editor or menu for your email program.

## Header & footer graphics

In the toolkit, we've included images for you to select from and add to the top of your email (header) and at the bottom of your email (footer).

Please include a header and footer image (matching colours) in all of your CCS newsletters. They will help add warmth, professionalism, and visual appeal to our newsletters.

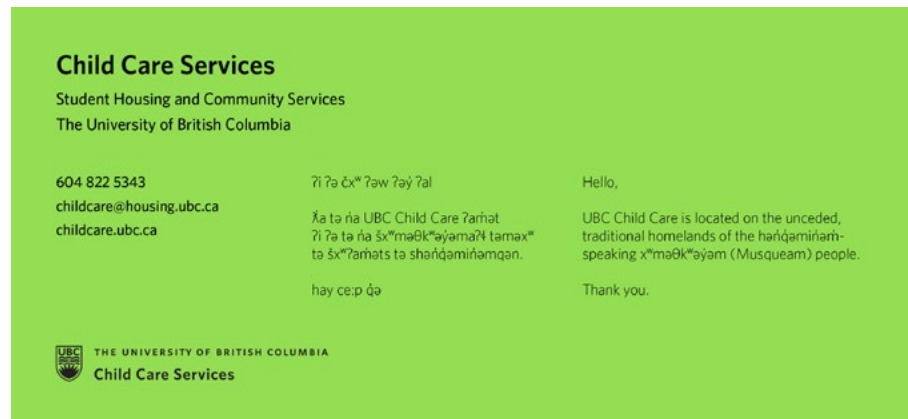
These are available in two sets of colours: green and blue.

Download images from [flickr.com/photos/ubc-shcs/albums](https://www.flickr.com/photos/ubc-shcs/albums).

### Header



### Footer



# IMAGES & GRAPHICS

## Including other images

Besides the provided header and footer images, we recommend you add only one or two additional images in the body of your email—since they can distract from the information you are trying to communicate.

If you're including photos of children from your centre, please make sure you follow all appropriate guidelines about permissions and sharing.

## Image format

Use the following file types. You can identify the file type by referring to the file name (i.e., "forest-walk.jpeg").

- .jpeg or .jpg
- .png

## Image size and orientation

### Orientation

**Use landscape orientation photos** whenever possible.



### Width

Images shouldn't be any wider than the header and footer images provided in the newsletter toolkit, which are both 660 pixels wide, the standard width for images in email.

If your image is too wide:

- In most email applications, you should be able to adjust its size after you insert the image into the body of your email.
- Or you could use another image editing app/program or online service to crop (cut off a portion of your image) or resize it to a smaller width. We've listed some photo editing tools below.

## Pro tip!

If you're resizing images, resize the image proportionally—so that as you change the size of the image you don't distort or squish it; the proportions remain the same.



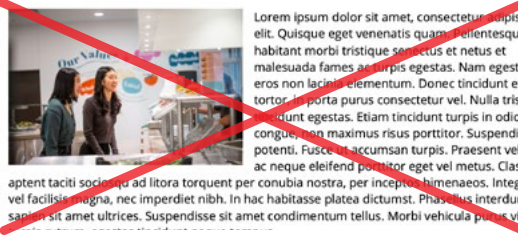
# IMAGES & GRAPHICS

## Should images go on the left, right or centred?

The default alignment for images is to the left-hand side of the email. That's the alignment setting you want. Don't centre or right-align your images.

## How do I add text beside my image?

This is called "word wrap". However, we suggest you don't use it. Instead, keep your images positioned above or below text to avoid formatting issues on mobile devices.



## Create a graphic

If you want to create a graphic for inserting into your email or attaching to it, you have a couple of options:

- **Canva:** Canva is the premiere place to create free, high-quality graphics. Visit [canva.com](https://www.canva.com).
- **Adobe Express:** Adobe Express is another great place to create free high-quality graphics. Visit [adobe.com/express](https://www.adobe.com/express).

## Looking for images or illustrations?

If you're looking for high-quality images or graphics to include in your email newsletter, that look great and have an emotional impact, there are a few places on the internet to find them.

- **Unsplash:** A top website for finding and downloading free, high-quality images. Visit [unsplash.com](https://www.unsplash.com).

See **Appendix I** in this guide for a list of additional websites.

Again, add just one or two additional photos, to keep the focus on the newsletter content.

## Copyright alert!

While a google image search will return lots of images, we can only use images that we have the rights to share, according to copyright law. As such, we need to download images from a valid source.

# IMAGES & GRAPHICS

## Pro tip!

Try to avoid clip art-style images/graphics to help emphasize the professional tone of our newsletters.

## Photo editing tools

The good news: you don't need Photoshop!

If you need to crop or resize a photo, or to brighten your photo or add a bit more colour, there are lots of easy-to-use tools available.

- Use the default photo viewing program or app that's already on your device. Many have simple photo editing capabilities.
- Online photo editors and compressors. We've included links to several options in [Appendix I](#) of this document.

For iPad, there are lots of apps out there, such as Adobe Lightroom or Snapseed, but your iPad should also have a convenient built in photo editing tool in the Photos app.

## Compressing images

If your images are too large to email (i.e., 10 MB or more for all images/ attachments), you'll need to compress your images. See [Appendix I](#) for a list of online image compression tools.

## Diversity in photography

If you are selecting photos from external sources that include people, try to select photos—to the best of your ability—that feature diverse backgrounds, genders, body types, abilities, etc. It might take a bit more searching, but photos with diverse representation are often available.

## Respectful use of Indigenous imagery

Only use Indigenous imagery that is directly connected to your content and that you have permission to use or share. Learn more about this important topic in UBC's Guidelines for Respectful Image Use document. Download a copy from [brand.ubc.ca/guidelines/photography](http://brand.ubc.ca/guidelines/photography).

## How to credit a photographer

Be sure to credit the creator or photographer for any external images you use. Underneath the image, simply write either:

- a. "Photo: <Photographer first name> <Photographer last name>"
- b. "Image: <Photographer first name> <Photographer last name>"



Photo: Martin Dee / UBC Brand & Marketing

# REVIEW & APPROVAL

## Review and approval

Once you're all finished building your email newsletter, it's time to send it for review and approval.

Be sure to send for review and approval at least a couple of days before you want to send your newsletter, to allow time for the review process.

### Review steps

1. Follow any internal review steps at your centre—for example, if you need a Senior Educator to review the newsletter.
2. Save a second draft (i.e. a duplicate copy) of your newsletter, if needed.
3. Send your newsletter for review to your Program Manager: Erin Bowman, Melanie Walters, Susan Damen or Nicole Farrell.
4. Your Program Manager will review for accuracy, consistency and quality, to double-check links are working, etc. and will reply with any requested changes.
5. Make any updates to your saved draft and you're ready to send!

# SENDING

**For the complete email production checklist, refer back to the quickstart guide on page 4!**

## Sending your email

Once your email is approved and ready to go, you're ready to send!

### When should I send my email?

Feel free to send your email whenever you are able; however, sending in the afternoons may increase the chance your email won't be missed!

## Your email send checklist

Steps for after your email is approved by the Program Manager.

- ✓ **Final content review:** Complete one final review of your content (text, images, and overall formatting) for any obvious issues or errors.
- ✓ **Links/hyperlinks:** Click all your links/hyperlinks to test them and ensure they send readers to the right web pages.
- ✓ **Subject line:** Make sure you've entered the correct subject line. If you've sent it to someone for review, remove the "RE:" or "FW:" which may now appear at the beginning of your subject line.
- ✓ **Attachments:** Make sure you've added any attachments you want to include.
- ✓ **"From" Email Address:** Make sure you're sending the email from your centre's email address (i.e., sitka.staff@housing.ubc.ca). You should send from the same email address every time.
- ✓ **"To" field:** Add your your centre's email address\* (i.e., sitka.staff@housing.ubc.ca).
- ✓ **"BCC" field:**
  - ✓ Add **ccsnewsletter.archive@ubc.ca** to the "BCC" field.
  - ✓ Add your location's listserv email address\* to the "BCC" field. (Save this step until last, so you don't accidentally send before your newsletter is ready to go!)
- ✓ **Take a deep breath:** You've got this!
- ✓ **Double-check:** Review your send fields (To, From, BCC field, and subject line).
- ✓ **Hit send.**
- ✓ **Celebrate!**

## Attachments

### Photos, storytelling documents/reports, and more.

Now that we've defined how to write, build, and send your email, let's look at supplementary content you may want to add as an attached document.

As mentioned earlier in this guide, your primary content—urgent, important, need-to-know, short-form content, and/or highlights—goes in the body of the email itself.

Any secondary or supplemental content, like multi-page reports, in-depth storytelling, or photo collages can be attached to your email newsletter instead.

### Photos

There are a few ways to integrate photos you've taken during Child Care activities into an email newsletter.

- **In the body of your email** (as described earlier in the guide, with room for just one or two).
- **Direct attachments:** Attach the photo file itself to your email. This is a great option if you just have one or two photos to share, in addition to any you included in the body of your email.
- **Collage document:** Create a one or two-page photo collage with short captions featuring a variety of photos from your child care centre. This type of document is great for featuring two or more photos. Use the storytelling template provided in the toolkit or an online service like Canva to create your own.
- **Storytelling document/report:** Visit the next section for more info.

## Storytelling document/report

If you have a more substantial initiative, event, or activity that you want to tell an in-depth story about, you may consider producing a storytelling document or report, which you can attach to your email newsletter.

By no means is this necessary, of course! We're including information about it for those teams who already are or may be interested in documenting their centre's activities in this way.

For this type of content, you would create a multi-page document that integrates text and images/graphics to tell a longer-form story about an activity, initiative, or event at your centre.

It might include content from a pedagogical narration, but does not necessarily have to follow that format.

This type of document is great for going more in-depth than you are able in the body of your newsletter—so you can keep your content brief and to the point in the email newsletter itself and put more depth and details into the storytelling document.

### An example from Huckleberry!

A good example of this type of document was a 14-page PDF that the Huckleberry team created to document their experience of Orange Shirt Day. The PDF included personal stories from several educators, along with descriptions of their activities, quotes from the children, and a wide variety of photos.

## CCS storytelling document template

To help you create engaging and on-brand storytelling documents—or even to use for a simple photo collage—we've created a storytelling document template in Powerpoint for you to use.

This template has the same look and feel as the header and footer graphics, so will add a quality of consistency to your newsletters.

### Two versions

- **Standard version:** this file is the primary template, which includes a variety of text, text + photo, photo collage slides, and a few more.
- **Long version:** this file is an advanced template, which includes some additional slide types, such as charts and timelines.

More detailed instructions for use are on the first slide in each file.

Both versions could also be used as templates for internal and external presentations or pedagogical narrations.

## Appendix I

### Links

#### Newsletter files

Newsletter guide, email templates, storytelling/presentation templates, and header and footer graphics.

- **Download from:** [childcare.ubc.ca/family-newsletter](http://childcare.ubc.ca/family-newsletter)

#### Webmail

- **Zimbra:** [mail.housing.ubc.ca](mailto:mail.housing.ubc.ca)
- **UBC FASmail:** [mail.ubc.ca](mailto:mail.ubc.ca)

#### Document editing

- **Microsoft Office online** (aka Microsoft 365, OneDrive, Sharepoint or Teams): [office.com](https://office.com).

#### Writing, revising and editing

- **ChatGPT:** [openai.com/blog/chatgpt](https://openai.com/blog/chatgpt)
- **Hemingway:** [hemingwayapp.com](https://hemingwayapp.com)
- **Grammarly:** [grammarly.com](https://grammarly.com)

#### Photos and graphics

##### Free photo libraries

- **SHCS Flickr:** Download newsletter header and footer images from [flickr.com/photos/ubc-shcs/albums](https://flickr.com/photos/ubc-shcs/albums).
- **UBC Flickr:** UBC Brand and Marketing regularly publishes photos for non-commercial use by UBC departments at [flickr.com/photos/134760388@N08](https://flickr.com/photos/134760388@N08).
- **Unsplash:** A great resource for free high-resolution photos. Visit [unsplash.com](https://unsplash.com).
- **Some alternatives to Unsplash** are [burst.shopify.com](https://burst.shopify.com), [kaboompics.com](https://kaboompics.com), [pixabay.com](https://pixabay.com), [pexels.com](https://pexels.com) and [picjumbo.com](https://picjumbo.com).
- **Flickr Creative Commons:** Download free photos offered under a Creative Commons license. Visit [flickr.com/creativecommons](https://flickr.com/creativecommons).
- **Flaticon:** Free, high-quality icons and illustrations. Visit [flaticon.com](https://flaticon.com).

# APPENDIX I

## Photo editing

Online tools you can use to make simple edits to photos.

- **Adobe Express Image Resize:** resize or crop your photos and make simple edits. Visit [adobe.com/express/feature/image/resize](https://adobe.com/express/feature/image/resize). Need to create a free account.
- **Canva Photo Editor:** simple photo editor, but no option to crop or resize photos. Visit [canva.com/photo-editor](https://canva.com/photo-editor). Need to create a free account.

## Graphics creation and editing

- **Canva:** Canva is the premiere place to create free, high-quality graphics. Visit [canva.com](https://canva.com).
- **Adobe Express:** Adobe Express is another great place to create free high-quality graphics. Visit [adobe.com/express](https://adobe.com/express).

## Photo compressors

If your photo files are too large to email\*, use one of these online image compressors to reduce the file size.

- TinyPNG: [tinypng.com](https://tinypng.com).
- JPEG Optimizer: [jpeg-optimizer.com](https://jpeg-optimizer.com).
- Compressnow: [compressnow.com](https://compressnow.com).

## PDF compressor

If your PDF file is too large to email\*, use this online PDF compressor to reduce the file size.

- Adobe Acrobat Compress PDF Size: [adobe.com/ca/acrobat/online/compress-pdf](https://adobe.com/ca/acrobat/online/compress-pdf).

\*The total size of your email, including all attachments, must be less than 10 MB.



# APPENDIX I

## Toolkit files

Download from [childcare.ubc.ca/family-newsletter](http://childcare.ubc.ca/family-newsletter).

## Visual assets and templates

- Email newsletter template.
- Email newsletter header and footer graphics.
- Storytelling/presentation templates.

## Training/reference

- Example email newsletter (in Appendix II below).
- Example email newsletter file.

## CCS Listservs

Contact the Associate Director, Operations for:

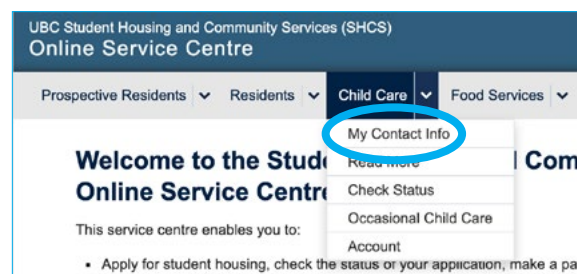
- The listserv email address for your centre.
- Your centre's email address (i.e., [sitka.staff@housing.ubc.ca](mailto:sitka.staff@housing.ubc.ca))
- Your centre's login information for Zimbra.

## How can families update their email address?

The primary family contact is automatically registered for your location's email listserv, using the email address they included when they registered.

However, to update their email address they can:

- Log in to [secure.housing.ubc.ca](http://secure.housing.ubc.ca)
- Navigate to *Child Care* and click the down arrow
- Click *My Contact Info*\*

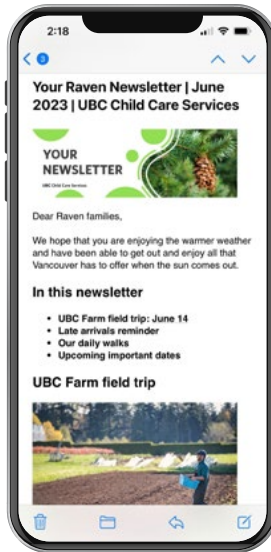


\*Note: families can update their email address using this online method, but not other contact information (i.e., phone number or home address).

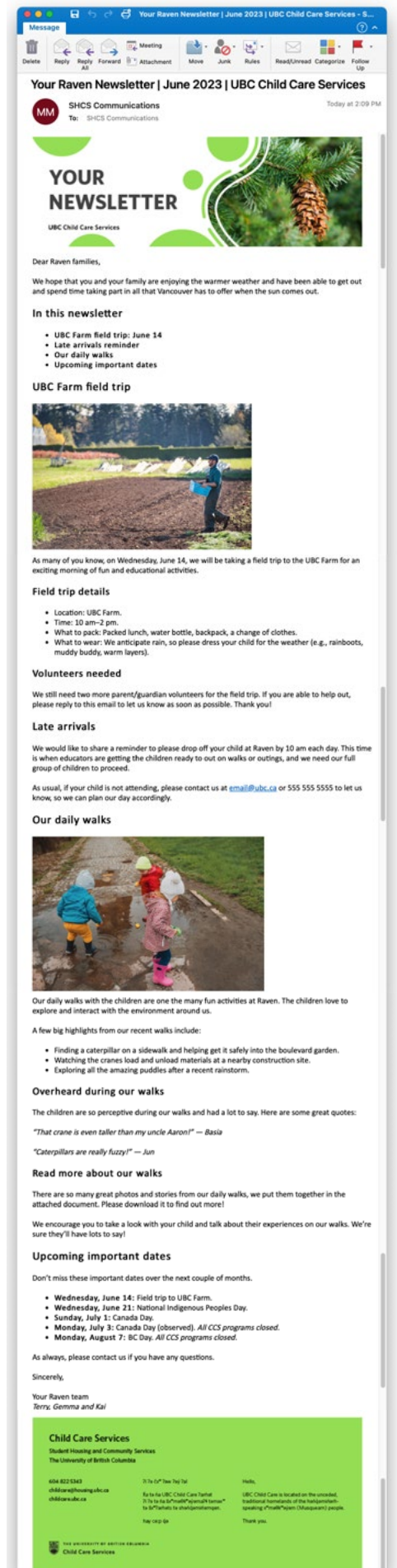
# APPENDIX II

## Example newsletter

- Desktop/laptop view: right
- Mobile view: below



Download a copy of this family newsletter guide and all toolkit files, including the email example and template at [childcare.ubc.ca/family-newsletter](http://childcare.ubc.ca/family-newsletter).



## Appendix III

### Families survey data highlights

Here is a quick overview of responses to the January 2021 survey of families regarding this CCS newsletters program.

#### Do you currently receive a newsletter or regular program update from your family's CCS centre?

90 respondents said they currently received a newsletter from their CCS program; 108 indicated they didn't receive one; 58 said they weren't sure.

#### How often would you like to receive newsletters/updates from your child's centre?

Most families (160 respondents) wanted to receive newsletters monthly. By contrast, 51 preferred every 2 months, 28 preferred quarterly.

#### How would you most like to receive newsletters from your child's centre?

Most families (130 respondents) preferred to receive newsletters by email, with newsletter content in the email body, rather than as an attached document.

An additional 91 preferred receiving newsletters by email, with newsletter content in an attached document. Only 9 respondents preferred paper/hardcopy newsletters delivered at pickup or drop-off.

# APPENDIX III

## On what device are you most likely to read a CCS newsletter?

- Mobile phone: 126 respondents
- Laptop: 88 respondents
- Desktop computer: 25 respondents
- Tablet: 4 respondents

## When are you most likely to read a CCS newsletter? (Select all that apply)

- Anytime, the moment I receive it: 133 respondents
- Any weekday: 86 respondents

## What time of day are you most likely to read a CCS newsletter? (Select all that apply)

- Anytime, the moment I receive it: 101 respondents
- After the kids are in bed: 60 respondents
- Evening: 44 respondents
- Lunchtime: 31 respondents
- While I'm at work: 28 respondents

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**“Good communication is the  
bridge between confusion  
and clarity.” — Nat Turner**



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Student Housing & Community Services