

REVIEW



The Little Ducklings Day care, preschool, and play zone

A person's a person no matter how small.

— Dr Seuss

Parents nowadays have to worry about a lot, but most common is the issue of having someone to care for the child, especially during office hours, particularly if both parents are working. Fortunately, that support can be in the form of a beautiful social venture known as 'The Little Ducklings – Day Care, Preschool and Play Zone,' launched in January, 2019.

This childcare service is a pilot project of Dhaka Ahsania Mission, and in the next 2-3 years, they aim to fully fund the "Children City and KNH-Ahsania Centre for Abandoned Children & Destitute" from this social venture. The Mission runs the 'Ahsania Mission Children City,' where 300 former street children are taken care of at Panchagarh city. This donor-funded project is among the 50 projects and 27 institutions under Mission.

"We aim to make ourselves more sustainable and not depend entirely on donations," said Samiya Tasmeen, programme manager of The Little Ducklings.

One of the unique features here is CCTV surveillance at all key areas with access to live footage for the parents' mobiles, ensuring easy remote monitoring.

Little Duckling is well monitored and regulated under strict standards of the

Ahsania Mission, and qualified teachers operate the preschool, which is an additional service. Furthermore, every caregiver is efficient and skilled, with many years of experience.

Samiya Tasmeen said they have made a spacious, well decorated play area for the children, and most importantly, there is no television.

"We do not believe in using television to keep our children distracted and unmindful of their surroundings. Rather, we want to engage them in healthy activities. Kids here enjoy themselves so much that sometimes, they need to be dragged away by their parents at the end of the day!"

In terms of food, parents can either provide cooked meals, which are heated and served, or alternatively, parents can opt for five meals a day provided by Little Ducklings, for an additional charge of Tk 200 per day.

They take children aged 6 months to 10 years, meaning, even school-goers can join the daycare after school.

Little Ducklings is open from Saturday to Thursday, 8AM to 8PM. On Fridays, only the play zone and learning centre are open from 10AM to 6PM.

"Parents leave with us someone very dear to them, and therefore, they expect our centre to be clean, hygienic, and hazard

free. They want to be assured that their child is not being injured, hurt or that there is no negligence in their care. The parents who have enrolled their child in our centre are highly satisfied," Tasmeen said.

"Our entire day care is covered with foam so kids won't get injured, even if they fall down while playing. Children also play under supervision in the front yard," she added.

Little Ducklings has four services, viz. pre-primary school, day care and drop-in day care, play-zone and learning centre for



arts, craft, dance and music.

For preschool hours without day care, children join for either 10-12AM session, or 4-6PM one. However, for babies enrolled at the daycare, preschool is included and does not cost extra. Children learn basics like naming, table manners, sharing, the alphabets, numbers, shapes, colours, and such.

"Any child can join our spacious play zone with a fee of Tk 150 per hour. On Friday and Saturday, the Learning Centre conducts Zumba Junior class, with certified instructor, 'Zumba with Nabila.' In the afternoon, there are art classes for children. In the near future, they will be introducing music, guitar, and piano classes as a well," Tasmeen added, with hopes to open more branches soon, given the good response.

Zaki Hasan, country director of Nutrition International, and former CEO of UCEP, is an advisor for the framework and supervision.

By Mayesha Raidah

Photo: The Little Ducklings – Day Care, Preschool and Play Zone

Location: 6/2 Lalmatia Block A, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Facebook Link: <https://www.facebook.com/littleducklingsbd/>

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