

seedlings

preschool



... A place to grow

Alberta's Only Nature-Based Preschool

PARENT HANDBOOK

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Address:

#103, 4807 – 44th Avenue
Stony Plain, AB T7Z 1V5

Phone Number: 780-446-8076

Email: seedlingspreschool@live.ca

Website: www.seedlingspreschool.ca

PHILOSOPHY

Children have a developmental and instinctual need to connect with nature. We believe that children need to explore and learn about their world using all their senses. Seedlings Preschool builds on a children's inherent curiosity about the world by using hands-on, nature based activities to promote social, emotional, physical and intellectual skill development. Age-appropriate activities are planned that integrate literacy, arts, culture, music and community services while encouraging cooperative learning and social competence.

Experience through active participation is more effective teachers than information at this age so activities will focus on hands-on, child centered, and playful nature based activities. It is also recognized that play is the language and work of young children.

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

Months of operation: September 12, 2011 – June 15, 2012

Days of operation: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday

Holiday Closures: Seedlings Preschool will follow the local school calendars for school closures.

Christmas Break: December 23, 2011 - January 6, 2012

Spring Break: March 26 – 30, 2012

Statutory Holidays: October 10, 2011 February 20, 2012

April 9, 2012 May 21, 2012

Students who miss classes due to a statutory holiday can choose to make up the class during that week. Please advise the teacher which day you will be coming to ensure there is space.

Morning Program

8:50 am – 9:00 am Drop off (parents are asked to ensure their child uses the bathroom prior to engaging in play.)

11:30 am Pick up. Please be on time, children look forward to being greeted by their parent/caregiver.

Afternoon Program

12:50 pm – 1:00 pm Drop off (parents are asked to ensure their child uses the bathroom prior to engaging in play.)

3:30 pm Pick up. Please be on time, children look forward to being greeted by their parent/caregiver.

A core component of our program is a nature-based curriculum. Outdoor exploration through structured activities in Rotary Park, an adjacent park/nature area, will be incorporated whenever possible and weather permitting. Specific policies and procedures are in place to ensure the safe use of this outdoor space including:

- Adequate protective clothing is required by children including sunscreen/sunhats during warm weather, and hats, mittens, boots, scarves and adequate warm clothing during cold weather.
- Outdoor activity will be limited when the temperature falls below 15 degrees Celsius.
- Structured activities and close supervision will be provided during all outdoor play.
- Adequate measures will be taken to ensure the safety of all children and minimize risk during outdoor play.

EXTREME WEATHER CONDITIONS

In the event of extreme weather conditions, if school is cancelled, you will be contacted by telephone. When weather or road conditions deteriorate during the school day, a decision mandating the early dismissal of students may be made (at the discretion of the teacher). If there is an early dismissal, we will need to get in touch with you or an alternate to ensure that your child will have someone available to pick him or her up. Your child's safety is our first concern.

SHOES

One pair for outdoor play (shoes they wear to school) and one pair (slip-ons or Velcro) for indoor use only. Please do not send tie-up shoes unless your child is completely independent at this skill.

CLOTHING

As mentioned above, children must always dress for the weather. No “Sunday Best” unless you are okay with it getting dirty – children will be involved in various forms of arts and crafts and outdoor exploration. We encourage children to explore, create and experience learning through a variety of activities. Some "hands-on" projects can be messy. Keep this in mind when dressing your child for school. The children will be taken outdoors to play and explore whenever possible. Children need clothes and shoes that are safe and appropriate for active play. A large part of the Seedlings Preschool Program is to encourage self-help skills. Allow your child to wear comfortable outfits. This makes bathroom time easier for your child.

Labeling: Please write your child’s name in coats, shoes, hats, and sweaters. Please send an extra set of clothes in your child’s backpack each school day.

SNACKS – Garbageless Snack Program

Children need to bring their own snack and drink each day. Just like any other habit, healthy eating habits start from a young age. Therefore, we want all our children to eat healthy snacks. Parents are encouraged to incorporate foods from at least two food groups. In addition, some foods are not allowed due to safety reasons. Please note we are a NUT FREE facility, so snacks must not contain nuts or peanuts.

Canadians produce more garbage than anyone else. Each of us generates a staggering 383 kg of solid waste annually, according to Statistics Canada (See Today’s Parent, July 2007). That’s roughly equivalent to the entire Seedlings Preschool class piling on a weigh scale! Much of our packaging is made of plastic, which does not breakdown. Seedlings Preschool is committed to doing its part to promote sustainable environmental practices. We ask that parents provide garbageless snacks. We will provide a recycling bin for recyclable garbage such as juice boxes, milk cartons and water bottles however we encourage parents to provide reusable containers for drinks. Food items can also be packed in reusable containers. A compost bin will be provided for compostable “waste” such as fruit peelings.

Parents are asked to indicate allergies on our registration form. As indicated, our facility will be allergy friendly therefore to avoid contamination; the choice of snack foods will be limited to the following list:

List of acceptable snacks:

- ◆ Fresh fruit or vegetables with or without dip
- ◆ Cereal
- ◆ Rice cakes
- ◆ Crackers and cheese
- ◆ Granola bars or cereal bars
- ◆ Baked goods, especially home made
- ◆ Pitas, wraps or bagels.

- ◆ Hummus and crackers or pita chips
- ◆ Left-overs
- ◆ Luncheon meats, pepperonis, etc. (these make good “shish kebobs with cheese and fruit)
- ◆ Yogurt (try buying the larger containers and sending it in a portion sized Tupperware-like container).
- ◆ Water to drink is preferred however milk and juice are also acceptable. It would be a good idea to send a water bottle along with your child.
- ◆ ****no nuts or peanut products please**

SHOW-AND-SHARE

We do various forms of show-and-share activities throughout the year on a monthly basis. Topics will be posted on the monthly calendar. Please do not send a “show-and-share” item on a daily basis.

NO WEAPON TYPE TOYS OF ANY KIND ARE ALLOWED

We discourage aggressive behavior. If we feel a toy is dangerous or in some way inappropriate, it will be kept by a teacher for the parents to collect. PLEASE do not send toys from home to school (unless it is for show-and-share); Seedlings Preschool is not responsible for lost/misplaced or broken toys.

FIELD TRIPS

Permission from parents and guardians is required whenever your child leaves the school grounds for a class outing (Rotary Park is considered part of school grounds). Permission slips will be sent home for each field trip, detailing our trip and asking for volunteers to join us. Walks around the school neighborhood or to a local park are not always planned in advance. A general permission slip to allow our staff to take your child on short walks off school property must be completed. Please send permission slips back to school promptly. If you have any concerns regarding your child’s safety on a field trip, you are welcome to join us. Field trips are a wonderful way to learn about the community. *Walking and parent transport are our primary method of transportation. On some occasions, parents may be asked to drop off and pick up their children in an alternative location. Parents will be notified well in advance in such cases.

INFORMATION

Please read our regular email newsletters and check out our bulletin board to keep informed about activities in our classroom and the school and feel free to contact any of the school staff with questions or concerns at any time.

INDIVIDUAL PRIVACY

Neither telephone numbers nor addresses of our Preschool families will be given out to others. If you wish to get in touch with another parent, we will gladly give your

note to that parent and he/she can get in touch with you. This is for your privacy and protection.

SAFETY POLICY

Teachers will release a child only to the parent or other adult that is authorized by the parent. Parents must furnish to the teacher, in writing, any instructions about releasing their child to someone other than the parent. This includes carpools and any other occasional to temporary arrangements.

Frequent evaluations of the premises by health and safety officials will take place.

If a child is injured at school, the parents will be notified. A telephone is accessible at all times. If necessary, the child will be transported to a source of medical or dental care by an emergency squad. An incident report will be completed when an accident or injury occurs. Minor injuries are treated with ice, Band-Aids, and T.L.C!

While at School, no child will be left unattended. A staff member shall immediately notify the local public service agency when it is suspected that a child has been abused or neglected.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents are invited to participate as parent volunteers however this is not a requirement. Depending on the activity, the number of parent volunteers may be limited. Family events will be organized regularly through the year to encourage families to connect with our program, with each other and with the community. Parent participation is especially invited during field trips and special activities. Parents are invited to share any special talents, skills, experiences or stories with the children.

Ongoing feedback and open communication is encouraged throughout the year with parent-teacher meetings scheduled during the year.

FEES **

The fee for the year is \$975.00 per ½ day session.

The fee can be paid in 10 equal monthly payments and must be received by the **first** day of each month. To eliminate late payment charges it is recommended to leave post dated cheques for the entire year or several months at a time.

There is no deduction of fees for months that consist of fewer days due to holidays. Returned cheques will be charged \$25.00. If two cheques are returned, we ask for cash.

DISCONTINUED ENROLLMENT

Parents may withdraw their child from the program by giving written notice of intent to withdraw at least 30 calendar days before the child is withdrawn. Charges will cease at the end of the 30th day.

Seedlings Preschool reserves the right to discontinue the enrollment of any child if:

1. Parents fail to cooperate reasonably with Seedlings Preschool in the provision of educational services to their child, in the payment of published tuition fees, or in picking up their child promptly;
2. The child is dangerous to him/herself or others, is destructive of school property, or is so disruptive that the education of other students is significantly impaired; or
3. The child requires another educational setting more appropriate to his/her needs.

ABSENCES

Please contact the school when your child is going to be absent from school. It would be helpful to report any illness at this time.

ILLNESS

Occasional illness is a part of every child's school experience. While it may be inconvenient for parents to keep their child at home when s/he would normally be at school, bringing a sick child to school has consequences beyond those of the family directly concerned. Our teachers are exposed to many children during the week and if they fall ill then every student's school experience is adversely affected. Because we are not part of a school board, we do not have ready access to substitute teachers. In the interests of our teacher's health, and as a courtesy to other families who would like to avoid unnecessary illness, we ask parents to adhere to the following guidelines. More specific information is available in the Policies and Procedures manual.

Your child should not be sent school if they are ill, including having such symptoms in the **last 24 hours** as

- coughing, sneezing, and/or a runny nose which are "productive" (*i.e.*, producing a coloured mucus). These symptoms are different from a dry cough or a clear nasal discharge, which are common with allergies. Allergy symptoms do not require exclusion from class unless the child is unable to participate.
- Fever of 101 degrees F or 38.3 degrees C or more
- Vomiting or Diarrhea
- Head lice is spotted
- Contagious skin rash or infection *
- Chickenpox or other communicable disease or infection*

*The return to school must be approved by staff and/or doctor.

Parents will be notified immediately if children have been exposed to contagious diseases and/or conditions.

DISCIPLINE

The ultimate goal of our discipline policy is to help children develop self-help, critical thinking, problem-solving skills, self-confidence and high self-esteem while remaining within a socially acceptable, flexible framework.

We believe in setting clear and consistent rules that are developmentally appropriate. Rules are designed to teach respect for people, environment, plants, animals and equipment. They are designed to foster the social-emotional development of the child while teaching self-control and conflict resolution. Discipline will be phrased positively (examples: running and loud voices are allowed outside) and redirection will be used when applicable. We strive to foster a non-violent community; we do not allow toys that have weapons or toys to be used as weapons in any way. The most useful tool in our discipline policy is knowing the child. Learning a particular child's triggers and sensitive spots is essential in prevention of conflict. We strive to create an environment where each child has the best opportunity for success. Sometimes this may mean helping vocalize emotions, providing a quiet space away from the larger group, encouraging some running, jumping or wiggling. Example is the best mode of teaching these rules. We strive to diffuse conflict before they occur with re-direction and gentle reminders. Gentle and firm reminders will be provided when rules are forgotten. Time to think and verbalize will be given, if the issue involved more than one person, they will be allowed to think together and work out the problem. If the issue is persistent, we will involve parents in the discussion. We believe that modeling behavior is the ideal method for children to learn. We may forbid a certain way of acting, but not the emotional feelings or ideas behind it. By suggesting alternative ways of expressing those feelings or ideas, we will guide the child towards self-discipline and self-control while ensuring the health, safety and respect of every one. Only in extreme cases where the safety of others is at risk will a child be separated from the group. If this is necessary, a staff member will take the child aside and help the child problem solve and develop a way to return to the group. Parents will be informed in such cases and if behavior problems continue on a regular basis or escalate, then a parent meeting will be scheduled.

PARENT RESONSIBILITIES

It is important that all families abide by the following guidelines:

1. Contact the school at (780) 446-8076. We ask that you do not call during class time unless it is an emergency.
2. If for any reason your child is going to be absent from school, please telephone the teacher at least fifteen (15) minutes before class begins and leave a message.
3. Please be prompt in bringing your child to school and in picking them up at the end of class. Teachers are paid only for instructional hours and it is not fair to ask them to supervise children outside class time. If you absolutely cannot avoid being late or in case of an emergency when you cannot pick up your

child, please call the school to inform the teachers. If parents are continually being late, an additional charge for childcare will be applied at the rate of \$5.00 per 15 minutes.

4. Adequate protective clothing is required by children including sunscreen/sunhats during warm weather, and hats, mittens, boots, scarves and adequate warm clothing during cold weather.
5. If someone other than a parent is to pick up your child, you must inform the teachers in advance.
6. Notify teachers of any allergies and ensure that all emergency medical information is up-to- date.
7. If your child may require medication to be administered at the school (*e.g.*, for allergies or a pre-existing medical condition), please review our section on medication.
8. Keep teachers informed of any event or change of routine at home that may affect your child's behaviour.
9. Parents and caregivers may stay with a child in the classroom and on field trips. We cannot, however, accommodate siblings unless they are less than six months of age and are being held or are sitting in a baby carrier at all times.
10. Leave cheques that need to be dropped off during the school year with the teaching staff so that they may be placed safely in a locked cupboard.
11. Information contained in registration forms or that parents share with staff is kept confidential.

FAMILY EVENTS:

Every couple of months, Seedlings Preschool hosts a special family event. This is an opportunity for families to get to know each other and for the children to play together. It is a great opportunity to make new friends. ALL family members (including extended family) are invited to attend.

October: Pumpkin Festival. This event will take place during your child's regular class at the end of October.

December: Winter Concert and Celebration
Watch our little Seedlings perform and enjoy some crafts and food.

February: Seedlings Skating Party
1:00 pm – 3:00 pm at Rotary Park, Stony Plain
Join us for some pond skating and hot apple cider!

May: Annual Artist's Reception
Melcor Cultural Center and Art Gallery – Spruce Grove
Come view the masterpieces created by your children over the past year. Prepare to be amazed!!

June: Endings and Beginnings Picnic and Closing Ceremony.
11:30 am – 1:30 pm

Come mark the end of another school year and celebrate the summer solstice at Rotary Park, Stony Plain. A special presentation to all our Seedlings will be made making this an event not to be missed!