



**PARENT HANDBOOK**  
**2022\_2023**

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## 1) WELCOME

Welcome parents and children to *Seedlings Early Learning*.  
We are very happy to have your child in our program.

## 2) SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

We believe that:

The impact of the environment during a child's first years of life has a life-long lasting impact.

All children have an enormous potential and for it to be developed they should be provided with a rich, fun and loving environment.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

To provide your child an excellent environment to support and nurture the creative, emotional, intellectual, physical and social development of your child.

### ***SPANISH PROGRAM***

Provide Spanish as a Second Language to children from non-Hispanic backgrounds.

Support Spanish-speaking families in fostering and preserving the Spanish language capabilities in their children.

## 3) PROGRAM DETAILS - PROJECT BASED & REGGIO INSPIRED

*Seedlings Early Learning* philosophies and methods are drawn from the Reggio Emilia approach.

Children learn through an emergent, dynamic, and interactive curriculum in which projects, in different areas of learning, reflect the interests of the children. This approach is not only tremendously motivational, but also allows children to develop their creativity and love of learning through what is termed "*the 100 languages of the child.*"

The projects are mainly developed using science and art. We emphasize the beauty and usefulness of natural and recycled materials and the desirability of protecting natural resources and the environment.

## 4) PROGRAM DETAILS - SPANISH IMMERSION

The program provides Spanish immersion; however, no previous knowledge of Spanish is required. For children who may be learning Spanish as a second, or even third language, *Seedlings Early Learning* will initially use both English and Spanish when talking directly to these children and then gradually eliminate the use of English.

Each child as an individual, will progress at his/her own pace. While almost all other preschools in Calgary have a 1:12, *Seedlings Early Learning* has a unique Teacher to Child ratio. This 1:5 Teacher - Child ratio allows each child individual attention as well as allowing them to fully participate in all the activities

## 5) PROGRAM DETAILS - CLASS ACTIVITIES

The activities completed in each class are such that they are related to the project and contribute to its development.

### **Class Components:**

1. Free Play
2. Music
3. Development of the Project (Art & Science)
4. Snack
5. Physical Activity
6. Development of the Project (Art & Science)
7. Story time

Additionally, individual, or small group work is also done throughout the class. Again, this work relates to and supports the project development and reinforces Spanish language learning, pre-mathematics, and fine motor skills. During the week each child will have a one-on-one time session (at least 30 min) with a teacher.

## 6) HOURS, DAILY ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE & LATE FEE

Students should arrive at school as close to the start time as possible and be picked up on time. In case of delay at pick-up time there will be a late fee as detailed below.

### **Arrival and pick up at preschool**

To have an organized and safe drop off and pick up of children we ask parents to: Sign in and out

If you need to communicate with the teachers you can talk to the teacher, please send a message through **HIMAMA**, please limit your time to communicate at the door. Just in exceptional cases if you need to approach at the door please do while she is not engaged in an activity with the children. The teacher may be unavailable to talk during drop-off, as teachers are busy at this time getting the kids settled and organized in their first activity.

Please say a quick goodbye to your child at the door on the main room and a teacher will receive the child and their belongings. For the safety of the children, we will keep that door closed.

If you need to pick up your child early, please send a **HIMAMA** message and / or leave a note in the communication book so the teacher will have your child ready.

When picking up your child please sign out and pick up your child's belongings. You can again use the communication book at this time and the teacher will check it before she leaves. For the safety of the kids please try to pick up your child(ren) quickly. Be aware that once your child leaves any of the two rooms at pick up time their safety is your responsibility.

Please mark all your child's belongings with his/her name. Unlabeled lost and found items will be placed beside the sign in/out folder.

Please arrange to be on time for pick up. It is stressful for the kids to see their friends leaving and then must wait more for their parent/caregiver. The teachers also need to start putting all the preschool equipment and educational materials away and leaving everything ready for the next class, and we have limited time to do this.

### **Late Pick Up**

We would appreciate if you could please notify the center director as soon as you are aware that you are going to be late to pick-up your child.

**Late fees of \$1.00 per minute will apply to families arriving to pick-up children after the dismissal time.** This fee will be collected by the teacher in charge at time for pick up.

Parents who continually abuse the late pick-up policy will be subject to termination of care

## **7) ADAPTATION TO THE NEW ROUTINE**

The first day of preschool, even for "experienced" students, is not always easy. Kids love to play, share with friends, sing, do art and learn but sometimes have a hard time with the change in routine and getting used to being away from their parents.

For some kids, the first week is challenging and then they are just ready to come into the classroom and have fun. For other children, it is not the first week but even the third or

fourth week that is challenging as the novelty of preschool wears off, and they realize that it is a permanent change that the parent will not be with them during preschool time.

To make this a very positive experience we ask parents to please bring your child to all his/her classes as long as they are healthy. We also recommend parents have short good-byes, which work better and are easier on the kids than drawn-out goodbyes. We ask parents not to remain in the classroom, however, you are welcome to stay in the building if you wish. If required, the teachers will get in touch with you or may advise to bring the child for a shorter class during the adaptation period.

## 8) WHAT TO BRING TO PRESCHOOL ON THE FIRST DAY

Families will need to ensure ALL items brought to the location are marked with the child's first name and last initial, including food items indoor & outdoor shoes, clothing, etc.

- **Two photos of your child** (passport size / name in the back).
- **A family photo** (Photos do not have to be printed on photo paper: they can just be printed on regular paper. The passport size photos do not have to be exactly passport size, small photos work just fine.)
- **Change of clothes every day** in case that it is needed.
- **Pair of Indoor Shoes.** Will remain at our facility (labeled).
- **Bottle of water** (labeled).

**FULL DAY PROGRAM:** Mat sheets (62 cm X 112 cm) & blanket (blanket is optional) (labeled). Quiet or Nap time are not Mandatory. We recommend a relaxation time, but the duration depends on your child's needs. Please bring on the first day.

After every Monday or first day of the week you should bring CLEAN sheets / blanket and every Friday or last day of the week to be taken home for laundering and returned at the beginning of the following week.

Appropriate outdoor attire for all seasons, including comfortable footwear and sunscreen during the summer months and boots, winter months.

## SNACK

**HALF DAY PROGRAM:** Healthy morning or afternoon snack.

**FULL DAY PROGRAM:** 2 Healthy morning & afternoon + Healthy Lunch (total 2 snacks + lunch)

We will ensure that your child is socially distanced while eating and practicing good hand hygiene.

You must follow certain **instructions** to avoid the risk of suffocation:

- ✓ ***Grapes***: cut lengthwise.
- ✓ ***Hot dog sausage***: cut lengthwise.
- ✓ ***Cherry tomatoes***: cut lengthwise.
- ✓ ***Vegetables and fruit***, cut lengthwise.
- ✓ ***Seed fruits***: remove the seeds.
- ✓ ***Fish with bones***: remove the bones.

Please note that the following foods **are prohibited**:

- nuts and peanut butter
- chewing gum
- hard candies and caramel
- popcorn
- snacks with toothpicks or skewers.

Due to the increasing number of children with severe and potentially life-threatening peanut allergies. ***Seedlings Early Learning is a NUT-FREE environment.***

Snacks should be nutritional in value and sufficient in quantity.

Staff will be responsible for making sure that the children wash their hands before and after snack.

Each parent is required to provide medical information, including food allergies on the Medical Information Form.

Parents of children with food allergies are requested to provide written instructions on how to proceed in the unlikely event that your child has a reaction.

All snack containers, water bottles and lunch kits must be labelled with the child's name.

## 9) BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Families are welcome to send NUT FREE cake/cupcakes to celebrate their child's birthday. Please verify first with teacher based on healthy most updated regulation.

If you do not wish us to celebrate your child's birthday, please notify the Center director or

make a note of it in the registration form under the section "***Knowing your child***".

## 10) PERSONAL BELONGINGS & LOST AND FOUND

Lunch boxes, water bottles and containers should be labelled. *Seedlings Early Learning* encourages families to label their children's clothing.

Unlabeled lost and found items will be placed beside the sign in/out folder. The preschool is not responsible for the loss of any belongings.

## 11) FIELD TRIPS

*Seedlings Early Learning* does not usually organize field trips. If a field trip is organized parents will be notified

## 12) OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

*Seedlings Early Learning* believes that time outside is a fundamental part of childhood and allows children to appreciate nature. However, in the interest of the children's safety: outdoor activities will only take place if the outside temperature, combined with the wind chill, is warmer than -15 degrees Celsius according to the Weather Network. (The information will be checked just before the activity takes place). If the temperature combined with wind chill is below 0 degrees Celsius the activity will be limited to a maximum of 30 minutes.

It is expected that parents/guardians provide their children with the correct gear to enjoy outdoor time, including snow pants, gloves, hat, and snow/ rain boots.

Children **will not be taken outside for outdoor time** if:

- ✓ The temperature **is higher than 30-degrees** Celsius.
- ✓ The air quality is rated a 7 or higher.
- ✓ The temperature **is lower than -15 degrees** Celsius (including wind chill).

If the air quality is rated at 4, 5 or 6, outside time will be reduced and children with respiratory conditions and infants will be closely monitored.

Half day and full day students will participate in nature walks limited to the Community Center property. (Students at Strathcona Community Center will participate in physical activity in the fenced green area built specifically for that purpose).

Full day students will under normal conditions have daily outdoor activities.

While outside, *Seedlings Early Learning* accesses and uses both public pathway systems as well as public parks in the community on a regular basis. The use of any public park shall be



subject to a safety inspection to be completed by teacher staff prior to allowing children to use the structure or play site. Any hazard or potential hazard that cannot be safely removed or corrected by staff shall deem the site as inappropriate for use by the children. The same discretion will be used by staff when accessing public pathway systems.

Should a staff member become aware of a safety risk, either potential or imminent, the children shall be immediately removed from the area and redirected to a more suitable area or return to the campus.

## APPROPRIATE CLOTHING

Children will participate in art and gross motor skills activities every day.

We ask parents to please bring your child in comfortable casual clothes. We encourage children to wear aprons provided by *Seedlings Early Learning* when participating in art activities. Please send along a change of clothes every day in case that it is needed.

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to make sure that the child wears to school appropriate clothing and footwear for all weather conditions.

If, at the discretion of the Center director, the child does not have the appropriate clothing for outdoor activities the child will not be able to participate in the activity. The parent/guardian will be notified at pick up time.

## 13) ABSCENCES AND ILLNESS

When a child is going to be absent, please notify the **school by HIMAMA** or during school hours by calling the center director.

**When children are sick, please do not bring them to school.**

*Seedlings Early Learning* believes in promoting the health and safety of all persons involved in our locations, from our students to staff. To meet this goal, *Seedlings Early Learning* observes the recommendations for controlling communicable diseases as outlined by the Calgary Health Region.

Children exhibiting any of the following symptoms or conditions may not attend our locations:

- Fever more than 38 degrees Celsius (24 hours from last fever reading) or any temperature higher than 37 degrees Celsius which is also accompanied by a change in the child's temperament/behavior (eg: crying, lethargy, irritability, refusal to

- participate in activities, expressions of general discomfort/pain).
- Vomiting (24 hours from last incident)
  - Diarrhea (24 hours from last incident)
  - Continuous green or yellow nasal discharge (indicates infection)
  - Discharge from eyes (indicates infection)
  - Head lice (until first treatment has been applied)
  - Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye) (until 24 hours from the beginning of treatment)
  - Any other communicable disease (until medical note can be provided to indicate a safe return to our location)

Please note, *Seedlings Early Learning* may request to see a doctor's note at any time to rule out if symptoms or a condition are contagious, cause for exclusion, and/or require additional staff support and training.

If your child catches a contagious disease, such as chicken pox, whooping cough, measles, etc. please let the teacher know as soon as possible as we will attempt to inform the parents of the other children possibly exposed to the disease. The child may return to the program if the child is symptom free for at least 24 hours or a parent has a physician's note stating that the child does not pose a risk to other people.

If your child has an allergy, it is the parent's responsibility to let us know before his/her first day of school.

## COVID-19 - PANDEMIC

During any time of a pandemic, *Seedlings Early Learning* will adhere to all regulations put forward by Health Services and may adjust their programming based on their guidance. *Seedlings Early Learning* will provide parents with a comprehensive guide for parents/guardians outlining the regulations and restrictions put in place.

## HANDWASHING

Regular and ongoing hand washing routines are in place within our locations and promoted to all children by the center's staff. Staff will ensure children practice thorough hand washing on a regular and ongoing basis and that it:

- ✓ Includes the use of warm water and soap and is completed.
- ✓ Before and after eating food.
- ✓ Before and after food preparation and handling.
- ✓ After diapering and toileting.
- ✓ After playing in sand, water, or other sensory tables.
- ✓ After wiping noses.
- ✓ After sneezing or coughing.

## 14) EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Evacuation procedures will be explained to all staff prior to commencing classes and to children where developmentally appropriate.

In the event of a fire/emergency, the children will be evacuated. Teachers and children will relocate to a designated spot outside of the building in the community center property.

If required, the teachers will relocate the group to the emergency evacuation site outside the Community Center property.

Parents/guardians will be notified of the event as soon as possible and will be asked to pick up your child at the evacuation site.

Emergency procedures and phone numbers are posted in the information board at the entrance of every center.

If a center is not able to open, or needs to close due to an emergency, (ie. extreme bad weather) parents/guardians will be notified by email.

## 15) PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIDEO

A fundamental component of the Reggio approach to education is documentation. Pictures and videos taken during class or special events are valuable tools for education, including for internal program evaluation and training purposes. *Seedlings Early Learning* also shares some pictures with preschool families and staff as well as on our website and social media.

Please indicate your consent or consent withheld in the media release form.

## 16) SUBSIDY

*Seedlings Early Learning* is approved for families to participate in the Alberta subsidy program. Subsidy approval is a family responsibility.

Families are responsible for paying any fees not covered by the Alberta program.

## 17) WITHDRAWAL POLICY

In the case of withdrawal of a child, reduction of number of days &/or hours per week, 2 months written notice is required for Pre-Authorized Debit (“PAD”) agreement termination. (This means, that monthly fees will be withdrawn from the account following 2 months after cancellation).

Notice must be received on or before the 1st of the month. No rebate in fees will be given for temporary absences. (\$30 Admon fee for schedule reduction)

There will not be cancellation of PAD agreements after May 1 of the school year.

There will be a partial monthly refund for the last debited month when a 60 days termination agreement is submitted before May 1<sup>st</sup> and no refunds will be given after May 1<sup>st</sup>

Monthly fees are the same every month irrespective of months with holidays. Cancellation of PAD agreement will be effective with a signed PAD cancelation form.

(Please refer to PAD agreement form: I/We may revoke this authorization at any time, subject to providing two months written notice. I/We may obtain a sample cancellation form, or more information on my/our right to cancel a PAD Agreement at my/our financial institution or by visiting [www.cdnpay.ca](http://www.cdnpay.ca).)

## LATE & RETURNED TUITION

**Returned or late fees will be subject to an additional \$50 fee** added to the monthly tuition.

## 18) SEEDLINGS EARLY LEARNING TERMINATION OF SERVICES

In exceptional circumstances, *Seedlings Early Learning* may need to terminate care for a family. These circumstances may include when a family is unwilling to follow the policies and procedures as outlined in this handbook, and when the behavior of a child or parent/caregiver is disruptive to the other families, disrespectful or threatening to staff members, or requires support beyond what *Seedlings Early Learning* is able to provide. At times, if a child’s behavior does not improve or if the parent is unwilling to work with *Seedlings Early Learning* to implement behavior support, then termination may be considered.

## 19) ACCESS TO CHILDREN RECORDS

Children’s records will be available for parents and caregivers to review by request. *Seedlings Early Learning* will retain all information pertaining to your time with us for a minimum of 2 years.