

PARENT HANDBOOK 2024

COVID-19 POLICY

One of the most important parts of preschool is socialization, children cannot be expected to play and social distance. We will try to have distance during some activities, but if they choose to play with others side by side, we will not discourage it. Therefore, we **need** everyone to **follow** the guidelines and keep children home if they are sick. We have made some changes to try and keep everyone safe and we are following all the guidelines recommended by Alberta Health Services.

THESE WILL BE IN PLACE UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE:

- Children/Staff are not required to wear masks, however, if they choose to, we will support that decision
- Hand sanitizing and hand washing will happen more often
- Cleaning and disinfecting will be enhanced
- We will spend more time playing outdoors
- Drop off and pick up will be different. Adults are encouraged to stay outdoors; a teacher will greet your child at the door and parent/guardian can sign in and out at the door
- There will be no reduction in program fees due to illness, travel or quarantine requirements (if the whole school is mandated to be closed for **longer** than 2 weeks, refunds will be considered)
- Staff and children will need to check for COVID 19 symptoms every day at home.

ILLNESS POLICY

Children who are ill must not attend preschool. If your child has any of the following symptoms, please keep them home. If your child is presenting any of the following symptoms while at preschool, he/she will be isolated from the rest of the group, with supervision and a parent/guardian will be contacted immediately for pickup.

- Fever more than 100.4°F
- Cough
- Runny Nose
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Green or yellow nasal discharge
- Discharge from eyes
- Head lice
- Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)
- Any other communicable disease
- Unexplainable rash or cough
- Any other illness that requires greater care and attention of a child

CHILD GUIDANCE POLICY

We will provide an environment where there are lots of choices and few restrictions to minimize struggles. We will appropriately discuss how to be a kind friend during our daily routines so that children understand our policy. The teachers will be attentive to be able to anticipate conflicts and aid the children in problem solving if an issue arises. Our main form of guidance will be redirection. We will reinforce positive behaviours. Choices will be provided to redirect play in order to guide children towards positive behaviours. Our goal is for children to be pro-social and caring in social situations and to learn self regulation.

GUIDANCE STRATEGIES:

It is essential that staff create a positive atmosphere with endless opportunities for desirable behaviour and problem solving. Teachers and aids will describe to the children what behaviours are acceptable and discuss the reason for limits, if any, and do so in a positive way. Allowing the children time to respond to the expectations and reinforcing appropriate behaviour. All of the staff will ensure that any child guidance action taken is reasonable in the circumstances.

There will never, under any circumstances, be any form of punishments such as:

- Any form of physical punishment
- Any form of verbal or physical degradation
- Any form of emotional deprivation
- Deprivation or threatened deprivation of any necessity
- Use or permit the use of any form of physical restraint, confinement or isolation

TERMINATION/SUSPENSION OF SERVICES

We reserve the right to suspend or terminate services for: failure to make payments; disruptive behaviour; or other actions deemed inappropriate. Upon termination, all outstanding balances must be paid.

PROGRAM WITHDRAWAL

Okotoks Preschool Academy requires 30 days written notice if a child is withdrawn from the program.

Registration fees are non-refundable.

EARLY INTERVENTION PARTNERSHIPS

Okotoks Preschool Academy is an inclusive preschool. We believe every child has the right to attend a typical preschool program. We partner with an amazing agency, Kids Developmental Services (KDS), which provides support to children in our program. Every child can participate in their assessments and find out if they require any additional supports. Families need to give consent. This is a **free** service offered by Alberta Education. Let us know if you are interested in participating.

DROP OFF & PICKUP

We were advised by Alberta Health Services, to limit how many people come into our premises. Parents are encouraged to stay outdoors to say your goodbyes. That being said, we recognize that new children, or children with anxieties might benefit from a quick meeting. If so, please contact us to arrange a meeting before school starts.

EVERYDAY DURING DROP OFF:

Parents will need to sign in and complete a health assessment for their child while remaining outdoors. The second teacher will help each child get ready to begin the day if required.

EVERYDAY DURING PICKUP:

Parents will need to sign out their child while remaining outdoors. Upon exit a teacher will call each child to come forward and greet you at the door. Children will not be released to any person other than the parent/guardian, emergency contact, or approved individual as designated in their Registration Package. We will ID anyone we haven't met or don't remember. We ask that your child/children be picked up promptly at the end of each session. We understand that being late is sometimes unavoidable. However, habitual tardiness is misunderstood by the kiddos and can create anxieties and worries. It also affects our staff members, as we try to sanitize and set up for the next cohort. Regrettably, a late pickup policy is in effect for frequent tardiness and will result in a late fee of \$5.00 for every five minutes payable at the time of pick up. We appreciate your understanding and support regarding this issue.

TIPS TO PREPARE FOR THE FIRST DAY OF PRESCHOOL

Below are a few suggestions to help you and your child prepare for their exciting new adventure at preschool.

- Tell your child what to expect at preschool (eg: teachers wearing masks/shields).
- Start practicing proper hand washing and use of hand sanitizer.
- Establish a routine at home. Rituals and predictability are very comforting to children.
- Start promoting self help skills at home (eg: putting shoes and jackets on by themselves).
- Make sure your child can put on and take off their own shoes, open snack packages, pack up snack containers/bag in their bag packs (small snack container and a big bag pack is the key to success, less frustration) zip up their backpacks etc, we need to minimize touching their belonging for everyone's safety.
- Make sure to show your child how to open and close water bottles, snack containers, snack wraps and backpacks.
- Show them their belongings and their name so they recognize their shoes, jackets etc.
- Maintain a clear and consistent goodbye routine. A kiss and a hug or a wave. Extending the goodbye tends to heighten anxiety for everyone.
- Have a positive attitude yourself! Emotions can be contagious. Your enthusiasm will assure the child that preschool is a fun and an exciting place to be!

- Sometimes the first few days are tough, please know that we are here to help and comfort your child during these transitions. Open communication between parents and teachers is essential. We can come up with a strategy that works for any child that is having a hard time staying at preschool. We are here to ensure that the first few days and onwards are happy and exciting.
- We recognize that new children, or children with anxieties might benefit from a quick meeting. Please contact us to make an appointment if you think your child might benefit from a quick meet and greet before school starts.

WHAT TO BRING TO PRESCHOOL

- A **big** backpack (so they can be independent in packing and zipping it up by themselves) with a change of clothes (everyday)
- A small **nut free** healthy snack including two food groups, and a bottle of water (everyday)
- A pair of non-marking indoor shoes that will stay at the preschool that your child can put on by themselves (No tie-up/laces shoes please)
- A 1-inch binder to store artwork, which you will get at the end of the school year
- A 4X6 family photo for our classroom family tree

Please remember to **label everything!** Shoes, coats, backpacks, boots, water bottles, lunch bags, hats, toys etc. We often get duplicates and same sizes too, labeling is essential. Thank you!