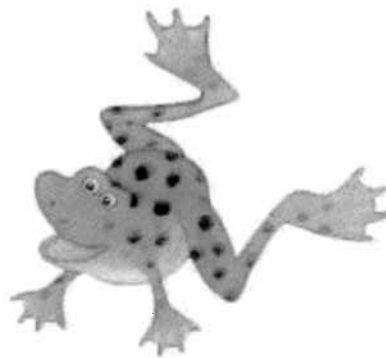


Jumpstart
Preschool Program
Senator Buchanan School
Parent Handbook
2011-12

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1.

Welcome to Preschool



What makes a great preschool? Is your child learning or just playing?

What an adventure awaits your little one as he or she heads off to preschool: new friends, new experiences and new ways of having fun. While enjoying the time in preschool your child will also be practicing important skills that will prepare him/her for kindergarten and beyond. Children will learn the prerequisite skills for reading, writing, math and science, as well as how to interact successfully with teachers and classmates. The overarching goal of any preschool is to help your child feel good about himself as a learner and to feel comfortable in a school-like setting.

The child care philosophy of our program is founded on a child's need to feel valued and accepted. Developing a positive self image and satisfying the natural curiosity of the children is fostered through the use of a variety of materials and activities. Suitable play materials will be presented in activity centres.

Children will be encouraged to use their imaginations, develop initiative and independence, function both as a group member and individual, and learn to share and cooperate with others. We will foster positive relations and respect for one another. Communication skills and socialization are keys to a successful future for your child.

Children will be encouraged to develop their listening skills (through songs, stories and show and tell) and to follow simple directions. We will provide opportunities (e.g. art, dress-up centres) which will enhance the creativity of all children. Our preschool provides an inclusive environment with excellent child to adult ratio encouraging interaction among children and adults in a safe and relaxed manner.

The preschool program focuses on language enrichment and speech development in all its activities. Preschool provides for the physical, social, intellectual, creative, and emotional development of all three and four year old children.

2.

Guiding Principles

- Every child learns—every child succeeds
- Experiences during preschool years are crucial to a child's learning and development.
- A safe and caring environment is necessary for learning.
- Children learn through play.
- Staff and families work as partners.
- A team approach is used to address all areas of a child's development.
- Active involvement in meaningful learning experiences includes challenges and successes.
- An individualized approach promotes success for all.
- Decision making and responsibilities are shared.
- Children learn and reflect what they know in different ways.
- Children's needs are identified early and proactive steps are taken to address potential problems before they come to elementary school.
- Our preschools are ready to accept all children and adapts programs to ensure learning and success for all.
- **All** children should have access to quality programs

3. Staff

Our Preschool Program Team is comprised of a full time **Program Manager** who is responsible for the day to day operations of the preschool program. She will be your child's preschool teacher.

A **team** of well trained and experienced preschool **educational assistants** are also part of the day to day team in the classroom.

A **learning support teacher** is responsible for setting the programming for any students with any identified special education needs. Her role includes the development, implementation and monitoring of Individualized Program Plans (IPPs).

Lethbridge School District No. 51 contracts the services of several private **Speech Language Pathologists** to work with us to develop effective speech and language goals and activities to help all children reach appropriate developmental milestones . One of these SLPs will be assigned to your preschool for ongoing support to children.

4. School Calendar

The preschool year follows the school year calendar for Lethbridge School District #51. This is available on line and also in the School Information Handbook Publication published annually.

www.lethsd.ab.ca

2011-2012

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JUNE						
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Statutory Holiday

 No School  Teachers' Convention

 Staff School Year Starts and Ends

 Student School Year Starts and Ends

 Professional Learning Days *

* Dates will be confirmed in February 2011.

Number of Days

Sem1 97

Sem2 99

Total 196

 Semester Change

5. Daily Schedule

Morning Program Schedule

- 8:45 Centres— Speech and Language Enrichment Activities
- 9:45 Carpet Time— Calendar, Weather, Show and Share, Music or Games
- 10:10 Gym—Gross Motor Skills
- 10:25 Washroom
- 10:35 Snack/Book Time
- 11:15 Carpet Time—Story and Songs
- 11:30 Dismissal

Afternoon Program Schedule

- 12:30 Centre Time
- 1:30 Carpet Time— Calendar, Weather, Show and Share, Music or Games
- 1:40 Washroom
- 1:50 Snack
- 2:10 Gym
- 2:30 Book Time
- 3:00 Carpet Time—Story and Songs
- 3:15 Dismissal



6. Registration Procedure

Children must be a minimum of age three years upon entry as of September 1st of the school year. We require that children are toilet trained (**this means not in diapers or pull ups**). If an exceptional medical circumstance exists whereby your child is **not able** to be toilet trained you must share this information with the school **prior** to registration being completed.

Qualifications for entry as a child with identified educational special needs should be verified with Ingrid Morden, Lethbridge School District's ECS Consultant at 403-380-5291. Please call her for further information.

Fees:

Fees are required for preschool programming. A non returnable **deposit of \$40 is required at the time of registration** and a series of ten posted dated cheques for the entire school year should be dated for the first of each month (September to June). In the event that your child leaves the program during the course of the year outstanding cheques will be returned to you. Non payment of fees may result in your child being asked to exit the program.

Some fees may be covered for children meeting special education criteria. Your family may qualify for preschool subsidy which may assist you in covering the fees for your child.

[www.child.alberta.ca /home](http://www.child.alberta.ca/home)

The registration process is considered complete when we have received:

- **your non returnable deposit**
 - **completed registration forms**
 - **10 post-dated cheques dated 1st of each month**
 - **copy of birth certificate and AHC number**
 - **evidence and results of a preschool screen or developmental check up**
 - **copy of immunization record**

Freedom of Information and Privacy Act

Effective September 1, 1998, school jurisdictions in Alberta became subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. The purposes of the *Act* (Section 2) are: (1) to allow the public a right of access to records held by a school jurisdiction; (2) to control the manner in which school jurisdictions collect, use and disclose personal information; (3) to allow individuals a right to access personal information about themselves held by a school jurisdiction; (4) to allow individuals a right to request corrections to their personal information held by a school jurisdiction; and (5) to provide for an independent review of decisions made under the *Act*.

Access to Information - Under the *School Act* (Section 18), a student, their parent/guardian, and any person who has access to the student under a separation agreement or court order will have access to records kept by the school pursuant to the *Student Record Regulation*. Access to other personal information not included on the student record will be subject to release under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (sections 16 and 17). The *Act* also gives individuals the right to request correction of personal information (Section 35).

Any individual may request access to any record in the custody or under the control of the school jurisdiction, subject to restrictions related to the release of personal information and other limited exceptions. Information that is routinely available to the public may be released without a formal request. Any requests for information will be subject to payment of applicable fees adopted by the Board.

Protection of Privacy - An individual's personal information belongs to them, and they have a right to protection of their privacy. Personal information is defined in the *Act* (Section 1(1)(n)) as recorded information about an identifiable individual, including the individual's name, phone number, address, ethnicity, religion, age, marital status, identifying numbers or symbols, education, employment, medical or psychiatric history, and anyone else's personal opinions about the individual. To ensure that an individual's privacy is protected, the *Act* establishes strict guidelines for how personal information is to be collected and used, including the retention and disposal of this information (Sections 32, 33, 34 and 37). There are also strict guidelines governing disclosure of personal information (Sections 38, 39, 40 and 41).

What information is collected and why? Registration information is collected under the authority of the *School Act* (Section 18), the *Student Record Regulation* and the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (Section 32.c). Information collected will be used for educational program purposes, such as placement in appropriate grades and courses, determination of eligibility for Alberta Education funding, contact information and as a record of health status in the event of a problem or emergency involving your child, etc.

How may the information which is collected be used or released? Information collected by the school jurisdiction may be used only for the purposes for which it was collected or for a consistent purpose (Section 39). This information will only be released if permitted under the *School Act* (Section 18) or the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (Sections 16, 17, 37, 38 and 39), or if written consent for its disclosure is obtained. The *School Act* and *Student Records Regulation* permit the release of information to Alberta Education, including student name, gender, birth date, program/grade, student/parent address and telephone numbers. This information is used to facilitate program funding, planning and evaluating programs, conducting enrolment audits of school jurisdictions, and for demographic and other statistical research purposes.

What security measures are in place to protect this information? Personal information collected through the student registration process is kept secure and access is restricted. The School District utilizes a computerized Student Information System to maintain student records. Information is entered into the computer system at the school level, and access to this information is restricted by password protection.

What if I have questions or concerns? If you have any questions about the collection, use or disclosure of information collected in this registration process or on any matters of access or privacy, please contact:

Office of the Superintendent
Phone: (403) 380-5300
Lethbridge School District No. 51

Fax: (403) 327-4387
433 - 15th Street South, Lethbridge, AB T1J 2Z5

General Policies

8. Arrivals and Departures

1. Please arrive no sooner than 5 minutes before the program begins.
2. Children should be taken to the bathroom before they come into class.
3. Parents are required to bring their child into the preschool classroom and sign their child in and out on a daily basis.
4. Please pick up your child on time: planning and preparation occurs between classes and staff require a break between classes.
5. The school must be notified if you are going to be late. Repeated late pick ups may result in your child being asked to leave the program.
6. If someone other than you will be picking your child up you must notify the school in advance. A "Pick Up Authorization" slip will need to be filled out and photo ID will be required from the person picking your child up.
7. Parents are responsible for the supervision of younger siblings at all times.

9. Illness and Absences

1. If your child will be absent please call the school to let us know. If your child is sick, please keep him/her at home.
2. Children should not attend school for 24 hours following a fever, vomiting, or starting a prescribed medication.
3. If your child is ill we will contact you to pick him/her up.
4. Staff will not administer medication. (Except in the case of a life-threatening allergy.)
5. In the event of a medical emergency, the hospital will be called and the parents notified.
6. Please report any communicable diseases to the preschool staff. (Example measles, mumps, etc.)

10. Setting Limits

Establishing clear, consistent and simple limits and providing children with clear explanations for these limits prevents many potential problem behaviours from occurring. We employ strategies that are prevention-oriented so that desirable behaviour occurs. Prevention is better than cure. Positive praise is integral to our program. Catching a child being good goes a long way to setting the expectations for others.

Incidents of inappropriate behavior will however sometimes occur. In these cases a calm voice is used to gain the child's attention, using their name. An adult may guide the child away from the situation and the child will be reminded of our class rules and limits. Every effort will be made to assist the child in understanding his or her actions. The child will then be redirected to another centre or activity.

Problem-solving skills are learned along the way. Choices, as well as natural or logical consequences, will be explained to clarify a given situation. A specific toy may need to be removed or a child may at times benefit from a quiet time away from the busy activities. The child's dignity and self respect will be maintained at all times.

11. The Special Helper

1. The child who is the special helper will bring his/her show and share that day.
2. We ask that you limit items brought from home to school.
3. We suggest that you let your child bring pictures, souvenirs, something meaningful and special to them, perhaps something that they have made, or something they found from the earth. (e.g. bugs in a jar, pussy willows, etc.)
4. We would appreciate if the children did not only bring toys.

12. Washroom Use

1. Children should tell the teacher when they need to use the washroom.
2. We will have a washroom break—where we use the toilet and wash our hands.
3. Assistance will be available as necessary.

13. Snack and Juice

Please alert your child's teacher to any food allergies your child may have. Snack consists of food from two different food groups as well as a drink. Foods which are prohibited in the preschool include nuts and seeds, hard candies, caramels/toffee, chewing gum and gumdrops.

14. Speech and Language Support for your Child

We pride ourselves on offering extensive speech and language support to all children within our programs and extra supports are given in this area to those children who come to us as having identified special needs. We procure the services of a Speech Language Pathologist who comes on site to consult to the program and to work with some of the students. In this way we are able to offer speech and language assistance to children all year round.



Occupational and Physiotherapy Services

These services are provided when necessary by Children's CARE Services and are delivered by Occupational and Physiotherapists that make on site visits for specific children as well as offering ideas and consultation to the preschool Team.

15. Newsletters

Newsletters will be sent home monthly informing you of upcoming events. A month by month calendar will be included to remind you of helper days.



16. Clothing and Supplies

1. Please label coats, boots, shoes, hats, mittens and back packs on inside labels of items.
2. Inside shoes are necessary in case of a fire drill, especially when it is rainy or snowy.
3. Dress the children appropriately as we may go outside when it is nice.
4. Clothing that is easy to pull up and down makes toileting easier for your child.
5. Clothing should be washable as we will use paint and glue and it may get messy.

17. Parent Involvement

We welcome your attendance on your child's special helper day. Children enjoy sharing this day with a parent, grandparent or caregiver.

Parent volunteers are welcomed in our classroom. Set up a time with the teacher and come and spend some time with us.

Parents have very special skills which they may like to share with the class. Please let your child's teacher know if you are willing to talk to the class about your job, a special interest or any other relevant topic.

18. Tip for Parents

If this is your first preschool experience you may have many questions regarding what will happen. Please feel free to ask any questions as they arise. If you are thinking it, then almost certainly someone else is wondering the same thing.

As this may be your child's first experience away from you for any significant time please know you may stay in the classroom for a few minutes for your child to settle. We suggest that you help your child find his/her name tag and join in a centre or activity and that you then leave as soon as the child is engaged.

Rest assured that the teacher will inform you of any prolonged upset on the part of your child after you have left the room. Our policy is an "open door" one however please realize that your child may behave differently if you are in the room (more clingy and wanting all your attention is not uncommon).

Prepare your child in advance by saying that you will leave them to play for a while but that you will be back to pick them up. Our experience is that most children quickly adjust to this. The age old saying "say what you mean and mean what you say" works perfectly as long as parents do leave when they say they are going to.

19. Friday mornings

Unique to our preschool program is the opportunity for your family to become involved in a number of different ways. Spending time in the classroom and helping out is a great way for you to see learning through play.

Some Friday mornings are set up as a planning time for the team so that the best possible program may be set up for your children. It is a time for staff to plan and talk about what has occurred and what will occur within the program. It is a time to prepare materials and maintain toys and supplies.

Family-oriented programming sessions are offered to families of identified special needs children on 6 Fridays throughout the year where parent, child and staff members engage in learning activities together. This provides a chance to learn more about child development in a fun and exciting special learning opportunity for families. It also provides you with ideas about how you might work with your child to support his/her learning needs. This is where we can all learn together and when a Speech Pathologist or other discipline may be on site to assist and advise on your child's development.

20. Withdrawal Policy

It is possible to withdraw your child from the program, should the need arise, during the year. Should your child exit the program without 30 days notice or part way through the month there will be no refund for the remainder of the days within the month of exit.

We look forward to meeting you and your family and welcoming your child into the exciting world of preschool.