

Westend Community Playschool

Parent Handbook

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1. School History and Philosophy

The Westend Community Playschool (WECP) has operated since its inception in 1977. Since the initial sponsorship of the Rio Terrace Moravian Church, we continue to offer a self-supporting program organized by an Advisory Board of interested parents and staffed by well qualified teachers and teacher's assistants. The WECP relies upon and appreciates continued volunteer assistance from parents.

The WECP shall provide a quality preschool program that enables each child to progress at his or her own level of development. By providing a stimulating environment, the children grow emotionally, physically, socially and intellectually. Focus is on the development of a positive self-image as a learner, pre-literacy skills, early numeracy concepts, and cooperation in the class, in a family, and in the community.

This is carried out by providing "free play" time, in which the child chooses his or her own area to play in such areas as toys, puzzles, craft materials or a quiet area for reading or just being alone. During circle time, the children are involved in singing, group discussions and stories that enable them to learn about themselves and their world. In addition, students are exposed to a variety of literacy and numeracy games, activities, and projects.

Parents are welcome to discuss their child's progress with the teachers at any time throughout the year. Parents of students who are continuing to Kindergarten in September will have an opportunity to discuss their child's progress with the teacher in early spring.

The Westend Community Playschool is an environment where children, families, teaching staff and volunteers work together in an atmosphere of respect and collaboration. Harassment of any kind is not tolerated.

The school staff is firmly committed to providing a safe and stimulating classroom environment and quality educational experiences to pre-school children. No matter how much is told of its virtues, it is the children and parents who ultimately decide if it is a great playschool. We are proud of the School's longevity, which speaks for itself.

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2. [Important Dates](#)

- Classes typically start the first full week after Labour Day
- Christmas Break – begins one week before Edmonton Public School Board (EPSB) commences Christmas Break and return on same date as EPSB in the New Year
- Registration for Alumni – end of January
- Registration for Public – February
- Class confirmation via email – March
- Classes end in mid-June, at least one week prior to EPSB

3. [Registration, Payment and Fee Policies](#)

3.1 Student Eligibility

For 3 year classes, the students should be 3 by the start of classes in September. However, the school does accept 2 year olds in both 3-year classes providing the child turns 3 by December 31, and if the family supplies a volunteer with a vested interest to volunteer in the 3-year classroom until the child turns 3. The licensing rules around 2 vs. 3 year olds mean the ratio of adults to children needs to be higher for younger children. If there are multiple 2 year olds in the class, a rotation of volunteers is possible

3.2 Registration Events

- Pre-Registration in January is open to all alumni (immediate) family members.
- Priority will be given to *currently* serving Parent Advisory volunteer board members.
- Open Registration for the public will occur within a week or two of the Alumni registration event.
- No registration forms will be accepted prior to these set dates.
- Families will be notified of class assignments in March.

3.3 Registration/Admin Fee \$100

A non-refundable registration/admin fee of \$100.00 per child must be submitted with the registration application. The non-refundable fee helps cover the costs associated with registering your child, and administration such as toy cleaning for the year.

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3.4 Tuition Payment Methods and Policies

There are 3 ways to pay tuition fees, each of which are to be submitted at our payment event in June, or to a registrar:

1. **Monthly Pre-Authorized Payment:** PAP form with a void cheque.
2. **Bi-annual:** two cheques, one dated September 1st for the months of September to January and the second cheque dated February 1st for the months of February to June.
3. **Annual:** one cheque dated Sept. 1st for all ten months.

No rebate or reduction of fees is allowed for temporary absence or holidays.

Fees are collected at the same rate per month regardless of the number of classes that month. The tuition fee is for the entire year, but to provide the option of automatic withdrawal, the fees per month are consistent as opposed to being per class.

If a child needs to be withdrawn from the Playschool, the parent must provide one month's written notice to the Registrar of the Parents Advisory Board. If a child is withdrawn for the month of June, that fee will not be refunded. If a child is withdrawn prior to the start of classes, but after August 1st, the first month's tuition will be charged.

If a student is registering after the June payment event has occurred, tuition payment must be received prior to the student's starting day of classes.

If a new student is not starting on the first day of classes for the month, and will be attending 50% or more of the classes for that month, they will be required to pay full tuition for the month. If the student will be attending less than 50% of the classes for the month, they will be asked to pay 50% of the tuition for the month.

3.5 Tuition Fees

Classes	3 ½- 4 ½ Year (AM Mon, Wed & Fri) 9:00am-11:15am	2-3 ½ year (AM Tues & Thurs) 9:00am-11:15am
Monthly	\$175	\$145
Bi-Annually	\$875/\$875	\$725/\$725
Annually	\$1750	\$1450

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3.6 NSF Policy Re: Cheques and Automatic Withdrawals \$25

- If an NSF situation has occurred the Treasurer will provide notice to the family requesting reimbursement, and notify the family that upon receipt of a second NSF incident, they may be asked to make alternate payment arrangements for any remaining tuition. If a family cannot meet the alternate payment arrangements, they may be asked to withdraw from the program.
- A \$25.00 charge will be levied to the parents for any NSF payment returned from the bank.

3.7 Annual General Meeting Deposit \$50 (Refundable)

WECP is an organization dependent on its parents and their input. Though there are no duty days, the school asks that parents attend the AGM and provide feedback. Parents can have the playschool cash the cheque in lieu of attending the AGM, otherwise it will be returned to them upon completion of the tasks/job.

3.8 Funding Information

Our playschool receives funds from sources: fees, fundraising and the Alberta Child Care Funding Grant. The funds are used for salaries, rent, supplies, and more. The fees you pay for your child each month do not cover the costs needed to maintain the high level of programming at WECP. The fees contribute to only a portion of the revenue needed. The rest of the revenue comes solely from fundraising.

3.9 Casino Fundraising Deposit \$250 (Refundable)

The WECP Parent Advisory Board is a non-profit organization, thus enabling us to apply for a casino gaming license. Alberta Gaming requires us to fill all volunteer positions for us to maintain our casino license every two years. Profits raised in the past have exceeded \$70 000, to be used by the school over two years, which contributes a significant portion of WECP's budget. Each time we are granted a casino, we are required to provide 60 volunteers over two days to cover both daytime and nighttime shifts, lasting about 8 hours long. These volunteers are recruited from the families that belong to our playschool, and no previous training or knowledge of casino games is needed.

On the years WECP is to host a casino event (even years), a cheque of \$250 is required from each family in September. Parents will have an

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opportunity to sign up for a shift a few months prior to the Casino. If the roster of volunteers is full, you will be placed on a reserve list of volunteers. It is extremely important that you provide contact information which is checked frequently, and that you respond to inquiries from the Casino Coordinator from the WECP Parent Advisory Board. The coordinator will reach out to you in the case that a volunteer is unable to make their shift.

If you are not able to fulfill the shift you signed up for, the school will cash your cheque. For parents on the waitlist for a shift, failure to return phone calls and/or emails and fulfill the required shift will result in the cheque being cashed.

Once a volunteer form has been submitted and the assignment completed, the cheque will be returned.

3.10 Government of Alberta Stay At Home Subsidy

A family paying tuition fees through the subsidy program must be approved by the Government on or before September 1. Once the subsidy has been approved, the school will submit a subsidy claim to the Government at the end of each month. In the event that the application is rejected, the family must pay for tuition or withdraw from the program.

4. School Operations and Related Policies

4.1 Holidays and School Closures

The WECP does not operate during public school holidays, including Teachers' Convention and Spring Break, however does operate on Edmonton Public School Board P.D. days. The Westend Community Playschool is non-denominational, but note that we do celebrate Christmas in a non-religious manner.

Please note that for years that Remembrance Day falls on what is typically a school day, WECP will be closed for the day.

WECP may cancel classes due to flooding, power outage, extreme weather conditions and/or any other unforeseen circumstances. In such cases, an email will be sent to all families, and a note will be posted on the door of the school.

4.2 Illness

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Parents are asked to keep ill children at home until they are free of symptoms for 24 hours (including but not limited to: fever, vomiting, diarrhea, sore throat, cough, runny nose, muscle aches, joint pain, lice) and feeling well, and can fully participate in all normal daily school activities. This applies to staff as well. Encourage and remind your children to use respiratory hygiene (i.e. cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, or cough and sneeze into their sleeve, dispose of used tissues and wash hands afterwards using soap and water, use alcohol-based hand rub if there is no access to soap and water).

The Playschool must be informed immediately of any communicable disease that your child may have.

4.3 Medical Assistance

Any emergency medical assistance necessary for a child left in the care of the Playschool will be sought at the medical facility decided on by the Emergency Personnel on site. Parents will be notified of any incident as soon as possible.

Teachers may not give non-prescription drugs to the children without consent from their legal guardian and instructions from the manufacturer/doctor. Prescribed drugs, including – but not limited to – EpiPens and inhalers, will be given only with written permission from the parent. A form including symptoms exhibited must be completed and drugs must be in their original container with a current date along with the instructions. The form will be posted for easy reference and the medication will be kept in the emergency backpack.

4.4 Child Guidance Policy

The Westend Community Playschool is committed to helping children thrive in a safe and caring environment. We create a positive, calm, engaging and flexible program which aids in the prevention of incidence. Should severe behavior occur, we are able to implement strategies to ensure the safety and well-being of children and staff. Children are provided with a nurturing environment with verbal and physical comfort when appropriate and provided with consent from the child.

Prevention

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- Children are informed and aware of expectations regarding behavior
- Children are encouraged when they are demonstrating acceptable behaviour
- Programing planned in advance to be suitable for the students age and abilities as well as their environment to ensure they are engaged and interested in learning
- Children are encouraged to be kind and respectful of each other and their environment
- Several activity centers are set up to foster different interests and allow children to spread out
- Materials are prepared in advance to ensure smooth transitions
- Objectives are discussed with the children in order to foster independence within an activity and lessen frustration and disengagement
- Children are warned of transitions from activity to activity so they have time to complete what they are doing
- Children are given enough time to complete activities
- Children are recognized as individuals and valuable members of the classroom and community

Intervention

- Redirection is preferred in order to disperse conflict
- Gentle and age appropriate discussions are held with the children involved help them learn and grow from the situation

Severe Behavior

This behavior includes:

- Physical abuse to themselves or others
- Verbal abuse to others
- Severe defiance and disruption
- Destruction of property
- Bullying

The following steps will be taken in order to diffuse the situation:

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- Removal of the child from the situation or removal of the other children in order to secure the safety and well-being of others in the room
- Teachers will discuss the situation with those involved to implement the most effective solution
- Teachers will give those involved time alone, listen or comfort them
- If behavior continues the student will continue to be upsetting or dangerous to others, a conference will be called with the parents. A plan of action will be discussed with the child's parent/guardian and teacher. The plan of action may include, but is not limited to, the following solutions: environmental restructuring, classroom preventive practices, social/emotional teaching strategies and other programming options. In extreme cases, plans may be made to find alternative school arrangements

Under no circumstances will the teacher, aide or volunteers use physical means to discipline a child.

4.5 Snack

From time to time we will have a “cooking day” where the kids will participate in making a snack for themselves. At no point will children be sharing snacks.

4.5.1 Allergies

Allergies for each class are posted inside the classrooms. Please check this information when considering your snack choice.

WECP is a nut-free playschool. There are children at the school with severe nut allergies. Please do not send any snack with nuts or nut products. The snack will be checked each day and if there is a risk, the snack will not be provided for the children. It is at the discretion of the Teacher whether a child with severe allergies needs to bring their own snack or not.

4.5.2 Snack Requirements & Water Bottles

We ask that you send a nut-free, nutritious snack which includes 2 food groups. The school asks that you provide your children with a water bottle, however if you choose to send a different beverage (milk or unsweetened

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juice) it will be served. We request a small snack that can be easily eaten with their fingers.

4.5.2.1 Regarding Nut-Free Items

Check the labels on all foods purchased for snack or birthdays. In addition to reading the ingredients, some brands have "May contain..." statements. Foods that "May contain nuts" or "Produced in a facility that also processes nuts" or "Produced on the same equipment that processes nuts" are not safe for children with nut allergies. Also, note that a "peanut free" facility is not necessarily a nut free facility

Some of the highest risk foods are granola/cereal bars and bakery items. Since granola/cereal bars are generally well labeled, it is easy for parents to read ingredient and allergen lists.

Bakery items are more difficult to assess due to cross contamination in items baked "in house" (e.g. muffins, bagels, cupcakes, cakes baked in house at Safeway, Superstore, Costco, Save On etc.). Children with nut allergies cannot safely consume anything from an "in house" bakery that is not a nut free bakery because of cross contamination.

4.5.2.2 Snack Size

We ask that parents not send a meal but a good size snack for their children. The children are quite active and often require more than 1 item.

4.5.2.3 Limit Teachers Food Handling

Please ensure your child's snack is easily eaten independently so teachers may limit their food handling. Choosing a reusable snack box in which you may send peeled fruits, opened packages and their own utensils (if needed) is a great option.

4.5.2.4 Preferred Snacks Guideline

- Fresh fruit or vegetables
- Cheese
- Sausage
- Yogurt Tubes
- Apple Sauce
- Cereal Bars
- Crackers or bagels
- Raisins or Dried Fruit

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Remember to always check the ingredient lists for nuts or possible nut contamination.

Please do not send foods of the following nature: Pop, Chips, Chocolate bars, Peanuts or nut products

4.5.3 Birthdays

Your child will have a "Snack and Share Day" as close as possible to their actual birthday. Parents are welcome to send a nut-free, store bought treat in addition to the regular snack on this special day. Bringing a birthday treat is completely optional.

4.5.4 Forgetting Snack

If you happen to forget your snack, the Playschool will provide a nutritious snack and water. In turn we ask that you replenish the snack provided by the Playschool.

4.6 Supervision and Emergency Evacuation Policies and Procedures

4.6.1 Supervision Outside of the Classroom

Children will be accompanied by both the teacher and assistant when they are outside. Boundaries of play will be reviewed and enforced by the teachers.

4.6.2 Promoting Child Safety Outside of the Classroom

Teachers will help dress the children according to the weather/activity and perform a count before leaving the classroom. Children will be counted again before leaving the building, when we arrive at our desired location and periodically while at the activity.

The teachers will carry an emergency backpack which includes the following:

- Daily parent sign-in book including emergency contacts for each student
- At least 1 teacher will have their Child Care First Aid CPR course
- A First Aid kit

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- Any emergency prescription medication that follows the medication plan reviewed above
- A cell phone

4.6.3 Emergency Evacuation Procedure

The Fire Evacuation Plan and diagram is posted within the classroom and at exits of the building. The plan will be reviewed with the students and practiced once a month with the students. The emergency backpack along with the Parent Sign-In book and emergency contacts will be brought with a teacher during any practice or real emergency evacuation. The students will be counted prior to leaving the classroom and once we reach the muster point 4 minutes away at Rio Terrace School (7608-154 Street)

4.7 Additional Parent Responsibilities

4.7.1 Drop-off & Pick-up

Parents are to provide transportation to and from Playschool.

Parents/Guardians must inform the teacher if there will be any persons other than themselves picking up the child.

If the parent/guardian is away for several days and has an alternate caregiver transporting the child, written confirmation must be given to the teacher beforehand. This shall include the name, phone number, and address of the caregiver.

The children are not to arrive more than 10 minutes before class time and must be picked up promptly, at the end of each class. Parents of children in the 3 year program are responsible for helping their children remove and put on their coats and shoes each day.

4.7.2 Allergies

Parents must advise the Playschool of **ALL** allergies whether food or environment, no matter how small or insignificant the allergy may be. In cases of certain food allergies, the parent may be required to provide a daily snack for their child.

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4.7.3 Changes of contact information

The Playschool must be notified of a change of phone number and/or address.

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4.7.4 Restrictions for Pick-up

Due to Social Service regulations regarding licensing, in cases of separation, divorce or unsettled situations, the person who has custody of the child must advise the teacher if there is any difficulty expected regarding an unlawful party picking up the child. In such a case, the parent must give the teacher the name of the party not allowed to pick up the child and record it on the registration form.

4.7.5 Emergency Contact Information

Parents are to confirm the emergency phone number and local address of their emergency contact with the person named on the registration form, to assure that the person named will accept the responsibility in the event of an emergency.

It is important Teachers can reach parents in the event of a toilet accident, illness or emergency. Parents are expected to provide contact numbers so they can be reached at all times. Please provide teachers with all numbers available including home, work, and cell for both parents and ensure the teachers are informed of any changes to contact numbers on file.