



Parent Handbook

2024-2025

Philosophy

As a Christian playschool, we believe that children are unique and cherished creations of God. We endeavor to help children understand their priceless worth in God's eyes. We know that children will flourish when they are given love, respect, encouragement, supports, and opportunities that reflect their individual personalities, interests, needs, and gifts. We believe that purposefully incorporating the teaching of God's word at a developmentally appropriate level fosters a lifelong relationship with God. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and he will not depart from it." (Proverbs 22:6).

Through a flexible, responsive, emergent based learning environment we endeavor to respect each child's unique perspectives, strengths, and curiosities as a mighty learner. Learning dispositions of perseverance, playfulness, participation, seeking, and caring will be supported when our teachers listen and observe to gain insight and meet the needs of individual children and the needs of the group. The classroom set-up, the materials we provide, and the activities we plan will be in direct response to this and will also include the input of the children as co-learners, co-researchers, and co-imaginors of possibilities.

Through our ongoing partnership with the RDPSD, we will provide an environment that is inclusive to children with exceptional needs. To do so we will adapt activities, materials, routines, expectations, and the environment to promote the child's independence and feelings of success.

We will support all children to find their voice as a valued citizen who can influence those around them in the classroom, in their families, and in the world at large. Also, their responsibility and role to understand how their choices and behavior impact those around them. To know and gain understanding that what they feel matters, what they say matters, and what they do matters.



Objectives

The program implements programming based on a blended approach, drawing from the philosophy and curriculum of Flight- Alberta's Early Learning and Care Framework and Reggio Emilia.

Play is a central and necessary part of a child's development. Play is also a major avenue for learning and provides a natural opportunity for children to add to their knowledge, learn new skills, and to practice familiar ones. Noah's Ark Playschool endeavors to provide play situations where children can observe, discover, reason and problem-solve.

Teachers are ever vigilant through formal and informal observations to see, listen, and inquire to discover where each child is at in terms of developmental needs, where their interests may lie, and to learn what they are curious about. These observations give us insight into planning for both individual children and the group. Planning and provision will also include input from families, discussion between staff members, and questioning of the children themselves. We know that a curriculum rich in variety and exposure allows children to formulate new ideas, wonderings, and allows them opportunity to discover where their interests and talents lie. We also know that allowing children to revisit, rework, and review gives them practice, increasing their skill and understanding. Therefore, activities are typically flexible in duration and follow the children's lead.

In this way, children will grow, mature, and develop at their natural pace. As this developmental process takes place, they will demonstrate age-appropriate concepts and an ability to apply them which will equip them with the skills and self-esteem to transition into progressive learning environments.



Entrance Requirements:

Noah's Ark Playschool is a ministry of the First Christian Reformed Church. Clearly defined as a Christian Playschool, it will be a service to the community. Registration will be accepted on a first-come first-serve basis. Church membership is not required. Children must be 3 years of age by enrollment date, and fully independent in toilet habits. Exceptions will be considered on an individual basis based on the needs/ability of the child, parents, and staff/program. Please contact us directly if this applies to you. Children currently registered will have pre-registration opportunities for the following year.

Registration and Fees:

A registration fee of \$75.00 must accompany registration form. This fee is nonrefundable.

Monthly fees are subsidized by an affordability grant of \$83.39 (available to every student without the need to apply). This affordability grant is provided by the Federal Provincial Childcare Agreement.

Remaining parent fees are dependent on 1-, 2- or 3-day programming and approved subsidies. They range from \$0 - \$132.80. Fees will be withdrawn from a chequing account on the first of each month from September 1st-June 1st until or unless we receive notice of a non-conditional subsidy approval. Automatic withdrawal permission forms will be supplied at the time of registration and must be completed and returned as soon as possible.

It is your responsibility to inform Noah's Ark Playschool of changes to any registration information.*** Your child will not be considered registered until an automatic withdrawal form is submitted, registration fee is paid, and all fields of the Registration form are filled in.***

Withdrawing from the Program:

One month's written notice is required should you withdraw your child from the playschool program. Should you withdraw your child from the program anytime during the year without providing a month's notice, payment will continue to be withdrawn on the first of the next month but will cease on all consecutive months following.

Due to the unlikely ability to fill the void space so late in the programming year, there will be no refund for withdrawal in May or June and fees will continue to be withdrawn for these months even with appropriate notification.

There will be no refund for the days a child is absent, or on holidays.

Failed withdrawals due to NSF would be dealt with individually. (Normal bank fees will apply).

Parent/Guardian Involvement:

To maintain reasonable fees, parents, guardians and/or others are required to volunteer in class approximately once every 6 weeks. A volunteer schedule/signup sheet will be posted on the bulletin board in advance of each month. Parents can choose a time that is most suitable. Staff maybe in touch to help facilitate this or to offer alternative volunteering opportunities to families that this does not work for.

Parent/Guardian volunteer duties include:

1. help with hand-washing
2. help with snack
3. general clean up duties including spraying and wiping all tables with a bleach solution, sweeping floors
4. general classroom assistance
5. various tasks as directed by teachers

If/when you are Parent Volunteer, please be open to allowing the teacher to guide your child's behavior and implement behavior guidance policy.

Parents/Guardians must respect confidentiality of each child including behavior, behavior guidance, and progress. This also includes photos or video taken in the class. Please do not post any photos of children other than your own on social media or share without permission. Please pay attention to children who are in the background of photos you have taken of your own child(ren).

Parents/Guardians must respect all children regardless of sex, race, color, and/or religious beliefs.

Parents/Guardians are to provide a snack for their own child, keeping in mind that 2 different food groups should be included in your child's snack. All snacks are to be NUT FREE. Please see page 5 for recommended snack foods. Please also provide a water bottle with your child's name labeled on it.

Sign-In Sheets:

All children must be signed in/out each day. In addition, the name of the person picking up the child must be entered on the sheet.

As much as possible, please respect classroom time. Morning class begins at 9:00am and ends at 11:30am. Afternoon class begins at 1:00 and ends at 3:30pm. Your promptness enables your child to benefit optimally from classroom time. The door will be opened at the end of each class, with each child being released to their parents in an orderly fashion. At that time, you are welcome to come in, after you have signed your child out. A built in 15 min. drop off will be accommodated before each class. In the event of unforeseen circumstances and you will be more than 15 minutes late to pick up your child please let us know.

Medication Policy:

We will only administer medications the child takes on a regular basis for illnesses like asthma, epilepsy, heart disease and allergies. Parents must give written authorization, by completing the Medication Form in ink. Only teachers will administer medications. If your child becomes ill, parents will be contacted first, and emergency contacts secondly if a parent cannot be contacted.

A child will be considered ill when:

1. Temperature registers 100 F or higher.
2. Undiagnosed rash is evident.
3. Communicable disease is suspected.
4. Severe and persistent diarrhea is present.
5. Vomiting is present.
6. The child is unable to participate in daily activities due to illness.

Medical/Emergency Procedure:

Staff of Noah's Ark Playschool will have current and updated First Aid Certificates. In the event of an injury or medical emergency an incident/accident report will be filled out. Emergency treatment will be activated to protect your child; however, Noah's Ark Playschool and/or First Christian Reformed Church will not be held responsible for costs incurred or further injury upon treatment.

An Incident/Accident report shall be recorded when:

1. A child is physically hurt by objects, equipment, or another child during class time.
2. When a child becomes extremely upset or frightened.
3. When a child arrives with an untreated injury (i.e., excessive bruising).

Evacuation Procedure:

In the event of an emergency, when children and adults must evacuate, senior staff will proceed as follows:

- Staff will direct children and volunteers to the nearest exit, as defined by the posted emergency evacuation plan.
- Staff will take portable records, sign in sheets, and turn off light switches, close doors and do bathroom checks.

Designated meeting place will be at the green area off McVicar Street, after all children/adults are accounted for, we will proceed to walk to:

Maryview School
3829 39 Street
Red Deer, AB
Phone number (403) 347-1455

Parents will be contacted immediately and be expected to arrange for pick up as soon as possible. Emergency evacuation plans will be posted on parent board and in each room by door.



Fire Drills:

To ensure both staff and students are confident in the steps to take in the event of an emergency, fire drills will be scheduled 3 times throughout the school year.

General:

Please remove outdoor footwear. Ensure that your child has indoor shoes, preferably non-marking runners. This is a multi-use facility; your child's indoor shoes should be taken home in a backpack each day.

A complete change of clothing should also be included in backpack. Label all children's belongings. Noah's Ark Playschool will not be responsible for lost or misplaced items. Children are encouraged to keep their toys at home (exceptions are show/share time/comfort items). Please dress your child appropriately for comfortable play (also, we do not shy away from messy play), also bring outdoor clothing suitable for weather conditions.

Additional Parent Orientation, supply, and program information will be sent out by email each year in June and August.



Behavior Guidance Policy

Noah's Ark Playschool seeks to create a positive learning atmosphere in the classroom. Children's behavior will be guided to encourage self-respect, respect for others, respect for the property of others, and safety.

Opportunities to develop self-regulation skills and pro-social behaviors are provided abundantly within the nature of the program. Through negotiation in sharing materials, communicating ideas in collaborative play experiences, expressing emotions in respectful ways during disagreements and disappointments, etc. children are supported in developing skills in both areas. Through modeling, co-regulation, and verbal/physical prompts staff facilitate children in developing skills. Using 'first/then' speech, teaching children respectful language in exchanges 'May I have a turn when you are all done?', reminding children of expectations 'Some for you, some for a friend,' and by referring to 'Good Friend Rules' staff guide behaviors in this way. Staff work with the children to find ways to cope with strong feelings, so they do not become too overwhelming. By developing warm, responsive relationships children feel respected as individuals and know they will be comforted and supported in times of stress. This positive relationship promotes self-efficacy and allows children to practice new skills and learn from their mistakes. Consistent routines, predictable expectations, and structuring the environment are other ways we support the children in their ability to choose behaviors and learn pro-social skills.

Good Friend Rules. A good friend:

1. is a good listener
 2. is a good helper
 3. is polite
 4. shares (or turn-takes)
 5. co-operates
- Ongoing behavioral concerns will be discussed with parents. If dangerous behavior continues and is hurtful to other children, the parent may be asked to remove the child from the program.
 - Staff of Noah's Ark will not inflict or cause to be inflicted any form of physical punishment, verbal or physical degradation, or emotional deprivation. Nor will they deny, or threaten to deny, any necessity or use, or permit the use of any form of physical restraint, confinement, or isolation.
 - As a regular part of our curriculum throughout the year, we introduce the "We Thinkers" social-emotional concepts. Learning and language from this curriculum is also used to assist students in understanding and developing positive social/emotional competencies.



Snack Policy

Noah's Ark Playschool is an **Allergy Aware Space**, and therefore all snacks must be **Nut-Free**. Below, you will find a list of foods that are suitable and healthy, along with a list of prohibited foods for this age group.

Licensing regulations require that snacks contain at least 2 of the 4 food groups.

Also, if you are planning to bring a snack for special occasions that all the children will share, please inquire first with the teachers as some children may have specific food allergies. You may be asked to include an ingredient list with any snacks that are brought to share.

Suitable Snack Ideas:

- Fruit
- Cheese
- Vegetables (cut up)
- Pudding
- Bread
- Rolls
- Yogurt
- Apple Sauce
- Crackers
- Rice Cakes
- Dried Fruit
- Meat
- Etc.

ALL NUTS AND NUT PRODUCTS ARE PROHIBITED

Additional Foods that are discouraged due to choking hazard:

- Caramels & Toffee
- Hard Candies
- Chewing Gum
- *Popcorn*
- *Jellybeans*
- *Any snacks made with toothpicks or pointed skewers (blunted tips ok only)*

**SNACKS WITH THE FOLLOWING PHRASES ON THE PACKAGE ARE
NOT OKAY AND SHOULD NOT BE BROUGHT TO
PLAYSCHOOL.**

- "May contain nuts or traces of nuts"
- "Packaged in a facility that processes nuts"