

**Come Play and Learn
with us!**



**We focus on the development of
the whole child!**

**Early Discoveries
Parent Handbook**



Main Office (MAILING ADDRESS ONLY)

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There is also a contact email on our website:

www.earlydiscoveries.ca

Check us out on Facebook and Instagram!

LOCATIONS

Here is a list of all our locations, including classroom phone numbers.

Hawkwood

100 Hawkwood Blvd. NW
St. Thomas United Church
403-239-6565

Kincora

38 Kincora Rise NW
Symons Valley United Church
403-239-0444

Parkdale

2919 – 8th Avenue NW
Parkdale United Church
403-233-0848

Thornccliffe

6311 Norfolk Drive NW
Good Shepherd Church
403-731-0022

Redstone (New for September 2020)

5 Redstone Heights NE
House of Praise Church
403-453-8444

PROGRAMS AVAILABLE

1 YEAR OLD PROGRAM: “PEEK-A-BOO” (Mom and Tot: Child must be 1)

This program is intended to enhance children’s early development, strengthen family and community relationships, and help in providing support for these early years. Concentration will be placed on language development since the sensory pathways to the brain are developed during this crucial time. All senses such as touch, smell, sight, and hearing will be challenged in a fun and creative way. Learn to talk, play, dance, and sing with your child. Come and have an hour of pure fun!

2 YEAR OLD PROGRAM: “WILBURY GANG” (Mom and Tot: Child must be 2)

EDNS has specially designed this program for the 2-3-year olds who are too young for a regular preschool program or for the child that may have a problem with separation anxiety. A world of visual and performing art, plus one of education and entertainment, is presented in a relaxed and fun atmosphere. The program will introduce children to school routines with Mom or Dad present and participating alongside for encouragement and support. What a great way to have your child ready to start the 3-year-old program and for you to get to know Early Discoveries!

STEPPING STONES: (2 1/2 year olds; class size 12)

Stepping Stones is designed for children who are ready for an unparented program but who are not yet old enough to join preschool. The program runs September to June and the classes run 2 mornings a week (Mon & Wed or Tues & Thurs) at our Thorncliffe location. It is a good “step” before the 3-year-old program!

3 YEAR OLD PROGRAM:(Must be 3 by Dec.31 to join a 3 year old class; class size maximum 18)

This program will reinforce colours, numbers, shapes, words, speech, and ideas. Children will be encouraged to learn through play to reach their full potential socially, intellectually, physically, and emotionally. Class discussions will be encouraged while the use of themes will help to foster excitement and interest. What a great introduction for your child to see what school is all about!

4 YEAR OLD PROGRAM:(Must be 4 by Dec.31 in order to join a 4 year old class; class size maximum 20)

This program is built around a junior Kindergarten setting and will emphasize reading and math readiness skills. Children are stimulated to express their thoughts and feelings while all avenues to learning are explored. Each child is encouraged to feel good about themselves and their own abilities. “Handwriting Without Tears” will be presented in a fun manner. We endeavor to give your child a good introduction to themes and ideas which will be reinforced in their Kindergarten and Grade One classes.

5 YEAR OLD PROGRAM: (Must be 5 years old by Dec. 31 to join Kindergarten; class size maximum 20)

This program follows the Alberta Learning Kindergarten Statement. It is a government approved and funded program with an Alberta certified teacher. A registration fee and an all-inclusive activity fee will be charged. Children will be encouraged to develop self worth and independence. A strong concentration will be placed on individual development of each child with emphasis placed on language arts, math, science, and fine arts. Decision making skills will be developed and communication skills will be enhanced through opportunities to speak effectively in class. Learning centers, special activities, in class and out of class experiences will enhance this educational 5-year-old program.

DAILY ROUTINE

Each teacher may vary the routine; however, most of them basically follow this format.

- Children arrive, hang up bags, get settled in
- Circle time – attendance, calendar, weather, discussion on themes/craft
- Craft time (practice of fine motor skills and following directions)
- Centre time
- Clean up
- Gym/music/dance
- Snack time
- Story/games/music/show and tell
- Prepare for home

FIELD TRIPS

*Three-year-old classes usually have visitors into the classroom. They may go on a field trip or two, but not until after Christmas. The four-year olds still have classroom visitors and may go on a few field trips. Kindergarten students go on a variety of field trips. Your child's teacher will ask for parent volunteers. Keep in mind – when volunteering, it is best **not** to bring siblings as you are in charge of a group of children. Please note that parents may be required to drive their own child to field trip destinations.*

SNACKS

Snacks are to be **nut free and chocolate free**. Choking hazards such as grapes **must** be cut in half. **Cherries are not permitted due to potential choking possibilities**. If you bring a snack for the class, **you must include a list of ingredients**. **Due to nut allergies, we do not allow cakes, cupcakes, or other baked goods for birthday treats**. Ask the teacher for other suggestions. **SNACKS MAY BE SENT HOME UNOPENED DUE TO ALLERGIES AND/OR CHOKING HAZARDS**. The discretion is left to the classroom staff. We do have substitute snacks for these occasions.

PHOTOS

*We have professional photographers come into our classrooms in January or February. They will take individual colour photos as well as classroom photos. Your child's teacher may take photos in the class and on field trips throughout the year. If for some reason you do not want your child's photo taken, please inform the teacher **in writing**.*

POTTY TRAINING

If your child is not yet potty trained, they can join our preschool. We like to maintain the teacher/child relationship. So, if they do soil themselves, a parent/caregiver/emergency contact person will be called to come and change your child. If a child soils himself on a regular basis, we will recommend that they withdraw from our preschool and try again at a later date.

TAX RECEIPTS

Tax receipts are issued in January of the school year. They are only issued if your account is in good standing. Your child's teacher will receive them from our office to hand out to you. If your child finishes preschool in June, will not be returning, we will send a tax receipt to the classroom in June and/or mail one to you.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

Our classrooms typically have a teacher and a teacher aide. We do **not** ask for parent volunteers on an ongoing basis. For field trips or special classroom events, the teacher may ask for volunteers to help out.

REGISTRATION

We hold our pre-registration in early February. Pre-registration is open to all parents of children currently enrolled in one of our programs. As well, parents of former students are eligible for pre-registration on a specific date. We have an open registration later in February for new families. **Dates will be posted on our website and at all the schools well ahead of registration.**

For payments, we have 3 options: EFT (automatic withdrawal from your bank account), cheques, or cash. The registration fee and June's fee are to be paid at registration. The remainder of the fees are collected/withdrawn September to May. Our tuition fees are set for the school year. We then divide the tuition into 10 equal payments. So, regardless if a month is long or short, the monthly payment is the same.

CANCELLATION POLICY

We require one month's notice if you wish to withdraw your child. Otherwise, you will forfeit one month's payment. There are NO REFUNDS after May 1st of the current school year.

LATE FEES

We realize that traffic and/or weather can delay you in picking up your child. However, in the past, some parents have been continuously late, which is an inconvenience to the staff members who need to pick up their own children. Remember, the staff has to travel in the same weather/traffic as you do.

We now charge families a late fee. The late fee will be charged each time you are late, and the amount will be determined by how late you are. Teachers will be keeping track and will let us know if any additional fees are needed from you. Again, we do know traffic and weather can affect pick up times. Please plan to leave earlier to accommodate these issues. Being late should not be happening on an on-going basis. As well, parents who have a child in our Early Discoveries Kindergarten are still expected to pick up their younger siblings on time. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

LICENSING

All our preschools are licensed by the government of Alberta. As such, they determine the capacity of our classes. We cannot have children attending on days they are not registered as we may exceed our allotted numbers. Therefore, we do not offer make-up classes. Having said this, your classroom teacher will occasionally invite all children to attend the class on special occasions. She would provide the extra supervision required.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

- In September, children receive a school bag and a snack container. **Please do not send large water bottles as our fridge space is limited.**
- Please take your child to the washroom prior to the start of each class.
- Provide non-marking indoor shoes when the weather is rainy and/or snowy.
- Please be punctual when you drop off and pick up your child. **Children are to be escorted right to the classroom door.** If someone other than yourself will be picking up your child, please notify the teacher.
- If you are going to be away for more than a month, please contact the office.
- We follow the Public School calendar for all statutory holidays. A copy of our calendar can be found on our website.
- We also follow the Public School Board in terms of possible school closures due to weather.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

The overall view of discipline at Early Discoveries is to establish clear, consistent, and simple limits that the children can follow with straight forward explanations for these limits. In so doing we will be using guidelines that are prevention oriented so desirable behaviour will be encouraged in a positive class atmosphere. A child must be made to feel proud of their abilities and to feel that they are worthy of being communicated with. A positive comment to a well-behaved student will inevitably bring the focus on the behaviour rather than the child's character and in so doing offer a positive guidance for learning.

When there is not a choice for differing behaviour, we will make a clear statement of what is expected of each child such as when we sing, "Time to put the toys away..." The children will be given sufficient time to respond to our expectations and will have full warning of a change in class activities as, "Five more minutes until clean up". Positive reinforcement will be used to reward appropriate behaviour and the focus will be on the behaviour rather than on the child. I.e. "Our room looks lovely after everyone worked so hard to tidy up".

There will be times when minor incidents will be tolerated as long as children are not infringing on the rights of others. Often these occurrences are attention seeking devices and are better left presumed unnoticed. We will be available for guidance, protection and a helping hand when needed but children will be encouraged to perform tasks, appropriate to their age group, with support and understanding from staff. By circulating throughout the room, a staff member will be able to step in and prevent problems before they occur.

The preceding strategies will help create a positive climate but there may still be incidents of inappropriate behaviour. In these cases, we will gain the child's attention with a calm voice using their name and then use close proximity to guide the child away from the situation. We will remind the child of our class limits and acknowledge their feelings for reacting the way they did. I.e. "I know you're really angry but...". The child will then be distracted or redirected to another activity. As children mature, we will engage in problem-solving skills. Choices as well as natural and logical consequences will be explained to clarify any given situation. A specific toy may need to be removed or a child may need quiet time but the building of self-esteem and solving ones' own problems will be encouraged. No person shall use corporal punishment against a child under any circumstances.

At no time will Early Discoveries permit the use of physical punishment, verbal or physical degradation or emotional deprivation. Early Discoveries will not deny or even threaten to deny any basic necessity. We also will not permit the use of any form of physical restraint, confinement, or isolation.

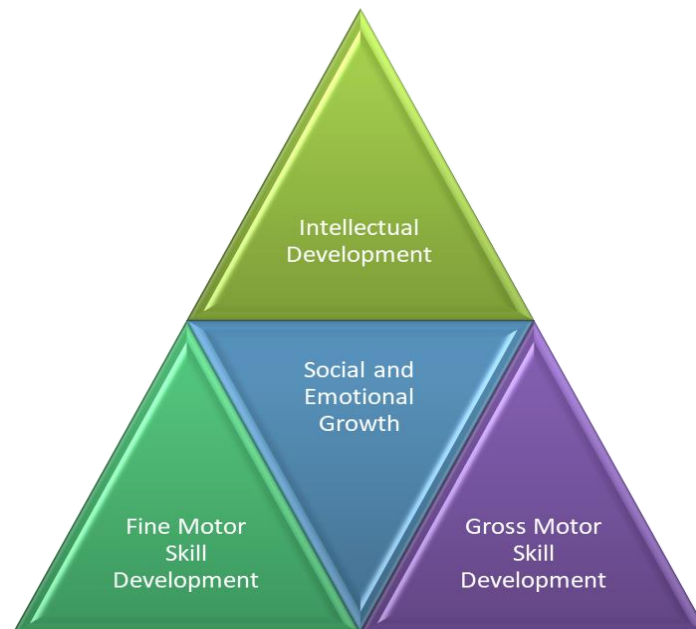
Supervision Policy

At Early Discoveries, the staff assumes responsibility for the safety and supervision of the children once the parents have left. In order to attain effective supervision, staff will follow these guidelines.

1. Parents or caregivers walk the children into the classroom and help get them settled before leaving.
2. The teacher takes attendance of her class within the first 10 minutes of the start of class.
3. If any child arrives late and/or leaves early, the teacher will note the time on her attendance sheets.
4. As well as taking attendance, the teacher will count how many children are present and share that total with any other adults in the class.
5. Throughout the class, counts are to be made to ensure all children are still present. For example, on the way to and from gym class, on the way to and from the washroom, and so on. The teacher will be at the front of the line and the aide at the end of the line to make sure no one gets left behind. When a staff member takes a few children to the washroom, she will make the other staff member aware of how many children she is taking.
6. In the classroom, the teacher and aide will position themselves so that they are able to be in visual and/or auditory contact with all the children.
7. Staff will conduct regular safety checks to remove any potential hazards. As well, they will complete a safety checklist (see attached)
8. Staff will be aware of who can or cannot pick up a child. Parents will provide information on new individuals who can pick up their children. All emergency contact information is kept in the teacher's binder on the child's registration form.
9. All staff will be aware of children requiring medication and where it is kept. As well, all first aid kits will be clearly marked in the classroom.
10. All staff will be aware of identifying and reporting suspected health outbreaks and accident and incident reporting, including reporting serious incidents to the regional child care office.
11. As all staff members (teachers and teacher aides) set up their classrooms before school begins, they are aware of their indoor physical environment. As we run preschools for 2.25 to 2.5 hours, we usually do not venture outside. We use a large, empty room as a gym at each location. The gym area is checked by a staff member before use to ensure there are no obstacles to a child's ability to run freely.
12. The teacher and the teacher aide are together in the classroom and in the gym to support the age groups (3 and 4 year olds) and the ratios (18-20 children: 2 adults).

EARLY DISCOVERIES ILLNESS POLICY

1. Staff will watch/check for any of the following symptoms:
 - Diarrhea
 - Vomiting
 - Fever (child hot to the touch, sluggish, “not himself”)
 - Cough (persistent)
 - Rash illness (face, arms/hands)
 - Other clusters of unusual symptoms (really tired, wants to lay down)
2. If a staff member suspects that a child has any of the above symptoms, she will separate the affected child from the rest of the class.
3. Staff will report any signs of illness to parents/caregivers so the child can be picked up immediately. Staff will convey that the child needs to be picked up as soon as possible so as not to affect the other children in the classroom. While waiting, the child can rest on mat in a quiet area of the room under constant supervision or at least within eye contact.
4. If a parent cannot be reached, staff will call an emergency contact and convey the same sense of urgency.
5. Staff will record the child’s name, date, and symptoms observed on the Illness Log Sheet. If another child exhibits the same symptoms, they will contact the Public Health Office to report a suspected outbreak. Your child can return to class once he/she is symptom free for at least 24 hours.



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