



PLAY & LEARN PARENT HANDBOOK

Visit us on the web at www.playandlearnpreschool.ca



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INTRODUCTION

Maximize ECS is offering a Play & Learn Preschool in Canmore for 3 and 4-year-olds (multi aged).

We are so thrilled to announce small classes; the maximum number for each session is 12. We believe in spending quality time with children and giving them opportunities to connect more closely to their peers. This promotes confidence and comfort in sharing ideas and makes for optimal playing AND learning.

Play & Learn is a well-rounded program that is designed to meet the needs of preschool-aged children. We provide structured and unstructured activities that contribute to the children's physical, social, intellectual, and emotional development. Students engage in art activities, games, stories, music and play centers as well as our community garden plot and our forest play area.

We believe in stimulating children to develop a feeling of self-worth and adequacy. We encourage healthy interactions with other children and adults, as well as confidently functioning independently outside the family unit.

We are proud of our experienced staff who are passionate about early childhood. Our program is overseen by an Alberta certificated teacher. With the help of our qualified and caring staff, the children are exposed to play that leads to the growth of knowledge and discovery of how their world around them works. We take pride in providing the best care for your child. Our staff create an environment rich in materials to explore, manipulate, and talk about. Children learn through play. Play is fun! Play is the work of children! They learn through games, activities, and repetition in a secure and nurturing environment.

We are located in the Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church, Canmore, with access to a large green space, a playground close by, the community garden and our newest feature – the forest play area. This is an inclusive, “learning through play” program, approved by Alberta Education to help meet the needs of preschool aged children in the Bow Valley.

The group will run Mondays – Thursdays through the school year with a choice of mornings or afternoons (8:45-11:45 or 12:30-3:30). The Preschool mostly follows the schedule of the Canadian Rockies Regional School Division No. 12, except for Professional Development Days.



THE PRESCHOOL STAFF

Samara Pooley (Ms. Sam) is our preschool teacher. She brings a myriad of experience in early childhood and working with children who need additional support.

We have several children who are supported by educational assistants so there will usually be 2-4 additional staff members. This ensures your child will get lots of attention and support!

Lauree Lavoie is our preschool director who has many years of experience teaching and program planning for instructional education experiences. She is a strong advocate for all learners and believes in inclusive, equitable and accessible learning for all children. She has a great laugh and sense of humor.

Our Administration team consists of Donna Rottmann, Ayisha Raja-Qadri and Traci Moir. Between the three of them there is a wealth of experience being involved in preschools and children. They are here for any questions you may have about invoicing, registrations, policies and subsidy applications.

We are all here to help and guide you and your children to have the most wonderful and adventurous preschool experience possible.

SNACK TIME

Each child should bring a nutritious snack in a small container with the child's name clearly marked on the outside. Fruit, vegetables, cheese slices, or crackers are convenient and mess-free. Along with the snack, each child should bring a water bottle. Only water is permitted at Preschool & it will be provided.

- Due to serious allergies, peanuts, peanut butter, nuts, nut butter or snacks containing any nut products are not allowed at Preschool.
- Due to provincial regulations, the following foods are not allowed: grapes (unless cut lengthwise), hot dogs (unless sliced lengthwise), hard candies, seeds, nuts, gumdrops, jellybeans, pitted fruit, caramels, popcorn, toffee, chewing gum or snacks with toothpicks.

We have some preschool snack blogs under “Resources” for inspiration.



BIRTHDAYS & SPECIAL OCCASIONS

Birthdays and Special Occasions will be celebrated keeping the birthday child in mind. The birthday child gets to decide on which fun activity we all get to do, and all the children work together to make a special birthday card. On other special days (Valentine Day, Halloween etc.), if you want to send a special treat for the classroom, please consult with the Preschool Teacher and make arrangements with them. Please inform staff if your child, due to faith, is not expected to participate and we will provide an alternative activity for your child.

HEALTH PROTOCOLS

When a staff member knows or has reason to believe that a child is exhibiting signs or symptoms of illness, staff will contact the parent who then must arrange for the immediate removal of the child from the program premises. The child may only return when they no longer pose a health risk to people on the program premises, and we are satisfied that they have no remaining signs or symptoms. The parent, guardian or Emergency Contact will be required to pick the child up within 20 minutes of being called. After leaving school the child may not return until the staff is satisfied that the child no longer poses a health risk to other people on the program premises. Acceptable evidence may include the child is symptom free for at least 24 hours or a parent has a physician's note. We will record and document when a child is sick on a log sheet. The illness log includes the name of the child, date the child was observed to be ill, name of the staff member who identified the child was ill, time the parent was initially contacted, name of the staff person who contacted the parent, time the child was dismissed from the program and when the child returned symptom free.

Otherwise, children are permitted to attend school, if a previous Medical Condition exists and results in one or more of these signs or symptoms. However, the child's parent must provide written notice from a physician indicating the child does not pose a health risk to persons on the program premises.



Signs or Symptoms of Illness Include:

- Fever - Temperature above 38 degrees Celsius
- Chills / Hot Sweats
- Nausea / Vomiting / Diarrhea - within the past 48 hours (at home or at school)
- Cough / Sore Throat / Difficulty Swallowing
- Shortness of Breath or Difficulty Breathing
- Runny Nose - Green or Yellow Mucous
- Nasal Congestion - Not explained by sensitivities, allergies or seasonal allergies
- Generally Feeling Unwell / Fatigue / Unexplained Loss of Appetite
- Loss of Sense of Taste or Smell
- Muscle and/or Joint Aches
- Headache / Earache
- Conjunctivitis - Pink Eye
- New or Unexplained Rash / Bumps / Hives
- Evidence of lice infestation
- Chicken Pox
- 5th Disease with rash still present
- Additionally, please inform us of:
 - Prescribed Antibiotics
 - Advil / Tylenol Administered
 - Family Illness within the past 48 hours (vomiting/diarrhea/cold/flu)

Guidance and regulations from AHS will supersede the info above. There is an understanding that parents have read and understood Play and Learn's Health Protocol.

Supervised Care for Sick Children:

If a student becomes ill or shows signs of being unwell their parents or guardians will be contacted to pick them up as the safest place for an ill student is at home. Until the parent or guardian arrives, the child will be kept in the Staff Area with a staff member so that they are safe and cared for with no distractions. Moving the sick child into an area away from other children will minimize the contact and risk to others. A staff member will remain with the child until the parent or guardian arrives. The parent or guardian will be required to pick the child up within 20 minutes of the phone call, otherwise the Emergency Contact will be called. Also, if the parent or guardian cannot be reached initially the Emergency Contact will be called.



Administration of Medication:

The administering of medication to a student is the responsibility of the student's parent and physician. If possible, medication schedules should be arranged so that students take the medication at home. When no other viable alternative exists for a student requiring medicine during the school day, school staff may be requested to provide such assistance if in the best interest of the child. All requests for the administering of medication to students shall be made through the office. - playandlearn@maxecs.org. Please note childcare staff will not administer over-the-counter medication.

The school will require a signed request from the parent and physician indicating the type of medication to be administered, time, and manner of administration, required dosage, and action to be taken in the event of possible hazard of side effects. All medication will be stored out of reach of the children, along with the Medication Records, including:

- The written consent of the child's parent has been obtained
- The medication is in the original labelled container and/or is pre-dosed and labelled with the original pharmacy label
- The medication is administered according to the labelled directions
- The following information is recorded:
 - Name of the medication
 - Time of the administration
 - Amount administered
 - Initials of the person who administered the medication

Please ensure that the Childcare Medication Authorization form is filled out and delivered to the Preschool Teacher and the Play & Learn Administration. This form is available upon request from playandlearn@maxecs.org.



EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In case of an emergency, a staff member will take the portable record and the school will implement a telephone or email fan out system that will be used to contact parents.

All parents will be informed of the nature of the emergency and the school's action plan to deal with the situation. As a proactive measure to an emergency that requires the school to be evacuated, we will have a minimum of one monthly fire/evacuation drill as well as two school lock-down exercises a year. These will provide the students and staff with the opportunity to become familiar with the routine and expectations in the event there is an actual emergency.

Also, an after-hours emergency number will be posted and visible in the foyer of the church. The following telephone numbers are posted on the program premises and are readily accessible:

- Emergency Medical Service
- Ambulance Service
- Fire Department
- Police Service
- Poison Control Centre
- Nearest hospital or emergency medical facility

Accident or Illness:

In the case of an accident or serious illness involving a child, a staff member will immediately ensure that a child receives medical attention as necessary.

In the event an incident does occur, we will submit an Incident Report Form to the regional childcare office as per licensing requirements. The Incident Report form is used to help identify trends and issues in order to ensure the incident does not occur again. Additionally, in the case of an accident or serious illness involving a child, the staff will ensure that the child's parent is notified immediately if an incident report was created, or a verbal discussion will take place in person at dismissal if it was a minor injury. If the injury or sickness requires calling 911 or a parent is required to come immediately to take the child to urgent care and they receive medical attention, an incident report is required. The incident report will be sent to the licensing officer (see below).



INCIDENT REPORTING

An incident means, “a serious illness of or injury to a child that occurs while the child is attending the program, and any other incident that occurs while a child is attending a program that may seriously affect the health or safety of the child.”

All incidents will be reported immediately by phone to Licensing intake, and the Incident form will follow as soon as possible. All incidents will be analyzed annually and a report, using the prescribed form, will be submitted to the regional childcare office on the anniversary date of license.

All Incident Reports will be reported immediately to the regional childcare office using the prescribed form:

- an emergency evacuation.
- unexpected program closure.
- an intruder on the program premises.
- an illness or injury to a child that requires the program to request emergency health care and/or requires the child to remain in hospital overnight.
- an error in the administration of medication by a program staff or volunteer resulting in the child becoming seriously injured or ill and requiring first aid, or the program requesting emergency health care and/or requires the child to remain in hospital overnight.
- the death of a child; an unexpected absence of a child from the program (i.e., lost child); a child removed from the program by a non-custodial parent or guardian; an allegation of physical, sexual, emotional abuse and/or neglect of a child by a program staff member or volunteer.
- the commission by a child of an offence under an Act of Canada or Alberta; and/or child left on the premises outside of the program’s operating hours.

OFF-SITE ACTIVITY

Each child’s parent will be advised when an off-site activity is taking place. Parents must provide consent in writing for their child’s participation in an off-site activity using the yearly permission form. This form will apply to all excursions taking place off-site. During an off-site activity a staff member will take the portable records along with them. Off-site activities include, but are not limited to, nature walks, community resource visits and field trips requiring transportation. Parents will be provided with additional Permission Forms for any other excursions.



DISCIPLINE POLICY

Caring Discipline Policy about children and wanting the best possible learning environment assumes a positive approach to discipline. At Play & Learn, our teachers guide the children in resolving conflicts and developing self-control. The main method of discipline is “Redirection”. A teacher will remind him/her of safe and acceptable methods of play. The child has the choice of altering his/her play methods or choosing another center. We encourage them to express their feelings.

Play & Learn strives to instill a safe, secure, caring school environment. We believe that the basic long-term purpose of discipline is development of the capacity for self-control leading to self-direction and leadership.

This policy has been developed in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct as stated in the School Act and Alberta Child Care Licensing.

Behaviors ranging from verbal (name calling, teasing, gossiping, manipulating, etc.), physical (pushing, kicking, biting, pinching, etc.), and relational (ignoring, isolating, excluding, rolling of eyes, sighs, etc.) will be addressed.

Teachers will intervene whenever such behavior is witnessed or reported. Depending on the intent, severity, and frequency of these behaviors, escalating consequences will apply. Play & Learn believes that students are responsible for their behavior and any behavior that disrupts or distracts from the learning environment of our school will be dealt with in an age-appropriate manner. The expectation is that students will follow reasonable rules and regulations, which are in place to benefit all the students in the preschool environment. It is expected that all students will behave in a manner that is courteous and respectful. When the conduct of a student is detrimental to him/ herself, others, or the school, or when a student refuses to comply with defined expectations, corrective measures will be taken with the expectation that parents will support school discipline procedures.

Play & Learn will NOT under any circumstance:

- Inflict or cause to be inflicted any form of physical punishment, verbal or physical degradation or emotional deprivation.
- Deny or threaten to deny any basic necessity.
- Use or permit the use of any form of physical restraint, confinement, or isolation.

Clear guidelines are provided so that children know what is expected of them. Limits that relate to safety and protection of self, others, and the environment are clear and are enforced consistently in a positive way. Children are given time to respond to expectations and the redirection provided.



Teachers may use a variety of strategies depending on the child and the situation. These strategies include:

- gaining a child's attention.
- staying in close proximity to the child.
- reminding, acknowledging feelings before setting limits.
- redirecting or diverting, age-appropriate choices.
- natural consequences.

Our goal is to encourage children to develop respect, self-control, self-confidence, and sensitivity in their social interactions during their time at school.

PRESCHOOL FEES

The Preschool fees for Play & Learn- Canmore in 2023-24 will be \$252 per month for 4 half-day sessions (\$177 after the Affordability Grant is applied).

You will receive an invoice from the Play & Learn Administration in the 3rd week of the month and the fee payment is due on the 1st of the month. Payments can be made by email transfers to donna@maxecs.org. Late payments are subject to a Late Fee of \$25.

You must still pay your fees even if your child has missed days due to illness, vacation, family days and any other reason for absence. If you intend on being away and would still like to hold your child's place, there will be a fee associated with that hold.

One-Time Registration Fee

There is a \$45 non-refundable registration fee. This must be paid before we can continue the registration process.

Late Pick-Up Fees

Our hours of operations are 8:45 am- 11:45 am or 12:30 pm – 3:30 pm. Our staff will welcome everyone by 8:45 am or 12:30 pm and will need your children picked up by 11:45 am or 3:30 pm. In the event you pick up later than the scheduled pick-up times, an industry standard \$1/per minute will be added to your next month's invoice.



Withdrawal Policy

Play & Learn requires written notice prior to the 1st of the month to playandlearn@maxecs.org if you are no longer requiring a preschool space. You are required to pay your fees for the remainder of the month you have given notice in, as well as the following month.

For example, if you do not intend to send your child as of May 15th, we would need written notice by April 1st. You would pay for attendance in the month of April and May and your last day being attending Play & Learn on May 15th.

This policy is in place to allow us enough time to find a replacement, as it can be difficult to fill a preschool space mid-month. We appreciate your understanding in this matter.

Termination of Care Policy

If there is a case where the Play & Learn Team are no longer able to provide a safe learning environment for your child, we will notify you with a 2-week written notice. Should we have to provide this notice due to immediate safety concerns, no notice period or refund shall be issued.



PARENT GUIDELINES

1. Label all removable clothing and footwear with your child's name.
2. Your child will use glue, paint, markers and playdough regularly. We provide slips or plastic aprons for painting, but they do not cover an entire outfit. Please dress your child accordingly.
3. When the weather is wet or snowy have your child remove his/her outdoor footwear at the building entrance and leave them beside their individual bin in the foyer. Your child will require indoor shoes when boots are worn to school.
4. Your child should wear rubber-soled shoes in school. For safety concerns, we do not recommend wearing plastic sandals, cowboy boots and other hard soled shoes.
5. Please do not allow your child to bring toys from home into the classroom.
6. Upon arrival we require you to sign your child in and take them to the washroom. Then an adult will take your child upstairs to the classroom.
7. Please note: if the session begins with outdoor play the teacher may be outside. Please sign your child in, leave their backpack in the foyer, take your child across the street to meet up with the teacher and make contact with the teacher so they know the child has arrived.
8. Please confirm with the teacher if someone else will be picking your child up at the end of the class and provide a phone number for this person.
9. Pick your child up promptly at the end of the class. If you are going to be late it is your responsibility to make alternate arrangements for the pickup of your child, please see Late Pickup Fee.
10. School closures for weather related days and/or facility closures notices will be sent out via email and text message.
11. If you have an emergency requiring you to contact the school during school hours, please call 403 688 2200.

CONCERNS

Please contact Samara or Lauree Lavoie with any concerns you may have about your child and their learning.

