



EARLY MINDS
PRESCHOOL

Policy Handbook
CHESTERMERE
2023/2024

Thank you for choosing Early Minds Preschool. Below are our policies and procedures we follow.

Philosophy:

At Early Minds Preschool, we believe every child deserves a unique and inclusive learning experience. Our program provides a safe, secure, and nurturing environment that encourages children to explore new learning opportunities and make connections at their own pace. Early Minds implements a flexible play-based curriculum that empowers children to be independent learners and leaders in their own development. We are committed to fostering the engagement of parents, staff, and children in our community to support the child's optimal development.

Within our play-based environment, staff work with the children to develop routines that provide daily care needs and support each child's learning journey. Our open and engaging play environment fosters a child's curiosity for learning. Early Minds uses a planning with purpose approach where all activities are aimed at specific educational goals and catered towards each child's growth and development. Our activity centers encourage children to explore and discover new learning opportunities and develop their skills.

Early Minds Preschool offers a diverse learning program for children ages 2-6. Activities are modified to meet the age-appropriate development of each child to ensure they are feeling successful and accomplished.

The mental needs of every child in our program are recognized and celebrated. Through play, we provide a language rich environment where the child can expand vocabulary, develop peer relationships, and expand their communal behaviours. Activities are geared toward building age-appropriate thinking skills and acknowledging the cultural and leadership practices of each child. During group activities, children develop their self-regulation skills using visual schedule, body, and emotional awareness activities. Our staff apply positive self-talk and regulation strategies to support children toward confidence in their environment.

We want to prepare children as best we can for kindergarten. Through language, literacy, problem solving, cognition, following teacher instructions, sharing, and social & emotional development, children will be well prepared for elementary school.

Early Minds Preschool will also be including the Learning Without Tears program in our curriculum. Learning Without Tears aims to make legible and fluent handwriting a skill that students can master easily. The program is structured to teach children that learning to write can be fun.

School Year:

Early Minds Preschool classes will run from September 2023 – June 2024.

Class Times:

Early Minds Preschool offers classes that are 2 hours 30 minutes long.

Registration:

A registration form must be filled out and submitted to Early Minds Preschool. All registrations will be taken on a first-come first-served basis.

Please note that Early Minds does not confirm your spot in our program until all documentation and fees are received.

Children must be 2 – 6 years old to attend our preschool.

Fees:

Early Minds Preschool monthly payments are from September 1 – May 1. Monthly payments are made via Pre-Authorized Debit. Your deposit payment will cover your final month of fees (June).

A 1-month deposit excluding any subsidies (non-refundable) is required at the time of registration. There is also a one-time yearly registration fee of \$75 (non-refundable). This can be paid by email transfer to info@earlymindspreschool.ca at the time of registration.

Should your family qualify for subsidy, you are still required to pay a 1-month deposit at the time of registration. This payment will be applied to your last month if you complete a full school year or provide proper notice based on the policy listed in our withdrawal policy. Once your subsidy is applied to your last month of service you will be refunded the difference.

Early Minds Preschool does not provide credit or refunds for temporary absences (vacations, extended absences, illness, Covid Closures, Covid related illnesses, etc.).

Federal-Provincial Childcare Agreement – Affordability Grant

The Alberta Government is providing an affordability grant to licensed preschools to help lower monthly preschool fees for registered families. The \$75/month grant is reflected in the class fees on our registration form. Should, at any point, the government take away or amend this affordability grant, parents will be responsible to pay any difference in fees each month.

Subsidy:

Subsidy is available for preschool. Families that have a household income of \$180,000 or less can apply for subsidy and receive up to \$125 off monthly preschool fees. It is the parent's responsibility to apply for this government subsidy program. To apply for subsidy please visit <https://www.alberta.ca/child-care-subsidy.aspx>. When filling out the subsidy form please choose **EARLY MINDS PRESCHOOL – CHESTERMERE**.

NSF:

A fee of \$35 will be charged on all NSF's. If this occurs, Early Minds Preschool will require this fee to be paid in cash within 7 days of being notified. Failure to comply may result in Early Minds Preschool terminating your child from our program until the fees are paid in full.

Late Payments:

A fee of \$35/day will be charged on all late payments. If this occurs, Early Minds will require this fee to be paid in cash within 7 days of being notified. Failure to comply may result in Early Minds terminating your child from our program until the fees are paid in full.

Withdraw Program Policy:

Should you choose to withdraw your child from the program, 1 month written notice must be given prior to the 25th of the month prior to termination. Verbal withdrawals are not accepted. Please email your withdrawal letter to info@earlymindspreschool.ca.

Withdrawals are subjected to a \$75 administration fee.

Early Minds reserves the right to withdraw a child from our program if the following should occur:

- Fees not paid
- Parent expressing aggressive behaviours to staff, students, or fellow parents/families
- Child expressing continuous and severe aggressive behaviour
- Frequent late pick-ups

Holidays:

Early Minds Preschool is closed on the following holidays:

- Labour Day
- National Day for Truth and Reconciliation
- Thanksgiving
- Remembrance Day
- Christmas
- New Years
- Family Day
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- Victoria Day

Christmas Break - CLOSED: December 21, 2023 – January 7, 2024

**Dates are subject to change*

Spring Break/Easter Break - CLOSED: March 29, 2024 – April 7, 2024

**Dates are subject to change*

Professional Days: Early Minds Preschool will have a few professional development days throughout the year for our teachers, in which we will be closed. Please see the yearly calendar for dates.

Daily Schedule:

At Early Minds Preschool we follow a structured play-based curriculum. A typical day in the preschool would consist of; welcome (welcome song, calendar, weather, etc), centers (numbers, letters, patterns, crafts, etc), snack, free play, story time and home time. We will be having special days (class parties, gym, and special guests) in the preschool, in which case our typical daily routine may change.

Snacks:

Early Minds Preschool does not supply snacks for your child. Please send your child with his or her own snacks and water bottle. Early Minds Preschool is a **NUT FREE** school. Please ensure that no snacks are sent in that contain nuts. If any snack is not clearly

labelled, and no note is left from the parents confirming it is nut free, your child will not be allowed to eat it.

Please ensure that your child's snack kit is clearly labelled with his or her name.

Child Guidance Policy:

At Early Minds Preschool we want to see happy and active children, but on occasion problems arise. Our policy is based on self-discipline. Our teachers will assist the children to take the right steps to solve the problem on their own, providing positive reinforcement.

Should a child's behaviour interfere with the other children, Early Minds Preschool teachers will carry out other positive actions to deal with the situation, such as:

- Redirecting the child to a quiet space, providing them with a book, or another calming activity. Once the child has calmed down, they will be able to return to the class activity.

Early Minds Preschool will not tolerate any child showing aggression to other children in the class. This includes biting, hitting, pushing, etc. Should this problem arise, we will notify the parent and come up with a solution on how to stop that behaviour. If a child continues to show aggression, putting the other children in harm, Early Minds Preschool has the right to terminate that child from our program until the aggression has stopped.

Under **NO CIRCUMSTANCES** will Early Minds Preschool inflict any form of physical, verbal, or emotional abuse on children, deny or threaten to deny any necessities, or use permit the use of any form of physical restraint, confinement, or isolation as per the Child Care Licensing regulation.

Our Child Guidance Policy is communicated to all staff members, parents, and children.

Drop off/Pick up:

At Early Minds Preschool we want to prepare your child as best we can for kindergarten. That includes having them learn to take off/put on their own jackets, shoes, etc. The first couple weeks of school will be a transition period where we will have the parents assist their child with this. Once the transition is over, we will encourage the children to learn these skills on their own with the assistance of the teachers and fellow classmates.

Late Pick Up:

Early Minds Preschool will not tolerate late pick ups. A fee of \$15 for every 10 minutes you are late will be charged to you. Failure to pay the late fee may result in your child being terminated from our program.

Emergency Evacuation/Fire Drills:

In the case of an emergency, all children will be evacuated from the building and taken by staff to our safe designated location. Staff will have a portable attendance record with them and will account for every child. Parents will be contacted if they are required to come pick up their child.

Early Minds Preschool will do monthly fire drills with every class. The children and staff will follow the evacuation procedure. Parents will be notified when fire drills will take place.

Illness:

At Early Minds Preschool, children **WILL NOT** be able to attend school if they are ill. An ill child is defined as a child who shows any of the following symptoms:

- Vomiting, fever, diarrhea, or a new unexplained rash or cough
- Requiring greater care and attention than can be provided without compromising the care of the other children in the program
- Having or displaying any other illness or symptom a staff member knows (or believes) may indicate that the child poses a health risk to persons on the program premises

Some examples of illness are:

- Fevers of 38.0 degrees C or higher
- Vomiting – with two or more episodes in the last 24 hours
- Diarrhea or loose stool – with two or more in the last 4 hours
- Continuous coughing, hacking, and runny nose with coloured discharge
- Strep throat or other Streptococcal infections
- Rashes
- Pink eye
- Lice
- Chicken pox, mumps, measles, influenza, etc.

Parents are asked to notify the school either by phone or email if their child is ill and unable to come to school. Parents are also required to let the school know immediately if their child is diagnosed with any contagious conditions (example: measles, head lice, pink eye, mumps, chicken pox, etc.) so we can inform the other parents to watch for any symptoms in their child.

Should a child come to school with an illness, or become ill at school, the school will notify the parent, legal guardian, or emergency contact immediately. You will be asked to pick up the child immediately. We will ensure the sick child is kept as far away from other children as possible, with staff supervision.

A child may return to preschool if Early Mind Preschool is satisfied that the child does not pose a health risk to other children or staff. A parent may also provide Early Minds Preschool with a physician note, or a parent can report to Early Minds Preschool that the child has been symptom-free for a period of not less than 24 hours.

Early Minds Preschool does not provide credit or refunds for temporary absences (vacations, extended absences, illness, Covid Closures, Covid related illnesses, etc.).

Medication:

If a child requires medication to be taken while he/she is in the care of Early Minds Preschool, the medicine needs to be in the original container and clearly labelled with the child's name, physician, name of medication, and the dosage amount. A parent consent form will need to be filled out prior to Early Minds Preschool administering any medication. We will not administer medication unless the parent has given it for a 24 hour period first.

Smoking Policy

Smoking is not allowed on Early Minds Preschool property at any time.

I'm For Kids Team

Early Minds Preschool is pleased to announce our partnership with "I'm For Kids Team". I'm For Kids Team is an early intervention service provider; approved by Alberta Education, for PUF, Mild/Moderate and English Second Language services. They are also able to offer support for behaviour, anxiety, and other areas of concerns that families may have. I'm for Kids Team will be offering a screening program (no cost to families) in our preschool for all eligible children. The screening will consist of speech/language and gross/fine motor skills. For more information on I'm For Kids Team please visit www.imforkids.org.