



EARLY MINDS
OUT OF SCHOOL CARE

Parent Handbook
OUR LADY OF WISDOM - SCHOOL
2024/2025

Thank you for choosing Early Minds Out of School Care. Below are our policies and procedures we follow.

Philosophy:

At Early Minds, we believe every child deserves a unique and inclusive learning experience. Our program will be a safe and caring environment that will allow children to explore new learning capabilities. Through our play-based program, children will feel empowered to independently take the lead and allow them to develop to their full potential.

Early Minds uses a ‘structured with flexibility’ approach when designing and developing our curriculum. We are committed to fostering relationships between children, staff, parents, and our community to support the child’s optimal development.

Our open play-based environment fosters a child’s curiosity for learning, where the leaders and children work together in planning engaging age-appropriate activities. Leaders respond to children’s exploration, as it brings areas of interest and imagination to our educational curriculum. Leaders are sensitive to the environment around them, ready to make modifications as needed for children’s needs.

In our childcare program, we meet, promote, and nurture the development needs of all our children regardless of age. We are ensuring that we meet the different needs to create an inclusive environment. In our Out of School Care program, we welcome all children from Kindergarten to Grade 6.

At Early Minds our mental needs are established with a supportive leadership team, allowing the children to foster relationships and explore their personal intellectual needs and cognitive development with confidence in a safe and positive environment. Our program will encourage children to grow and be proud of their unique identity and have strong self-esteem to be honored in who they are and will become.

To promote the mental needs in our program our leadership team plans daily team building activities and discussions. Where children are involved in communication by sharing ideas, becoming leaders, and working as a large group. During these activities, our leaders use positive self-regulation skills such as visuals schedules, Zones of Regulation, and Kelso Choice to help our children adapt when participating in various activities.

Allowing children to have the freedom to become leaders is very important to us. Our team works together alongside the children to create planning that meets diverse interests. At Early Minds we entrust our children to choose activities that they enjoy most. Every day they can explore and develop their own interests through creative arts, social interactions, science/STEM, large groups, and physical activities.

School Year:

Early Minds Out of School Care programming begins in September and ends in June. The start date is based on the school calendar. Kindercafe programming starts during **or** after staggered entry for your child.

Early Minds follows the same calendar year as the school your child attends. Early Minds operates on most P.D. Days unless otherwise specified.

Program Hours of Operations:

Monday – Friday (Early Dismissal on Friday)

AM Program:

7:00am – 8:45am

PM Program:

3:35pm – 5:45pm (Monday - Thursday)

2:00pm - 5:45pm (Friday)

FULL Day Kindercare Program:

7:00am – 12:50pm (Monday - Thursday)

3:35pm – 5:45pm

7:00am – 11:50am (Friday)

2:00pm – 5:45pm

School Year:

Early Minds follows the same calendar year as the school your child attends. Early Minds operates on most P.D. Days unless otherwise specified.

Holidays and Closures:

Early Minds is closed on the following statutory and civic 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 20, 2024 – January 5, 2025

**Dates are subject to change*

Spring Break/Easter Break - CLOSED: April 18, 2025 – April 27, 2025

**Dates are subject to change*

Weather Closure:

Early Minds follows the school’s policy on weather conditions and closures. Should we experience severe weather conditions, and the school closes, Early Minds’ programs will also be closed. A phone call or email will be used to communicate with parents should this occur. If you are not sure if the program is running, please feel free to call Sabrina at 403-966-5328. Our voicemail will indicate the closure of our programs.

Registration:

A registration form must be filled out and submitted to Early Minds Out of School Care. 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.

Fee Schedule:

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

Monthly fees are not affected by sudden school closures, holiday closures, vacations, extended absences, illnesses, etc.

A 1 month's deposit (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.

Federal-Provincial Childcare Affordability Grant - KINDERCARE ONLY:

The Alberta Government is providing an affordability grant to licensed KinderCare programs to help lower monthly programming fees for registered families. The \$607.50/month (Full Time Care ONLY) grant is reflected in the programming fees on our registration form. Should, at any point, the government take away or change this affordability grant, parents will be responsible to pay any difference each month.

Subsidy:

Subsidy is available for families from Kindergarten-Grade 6. Families that qualify can receive an additional discount on their monthly programming fees. It is the parent's responsibility to apply for this government subsidy program. To apply for a subsidy please visit <https://www.alberta.ca/child-care-subsidy.aspx>. When filling out the subsidy form please choose **EARLY MINDS OUT OF SCHOOL CARE – OLW**.

Parents are responsible to pay for all fees until approval is received and your child is posted in our system.

Discounts:

10 % will be given to a family that has 3 or more children in our program at one time. The discount will apply to the 3rd child's fee. This will only apply to full-time fees.

NSF Fees:

A fee of \$35 will be charged on all NSF cheques. 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.

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 the staff, students, or fellow parents/families
- Child expressing continuous and severe aggressive behaviour
- Frequent late pick-ups

Daily Schedule:

At Early Minds, we follow a structured play-based program. Below is what a typical day in our program looks like. We will be having theme weeks (class parties, gym, and special guests), in which case our typical daily routine may change.

MORNING
Open
Parents sign in child
Hand washing and morning snack
Free play (various centers such as, crafts, puzzles, reading, dramatic play)
Clean up
Prepare to leave for school. Children are now under schools supervision until bell rings.
AFTERNOON
Open
Staff sign in children
Hand washing and afternoon snack
Free Play (various centers and leader lead activities such as crafts, puzzles, reading, homework help, dramatic play, outdoor time, games, gym/active games)
Clean up, prepare for children to leave
Close

Snacks & Lunch:

Early Minds does not supply snacks or lunch for your child. Please send your child with his or her own snacks and/or lunch. Early Minds is a **NUT FREE** program. Please ensure that no snacks or lunches contain nuts. If any snacks or lunches are 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/lunch kit is clearly labelled with his or her name.

Parents need to ensure that their children are provided with healthy food choices. No pop or candy is permitted. We would like to encourage water, fruits and veggies. Also, please ensure your child has adequate snacks for both AM and PM snack times, and lunch for full and half day programs.

For P.D. days and field trips please ensure that your child is provided with a disposable lunch.

Homework:

Children will have the opportunity to complete any homework they were given from their daily class. Parents will need to advise the staff if they would prefer their children to not complete their homework assignments in our program.

Outdoor Activity:

Our program will allow for the children to have outdoor play each day (weather permitting). Early Minds follows the school’s policy on weather conditions.

Parents are responsible to ensure that children are provided with the appropriate outdoor attire based on the weather.

Absences:

Should a child be absent from the program or arrive late, parents will need to notify your program directly.

Drop off/Pick up:

Early Minds is open at 7:00am and closes at 5:45pm. Children are not permitted on the premises outside of these hours.

Parents are responsible to pick and drop their child up at the program entrance where the transfer of care will begin.

Early Minds will not tolerate late pick-ups. A fee of \$25 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.

If for any unforeseen reason a parent is late, it is expected that the program will be contacted. Late charges will apply. If the parents can not be contacted, the program staff will contact the emergency contacts or contact Alberta Family and Social Services and the local police.

Failure to abide by our above policy could lead to suspension or termination in our program.

Sign In/Sign out:

A parent or authorized person is required to sign the child in and out prior to the child entering or leaving our program. This is mandatory. This will also allow us to communicate any important information.

Early Minds is not liable for any child dropped off outside our program, or if a person has not followed our sign in/out policy.

Authorized People:

Only the people listed on the registration and pick up consent form will be authorized to pick up your child from our program. All authorized people must present a government issued picture ID for the staff to verify with the file in order to release the child to them. Should your authorized person change at any time you are responsible to notify us in writing.

Child Guidance Policy:

At Early Minds Out of School Care 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 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 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 has the right to terminate that child from our program until the aggression has stopped.

Under **NO CIRCUMSTANCES** will Early Minds inflict any form of physical, verbal, or emotional abuse on children, deny or threaten to deny any necessities, or 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.

Illness:

At Early Minds, children **WILL NOT** be able to attend the program 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 severe 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 37.5 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 program either by phone or email if their child is ill and unable to attend. Parents are also required to let the program know immediately if their child is diagnosed with any contagious conditions (i.e. 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 the program 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 the program if Early Minds is satisfied that the child does not pose a health risk to other children or staff. A parent may also provide Early Minds with a physician note, or a parent can report to Early Minds that the child has been symptom-free for a period of not less than 24 hours.

Early Minds 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, 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 administering any medication. We will not administer medication unless the parent has given it for a 24 hour period first.

Vaccinations:

If you have chosen not to vaccinate your child, please note they may be at higher risk to contract a disease.

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 will conduct monthly fire drills. The children and staff will follow the evacuation procedure. Parents will be notified when fire drills will take place.

Emergency Program Closure:

Should the program be closed for an emergency or unforeseen circumstance, the staff will ensure all parents receive a phone call, text message, or email regarding the closure. Our staff will make every effort to make sure all parents are notified in a timely manner.

Safety:

Early Minds takes the safety of the children seriously. The staff will ensure that all children that enter our program will have a safe place to enjoy. Whenever we leave the premises (including daily outdoor play) we ensure that all staff carry walkie-talkies so they can communicate any emergencies immediately.

Smoking Policy:

Smoking is not allowed on the premises of any Early Minds program at any time

Respect Policy:

Early Minds is committed to providing a safe and secure environment. All members of our program are to treat each other with respect. Parents, students, and staff must abide by this policy at all times.

Bully Free Zone:

Early Minds will not tolerate bullying in any form. We promote a Bully Free Zone where children, staff, and families can feel safe. Bullying is not only verbal and physical. This also includes cyber bullying and indirect bullying.

Should you feel that your child or anyone in our program is being exposed to this behaviour, please contact us at 403-966-5328 or speak to the lead staff.

Communication:

Early Minds believes in having an open communication policy with families, children, staff, and members of the community. We communicate in a respectful and positive manner, as we want to ensure we are creating a positive and supportive environment for our program.

Social Media Policy:

We are aware that parents/guardians may be familiar with staff outside the childcare; however, we ask that you refrain from using personal messaging and social media to contact employees with regards to your child to respect the professionalism and privacy of our employees.

We also ask that you refrain from posting childcare pictures on social media unless it is a picture of only your child. Doing so otherwise may breach the privacy of our other families and we always strive to maintain the highest level of confidentiality and privacy.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding our policy and procedure please feel free to contact us.