

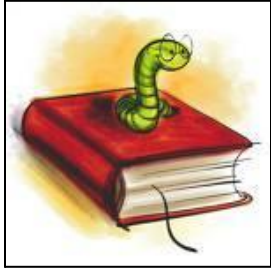
Care to Learn



Preschool  
learning through play...together

# Parent Handbook

Revised September 2024



**A child's pre-school experiences are some of the most significant in their life.**

**When your child plays, they are practicing skills in every area of their development. They think, solve problems, talk, and move, cooperate and make moral judgments.**

**Play is helping to get them ready for the real world.**

## **Introduction and Goals**

**Care to Learn Preschool** is a provincially licensed organization operated by Northern Lights Public Schools. We are an educational preschool, providing developmentally appropriate play activities and learning and growth opportunities for pre-kindergarten aged children based on FLIGHT - Alberta's Early Learning and Care Framework.

The preschool room and its contents are specifically designed to meet the needs of three and four year old children. Children have a room full of safe choices, at their developmental level, with little restriction - a gratifying experience for preschoolers!

Our preschool program is designed to support families in their efforts to provide their preschool aged child the following essential skills:

- independence
- decision-making skills
- imagination and creativity
- sense of community
- communication skills
- explore to learn
- problem solving skills
- feelings of value and self-worth
- relating to others
- school readiness

**Care to Learn Preschool** will assist in developing these skills through socialization, fine and gross motor activities, music and movement, creative art activities, and dramatic play - all with a huge and healthy dose of FUN!

We will enable children to:

- Experience a smooth transition from being at home to attending school
- Function successfully in structured activities and open-ended activities that allow the children to explore the materials at their own pace
- Positively interact with their peers, developing social skills such as sharing, taking turns, consideration for others, and problem solving
- Become self-reliant and self-disciplined and learn regulation strategies as they choose their own activities, put on and remove outdoor clothing with minimal assistance, accept given tasks, and tidy up their play area, returning items to their correct spaces
- Be eager and comfortable with new learning experiences as they are exposed to new objects and ideas



## **Registration and Fees**

Completed on-line registration forms must be received before attending the preschool program. A *non-refundable* deposit and registration fee is due upon registration. All payments are processed through School Cash Online (School Cash Online fees are included in the preschool fees).

In order to provide continuity in our programming our preschool programs operate on a yearly not monthly basis, with the second half of our year beginning on February 1st.

We do accept payments in the form of monthly, online payments.

In order to ensure a space for your child in our program a ***non-refundable*** \$300.00 (Part Day), \$560.00 (Full School Day), \$974.51(Full Day Care) (including admin & School Cash Online Fees) deposit payment must be received upon registration. Please note this fee is to secure your space in the program and will not be refunded if you withdraw for any reason any time after payment has been made. At the end of the school year, once we have received all payments and federal funding, any balances will be refunded as required.

**\*Fees may vary by program and location\***

*Parent Helper Commitment:* Some of the preschool programs require parent helpers to meet ratio requirements. Calendars will be provided at the beginning of the school year. Please speak to the Instructor if you need to switch your helper day with another parent. In the event you do not fulfill your Parent helper duties, you will be required to pay a \$75.00 fee/per class (plus School Cash Fees). (Glendon, Iron River, & Ardmere Preschools)

*Refunds:* Please note our policy as there are no exceptions to our refund policy. When a child is voluntarily withdrawn from the program, 1/2 of the yearly fee will be refunded if the child is withdrawn prior to January 31<sup>st</sup>. There will be *no refunds* if the child is withdrawn on or after February 1<sup>st</sup>. Registration fees are *yearly fees* and if you withdraw your child from the program early, fees are not refunded as the space was secured in the class for the whole year.

Children in Full Day Preschool will require a one month written notice (30 days - one calendar month) in order to withdraw. Refunds are not given for sick days, holidays, or canceled classes.

*Late Payments:* Due to an increase in late payment of monthly fees we have had to enforce a \$25 (plus School Cash Online Fees) late payment fee. Fees are due as noted on School Cash, by the 1st of the month. (Payment #1 is due October 1st) (Full Day Preschool fees are due PRIOR to the start of the month) Please ensure payments are made prior to the due date to avoid any late charges.

*Withdrawals:* If a parent or guardian is asked to withdraw their child due to non-compliance of policies, 1/2 of the yearly fee will be refunded if the child is to be withdrawn prior to January 31<sup>st</sup>. There will be *no refunds* if the child is withdrawn on or after February 1<sup>st</sup>. Children in Full Day Preschool require a one month (30 days - one calendar month) written notice to withdraw.

*Subsidy:* The Alberta Government offers a child care subsidy program for parents.

**Registration procedure for the upcoming preschool year will be as follows:**

- 1. Existing families in the program can register beginning March 25<sup>th</sup>**
- 2. April 1st registration will be open to the general public.**

## Supplies From Home

Parents will receive information from the Preschool Instructor regarding any items students will require for Preschool. Please watch for an email in early September with this information.



## Snacks

It will be the responsibility of each parent to provide a healthy snack or lunch for their child. As part of our efforts to promote a healthy lifestyle, we ask that all snacks will follow the Canada Food Guides categories of fruit, vegetables, baking or dairy. The children should bring snacks which include at least two different food groups each day. A healthy drink is also necessary. For children in the full day program please include at least two different food groups for both morning and afternoon snacks each day. Lunch should include a minimum of 4 different food groups. Some programs require peanut free snacks. You will be notified by your Preschool Instructor.

### **Nutrition Guidelines**

- drinks may be water, milk, flavored milk, or 100% fruit juice
- no pop, kool-aid or tang please
- no candies or gum please
- sweets will be reserved for special occasions - we LOVE celebrating special occasions!

**\*\*\*\*\* Allergy Alert \*\*\*\*\***

**There may be children in the school with a life threatening ALLERGY.  
Please ensure you follow instructions regarding allergies from your teacher as we must  
ensure a safe, healthy environment for all children.**

## **Policies and Procedures**

The following policies have been established for the successful operation of Care to Learn Preschool.

- 1. Age Eligibility:** Children must be 3 years old to enter preschool. Children must be fully independent in the washroom. No Pull-Ups are allowed. Exceptions are for children who qualify for the Little Lights program.
- 2. Non Attendance Days:** Care To Learn Preschool will follow the NLPS calendar. School will be closed during major school holidays, as well as non-school Fridays. Please see the NLPS Calendar for specific dates. Duclos Full Day Preschool will operate from Monday to Friday, September to June, except statutory holidays.
- 3. Cold Weather Policy:** Care to Learn Preschool follows NLPS policy for inclement weather. The Preschool may close when school classes are canceled due to the weather. Your Instructor will contact you in the event the program must close. Full Day Preschool will remain open. Please pack appropriate outdoor wear for your child.
- 4. Photography/Videography Policy:** Preschool has many special events in which families are invited to attend. Please only take videos/photos of your child. Taking photos or videos of other children is strictly prohibited and may result in a restriction of all videography/photography. Posting videos/photos of other children on social media is also strictly prohibited for safety/security reasons. Please be aware of who may be in your photo/video before you shoot.
- 5. Shared Space:** The Care To Learn Preschool room may be shared with the schools before and after care program, therefore drop off and pick up of preschool children needs to be accurate. Children are not able to enter the room until program start time, and must be picked up promptly at the end of class.
- 6. Lockers:** The preschoolers may be using the hallway lockers to store their backpack and outdoor clothing. Please be aware that as the preschoolers are entering and leaving school, the older children are in class. Please be respectfully quiet in the hallway and when using the lockers.
- 7. Drop off & Pick Up:** All parents must remain at the preschool at drop off time until there is a parent helper on site for the class. (\*For site with a parent helper requirement) Class may be canceled in the event there is no parent helper. Parents are welcome to volunteer or observe in the preschool (please speak to the Instructor) however, at pick up time, we ask that parents remain outside the room until children are dismissed to minimize disruptions. (Not applicable to Full Day Preschool)  
Children are to be picked up promptly at the end of class. A late pick up fee of \$10.00 (plus School Cash Online Fees) for each ten-minute period (or portion thereof) will be charged after the first warning. Repeated tardiness for child pick up will be referred to the Division Coordinator and may result in dismissal from the program.
- 8. Parent Volunteers:** Parents are encouraged to become involved in their child's education through volunteering in the preschool. Many opportunities exist in each program and parents are asked to discuss specific volunteering opportunities with the preschool instructor so appropriate times can be scheduled.

**Preschool classes that require a parent helper.** (not applicable to Full Day Preschool, and ½ day programs at Duclos School, Cold Lake Elementary School, North Star Elementary School) You will be assigned days on the calendar located in the classroom door. Every parent must do their assigned helper duties as required. Parents will be charged a \$75.00 fee if they do not attend on their specified Parent Helper day. (plus School Cash Online fees) It is the parent helper's responsibility to find a replacement if they are unable to fulfill their duties. (please speak to the Instructor if you need to switch days) Government Licensing requires two adults on the premises if there are 7 or more children. Without assistance from parent helpers the teacher cannot provide appropriate care and supervision for the children. Classes may be canceled in the event there is no parent helper. Please ensure you fulfill your parent helper commitments as required.

Care to Learn Preschool values your input and assistance. Parents will have the opportunity to complete an annual survey to assist with ongoing program evaluation. Providing a safe and caring learning environment is our mutual goal! Speak with the Preschool Instructor for further information on how you can assist.

- 9. Transportation:** Parents are responsible for the safe escort of their children to and from the preschool classroom. If the parent will not always drop off/pick up their child, an authorized person must be named on the registration form. No child will be released to an individual less than 16 years of age. Parents must provide written (email or text) consent to have someone not on their list pick up their child. ID will be requested if staff are not familiar with the individual. Please be aware that there may be extra costs associated with any field trips or special events that we may do during the year.
- 10. Toileting:** Children *must* be completely toilet trained, and be able to use the bathroom independently prior to enrolling in the program. Pull-ups will not be allowed. Exceptions for children that qualify as Little Lights or have special needs.
- 11. Room Safety:** Medications must be locked and out of children's reach. Personal items of teachers and parent helpers must be inaccessible. Children must have footwear on at all times when indoors and out.
- 12. Readiness:** In keeping with the philosophy of active learning, appropriate clothing is required. Children will be involved in painting, water play, climbing, outside play, etc., so easy care clothing is essential. In cold weather, children must have ski pants, toque, mitts, and boots.
- 13. Label:** Please label your child's footwear, snack bag, and other personal belongings. Care to Learn Preschool is not responsible for lost or stolen articles, please label well.

## Discipline

Behavior management is the discipline method used at Care To Learn Preschool. Behavior management refers to teacher activities purposefully designed to promote positive behavior - providing lots of demonstrations of what the desirable behavior should be. When children are



told and shown what the desirable behavior looks like, it eliminates many undesirable behaviors. Teachers will role model manners, sharing, and taking turns. Teachers will be involved in children's play. Teachers will be circulating and interacting. Children are given clear, simple guidelines to follow. Behavior management includes providing an alternative choice when there is conflict.

When introducing a new activity (play at a new center, using musical instruments, table game, etc.) we will all gather and demonstrate what desired behavior should occur. Children will know how to participate in the new activity, how to play with others, and how to end activity and tidy up.

Time away is rarely used. If a child misbehaves to the extent that it is a threat to themselves or others, the child will be removed from the group and a staff member will stay with them until they have calmed and are able to return to the group. If we can come up with a solution, they can continue to play when they are calm. If a child is very upset, we will call the parents.

If a child is having a very difficult time, with no resolution, the teacher will discuss this with the parent to find out if there is a hidden reason he/she may be having a bad day. Perhaps he/she may not have slept well the night before (overtired), there may be a stressful family situation occurring, or an illness might be coming on. It is important to get to the root of the problem so that we can all help the child cope and adjust.

If a problem continually reoccurs, and is causing the other children too much disruption, the parent will be notified and the concern discussed. Parents may be requested to provide additional supervision for their child. Where children become totally disruptive and no satisfactory solution can be reached; a child will be removed from the program for the benefit of the other children in the program. Corporal punishment will NEVER be used.

## **Illness**

Each child must be in a state of health to attend preschool. They must be able to go outdoors, and take part in active play. COVID Protocols are continuously evolving. Preschool Instructors will provide the most up to date information on illness screening and protocols. Children with allergies or ongoing medical conditions should include that information on their registration form. **We ask that you please keep your child at home if they are ill or have cold or flu symptoms.**

If a child becomes ill during class, the parents or guardians will be notified, and the child must be picked up promptly. The child will be removed to a quiet area to rest until the parent/guardian arrives. Staff members will visually assess or take the child's temperature if they have reason to believe the child is ill. Prior to returning to the program, the caregiver must be satisfied that the child no longer poses a health risk to others. **The child must be symptom free for at least 48 hours or the parent must provide a note from the child's physician prior to returning to the program.**

A child is considered ill when they exhibit any of the following signs or symptoms: vomiting, fever, diarrhea or a new unexplained rash or cough. A child can also be considered ill if they require greater care and attention that cannot be provided without compromising the care of other children or if a staff member knows or believes the child poses a health risk to other persons on the program premises.



## **Communicable Disease**

A child who has or is suspected to have a communicable disease (i.e. pink eye, measles, mumps, chicken pox, tuberculosis, etc.) must be removed from the preschool. The parent will be notified and the child must be picked up from the school immediately, and will not be allowed to return until medical or public health officials indicate the risk of contagion is over. If a child is suspected of having a communicable disease, the child will be separated from the other children and isolated under supervision until a parent or guardian arrives to pick up the child. A staff member will notify the health clinic at once and request guidance as to how to ensure the safety of the other children (i.e. bleaching all toys.) The recommendations will be followed precisely. Please ALWAYS notify the teacher AND the public health clinic of communicable disease present in your home.

A written note will be sent home should your child's class come in contact with a communicable illness. The parent must provide confirmation of the immunized record.

## **Lice**

If there are suspicions that a child may have lice, the child will be taken aside and checked for lice by one of the staff members.

If nits and/or live lice are found, parents will be notified and MUST pick up their child from the school and have treatment applied that same day. A letter from the Health authority will be given, showing treatment and explaining lice. Please note items at home MUST be sanitized to eliminate further outbreaks. The child may return to preschool after treatment. There must be NO live lice for a child to return.

When a child is sent home upon finding lice or nits, a letter will be sent home with all children in the class stating that lice was found in the classroom.

## **Accidents and Emergencies**

The Preschool Instructors at Care To Learn Preschool must hold a valid Standard First Aid Certificate. One of the many advantages of having a preschool within a school setting is that there are many adults close by that can help out when a situation such as an accident or an emergency arises.

In case of an accident, the preschool will arrange medical care as required. The Preschool Instructor will attend to the injured child(ren) while another adult will be in charge of the remainder of the class. It will be at the preschool teacher's discretion, as per his/her first aid training, as to whether the injury requires immediate medical attention. If it is necessary for the child to be transported to the hospital by ambulance, the preschool teacher will go with the child if a parent/guardian has not yet arrived. The parents/guardians will be responsible for ambulance costs. An accident report will be completed and signed by the preschool teacher and parent(s).

## **Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

Our emergency exit is posted in the preschool room. If moving to an alternate site is required, the alternate site will be posted in the classroom on the emergency evacuation plan. The preschool will practice emergency exits (such as fire drills) as per school policy.

Duties of Teacher:

- lead children to the closest safe exit
- once outside, check off children's names on the register
- once teacher's parent helper arrives, verify that all are present and accounted for

Duties of Assistant/Parent Helper:

- check bathroom, storage room, and play areas to ensure everyone is out
- close designated doors
- join teacher and children outside

All parents will be notified of an emergency evacuation including lock downs. Children will participate in fire and lock down drills with the rest of the school.

## **Grievance Procedure**

Although the Care To Learn Preschool makes every attempt to offer the highest quality care to all children and families, there may be occasions when parents have concerns about particular events or situations.

All concerns brought forward to the Division Coordinator or Preschool Instructor will be addressed in a timely manner.

- Parents are encouraged to speak to their child's Instructor as a first point of contact.
- If they have tried this without satisfactory results, or if their concerns are serious enough to warrant immediate administrative review, parents are encouraged to contact the Division Coordinator. The Division Coordinator will then schedule meetings, as required, with the appropriate parties to gather relevant information before deciding on a course of action.
- Parents will be informed, as appropriate and within confidentiality requirements, as to the result of the Division Coordinator's inquiry and action taken.

Please ensure you have read and understand all information in the handbook. Please contact your instructor if you require further clarification.

All final decisions which vary from the statements of this handbook will be made at the discretion of Northern Lights Public Schools.

We look forward to having a wonderful year  
of learning and growing together!!

**Play is the  
work of  
the child.**

**- Maria Montessori**

