



**2015–2016**  
**Parent Handbook**

# Early Education



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1)	Welcome to Early Education! .....	1
2)	Guiding Principles .....	2
3)	Staff .....	3
4)	School Calendar .....	3
5)	Sample Daily Schedule .....	5
	Morning Program Schedule .....	5
	Afternoon Program Schedule .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
6)	Registration Procedure .....	6
	Fees: .....	6
	<b>General Policies .....</b>	<b>7</b>
	Arrivals and Departures .....	7
	Illness and Absences .....	7
	Emergency Procedures .....	7
	Setting Limits .....	8
	The Special Helper .....	8
	Washroom Use .....	8
	Snack and Water .....	9
	Speech and Language Support for your Child .....	9
	Occupational and Physiotherapy Services .....	9
	Newsletters .....	9
	Clothing and Supplies .....	9
	Parent Involvement.....	10
	Tip for Parents .....	10
	Friday mornings .....	10
	Withdrawal Policy .....	11
	Non Payment of Fees .....	11



# 1) Welcome to Early Education!



What an adventure awaits your little one as they head off to school: new friends, new experiences and new ways of having fun. While enjoying the time in the early education program your child will also be practicing important skills that will prepare them for kindergarten and beyond. Children will learn the prerequisite skills for reading, writing, math and science, as well as how to interact successfully with teachers and classmates. The overarching goal of any early education program is to help your child feel good about him/herself as a learner and to feel comfortable in a school-like setting.

The child care philosophy of our program is founded on a child's need to feel valued and accepted. Developing a positive self-image and satisfying the natural curiosity of the children is fostered through the use of a variety of materials and activities. Suitable play materials will be presented in fun and creative activity centres.

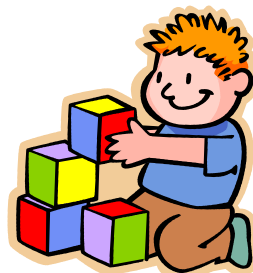
Children will be encouraged to use their imaginations, develop initiative and independence, function both as a group member and individual, and learn to share and cooperate with others. We will foster positive relations and respect for one another. Communication skills and socialization are keys to a successful future for your child.

Children will be encouraged to develop their listening skills (through activities such as songs, stories and show and tell) and to follow simple directions. We will provide opportunities (e.g. art, dress-up centres) which will enhance the creativity of all children. Our early education programs provide an inclusive environment with excellent child to adult ratio encouraging interaction among children and adults in a safe and relaxed manner.

The program focuses on language enrichment and speech development in all its activities. Early education opportunities provide for the physical, social, intellectual, creative, and emotional development of all three and four year old children. Cultural diversity is embraced.

## 2) Guiding Principles

- 📦 Every child learns—every child succeeds
- 📦 Experiences during early childhood years are crucial to a child’s learning and development.
- 📦 A safe and caring environment is necessary for learning.
- 📦 Children learn through play.
- 📦 Staff and families work as partners.
- 📦 A team approach is used to address all areas of a child’s development.
- 📦 Active involvement in meaningful learning experiences includes challenges and successes.
- 📦 An individualized approach promotes success for all.
- 📦 Decision making and responsibilities are shared.
- 📦 Children learn and reflect what they know in different ways.
- 📦 Children’s needs are identified early and proactive steps are taken to address potential delays or challenges before they come to elementary school.
- 📦 Our early education programs are ready to accommodate all children and adapt programs to ensure learning and success for all.
- 📦 All children should have access to quality programs



### 3) Staff

Our Early Education Program Team is comprised of a full time Program Manager who is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the early education program. The Early Education Program Manager will be your child's teacher.



A team of well-trained and experienced early education educational assistants are also part of the day to day team in the classroom.

A learning support teacher is responsible for setting the programming for any children with any identified needs or delays. Their role includes the development, implementation and monitoring of Individualized Program Plans (IPPs).

Lethbridge School District No. 51 has three Speech Language Pathologists on staff who work to develop effective speech and language goals and activities to help all children reach appropriate developmental milestones. One of these SLPs will be assigned to child's school for ongoing support to children. We also work with team members from outside agencies who may be offering support to your child as well for occupational, physical or behavioural therapies.

### 4) School Calendar

The early education year follows the school year calendar for Lethbridge School District No. 51. This is available online and also in the School Information Handbook Publication published annually.

[www.lethsd.ab.ca](http://www.lethsd.ab.ca)

Please refer to the calendar on the website for the most up-to-date and accurate calendar information. [Westminster Calendar](#)

# SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

August 2015						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					3

- 24 Office Opens
- 27 Teacher's start up/meeting
- 28 Teacher Planning Day
- 31 Welcome Back Breakfast  
Staff Meeting, EA Back Care Workshop

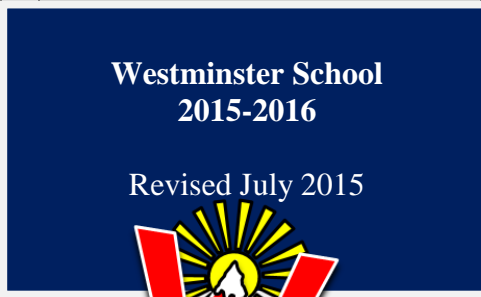
October 2015						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
						21

- 1 Orange Shirt Day
- 5 No School (Assessment Day)
- 12 Thanksgiving Holiday
- 13 Picture Day
- 20 School Council Meeting at 6:30pm
- 23 No School, Professional Learning

January 2016						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						20

- 4 School resumes
- 8 Staff Meeting
- 19 School Council Meeting at 6:30pm
- 29 No School, Professional Learning Day

April 2016						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23



November 2015						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					
						20

- 2 District PD Day, No School
- 6 Staff Meeting
- 9 Report Card #1 Goes Home
- 10 Remembrance Day Assembly 10:30am
- 11 Remembrance Day Holiday
- 12/13 Parent/Teacher Interviews
- 17 School Council Meeting at 6:30pm
- 18 Picture Retakes

February 2016						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29					
						18

- 2 Town Hall Meeting
- 5 Staff meeting
- 15-19 Family Day, Teachers' Convention
- 23 School Council Meeting at 6:30pm
- 24 Pink Shirt Day

May 2016						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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September 2015						
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13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			
						21

- 2 Student's First Day!
- 2 School Wide Assembly at 11am
- 10 Meet the Teacher Night 7pm
- 7 Labour Day Holiday
- 15 School Council Meeting at 6:30pm

December 2015						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		
						14

- 4 Staff meeting
- 8 School Council Meeting at 6:30pm
- 17 Cargill Cookies and Milk
- 18 Elf Tryouts, Gift Gathering
- 19-Jan 2 Winter break

March 2016						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		
						18

- 4 Staff Meeting
- 7 Report Card #2 Goes Home
- 11 Parent/Teacher Interviews, no school
- 15 School Council Meeting at 6:30pm
- 25 Good Friday/Easter break

June 2016						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25

24	25	26	27	28	29	30		29	30	31							26	27	28	29	30								
						20																							22
4 School resumes 8 Staff meeting 15 No School - District Learning Day 19 School Council Meeting at 6:30pm 21 Admin Spring Retreat							6 Staff meeting 13 No School Staff Learning Day 17 School Council Meeting at 6:30pm 20 No school 23 Victoria Day Holiday 26 Welcome to Kindergarten							3 Staff Meeting 14 School Council Meeting at 6:30 p.m. 22 Westminster Swimming 29 Report Card # 3 (am only) 30 Last day for staff															

# 5) Sample Daily Schedule



## Westminster Morning Program Schedule

- 8:20am – Program start time. Once signed in, children will play at first centers.
- 8:55am – Circle time on the carpet/show and tell
- 9:15am – Craft time/2<sup>nd</sup> play centers
- 9:50am – Snack time (each child will bring their own snack)
- 10:15am – Playtime in the gym
- 10:35am – Story time
- 10:50am – Last jobs (mail, backpacks, coats on, etc.)
- 11:00am – Outside playtime (weather permitting)
- 11:30am – Program end time. Please sign your child out when you pick them up.



## 6) Registration Procedure

Children must be a minimum of age three years upon entry as of September 1st of the school year. We require that children are toilet trained (this means not in diapers or pull ups). If an exceptional medical circumstance exists whereby your child is not able to be toilet trained you must share this information with the school prior to registration being completed.

Children who turn 3 between September 1<sup>st</sup> and December 31<sup>st</sup> may enter the early education program after they turn 3 providing there is space available at that time.






Qualifications for entry as a child with identified educational needs that may require support should be verified with Isabelle Plomp, Lethbridge School District's ECS Consultant at 403-380-5291. Please call her for further information.

### Fees:

Fees are required for preschool programming. A non-returnable deposit of \$40 is required at the time of registration and a series of ten post-dated cheques for the entire school year should be dated for the first of each month (September to June). In the event that your child leaves the program during the course of the year outstanding cheques will be returned to you. Non-payment of fees may result in your child being asked to exit the program.

Some fees may be covered for children meeting education funding criteria. These would include children with identified delays or children just learning English providing they meet educational age requirements.

The registration process is considered complete when we have received:

-  your non-returnable deposit
-  completed registration forms
-  10 post-dated cheques dated 1<sup>st</sup> of each month
-  copy of birth certificate and AHC number
-  copy of immunization record



# General Policies

## Arrivals and Departures

1. Please arrive no sooner than 5 minutes before the program begins.
2. Children should be taken to the bathroom before they come into class.
3. Parents are required to bring their child into the early education classroom and sign their child in and out on a daily basis.
4. Please pick up your child on time – arriving 5 minutes prior to the end of class is advisable. The school must be notified if you are going to be late. Repeated late pick-ups may result in your child being asked to leave the program.
5. If someone other than you will be picking your child up you must notify the school in advance. A “Pick-up Authorization” slip will need to be filled out and photo ID will be required from the person picking your child up.
6. Parents are responsible for the supervision of younger siblings at all times.

## Illness and Absences

1. If your child will be absent please call the school to let us know. If your child is sick, please keep him/her at home.
2. Children should not attend school for **24 hours** following a fever, vomiting, or starting a prescribed medication.
3. If your child is ill we will contact you to pick him/her up.
4. Staff will not administer medication. (Except in the case of a life-threatening allergy.)
5. In the event of a medical emergency, the hospital will be called and the parents notified.
6. Please report any communicable diseases to the early education program staff. (Example measles, mumps, chicken pox, pink eye, etc.)

## Emergency Procedures

Please refer to the school handbook for procedures relating to fire drills, lockdowns, etc.

## Setting Limits

We employ strategies that are prevention-oriented so that desirable behaviour occurs. Prevention is better than cure. Positive praise is integral to our program. Catching a child being good goes a long way to setting the expectations for others.

Incidents of inappropriate behavior will however sometimes occur. In these cases a calm voice is used to gain the child's attention, using their name. An adult may guide the child away from the situation and the child will be reminded of our class rules and limits. Every effort will be made to assist the child in understanding his or her actions. The child will then be redirected to another centre or activity.

Problem-solving skills are learned along the way. Choices, as well as natural or logical consequences, will be explained to clarify a given situation. A specific toy may need to be removed or a child may at times benefit from a quiet time away from the busy activities. The child's dignity and self-respect will be maintained at all times.

## The Special Helper

1. The child who is the special helper will bring his/her show and share that day.
2. We ask that you limit items brought from home to school.
3. We suggest that you let your child bring pictures, souvenirs, something meaningful and special to them, perhaps something that they have made, or something they found from the earth. (E.g. bugs in a jar, pussy willows, etc.)
4. We would appreciate if the children did not only bring toys.

## Washroom Use

1. It is recommended that you visit the washroom prior to bringing your child into the classroom. This would include washing hands to reduce allergy risks and germs.
2. Children should tell the teacher when they need to use the washroom.
3. We will have a washroom break—where we use the toilet and wash our hands.
4. Assistance will be available as necessary.

## Snack and Water

Please alert your child's teacher to any food allergies your child may have. Snack consists of food from two different food groups as well as a drink of water. Foods which are prohibited in the classroom include nuts and seeds, hard candies, caramels/toffee, chewing gum and gumdrops.



## Speech and Language Support for your Child

We pride ourselves on offering extensive speech and language support to all children within our programs and extra supports are given in this area to those children who come to us as having identified speech or language needs. We have on our district staff 3 Speech Language Pathologists who come on site to consult to the program and to work with some of the children. In this way we are able to offer speech and language assistance to children throughout the school year.

## Occupational and Physiotherapy Services

These services are provided when necessary by Children's Allied Health Services and are delivered by Occupational and Physiotherapists that make onsite visits for specific children as well as offering ideas and consultation to the early education team.

## Newsletters

Newsletters will be sent home monthly informing you of upcoming events. A month by month calendar will be included to remind you of helper days.

## Clothing and Supplies

1. Please label coats, boots, shoes, hats, mittens and back packs on inside labels of items.
2. Inside shoes are necessary in case of a fire drill, especially when it is rainy or snowy.
3. Dress the children according to the weather as we go outside for activities weather permitting.
4. Clothing that is easy to pull up and down makes toileting easier for your child.
5. Clothing should be washable as we engage in creative activities involving paint, glue, etc. and it may get messy.



## Parent Involvement

We welcome your attendance on your child's special helper day. Children enjoy sharing this day with a parent, grandparent or caregiver.



Parent volunteers are welcomed in our classroom. Set up a time with the teacher and come and spend some time with us.

Parents have very special skills which they may like to share with the class. Please let your child's teacher know if you are willing to talk to the class about your job, a special interest or any other relevant topic.

## Tip for Parents

If this is your first early education experience you may have many questions regarding what will happen. Please feel free to ask any questions as they arise.

As this may be your child's first experience away from you for any significant time please determine a plan of action with the Early Education Program Manager if your child may have difficulty separating from you.

Rest assured that the teacher will inform you of any prolonged upset on the part of your child after you have left the room. Our policy is an "open door" one however please realize that your child may behave differently if you are in the room (more clingy and wanting all your attention is not uncommon).

## Friday mornings

Family-oriented programming sessions are offered to families of identified children receiving some specialized educational services, on several Fridays throughout the year where parent, child and staff members engage in learning activities together. This provides a chance to learn more about child development in a fun and exciting special learning opportunity for families. It also provides you with ideas about how you might work with your child to support his/her learning needs. This is where we can all learn together and when a Speech Pathologist or other discipline may be on site to assist and provide recommendations regarding your child's development.

## Withdrawal Policy

It is possible to withdraw your child from the program, should the need arise, during the year. Should your child exit the program without a 30 day notice or part way through the month there will be no refund for the remainder of the days within the month of exit.

## Non Payment of Fees

Non-payment of fees may result in your child being asked to leave the program. We operate under the School Act and as such are a non-subsidized program reliant upon fee payment to remain in operation.



***We look forward to meeting you and your family and welcoming your child into the exciting world of early education!***