

PARENT HANDBOOK

Philosophy, Curriculum and Program Policies

Updated April 21, 2022



Preschool Philosophy

We provide children with the opportunity to participate in a holistic, inclusive play-based program that fosters their individual social/emotional growth, fine/gross motor skills and cognitive development. We provide the opportunity for families to share in their children's preschool experience and rely on their support and knowledge in the day-to-day running of the preschool.

Parent Participation and Non-Profit Organization

Your Preschool operates as a non-profit parent participation organization. It relies on an elected executive made up of volunteer parents who work and support each other to ensure the preschool functions successfully. Parent participation, whether on the board or not, is key to the operation of the preschool. The parent participation piece not only lessens cost by spreading the workload, it also sets a good example for the children and community.

Share Basket - On **Mondays and Tuesdays**, children are encouraged to bring snacks in to share with their friends throughout the rest of the week. This can be a piece of fruit, a bunch of bananas, tortilla chips, blocks of cheese, a jar of pickles or a box of crackers. Use your imagination! Whatever you share will be used by all. The children love this, and it fosters a sense of community and giving that is vital to their development. Please ensure snacks are *nut free*; we are happy to do the cutting and washing to ensure *allergens* are not present on the children's snack. Packaged food must be peanut/nut free. No "may contain" allowed. *Please check with teachers concerning allergies in the school.* No homemade goods currently allowed.

Parent Helper Days - A *minimum* of **2** throughout the year. Parent duties are posted in the kitchen; ***please read.*** Please alert a teacher if a child needs help toileting/changing or resolving a conflict. As licensing dictates, parent helpers must be present for the duration of the class and younger siblings/children are not permitted in the school during class time

Fundraising - Please take part, monetarily, in a *minimum* of **2** during the year.

Daily/Weekly maintenance tasks - This is on-going and may consist of taking home laundry/toys to wash or doing something extra around the school; tasks will be posted by sign-in book, *minimum 2* per year. While we prefer your participation, we understand that work/life demands can make fulfilling your duties difficult. If you or a family member cannot fulfill the required duties, your \$15 monthly charge equaling up to \$150 will be retained to help balance the cost of extra work done in your absence. We hope that the majority will be able to participate as this is what makes us a parent-participation school.

Monthly Newsletters - The newsletter is a major source of communication and information. Please take the time to read it.

Field Trips - We have 3 or 4 throughout the year, and parents/guardians must always provide their own transportation and remain with their child/ren.

Annual General Meeting - A family member is requested to attend the Annual General Meeting in May.

Board Meetings – All parents are members of the board while those who volunteer to run the school are the Executive Board. Every second meeting is an Open Board Meeting, and all parents are welcome to attend.

Open House - Our open house is in August or September (TBA as it will change year to year). All postdated cheques and/or payment plans are due at this time.

Curriculum

Our teachers will provide your child with a fun, safe and supportive play-based preschool experience. The curriculum is based on the children's interests and needs, naturally occurring themes (seasons/weather/community events) and the development of children's projected developmental milestones. The activities change as the children's interests and needs change. Social/emotional/physical development and cognitive concepts are placed throughout the centers and positive interactions with teachers support children's learning. Your child's day will consist of a balance of structured and free time. The balance includes circle-time, group and individual activities, art, music, snack, outdoor time, monthly fire-drills and field trips throughout the year. The children do not have access to a computer or any screen time while at school.

Licensing requires we have a balanced curriculum; a part of that is active play and physical literacy. Active play gets the heart pumping and makes them "huff and puff." It is recommended that preschool age children participate in 180 minutes of physical activity throughout their day. We are required to provide 30 minutes. Our outdoor play time allows for 20 to 30 minutes of active play. Children run, play tag, climb, sled, shovel, bounce and swing. The other required time is built right into our indoor curriculum: dancing, movement activities, games like go go stop, parachute play, yoga, large block play, ride-em tractor, duck duck goose, etc.



Bringing the heart rate back down is important, too. We will facilitate calming cool activities to support the children's self-regulation and mental health.

As we know, long-term academic and life success is based on children's ability to self-regulate, problem solve, take appropriate risk, and *their* continuing desire to learn. Therefore, we strive to support your child's social/emotional development and love of learning first and foremost.



Our Staff

The Teachers

We have a licensed Early Childhood Educator (ECE) and a Certified Educational Assistant (ECEA) present unless a substitute teacher is called in. An ECE may operate a class of 6 or less children, unaccompanied, if the children present all require similar guidance and the ECE is familiar with the staff plan concerning safe and affective unaccompanied operation. An ECEA may provide substitution in a class they are typically present when there are low numbers (6 or under) on a particular day and the ECE responsible for that class is unavailable. An ECE not normally present may come in as a sole teacher, in a class they are not typically present, if they have spent time previously with the children present and feel that safe and effective guidance can be offered. Licensing allows for a ratio of 1:10. We feel safety and affective leadership requires a lower child to teacher ratio.

Supported Childcare Workers

Some children require extra support. In that case, a third team member is brought in to support that child as well as build relationships with all the children. Supported childcare workers are not counted in the ratio required by licensing.

Substitute Teachers

Our substitute teacher will be qualified as per licensing requirements.

Your Child's Day

Please come prepared for all weather including clothing/sun block/hats, etc. Unless it is unsafe to do so, we will spend time outside. Please have your child's sunblock on **before** dropping them off at preschool.



Monday/Wednesday/Friday Class 4-year-olds

- Class begins at 8:30. Gate/door will open a couple minutes early.
- If beginning outside, we will transition inside at approximately 8:50.
- Children change their shoes, wash their hands, find their name tags or a name related task and meet at the circle time carpet for hellos and welcomes.
- After 1st circle, fun ensues in both rooms until clean up time.
- Everyone cleans up and meets for games, stories, songs, and fun at the carpet.
- Transition to hand washing and snack.
- Meet back at the carpet, or we'll be outside if we began class inside, for reading and socializing and good byes. Children will get a high-five from the teacher to signal our time is done for the day. Please make sure you see the teacher before leaving so we know your child is safe with you.

Tuesday/Thursday Classes 3- and 4-year-old classes

- Classes begin at 8:30 and 12:00. Door/gate will open a couple minutes early.
- Children change their shoes, wash hands, find name tags and play in the circle-time room until everyone arrives.
- A short good-morning circle is held before children disperse to play in either room.
- Clean up
- Meet at the carpet for stories, songs, and activities.
- Transition to hand washing and snack.
- Get ready for outside time or meet back at the carpet if leaving from inside for reading and socializing before stickers and home time at 10:45 and 2:15.
- All children receive a sticker before being passed to parents at 10:45 and 2:15.

4-year-old classes have a maximum of 20 children (as per licensing requirements)

3-year-old and split age classes have a maximum of 15 children (Licensing dictates 20. Preschool Policy dictates 15 for children's needs to be appropriately met.)

Guidance Policy

The goals of the teachers' interactions with children are to give them the tools to self-regulate, solve conflict kindly and respectfully and internalize the ability to do so; this will help them be successful in the long-term.

Children are encouraged to be kind and caring because it is the right thing to do, not because we said so.

School Rules

1. Be a good friend.
2. Take care of our toys and our school.

Most conflict can be resolved by referring to our two rules. When conflict arises, teachers will support children in resolving their own conflict/situation through restorative restitution.

Example: If a child throws a toy, they are asked to pick it up and encouraged to voice what they will do next time. If a child shoves/takes a toy they are asked to stop/give the toy back or move to a different area. The shoved/taken from child is encouraged to tell the other child to stop and why. Both children are involved in the resolution and the teacher's participation is respectful and encouraging and on an "as needed" basis.

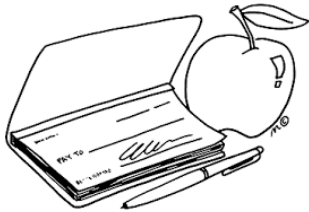
Teacher involvement is based on the children's' safety and their level of development/capability. The teachers strive to support the children in a way that enables them to internalize self-regulation and conflict resolution skills on their own in order for them to be successful. "No" and "Stop" are reserved for times when unsafe or unacceptable behaviour is going to or already happening. Teachers will model positive behaviour and appropriate dialogue when needed. Choices are given so that children are active participants in their behaviour change. If a child is not able to stop a dangerous/unacceptable behaviour they will be given the choice to stop on their own or get help from a Teacher.

- Some shoving, yelling, throwing, etc is typical. If a child's behaviour is out of the ordinary or they/we need extra support with their behaviour, the parent/guardian will be contacted for a meeting so that the child can be fully supported. We will **only** contact you about your child's behaviour if it is impeding their or others safety/development on an ongoing or critical basis. Day-to-day typical conflict will be handled appropriately at the time it happens and will not need further attention.
- Parents/guardians are *responsible* for their child's guidance before and after posted drop off and pick up times.
- Singling out, isolating, time-outs, "good girl/bad girl," speaking about children in front of them or around other parents, and physical, emotional or social harm are at **not** permitted in our school.
- Please feel free to make a time to talk with your child's teacher if you have any concerns or questions.

Toileting

- Teachers are responsible for children's toileting needs during class times. Parent helpers please alert a teacher during class time if assistance is needed. *Licensing* requires a teacher to assist children (other than your own) in the bathroom.
- Children are encouraged to toilet/dress self and follow appropriate hygiene practices throughout the day.
- Children are *not* required to be fully potty trained. We will support your child's toileting by encouraging them to use the bathroom and we will incorporate this into stories and fun, so that individual children are not singled out.
- Every child should have extra pullups/diaper and a change of clothes in their backpack. We will help them change if needed. We will encourage children to self-regulate by reminding them and modelling appropriate behaviours in this area when needed.

Fees/Registration



Registration is held in April (date TBA each year). Current registrants have priority for the next year's registration. New registrants are on a first-come first-served basis. Registration is also ongoing throughout the year if spaces are available. A minimum of 5 children registered is needed to run a class. Wait lists are available for full classes.

We try our best to give you your requested class, but some movement may be necessary to meet all the children's needs. Class lists will be finalized as soon as possible and you will be notified.

3 days per week class	- \$255 per month + participation fee*	Daily rate = \$21.25
2 days per week classes	- \$100 per month + participation fee*	Daily rate = \$12.50

*Additional \$15 added per month for parent responsibilities, refundable up to \$150 in June of that year

-Children must be 3 or 4 years old by December 31st of the current school year in order to attend preschool.

-There is a \$25 per year, per family, registration fee (non-refundable). This fee is required to hold your child's space.

-If your child registers after mid-month, your fee is calculated by the day. Refunds are not given if your child is absent.

- Fees are due the **1st** of the month. Please e-mail armstrongpreschoolfinancials@gmail.com for payment options. *September & June fees are due in September. October through May are due monthly.* Please notify us at registration if cash will be used to pay fees.
- A fee deduction of \$5 per additional child, per month is available. First child's fees are not discounted.
- The affordable childcare benefit can be applied for at <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/child-care-funding/child-care-benefit>. Please ask your child's teacher for the form required from us before submitting your application. *Please submit these promptly as pro-rated payment may apply.* The first month's fee and registration fee are due in order for your child to begin attending. If your approved ACCB is pro-rated, then the monthly fee you paid will be reimbursed. ACCB does not cover the \$15 parent participation payments.
- Please give at least 2 days verbal notice to our treasurer if banking information changes in order to prevent NSF cheques and penalty.
- If fees are not paid within 5 days after the due date, and no explanation is given in writing, and deemed acceptable by the Board, the child is deemed withdrawn. If the issue is resolved, then the child may attend or be put on a wait-list if space is not available.
- There is a \$45 NSF fee. If 2 NSF and/or unpaid fees incidents occur, we ask that you wait until the issue is resolved before bringing your child to school. Written notice will be given to you.
- People with unpaid fees will not be permitted to register until previous fees are paid.
- If you choose to not have your child attend the full month, the full months fees are still owed. i.e. vacation, etc.
- In the unlikely event of the school being closed (unscheduled) for more than 2 consecutive days, monthly fees will be pro-rated and reimbursed.
- Late pick up fees (\$5/per 10-minute period) will apply if you are 10 minutes or more late, more than twice, with or without a phone call. At ten minutes late we will call you then your emergency pickup person. This fee covers your child's care outside of school hours by one of their teachers. If circumstances out of your control occur (i.e. accident/sudden illness/emergency care of family member), please let us know so that we can review and proceed appropriately.
- A written withdrawal notice **must** be submitted two weeks in advance to prevent penalty; one month is appreciated. Written notice is required by licensing. Please state reason (i.e. moving, scheduling conflict, etc).

Illness Policy

- Please keep your child home if they are vomiting, have diarrhea, a fever, chicken pox, green/yellow/cloudy mucous (nose or throat), have an ear/eye infection, untreated head lice, any sign of a communicable disease or are generally unwell.
- Please give us a phone call if your child will be absent.*
- We will post a note for families if we are informed of a child having chicken pox, lice, or anything out of the ordinary.
- If any of the above occur, please keep your child home until they are free and clear of all symptoms.
- If antibiotics are issued, please keep your child home for 24 hours after antibiotics are first administered.
- Head lice/pinkeye/staph **must** be treated for children to return to school. Please wait 24 hours.
- We reserve the right to call you to pick up your child if any of the above is noted at preschool. If we cannot contact you, your emergency contact person will be called.

Safety

- The front door must remain locked during class times. Both fire doors are equipped with alarms.
- No smoking on school property or surrounding area. This includes electronic cigarettes and vapes.
- Teachers have first aid training. All injuries will be documented as per licensing requirements and a parent will be notified.
- If you would like to talk to the teachers, please arrange a time to do so. Pick up is a busy time, and the teachers are busy ensuring your children's safety.

The lead ECE's can be notified at armstrongpreschoolstaff@gmail.com and/or 250-546-9314.

The volunteer parent board can be reached at armstrongpreschool@outlook.com

- In order to operate professionally and respectfully, we ask that communications about all preschool business be directed towards the above. Please refrain from contacting staff privately via social media, approaching them in person outside of school hours, etc.
- Please ask a teacher before taking *photos* of any child but your own, and please ask *permission* before posting photos online.
- All children will get a personal goodbye (sticker/high five) before being passed on to you. This marks the end of your child's day at school and ensures they are safely under *your* supervision.
- Please have weather appropriate clothing for your children. This includes sunhats, jackets, snow pants, gloves, hats, and indoor and outdoor shoes. Inside shoes must be flat, non-slip and non-marking. Outdoor shoes must be non-slip and flat.
- Please apply sun block before school if needed.
- If a parent drops off or arrives to pick up a child and is under the influence of alcohol or drugs the teacher will offer to call an alternate pick up person for parent and child. If a parent chooses to leave with the child the police will be called.

-It is the teacher's responsibility to document and report any witnessed or suspected abuse to the appropriate authorities. *The Ministry of Children and families' guidelines for reporting abuse* will be used.

-It is your responsibility to inform teachers of any legal/custody/allergy/illness information in order for them to act appropriately and in the best interests of the children.

-Each class will have a fire drill every month. They will be executed calmly, respectfully and in an age appropriate manner.

-One emergency evacuation drill will be executed per year. You will be informed beforehand.

-You **MUST** note on the sign-in sheet if someone other than the drop off person will be picking up. This person **MUST** be on your registration form, or you **MUST** provide a written note for us to attach to your registration form. Please call us if someone other than the arranged person will be picking up your child. Any changes with the pick-up person requires written consent, given to the teacher, prior to change being implemented. Teachers will call you if there is a discrepancy and we will not release your child to an unauthorized person. We will ask for ID.

Our Emergency Evacuation (Immediate) Site is the Armstrong Elementary School - 3010 Pleasant Valley Road - Phone #250-546-8778

Emergency Relocation (Community) - Children will be relocated, by bus, with the Armstrong Elementary children to the area relocation site.

Parents/Guardians/Emergency contacts will be contacted via phone.

Respect and Confidentiality

- The teachers pledge to respect your family's privacy and will always engage in respectful and confidential dialogue with you and your children.
- Any concerns or questions you have are to be taken to the teacher in a respectful and confidential manner. Feel free to phone and make an appointment or do so in person. *There is not always time at drop off and pick up.*
- We encourage all to speak positively and respectfully in order to keep our school a child friendly and positive environment for all.

Special Requirements/Needs

All allergy/medication information must be reported to the teacher before your child begins school. A medication release form needs to be filled out and signed by you.

All allergy information will be posted in the kitchen.

Please distinguish on your registration form between an anaphylaxis allergy or a sensitivity/preference. If your child requires an Epi-pen, Benadryl, etc at home for an allergy, we will require they have it at preschool as well.

Our school is a “No Nuts/Allergy Aware” zone and every precaution is taken to keep all our children safe.

If there are custody or foster children circumstances, please inform your teachers via registration forms. A teacher will contact you during the first 2 weeks of school to discuss your family’s needs. All information is kept confidential and is discussed in order to keep your and others’ children safe. Formal papers may be required in adherence with licensing.

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about your child’s preschool.

"Scientists have recently determined that it takes approximately 400 repetitions to create a new synapse in the brain—unless it is done with play, in which case, it takes between 10 to 20 repetitions!"

Dr. Karyn Purvis