



Vegreville Preschool Program Handbook

We are licensed daycare & preschool facility that has been providing quality early childhood education and childcare to children in the Vegreville area for more than thirty years. Our play-based program is taught by an Alberta Education Certified Teacher and enhances speech, language, social and cognitive skills to prepare children to enter Kindergarten. Vegreville Preschool Association is a charitable, non-profit organization that operates the preschool program and childcare services that go along with the program.

OUR BELIEFS

Vegreville Preschool is a **play-based, inclusive early childhood program** that aims to prepare children for life-long learning, individually and as part of a community of learners.

- We believe every child is a **'mighty learner'** – strong, capable, and resourceful with dispositions to be playful/playing, seeking, participating, caring, and persisting.
- We believe **'play is central'**. Children make meaning by participating within open, engaging and responsive environments where exploration and play is intentionally observed, reflected and purposefully planned.
- We believe that **preschool is an in-between space** that bridges home and school through new social relationships. In preschool, learning emerges in moment-to-moment interactions among children and educators as we learn how to learn from each other.

OUR PROGRAM

The 2023-2024 Vegreville Preschool program will be organized around five core areas of early child development that are known to be good predictors of adult health, education and social outcomes. Staff will work with the early learning curriculum framework to create opportunities for play, possibilities and participation in all 5 developmental domains.

1. Physical health and wellbeing

- *Fine motor skills* (pre-printing, cutting, hand coordination).
- *Gross motor skills* (balance, motor planning, kicking, throwing).
- *Self-care skills* (dressing/undressing, washing hands, toileting routine).

2. Social competence

- *Friendship skills* (getting along with others; showing respect for others).
- *Participation skills* (following rules and routines; managing transitions; focusing on tasks).
- *Cooperation skills* (accepting responsibility for making 'good choices'; sharing; turn-taking).

3. Emotional maturity

- *Emotional regulation skills* (expressing feelings and frustrations in developmentally appropriate ways; not too fearful, not too impulsive).
- *Separation skills* (forming new relationships with trusted adults)
- *Relationship skills* (negotiating social conflicts with adult support; building on emerging capacity for empathy)

4. Language and thinking skills

- *Early literacy skills* (sequencing, re-telling, identifying letters and their sounds, rhyming, etc.)
- *Early numeracy skills* (counting, recognizing numerals, labeling shapes)
- *Classifying skills* (sorting items according to function or concept - e.g. same/different, big/small, heavy/light).

5. Communication skills and general knowledge.

- *Play skills* (engaging in pretend/dramatic play situations; negotiating, compromising, exploring, imagining).
- *Collaboration skills* (learning with their peers, asking questions and listening to comments).
- *Early science skills* (exploring the natural environment; noticing changes and patterns, making predictions).

5 KINDS OF PLAY

The Vegreville Preschool program provides possibilities for engaging in various kinds of play to promote skill acquisition across the domains.

Outdoor play – opportunities for children to exercise their bodies and minds by running, jumping, digging, swinging, and shouting, etc.

Dizzy play – opportunities for children to create disorder and reorder within playful experiences (e.g. rough and tumble play, physical humour, and language play).

Socio-dramatic play- opportunities for children to take up cultural roles and imaginatively explore new identities.

Constructional play – opportunities for children to invent new connections as they design and create with mud, sand, twigs, cardboard, and blocks etc.

Playful exploration and heuristic play – opportunities for children to learn about the physical properties of materials and rules of thumb for problem solving.

COMMUNICATION

Our main way of communicating is through email as it is fast to communicate with many people at one time. It reduces the number of papers that have to be sent home with your child and it reduces the risk of papers getting lost or being left in your child's backpack. It also helps the environment. We are also looking into an app that we can communicate through as well. It is required that at least one parent/guardian or both provide an email so all messages are seen. It is also important to check your junk mail as sometimes the email ends up there. The following are the email addresses that you may receive an email from and you may want to add them to your contacts as safe senders:

vegpreschool.teacher@gmail.com	Classroom teacher – will receive monthly newsletter
vegpreschool.registrar@gmail.com	Registrar – registration forms
vegpreschool.fundraising@gmail.com	Fundraising Coordinator – will receive fundraising information
vegpreschool@gmail.com	Preschool Administrator – all general emails, questions, and info

Important Numbers

Text The Classroom: 587-280-7529

Call The Classroom: 780-632-6008 (you may have to leave a voice mail)

WHAT TO BRING TO SCHOOL



Children need to bring a **backpack** *clearly labelled* with their name with the following items inside:

- A complete **change of clothes** (shirt, pants, socks, underwear) in a resealable plastic bag
- **Inside shoes** labeled clearly with your child's name
- **Weather appropriate gear** (sunhat for warm weather, snow pants, toque, mittens, scarf for cold weather)

Please provide a light, nutritious **snack** for your child consisting of at least two food groups and a healthy beverage or water (NO pop). If your child is attending our full day program, ensure to pack a lunch along with a morning snack and afternoon snack. Please **DO NOT** send any foods that are considered choking hazards, such as popcorn.

We are a NUT FREE school so please read food labels carefully. When bringing a snack to the preschool, please keep in mind that there may be an allergy in the classroom. At the beginning of the school year, we will be posting a list of allergies that are present within each class. If the snack that you are bringing contains ingredients that are on the allergy list, **PLEASE LABEL IT CLEARLY** on the container and advise the teacher that it contains these ingredients. For home baked goods, please label if it is NUT FREE. This is to ensure the safety of all of the children who attend our program.



BIRTHDAY AND UN-BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Every child will have a day on which they will celebrate their birthday or un-birthday. Parents are encouraged to spend this special day with their child and are invited to provide a special snack to share with the class on that day. Please ensure that you notify the teacher **prior** to bringing in a snack. There are many days when the preschool children have special events and field trips scheduled and we would like to ensure that your child and the other students are able to enjoy this special occasion. **Please check with the teacher regarding any food allergies present in the classroom.** Parents can choose the day of their child's un-birthday to fit their schedule.

HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

Halloween, Christmas and Valentine's Day are celebrated in the preschool classroom with special activities. On these days, children **DO NOT** need to bring individual snacks. Lists will be posted and you will be notified by email in the weeks prior to these events requesting specific items for the party (fruit or veggie tray, crackers & cheese, dessert item, juice, plates, cups & cutlery, etc). We encourage parents to take turns signing up for these items so that the responsibility can be shared. Having snacks brought in to share with everyone and having volunteers/visitors in the classroom will depend on the COVID restrictions in place at the time of the holiday.

The children always enjoy these celebrations and we sincerely thank those parents who provide snack items. The dedication and effort make these days extra special!

CHILD DROP OFF AND PICK UP

The parking lot is a busy place, **please drive with caution** and take care to ensure that your child is safe. If the marked parking stalls are occupied, please do not attempt to create parking; extra parking is available on the street east and south of the building.

The classroom doors open **five to ten minutes prior** to the start of class. **ALL PARENTS/GUARDIANS MUST SIGN IN AND SIGN OUT THEIR CHILD.** There will be a sheet located at the front door for sign in and one of our friendly

staff will have the sign out available to parents/guardians as they exit the preschool. Parents may be required to assist their child to put on indoor footwear and put on nametag as part of the drop off procedure. At the end of class, children will only be released to a parent/guardian or individual identified on registration form as someone with permission to pick up your child. If someone different will be picking up your child, parent must provide written or verbal confirmation to teacher. Your child WILL NOT be released to someone without the appropriate permission.

SICKNESS

With the recent COVID19 pandemic, it is very important that if your child has any symptoms of illness, please keep your child at home.

If a child has a fever (a temperature over 38°C or 100°F), or a severe cold with cough, or other acute symptoms, the parents will be advised to keep the child at home until the child's condition improves, for the well-being of both that child and the other children in the class. This also applies to contagious skin disorders, e.g. scabies.

If any of these symptoms are observed in a child and a temperature has been taken, parents/guardians will be advised to have the child picked up as soon as possible: fever, vomiting, diarrhea, severe coughing, difficult or rapid breathing, yellowish skin or eyes, pink eyes.

Parents will be advised to keep the child at home until the child's condition improves and is symptom free for at least 24 hours or parent has a physician's note that the child no longer poses a health risk to any person on the program premises.

Employees will ensure supervised care for the child in a space separate from other children until the child can be removed from the facility.

To contact the Preschool to advise staff of illness or pertinent information, you can contact the classroom the following ways:

Text The Classroom: 587-280-7529

Call The Classroom: 780-632-6008 (you may have to leave a voice mail)

SANITIZATION/CLEANING

Sanitization and cleaning of the classroom, toys, lockers, and bathrooms are done on a daily and weekly basis depending on the area.

WEATHER AND ROAD CONDITIONS

Programming will be suspended, but the school will remain open when:

A temperature of -40° C or a wind chill factor of -40° C is measured by Environment Canada at 5:00 a.m. and/or Elk Island School buses are not running.

In the event that conditions are extreme, parents/guardians will be notified by the following:

- Notified by fan out procedures
- Email
- Posted on social media
- We will strive to share the information by 7:00 a.m.

Vegreville Preschool believes it is the parents/guardians' right and responsibility to make choices for their children based on their beliefs and perceptions of safety during inclement weather conditions. Parents must use their discretion when sending their children to school during inclement weather conditions.

For the safety of the students, it is the responsibility of the parents to ensure that their children are suitably dressed for coping with weather conditions and arrangements have been made for alternate shelter for their child if no one is home.

School days will NOT be made up for school closures due to weather or circumstances beyond our control.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION

The preschool students will be doing a fire drill monthly. The students will be relocated to a designated safety spot located at the end of the guardrail on the west side of the Preschool Building. This is posted in numerous places throughout the preschool and ALL staff have been trained and are aware of the evacuation process. Preschool students will be also doing a lock down practice once during the school year. In the event of an emergency evacuation, staff will follow the emergency evacuation procedure in our policy and procedure manual, ensuring that all students are accounted for and are safe from harm. Under circumstances where it is unsafe for the children to return to the Preschool building for the remainder of the class day, parents will be notified and children must be picked up as soon as possible.

CHILD GUIDANCE POLICY & PROCEDURES

We are committed to supporting children's development through respecting their individual differences, facilitating their ability to learn and work co-operatively, and promoting their self-esteem.

The purpose of this policy is to support our employee's ability to develop a sense of self-discipline and self-worth in every child attending the Vegreville Preschool/Head Start program.

Each child will be treated with respect and dignity. There will be no verbal or physical abuse of any child at any time. Strategies implemented will be proactive; for extreme behaviors removal from the situation may be necessary. *Actions taken must be reasonable in the circumstances.*

PROCEDURE

- Program Staff will take a proactive approach. Positive behaviour will be modeled and reinforced by staff.
- Program staff recognize their role in facilitating and encouraging positive behaviour in participants.
- Program staff will guide behaviour through positive strategies such as redirection, anticipation, positive reinforcement, role modeling and encouragement.
- Program staff will be attentive to environmental and program structure factors that encourage positive behavior.
- Program staff will make participants aware of program rules and age-appropriate expectations.
- Program staff have the primary responsibility for maintaining program discipline.
- Program staff will ensure that program activities are developmentally appropriate, smooth and well-planned transitions between activities are made and establish consistent routines.
- In circumstances where behaviour difficulties arise and warrant more specific strategies, i.e. child's behaviour is disruptive to the class as a whole, or the child is aggressive towards another child or adult, a child may be required to be removed from the activity to a quiet space to allow time for the child to calm down and settle before rejoining the group.
- Once the child has settled, staff will discuss behavior with the child and explore alternatives.

- All aggressive and disruptive behaviour will be discussed with the parents/guardians by appropriate staff:
 - **Preschool Program:** Teacher and/or Educational Assistant(s), as required
 - **Head Start Program:** Teacher, and/or Educational Assistants(s) and/or Executive Director
- If after a period of consistent implementation of strategies, staff do not see improvement in child's behavior, consultation and/or further assessment may be required, with the permission of the parent/guardian.

*The following use of **PUNISHMENT** is prohibited from the program:*

- *Inflict or cause to be inflicted any form of physical punishment, verbal or physical degradation or emotional deprivation;*
- *Deny or threaten to deny any basic necessity, or*
- *Use or permit the use of any form of physical restraint, confinement or isolation.*
- The use of physical restraint in the classroom is not permitted, except in instances when the child is at immediate risk of injuring him/herself or others.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

The Vegreville Preschool encourages parents who are looking for information on our policies and procedures, which include our discipline policy, illness management, critical incident reporting, medication administration procedures and supervision policies, to please inquire with the teacher. If you would like a copy of these policies, we will be happy to provide you with an electronic or paper copy as per your request.