



Preschool Parent Handbook & Policy Manual 2012-2013

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Yellowknife Education District #1

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Educational Philosophy

The principle goal of our preschool is to provide a happy, healthy and stimulating environment for pre-kindergarten aged children.

Our focus is on preparing children for kindergarten, focusing on skills in literacy and numeracy.

Our programs are based on the needs of Northern children and on the nature of their surroundings. The program is shaped and influenced by the following values:

- Self-reliance
- Respect for individual freedom
- Generosity
- Respect for nature
- Wisdom

The children are also offered a program which fosters their physical, intellectual, emotional, social and cultural development.

Physical development:

Physical development involves both the growth of child's body and the ability to use it through jumping and running (gross motor skills), as well as cutting, pasting, drawing and block building (small motor skills).

Intellectual development:

This part of the program focuses on the child's ability to think and problem solve.

Emotional development:

Emotional development is the child's ability to learn from his/her experiences, express his/her emotions and feelings, and to develop empathy for others.

Social development:

Skills in social development will carry a child through life. Social development allows them to get along with others.

Cultural development:

Cultural development involves a program that reflects the cultural diversity of the children attending the program, as well as the world around them.

For the French Immersion program, the principal goal of the pre-kindergarten program is to provide the opportunity for children who will be 4 by December 31, 2011, to enjoy a bilingual

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experience in a French environment. This program will help children to develop French language proficiency through healthy, stimulating and fun activities in a safe environment.

Preschool Calendar 2012-2013

The preschool follows the YK1 school calendar. The first day of pre-school begins on September 4th 2012. The last day will be June 26th at 3:30 pm. Preschools are open normal hours during the regular school SIP and Professional Development days for teachers. Please check the YK1 school year calendar 2012-2013 for Christmas break, Spring break and other holidays when preschool will be closed.

Groupings

In accordance with the Child Day Care Manual:

- All children must be four years old by December 31, 2012
- Maximum child to adult ratio of 9 to 1

Daily Schedule and Routine Sample

The preschool has a fairly set routine as it is proven that children respond best when they know what is to be expected. We do however have an “open educational philosophy”, which allows the schedule to be flexible and somewhat child directed. It may vary according to the needs of the children, special events, the time of year, the weather and special projects or activities. What follows is a sample only.

8:00am – 8:30 am	Child drop off** with supervised free play.
8:30am – 8:45am	Circle Time – This is a teacher directed activity on the carpet. Children will learn about the weather, days of the week, numbers, letters, listen to stories, sing songs and have time to share information with others.
8:45am – 9:45am	Centers – Children are able to choose from a variety of activities set out by the teacher. These activities include: art, modeling, dramatic play, puzzles, floor toys, books, and science centers.
9:45am – 9:50am	Clean-up & hand washing
9:50am – 10:05am	Snack & Book Time
10: 05am – 10:15am	Prepare for outside play or gym time
10:15am – 10:30am	Outside Play or gym
10:30am – 11:30am	Centers – Children are able to choose from a variety of activities set out by the teacher. These activities include: art, modeling, dramatic play, puzzles, floor toys, books, and science center.

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11:30am – 11:45am **Circle Time** – This is a teacher directed activity on the carpet. Children will learn about the weather, days of the week, numbers, letters, listen to stories, sing songs and have time to share information with others.

11:45am **Preparation for lunch** – for full time students

- This routine is flexible and children will have the opportunity to use the gym and the library.

12:10pm – 12:20pm **Prep time** – Clean up lunch, brushing teeth and preparing for relax time

12:20pm – 1:00pm **Rest time** – Children are able to rest on the mattress or relax in a calm environment.

1:00pm – 1:50pm **Centers** – Children are able to choose from a variety of activities set out by the teacher. These activities include art, modeling, dramatic play, puzzles, floor toys, books, and science center.

1:50pm – 2:00pm **Prepare for outside play or gym time.**

2:00pm – 2:15pm **Outside play or gym.**

2:15pm – 2:20pm **Clean-up and hand washing.**

2:20pm – 2:30pm **Snack and Book Time.**

2:30pm – 3:25pm **Circle Time** – This is a teacher directed activity on the carpet. Children will learn about the weather, days of the week, numbers, letters, listen to stories, sing songs and have time to share information with others.

- This routine is flexible

3:30pm **Home Time**** - for all students

This activity schedule is a sample only.

**** PARENTS OR SIBLINGS MUST SIGN IN THE CHILDREN IN THE MORNING AND SIGN OUT BEFORE THEY CAN LEAVE THE CLASSROOM. ONLY PEOPLE ON THE PICK-UP LIST WILL BE ALLOWED TO PICK UP YOUR CHILD. ANY CHANGES TO THE LIST MUST BE IN WRITING.**

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Program Design

The preschool is a theme based program that is set out by the teachers. The themes will revolve around the seasons, special events, children's interest or basic concepts.

We are open to change and enjoy finding out what interests the children, so all themes are flexible. If you or your child has a theme that could be added, please let the teacher know.

Some examples of activity themes which could take place:

- Family and Friends
- Health and Nutrition
- Safety
- Multiculturalism
- Transportation
- Bugs
- Kindergarten readiness:
 - colours
 - numbers
 - letters
 - shapes
- Seasons
- Easter
- Valentine's Day
- Mother's Day
- Father's Day
- Aboriginal Culture

*This is only a guideline for the program. We may cover more or less themes depending on the interest of the children.

Health Safety and Nutrition

Illness policy

Government regulations do not permit children to attend preschool if ill. Children should be kept at or taken home if suffering from one or more of the following conditions:

- Pain - any complaints of unexplained or undiagnosed pain
- An acute cold with fever, runny nose and eyes, coughing and sore throat. Once temperature, well-being and energy are normal, coughing and runny nose may continue (depending on the suspect illness) without the child being contagious and the child may return to the facility. If symptoms are caused by a known allergic reaction, then the child is not contagious and may attend.
- Difficulty breathing, wheezing or a persistent cough.
- Fever (100 degrees F or 38 degrees C or more) accompanied by general symptoms such as listlessness, sore throat or trouble swallowing, infected skin or eyes or an undiagnosed

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rash, headache and stiff neck, unexplained diarrhea, or loose stool, combined with nausea, vomiting or abdominal cramps, or severe itching of body and scalp.

- Children with known or suspected communicable diseases.

Should a child develop any of the above symptoms, staff will contact parents/guardians and request that they pick up the child. If parents/guardians cannot be reached, the emergency contact person listed on their registration form will be contacted. If they are not reached, staff may call the hospital.

Should a child become sick with a contagious disease, parent/guardians must notify the preschool within 24 hours so the staff can inform other families and Public Health. The sick child should have a doctor's approval in writing before returning to the preschool in the case where the illness was a contagious disease.

Ultimately the care of the child is the parent's responsibility.

Medication

Should it become necessary for your child to be given medication at the preschool, parents must adhere to the following guidelines:

If your child requires any medication, whether prescription or over the counter, such as Tylenol or Aspirin, that needs to be administered during school hours, it must be accompanied with the appropriate completed medical form, and in its original container identifying the medicine, the child's name, doctor's name and dosage.

There are two different forms, one being for Prescription medication, which requires completion by the family doctor and one being for Non-prescription drugs which requires completion by the parent or guardian. These forms are available from the Preschool teacher.

Immunization

Every child must have an immunization record from Public Health. The record should be updated when additional shots are given. If a child is not being immunized for religious, medical or conscience reasons, parents must provide written documentation.

Children with Special Needs

Although most children with special needs benefit from a structured preschool program, not all children have the independence necessary to participate without support.

Support in the form of an Early Intervention Worker may be available through the NWT Council of Persons with Disabilities. They can be contacted at 873-8230.

Children who are registered but are unable to participate in the preschool program independently may be asked to withdraw.

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Fire Drills

Each school holds fire drills and follows procedures approved by the local fire department. A record is kept of the date, time and number of children participating. Each staff member is familiar with this procedure and has specific instructions for moving the children safely out of the building. The procedures are posted.

Safety

Parents/guardians must be in control of their children during arrivals and departures. During departures, children are not to leave the preschool until their parent/guardian leaves as well. Children are not permitted to go outside unattended.

Suspected child abuse

In compliance with the Daycare Act, any staff member who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has suffered from or may be suffering child abuse or neglect must report the suspected abuse.

A report of suspected abuse should be made orally by the staff on the day the suspicion occurs, after a consultation with the administration. The staff member is responsible for making the report.

Nutrition

Parents are asked to send nutritious snacks daily with their child and lunches for full-time pupils. Children also have access to the water fountain. **Parents should also be aware that due to peanut allergies it may be necessary to remove peanuts, other nuts, and peanut containing products from your child's snacks and lunch.** Children are not permitted to come to school with pop, chips, or candy in their lunches or snacks.

Potty Training

Upon entering Pre-Kindergarten, all students must be potty trained.

Parent Information

Supplies

All supplies brought to school should be marked with the child's name. Each child should have a complete change of clothes and indoor shoes (sneakers are best as these double as gym shoes).

Extra clothing

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As the preschool encourages a variety of activities, please make sure the children are dressed in “play” clothes that can be easily washed. During the winter children should be dressed to play both indoors and outdoors (winter coat, ski pants, boots, hat, mitts and scarf). During the spring, please send splash pants and rubber boots. An extra set of clothes is to be kept on each child’s hook. Please label all items with children’s names. All clothes must be free of profanities, weapons/violence or derogatory expressions.

Toys from home

Please do not allow children to bring toys from home, unless it has been requested as a part of an activity. The preschool encourages respect and sharing. Items brought from home are often very special to a child and they may not want others touching or playing with them.

We will have regular “sharing” days. These days will be marked on the monthly calendar. At this time children may bring something from home to talk about during circle time. The preschool encourages items that may relate to the theme or the environment. We encourage photos or a story about something special that may have happened. Children may bring toys that have “special meaning”, but all toys must be weapon and violence free.

Separation

It is normal for some children to have difficulty separating from parents, or not want to come to school. It is important that a child is reassured of your return, and that school is a fun, safe environment. Please be brief (no more than 5 minutes) during morning and afternoon drop-offs. The longer parents/guardians prolong the departure, the harder it gets for the child. A smile, cheerful goodbye kiss and a reassuring word that the parent will be back are all that are needed to make a child feel comfortable.

*The preschool has an open door policy and the parents are welcome to drop in as often as they like. If you would like to help in the class in any capacity, please feel free to talk to the teacher.

Transportation Policy

Although it happens infrequently, occasionally travel will require the use of vehicles. Often the parents will be asked in these situations to help provide the transportation. All vehicles must conform to the following guidelines:

- All vehicles must have federally approved safety seats and/or safety belts.
- Each child must be secured in the appropriate safety seat or seat belt.
- Before any trip - ensure that the vehicle is in good working order and that the vehicle contains nothing that might harm the children.
- Never transport children or adults in the cargo area of a station wagon or van.
- Never leave children alone inside or nearby a vehicle.

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- Any sharp or heavy objects should be kept in the trunk to avoid any injury in case of a sudden stop.
- Load and unload children only when the vehicle is pulled up to the curb, side of the road or in a driveway and release them only to an authorized adult.
- Do not allow children to stick their arms or heads out of the vehicle.
- Do not give children food or drinks during transport.
- Place all hard objects (i.e. lunch boxes, backpacks) on the floor.
- Ensure all fingers and feet are well inside the vehicle before closing the doors.
- Doors should be locked before transport.
- Before departing, remind children of rules and the importance of behaving.
- Always find a safe place to pull over before dealing with problems in a vehicle.
- A Driver's Abstract and a Criminal Record Check are required for volunteer drivers. Volunteers will be reimbursed for these costs.

Admission and Attendance Policy

Each YK1 Preschool maintains a waiting list for each group of children. The preschool will accept new children when there are vacancies in the class list. In the case of French Immersion, preference will be given to full-time students.

The preschool will provide an orientation for each family explaining the purpose and philosophy of the preschool. We will review the policies and give a basic outline of the program.

Upon enrollment, parents must complete all registration forms; provide a birth certificate and a copy of immunization records.

Parents will be given a Parent Handbook to review and ask questions about. The preschool can provide assistance (including translation and clarification) in understanding the policies.

Arrivals and Departures

The current preschool is **open** from 8:00 am until the end of each school day (3:30 pm). Parents are requested to pick-up their child by 3:30 pm.

Parents are asked to call the school by 9:00 am if their child is coming in late or will be absent for the day.

All children **MUST** be signed in and out each day. Only those people on the pick-up/drop-off list will be given permission to take the child. If a person needs to be added to the list, please give a written note to the teacher (this note will be attached to your child's file).

If a parent is late and the preschool has not received a phone call the staff will:

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- (1) Try to contact parents at home and work
- (2) Try to contact emergency contact people

If the staff cannot reach anyone to pick up the child, the staff will contact Child and Family Services.

If an authorized individual comes to pick up a child and appears incapable of providing safe care to the child (i.e. due to intoxication) the staff will not release the child to that person and will contact the emergency numbers.

In a situation where there is a custody agreement, the preschool will release the child to the parent/guardian who has custody of the child, unless written permission has been given to the preschool.

Notice of withdrawal

The preschool requires one month's written notice, if a child is being withdrawn. If a child is withdrawn without notice, one month fees will be required in lieu of notice.

Closure of centre

If the preschool is closed due to circumstances beyond its control, every effort will be made to notify parents as soon as possible. The preschool is not responsible for alternate childcare if closed. It is the responsibility of the parents to find alternative care.

Vacations/Illnesses

The preschool is not able to provide refunds for vacations or illnesses. Fees will need to be paid regardless if the child attends or not.

Nonpayment of fees

Monthly fees are required on the first school day of each month. We ask that post-dated cheques for the year be given to the office. We also now accept Visa. Please write all cheques out to Yellowknife Education District #1. The cost of this program is \$600.00 for full-time students, and \$300.00 for half-time students.

NSF cheques are subject to a \$35.00 service charge. If two NSF cheques are received, parents/guardians are to pay with cash or money order only. School Administrators will pursue delinquent accounts by all legal means available. Parents who leave the preschool with an outstanding account will have 60 days from the last day the child is at the centre to pay the account in full or an additional 25% handling charge will be added to the account and referred to a collection agency.

Late Pickup

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All day children and afternoon children are to be picked up at or before 3:30 pm. Parents will be charged a rate of \$15.00 per 15 minutes of lateness. If lateness becomes an issue, parents may be asked to remove their child from the program.

Changes

Families frequently have changes (new homes, new jobs, new telephone numbers, etc.). Please inform the staff immediately of any significant changes.

Communication

Daily communication

Communication between parents and preschool staff is very important. The preschool encourages parents to let staff know of anything that changes in a child's daily life. Please let staff know of any concerns you or your child may have.

Calendars

A monthly newsletter and calendar will be sent home detailing the themes and special events to come. If you are aware of any special community event coming up and would like to add them, please let the staff know as soon as possible.

Concerns and Questions

If parents have any concerns, and they are unable to discuss them with the staff involved please contact the administration of the school.

Progress Report

Parents will receive a year end progress report for all those children going to kindergarten next year.

Staff will be available for parent meetings (by request). Please feel free at any time to make an appointment.

Volunteer Policy

The preschool is a nonprofit agency, and relies heavily on volunteers and parent support. Parents may be asked to help with field trip supervision, craft making, or general classroom support.

Confidentiality Policy

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It is the policy of YK1 Preschools to keep all information pertaining to children enrolled in the programs confidential. Parents or guardians may have access to the information as well as representatives from the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and licensing officers. Information regarding registration will not be accessible to other families.

Guidance and Behavior Policy

The preschool's philosophy and practices with regard to guidance and discipline are always based on a positive, non-punitive approach.

Behavior management is a process by which children develop socially acceptable and appropriate behavior patterns. The preschool staff believes that children are influenced by kind and continuing guidance and appropriate modeling. The staff recognizes the child as a unique individual and in doing so, needs to find guidance techniques to support appropriate behaviors.

In cases where 'discipline' is needed, staff will acknowledge feelings, set limits, offer appropriate choices, and use natural and logical consequences. It will be a positive learning experience, reinforcing appropriate behavior.

Management Techniques

If behavior is more significant, the following management action will be taken:

- (1) The child is removed from the situation to allow them time to calm down.
- (2) The teacher will then discuss with the child as to why he/she was removed.
- (3) Depending on the regularity of the misbehavior, privilege loss may be used as a management tool.
- (4) A report will be written about the incident and will then be discussed with the parent.

In the event that the Preschool should ever find it necessary to terminate enrollment, the parent will be given **two weeks written notice except** for reasons such as but not limited to:

- Destructive, uncontrollable or violent behaviors
- Habitual tardiness in dropping off or picking up the child
- Excessive absences without notice
- Lateness of payment or nonpayment
- Lack of parental cooperation

On a final note...

Comments from parents

- ✓ "This was a great program to get my child familiar with the environment and also be comfortable around new groups of kids. Also my child was very fond of her teachers."

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- ✓ “The program gave my son the opportunity to get used to coming to school, following the structure, listening to the teachers, getting along with peers, exposure to skill building crafts all in a comfortable, more play based environment. We have seen many positive changes in him and he really enjoyed the program. Thanks!”
- ✓ “What an excellent program! The instructors were great, always offering suggestions and providing useful feedback. Our son always enjoyed going! It also confirmed that we were putting him in the right school for him, being the French Immersion. Thanks.”