



Pre-primary Guardian Handbook



South Shore
Regional Centre for Education

Pre-primary Goals and Objectives

We believe:

- Children develop best in a loving, engaging and secure environment.
- Children need positive experiences and encouraging responses to build self-esteem, confidence and empathy.
- Children benefit from developmentally appropriate, child-focused and interest-based activities that challenge and excite them.
- Children benefit from strong family, educator and community relationships.

Children in the pre-primary program will be engaged in play that puts them in charge of their learning, guided by Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework. The children will build on and create new knowledge through exploration and discovery of the world around them using many materials. The program will be thoughtfully set up to encourage the children to be active participants in making connections using play to experiment with their interests. Each day the physical environment will be set up as the "third educator" to provide interactions and discovery for children. Children will be guided through the day by caring and trained staff who will encourage and model independence, self-confidence, respect, responsibility, kindness, cooperation, creativity and excitement for learning. Activities will reflect the family, community and individual interests of the children in the group.

Educators will possess early childhood educator provincial qualifications to insure expertise in care for the children. Educators will also be partners in strengthening families by being a support to families of children in the program. Our goal as educators is to build strong positive relationships between home, school and the community through consistent communication and observation.

Program Information

Attendance

It is not mandatory that children attend every day; however, whenever possible please notify the pre-primary educators if your child will be absent on a day they typically attend.

Arrival/Dismissal

We ask that children come within one hour of your program's start time in the morning (unless otherwise indicated by staff). This is so that they do not miss out on the morning routines and play experience, which can make it difficult for them to transition into the flow of the program that day. Please speak with the educators in your program about bus times and drop-off/pick-up schedules in order to help us decrease traffic and congestion with bus schedules at the school. We ask that you please make sure an educator is aware when your child has arrived at the program; as drop-off time is typically busy. The same policy applies to afternoon dismissal.

Alternate Pick-Up/Emergency Contact

Educators must be given written notice or receive a phone call from the parent or guardian if someone other than themselves or their emergency contacts will be picking up a child. Children will not be released from the program to anyone without prior written consent or a phone call directly to the educators. The alternate pick-up person will be expected to provide identification if they are not known to the educators.

Parents or emergency contacts will be notified to pick up their child if they are unwell or injured and cannot fully participate in the program. Please ensure your emergency numbers are kept current. If your child becomes injured while attending the program an Accident/Injury Report will be written up. First aid will be administered and the level of severity will dictate if the child can remain in the program or will need to go home.

In order to keep everyone in the program healthy, children who are ill will be required to be picked up and kept home for 24 hours in the event of the following symptoms:

- A fever of 38°C or higher; your child must be fever-free without medication for 24 hours to return to the program.
- Vomiting, diarrhea, rash (unless a doctor's note allows them to return sooner).
- A confirmed or suspected chest or sinus infection resulting in prolonged coughing and/or difficulty breathing, sore throat or swollen glands, fatigue or illness which prevents regular participation in daily activities or requires one-on-one attention from educators.
- Covid-19 symptoms (as directed by public health).

The pre-primary program will adhere to the South Shore Regional Centre for Education's procedures and policies on Communicable Diseases and Head Lice. Detailed information on these policies can be found under the 'About Us' tab on the SSRCE website (www.ssrce.ca).

School Closures and School Calendar

The pre-primary program will observe the same school closures as the South Shore Regional Centre for Education calendar (i.e. holidays, storm days, PD days and embedded CLT days). Unexpected school closures due to storms, etc. will be announced on the SSRCE website: www.ssrce.ca and on CKBW radio by 6:30 am. In the event of early dismissal due to inclement weather, if your child does not travel on the bus, you or your emergency contact will be contacted and required to pickup your child.

The pre-primary program will participate in all school safety protocols which may include fire drills, bus evacuation drills and hold-and-secure drills.

Clothing

Please ensure your child brings appropriate outdoor clothing for all weather conditions and has extra clothing available every day as the program includes daily outdoor play. A few changes of indoor clothing (including underwear and socks) should be left at school or brought daily in a backpack if possible. Your child is required to have a pair of indoor shoes to wear. All of your child's belongings should be labeled with their name.

Food and Mealtimes

Your child will receive two nutritious snacks each day that will include 2-3 servings of fruit/vegetable, grain and protein. Lunch is provided by the families. A snack menu will be posted monthly for the parents and can be requested at any time from the educators. This menu follows the Manual for Food and Nutrition in Regulated Child Care Settings. Children will be eating alongside adults in a family style dining model and will be encouraged to try what is provided for them either by the program or home. Children will eat as much as their bodies need and will have continuous access to their lunch and other snacks throughout the day. We will be encouraging and modeling positive eating habits as adults in order for children to experience and develop this skill on their own.

If you are concerned about what children are eating first, we encourage that you send only the items that you wish to be eaten, the fewer choices that are available makes it easier for a child to start and finish what is provided for them (sometimes too many choices makes it hard to finish one item before moving on to the next). If children are still hungry after lunch, the educators will provide them with nutritious snacks. We recognize that children at this age often eat in small amounts regularly as opposed to a few large meals.

News and Documentation

Our programs will provide communication to all families about the learning taking place through some/all of the follows means: Seesaw (App), monthly newsletters, notices, emails and text messages. Individual observations about children will be discussed and expressed with parents frequently and through a means of communication that best suits the family. We will also take pictures and record the learning and experiences of the children. These will be posted in the program and will remain on site. We have an X (twitter) account where we will post

exciting discoveries, observations and learning experiences. A consent form will be sent home with children in the first days of pre-primary for families to indicate their permission for social media usage and photo documentation. (@ssrcepreprimary)

Policies and Procedures

Behaviour Guidance Policy

In the South Shore Regional Centre for Education Pre-primary Programs, we create an environment that will set children up for success. This means careful planning on the part of the educators to promote a positive and proactive atmosphere that supports children in developing their sense of well-being. These are important skills that children will engage in developing as seen in our curriculum framework.

Educators will create spaces where children:

- *feel safe, secure and supported*
- *become strong in their social and emotional well-being*
- *take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical well-being*
- *develop knowledgeable and confident self-identities*

In instances where children are communicating with challenging behaviour, educators will employ developmentally appropriate practices in order to guide children through regulating and replacing these behaviours. Techniques will include:

- Supporting children in their emotional literacy through daily discussions, play-based learning and visuals.
- Adults will use respectful, warm, caring and responsive language and/or actions at all times, including when responding to children when they are experiencing discomfort or are upset.
- Adults will use clear, positive language (verbal and visual) to promote desired behaviours.
- Educators will model and provide opportunities for learning replacement behaviours. Children will be a part of the process for talking about and explaining limits and expectations for the learning environment and playing with others.
- Promoting and reinforcing desired behaviours through social praise and natural consequences. Techniques may also include “planned ignoring” of specific behaviours (not the child).
- Educators will remember that behaviours do not make the child.

In the event that a child exhibits behaviour that becomes a consistent safety concern the lead educator will contact families to meet and create a Positive Behaviour Support Plan. This includes useful strategies and/or supports required to assist the child in learning replacement behaviours.

Educators will be trained in appropriate methods for de-escalating safety concerns. This may involve transitioning the rest of the children to an alternative learning space.

Children will not be suspended or expelled from the Pre-primary Program.

Educators will be subject to the Provincial School Code of Conduct Policy where applicable to the pre-primary setting and will not engage in inappropriate responses to behaviours such as:

- Corporal or physical punishment
- Use of harsh, degrading or coercive methods when speaking to children
- Reacting to children physically
- Confining or isolating a child
- Deprive of or withhold basic needs such as food, water or clothing
- Sending a child home early due to communication through behaviours

Child Abuse Policy

As per the protocols outlined by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development for the prevention and reporting of child abuse, the program staff are legally required to report cases of suspected child abuse and any disclosures by children.

Questions and Concerns

Parent Concern Protocol for Pre-primary

In the event that you have questions or concerns, the Lead Early Childhood Educator should be the first person you have a conversation with, as they are with your child each day and may be able to provide accurate and timely information.

If you require further information or support, please contact:

Genevieve Rhyno - Pre-primary Program Supervisor
grhyno@ssrce.ca
902-521-7679

Jacq Cameron - Pre-primary Program Facilitator
jcameron@ssrce.ca
902-541-0110

If you require further support after communicating with the supervisor and facilitator, please contact:

Gretchen Gerhardt – Literacy Coordinator
902-541-3000

Angela Gladwin - Director of Programs and Student Services
902-541-3004

Nancy Pynch-Worthylake - Regional Executive Director
902-541-3002

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