



Blueberry School

All You Really Need to Know About Blueberry Kindergarten



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Welcome to Kindergarten

This booklet has been written to introduce you to the Kindergarten Program your child will be involved in this year. We hope it will answer many of the questions you may have regarding this first important year in school. A monthly newsletter will be sent home with more specific information about the happenings in our classroom.

It is a privilege to spend days watching children grow, learn and develop. Children bring with them a unique kind of curiosity, energy and zest for life. We believe it is our role to provide an environment that facilitates the best possible place to grow and learn. An environment that is trusting, caring and encouraging will enable each child to feel comfortable enough to take “risks” to learn, and to reach his/her potential. Each child is unique. Each has their own set of background experiences, interests, characteristics and abilities.

We will endeavor to plan, adapt and/or change instruction to meet the particular needs of each child. A variety of learning experiences using various instructional strategies will be implemented to meet the many different styles of learning. We are committed to the growth of skills and attitudes in each developmental area (social, emotional, physical, intellectual, creative language). We will foster in children an appreciation of one another as unique and worthwhile individuals. Please, always feel welcome to drop into the kindergarten classroom whenever you can. We encourage you to contact us regarding any questions or concerns you may have. We want you to know how your child is progressing and to always feel well informed.

We want your child’s first year in school to be the best beginning filled with happy and successful experiences.

Natasha Lang, Wendy Feschuk



KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM RATIONALE

Early childhood is a significant period in human development. Independence, initiative, decision making, creativity, the ability to learn, the ability to relate to others and feelings of self worth all have their beginnings in early childhood. What young children learn at this age will have a major impact on successful learning experiences in school, on personal development and on future participation in society.

Young children benefit from programs that help them explore the world around them and guide them through the transition from home to school. The purpose of kindergarten is to provide learning experiences that meet the diverse needs of children and prepare them for entry into grade one.

A child whose needs have been met is more likely to develop into a self-reliant, responsible, caring and contributing member of society.

Ensuring that all young children receive support and suitable learning opportunities is extremely important.



*Taken from: Kindergarten Program Statement
Revised: September, 2000
Alberta Education
Curriculum Standards Branch*

KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

1. Young children develop knowledge, skills and attitudes that prepare them for subsequent learning.
2. Through early intervention and other strategies, young children with special needs develop knowledge, skills and attitudes that prepare them for subsequent learning.
3. Young children build a shared set of experiences and participate in learning.
4. Parents have the opportunity for meaningful involvement in the education of their young children.
5. Coordinated community services are available to meet the needs of young children and their families.



*Taken from: Kindergarten Program Statement
Alberta Education
Curriculum Standards Branch*

PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

The following learning areas come from Alberta Education's Kindergarten Statement and are interrelated and integrated into the daily Kindergarten program. Young children benefit from learning in an integrated environment and instructional activities are planned and woven into these areas.

1. Early Literacy
2. Early Numeracy
3. Citizenship and Identify
4. Environment and Community Awareness
5. Personal and Social Responsibility
6. Physical Skills and Well-Being
7. Creative Expression

For more information, please visit My Child's Learning – A Parent Resource:

<http://learnalberta.ca/content/mychildslearning>

TOPICS - Integrated Instructional Activities

Themes are used, usually one main theme each month, based on the children's interests and needs, current events, the time of year, relevancy to the curriculum and the availability of resources. The objectives and activities for each theme will be outlined in monthly newsletters. Curriculum areas such as early literacy and numeracy, social studies and science are integrated into each theme.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Our days are active and busy! The schedule is a flexible one that changes according to the needs of the students, program content etc...but we try to keep a fairly regular routine so the children can be prepared and ready.

A typical Kindergarten Day includes many activities and can include the following:

- Singing of O'Canada
- Calendar, Morning Message, Weather, Oral Language (poems, songs, chants, etc.)
- Center Time
- Gym
- Outdoor Playtime (recess)
- Story time
- Sharing Time
- Early Literacy and Numeracy Activities
- Music, Creative Movement Activities
- Story time/Day Review
- Technology: I-Pads, SMART Board Activities, Listening Centers

Kindergarten Learning Centers

Why Centers?

1. They attract the child's interest so the learner is highly motivated.
2. Centers involve children in an active way.
3. They offer opportunities for a child to pursue learning in an individual manner.
4. Centers involve small groups of children learning skills in decision-making, problem solving, responsibility, and cooperation.

Each day, during center activity time, the children will work through a variety of centers. Center time is a time for social interaction, small group work, individual projects, exploration, experimentation, practice and application of skills, creative expression and small group projects.

Play is an educationally important part of an early childhood program. Not only are physical skills developed through this activity, but also mental, social and emotional skills. Play is the business of childhood.

Opportunities for social and individual play are provided as both are desirable and should be cultivated. It is through social play that the child learns how to be a member of a group and contribute by sometimes being a leader and at other times a follower. The child learns to enjoy social contacts through understanding and appreciating other people's work.

Play satisfies the needs of the active, inquiring, investigating, four, five and six year old child and the "activity" is of far greater importance to the child than the "product" which might result from the activity.



Learning Centers:

Reading - book handling knowledge, story sequence, and book elements, beginning reading skills.

Writing - expression of ideas, beginning writing skills, conventional letter formation, alphabet exploration.

Math - manipulation and exploration to develop understanding of pattern, numbers (sorting, matching, counting, ordering), time, length, problem solving games, and puzzles.

Discovery - exploration of properties of natural and manufactured objects, experiments.

I-Pads – appropriate programs – literacy, numbers, science, etc.



Listening – auditory experience of stories, rhymes, etc.

Sand – exploration and experimentation with scientific and mathematical skills (e.g. capacity, weight).

Water – exploration and experimentation with scientific and mathematical skills (e.g., capacity, weight, temperature, buoyancy, etc.).



Art – expression of ideas, perceptions, feelings, thoughts; manipulation of various materials.

Painting – exploration and expression of ideas; perception, feelings, thoughts using paint; experimentation using brushes, sponges, air (blow painting), etc.

Playdough – formation of letters, numbers, various shapes, sculpting, mathematical concepts (i.e., length, etc.), fine motor development.

Puppetry – Acting out stories, expression of own ideas and opinions, responding to ideas presented by others.

Blocks – cooperative building, mathematical concepts (e.g. more than, longer than, etc.) science concepts (i.e., ramps – inclined planes, etc.)



House – role-playing familiar situation, problem solving with peers, concept of real and make believe, etc.

Construction – cooperative building and exploration with toys such as Lego, train set, etc.

BEHAVIOUR EXPECTATIONS

During our first week of school and as needed throughout the year, the children will be involved in discussions about ways to make our classroom a special one; a happy, productive place to learn. An environment filled with mutual respect, cooperation, and responsible attitudes and behaviour will help to ensure a positive climate conducive to optimum learning. After the initial “caring and sharing” discussions, each child will understand what acceptable behaviour in our class is.

If your child is having difficulty, I will be in contact with you. We’ll discuss ways to help your child learn to behave appropriately in the school setting using cooperative discipline strategies.

Please do let me know if your child is having difficulties at school that I am not aware of so I can be of help. Also, please inform me if sleeping or eating habits or health conditions change as these often affect behaviour.

FIELD TRIPS

Much of the knowledge children absorb is best acquired by exploration in the real world where they may freely, actively, construct their vision of reality, rather than be passively instructed about it."

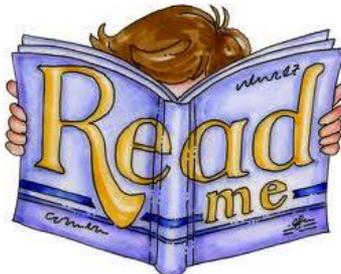
Edward A. Chittenden

The excitement that precedes and follows a field trip is fantastic. Field trips provide students with hands-on "real" learning experiences. They take many forms, varying from autumn walks, spring snoops, to out of school excursions. A variety of field trips are planned for the school year and specific field trip plan will be sent home as needed.

Two Sculptors

*I dreamed I stood in a studio,
And watched two sculptors there,
The clay they used was a young child's mind,
And they fashioned it with care.
One was a teacher, the tools she used
Were books, music and art.
One a parent who worked with a guiding hand
And a gentle, loving heart.
Day after day the teacher toiled
With touch that was deft and sure,
While the parent labored by her side,
And polished and smoothed it o'er,
And when at last their task was done.
They were proud at what they wrought;
For the things they had molded into the child
Could neither be sold or bought,
And each agreed she would have failed,
If she had worked alone,
For behind the teacher stood the school,
And behind the parent, the home*

Author Unknown



LIBRARY

Students in Kindergarten will take home books from the school library. Our library day will be determined early in September.



10 Reasons to Read to Your Child...

- 1. Because when you hold them and give them this attention, they know you love them.*
- 2. Because reading to them will encourage them to become a reader.*
- 3. Because children's books today are so good that they are fun even for adults.*
- 4. Children's book illustrations often rank with the best, giving them a lifelong feeling for good art.*
- 5. Books are one way of passing your moral values to them. Readers know how to put themselves in another's shoes.*
- 6. Because, until they learn to read themselves, they will think you are magic.*
- 7. Because every teacher and librarian they ever encounter will thank you.*
- 8. Because it's nostalgic.*
- 9. Because for that short space of time, they will stay clean and quiet.*
- 10. Because of you, they may then let you read in peace.*

Author Unknown

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF STUDENT GROWTH AND ACHIEVEMENT

Demonstrating and communicating student growth is an essential, important link between home and school. Assessment and evaluation of a student's progress is an ongoing daily process. Many forms of assessment are used. Some include:

- Classroom observation
- Student daily work
- Collection of dated student work throughout the year.
- EYE – Early Years Evaluation



We invite you to contact us very early in the school term and throughout the year, if you have any comments, questions, or concerns about your child's development and progress. There are three regular reporting periods during the school year.

It is our hope that with this open, regular communication between home and school your child will experience a wonderfully happy and successful year in kindergarten.

PARENT PARTNERSHIP

It is indeed an exciting day when a child's parent visits the classroom. Please feel very welcome to come and observe or help! For those parents who work during the day, please feel welcome to stop by if you ever have a day off. Parents are invited to begin volunteering in October. September is a time for the children and the teacher to get to know each other and to become a kindergarten family.

Parents can volunteer to help in the classroom by signing up. Classroom help is required in the mornings from 8:30-11:50 or from 12:30-2:30 in the afternoon. Classroom helpers may be asked to prepare instructional materials, assist students during center time, assist small groups of students with their learning, and help with general classroom upkeep. Parent helpers are also necessary for field trip supervision, assisting with classroom parties, fundraising, etc.

MONTHLY CLASSROOM NEWS

You will be getting a school newsletter once a month as well as a classroom newsletter once a month. These newsletters will keep you informed about current curricular studies, activities and events. They can be received through the school email, if you give us your email address and consent through our school website. For people who do not have internet access, the newsletters will be sent home. Please mark all important dates on your calendar before putting the letter away. Please let us know if you did not receive your classroom newsletter by the end of the first week each month.

PARKING

Parking is available in the front parking lot. Please note that parking is NOT permitted in the front “drop-off” zone! Also, there are two handicapped parking spaces for vehicles displaying a handicapped parking sticker. Traffic movement in the back (bus) parking lot is not permitted from 7:45 – 8:30 am and from 2:15 – 3:00 pm daily for safety reasons.



PARKLAND SCHOOL DIVISION

Parkland School Division, including all of our schools, is committed to acting on our new vision, mission and values statements. These new statements that emphasize student success and well-being reflect the future-focused and innovative organization that we are today.

Our Vision

Parkland School Division is a place where exploration, creativity, and imagination make learning exciting and where all learners aspire to reach their dreams.

Our Mission

Our purpose is to prepare, engage and inspire our students to be their best in a quickly changing global community.