

RioTerrace community Preschool



PARENT HANDBOOK
Revised February 2024

Rio Terrace Community Preschool

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Welcome to the Rio Terrace Community Preschool for 3- and 4-year-olds! Our preschool is a parent cooperative program, which has been in operation since 1968. The program is part of the Rio Terrace Community League. We aim to provide a stimulating, supportive and positive environment to meet the physical, emotional, intellectual, and social needs of your child. We are inspired by Flight: Alberta's Early Learning and Care Framework (www.flightframework.ca) We see children as curious, creative, and competent and our role is to support their learning through play and to create relationships of mutual respect and caring. Daily explorations may include play and discovery, snack, meeting time, music and movement, literacy, process art, STEM and large-muscle group games. We offer a flexible and responsive environment for the children and expect that parts of the classroom will change based on the interests and needs of the children.

A classroom that is functioning successfully as a third teacher will be responsive to the children's interests, provide opportunities for children to make their thinking visible, and then foster further learning and engagement.

(Fraser, 2012, p. 67)

Our classroom is divided into many centres, and children are encouraged to explore each area: blocks and manipulatives, sensory, process art, dramatic play, gross motor (climbing wall and slide), STEM, as well as opportunities for play in the Rio Terrace hall gym, the playground and surrounding green space. Although we encourage every child to participate in each offered play experience, children are given autonomy to decide how they would like to participate in their day at Rio Terrace Preschool. This means that some children may bring home piles of art and some very little. Some of the benefits of offering children autonomy in how they pursue their interests include developing a sense of self, self confidence, critical thinking and building self- motivation.

PROGRAMS - We have three programs, two held from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. and one held from 12:30 to 3:00 p.m., each supervised and supported by a teacher, teacher's assistant, and a volunteer parent helper.

- The three-year-old program runs on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. Children must be three years old by January 1st of the graduating year to enroll in the three-year-old class. Enrollment in the three-year-old program is limited to sixteen children. Children must be fully toilet trained.
- The four-year-old program runs on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings. Children must be four years old by January 1st of the graduating year to enrol in the four-year-old class. Children must be fully toilet trained. Enrollment in the four-year-old programs is limited to eighteen children.
- The afternoon program is a mixed age class open to three year old and four year old children. Children must be at least three years old by January 1st of the graduating year to enrol in the afternoon class. Children must be fully toilet trained.

REGISTRATION PRIORITY - All children who have previously attended Rio Terrace Community Preschool (and their siblings) have first priority in the program and are able to register prior to other families for the following year (generally late January). Children whose families live in the Rio Terrace, Patricia Heights, and Quesnell Community, are eligible to register one week later. Non-alumni out-of-area residents are eligible to register following one additional week. Children within these categories will be enrolled in the order that a fully complete Registration Application Form and all supporting documentation have been provided to the registrar. All registration

documentation will be completed online via Google.

FEES - In order to register a child in the preschool, a \$100 registration fee is paid when a child first registers. The registration fee is non-refundable. If a child is on a waiting list for one of our programs, the registration fee is not submitted until a spot becomes available and this spot is accepted by the parents. Yearly tuition fees, considering applicable government subsidy, are \$450 for the three-year-old program and \$900 for the four-year-old programs. All fees and tuition payments must be submitted with the registration application. Cheques should be made payable to the Rio Terrace Community Preschool.

Tuition payment may be made according to one of the following two options:

- One cheque for the entire tuition amount (i.e. \$463.50 or \$927).
- OR
- Monthly tuition payments via automatic withdrawal through online banking for September 1 to June 1 (\$46.35 or \$92.70 per month x 10 months).

Fees are payable in full, whether or not your child attends all the sessions. Fees are not refunded for absences due to illness, holidays, or inclement weather. N.S.F. cheques or declined automatic banking withdrawal will be charged \$17.00 and payment will be immediately requested by our volunteer executive.

WITHDRAWAL FROM PRESCHOOL - One full calendar month's written notice to the president of the preschool is required to withdraw from the preschool. A "Rio Terrace Community Preschool Withdrawal Form" must be filled out and submitted to the president. If you withdraw part way through a month (i.e. January 15th) the next month's full tuition will be cashed (i.e. February). If you withdraw after August 1 for the upcoming school year, September's full tuition will be cashed. There will be no refunds for partial months.

COMMUNITY LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP - As the preschool is part of the Rio Terrace Community League and is covered under the Community League's insurance policy, a current community league membership is required for your child to attend Rio Terrace Community Preschool. This membership can be from the Community League of your choice.

MEDICAL CONSIDERATIONS - Our staff have certified CPR training. In the event of an emergency the duty parent/aide or teacher MUST remain with the child until the parent arrives. We will phone an ambulance if necessary ((780) 426-3232 or 911).

If your child has health concerns, it is your responsibility to discuss this with the teacher, preferably before registering. If the child requires emergency medication or special care, a parent or assistant may be required to attend with the child. It may also be necessary for you to provide the preschool with a signed waiver of responsibility absolving the staff and parent helpers from legal responsibility.

Allergies and dietary food restrictions are recorded on the snack list in the classroom. Parents of children with severe allergies are responsible for checking the snack and updating the allergy list.

In the event that your child comes down with a communicable disease, you are required to inform the teacher of the illness as soon as it has been diagnosed. This will permit other parents to be warned to look for the symptoms and limit the spread of the disease.

SICK CHILD - When a child is not well please keep your child at home to prevent spread of illnesses. If your child has a fever, diarrhea or vomiting, your child should not return to preschool until symptom free for 24 hours. If a child becomes ill while attending a session, we will contact the parents to pick up the child. If the parents cannot be reached, we will contact the emergency person listed on the student's registration form.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT - We operate as a parent co-operative, and as such it is necessary that we receive everyone's assistance. One parent (per child) will be required to take an executive position or to take on particular jobs. When a parent takes on a job, they receive a job description for it; new suggestions for jobs are always welcome.

Parents should be prepared to:

1. Attend the preschool's general meetings, 3 times per year.
2. Support in the classroom every four to six weeks.
3. Be responsible for a parent job or serve on the Executive Board.
4. Assist with fundraising.

Additionally, if you have special skills, hobbies, or exciting jobs, and would like to assist the teacher with special projects or field trips, please take the time to advise the teacher.

FUNDRAISING - Parents are obligated to participate in Fundraising Initiatives throughout the year. During the first General Meeting a fundraising commitment signup will be presented by the fundraising committee. Participation is mandatory and all parents must sign up. One of the main fundraisers for the preschool is a Silent Auction Event held in late fall. As part of the registration package, a deposit of \$200 is collected as a "Fundraising Deposit". The fundraising committee will determine if appropriate fundraising requirements for the Silent Auction are met, and if so, this cheque is returned to you. If fundraising requirements for the silent auction are not met, this "Fundraising Deposit" will be cashed. Additionally, there are other fundraising events throughout the school year where all parents are expected to participate.

MEETINGS - General Meetings will be held in the Community League Hall (3) THREE times annually (September, October and May). At least one parent or a parent representative from each family is expected to attend every meeting. Please make childcare arrangements, as these meetings are for parents only. The General Meetings provide a time for the teacher to share concerns and anecdotes about life in the classroom with your child and give parents an opportunity to participate in running the school. Furthermore, parents should feel free to express any suggestions or concerns regarding the program or operation of the pre-school to the Executive (both at the meetings and in private). Agendas and minutes of the meetings will be posted for the parents to read.

Each family is required to submit three undated cheques of \$25.00 each, when you submit your preschool fees for the year. Your cheques will be returned to you one at a time after each General Meeting attended. If you are unable to attend a General Meeting, and you cannot send another family member in your place, one \$25.00 cheque will be cashed (for each missed General Meeting).

If you have two children attending the preschool at the same time (twins, siblings in two different classes) you will be required to attend all three General Meetings and will need to submit only (3) THREE General Meeting cheques. After each General meeting your cheque(s) will be returned, as long as you attended the meeting. All other fees (i.e. registration fee, tuition, silent auction deposit) must be paid in full for each individual child.

“SPECIAL HELPER DAYS” – Your child will be assigned a “special helper” day approximately every 4-6 weeks. On your child’s special helper day your child will have a few special jobs, including bringing a special item from home to show and share with the class. On your child’s special day, a parent or caregiver is the helper in the classroom and it is your responsibility to provide the assigned snack for the class. Please be prepared to assist in the classroom according to the roster. Unfortunately, due to insurance you may not bring siblings on special helper days. Your child looks forward to sharing his/her "special day" with you and your undivided attention is required when preschool is in session.

In consideration of the teacher's dependence on your help, please be in the classroom by 8:45 a.m. / 12:15 p.m. This will give you time to:

- a) Help set up equipment.
- b) Review the day’s plan with the teacher.
- c) Receive any extra instructions for the day.
- d) Acclimatise yourself to the room and settle in before the other children arrive; and,
- e) Spend a few minutes alone with your child so she/he can show you his/her favourite things at school.

Please follow the list of duties posted in the classroom to assist you in determining how you can help. The teacher will require your participation in activities, your help with supervision, and your assistance making sure the program runs successfully. You will also be required to help with cleaning up after class.

If a parent is unable to attend on their scheduled “special” day, they must make arrangements to find a substitute (grandparent, sitter, etc.) or to trade with another family. Please notify the duty roster parent and teacher of any changes as soon as possible. If you have a preference regarding days, please notify the teacher of this before the list is drawn up.

SNACKS - Snacks are provided by the Special Day Parent on their assigned day. Please ensure that adequate quantities are provided for 16/18 children and the staff. Children will be encouraged to sample whatever snack the Special Day Parent brings. According to health regulations, snacks must be prepared at the pre-school (this includes cutting, washing, mixing, assembling etc.). No home baked goodies are permitted.

Please check the posted dietary food restrictions and allergy list before serving snack and record the snack on the Board of Health snack list.

Some simple snack suggestions are fruit, vegetables, cubes of meat or cheese and served with crackers, store-bought muffins, yogurt, granola bars or bread sticks. Water bottles will be available for children as they are during the rest of class time. Please avoid such snacks as pop, sugared fruit drinks, sweet cookies, cake, doughnuts, potato chips, candy and chocolate bars as these items contain calories and few nutrients. Dishes are provided. Please remember it is just a snack.

MONTHLY CALENDARS AND NEWSLETTERS - Our teacher will prepare monthly calendars. Parents should review these carefully as they inform you about your child's activities and list special items, which may be required in class, as well as any upcoming social events (Winter Party, etc.)

SCHOOL YEAR - Classes commence one week after the start of the Edmonton Public Schools in September and end in mid-June. All scheduled holidays or non-operational days follow the Edmonton Public School Board calendar.

PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR SCHOOL - Speak positively about school and talk about all the fun your child will have. Please see that your child has adequate sleep and well-balanced meals. This helps with all the new stimulation of the day.

Be on time and stay until the classroom door opens letting your child know that school is starting. Saying goodbye is easy for some children and for others a natural fear of being left is something that will take time. Please be on time to pick up your child at the end of the class. Teachers understand that each child and caregiver will transition into a new routine in a different way and are there to support and guide each family.

EDUCATOR EMERGENCY ABSENCE - In the event that one of our educators is unable to attend class, the following actions will be taken:

Notification Timeframe: The following people will be notified by text and email at least 90 minutes before class begins: the other educator, the board president and the emergency parent helper. The emergency parent helper will send an email to secure a parent volunteer who will attend the class.

A volunteer must be secured at least one hour before the start of class and the emergency parent and the educator notified by email.

Ratios for 2023/24: The afternoon class needs one parent volunteer and the morning classes each need to have two confirmed volunteers (the special helper of the day and one more) when a staff member is not in attendance. This will meet our required child:parent ratio.

Cancellation: In the rare instance a parent cannot be secured within the specified timeframe the preschool class will be cancelled.

PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION - The teacher would appreciate being told of any concerns such as sickness, trauma, or anything causing great excitement or joy, which would affect your child's behaviour at school. Knowing the above will assist the teacher in finding a suitable activity for your child or to anticipate any problems in the classroom. If you have any worries, please bring this to the teacher's attention by special appointment or when the children are not around so that matter can be given full attention.

Preferred Communication Method:

- **Email:** Our primary mode of communication is email. Please send all non-emergency communications, including illness reports and absences, to rtpedm@gmail.com. We will check emails before and after each class to address any inquiries or updates.

Emergency Contact Information:

- **Emergency Phone Number:** For urgent matters or emergencies, please contact us at 780-718-0230. This number is reserved exclusively for emergencies.
- **Text Messages:** While we encourage the use of email, we understand that urgent matters may arise. However, please note that text messages will not be checked in a

timely manner. For immediate assistance, call the emergency phone number mentioned above.

Response Timeframe:

- **Before/After Class:** We will diligently check and respond to emails before and after each class. This ensures that we can address non-emergency matters promptly.
- **During Class:** Any emails sent during class hours will not receive a response until after the class is complete. We are busy working with your child during class and not attending to emails.

Illness and Absence Reporting:

- **Email Notification:** If your child is unwell or unable to attend preschool, kindly report their illness or absence via email to rtpedm@gmail.com, preferably before class begins.

COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL - Do you have a wonder, question or need more information about preschool? We are always available to chat and clarify your queries. Both parents and educators strive for a program that supports and keeps the best interest of children in mind and the way for us to achieve this is through open communication. Contact the educators when you are wondering about something!

Do you have a concern? Each situation is unique and parents are encouraged to reach out to the educators to discuss concerns. Open and constructive dialogue to address and resolve any issues is important in maintaining relationships between the teaching team and parents. At times, a parent might be apprehensive talking with the educators or feel that their concern has not been satisfactorily addressed. If so, please contact the President of the Parent Executive at president.rtcps@gmail.com. The Board President will be available to address and assist with any unresolved issues.

SOCIAL MEDIA - Social media is a wonderful tool to highlight and share our exceptional preschool program and learning approaches with children. As parents, you are an integral part of building our preschool community and encouraging others to get involved with Rio Terrace Preschool. The online presence of the Preschool and parents in our preschool community is one key aspect of building and maintaining a positive and supportive environment for our children, families, staff and future families.

We understand that social media is a platform for community interaction. We encourage parents to use discretion and refrain from discussing preschool matters in public forums. If you have a concern or need information, please discuss it with the Preschool staff or Parent Executive rather than on social media or in conversations with others. Our preschool is a close-knit community and we are all here to support one another during this preschool experience.

CONFIDENTIALITY - Preschool is an exciting time for your child's growth and learning and, as proud parents, we often want to share this widely! Please refrain from sharing personal information or photos about other children and families or teachers on social media without explicit consent. Respect the privacy of all members of our preschool community.

ADVOCACY - Parents are the Preschool's best advocates! We encourage you to share information and comments on social media with the intention of promoting positive aspects, achievements, or events. Did you know that Rio Terrace Community Preschool received an

award as one of the top three preschools in Edmonton? That was due, in part, to our excellent parent engagement on social media!

GUIDING BEHAVIOUR POLICY - Our purpose includes providing a supportive environment in which children can enjoy the company of others, play with new friends individually or in a group continually learning how to respect one another. Demonstrating, modelling, and acknowledging examples of positive ways of interacting with each other is the basis of our policy. Providing a flexible and responsive atmosphere through the organization of the day, and the physical set up of our preschool helps to prevent behavioural challenges.

Our educators will model appropriate behaviour. If a problem does arise, the educator will first encourage conflict resolution. Then the educator will then redirect the child to a different activity and suggest appropriate behaviour. If the child is harming themselves or others, they will be safely removed from the situation.

It is best if children can work out their own conflicts and they will be encouraged to do this by our educators. Should a difficulty arise with a child that appears to be negatively affecting the child or other children in the class, the teacher will notify the parents.

In general, duty parents should refer disciplinary problems to the staff to ensure consistency.

The Executive Board reserves the right, upon recommendation of the teacher, to remove a child from the program if discipline becomes a very serious problem that cannot be resolved.

FIELD TRIPS - Parents will be given the opportunity to suggest field trips. All three programs may have field trips during the year. Parents will be asked to join us on field trips, and we would appreciate any invitations to inspect backyards for such things as coloured leaves in the fall, vegetable gardens, outdoor rabbits and other pets, caterpillars, spiders and spring flowers.

CLOTHING - Please pack a change of clothes for your child and label all clothes. According to health and safety regulations, children are required to wear shoes with non-slip soles. Please label footwear and leave it in our boot room or bring it along daily. Children should wear washable and durable play clothes to school, preschool is messy business!

Dress children appropriately for outdoor play. If it is colder than -20 degrees Celsius, wind chill considered, the class will not be going outside. During the winter months, snow pants, mitts, hats etc. are required. PLEASE LABEL ALL OUTDOOR GEAR!!

BIRTHDAYS – On your child's birthday or as close to the day as possible, we will celebrate by singing Happy Birthday. At year-end we will celebrate summer birthdays. Please do not send any snacks or loot bags. The teachers will have a small present for the birthday child.

FIRE DRILLS (Teacher's routine printed here for your information)

We conduct fire drill procedures regularly and inform the children about fire safety, and fire drill regulations, as well as evacuation procedures. In the event of an evacuation, children will walk to Rio Terrace Elementary School at 7608-154 Street (780-481-6866).

FIRE DRILL PROCEDURE

1. Conduct at least one fire drill per month. (Keep a record of performance on the chart.)

2. Maintain and know how to use fire equipment (extinguishers and alarm system).
3. After a drill, reset alarm system in control panel to the right of the main door.
4. Children will learn to acknowledge the alarm immediately, quickly, and quietly, and exit out south door.
5. Explain that they must not wait to dress or take belongings.
6. The teacher and aide/duty parent will then follow evacuation procedures of the emergency plan.

EVACUATION PROCEDURE

1. SOUND ALARM IMMEDIATELY.
2. EVACUATE:
 - (a) Duty Parent/Assistant leads children out south preschool door. Alternative exit through yellow door to main hall exit.
 - (b) Teacher takes registration forms and emergency ponchos, checks storage area, playroom, washrooms, and entrance. They exit via main south door. Close doors if practical to do so.
3. PHONE fire department (911 or 780-496-3900).
4. ASSEMBLE CHILDREN: Duty Parent assembles children west of the building (100' clear in case of an explosion). An actual accounting of the children will be made when the building has been evacuated. Provide children with emergency ponchos if necessary and possible. Meet the Edmonton Fire Department to direct and to report any missing children if possible.
5. If the Fire Department decides it is safe to do so, orders will be given to return to the building, otherwise all children and staff will move to the predetermined and approved premises.

RELOCATION PROCEDURES

1. Walk children from Rio Terrace Community Hall to Rio Terrace Elementary School (7608-154 Street, 780-481-6866). In the event of an evacuation of a wider area, proceed to Patricia Heights Elementary School (16216 - 78 Avenue, 780-487-0550).
2. Assemble children near the principal's office. Duty Parent/Assistant remains with the children while the teacher advises the principal we are there.
3. Begin contacting parents to inform them of the children's whereabouts.

RIO TERRACE PLAYGROUND POLICIES

1. Assemble in the front entryway until all children and adults are prepared.

2. Each child must wear a “pinnie” (for easy spotting and identification).
3. Only an ADULT opens the door.
4. Walk up the preschool path to the main sidewalk (76 Avenue). Proceed west along the sidewalk to the path that leads to the playground.
5. We decide which area of the playground we are going to play in depending on the following factors: if the day-care children are there, if there are mothers and small children, or if the area is too wet.
6. Under no circumstances are the children allowed outside the perimeter of the playground, unless a group activity has been planned.
7. When returning to the classroom, the children will be signalled to regroup for a head count and will then walk back to the preschool. The children are not allowed to leave preschool until the parent/caregiver has entered the building for pick up at 11:30 a.m./3:00 p.m. (If the individual who regularly picks up your child changes THE TEACHER/ASSISTANT MUST BE NOTIFIED).
8. The same rules apply during winter depending on weather conditions.