

PARENT HANDBOOK



**Carstairs Playschool Society
213, 10th Ave North, South Entrance
Box 631 Carstairs, Alberta TOM 0N0**

Phone: (403)816-1481

www.carstairsplayschool.net

WHO WE ARE:

The Carstairs Playschool Society became a society on November 15th, 1989 and is licensed by Alberta's Early Learning & Child Care Act (ELCCA), in accordance with the Early Learning & Child Care Regulation. The playschool is to follow strict regulations and also adhere to Alberta Health Services (AHS) Health and Safety Child Care Guidelines. The playschool is subject to random inspections to ensure that the facility and staff are in compliance with all regulations provided.

Carstairs Playschool is a preschool environment that focuses on kindergarten readiness, healthy active living, positive play, and socialization.

Kindergarten Readiness - We want all children who complete our program to succeed in kindergarten. To ensure their success, we practice prerequisite skills in reading, writing, and math. These prerequisite skills include letter recognition, reading books left to right, linking text with images; hand strength, pencil grip, hand precision; number recognition, shapes and colors.

Healthy Active Living - Our students participate in weekly movement or outdoor play time. Our facility has a large open space for equipment and a park across the street. We practice regular hand hygiene and encourage healthy snacks.

Positive Play and Socialization - We have a large, open space full of activities and centers that encourage groups and creative play. We emphasize independence, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship.

The Carstairs Playschool Society is mostly a volunteer organization. It is the Board of Directors responsibility to operate the Playschool, set the guidelines for staff, ensure that all regulations are followed and act as a liaison between the staff, parents and governing authorities.

Members of the Playschool Board of Directors are elected at an annual general meeting held in August/September of each year. All Board of Director positions are a one year term with a maximum of three consecutive years.

The Board of Directors consists of the following positions:

- Chairperson
 - The Chairperson looks after day to day operations and includes the Vice-Chairperson if necessary. When the year's term is over, the outgoing Chairperson is expected to remain available to the Board of Directors for one year.
- Vice-Chairperson
 - The Vice-Chairperson assists the Chairperson with the day to day operations.
- Secretary
 - The Secretary is responsible for recording all meeting minutes, documenting and distributing the minutes to the rest of the board two weeks post meeting.

- Scholastic Representative
 - The Scholastic representative provides the families with the monthly flyer, places orders and distributes books.
- Fundraising Representative
 - The Fundraising representative seeks, organizes and executes the playschool fundraisers. They are also responsible for providing the playschools office administrator with all documentation surrounding the fundraisers.
- Class Representatives
 - The Class representatives are responsible for helping to organize the playschool parties. If in case of a facility emergency the representatives will be called upon to notify each individual family for their age group.
- Members At Large
 - The Carstairs Playschool board welcomes members who may not want to hold a position with specific responsibilities. Members at Large attend monthly meetings, have input and voting authority.

Any parent of a child registered may attend and participate in monthly board meetings. Please contact the Chairperson to confirm scheduled meeting dates.

All questions or concerns regarding programming, staff or procedures should be forwarded to the Board of Directors via email at carstairsplayschoolboard@gmail.com. All comments will be reviewed by the chairperson and will be discussed at the monthly board meeting. The chairperson or office administrator will follow up on any comments they have received.

Staff Qualifications

The playschool teacher is required to have at least a Level 2 Early Learning Educator certificate issued by the ELCCA. The teacher assistant is required to have a Level 1 Early Learning Educator certificate, also issued by the ELCCA. Both teacher and teacher assistant must have a current Standard First Aid and CPR Level C certification. All staff and volunteers must complete a criminal record check, including vulnerable sector. Staff are encouraged to further develop their qualifications through courses and seminars.

OUR PROGRAMS:

Three Year Old Program

Students wishing to attend the three year old program must be three years of age by December 31st of the year they are attending. Only three spots will be held for children who are not three years old as of September 31st, but will be three as of December 31st. Children can not attend until after their third birthday. Parents will still be held responsible to pay for the months the child is not yet in the class, as subsidies will not cover program fees until the child is in attendance.

The three year old class consists of a maximum of 15 students.

Program times are as follows:

- Monday/Wednesday 8:45 AM – 11:15 AM

Three/Four Year Old Split Program

Children registered in the three/four year old program must be three by the age of September 1st and four years of age by December 31st of the year they are attending. The three/four year old class will have a maximum of 22 students per class.

Program times are as follows:

- Monday/Wednesday 12:30 PM – 3:30 PM

Four Year Old Program

Children registered in one the four year old programs must be four years of age by December 31st of the year they are attending. The four year old classes will have a maximum of 22 students per class. Program times are as follows:

- Tuesday/Thursday 8:30 AM - 11:30 AM
- Tuesday/Thursday 12:30 PM - 3:30 PM

Children must be toilet trained completely before they can attend (ABSOLUTELY NO PULL-UPS). We understand that occasional accidents do happen, but if a child has regular accidents, the child may be asked to leave the Playschool. This policy is in place due to health regulations within our licensing. In the event of a bowel movement incident, the parent or emergency contact will be notified, and arrangements will be made to come clean up the child immediately.

Please note that we generally follow the Chinook Edge School Division school calendar in regard to days off for various reasons. To keep classes even, when Monday is a holiday, there will be no classes on Tuesday. If an organization day falls on a Wednesday, then there will be no class on the Thursday. The school calendar will be provided and available on the website at the beginning of each school year.

Program Fees

Our fees are based on operating expenses and are kept at a minimum as much as possible. Program fees are reviewed yearly and are subject to change year to year.

1. \$50 Registration fee – This is a non-refundable fee.
2. Program fees
 - a. Monthly fee - \$128.75 each month starting September 1st, through to June 1st
 - b. Families who have a household income of less than \$180,000, can apply to receive Child Care Subsidy. To apply or for more details visit <https://applychildcaresubsidy.alberta.ca/>
 - c. All families are eligible to receive funding from the Federal-Provincial Affordability Funding. As of January 2022, all families will receive \$75 per month off of their program fees, decreasing their payment to \$53.75. More about this funding can be found at <https://www.alberta.ca/federal-provincial-child-care-agreement.aspx>

Monthly payments can be sent by the first of the month, via EFT to carstairsplayschool@gmail.com or cheque.

Continuous failure to send EFT payments after three months will result in a delinquent account. Your child will not be allowed to attend programming until the account is in good standing. Email notification of this will be issued when accounts are frozen.

NSF fee is \$50 for each returned cheque. After three returned cheques, written notice will be provided indicating program fees will be on CASH basis moving forward. If payment is not made by the first of the month prior, the Board of Directors may ask the family to leave the program.

Receipts will be provided on a calendar year basis and will be emailed out in January of each year.

Late Pick Up Fee

Due to the limited amount of time between classes, the Carstairs Playschool Society asks that parents arrive at least five minutes prior to your designated pick up time. If the situation arises that you will not be able to arrive on time, please message or call the school to notify staff. If late pick up is a continuous occurrence, staff will provide a verbal warning. If after two verbal warnings, late pick up continues a \$10 per five minutes late pick up fee will be charged.

Registration Forms

Forms must be filled out in completion in order for the playschool to remain in compliance with ELCCA. All forms will be kept onsite and must be updated as necessary throughout the school year. It is the parent's responsibility to notify of any changes in contact information, emergency contact information, and child's medical history. Notification of changes can be emailed to carstairsplayschool@gmail.com.

Withdrawal

If you decide to remove your child from the Carstairs Playschool program, 30 days written notice is required. Program Fees paid will be refunded within two weeks for the months not attended after written notice received and reviewed by the board of directors. The refund will not be prorated for mid-month withdrawals. Any post dated cheques will be returned to you via Canada Post or in person.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS:

Program Unit Funding Program (PUF program) - Alberta Education provides program unit funding to support the educational needs of children who may require additional support. The PUF program is operated through a Third-Party that utilizes our facility. Children between the ages of three and four may be eligible for the funding. The funding is used to support children's participation (with the help of Education Assistants) and learning in early childhood programs. If you have concerns regarding your child's development, please advise staff immediately. They will provide you with guidance and contact information to get your concerns addressed. All PUF students must have funding in place by September 31st.

CHILD GUIDANCE:

The Carstairs Playschool focuses on prevention of behavior problems through predictable routines, a safe environment and vigilant supervision. We set and clearly define limits and standards of behavior for the group which promotes safety, harmony and responsibility. We support children as they learn and practice appropriate and acceptable behaviors. The children are encouraged to talk about their feelings of anger and frustration rather than acting out. We will never use any form of physical punishment, unreasonable consequences or verbal threats. We will always emphasize the positive. Consequences will be directed at the behavior, not the child. If the negative behavior continues, a short "time in" or quiet time away from the activity and a discussion between the student and staff will be had regarding the behavior. "Time in" or quiet times are a maximum of three minutes for three year old's and a maximum of four minutes for four year old's.

If a situation occurs the details of the incident will be recorded and reviewed at pick up with the parent/guardian. Staff will continue to connect with the parents about their child's behavior. If the Board of Directors feels that the behavior is not improving, we will contact the parents to discuss the concern.

We reserve the right to remove children from the program due to severe behavioral issues that have not been rectified. When the safety of the students, staff members, or volunteers are put at risk, parents will be contacted to pick up their child from the program. Physical and verbal abuse will not be tolerated.

PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF ABUSE:

Carstairs Playschool Society is committed to fostering a caring, safe and respectful atmosphere for our clients. Any abusive behavior on the part of employees, volunteers, students, other persons providing services, clients, family members and visitors will not be tolerated.

Carstairs Playschool Society, as a service provider, is required by Early Learning and Child Care Regulation, Protocols for Handling Child Abuse and Neglect in Child Care Service to prevent and report abuse of clients. For a more in depth look, our Prevention and Management of Abuse Policy can be found on our website.

INCLEMENT WEATHER:

Carstairs Playschool will be following the guidelines set out by Chinook Edge School Division. They are as follows:

- **Green days** – the days when it is clearly safe for everyone to travel
- **Yellow days** – the days when buses might not run, but schools remain open. Please visit our website at www.carstairsplayschool.net or our Facebook page for status.
- **Red days** – the days where the facility will be closed for everyone’s safety. We will initiate our call out procedure as promptly as possible. Visit our website at www.carstairsplayschool.net or our Facebook page for status.

In the event of an unexpected closure, notification will be fanned out via email, website, Facebook and call out as soon as possible. Refunds will not be given for school closure due to weather.

SCHOOL CLOSURE:

In the event of staff illness, attempts will be made to bring in substitute staff. However, if staff is not available the playschool may have to close until staffing can be secured. Refunds will not be issued for these days.

In the event of an outbreak or AHS mandated closure, refunds will only be issued if the closure extends over one month.

As much notice as possible will be provided, by callout, website, Facebook, and email.

EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN:

The emergency evacuation plan will be posted in the entryway of the Playschool and on the green door located inside the classroom.

In case of an emergency, such as fire, students will be evacuated to the **Carstairs Legion parking lot (121 10 Ave N)**. The children will be evacuated through the PLAYSCHOOL ENTRANCE or, if this is not possible, through the FIRE EXIT, FRONT ENTRANCE or GYMNASIUM EXIT. Carstairs Playschool staff will walk the students to the Carstairs Legion parking lot, call 9-1-1, take attendance, and begin the call out procedure.

Staff will call 9-1-1 in the event of fire, medical or traumatic injury, etc. Parents will be notified immediately of any emergencies at the playschool. The appropriate class binder, with all contact information included and cell phone will accompany staff at all times when leaving the facility.

FIRE DRILL PRACTICES WILL OCCUR REGULARLY WITH THE CHILDREN. During these fire drills, the children will be taken to the Carstairs Legion parking lot, to familiarize students with the emergency procedure, protocols and meeting place.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

1. What does my child need to have for school?

- A complete change of clothing in a labeled ziplock bag. This should include socks and underwear. Extra clothes will be collected and stored at the playschool.
- A snack bag, with a healthy snack and refillable, labeled water bottle. Please no juice boxes, as they rarely get finished and we do not have storage for recyclables. We are a NUT FREE FACILITY. 20 minutes will be provided for snack time.
- Clean, labeled indoor shoes that stay at the facility. VELCRO PREFERRED.
- Appropriate clothing for outdoor activities.
- Classroom supplies
 - Three containers of Play-doh, your choice of color
 - Three glue sticks
 - One sheet of stickers, any size
 - Two Sharpies - black

2. What does it mean to be a “NUT FREE” facility?

Nut and peanut allergies can cause a severe reaction called anaphylaxis. Anaphylaxis may begin with some of the same symptoms as a less severe reaction but then quickly worsen, leading someone to have trouble breathing, feel lightheaded, or to pass out. If it is not treated quickly, anaphylaxis can be life threatening. A small amount of nut protein can set off a severe reaction. For the safety of our students, the Board of Directors has deemed the Carstairs Playschool a NUT FREE facility.

3. Can I volunteer in or visit my child’s class?

At this time volunteers or visitors are not permitted. Should you need to stop by while your child is in programming, we ask that you call first. Please ring the doorbell and wait for the staff. You will be required to complete an online self-screening form, sanitize and mask. Visits are not to be longer than 10 minutes and distancing from all other students and staff is required.

Should you want to volunteer in other ways, please reach out to the Board of Directors at carstairsplayschool@gmail.com.

4. What happens if my child becomes ill?

Please keep your child home if they are sick in any way. **Parents and children must not enter the playschool if they have any Covid-19 or flu like symptoms.** Please refer to the Covid-19 Policies and Procedures document found on our website.

In addition to Covid-19 symptoms, if your child has head lice they will not be permitted to attend. If your child appears to be too ill to participate in the program, staff reserves the right to not allow the child into the facility. Staff reserve the right to monitor your child's temperature if they feel it is necessary. If your child develops an illness during class time, staff will follow Covid-19 procedures and contact you to make arrangements for your child to be picked up immediately.

Refunds will not be issued for days missed.

In case of student absence, please contact our staff via phone or text at (403)816-1481.

5. What happens if my child requires medication?

Carstairs Playschool staff will not administer medications unless it is emergency medical intervention (IE. Asthma, Anaphylactic Allergy, etc.) An Emergency Medication Authorization Sheet must be completed by parents at the time of delivering emergency medication to the playschool. In the event that medication is administered, staff will record the circumstances in which the medication was deemed necessary, the medication given (including name and dosage), the time of administration and time of contact with parents (and EMS if applicable).

6. What if someone else needs to pick my child up from playschool?

Carstairs Playschool staff will only release your child to people who are listed as authorized persons on the registration form. If at some point you require an additional person to pick up, please notify staff prior to by texting or calling (403) 816 1481.

7. May my child bring in a treat to celebrate a special occasion?

Parents are welcome to send a special treat to be shared in the classroom. However, treats must arrive unopened and prepackaged. Treats must be NUT FREE. Staff will not serve homemade goods. Please notify staff prior to bringing treats.

If you prefer that your child not partake in special treats, please notify the staff at the beginning of the year. You are also welcome to send an alternate prepackaged treat to be kept at the facility.

8. Can my child wear a pull up?

No, all children must be fully potty trained prior to attending playschool. This is due to licensing requirements around change tables and sanitation. We do understand that accidents happen at such an early age. If a child accidentally pees, staff will assist them in changing their clothes into the extra clothing provided by parents. If a child accidentally soils themselves, parents will be required to come and change their child. Again, this is due to licensing.

Staff will assist the children in the bathroom, if necessary and ensure proper hand hygiene.

Staff remind children to use the washroom periodically throughout programming.