

Little Flower Pre-Kindergarten Program



The Society of Our Lady for Community Education

INTRODUCTION

The Society of Our Lady for Community Education operates the Little Flower Pre-Kindergarten Program. This program has been organized to provide education and care for children. It is a provincially licensed, non-profit program administered by an Early Childhood Educator. The Parent Handbook of Little Flower Pre-Kindergarten Policies & Procedures is a valid part of the enrollment agreement between the program and the parents or guardians of children who are enrolled in the program.

This is a living document that can be updated and amended to reflect current best practices, or any changes deemed necessary by the Alberta Early Learning and Child Care Act and Regulation, Health Canada, or Alberta Health Services.

Goal

The Pre-Kindergarten Program will provide quality education and childcare that parents can rely upon throughout the school calendar year as defined by The Society of Our Lady for Community Education.

Program Philosophy

CHILDREN ARE MIGHTY, CREATIVE AND CAPABLE LEARNERS

We take a holistic approach to early childhood education, taking the child's intellectual, physical, and spiritual well-being into consideration. We believe in laying the foundation for life-long learners by creating an engaging, play-based program that sparks wonder and curiosity.

Our guiding curriculum principles are:

Faith-based: The learning environment is permeated with the Catholic Faith. We seek to support the growth and development of children who are made in the image and likeness of God. We welcome and serve all children from all religious backgrounds and belief systems.

Emergent curriculum: We build on the interests of the children, through observation, conversation, and engagement. Teachers create open-ended activities and experiences that spark curiosity, extend learning opportunities, and encourage children to test new theories.

Projects: Children are co-creators who explore concepts, ideas, and interests through imagination and self-motivation. Children discover and express learning through many ways such as art, words, movement, building, outdoor and nature exploration, and more. Children learn early literacy, math and science concepts and develop language and communication skills through interest-led experiences.

Collaboration: Children are co-constructors and are encouraged to problem-solve, reason, and express their thoughts and ideas. Children develop social emotional skills through collaborating in peer groups, helping one another, and developing empathy. Teachers model healthy interactions and conflict resolution skills and respect the diversity and uniqueness of each child. Every child is a valued member of our community, and their families are respected partners in education whose traditions, culture, ideas, and skills are an asset to our classroom.

Observation and Documentation: Teachers observe and document learning through photos and written word to better understand children, to extend learning opportunities and to make learning visible for themselves, for families, and for the community.

Communities Served: Our pre-kindergarten will serve the geographic areas of Okotoks, Foothills, and Strathmore areas, and serves all children who are Catholic and non-Catholic.

Program Curriculum

The primary purpose of the Little Flower program is to aid in the development of the child socially, emotionally, physically, and spiritually in a developmentally appropriate and fun environment. In so doing, we will help to

prepare the children to enter a Kindergarten setting the following year.

The program follows the best and most current practices, including the Flight curriculum

framework. The following section describes the objectives in each developmental area:

Spiritual and Religious Development

1. Begin each day with prayer of gratitude to God.
2. Offer children the opportunity to explore creation where they experience the invisible nature of God through touching, smelling, tasting, seeing, and hearing the things that He has made.
3. Children come to know Jesus through their experiences with others and learn to love others and themselves as they were first loved by Him.
4. The Program will have a prayer table/space with a cloth, candle, rosary, and Bible that the children can explore freely, and gather around for prayer and learning.

Social Development

1. Be responsible for their belongings and for their work.
2. Create friendships and develop conflict resolution and problem-solving skills.
3. Engage in positive and respectful interactions with peers and adults.
4. Have a sense of community and feel a part of that community.
5. Demonstrate helping skills and empathy for others.

Working within a group necessitates sharing, taking turns and demonstrating politeness and respect. Children learn from each other, co-operating to form new ideas and accomplish tasks.

Emotional Development

1. Have a positive attitude toward learning and coming to preschool.
2. Develop a sense of responsibility for themselves and ownership of their belongings.
3. Regulate emotions, increase attention, and demonstrate prosocial behavior.
4. Develop a positive self-image, positive self-esteem, and a sense of pride in their accomplishments.
5. Recognize emotions and express them in a healthy manner.

The child's self-reliance is encouraged through dressing and undressing of outerwear upon arrival and departure from preschool. Goal setting, acting responsibly toward themselves, their peers, and the classroom and seeing themselves as valued members of the community, builds a healthy self-esteem and a sense of belonging.

Physical Development

1. Develop gross motor skills through games and physical activity time.
2. Develop fine motor skills by strengthening the hand muscles through dressing, using scissors, threading beads, playing with playdoh, tracing and more.
3. Encourage proper hygiene habits such as independent toileting and washing hands.

Intellectual Development

1. Develop communication skills through observing, questioning, reflecting, and reaching conclusions.
2. Increase awareness of the community and the people around them.
3. Develop self-regulation and problem-solving skills. Able to construct and share ideas with peers and adults.
4. Engage in complex play using curiosity, creativity, and imagination.
5. Through play-based experiences, letters; including, name recognition and phonological awareness, 2D/3D shapes, spatial awareness will be introduced. Including directions and maps, numbers, counting and early math and science concepts.
6. Enjoying literacy, choosing books, re-telling stories, and creating early connections to printed words.

Creative Development

1. Offer open-ended materials and experiences that spark creativity.
2. Offer process-based art experiences engaging children's imaginations.
3. Offer extended play time and access to creative activities each day to help children develop communication skills and express their emotions.
4. Plan activities that help children develop fine motor skills, bilateral hand use and hand-eye coordination.
5. Provide a variety of creative activities to develop children's thinking and problem-solving skills.
6. Exploring music through instruments, songs, and dance; creating and following patterns and rhythms.

All activities are developmentally appropriate and are designed to meet the children at their level. The program provides positive opportunities and experiences that foster creativity, imagination, and a love of learning. The children will be immersed in an enriched learning environment that is emergent and play based.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Fees, Payment, & Termination Policy

The Program salaries, supplies and administrative expenses are primarily supported by parent fees. Christ the Redeemer Catholic Separate Regional Division No. 3 provides the Program with space, utilities, and custodial services. A fee schedule is determined at the beginning of each year.

The monthly fee is as followed:

- Registration takes place through Time Savr. In order to complete the registration process, parents will be required to complete a PAD agreement and abide by the terms provided.

Termination/Suspension of Services

We reserve the right to suspend or terminate services for failure to make payments; disruptive behaviour; or other actions deemed inappropriate. Please note that children must be toilet trained to attend Little Flower. Upon termination, all outstanding balances must be paid. Please refer to the 'Child Guidance Policy' on page 10 of this handbook for a detailed description of the process that will occur prior to suspending a registration.

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from the program. Notice for withdrawal must be given prior to the billing cycle and with a minimum of 30-days notice. Registration fees are non-refundable. There will be no refunds or suspension of fees for family/personal vacation or illness.

Registration and Enrollment

Registration

The parent must complete the online registration form and submit it to the designate. Children who cannot be immediately enrolled will be placed on a waiting list.

Eligibility

Children must be 4 years of age by December 31 of the registration year.

Openings

Openings are determined based on the number of spaces permitted by the program's license. When openings occur, parents of registered children are contacted for enrollment based on a first-come basis for the time slot according to the date of registration.

Enrollment

1. Parents can access a set of enrollment forms for each child through the School Website. All forms must be completed on-line via Time Savr.
2. A registration fee will be payable when you formally register at Little Flower Pre-Kindergarten.
3. Children will be allowed to attend the program only after all forms have been completed and returned, and payment has been submitted.
4. If the parent has not submitted completed forms or payment on the date when the child is scheduled to start attending, the parent will be responsible for payment of the tuition fee to reserve the enrollment spot until the completed forms and payment are returned.

Enrollment Forms

- Parents will be asked to complete the following:

Registration Forms

Medication Authorization – if required

Walking/Field Trip Authorization

Emergency Medication – if required

Sunscreen Application

Insect Repellant Application

Photo Consent Forms

The Program expects the forms to be kept current. The parent must provide new information to the Lead Teacher regarding information on forms such as: emergency persons, names, phone numbers, and arrival/departure changes.

Program Hours

The Program times are as stated on the registration forms.

In addition to the Program space, the children may have access to the school gym, library, outdoor spaces and other spaces throughout the school.

Outdoor exploration and play are an important factor in mental and physical health and are an important part of our program. We will not go outside if the temperature falls below -20 degrees C in the winter, or during air advisories in the summer. The Lead Teacher will use their discretion about allowing children to go outdoors during high wind chills, heat, rain, or snowy conditions.

Please ensure your child is wearing weather-appropriate clothing.

Absences

If your child will not be attending the Program because of scheduled appointments, vacations, or other planned absences, please notify the Lead Teacher in advance. If your child is ill, please advise the Lead Teacher.

Sign-in/Out Policy

As per Licensing guidelines, children will be signed in and out daily through Time Savr.

Children will only be released to a parent/guardian as indicated on the enrollment form. Children will be allowed to leave with persons other than the parent only if written permission has been given to the Lead Teacher on the enrollment form, or in writing by the parent. If a one-time exception is made to this schedule, the parents should provide the Lead Teacher with a signed note or email. Identification will be required.

Parents are to pick up their children on-time and communicate any issues with the Lead Teacher.

Program Schedule

Little Flower Pre-Kindergarten will commence on Sept. 4th, 2025, unless unforeseen circumstances prevent this. If the program cannot start on the expected date, parents will be notified as soon as possible.

All registered families will be contacted prior to the start date.

1. **School Schedule** – Little Flower Pre-Kindergarten follows the Christ the Redeemer School Calendar and observes all closures, holidays, and PD days.
2. **Unscheduled No-School Days** - There will be no school on days when school is canceled due to water main breaks, heating failure, electrical problems, weather, etc.
3. **Unscheduled Early Dismissal Days** - The Program is not available when school is dismissed early due to water, heating, electrical problems, weather, etc.
4. **Teacher Illness** – in the event the Lead Teacher is ill, a qualified substitute will replace them. If possible, parents will be given notice of the substitute teacher.

Snacks

A healthy, **nut-free** snack will be provided by the parent/guardian. We are a nut-aware school, and snacks containing nuts will not be permitted. This rule will be strictly enforced to keep children with allergies safe. Shared food for special circumstances and celebrations is allowed, with the approval of the Lead Teacher.

For special occasions, such as birthdays and holidays, special treats can be provided by families. We ask that the treats are store bought and have an ingredients list available.

Visitors and Students

Guests from the community may be invited to participate in the Program during special events and activities. At no time will a visitor be left unsupervised with children.

The program is proud to collaborate with local Colleges and Universities to accept students who are working in the Early Learning field.

- ✓ A student will have a valid criminal reference check – current within 6 months
- ✓ A student will not have unsupervised access to children
- ✓ A student will not count in ratio
- ✓ A student must agree to Little Flower Pre-Kindergarten's Policies and Procedures before attending

Child's Personal Property

Children's personal property, coats, clothing, school bags, etc. should be labeled with the child's first and last name. Any personal items left behind will be put in the 'Lost and Found'. The Program cannot be responsible for lost or damaged personal property.

Children should not bring money, toys, candy, chocolate, gum, or other items not necessary for school activities to the program without checking with the Lead Teacher.

What to Bring

- ✓ A regular sized backpack
- ✓ A pair of non-marking running shoes that your child can put on/take off independently that will stay at the school (Velcro or slip-on please)
- ✓ A healthy nut-free snack and a reusable water bottle
- ✓ A labeled change of clothing in a Ziploc bag (pants/shirt/socks/underwear that will be kept in the backpack)
- ✓ Hat and sunscreen when the weather is hot
- ✓ Please wear play clothing

School Supplies

Little Flower Pre-Kindergarten is a not-for-profit Program. We ask families to provide a small number of

supplies that will be used in the program. The list of supplies will be provided prior to the first day of school.

Field Trips

From time to time during the year, the children may go on field trips into the community. Parents will be notified at the beginning of the month of the date and time of such field trip experiences and must sign a permission form to allow their child(ren) to participate. The staff will complete a Field Trip Form including the purpose and proposed activities for the Field Trip and submit it to the Program Director. The children will walk to the destination. **Transportation in personal cars is not permitted**, unless under extraordinary circumstances.

Insurance

The Program carries liability insurance through its agreement with Christ the Redeemer School District No. 3. Families may obtain additional insurance coverage.

Distribution of Medication

If a child is to be given emergency medication, the parent must provide the Lead Teacher with a completed, signed medication authorization form. The medication must be provided in the original container and will be administered as prescribed, or if changed; must be accompanied by the doctor's directions.

Medication will be kept locked and out of reach of children. A medication form will be completed when medication is administered.

Child Illness Policies

Our Program requires that the following symptoms will be the reason for a child to be absent for a period of at least 24 hours. We recognize some opinions may differ, but this is a firm policy.

If your child is sick, they must not attend preschool. If your child shows any symptoms as listed below, a parent will be notified to pick their child immediately and the child will be kept away from other children in the dedicated sick room, with supervision. If a parent cannot be reached, the emergency contact will be contacted.

- Fever more than 100.4°F
- Cough
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Green or yellow nasal discharge
- Discharge from eyes
- Head lice
- Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)
- Any communicable disease
- Unexplainable rash or cough
- Any illness that prevents the child from fully participating in the program

Health and Safety Policy

If your child has a known medical condition (asthma, anaphylactic allergies, diabetes, seizure disorder, etc.) please be sure the Lead teacher knows what to do if a problem should occur during program hours. Please supply the program with a personal health plan, if required.

In case of accident or illness, the following steps will be taken:

1. If minor, trained staff will administer First Aid as needed, complete an incident report form, and inform the parent(s) or guardian at pick-up.
2. If serious, trained staff will administer First Aid and contact a parent or guardian. If a parent or guardian is not available, the emergency contact will be contacted.
3. In case of emergency, 911 will be called. If warranted, an ambulance will be called, and an adult will accompany the child to a local hospital until a parent/guardian can arrive.
4. All serious incidents require an incident report form, an AB critical incident report form, and the incident reported to Child Care Licensing within 24 hours as per the Child Care Licensing Act.

Any protocols or procedures deemed necessary by Alberta Health Services, Alberta Children's Services, and/or Health Canada will be strictly followed by the Little Flower Pre-Kindergarten Program.

The Lead Teacher will make every effort to keep a child from getting into a car with a parent under the influence of drugs or alcohol and will contact the RCMP, if intoxication is suspected.

Staff are required to report suspected cases of child abuse. This includes the reporting of parents who appear to be impaired by drugs or alcohol.

Emergency Policy

Little Flower Pre-Kindergarten program will practice fire drills and lockdown drills as required. The drills will be carried out in a developmentally appropriate manner, keeping the children's health and safety as priority. During an emergency, our first concern is the safety and well-being of the children. Staff are trained in emergency protocols and will follow the emergency policies as outlined by the school.

- Parents will be contacted once the emergency has been resolved.
- The evacuation plan is posted on the Program window.

Child Guidance Policy

1. We will provide an environment that provides children with lots of choices to minimize struggles. Our goal is to support children with positive guidance techniques that encourage the development of prosocial behavior. Teachers will model and discuss class rules and routines, taking into consideration the developmental level of each child.
2. Unacceptable behavior is defined as any intentional behavior that is disruptive, destructive, or harmful to the child or to those present. Some examples of unacceptable behavior are intentionally hurting, pushing, or hitting others, or intentionally damaging property.
3. Child guidance methods, such as offering choices, redirection and a calm area will be used by all staff and volunteers.
4. All children have the right to be safe, the right to avoid unnecessary discomfort, the right to their possessions and the right to fairness.
5. Child guidance is addressed with the teacher who will act according to the following Program Policies and Procedures:
 - A. While considering the developmental level of the child, the teacher will speak with the child and explain the expected behavior. The teacher will continue to monitor and observe the child and encourage appropriate choices.
 - B. The teacher may ask the child to join her in the calm area and help the child with problem-solving and self-regulation skills.
 - C. If all interventions have been exhausted, the teacher may require the parent to remove the child from the class for the rest of the day.
 - D. The teacher will notify the parent of any continuing behavioural needs in person, or by phone, and a meeting will be set up to create a plan to best support the child. This plan will be reviewed daily or weekly depending on the child's needs. The Program Directors may be called in for an additional meeting if the problems persist and to provide recommendations to assist the Lead Teacher and parents. Parents will be provided with outside resources in each community to assist their child. The Lead Teacher and /or Directors may assist parents in accessing the resources listed above and attend collaboration meetings if required.
 - E. The Lead Teacher, parents and Directors may discuss an alternate or reduced schedule for a short period of time.
 - F. The Lead Teacher may determine that the child is not developmentally ready to attend preschool. If such a determination is made and a parent is asked to remove their child from the school, a prorated refund will be issued.
6. As per the Alberta Early Learning and Childcare Regulation, there shall be:
 - A. No form of physical punishment, or verbal or physical degradation.
 - B. No form of emotional deprivation.
 - C. The teacher shall not deny or threaten to deny any necessity.
 - D. The teacher shall not use or permit the use of any physical restraint, either physical or isolation.

7. The parents will be made aware of the child guidance policy in the Parent Handbook.

Parent Involvement

All parents/guardians will be invited to be involved in the program.

Parents who wish to volunteer in the program must be 18 years or older and have a current criminal sector check.

Parents will be encouraged to participate in any of the following ways:

- ✓ Volunteering in the program
- ✓ Collecting materials for children's projects
- ✓ Preparing materials
- ✓ Helping with field trips and/or guest visitors

Parents/guardians are expected to act in a respectful nature and follow all program policies and procedures.

Communication and Escalation

Parents are kept informed of what is happening in the Program in the following ways: 1. Class Dojo, email, phone, in-person communication.

2. Bulletin Areas - display information, workshops, and documentation.

3. Excursion Notices - notification of off-ground field trips.

4. Day-to-day contact with staff during arrival and departure.

5. Interviews with Staff Members - parents can request a meeting at any time to discuss their child's progress or any concerns they may have.

Little Flower Pre-Kindergarten has an open-door policy and parents are encouraged to communicate with the Program Staff.

If, after speaking with the Lead Teacher, a parent still has a concern, they are encouraged to contact the Program Director.

ClassDojo

As a way of keeping open communication with families, the teachers utilize an app called the ClassDojo. Through the Classdojo parents will be able to see pictures of their child's day, receive reminders, access the newsletter and communicate directly with the teachers. Photos and information shared within the Classdojo are meant to be enjoyed only by the child's family and are not to be shared on social media platforms or distributed in any way.

PARENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

LITTLE FLOWER PRE-KINDERGARTEN _____

CHILD(REN)'S NAME: _____ I have received and read the 2024 Handbook in full and fully understand the policies and procedures and understand the requirements regarding my child(ren). _____.

I, _____ consent for photos and video of my child to be posted in the ClassDojo. I acknowledge that I can remove this consent at any time.

I, _____ consent to receive electronic messages from Little Flower Pre-Kinderergarten, including Centre updates, important information, and emergency communications, etc.

Printed Name

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date