

SERENDIPITY PRE-KINDERGARTEN



A Wonderful Place for Children to Learn through Play!

HANDBOOK

2021-2022

Updated December 12, 2020

Serendipity Pre-Kindergarten

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We are pleased you have chosen Serendipity Pre-Kindergarten for your child. This booklet contains information regarding our philosophy, policies and general information. You will find this information valuable throughout the year, so make sure you keep it for future reference. You may also find the information on our website www.serendipitypre-k.ca.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

The Serendipity Pre-Kindergarten program is based on 'learning through play' concept. For the child, play is their way of coping with life and learning fundamentals of living in a very complex, fast moving world. We try to provide an atmosphere where the child can move, at their own pace, and learn when they are ready to learn.

Serendipity believes in equal opportunity and participates with early intervention agencies and special needs children. All special needs children are fully integrated into our program using an aid supplied by one of the many early intervention agencies.

Children learn through a process of sensory information. They hear, feel, see, smell and taste. Therefore, in a creative play program, we emphasize activities that involve the senses as well as lots of movement. Play in a natural function and the learning it leads to is achieved by the well-accepted process of "doing" by a sequence of exploration, testing and reception.

The Pre-Kindergarten is a place for learning. We want to provide appropriate play experiences, which contribute to the overall growth and development of the child. Our creative play philosophy is based on the premise that the more our emotions are involved, the more sensory information we receive, the more easily learning takes place. That is why play is important and why we want to promote the principle of learning by doing, learning through play, and the right of a child to enjoy childhood.

OUR HISTORY

Serendipity Pre-Kindergarten has been serving the families of Okotoks since 1971. Our school was established by a group of parents that identified a need for a quality preschool choice in our community. Our Association continues in that spirit, operating through a volunteer Board of Directors filled from our parent membership.

We are a nonprofit organization, which runs solely through fees charged and fundraising. Throughout the year, we have various fundraising events in order to keep our class fees down and to provide the excellent programs that add to the uniqueness of our school. Each year our program gets better as each Board builds from the experiences of the previous members. Our programs are decided by the Board of Directors and may vary from year to year. In the past, we have provided a swimming program with a qualified instructor, a skating program, and creative movement with a community dance instructor. We go on field trips and invite special guests into our classroom to teach us about their special knowledge. Parents are encouraged to participate and share all their talents and experiences within the school. We feel that the close cooperation among our teachers, our parents and our children and the subsequent exchange of ideas builds a healthy and happy attitude for a first school experience.

MEET OUR TEACHING STAFF

MONICA DEARDOFF

Monica has completed 2 years of Early Childhood Education and holds the Child Development Supervisor Certificate which she earned at Mount Royal College. After that, Monica worked with children in many capacities. She was the director of a daycare and playschool in Calgary for 7 years. Following the birth of her daughter, she had a day home for 7 years. In 1999, her family moved to Okotoks where she has spent time volunteering in the school as well as the community. Monica and her husband have 2 children. Since Monica was in her early teen years, she has loved working with children and looks forward to teaching your children at Serendipity.

LEANNE KOSTYK

Leanne started with Serendipity in the fall of 2015. Leanne holds a certificate as Child Development Assistant. When her daughters were 3 they attended Serendipity, and she loved the atmosphere, staff, and what Serendipity had to offer them. Due to the fact that I loved working with young children, I decided it was time to change my career. Prior to Serendipity LeAnne was a registered Dental Assistant as well as worked in Public Health with children. She has twin girls, and was very fortunate to be able to stay home with them. During her time of being a stay-at-home mom, she volunteered in Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten to Grade 3 at her daughters' schools. I now look forward to working at Serendipity Pre-Kindergarten.

Alesha Manning

My journey with Serendipity began back in 2014 when my son attended the school, I fell in love with the philosophy of Learning through Play. I have a passion for working with children and have enjoyed my time with all age groups. I ran a day home for 10 years before starting my career in education and intervention with the Foothills School Division as a PUF Education Assistant. In June 2018 I completed my Child Development Assistant certification and became Serendipity's summer school teacher.

OUR PROGRAM

Please Note: This is a general outline of a day and can vary based on teacher, theme and other wonderful experiences.

ARRIVAL AND WELCOME

The teachers and other classmates greet the children as they arrive.

FREE PLAY

A time for socialization and exploration. A variety of manipulative (table top), puzzles and age-appropriate activities are available at this time.

CIRCLE TIME

A time to come together for sharing, discussion, songs, finger plays and creative movement.

CENTER TIME

Children may choose from a variety of centers: sand and water, paint easel, art activities, home center, blocks, listening, reading, gross motor center (e.g. climber, balance beam).

SNACK TIME

The children gather together to sample some new foods and converse with their classmates. Parents follow an assigned schedule revolving around Canada's Food Guide. Please see next page for more on our snack time program.

STORY TIME

A time to encourage a love for books and reading, along with an enrichment of vocabulary and an exposure to a variety of language.

** Some of the program will be utilized in our outdoor yard. Please make sure children come dressed appropriately for the weather.

DEPARTURE/HOME TIME

THE SNACK PROGRAM

Serendipity Pre-Kindergarten requires every family to participate in our snack program, where each day, a child supplies the snack for the entire class. On this day, your child may choose a special adult (parent, grandparent or other) to invite to be a special guest (by sign up). This is also your child's "special day" to help the teacher, sit in the special chair and bring a show and tell item to share with all their friends. Please remember that whoever attends your child's special day must have had a police check completed and handed into the school. If it is not convenient for you to send a snack on your designated day we ask that you make your own arrangements to trade with another family in the class.

As part of nutritional education, you will provide the snack and drink for your child's entire class on the day designated. We encourage parents to bring in healthy snacks for our children, and avoid high sugar foods, instant drink mixes etc. Your class snack coordinator will be assigned 2 food groups from the Canada Food Guide, which we ask that you adhere to (e.g.. vegetables and dip, muffins and fruit). Our snack program allows the children to experience foods they may not have tried at home and learn about the different food groups. If you are unable to attend on this day, it will still be your child's special day and you are responsible for the snack for that day. Keep the snacks simple and in small servings. Fruits and vegetables should be washed and cut up where possible beforehand.

Where a birthday is noted however, feel free to send a birthday treat (e.g.. cupcakes) rather than your designated food groups.

The following food items are strictly not allowed: all nuts (incl. peanut butter, peanut oil, coconut), eggs (i.e. egg salad, deviled eggs, etc....), canned fish, hot dogs, popcorn, and any other items that spoil easily without refrigeration.

SERENDIPITY DISCIPLINE POLICY

1. Each child will be respected as an individual. Each incident will be treated as an individual situation.
2. Consideration for the temperament and uniqueness of the child will determine the type of intervention.
3. Limits will be stated kindly but firmly.
4. The problem will be identified with the child and then choices will be used to help redirect the behavior to a more positive activity or action.
5. Positive reinforcement of an appropriate behavior is the main focus of our discipline policy.

As a license holder, Serendipity Pre-Kindergarten will not, with respect to a child in the program, inflict or cause to be inflicted any form of physical punishment, verbal or physical degradation or emotional deprivation; deny or threaten to deny any basic necessity or use or permit the use of any form or physical restraint, confinement or isolation.

PRE-KINDERGARTEN CLASS TIMES & FEES

FOUR Year Old Program (must be 4 years of age)

Monday Wednesday Friday	Morning	9:00am-noon (Lemurs)	\$220.00/mn
Monday Wednesday	Afternoon	12:30-3pm (Meerkats)****	\$180.00/mn
Tuesday Thursday	Afternoon	12:00pm – 3:00pm (Bluebirds)****	\$200.00/mn

THREE Years Old Program (must be 3 years of age)

Tuesday Thursday	Morning	9:00am – 11:30am (Chickadees)	\$180.00/mn
Tuesday Thursday	Afternoon	12:00pm – 3:00pm (Bluebirds)****	\$200.00/mn
Monday Wednesday	Afternoon	12:30pm-3:00pm (Meerkats)****	\$180.00/mn

**** This class is offered as a split class 3&4 years old.

All children entering the program must be toilet trained. Classes start promptly and the doors will be open at that time for greeting of the children by the teacher. Please be on time!

**** \$100.00 NON-REFUNDABLE REGISTRATION FEE IS REQUIRED**

**** \$10 School Supply is also collected at time of Registration instead of asking parents to bring in supplies at the beginning of the school year.**

1. Registration and school supply fees are due upon registration. Tuition payments may be made in the form of postdated cheques, September through June on the 1st of each month, or a yearly lump sum payment in the form of one cheque. Please make a separate cheque for the registration fee.
2. Cheques are made payable to: SERENDIPITY PRE-KINDERGARTEN
3. NSF cheques will be charged a fee of \$20.00
4. If a family is choosing to pay via etransfer or cash, please note first and last month class fees are due on or before August 15 (before the school year starts).
5. If any family is in arrears more than 15 days, membership privileges will be suspended until fees are paid and the child is reinstated.
6. We require **one calendar month's written notice** (30 days) if you will be withdrawing your child from the program. Please give the notice to your teacher and they will forward it to the Board of Directors.
7. When a family registers two (2) or more children for the same school year only, a single registration fee will be charged.
8. There is no reduction in fees for holidays, sickness, or any other absences including school closures for emergencies at the discretion of the Board of Directors.
9. Should a child be temporarily withdrawn from the program through a teacher's or other recommendation, parent membership continues until the child is permanently withdrawn. There will be no refunds of fees for withdrawal of a child for periods of less than 4 weeks.
10. Are you registering a sibling too? Enjoy 10% off the 2nd child's class fees (lower amount)

*****IN ORDER TO RESERVE AND SECURE YOUR CHILD'S SPOT IN THE CLASS, ALL FORMS, REGISTRATION & SUPPLY FEE AND MONTHLY CHEQUES MUST BE RECEIVED*****

Every so often, parents are requested by their physician or outside agency to have our teachers complete an evaluation form or assessment of their child. This is considered extra work for our teachers, which is not deemed classroom time. As a result, there will be a \$30 fee assessed for this service. If you have any questions regarding this process, please contact the President of the Board of Directors.

CLASS SIZE

We also encourage our parents to participate, which improves our ratio. One of our objectives at Serendipity is to keep our adult to child ratio low enough to allow the teachers to meet the individual needs of each child. Ratio is 1:9 or better.

OTHER INFORMATION

VOLUNTEERS

From the Board of Directors to helping out as a guest speaker, it all makes our school a special place for our children to be. It gives them the true sense of community in a smaller atmosphere. To be involved contact the school's president at (403) 938-2811.

As a parent run preschool, it is important to have volunteers to help us with daily activities. Our most important commitments will be the casino which is held every 3 years and members of the Board. Other areas such as craft prep, playdoh making, monthly toy cleaning and more will also be items to help a hand. Sign up will happen in September. Thank you for making our school the best in Okotoks for over 40 years.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

We are a nonprofit society managed completely by a volunteer Board of Directors. This board is elected each year at registration. Being a board member is a one-year commitment. It entails a meeting once a month and occasionally involves subcommittees. All board members are involved in the following:

- Personnel decisions, including contracts and salaries
- Deciding which programs our children will participate in
- Fundraising
- Community involvement
- Budgeting and money management
- Future planning for the school

Please feel free to contact our board members regarding any questions or concerns you have regarding the school or the program.

Watch in the Quarterly newsletters for meeting dates and times. You are welcomed and encouraged to attend the General Meetings. Your vote counts!!!

WHAT IS THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING?

Each year in October, we have an Annual General Meeting for all of the members of the organization. At this meeting, we get input from parents about what they would like to see in our programs and in our school. We review financial information and there is an opportunity for any questions you may have to be answered. We encourage everyone to attend.

FUNDRAISING

In order to keep our tuition down, and provide the programs that make our school so unique, we do fundraising. Our main fundraiser is the casino operated at Frank Sissons in Calgary. We usually do this once every two and a half years and it requires 40 volunteers to which we must get through our membership. We also do 2-3 smaller fundraisers like Coco Brooks Pizza, Cookies and Cheesecakes, Christmas campaign or others of interest. We choose the smaller fundraisers through the Board and provide them to our parents as an opportunity to shop at home while benefiting our school. We do not ask that parents or children go door to door or purchase items if they do not require them. If you have any ideas or questions about fundraising, please direct them to the school's fundraising coordinator.

Things bought through fundraising in past years:

Outdoor Climber, New Toys for the School, Painted the interior of the school, School Supplies

POLICE CHECKS

At Serendipity, the safety of your child is of the utmost important to us. We ask all volunteers to get a police check done before being able to volunteer in the classroom. We have letters written that you provide the RCMP and receive a FREE police check. These letters are available from the registration coordinators and from your teachers.

All of our staff, child's aide workers and volunteers must have the police check done and submitted prior to being in the classroom.

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS AND CLOSURES

Serendipity observes all statutory holidays and oversees most of the same school holidays as the Foothills School Division. Parents will be notified through our regular newsletters of days off and on the website.

Holidays include: Labour Day (September), Thanksgiving (October), Remembrance Day (November), Winter Holiday Break (December into January), New Years (January), Family Day Week (February), Easter (March or April), Good Friday, (March or April) & Memorial Day (May).

If the public schools are closed, we will be too. In the event of a closure, the voice message at the school will reflect this (403-938-2811). Otherwise, please use your own discretion.

COMMUNICATION

Parents are welcome to observe and participate in our program. We encourage all parents to discuss policies, make suggestions and get involved. Our teachers are available to discuss your questions and concerns with you at your request. If you would like to discuss anything with the teaching staff, make arrangements with them before or after class and they will either discuss it at that time, or make arrangements for a more convenient time when there are fewer interruptions for both parties. At present, we don't have any formal parent teacher interviews but they can be arranged on an individual basis should they be requested.

EXTRACURRIULAR

The decision of what extracurricular activities our classes will be participating in varies each year and is determined by teachers and the Board of Directors. The "Field Trips" are subject to change each year and are based upon popular response in the past, popular requests and availability of the business/service, etc. If you have any suggestions, please do not hesitate to discuss with your teacher. Below is a list of some of the Field Trips Serendipity has participated in the past.

Swimming program with an instructor (Small Charge)
Skating (may have a small charge)
Creative dance
Chinook Honey Farms (may have a small charge)
Dental Office Visit
Search and Rescue
911

WHEN DOES THE SCHOOL YEAR START AND END?

The first week of school will be the week following Labor Day. On the first day of class, we have staggered entry. Half the class comes for the first hour, with their parent(s). For the second hour, the second half of the class comes with their parent(s). We will send you an information letter about 3 weeks before the beginning of school to let you know the time for your child. Our last day of school will be the 3rd Friday in June.

WHAT DO I NEED TO BRING WITH ME TO SCHOOL?

A pair of indoor shoes. No slippers or marking soles will be allowed. A plastic lidless cup with your name on it, required for snack time. A school bag for artwork and information that needs to be sent home (please make sure your school bag is of medium in size and will hold, shoes, cup and art work.

SECURITY

For the safety of your child and that of our staff, the doors to the school will remain locked during class time.

CAN I BRING MY OTHER CHILDREN FOR MY CHILD'S SPECIAL DAY?

Due to fire and licensing regulations, the school cannot have other siblings in the classroom. If you would like to attend your child's special day, we encourage you to find alternate arrangements for them. If you are unable to attend, it is still your child's special day. You are welcome to switch with another parent.

WHAT IF MY CHILD IS SICK OR CANNOT MAKE IT TO CLASS?

We really appreciate you letting us know when your child won't be in class. The phone number for the school is 403-938-2811. If there is no answer, please leave a message and it will be directed to the appropriate teacher. If it is your child's special day we ask that you either drop off the snack at the school or arrange to switch with another parent.

SOMEONE ELSE WILL BE PICKING MY CHILD UP AFTER SCHOOL.

Please notify the teacher of who will be picking up your child if you are unable to be there. We cannot release your child to someone else without prior notification.

INDIVIDUAL AND CLASS PHOTOS

Individual & class photos are taken through Classic Imaging in the fall, usually in the beginning of October.

SUBSIDY

The Government of Alberta currently does not offer any subsidy programs that will cover preschool fees.