

General Introduction

Welcome to Cookie Jar Preschool. We are a licensed, non-profit, parent run co-operative pre-school providing services to 3 and 4 year old's in our community. This handbook has been prepared in order to give you information about our philosophies, policies, and program operation.

Our teachers, Sandra Simmelink and Aly Visser, offer a stimulating and inviting program for preschool children. They have diplomas in Early Childhood Development as well as training and experience with special needs and speech education. Both teachers are also certified in Early Childhood Education and First Aid.

The team teaching approach allows the teachers to work together in each class. They also have the ability to split the class into two smaller groups which enables each group to take part in a gross motor activity program in our Creative Movement room. This gross motor activity program enables the child to learn about the theme of the week, basic concepts, letters, and numbers through various action songs, games, and other activities. While the one group is working in the Creative Movement room, the other group is able to learn through play with the various centers set up in the classroom. During play, basic concepts such as letters, numbers, shapes, sequencing, and science are incorporated into activities. The teachers will repeatedly re-enforce these concepts (i.e. the letter "B", the number "8", and the color "Red") with students when addressing the entire class during adult-guided play (stories, books, songs, etc.), as well as one-on-one instruction while the students circulate through various centers (kitchen, carpentry, sand, water, crafts, painting, etc.) during child-choice activities.

Weather permitting, the children may go outside to explore the outdoor environment through various outdoor activities (sandbox, paint, outdoor toys etc.). The deck provides a great extension to the classroom on warm days.

The goal of our program is to allow each child to develop socially, physically, emotionally, creatively, and intellectually at their own developmental level. We also endeavor to provide a secure, affectionate, and enthusiastic environment that promotes learning while building each individual's self-esteem and social skills.

While realizing that preschool children learn at their own rate, a thematic approach is used to plan the program. A monthly newsletter will keep you updated about themes, concepts, and field trips each month. We also have a website full of great information and the current newsletter is also available to reference.

Class Schedule 2020/2021

We operate on the same holiday schedule as the Wild Rose School Division. A list of holidays will be provided in September.

Initial Contact Numbers

Registrar Melodie Peacock 403-846-0521

Teachers Aly Visser
Sandra Simmelink

Cookie Jar Preschool 403-845-7600
(messages checked regularly)

Elections for the 2020/2021 Executive Board will be held at the **Annual General Meeting held on Monday, May 4, 2020 at 7:00 PM at Cookie Jar Preschool**. All parents are encouraged to attend the Annual General Meeting to ensure the success of the program. The executive board positions must be filled at this time or the program cannot run the following year. The Board meets each month and each position is responsible for various duties throughout the year. If you are interested in finding out more about filling a Board position, **please attend our Annual General Meeting** on May 4, 2020 or contact a Board member.

A phone list of the newly elected 2020/2021 Board will be circulated in September 2020. Please feel free to contact a Board member with any questions that may arise. Our volunteer Board members will do their utmost to provide additional information through newsletter, notes home, whiteboard, etc. General meetings are held twice a year. Since Cookie Jar Preschool is a volunteer, parent-run organization, many decisions cannot be made without an adequate number of parents present. Please attend the general meetings and help make this program successful. **We rely on, and welcome, parent input.**

Fees

Registration Fee

A registration fee of \$30.00 is due at the time of registration.

Tuition Fees

Tuition fees for the 2020/2021 school year are kept at a minimum due to our fund-raising efforts.

Full tuition fees are due **at the time of registration**. However, you have three payment options available (see below).

Cookie Jar Preschool accepts Email Money Transfers for Tuition. You may forward funds to Cookiejarpreschool@gmail.com. Please include Child's Name for Reference.

	Payment Options	Once A Week Program	Twice A Week Program
1.	9 Monthly Cheque's post-dated Sept. 1, 2020 to May 1, 2021	\$55.00/month	\$110.00/month
2.	2 Semester Cheque's post-dated Sept. 1, 2020 and Jan. 1, 2021	\$247.50/semester	\$495.00/semester
3.	1 Annual Cheque post-dated September 1, 2020	\$495.00/year	\$990.00/year

- There will be a cash \$25.00 administrative charge on all N.S.F cheques.
- Statutory holidays and school closures due to inclement weather are beyond our control and, therefore, these days will not be make up and no reimbursements will be offered.
- The Alberta Government offers partial to full subsidies to stay at home parents with children in an approved preschool program, such as Cookie Jar Preschool. Visit www.child.gov.ab.ca, click on Financial Support and then on Childcare Subsidy or call **1-866-714-5437** or contact your child's teachers or a Board member for further information. Please note, families applying for subsidy will still be expected to pay their fees until Subsidy is received by Cookie Jar Preschool. Once subsidy payments have been made to the Cookie Jar Preschool, the remainder of your checks will be returned.

•Do I qualify for subsidy? Many families do not realize that they may qualify for a

full or partial subsidy.

- Does one parent stay at home to care for preschool children?
- Does the applicant have a special need and require childcare for developmental or therapeutic reasons?

If you answered '**YES**' to any of these, your family may qualify. Please ask our teachers or the registrar for more information.

- Subsidy applications can be submitted as early as August 1st
- Cookie Jar Preschool is able to offer a Tuition Assistance Program for families in need. There is a limited number of funds available for this program, so families will have to submit a formal application. Families should investigate the possibility of qualifying for the Alberta Government Subsidy Program before applying for the Cookie Jar Preschool Tuition Assistance Program. Contact the Cookie Jar Preschool Registrar for more information. The application is available in the registration package, Cookie Jar Preschool and from the Registrar. All applications will remain confidential.

Volunteer Bond

Volunteering some of your time to Cookie Jar Preschool helps to ensure a successful program, but is certainly not mandatory. We understand that with hectic schedules volunteering is not always an option.

A volunteer cheque of **\$150.00** is required at the time of registration. It will be deposited on February 1, 2021. This money will be held and returned to parents if they participate in the ongoing duties of running the Cookie Jar Preschool program. This includes, but is not limited to, attending work bees, volunteering time with scheduled fundraising events, holding a position on the executive board, or donating skills and services to various operations at Cookie Jar Preschool. Please note, that participating as a Parent Helper in the classroom, will not be used towards your volunteer hours. **To have the Volunteer Bond reimbursed, a minimum contribution of 3 hours volunteer time is the guideline used.**

There will be many opportunities throughout the year to volunteer your time, skills, and/or services. If you have any ideas about other ways you can help, please contact a Cookie Jar Board member or the teachers to discuss them. If parents decline to participate in these aforementioned ways, their cheque will be considered a personal donation to Cookie Jar Preschool. You will receive a receipt for this donation. **If you have**

financial concerns regarding the February 1, 2021 deposit, please contact the Cookie Jar Preschool Board President ASAP and they will be able to accommodate you with volunteer hours before that date.

Parent Involvement

Fundraising

Fundraising is a necessary part of this volunteer, parent-run co-operative program. The Cookie Jar Preschool cannot operate on tuition fees alone. Parents are encouraged to participate in one of our planned fundraising events such as working a shift at the casino fundraiser, book orders, or participating in our bottle drive, etc. Please note that if you are not interested in participating in the fundraising opportunities presented, we do accept donations and are always open to new fundraising ideas.

Please note, Cookie Jar Preschool has an ongoing bottle-drive to support the program. If you are interesting in donating bottles, contact the Cookie Jar Preschool teachers or the Fundraising Committee.

Parent Notice Boards and Newsletters

Please check the notice boards at the main entrance and white door regularly for our upcoming events and other important messages. It is updated weekly.

General messages (and extra newsletters) appear on the side walls above the coat cubbies. Newsletters and other information are sent home once a month and/or as needed (i.e. event deadline reminders, Scholastic book order forms, etc). These are placed above your child's coat cubby. Please make it a habit to ensure these notices arrive home with your child and take the time to read and note the information within. You will not be contacted at home unless there is a last minute program change.

Parent Participation Duties

Due to our team-teaching approach, we always have two teachers in the classrooms and as such parents are not required to be a classroom helper for licensing purposes. However, we enthusiastically encourage you to participate as a parent helper. Your child and the Cookie Jar Preschool program benefits greatly by having you in the classroom. **Every Parent Helper at Cookie Jar Preschool is required to submit a current Criminal Record Check to school before entering the classroom to work with the students.**

Criminal Record Checks are to be completed every 3 years unless there is a break in attendance. The Criminal Record Check letter is in the registration package. Please take the letter to the R.C.M.P. Detachment to obtain your Criminal Record Check. We ask that you please bring the Criminal Record Check to your child's first day of school. If you prefer, you may bring in the original Criminal Record Check and we can photocopy it.

A parent helper schedule will be circulated and posted on the parent notice board in advance. You will be scheduled to be a classroom helper unless you indicate otherwise. It is your responsibility to help on the day your name appears. If you are unable to be there yourself, please try to find another family adult (grandpa, aunt, etc.) or another parent helper to take your place. **Notify the Vice-President of any schedule changes or problems, or if you have a specific day you want to volunteer (i.e. your child's birthday, an arranged day off, etc).**

On your helper day, please arrive by 8:55 AM (morning class) or 12:55 PM (afternoon class) and inform the teachers of your presence. The teachers will familiarize you with the jobs you can help with during class time such as mixing paint or playing a game, etc. Please take note of the fire escape procedures.

School Routines

Arrival/Departure

Morning Session	9:00 - 11:00 AM.
Afternoon Session	1:00 - 3:00 PM.

Upon bringing your child into school, **please sign in the child on the sign-in sheet**. Also provide an emergency phone number for that day. Note on the sheet if someone other than yourself will be picking up your child. If this person is not listed on your registration form as someone who is allowed to pick up your child, please provide a written consent note for the teachers to release your child into their care. Make sure that the teachers have acknowledged your child's presence before you leave. You are always welcome to stay with your child until they feel ready for you to leave. **When picking up your child, sign your child out and once again make sure that the teacher acknowledges your child's departure**. Due to licensing regulations we cannot allow any children into the class prior to 8:55 AM for morning classes or 12:55 PM for afternoon classes. The teachers will keep the classroom doors closed until these times.

Clothing

Fire regulations dictate that all children must have shoes on at all times. During wet and winter weather, please make sure that your child has indoor and outdoor footwear, as well as outdoor clothing for outdoor activities. Children should dress in play clothing for preschool, as they may hesitate to participate in activities (painting etc.) if they are dressed in their best. All children must be toilet-trained before admission into the program, and should bring a spare set of clothes in case of accidents.

Snacks

Provincial licensing regulations require that snacks are available to children who need/request them. Please send a juice or milk box and/or a basic, ready-to-eat **healthy** snack (fruit, raisins, crackers and cheese, drinkable yogurt, etc.) each school day; in total, **two food groups** must be covered. Please package the snack in a **labeled** container (plastic baggie, brown bag, Tupperware or reusable lunch kit). The snack will be made available to your child upon request, if they are too busy playing and do not stop to eat their snack, they will not be directed to do so. There will be a designated center at which the students will sit and eat. You will be notified if a student in your child's class has any food allergies - indicated allergens cannot be sent. Any day that a snack will be provided for the class as a whole (i.e. special holiday parties, a student's birthday etc), every effort will be made to communicate this in advance.

Field Trips

The children will have the opportunity to attend field trips throughout the school year to places around the community. Parents are asked to pick up and drop off students at the field trip location. Snacks will be provided during field trips. Parents and/or siblings will only be allowed to attend if there is space available at the field trip location. If parent volunteers are required a sign up sheet will be posted prior to the field trip. There may be some overlap with the Tuesday and Thursday morning field trips and parties (ie. Christmas, Halloween etc.) because not all students attend both days. In this case students enrolled in both Tuesday and Thursday mornings can choose which day to attend, either the Tuesday or the Thursday morning field trip or party.

Policies and Procedures

Health Policy

For the well-being of the children and staff, any child attending Cookie Jar Preschool must be well enough to participate in all school activities including outdoor play. The teachers will ask parents to immediately remove any child who is strongly suspected of having a fever (higher than 38 Degrees Celsius), diarrhea, vomiting, unexpected rash, cough, or a communicable disease (ie. Fifth Disease, Pink Eye, Measles, Chicken Pox, etc). Children can return to the program after providing Cookie Jar Preschool with a doctor's note.

If any child may require medication during classroom hours or in the event of an emergency, the parent must complete an Individual Medication Record and notify the teachers of any special requirements or if the condition of the child changes.

In the event of an incident or accident, the teachers must complete an Incident/Accident Report and provide a copy to the Board and the affected children's parents.

Absenteeism

If for any reason your child is going to be absent, please call Cookie Jar Preschool at 403-845-7600 to inform the teachers or sent a note in advance. This will avoid delays in activities or outings.

Inclement Weather Policy

Due to inclement weather, the school may close. The school will be closed when the temperature reaches -30 degrees Celsius or lower with or without a wind-chill factor, and at the discretion of the teachers and the board president. Please listen to the local radio station (B94 94.5 FM) and check the Cookie Jar website (www.cookiejarpreschool.ca) for up-to-date information.

If inclement weather or any other circumstances force a closure, you will be notified by a phone call. Please ensure that your phone number is kept current.

Withdrawal Procedures

We often have waiting lists for children who would like to join the Cookie Jar Preschool program. If you intend to withdraw your child from the program, please submit written notification one month in advance. This will allow us sufficient time to fill the vacancy.

Tuition fees apply during this period, regardless of the child's attendance. Any remaining tuition fees will be refunded to you.

Report Cards and Parent-Teacher Interviews

Cookie Jar Preschool is considered a preschool. It is not deemed necessary to hand out formal report cards at this level or have formal parent-teacher interviews. If you have any concerns about your child, or want an update on your child's progress, you are encouraged to speak with the teachers. Please phone 403-845-7600 or make an appointment with the teachers at the school.

Student's Age Requirement

Due to licensing restrictions, Cookie Jar Preschool is unable to accept students until they are three (3) years of age. It is possible to guarantee a spot in the program for your child; however, this requires you pay full tuition. Your child may begin attending classes in the week that s/he turns three. Late registrations are sometimes possible - contact the registrar listed to have your name and child's birth date recorded. In the event a spot remains or becomes open in the appropriate class, you will be contacted at that time.

Toys/Show and Tell

Please discourage your child from bringing toys to class as we cannot be responsible for lost or stolen items. Show and Tell is scheduled during the last week of every month. Children may bring a toy or an object that they would like to share with the class during that time.

Problem Solving Procedures

If you are experiencing a problem, have a concern or a suggestion about the program or your child's involvement in it, please first contact the child's teachers directly. Our teachers are approachable and open to discussions regarding the Cookie Jar Preschool program. If you do not feel this is approach is successful dealing with the issue at hand, the matter can then be brought to the attention of the Board for discussion and/or mediation. The Board is always open to solution-focused discussions with regards to maintaining and improving the Cookie Jar Preschool program. Board member names and contact information is posted in the coat room, and is included in monthly newsletters. If, after Board involvement, you feel the issue is still not satisfactorily resolved, the next step would be to contact Alberta Children's Services at 403-341-8642.

Inclusive Programming for Special Needs Students

Cookie Jar Preschool welcomes all students to the program. An educational assistant may be required for students whose needs cannot be safely or adequately met with regular

staffing levels. Cookie Jar Preschool has access to extra funding from Alberta Children's Services for children who may be identified as requiring extra care in the classroom. Cookie Jar Preschool is also a program often utilized by Wildrose Public Schools for students in the PUF (Program Unit Funding) stream. The teachers are committed to inclusion, and will endeavor to integrate any special needs student. To better facilitate transitions, this may require some flexibility on behalf of the family regarding drop off and pick up times.

Discipline Policy

Cookie Jar Preschool does not support corporal punishment. It is the responsibility of the teachers to positively discipline students, never that of the parent helper. Should the parent helper witness student conflict or any safety concern, however minor, s/he needs to report the incident to the teacher immediately so they can intervene. Any educational assistants or substitute teachers present in the classroom will be directed to follow Cookie Jar Preschool's discipline policy.

Discipline at Cookie Jar Preschool is that of positive guidance, and includes a combination of techniques.

- When addressing a situation, teachers will identify the problem with the children involved ("Sally, at Cookie Jar Preschool we don't grab toys from our friends. Simon was playing with those blocks.")
- Next, the teachers will model the appropriate action for the student to take ("You seem like you really want to play with the blocks too. Can you use your words and ask Simon if you can join him?")
- If needed, next techniques such as substitution ("How about you stack up these dominoes?") or re-direction ("Let's build with the train set until there is room at this center for another friend to play.") may be employed.
- Should the behavior persist, the child will be warned in simple language of the consequence of repeating the behavior ("Sally, the next time you grab a toy away from one of your friends, you will have a "time out.")
- If this is still unsuccessful, the final step in the process would be to place a child in "time out" for three minutes. The student will be directed to a spot to sit by themselves while the teacher keeps an eye on them.
- The child will be welcomed back to group interaction when the three minute "time out" has ended.
- The teachers will verbally communicate the incident to the parent/guardian when they arrive at the end of class, or by phone in the evening if necessary.

In the event that a behavior raises safety concerns (i.e. pushing or hitting), the above steps will be followed to immediately address the situation in a constructive and positive manner. Incidents of this nature will be reported to the parent, and they will be asked to collaborate with the teachers to create a timely and proactive plan to manage the student's behavior. The teachers will notify the parents of all the students involved in the event. The child in question will be observed for a month, and then the family will then be approached for the child to do an assessment. Depending on the severity of need the child may or may not be allowed to return to the class until an educational aid is in place.

Should you at any time have questions or concerns regarding classroom discipline, please speak to one of the teachers or the Cookie Jar Preschool Board President.

We look forward to working with you and your child!!!