



Preschool Handbook for Parents 2024-2025

FOOTHILLS CREATIVE BEGINNINGS PRESCHOOL
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FOOTHILLS CREATIVE BEGINNINGS PRESCHOOL AND E.C.S ASSOCIATION

FCB was established in 1983 as a private school. Our organization was incorporated as a non-profit society in 1994 and is governed by a board of directors. We offer preschool classes, childcare, a kindergarten program, and early intervention services.

VISION

A community of confident, capable, creative, curious learners.

MISSION STATEMENT

We intentionally create personalized early learning opportunities through childcare, preschool, kindergarten, and early intervention.

VALUES



RESPECT

We respect the individuality and unique talents of each child and staff.



HOLISTIC

We encourage and support children to reach their full potential through inclusive and holistic environments.



PURPOSEFUL PLAY

We believe that learning through purposeful play is the basis for child development and early learning.



PARTNERSHIP

We value partnerships with families and early learning centers to meet challenges and build support for the children we serve.



PROFESSIONALISM

We are dedicated to professionalism by seeking out and adopting best practices that demonstrate integrity and honesty in all that we do.

OUR PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

Our preschool is a division of Foothills Creative Beginnings Preschool and ECS Association which operates as a non-profit society. The preschool is licensed by Calgary and Area Child and Family Services. We offer an integrated program following a developmental and creative approach to educating young children.

POSITION STATEMENT

Our preschool recognizes each child as unique and capable. We strive to provide a program which fosters creativity and love of learning. Our preschool curriculum is a body of experiences promoting child development.

FCB preschool strives to:

- *Help each child develop a positive self-awareness.*
- *Invite and encourage children to think creatively and to use all their senses and become actively involved in learning.*
- *Actively support children's development and provide occasions for children to acquire important knowledge and skills.*
- *Expose each child to the excitement of learning.*

The underlying goals of our program are determined by the consideration of developmental stages, learning behaviors, and characteristics of young children. Experiences and materials are sequenced to follow a progression from simple to more complex.

PAYMENT

TUITION- To be paid the 15th of September and 1st of every month October - June

- Monday, Wednesday & Friday - \$250.00 per month
- Tuesday & Thursday - \$190.00 per month

Direct Debit: Please fill out the direct debit form available on our website. Payment is due the 1st day of each month from October to June (exception will be September) and will be withdrawn from your account on this schedule. Any questions about fee payment can be directed to our controller, Donnelle Watson at donnelle.watson@foothillscreative.org

Affordability Grant = \$75.00 fee reduction for all families registered within a licenced preschool

- This is a flat rate fee reduction for all families registered in a licenced preschool.
- There is no application process.
- Each family is eligible automatically with confirmed registration at a licensed facility. The grant is received directly by the licenced facility and passed on to families through fee reduction
- Using FCB 3 day program as an example, this grant reduces fees from \$250.00 to \$175.00/month
- Using FCB 2 day program as an example, this grant reduces fees from \$190.00 to \$115.00/month

Childcare (Preschool) Subsidy-\$125 for eligible families

- Families with a household income up to \$180,000 will now be eligible to qualify.
- Families must apply for this subsidy on their own, and the licenced facility will then be notified of eligibility.
- The subsidy is received directly by the licenced facility and passed on to families through additional fee reduction
- *Review your eligibility and apply here:* <https://www.alberta.ca/child-care-subsidy.aspx>

WITHDRAW POLICY

- One month's notice is required if a child is to be withdrawn. A one month's tuition will be charged when notice is less than one month.

RECEIPTS

- Receipts will be issued in January 2025 and June 2025. Preschool tuition may be claimed as Childcare expenses by mothers declaring an employment related income. Please refer to the current Tax Guide for complete information.

QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

- If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Michele Steier, Preschool Director michele.steier@foothillscreative.org

ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS

STUDENT INFORMATION AND HEALTH FORM

No child may attend without a completed form, all areas completed including addresses of home, places of work, business phone number, caregivers and an emergency contact are required.

Should there be a change in any information such as address, phone number or caregiver during the year, please notify us. Should an emergency arise we will need to reach you or the emergency contact to pick up your child. You will be requested to update this information in the new year. This form is audited by the Childcare Licensing.

- *EMERGENCY CONTACT:* This must be a person who would be able to pick-up your child in the case of illness or an emergency if the parent is unavailable. A phone number and physical address (not a mailbox address) are required.
- *IMMUNIZATIONS:* You are encouraged to have your preschool child immunized before he/she attends preschool. In the event of an outbreak of a communicable disease, the public health officials will order those children without proof of immunization be excluded from school for a period of 14-21days after the last case has occurred. There would be no refund of tuition in such a case.

- *ALBERTA HEALTH NUMBERS:* Alberta Health numbers are optional (FOIP) but would be helpful to the hospital should your child need emergency transport and treatment.
- *MEDICAL CONDITIONS:* If your child has a medical condition such as asthma, allergies, diabetes, etc. that could require medication such as inhalers, epi-pens, insulin, sugar etc., a special permission form is required to allow the preschool staff treat your child.

Please phone - 403-851-5534 to obtain a form.

DROPPING OFF AND PICKING UP CHILDREN

Each day the child attends preschool, the educator will enter the time of arrival and initial the record. There is a space to add other important information for the day. When the child is picked up the educator will enter the time of departure and initial. The person picking up the child must be listed on the child's student information form as a person to whom the child can be released from preschool. These records are available for inspection by Childcare Licensing at any time and will be retained for a minimum of 2 years. *The Attendance book is a legal document, these records are kept for two years and are audited by Alberta Early Childhood Services and may be requested by the Canada Revenue Agency.*

ARRIVAL

Preschool sessions begin at **8:45 AM** and **12:45 PM**

Please respect school hours and teacher preparation time.

Please wait in the hallway until the preschool door opens. When the school door opens, the educator will record your child's arrival in the classroom attendance book. Should you arrive early you must stay with your child until the educator is present.

Please phone the preschool if your child is going to be absent **403- 851-5534**.

MEDICATION REGISTRATION

The adult delivering your child to preschool is required to list, daily, any medication the child has taken (antibiotics, inhalers etc.) and the condition being treated. Please pass any such information on to the person bringing your child to preschool. The attendance book has a space for such information.

DEPARTURE

Preschool dismisses at **11:45 AM** and **3:45 PM**

When you come to the preschool to pick up your child please wait in the hallway until the educator opens the preschool door.

The educator will sign the attendance book indicating that you have taken your child. Signing the attendance book releases the child to your care, responsibility, and supervision.

Please be respectful of the other businesses in the building, we ask that children do not run or yell in the hall.

CHILD RELEASE POLICY

No child will be released to a person other than a parent without authorization.

Parents must list on the registration for the names of all **adult** persons who are permitted to pick up their child on a regular basis (e.g. friend, neighbour, nanny). If the person picking up the child is not known to the educator or is not listed on the registration form, information about the person must be provided to the educator and recorded in the sign-in book at the time of arrival. Should an emergency arise where a person not listed needs to pick up your child, please call the school **403-851-5534** with the name and physical description of this person. This person may be asked to show picture ID.

LATE PICK UP

If you or an authorized person has not picked up your child within 15 minutes of the end of class, we will call:

1. home phone
2. parents' cells
3. work number(s)
4. emergency contact

After one hour we call social services child protection department.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION

Should there be a situation where the school must be evacuated, the children would be taken to the Boys and Girls Club and parents would be contacted to pick up their children. Full details of the procedure are posted. Fire drills are held monthly.

INSURANCE

The preschool carries general liability insurance. Parents waive all claim against the preschool in excess of the liability coverage. You may purchase individual or family accident insurance.

SEPARATION ANXIETY AND HELPING YOUR CHILD TO INDEPENDENCE

This term refers to the emotional stress that some children experience when separating even for a short time, in safe surroundings, from their parents. Tears or tantrums disturb parents who feel torn as to whether they should leave the child, or become concerned at how the teacher will manage.

It has been our experience that children most easily learn the satisfaction which comes from coping with separation anxiety when parents and teachers are kindly, honest and reassuring in their approach. We request that you always tell your child when you plan to leave, even if tears occur. Such truthfulness instills trust, while the unpleasant surprise of discovering that

the parent has slipped away fosters insecurity. When you leave, state your plans cheerfully. Your child will take the cue that preschool can be enjoyable from your body language as well as your words. When you return, compliment your child on his/her work and let your sincere interest in the activities of the day be spoken.

Sometimes keeping a photograph of Mom or Dad helps. Sometimes a cuddly toy from home eases the stress. If tears are flowing when you leave, your child's teacher will help the child to see exciting possibilities for play and will reassure the child of your return. You may want to be gradual in your time of separation, which is fine, as long as your child understands that you will go when you say you will and that you will return at the designated time.

There may be a time during the session when your remaining in the center impedes your child's progress. If your child's educator requests that you leave, please do not feel that this is a reflection on your parenting, but rather that the teacher feels that your child is ready and able to risk independence at the center. The teacher will use this time to interest your child in the activities and to reassure him/her. The teacher will keep you advised of your child's progress and reactions. We will do our best to help your child to confidence and self-fulfillment.

If preschool is so stressful for your three-year-old child that he cannot adjust to the separation and is showing signs of stress, the best solution is sometimes withdrawing from the program and trying again January or the next school year. Tuition refund arrangements can be made.

SUPERVISION POLICIES

CLASSROOM SUPERVISION

During the first hour of preschool when the children are enjoying free play in the two adjoining areas the educators will be mindful of having at least one primary staff member in each area. This supervision will be supplemented by the primary staff educational assistant.

During 'class' times the educator will be with the children for all activities, in this way she will be knowledgeable about each child's needs and idiosyncrasies.

OUTDOOR AND OFF-SITE ACTIVITY SUPERVISION POLICY

For routine outdoor activities such as walks in the neighborhood or visits to the nearby community playground, parents will provide written approval in advance for the school year. Each group of children (not more than 12) will be supervised by a minimum of 2 adults. When off-site the educator will take a portable records file, cell phone and mini first aid kit. The educator will prepare the children for the outing by discussing where they will be going, safety rules and to whom they will need to listen. In the event of an accident the educator will ensure that the child receives first aid/medical treatment as necessary, and that the child's parent is notified.

HEALTH POLICIES

ILLNESS POLICY

WHEN SHOULD A CHILD BE KEPT HOME FROM SCHOOL?



Parents are advised to keep a child at home if they have any of the following:

- a fever of 38 degrees or more
- green or yellow discharge from the nose
- vomiting within the past 24 hours
- diarrhea within the past 24 hours
- An infection that requires antibiotics (if a child has been on antibiotics for 24 hours and feels well he/she can come to preschool). Pink eye and strep throat are two such infections.
- Any communicable disease.

When in doubt, it is best to error on the side of caution, both for the child's comfort and for the health of classmates and teachers.

WHAT IF A CHILD BECOMES ILL AT PRESCHOOL?

If a child exhibits signs or symptoms of illness while at Foothills Creative Beginnings the parent/guardian or emergency contact will be called to pick up the child immediately (ie. within 2 hours).

Signs or symptoms of illness can include:

- Vomiting, fever (38 degrees or more), diarrhea,
- a new unexplained rash or new or unexplained cough
- unexplained pain
- Requiring greater care and attention than can be provided without compromising the care of the other children
- Displaying any other sign or symptom the teacher believes may indicate that the child poses a health risk to persons on the program premises.

To ensure the childcare environment remains healthy, a sick child will be made comfortable in a separate area and will be supervised by a primary staff member until the parent/guardian is able to take the child.

Our normal order of calls, until we make contact, will be:

- home phone,
- primary contact cell phone
- secondary contact cell phone
- primary contact's work
- secondary contact's work

- emergency contact.
- If another plan is in place it must be discussed with the director (Michele Steier) and outlined on the registration form.

If the parent or designated alternative cannot be contacted or fails to pick up the child and does not contact the preschool within the 2 hours, the preschool staff will continue to monitor the child until the end of the class time and for one hour after (12:45 pm for morning classes, and 4:45 pm for afternoon classes). After this time the child will be considered abandoned or neglected and under the provincial protocols for handling child abuse and neglect, the program director or coordinator will call Alberta Children and Family Services (403-297-6100) or the Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-387-5437). FCB staff will not transport the child.

If the condition of the child (seizure, altered level of consciousness, breathing distress, etc) is considered serious enough to require immediate medical intervention, the first aid person in attendance will summon an ambulance and contact the parent. If emergency health care (ambulance) is requested and/or if the child is required to remain in hospital overnight the director or program coordinator will contact the licensing officer. If an ambulance is called the cost is the responsibility of the parent.

ILLNESS REPORT

Whenever a parent is summoned to pick up a child the educator who notices the symptoms of possible illness will complete an "Illness Report".

The child may return to the program when the child no longer poses a health risk, as determined by the program director. The parent may provide a physician note or a parent can report to the teacher that the child has been symptom free for a period of not less than 24 hours.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE POLICY

If a staff member has reason to believe that a child may be suffering from a communicable disease listed on the notifiable disease list, the educator or the program director would contact the parent of the child to take the child from the preschool premises as soon as possible (within 2 hours). In the meantime, the child would be isolated, made comfortable and supervised by a primary staff member until the parent/guardian is able to take the child. The child may return to the program when the child no longer poses a health risk, as determined by the program director. The parent may provide a physician note or a parent can report to the educator that the child has been symptom free for a period of not less than 24 hours. Some diseases such as Chicken Pox or Fifth's Disease are contagious before the appearance of symptoms and the child may return to school as soon as he/she feels well enough, even if the rash is still visible. We follow the recommendations of Calgary Public Health.

REPORTING TO ALBERTA HEALTH SERVICES

To identify outbreaks and epidemics, provide preventive treatment and education, and protect children and staff in childcare settings, the preschool must report:

- communicable diseases
- All diarrhea and vomiting “outbreaks” (2 or more children within 48 hours of each other).

REPORTING TO LICENSING

FCB will immediately report to the licensing officer if a child’s illness/accident requires FCB to request emergency health care (ambulance) and/or requires the child to remain in hospital overnight. 403-297-6100, Alberta Children’s Services.

ACCIDENT POLICY

Should a child be involved in an accident while at preschool a primary staff member will assess the situation; for minor injuries such as scrapes or minor bumps the primary staff member will see that necessary first aid and comfort are provided and the parent will be informed at dismissal time.

Should an accident of a more serious nature occur a primary staff member with current first aid qualification will attend to the child providing emergency first aid, have the parent called and if deemed necessary have EMS summoned to give medical attention.

If emergency health care (ambulance) is requested and/or if the child is required to remain in hospital overnight the director or program coordinator will contact the licensing officer. If the first aid person calls for the ambulance (emergency health care) parents must assume the cost of this service. FCB staff will not transport sick or injured children.

ACCIDENT REPORT

Whenever an injury requires first aid an accident report will be completed by the primary staff member and will be signed by the person who picks up the child. If the person picking up the child is not the parent, a copy of the report will be sent home with the child.

PROVISION OF HEALTH CARE

Foothills Creative Beginnings Preschool will provide or allow for the provision of health care to a child only if:

- The written consent and direction has been received from the child’s parent.
- The health care provided is in the nature of first aid.

ADMINISTRATION OF EMERGENCY MEDICINE

Foothills Creative Beginnings will administer emergency medications such as inhalers or epi-pens if we have the medication and the permission forms. If a child requires emergency medication, we have a special permission and instruction form for the parent to complete.

When medication is administered to a child the attending staff member will record on the back of the permission to give emergency medication form: a) the name of the medication b) the time of administration c) the amount administered d) follow-up procedures followed e) sign and date the form.

Emergency medication is stored in a cupboard that is unlocked but inaccessible to the children.

ADMINISTRATION OF NON-EMERGENCY MEDICATION

FCB may administer or allow the administration of a medication (such as inhalers, insulin) to a child only where:

- Written consent, of the child's parent has been obtained, and direction and/or training are provided to the comfort level of the primary staff member with first-aid certification responsible for administering the medication.
- The medication is in the original labeled container, and
- The medication is administered according to the labeled directions

Where medication is administered to a child, the program director/coordinator will ensure that the medication is stored in a locked container that is inaccessible to children and that the following information is recorded each time the medication is administered.

- Name of the medication
- Time of administration
- Amount administered
- Initialed by the person who administered the medication

If your child requires such medication, we have a special permission and direction form for you to complete. Please call 403-851-5534

GENERAL INFORMATION AND POLICIES

PHOTO POLICY

The educators may take photos of the children as a form of documentation of each child's achievements and discoveries. Sometimes we post these photos within the classroom. The pictures are given to the parents at the end of a project. If this is not acceptable to you, please indicate on the registration form and talk to your child's teacher. Children's artwork is also displayed within the classroom

School Photos will be taken in the fall. See the School Calendar for the date. A school photographer, Ken Stewart, will take the photos. Proofs will be sent home for you to examine and decide if you wish to purchase. There is no obligation to purchase.

TOILET TRAINING

It is expected that children who come to preschool are toilet trained; special needs children accompanied by an assistant are the exception. Our educators accept 'accidents' casually without embarrassing or scolding, however, you will be called to come and change or take home a child who has not made it to the washroom for a bowel movement.

CLOTHING

It is recommended that the children come dressed in play clothes as they will be involved in messy projects using glue, paint and playdough. Pants and short or easily rolled sleeves are suggested for both boys and girls. Dresses are very awkward and even dangerous in the gym and when actively participating in music.

We have changes of clothes for those who get wet at the water table or have toileting accidents. If preschool clothes come home on your child, please wash the clothes and return them to preschool. If you have outgrown play clothes, sizes 4-6, that you could add to our emergency box, it would be much appreciated.

FOOTWEAR

Non-slip shoes such as runners are a necessity at school for safety reasons. Children will not be allowed to participate in gym activities without appropriate shoes for the same reason. No sandals, flip-flops or fancy-dress shoes, please. If you leave home without your child's shoes we have a box of extras to lend.

BRINGING THINGS TO SCHOOL

We request that the children do not bring toys to school as these tend to get broken and/or lost.

PARENT CONCERNS

The classroom educator invites you to discuss any concerns you might have about your child's classroom experience. Casual chats can occur when you bring or pick up your child. Serious concerns should have a private space—just mention it to your child's teacher. If an issue cannot be resolved easily, you are encouraged to speak to our Director, Michele Steier (403-851-5534).

EDUCATOR CONCERNS

If the educator has any concerns about your child's adjustment or progress at preschool, they will arrange a time for a mini-conference with you.

NEWSLETTERS

A newsletter is prepared for the beginning of each month and will be e-mailed to you. It will contain special dates to remember, program highlights and notes, parent and community resource information.

GUIDANCE POLICY

We realize that three and four year old children are learning and practicing skills in cooperation, sharing and assertiveness as well as respectfulness. We believe our code of discipline is reflective of this.



Our first concern is that all the children in the center are safe, comfortable, and feeling free to develop their imagination and explore with a sense of confidence.

Guidance is not punishment. The most important aspect of this definition is that behavior is not changed by punishment, but by helping children discover that it feels good to act in a way that brings approval and a sense of confidence.

Guidance for us is a four-step approach:

- **Anticipate.** We prevent problems by having enough equipment and activities and by setting the ground rules before the problem arises.
- **Hesitate.** We stand back for a moment and watch. If neither child is coming to harm, we allow the children to work out the problem with their own solutions.
- **Investigate.** We are careful not to blame either child, especially when we have not seen what has happened from start to finish. We allow each child the opportunity to talk so we can understand the situation.
- **Communicate.** We encourage the children to generate their own solutions. If this is unsuccessful the educator will explain the problem and offer the child(ren) some positive choices to redirect them and give them control over their decisions. Communicate with the parents. The parent would be informed so that together, with the child, we can work towards a solution. If the child poses a threat to the comfort of the group then a conferences with the parents would be initiated to form a 'behavioral support plan' to help guide the child to success.

In accordance with Alberta Licensing regulations staff, volunteers, parents will not discipline a child by using any form of contact intended to ridicule, humiliate, degrade or undermine the self-worth of a child. This includes physical or emotional abuse, neglect or permitting any of the above from happening to a child in our care

PRESCHOOL SNACK TIME

Families will be required to provide snack for their own child daily. Please remember we are a NO NUT facility.

- Children will need a filled water bottle and snack each day at preschool.
- Your child's snack will be stored with their belongings in their backpack.
- A fridge will not be available; if there are dairy products packed please include an icepack.

FOOD SUGGESTIONS:

Each snack should consist of 2 food groups. Overall please try to keep the snacks simple and healthy.

Fruit: bananas, apples, raisins, watermelon, oranges, grapes- cut lengthwise

Vegetables: carrot sticks, cucumber, celery sticks

Breads: whole grain, cheese or raisin breads, muffins, crackers, fruit loaves

Dairy: cheese, yogurt, puddings, mini-go, yogurt tubes,

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

The Calgary Health Region has some guidelines for serving these foods.

- Vegetables and fruit may be peeled and cut at home, using good sanitary procedures. Please take care not to use a knife that has just been used to spread peanut butter.
- Cantaloupe is known to carry Salmonella. Please wash it before peeling and keep cantaloupe refrigerated at all times.
- **To prevent an incident of choking, please cut carrots and celery into sticks and grapes in half, length ways.**
- Popcorn should not be served to the Threes.

ALLERGIES:

Children bring their own safe snack from home but for children with severe allergies this is not enough to keep them safe. If an allergic child should play with a toy that has been handled by a child with one of these products on his/her hands an allergic reaction could be triggered in the allergic child. If a non-allergic child has immediately eaten peanut butter and breathes on an allergic child it could trigger an allergic reaction.

If an anaphylactic reaction is triggered in one of the children it means that the educators will have to administer a painful shot to the allergic child and call the ambulance. Such an event would be terrifying to the children and the educators. We have never had such an occurrence, but it is one of our greatest concerns.

*Nut products can appear in surprising places such as in chocolate, granola bars, cereals, frostings, candy, fried foods, flavorings, even lip gloss and shaving cream.

For the safety of all we have the following rules:

- Children on special individual diets will not include nuts or peanuts in their preschool snacks
- Please have your child wash hands and brush teeth after eating / before coming to preschool, particularly if they have had peanut butter for breakfast or lunch.
- Please do not include peanuts, nuts, or seeds in the snack that you send to school for your child's class.
- Please take care when cutting something for preschool that you do not use a knife that has just been used to spread peanut butter.

- Please send the original container or at least the label which lists the ingredients from any commercial product so that the teacher will be aware of the ingredients in a snack.