

Ready Set Grow Hillcrest Community Preschool

Parent Handbook



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Ready Set Grow Preschool
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INTRODUCTION & HISTORY

Welcome to Hillcrest Ready Set Grow Hillcrest Community Preschool. To make you and your child's time with us fun and consistent, please take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with our policies and procedures as outlined in this Handbook.

The preschool began in September 2001 in response to need in the neighbourhood for a preschool. There had been a preschool at Hillcrest Elementary school for a couple of years previous, but that owner was not able to continue operation. Hillcrest Elementary Out of School Care Society had been operating the out of school care programs at Hillcrest Elementary since 1993 and it seemed like a natural progression that we would take over the preschool instead of another private operator. The Out of School Care and Preschool programs are governed by a Board of Directors who are elected each year at the Annual General Meeting held at the end of October. Also, our programs are licensed under the Community Care Facilities Act and we work hard to go beyond the minimum requirements of the Act in as many areas as we can.

Ready Set Grow Hillcrest Community Preschool is committed to providing:

- A reliable, safe, and healthy environment where each child is treated as an individual.
- A team approach with parents and preschool staff to nurture and guide the children through their preschool years and to provide parents with open communication and to encourage them to visit the Program whether for 2 minutes or 2 hours.
- A stimulating environment where children can have fun and make choices.
- An atmosphere where children can develop positive social interactive skills.

NON-PROFIT STATUS

Ready Set Grow Hillcrest Community Preschool is part of an incorporated non-profit society. This model helps keep fees low and provides parents with the opportunity to have significant input in the Program through the Board of Directors, which oversees the Program. Regular Board meetings are held throughout the year and an Annual General Meeting is held once per year. All parents are strongly encouraged to attend and become involved. When the preschool first opened the Board developed a policy that at least one parent whose child attends the preschool must sit on the Board of Directors. Board meetings are open to all parents and notice is provided through the Parent Bulletin Board.

PROGRAM RULES

We ask that the children adhere to three basic rules:

1. Take care of themselves by playing safely and following program rules
2. Take care of others; to help and never hurt.
3. Take good care of the world around them; to look after equipment, the school and the environment.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

Children are eligible for registration if they are between the ages of 2.5 years (30 months) and 5 years (before Kindergarten starts). Registration forms must be completed by the parent or guardian of a child prior to the child's first day in the Program. The registration form contains information required by Provincial legislation. Incomplete forms may delay a child's entry into the Program. To ensure that information is kept current, new forms are required every year.

TOILET TRAINING

Children must be completely toilet-trained to be eligible for registration. At Ready Set Grow Preschool, we define being toilet trained as the following:

- Wearing underwear each day, avoiding pull-ups.
- Being aware of their own body cues and recognizing the need to use the toilet.
- Being able to vocalize, or through gesturing, the need to use the toilet.
- Be able to wait until they're on the toilet to have a BM or urinate.
- Independently able to lower their bottom clothing and underpants, urinate or have a bowel movement in the toilet, wipe, flush, and re-dress themselves.
- Consistently and successfully be able to use the toilet outside of the home without aid.

We understand that accidents can happen. When these situations occur, staff will discretely take the child to the washroom and assist them in changing to dry clothing. We will advise families of the accident, and if there are soiled clothing to take home.

Should a child have accidents frequently, we may ask that your child stay home until they are consistent with their washroom use. In extreme circumstances, should a child not be consistently toilet trained at this Preschool, they may be asked to withdraw from the program.

REGISTRATION FEE

Upon registration, each family pays a yearly \$50.00 non-refundable registration fee.

FEES

The fee schedule is determined each year by the Board of Directors. A copy will be provided to each family as an addendum to the handbook.

Please note the following fee payment policies

- Fee's are due on the first of each month. We accept cheque, cash or automatic withdrawal. Please speak with the Manager if you would like to register for automatic withdrawal. Special arrangements can be made if necessary, by talking to the Manager.
- Tax receipts will be provided to families in January.
- There is a late charge of \$5/day for unpaid fees. Post-dated cheques are preferred as this cuts down on late fees.
- Cheques can be made out to H.E.O.S.C. or if paying by cash, please have the correct amount as we do not carry cash to make change. If the correct change is not possible, any money owing will be credited on the next month.
- NSF cheques will be subject to a \$20 service charge by H.E.O.S.C.
- Any extra fees owing will be billed on the next month's invoice, except in June when it will be billed prior to the end of the month.
- **One calendar month's** notice is required for withdrawal from Program or for change in registration status.
- Refunds are not available for going to a friend's house, days missed, statutory holidays, illness, vacations, etc. Days missed or not used in one month cannot be carried over or accumulated for use in subsequent months.

- Fees are calculated as a monthly average for the year. The average month is 30 days. We do not charge extra for those months over 30 days nor do we have a reduced rate for those months with fewer than 30 days.
- If you have any questions about your fees, please speak with the Manager. Please speak with the Manager if you will be late with fees during a particular month as this will cut down on late charges.

STAFFING

Each staff member is required to complete a criminal record check and provide a physician's note of good health. The Program also requires that all staff have current first aid certificates. A valid Early Childhood Education certificate is required for the staff member responsible for the day-to-day programming and implementation of the program. Staff hiring decisions are based on relevant experience, educational background, and interest in working with children.

Please note that staffing can change without notice.

ATTENDANCE AND PICK-UP NOTIFICATIONS

Parents are required to notify a regular staff person at the Program if:

- Their child will not be attending that day.
- Their child will be late or picked up early.
- The parent will be late to pick up the child.
- Someone not authorized is picking up the child.

Please email heoscmanager@gmail.com, and/or heosc.readysetgrow@gmail.com.

HOURS OF OPERATION

We are closed on all statutory holidays, school breaks, and early dismissal. Preschool remains open on professional development days (Pro-D). Please check the calendar of dates for any changes to the schedule.

Monday to Friday – 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
(Hours subject to change year to year)

ARRIVAL

As children arrive, staff marks attendance on the Sign In/Sign Out sheet. Children then put all their belongings in their assigned storage area.

PICK UP

- Upon departure, parents must sign out their child as directed.

Only those listed as an authorized pick-up person may take the child without permission.

In the case a non-authorized person arrives to pick up the child, the Manager or ECE Supervisor will attempt to contact the parents or the emergency contact person for permission. If no one can be reached, the child will not be released REGARDLESS OF THE RELATIONSHIP TO THE CHILD until someone is reached that can authorize the release of the child. Any late fees incurred as a result of this situation will be the responsibility of the

parent and are subject to all the terms outlined in the Fees section. A letter will also be sent informing the parent of the incident.

The charge for late pick up is: \$1 per minute per child.
The Manager will discuss frequent lateness with the parent.

In the case where a parent is extremely late (an hour to 1½ hours) in picking up their child, staff will attempt to contact the parent (if they have not already done so). If this is not successful, staff will attempt to contact the emergency contact person and if that fails, will contact the Ministry of Children and Families to take custody until the parent can be contacted. All late fees incurred during this time are the responsibility of the parent and are subject to all the terms outlined in the Fees section.

CUSTODY AND ACCESS

If parents live separately, the Preschool staff expect that the information provided by the enrolling parent is accurate. Without a custody and guardianship agreement or court order on file at the Program, staff cannot deny access to the non-enrolling parent. If one of the parents is not authorized to pick up according to the custody and guardianship agreement or court order on file, the policy on unauthorized persons will be followed.

If custody has not been legally determined and conflict between the parents and/or their family members is evident, the Program may not be able to care for the child unless both parents and/or other family members sign a written agreement confirming details re: authorization for pick up and access to information about the child.

If a family has a custody and guardianship agreement or court order, a copy must be provided and placed in the child's file.

CENTRE CLOSURE

In the case of fire, extended power or heat failure, extreme weather conditions or an evacuation due to the safety of the facility, the Program may have to close. The staff will contact families or emergency contacts and care for children until they are picked up. We ask that the children be picked up as soon as possible in this situation.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Parents must not send a child to the Program if the child is suffering from one or more of the following symptoms.

- Any complaints of unexplained or undiagnosed pain, sore throat or trouble swallowing.
- An acute cold with fever, runny nose and eyes and/or coughing and sore throat.
- Difficulty in breathing, wheezing or a persistent cough.
- Fever of 100°F or 38.3°C or higher.
- Infected skin or eyes or an undiagnosed rash; headache and stiff neck.
- Diarrhea or loose stool combined with nausea, vomiting or abdominal cramps.
- Severe itching of body or scalp.
- Suffering from any communicable disease or condition.
- Is not well enough to take part in the regular program.

If the child becomes ill during the day, a staff person will

- Contact the parents to pick the child up from the program.
- Or will contact the Emergency Contact person if the parents cannot be reached.

THE PROGRAM DOES NOT HAVE FACILITIES OR EXTRA STAFF TO CARE FOR SICK OR INJURED CHILDREN.

Parents must report to the Manager any communicable disease or condition that their child contracts within 24 hours of diagnosis.

The child may return to the Program

- 24 hours after receiving an antibiotic, or
- when the child is no longer contagious

Some children require medications either on a temporary or long-term basis. Use of medications must be governed by the information provided by the parent on the "Permission to Administer Medications" form and in accordance with the following policy.

All medications with a Drug Identification Number, including most common remedies, are required by Provincial regulations, to be given to the Program Manager upon the child's arrival. The Program staff will be in control of all medications and medications will be kept in a locked box. A child will be given their medications as indicated on the written instructions sent by parents. If the child required medication in the Program for an extended time, it is required that a supply of medication be given to the Manager. This supply is returned at the end of the year or when no longer needed.

Authorization to give medication must give specific directions as to the reason for the medication, name of the medication, dosage, method of storage, method of administration, known side effects, and treatment of side effects. If there is health or behavioural consequences in missing medication, or in receiving it too early or too late, this should also be explained in the instructions. The name and number of the prescribing physician should be indicated so that the Manager can refer questions about the medication to the doctor.

The administration of medication is done as a service to children. It is not a regular part of the Program. If such administration is too complicated or specialized, the child may be unable to participate in the Program. *Please see "Special Needs Participation".*

CHALLENGING BEHAVIOURS

Every effort will be made to work with parents and counsellors to help a child in the Program with behavioural challenges. However, the Program does not have the extra staff or other resources to support a child that chronically harasses and/or abuses other children and staff. Children with chronic and/or severe behavioural problems may not be allowed to attend the Program without additional support. The Board of Directors along with senior staff will assess on a case by case basis and may withdraw services if needed. *Please see "Special Needs Participation".*

SPECIAL NEEDS PARTICIPATION

The Program believes in integrating children with special needs when appropriate support is available.

Children with special needs may be accepted into the Program upon evaluation of impact on the Program and upon the hiring of a special needs worker, if required. Parents may be eligible for funding of a Supported Child Development Worker, but if not, parents will be required to pay for such a worker. Parents will be required to pay for the cost of any special equipment and personnel needed to support their child in the Program.

On days with field trips, children with special needs may attend the Program if SCD worker is available, and the activities are such that the child can participate in the planned activity.

SAFETY PROCEDURES

Policies regarding safety procedures and disaster plans will be similar to the policies designated by the elementary school. There will be fire and earthquake drills on a monthly basis. Sometimes the elementary school

will hold fire drills during preschool times. We participate in those drills and children will be evacuated along with the rest of the school.

CLOTHING

Please send appropriate clothing – rain gear on wet days and good walking shoes for walking field trips. We recommend that a full change of clothing for each child be provided that can be left in their cubbies for unexpected problems. We encourage all items be clearly labeled to help prevent loss. Please provide a pair of non-skid indoor shoes.

TOYS

A child occasionally wishes to bring a toy to school the preschool program either because it's a favourite or because it's show and tell day. Please discuss with your child the possible consequences of bringing a toy to the preschool. We can take no responsibility for lost or damaged toys and chronic problems with certain toys and equipment will result in the toy being banned from the preschool. Special arrangements can be made for special toys or games. We encourage toys and items to be clearly labeled to help prevent loss.

ADDITIONAL WORKERS

Parents, practicum students, observing students and volunteers may be involved in the Program from time to time. They will be under the guidance of the Manager and/or Program staff and will be required to complete criminal record checks prior to being with any child.

SNACK/LUNCH

Please provide a snack for your child when they come to the Preschool. Even though we ask families to provide the snack, please inform us of any food allergies, particularly if they are life-threatening so we can be aware and make arrangements in those instances to ensure the child does not come into any form of contact with the food (ie: nut allergies).

A good rule of thumb is to avoid packing nut-based snacks altogether. It is a good habit to get into to ensure the safety of other children in program. If children get used to not having nut-based snacks packed, they will not be upset if a child enrolls with a nut allergy.

For children attending our four-hour program, it is expected that lunch will be brought from home. We do not provide food. Please ensure that the lunch is healthy and nutritious. Please avoid sugary beverages and snacks.

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

The purpose of behaviour management in this program is to provide a safe and healthy environment in which each child can feel secure, respected, and valued. Each child will be encouraged to develop positive relationships with peers and staff. Staff will strive to be appropriate behavioural models, showing respect for children, parents, co-workers, and their environment. To this end, parents can expect that staff will:

- Provide clear, simple, and consistent limits regarding appropriate behaviours with the Program. Such limits will be offered in a positive manner. Harsh or belittling language will not be used at any time. Physical punishment will not be used at any time.
- Demonstrate appropriate affection and caring for your child.
- Attempt to meet the needs of children as means of preventive discipline.

- They may also ask the child to think of a better way to solve their problems in the future and/or engage the child in a discussion on this subject. Sometimes this is effective simply as a means for the child to cool off, after which they can often resolve their difficulties on their own.
- Give the child time away from an activity, if need be, to help them get back in control of themselves.

Parents are encouraged to bring their concerns about the handling of any incident with the Program directly to the Manager.

Staff will be pleased to answer any questions you have about any aspect of this Guidance and Discipline policy.

PARENT INPUT

OUR SUCCESS IS DEPENDENT UPON YOUR INVOLVEMENT AND INPUT

Ready Set Grow Hillcrest Community Preschool program supports an “open door” communication policy. This means”

- Parents are welcome to drop in and either participate or observe the Program at any time. If consultation with staff is desired, please let us know ahead of time so that a staff member can give you their undivided attention, if possible.
- Telephone communication is also encouraged. Please check with the Manager regarding mutually convenient times.
- Parents can expect ongoing communication with staff concerning:
 - ✓ Their child’s progress
 - ✓ Behaviour concerns, problems with peers and/or siblings
 - ✓ Program activities
 - ✓ Program operation
- Parents can expect individual parent/staff meetings if concerns arise.
- Parents are asked to make themselves familiar with this Handbook as it states the Program’s policies and procedures.
- Parents concerned with the care of their child, or any aspect of the Program, are urged to speak with the Manager.
- Parents are encouraged to become involved as Board members and are invited to all Board meetings.
- Staff welcomes the interest and concern of parents on any topic. Your suggestions and comments are valuable to us.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Please note that this Handbook may be updated periodically to reflect and clarify our policies and practices. Updates will be communicated via our website, www.heosc.com, or will be sent out via email. Should you notice sections that need clarifying, please email heoscmanager@gmail.com.

Thank you.
Welcome to Ready Set Grow Preschool