



## All You Really Need to Know About Blueberry Kindergarten



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# **PARKLAND SCHOOL DIVISION**

Parkland School Division, including all of its schools, is committed to acting on its new vision, mission and values statements. These new statements that emphasize student success and well-being reflect the future-focused and innovative organization that it is today.

## **Vision**

Our students possess the confidence, resilience, insight and skills required to thrive in, and positively impact, the world.

## **Mission**

We assure supportive learning environments, meaningful experiences and healthy relationships that create opportunities to develop resilience, to gain diversity in perspectives and to achieve enduring success.

## **Our Values**

- Learning opportunities that are purposeful, essential, relevant, authentic and responsive;
- Excellence in achievement;
- Trustworthy, respectful relationships; and, ● Resilience with self-awareness.

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## WELCOME TO KINDERGARTEN

This booklet has been written to introduce you to the Kindergarten Program you and your child will be involved in this year. We hope it will answer many of the questions you may have regarding this first important year in school. In addition, we will share more specific information about the happenings in our classrooms through Google sites, blog entries, and/or monthly newsletters.

It is a privilege to spend days watching children grow, learn, and develop. Children bring with them a unique kind of curiosity, energy, and zest for life. We believe it is our role to provide an environment that facilitates the best possible place to grow and learn. An environment that is trusting, caring, and encouraging will enable each child to feel comfortable enough to take “risks” to learn and to reach their potential. Each child is unique. Each child has their own set of background experiences, interests, characteristics, and abilities.

We will endeavor to plan, adapt, and/or change instruction to meet the particular needs of each child and individual classroom. A variety of learning experiences using various instructional strategies will be implemented to meet the many different styles of learning. We are committed to the growth of skills and attitudes in each of the developmental areas - social, emotional, physical, intellectual, and creative. We will foster in children an appreciation of one another as unique and worthwhile individuals. We encourage you to contact us regarding any questions or concerns you may have. We want you to be a part of your child's learning journey, to know how your child is progressing, and to always feel well informed.

We want your child's first year in school to be the best beginning filled with happy and successful experiences.

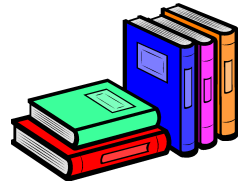


## **KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM RATIONALE**

Early childhood is a significant period in human development. Independence, initiative, decision-making, identity, creativity, the ability to learn, the ability to relate to others, and feelings of self-worth all have their beginnings in early childhood. What young children learn at this age will have a major impact on successful learning experiences in school, on personal development, and on future participation in society.

Young children benefit from programs that help them explore the world around them and guide them through the transition from home to school. The purpose of Kindergarten is to provide learning experiences that meet the diverse needs of children and prepare them for the rest of their learning journey. It's an important building block.

A child whose needs have been met is more likely to develop into a self-reliant, responsible, caring, and contributing member of society. Ensuring that all young children receive support and suitable learning opportunities is extremely important.



## **KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY**

Young children develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes that prepare them for subsequent learning.

1. Through early intervention and other strategies, young children with special needs develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes that prepare them for subsequent learning.

2. Young children build a shared set of experiences and participate in learning.
3. Parents have the opportunity for meaningful involvement in the education of their young children.
4. Coordinated community services are available to meet the needs of young children and their families.

*Taken from: Kindergarten Program Statement Alberta Education Curriculum Standards Branch*

## **PROGRAM ORGANIZATION**

*The following learning areas come from Alberta Education's Kindergarten Statement and are interrelated and integrated into the daily Kindergarten program. Young children benefit from learning in an integrated environment and instructional activities are planned and woven into these areas.*

1. Early Literacy
2. Early Numeracy
3. Citizenship and Identify
4. Environment and Community Awareness
5. Personal and Social Responsibility
6. Physical Skills and Well-Being
7. Creative Expression

Please visit My Child's Learning – A Parent Resource:  
<https://www.learnalberta.ca/content/mychildslearning/kinergarten.html>

## **TOPICS/FOCUS**

Inquiry into concepts and themes is used to develop a holistic view of learning, Inquiries may last anywhere from a week to several months, based on the children's interests and needs, current events, the time of year, relevancy to the curriculum, and the availability of resources. The objectives and activities for each inquiry

will be outlined by your child's teacher. Curriculum areas such as early literacy and numeracy, social studies, and science are integrated into a transdisciplinary approach to learning with a focus on critical thinking skills.

## **DAILY SCHEDULE**

Our days are active and busy! The schedule is flexible and may change according to the needs of the students, program content, etc...but we try to keep a regular routine so the children can flourish.

A typical Kindergarten Day includes many activities and can include the following:

- Large group routine activities – singing of “O Canada”, calendar, Morning Message, oral language (poems, songs, chants, etc.)
- Early Literacy and Numeracy Activities
- Outdoor Playtime (recess)
- Storytime
- Sharing Time
- Music, Creative Movement Activities
- Center Time – learning through play
- Day Review
- Technology: I-Pads, SMART Board Activities
- Gym
- Library

## **CLASSROOM NEWS**

Most classroom news is now done digitally via emails, Google sites, etc. You will receive information at the beginning of the year outlining all of the special things about your child's Kindergarten classroom and teacher. You will also receive a year calendar outlining all Kindergarten days for the year, as well as special days and field trips. In addition, you will receive information from your teacher outlining all Kindergarten experiences for each week/ month, as well as regular information and

updates. Please be sure to read all classroom information carefully and mark all important dates on your calendar.

## **Just playing...**

When I am building in the block center, please don't say I'm "just playing". For you see, I'm learning as I play, about balance and shapes. Who knows, I may be an architect someday.

When I'm getting all dressed up, setting the table, caring for the babies, don't get the idea I'm "just playing". For you see, I'm learning as I play. I may be a mother or a father someday.

When you see me up to my elbows in paint or standing at an easel, or molding or shaping clay, please don't let me hear you say, "he's just playing". For you see, I'm learning as I play. I'm expressing myself and being creative. I may be an artist or an inventor someday.

When you see me sitting in a chair "reading" to an imaginary audience, please don't laugh and think I'm "just playing". For you see, I'm learning as I play. I may be a teacher someday.

When you see me combing the bushes for bugs, or packing my pockets with choice things I find, don't pass it off as "just play". For you see, I'm learning as I play. I may be a scientist someday.

When you see me engrossed in a puzzle or some "plaything" at my school, please don't feel the time is wasted in "play". For you see, I'm learning as I play. I'm learning to solve problems and concentrate. I may be in business someday.

When you see me cooking or tasting food, please don't think that because I enjoy it, it is "just play". I'm learning to follow directions and see differences. I may be a cook someday.

When you see me learning to skip, hop, run, and move my body, please don't say I'm "just playing". For you see, I'm learning as I play. I'm learning how my body works. I may be a doctor, nurse, or athlete someday.



When you ask me what I have done at school today and I say “I just played”, please don’t misunderstand me. For you see, I’m learning as I play. I’m learning to enjoy and be successful in my work. I’m preparing for tomorrow. Today, I am a child and work is my play.

Written by Anita Wadley, 1979

## **KINDERGARTEN LEARNING CENTERS**

### **Why Centers?**

1. They attract the child’s interest so the learner is highly motivated.
2. Centers involve children in an active way.
3. They offer opportunities for a child to pursue learning in an individual manner.
4. Centers involve small groups of children in learning skills in decision-making, problem-solving, responsibility, and cooperation.

Each day, during center activity time, the children will work through a variety of centers. Center time is a time for small group instruction, social interaction, small group work, individual projects, exploration, experimentation, practice and application of skills, creative expression, and small group projects.

Teachers support work in guided centers which children rotate through to develop and enhance literacy and numeracy skills. These guided opportunities are balanced with self-guided play opportunities.

Opportunities for social and individual play are provided as both are desirable and should be cultivated. It is through social play that the child learns how to be a member of a group and contribute by sometimes being a leader and at other times a follower. The child learns to enjoy social contact through understanding and appreciating another’s work.

Play satisfies the needs of the active, inquiring, investigating, four, five, and six-year-old child.



## **LEARNING CENTERS AND THEIR EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES**

**Reading** – early literacy skills include book handling knowledge, story sequence, book elements, phonological awareness, letter/sound identification, beginning reading skills, personal connections, asking questions, ideas, and information.

**Math** - manipulation and exploration to develop an understanding of early numeracy skills such as patterns, numbers (sorting, matching, counting, ordering, comparing, creating, and grouping), measurement, problem-solving, shape, and space.

**Writing and Drawing** - expression of ideas, beginning writing skills, conventional letter formation, alphabet exploration.

**Discovery** - exploration of properties of natural and manufactured objects and experiments.

**I-Pads** – appropriate programs – literacy, numbers, science, etc.

**Viewing/Listening** – auditory experience of stories, rhymes, dance, etc.

**Sensory** – exploration and experimentation with scientific and mathematical skills (e.g. capacity, weight, temperature, buoyancy, etc) with substances such as sand and water in the sensory table.



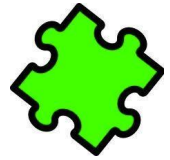
**Art & Painting** – expression of ideas, perceptions, feelings, and thoughts; manipulation of various artistic materials.

**Tinkering** – manipulation of various natural, found & manufactured objects to promote exploration, creativity, discovery, collaboration, and problem-solving.

**Playdough** – formation of letters, numbers, various shapes, sculpting, mathematical concepts (i.e., length, etc.), and fine motor development.

**Puppetry** – Acting out stories, expressing of own ideas and opinions, responding to ideas presented by others.

**Blocks** – cooperative building, mathematical concepts (e.g. more than, longer than, etc.), and science concepts (i.e., ramps – inclined planes, etc.).



**Dramatic Play** – role-playing familiar situations, problem-solving with peers, concepts of real and make-believe, etc. in the House Center, the doll house, or other centers that may have role-playing objects.

**Construction** – cooperative building and exploration with toys such as Lego, train sets, etc.

## **BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS**

During our first week of school and throughout the year, the children will be involved in discussions about ways to make our classroom a special one; a happy, productive, and safe place to learn. An environment filled with mutual respect, cooperation, and responsible attitudes and behavior will help to ensure a positive climate conducive to optimum learning. After the initial “caring and sharing” discussions, each child will understand what acceptable behavior in our class is.

If your child is having difficulty, we will be in contact with you. We’ll discuss ways to help your child learn to behave appropriately in the school setting using positive, cooperative discipline strategies.

Please do let us know if your child is having difficulties at school that we are not aware of so we can be of help. Also, please inform us if sleeping, eating habits or health conditions change as these help us better understand your child.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

*Much of the knowledge children absorb is best acquired by exploration in the real world where they may freely, actively, construct their vision of reality, rather than be passively instructed about it.”*

*Edward A. Chittenden*

The excitement that precedes and follows a field trip is wonderful. Field trips provide students with hands-on “real” learning experiences. They take many forms, varying from autumn walks, to in-school special days and out-of-school excursions. A variety of field trips are planned for the school year and specific field trip plans will be sent home in the yearly calendar and monthly newsletters.

## ***Two Sculptors***

*I dreamed I stood in a studio,*

*And watched two sculptors there,  
The clay they used was a young child's  
mind, And they fashioned it with care. One  
was a teacher, the tools she used Were  
books, music and art.*

*One a parent who worked with a guiding hand  
And a gentle, loving heart.*

*Day after day the teacher toiled  
With touch that was deft and sure,*

*While the parent labored by her side,  
And polished and smoothed it o'er.  
And when at last their task was done.  
They were proud at what they wrought;  
For the things they had molded into the child  
Could neither be sold or bought,  
And each agreed she would have failed,  
If she had worked alone,  
For behind the teacher stood the school,  
And behind the parent, the home*



*Author Unknown*

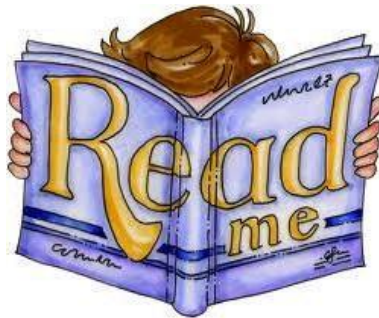
## **LIBRARY**

Students in Kindergarten will have the opportunity to take home books from the school library once a week. Our library day will be determined early in September.

## **10 Reasons to Read to Your Child...**

1. *Because when you hold them and give them this attention, they know you love them.*
2. *Because reading to them will encourage them to become a reader.*
3. *Because children's books today are so good that they are fun even for adults.*
4. *Children's book illustrations often rank with the best, giving them a lifelong feeling for good art.*
5. *Books are one way of passing your moral values to them. Readers know how to put themselves in another's shoes.*
6. *Because, until they learn to read themselves, they will think you are magic.*
7. *Because every teacher and librarian they ever encounter will thank you.*
8. *Because it's nostalgic.*
9. *Because for that short space of time, they will stay clean and quiet.*
10. *Because of you, they may then let you read in peace.*

*Author Unknown*



## **ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF STUDENT GROWTH AND ACHIEVEMENT**

Demonstrating and communicating student growth is an essential, important link between home and school. Assessment and evaluation of a student's progress is an



ongoing daily process. Many forms of assessment are used. Some include:

- Classroom observation
- Student daily work
- Collection of student work throughout the year
- Assessment of phonological skills
  - Brigance - Comprehensive assessment of skills
  - Portfolio of Learning

Regular contact regarding your child throughout the school year is encouraged. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns about your child's development or progress, please contact your child's teacher. There are three regular reporting periods in Kindergarten (with report cards that are accessible through your PowerSchool account), as well as two parent/teacher interview experiences.

It is our hope that with this open, regular communication between home and school, your child will experience a wonderfully happy and successful year in kindergarten.

## **PARENT PARTNERSHIP**

It is indeed an exciting day when a child's parent visits the classroom. Please feel welcome to come and volunteer or help! For those parents who work during the day, please feel welcome to stop by if you ever have a day off. Parents are invited to begin volunteering in October. September is a time for the children and the teacher to get to know each other and to become a Kindergarten family.

Parents can volunteer to help in the classroom by signing up - classroom teachers will provide sign-up instructions. Volunteers may be asked to prepare instructional materials, assist students during center time, assist small groups of students with their learning, and help with general classroom upkeep. Volunteers are also necessary for field trip supervision, assisting with classroom parties, fundraising, etc.

***\*\*\* Please note that a criminal record check (vulnerable sector) is required to volunteer in the school. Please contact the office for a form – it is free of charge.***

## **PARKING**

Parking is available in the front parking lot. Please note that parking is NOT permitted in the front “drop-off” zone! Also, there are two handicapped parking spaces for vehicles displaying a handicapped parking sticker. Traffic movement in the back (bus) parking lot is not permitted from 7:45 – 8:30 am and from 2:15 – 3:00 pm daily for safety reasons.

