

Prairie Nature Children's Centre

School Age

Program Overview



Welcome to School-age (SA)!

Our 'play based' program has 45 children in grades 1-5 that mainly attend Westvie School. The children are separated into two cohorts. SA1 uses Room 16 and SA2 uses the gym as their home base. We look forward to getting to know you and your child. We know that all children are unique and special. We feel fortunate to have the opportunity to spend our days with them. The following information is to help answer some questions that you may have.

Acknowledging the developmental needs of the children, some of the general goals and objectives we have are:

- Encouraging independence in the children to make choices for themselves, when choices are available, in a safe environment.
- Enhancing children's development in the three main areas-cognitive growth, social/emotional growth, and physical growth.
- Providing developmentally stimulating play experiences.
- Allowing children to explore a wide array of natural and interesting materials to provoke curiosity so they may have a better understanding of the world around them.

Virtues

Prairie Nature Children's Centre staff incorporate these virtues in our language with children. Here is a list of the 52 virtues:

Assertiveness	Diligence	integrity	reliability
Caring	Enthusiasm	joyfulness	respect
Cleanliness	Excellence	justice	responsibility
Commitment	Flexibility	kindness	self-discipline
Compassion	Forgiveness	love	service
Confidence	Friendliness	loyalty	tact
Consideration	Generosity	moderation	thankfulness
Cooperation	Gentleness	modesty	tolerance
Courage	Helpfulness	orderliness	trust
Courtesy	Honesty	patience	trustworthiness
Creativity	Honour	peacefulness	truthfulness
Detachment	Humility	perseverance	understanding
Determination	Idealism	purposefulness	unity

Parent Communication

We consider ourselves to be an extension of your child's family and hope you feel the same. Besides daily verbal communication with our parents (guardians, grandparents, aunts, uncles), we have a communication board outside of the classroom. We would ask that you check it daily. It will have information regarding your child's day and other upcoming events. The Remind App, which sends out text/email, is another tool that we use to keep families informed.

Learning Stories

The Learning Stories Assessment approach is a form of observation and documentation that is written in a narrative story format. The teacher watches and listens as children explore through play. Reading learning stories is a wonderful opportunity to get a snapshot of a child's leaning and development for families. A copy of your child's learning story will be made available to you.

Nature at Prairie Nature Children's Centre

Our aim is to create an opportunity for children to develop a sense of wonder and appreciation for our natural world and experience the benefits of spending time outdoors. Studies have shown spending meaningful time in nature positively affects children physically, emotionally, socially and cognitively. Our hope is that this connection to nature will develop into a lifelong appreciation of our environment.

At Prairie Nature Children's Centre the children help us to recycle which indeed diverts about one half of our trash from going to the garbage dump. In teaching them this we are hoping that they will grow up to be responsible citizens willing to live in a sustainable and responsible way as citizens of planet Earth.

Nature is becoming a big part of our program and we spend a great deal of time outside. We are learning to enjoy the natural beauty that is all around us even here in an urban environment. We go out rain or shine, sleet or snow. We work (play) and explore in our outdoor environment as much as we can. While outdoors, we catch bugs, jump in the puddles, dance in the rain, and let snowflakes fall on our tongues. In our outdoor playgrounds we have gardening beds that allow us to learn gardening skills in the summer months and harvesting in the fall.

Two Weeks Outdoors

The Two Weeks Outdoors is just as it sounds. We spend two weeks outside in the beautiful Manitoba weather. We take our classroom outside for the whole day during these weeks (usually during spring or summer break). We eat and play outside rain or shine. We will give parents notice on the weeks that our program has chosen. We ask that the parents prepare their child for this time outdoors by having their backpack stocked up with our list of items we know they will need.



Groups

Children are divided into three separate mixed age groups, grades 1-5. We use room 16, the music room, library and the gym.

Inclusion

Prairie Nature Children's Centre is committed to the inclusion of all children (regardless of their needs) into our program. Where additional staffing is required to help include these children into the program, it will always be utilized according to the goals of inclusion, namely:

- Provide as little assistance as is needed to maximize independence and develop self-confidence.
- One-on-one time with a child will not be provided except under very rare conditions.
- Small group learning while in the classroom will be the most frequently used model of teaching those skills that are not easily learned through other methods.
- Every attempt will be made to normalize the child's stay at Prairie Nature Children's Centre. This will include the sharing of any extra tasks, as required, by all staff in the program.

Helper Chart

Children are assigned to be 'daily helpers' at lunch time. Their responsibilities are to clean tables, sweep the floors and help to tidy up. We encourage children to take ownership of our environment and to keep our space clean.

Microwaves

Children may heat up their own lunches, in glass containers, from September to June. During the summer months children may not bring items that need to be heated up because of the many days that we spend away from the centre on field trips.

Extracurricular School Activities

Your child may request to participate in the extracurricular activities at school.

- After School activities - If you are picking your child up from the school and not returning to the centre, please be sure that our staff is informed so we are not looking for them.

After School Activities/Cooperative Games

- A variety of activities and cooperative/field games are implemented daily with the children.
- S.W.A.T. Team Leadership Program - The S.W.A.T. Leadership Programs (**Students Who Assist Teachers**) teach children ages 9 to 11 leadership skills that build confidence. The leadership characteristics that we encourage in this program are: respect, responsibility, taking initiative,

integrity, honesty and trust. We believe that if children are taught leadership skills at an early age they have the potential of growing into productive, confident Canadians that are able to deal with negative situations positively. S.W.A.T. team children are encouraged to assist in a number of ways at the Centre (i.e. assisting in the Preschool Programs, bake sale, hot lunch fundraisers).

"What makes you different as a child will make you great as an adult. Celebrate your difference!"

Electronics and/or Toys from Home

Our focus is on helping children grow strong interpersonal skills and friendships, bring an active balance to their more sedentary school day and reconnecting children with nature. For these and other reasons we restrict the use of electronics in our program. This includes screen time involving watching movies.

- Children are responsible for their own toys brought from home.
- Children that have cell phones and bring them to daycare are required to leave them turned off in their lockers.

*Our staff are not able to assume responsibility for lost or stolen items.

Parent Volunteers

We welcome parent volunteers so if you are able and interested to help out, contact us so we can arrange the best possible fit for your involvement in our program.

"Camp Day" Fundraising

Yearly we will enjoy celebrating the end of the school year by planning a "Camp Day". The cost of this day is significant and so each year we engage in fundraising activities to help defray the cost. Camp Day is typically on a school in-service day in mid-June. All of the SA children participate. We go to Camp Manitou for this all day field trip. We encourage you to help us fundraise by participating in our hot lunch fundraisers and bake sale, etc. Camp Day allows children to spend an amazing day outside participating in activities such as: zip-lining, archery, fire building, bannock baking and a variety of other activities.

What to Bring to the Centre

To assist your child(ren) in having comfortable days while at Prairie Nature Children's Centre, please, ensure they have the following items present at day care:

- Work Clothing – Parents should be aware that older, less valuable clothing, is suggested for Centre use as the children are involved in many activities that may cause clothing to be soiled or, in some cases, stained. Staff will not be responsible for lost or misplaced articles of clothing.

Parents should have all clothing labeled. Also children must have an extra set of clothing (everything – e.g. socks, underwear, shirt, pants, shoes) in their locker. Remember: anything can happen! It is an embarrassment to the children when they require a change of clothing and they do not have any available. There will be no lending of clothing, except within families.

- Footwear - each child must wear shoes/slippers at all times in the Centre
- Outerwear - The children go outside on a daily basis (weather permitting). During the wet months (Spring/Fall), children need to have a pair of boots or extra shoes in their locker, so that they are able to have dry footwear indoors and keep the Centre carpets clean. In the winter, all children should have good, warm, winter clothing (snow pants, mitts, hat, scarf and boots). We discourage flip flops. On fieldtrips children must wear runners or closed shoes.
- Lunch for your Child – Parents must supply lunch for their child. Lunches are to be placed in the child's locker. The health inspector suggests an insulated lunch bag/box with a small ice pack next to your child's food as a good precaution against spoiled food. Lunches, as well as any utensils or containers that are sent along, should be labeled. A minimum of \$5.00 will be charged for each meal the Centre needs to make on occasions that a child's meal is forgotten at home.

Prairie Nature Children's Centre Inc. will not assume responsibility for ill effects of food that are brought in by parents.

Prairie Nature Children's Centre Inc. encourages nutritionally balanced meals following the recommended servings from the Canada Food Guide. Children will not be permitted to have potatoe chips, chocolate bars, candies or pop/ice tea, etc. <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/>

- Staff will use microwaves to heat up children's lunches, in glass containers, from September to June. During the summer months children may not bring items that need to be heated up because of the many days that we spend away from the centre on field trips.

Some Final Reminders

- Please label all of your child's belongings. We have a great number of children who use our program and many of them have similar items
- If your child requires medication while they are at daycare please ensure their medication form has been filled out.
- If you are entering the building during school hours, you will need to use the buzzer located at the side doors by the playground off Ravelston Ave. The staff will then answer the phone to identifying who you are *who you are picking up/dropping off. Then they will come to let you in.
 - once you are in the building, you will also need to buzz into the rooms
- We would appreciate it if you could take responsibility, along with your child, for their personal locker space. Check it daily for soiled clothing, artwork or other items that needs to go home. Periodically, you should also do a locker cleaning with your child, in order to keep the locker tidy and presentable.

School Day Schedule (September to June)

Please note that times may vary slightly due to scheduling changes and outdoor play is weather dependent (i.e. wind chill & high U.V. rating)

7:00am-8:40am	Free play in room 16, music room or Gym
7:45-8:25am	Snack (free flow)
8:40am-8:55am	Prep and transition to school
3:30pm-4:00pm	Children arrive from school/ Snack (free flow)
4:00pm-5:30pm	Outdoor Time *Inclement Weather-Indoor Invitations to play (pedagogy-reflective teaching)/gym free play/after school activities/cooperative games
5:30pm-5:45pm	Quiet activities

In-Service Day/Non-School Days/Summer Schedule

*Please note that times may vary due to scheduling changes/special activities/field trips and outdoor play is weather depending (i.e. wind chill & high U.V. rating). Calendars will be handed out for summer groups.

7:00am-8:40am	Free play in room 16, music room or Gym
8:30am-9:00am	Snack (free flow) *inside or outside
8:00am	Gym /Free Play/activities inside or outside
12:00pm	Lunch *inside or outside
12:20pm	Children excused for free play in rooms or playgrounds
	Daily helpers tidy up after lunch
	Free Play/activities inside or outside
3:00pm-3:30pm	Snack (free flow) *inside or outside
3:30pm-5:30pm	Outdoor Time *Inclement Weather-Indoor Invitations to play (pedagogy-reflective teaching)/gym free play/activities/cooperative games
5:30pm-5:45pm	Quiet activities

Philosophy

At Prairie Nature Children's Centre we believe it is our task to help prepare our children for life. Therefore, we provide an environment designed to facilitate learning experiences that will better help our children deal with themselves and the future.

The future, as we all know, is very unpredictable, however, three things are guaranteed: it will involve change, uncertainty and challenge. In recognition of this, we have set a priority of helping children gain the qualities that will help them survive and thrive in the future. These qualities include Courage, which enables a child to try, fail, and try again; Self-Esteem, which aids children in succeeding at challenges, learning from failures, and taking advantage of future opportunities; Responsibility, which involves making choices and accepting the consequences of those choices; and Cooperation, which helps unlock the magic of team work and the interdependent skills that are so necessary in our society.

Let it be understood that we have no desire to hinder a child's desire or ability to learn in the cognitive (intellectual) area. It is our belief however, that information will be of little interest or help to a child whose emotional, physical or social needs are not being met.

Every facet of the Centre encourages development of the whole person.

1. Physical Needs

Including security, rest, nutrition and adequate movement for health, muscle coordination and ability.

2. Emotional Needs

Fostering the feeling of being loved and teaching respect for both adults and children. We will also help the children to understand their emotions and learn appropriate ways of dealing with them.

3. Social Needs

Developing acceptance by the peer group. First hand experiences with adults and children will facilitate this. The child will be assisted in problem-solving techniques involving interpersonal differences.

4. Intellectual Needs

We will help children enjoy their learning experience. The child will be encouraged to learn to his/her potential.

Prairie Nature Children's Centre is also committed to the inclusion of all children (regardless of their disabilities or needs) into our program. Where additional staffing is required to help include these children into the program, it will always be utilized according to the goals of inclusion, namely:

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