

**Welcome to the Kindergarten program at Westview School.** Your child's first year of school is a time for your son or daughter to grow and develop socially, emotionally, physically, intellectually, and creatively. This development is fostered in an atmosphere which is cooperative rather than competitive, supportive, joyful, yet challenging.

Especially important in the kindergarten year are **the social and emotional** aspects of a child's development. Social development involves learning how to interact with others. Most children come to school having limited playmates. Suddenly, there are twenty or more children with whom they must share, take turns, and work in small and large groups. They must learn to listen while others are speaking, keep hands and feet to themselves, etc. Included in emotional development is learning how to express and control feelings of happiness, sadness, anger, or disappointment. Putting forth one's best effort and taking pride in one's work are included in positive emotional development.

Your child will be off to a good start in kindergarten if he or she is able to:

- **Attend to personal needs.** Your child will need to know how to use the washroom appropriately, and get dressed with minimal help. Teaching your child to become independent and responsible for such tasks enables him/her to build confidence and feel competent. You can allow your child to dress alone as soon as possible. At school your child will be expected to remove and put on outdoor clothing as well as change footwear. It is important that he/she practises putting them off and on without adult help. You can appreciate the implications if all twenty kindergarteners required the teacher's help to get dressed!
- **Work and play appropriately with others.** If your child has had limited experience playing with other children of his/her own age, it is important to provide some opportunities for him/her to do so. Invite other children to play at your house, and allow your child to play for short periods of time at someone else's home. Teach your child how to share with others, and to respect other children's belongings. Emphasize the importance of obeying the rules of the game – everyone is happier with fair play.
- **Display confidence and self-control.** When you are away from your child, assure him/her that you will be back before too long, but avoid long and emotional good-byes. Your apprehension will be noticed by your child, and will contribute to his/her feeling of separation anxiety. This will be very important when school begins. We insist that parents say good-bye to their child at the doors of the school, and to not proceed into the school with them.

Under **physical development**, the kindergarten program works on the development of fine-motor skills (eye-hand control). Kindergarteners learn how to hold and use pencils, crayons, scissors, and learn how to manipulate materials such as play dough, Lego, etc. Large motor control is developed through running

and stopping, jumping, balancing, skipping, throwing and catching, and many more activities. Kindergarteners will have at least two physical education classes per 6-day cycle with a specialist teacher. Musical experiences will also be a part of every day in kindergarten, with specialized classes twice per cycle.

**Intellectual development** is guided by the various Department of Education curricula. The objective is to move kindergarteners through the curriculum outcomes, recognizing individual learning rates and styles. Most learning progresses through three stages: the concrete, the semi-concrete or pictorial, and the abstract. In kindergarten, many learning experiences occur in the concrete and semi-concrete levels. This means that kindergarteners learn through “hands-on” experiences in classroom activities and play centers. Play is the way kindergarteners develop concepts, use language, promote friendship and cooperation, and learn to think creatively.

The **Language Arts program** is implemented through a balanced literacy plan that involves listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, and representing. Early reading skills will involve learning the alphabet and associated letter sounds, establishing left-to-right and top-to-bottom directionality, and developing basic concepts of print. Kindergarteners will experience shared reading, guided reading, and independent reading of early level books. They will learn to print alphabet letters in upper and lower case forms, as well as some high frequency words to write independently. They will learn to convey a written message through meaningful illustrations, and eventually learn to use letter sounds to record some words independently. Westview School has a **writing continuum** that provides students with a self-assessment tool to guide them on the path to becoming writers.

Speaking skills involve encouraging the kindergartener to speak in full sentences, increase vocabulary and fluency with the English language. He/she will be encouraged to express thoughts, ideas, feelings, and experiences. “Show & Tell” is one opportunity for each child to practise speaking in front of the group.

The **Mathematics program** is developed through the following strands: **Patterns and Relations** (reproducing, continuing and creating patterns, and learning to sort items by like characteristics); **Measurement and Geometry** (learning about non-standard measurement, 2-D and 3-D objects); **Understanding Number** (recognizing numerals, counting forwards and backwards, showing and comparing sets of objects, demonstrating an awareness of addition, recognizing dot patterns)

The **Science curriculum** includes the following three clusters: Trees, Colour, and Paper. Extensive work is done with each of these three units of study throughout the year.

**Social Studies** involves learning about concepts of self and individual talents and abilities; learning about basic needs, about people who help at home, at school, and in the community. We learn about Canada, its flag and special celebrations.

The **Health curriculum** includes nutrition, dental health, safety, and physical well-being.

### **Assessment and Reporting to Parents**

Parent-Teacher Conferences are held twice a year – in November and March. Report cards are issued before the conferences, as well as at the end of June. Parents are encouraged to contact the teacher by telephone or in person if there are concerns at any time during the term. The teacher will also be in contact through a monthly calendar, letters and notes, when information needs to be shared.

### **School Entry and Dismissal – A.M. Kindergarteners**

Kindergarteners have the same entry and dismissal times as the rest of the students in the school. The morning entry is **at 8:55 A.M. at the Hoka Street entrance**. Kindergarteners should arrive at school only a few minutes early, and should wait with their respective parent until the 8:55 buzzer is heard. On rainy or very cold days, kindergarteners may enter the Hoka Street doors and quietly wait with his/her parent in the foyer. I will meet the kindergarteners at the doors and lead them to our classroom at 8:55 A.M. Please say good-bye to your child at the doors, and allow him/her the independence of making his/her own way to the classroom. When picking your child up at **11:45 A.M., please come to the Hoka Street entrance** at the front of the school and wait in the foyer area until the class is dismissed. If your child attends the Westview Community Day Care, the day care staff will drop off and pick up your child in the kindergarten classroom.

### **School Entry and Dismissal – P.M. Kindergarteners**

Kindergarteners have the same entry and dismissal times as the rest of the students in the school. The afternoon entry is **at 12:45 P.M. at the Hoka Street entrance**. Kindergarteners should arrive at school only a few minutes early, and should wait with their respective parent until the 12:45 buzzer is heard. On rainy or very cold days, kindergarteners may enter the Hoka Street doors and quietly wait with his/her parent in the foyer. I will meet the kindergarteners at the doors and lead them to our classroom at 12:45 P.M. Please say good-bye to your child at the doors, and allow him/her the independence of making his/her own way to the classroom. When picking your child up at **3:30 P.M., please come to the Hoka Street entrance** at the front of the school and wait in the foyer area until the class is dismissed. If your child attends the Westview Community Day Care,

the day care staff will drop off and pick up your child in the kindergarten classroom.

### **Snack Time**

Research shows that children who eat a good breakfast are more successful learners. Please be sure your child eats breakfast at home each day. In addition, most children enjoy having a little snack mid-morning. Please send a small nutritious snack for your child. Some suggestions are: fruit, no-nut granola bars, a container of dry cereal, cheese and crackers. No yogurt tubes or fruit cups please. **Please note: Snacks containing nuts, peanuts, peanut butter, or cooked eggs in any form are not allowed, since we have students in our class and school with life-threatening allergies.** For Day Care kindergarteners, please pack your child's snack separately from his/her lunch, and put the snack into his/her backpack for easy access. Thank you for your cooperation.

### **Home-Reading**

Kindergarteners will take home two books – twice a cycle to read at home. The baggies will be used to keep these books in good condition. Remind your child to return the books, so new ones can be issued.

### **Daily Communication**

If you wish to send the teacher a note, please include it in your child's backpack. If your child will be missing school due to illness, a medical appointment, or for some other reason, please send a note or call the school office. We have a daily call-back program in effect, so if your child is absent and you have not called the school, you will receive a phone call in the morning. This is time consuming for us so we appreciate when you call.

### **Monthly Calendar and Newsletter**

A kindergarten calendar and school newsletter will be sent home monthly. Please post the calendar on your refrigerator or bulletin board to keep track of your child's daily schedule and special events.

### **Show & Tell Schedule**

Show & Tell will be held on Mondays and Fridays. On Show & Tell day, please help your child prepare by going over the significance of the item and what he/she might like to say about it. Please keep in mind the educational benefit to the other children when choosing items, and try your best to discourage toys, DS games, etc.

## **Volunteers**

There are sometimes opportunities for parents/grandparents to volunteer in the kindergarten classroom, assisting with special occasions, crafts, and material preparation. All volunteers must fill out a child abuse registry form at the office, before working in the school.

Thank you for your attention to this Kindergarten Orientation Booklet for Parents. Together, I'm sure we can make your child's first year at Westview School a warm and memorable one.