

Mills Haven elementary



Unity

By Cleo V. Swarat

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 and music and art;
One was a parent
With a guiding hand and gentle loving heart.

And when at last their work was done,
They were proud of what they had wrought.
For the things they had worked into the child
Could never be sold or bought!

And each agreed she would have failed
if she had worked alone.
For behind the parent stood the school,
and behind the teacher stood the home!

Dear Parents,

This Kindergarten Handbook was designed to give you as much information as possible about Mills Haven School's Kindergarten Program.

We know that as parents it is very exciting to send your child to Kindergarten and that many questions will come to mind. Hopefully this handbook will answer most of your questions.

2017-2018 Kindergarten Handbook

Entrance

Parents are responsible for the supervision of their children outside until the Entrance Bell rings. At that time parents need to say good-bye to their children and allow them to **enter the school by themselves**. It is important that you allow your child to **take responsibility** for his/her school day and begin developing his/her **independence**. If a situation arises where a child is demonstrating separation anxiety issues certain arrangements will be made to accommodate the child and provide for a smooth transition.

Preparing for Kindergarten Tip: Begin early, by talking about the changes your child will experience in Kindergarten. Talk about saying good-bye, what to expect, seeing them at the end, etc... Visit the school, meet the teacher, see the classroom before the first day.

Boot Room

Children will take off their outside shoes and carry them to their Kindergarten locker. They will place their boots on the bottom shelf at their assigned locker.

Preparing for Kindergarten Tip: Label everything your child brings to school

Classroom Hallway

Backpacks will be hung on the front hook and coats, snowpants will be hung on the back hook at their locker.

Backpack

Children need a backpack big enough to hold their snack bag, Communication folder, a duotang, a library book and snowpants. Students will hang their backpack on the first hook in their cubby.

In the hallway they also take off and hang up their coats/snow pant. Children will put their mittens, toques, hats,etc... in their backpack. Then they put on their inside shoes. Each child needs a pair of no scuffing **inside shoes labeled** with their **name** for use within the school. Children should have Velcro shoes until they are able to tie their shoes without assistance.

Preparing for Kindergarten Tip: Have your child practice putting on his/her coats, snowpants, mittens, toques and neck warmers by him/herself. Practice zipping up coats. Leave items of clothing that are difficult for your child at home. Please do not send scarves to school.

Into Classroom

Children bring their Home/School Communication Folder, "Work Book" and "snack bag" into the classroom.

Snack Bag

Please send your child to school with lunch kit to hold their snack, lunch and a water bottle. Please make sure to send 2 small, healthy snacks as well as healthy food for lunch. We will work with the children at the beginning of the year regarding what should be eaten at snack and what is lunch. Please label the lunch kit and water bottle. If you are putting the water bottle in the lunch kit please make sure water bottle is closed before putting it in their lunch kit.

Library Books

We will go to Library to sign out 1 book each week beginning in January. You will be advised of your day when it is scheduled.

Home-School Communication Folder

Students will be given a folder at the beginning of the year to be used for transporting notes to and from school. Please check it daily.

Attendance

Cards are placed on the table outside the classroom and each child must find his/her name and place the card into the basket, indicating he/she is here. It is important that children take responsibility for finding their name from the beginning. We will assist students if necessary.

Preparing for Kindergarten Tip: Make sure your child can recognize his/her first name before starting school. Use an uppercase letter (capital) for the first letter and lowercase letters for all the rest.

Calendar

Over the last few years I have been redesigning my "Calendar Time" in Kindergarten. I believe that in order for children to have meaningful conversations about time, days of the week, months, etc... it must be related to them personally. So, we begin calendar by talking about what they know- their birthdays! Please practice your child's birthday. Calendar will also not be a "time" each day but integrated into different activities as it naturally arises in the classroom. Usually this begins with a discussion about special days- first day of school, Halloween, etc... and will eventually expand into the weekend days (the days we don't come to school) and the days on which they do certain things (ex. swimming lessons every Tuesday). Through these activities we will explore- days of the week, months,

today, tomorrow, yesterday, a long time from now, a long time ago, soon, not that long ago (known as past, present and future but put in child friendly terms).

Kindergarten Program Statement

1. Early Literacy

Phonemic Awareness

This is often confused with phonics, which is the letter and sound association and sounding out that takes place when children learn to read and write. Phonemic Awareness introduces children to the similarities and differences in sounds of words to show that language has meaning, message and form. Most phonemic awareness comes from playing with the sounds of language through activities that involve **nursery rhymes, alliteration, poetry, tongue twisters, patterned books, singing, dancing, acting, finger play, telephone games, clapping, tapping, marching, counting, etc...** Some phonemic awareness is discovered through music, math and literacy activities. A huge focus at the beginning of Kindergarten is on recognizing that sounds put together create a message, identifying and producing rhymes and identifying syllables of words. As the year progresses the focus on rhyming continues and for those that are ready the focus is on identifying beginning/middle and end sounds of words, blending sounds together to make words and segmenting sounds of words.

Preparing for Kindergarten Tip: Spend time rhyming- use nursery rhymes, songs, etc... Visit <http://www.starfall.com/>

Alphabet

The literacy program that is used in the Kindergarten classroom is based on the integration of letters and sounds using all the senses. During each theme children will learn the letters of the alphabet. Children will participate in songs, games, movement and many other activities to focus on uppercase and lowercase letter recognition and letter/sound association. I will also send home ideas and suggestions for reinforcing sounds and letters as a part of everyday activities.

Concepts of Print

In Kindergarten children will begin to explore that print and pictures have meaning, that the words being read match the words written on the page. We explore concepts such as, what is a letter, what is a word (a group of certain letters makes a word), groups of words make sentences, sentences have a beginning and an end, there is an uppercase letter at the beginning of a sentence and punctuation at the end of a sentence, the words match the picture above, there are spaces between words, etc... Some children will begin to recognize some sight words and may begin reading simple sentences.

Reading Comprehension

Listening to books read aloud and being able to retell the story and answer questions about the story is an important component of literacy in Kindergarten. You can help your child by reading to them every day and talking about what you have read and asking questions about Who, What, When, Where, How and Why.

Writing

Writing in Kindergarten begins with children drawing pictures and telling us about them. Once they have some letter/sound knowledge children will begin to use the beginning sound/letter of words to write about their pictures. As they learn some sight words and have more sound knowledge they will start writing simple sentences. During writing time the children's printing form and spelling are never corrected. This might discourage them from writing and expressing their ideas.

2. Numeracy (Early Math)

The focus of mathematics activities in Kindergarten is on developing **sorting, patterning, number sense, measurement and 3-D object understanding**. The emphasis is not on rote memorization of sorting rules, numbers and names of objects but on using **problem solving strategies, thinking skills and reasoning** to develop the **knowledge and understanding** of the concepts. Talk about Math is extremely IMPORTANT- children expressing their ideas and understandings.

3. Citizenship & Identity (Early Social)

Students explore **concepts about themselves**, their classmates, their family and the community by sharing their "I Am A Star" Book and sharing special items from groups (sports, girl guides, dance, etc..) with the "Me Bag". In class we discuss what makes each of us unique by talking about our similarities and differences and the community around us.

Environment & Community Awareness (Early Science)

During the year we explore a variety of **themes** to learn about the world and environment around us. Possible themes include- Nursery Rhymes, Pumpkins (life cycles), Space, Community, Body Parts (inquiry project) , Winter, Ocean, Farm, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Ice Cream, Pirates and Valentine's Day.

Music

The Kindergarten children are given music instruction. They participate in a whole school Christmas Concert and a Year End Kindergarten Celebration.

Physical Activity

Many physical activities are integrated into the daily activities of the classroom. There are also many opportunities for movement in the gym, the activity room and outside.

Classroom Supports

Speech Language Services

All Kindergarten students are screened in September for sound and language development by the classroom teacher or educational assistant. If there are concerns in an area, the child is referred to the speech language therapist that works at the school. Information and permission slips are sent home before the SLT begins any assessments. If your child qualifies for therapy, the SLT and/or teacher will contact you to discuss your child's programming needs. Therapy is provided at the school once a week by the SLT and 2 to 4 times per week by the educational assistant. Home practice is sent home by the SLT.

Fine Motor Skills

All Kindergarten students are also screened for fine motor skills- pencil grasp, doing up buttons, picking up small objects, cutting, printing, etc... If there are concerns in an area the child is referred to the Occupational Therapist assigned to our school. Information and a permission slip are sent home before the OT begins any assessments. If your child qualifies for therapy the OT and/or teacher will contact you to discuss your child's programming needs. Therapy is provided at the school by the OT and skills are reinforced one on one, in small groups and in the classroom by the educational assistant and teacher. Ideas and suggestions to improve fine motor skills are provided by the OT and teacher.

Report Cards

You will receive a Checklist outlining your child's progress in November and March. In June you will be required to access an online report card outlining your child's progress. In October and February there will be Student led Conferences that give your child the opportunity to explore his/her learning through structured centre activities. There will also be time for each family to talk with the teacher. Of course, if you have questions or concerns you may contact the teacher and schedule a time to meet.

Other Important Information

Work Book

In September your child will receive a duotang with activities to support your child's learning at home. When you complete a page please sign and return it to school. At that time I will put in a new page.

Labels

All clothing and school supplies **MUST** be labeled with the child's name.

Communication

I will be using the following 3 methods to communicate information.

1. Remind app- used for daily communication of activities, reminders, back and forth communication
2. Home School Folder- used for notes, classroom activities to be sent back and forth
3. eteacher page on the Mills Haven website- Calendar with up to date classroom activities

If a situation arises during the school day that needs to be communicated to your child or his/her teacher please phone the school. There is no guarantee that the teacher will get the information if it is emailed as we are busy with the students during school hours.

Volunteers

Parents, grandparents, etc... are welcome and encouraged in the Kindergarten classroom. It is valuable for parents to get into the classroom at least once a

month to observe their child in the classroom. Please contact your classroom teacher to sign up and volunteer.

Snacks

Each child brings his/her own snack every day. Children should bring **one** healthy food item and **one** healthy drink. Water bottles are great for snack time. We use snack time to discuss table manners and healthy food choices so please send healthy snacks with your child. Candy and pop are not allowed at snack time. Please send snacks in containers that children can open independently. We use snack time to develop the children's fine motor skills and children quickly become independent in their "opening" and "closing" skills. In order to continue with the recycling initiatives of the County of Strathcona and as a part of our Environmental and Community Awareness expectations we will send home empty packaging for recycling. In order to keep the lunch kit clean please send a Ziploc bag in the lunch kit for putting all their recyclables in. Children will also be responsible for cleaning up the snack tables- sweeping up crumbs on the table, wiping tables, pushing in chairs, sweeping, etc... This helps reinforce the sense of community responsibility we talk about in Citizenship & Identity.

Clothing

Please provide an extra set of clothing, in a labeled ziploc bag, to be kept at school, in case of an accident or spill.

Field Trips & In Class Activities

The following field trip(s) have not yet been approved for the year, however they are in the planning stages for next year. More information and permission forms for each field trip will be sent home a few weeks before each trip.

Telus World of Science- This field trip will be an all day trip for both classes. Children will explore the planets through a star theatre presentation. Students will also be given the opportunity to explore bubbles and space through a variety of hands on activities. There is also some time for children to play in the Discovery Zone.

Nature Detective- The Nature Detective will visit each classroom three times during the school year. The children look forward to her visits and are sad to see her go when the last one is done in June. The Detective brings in many interesting items that allow the children to explore animals, their food, their habitats, etc... during different seasons. There is one in the Fall, Winter and Spring.

Spineless Wonders- West Edmonton Mall brings out creatures without backbones- sea anemones, starfish, etc...

Sparky the fire dog comes out for a visit early in the year to teach us about fire safety.

Gymnastics- Every year the Kindergarten children participate in 2 gymnastics classes at Salto Gymnastics. This is an exciting opportunity for the students to explore gymnastics with trained coaches.

Kindness and Caring Community Event- Kindergarten students will take message of kindness and caring to an assisted living facility in connection with Valentine's Day.

All Day Field Trips

These trips will be scheduled on a regular scheduled day for each class.

Field Trip Volunteers

Most field trips require a supervisor: child ratio of 1:5. If there are not enough volunteers for a particular field trip that field trip will be cancelled. Siblings are not allowed on field trips.

Field Trip Costs

Field Trips will be paid through our Acorn System and more information will be available at the start of the school year.

Extra-curricular activities

The school has many activities scheduled during the year. Kindergarten children attend if the event is age appropriate and it works within our schedule. Information regarding these activities and events will be shared via REMIND or on the eteacher pages. If you wish to attend an activity that is not within your regularly scheduled Kindergarten time than you **MUST** accompany your child to the event.

Book Orders

Your child will be bringing home a form to order books about once a month. The orders are provided as a convenient way for parents to buy quality books for their child. As an added bonus, I earn bonus points that I use to purchase books and other items for classroom use.

Toys

Please do not allow your child to bring toys to school unless specified. We can't be responsible for lost or broken toys.

Outside Recess- Students sometimes go outside at recess. At the beginning of the year this is supervised by the teacher and/or educational assistant and then by older grade buddies and eventually they are supervised by the regular supervisors. Children enjoy the time outside with the buddies and friends they have made.

Bus Supervision: During the beginning of September children that arrive at school on the bus in the morning and those that depart on the bus after school will be supervised by the teacher/educational assistant. Once the children are familiar with the routines and can get to the classroom (morning students) or to the bus (afternoon students) independently they will continue to be supervised by assigned staff members every day.

Absences & Lates

In order to maximize your child's safety while at school it is IMPERATIVE that you inform me or the office when your child is absent from the school. If you know of an absence ahead of time or your child will be absent for multiple days please inform either the teacher or the school and you will NOT get a phone call home each day.

If your child is going to be late to school (appointments, etc...) please phone the school and inform them. When your child is late they MUST go to the office and check in with the office. It is important that the office know the children have arrived at school.

Thank You

Maxine Holm

Mills Haven Kindergarten Teacher (K1 and K2)