

Community Options

A Society for Children and Families



Community Preschool Education

Parent Handbook

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Welcome

We are pleased to be working with you and your family. We want to work together to give your child a chance to make friends, learn about him/herself and the world around her/him while going to the child care centre, preschool or kindergarten in their community.

This is a wonderful time for children to explore, to experiment, to learn, and to enjoy!

If you would like another parent perspective, we may be able to arrange for you to talk with other parents whose children have been in this program. Please ask the Community Preschool Education (CPE) Intake office at 455-1818.

What about Funding?

Funding for Community Preschool Education is provided through Alberta Learning, Special Education Program Unit Funding. **Children are eligible for this funding if they:**

- (a) Are at least 2 ½ years old, but not yet 6 years old on September 1st and
- (b) Have a severe disability that meets the Program Unit Funding criteria as set out by Alberta Education.

According to Alberta Education funding guidelines, and depending on the needs of the individual child, Community Preschool Education may fund:

- (a) Teachers and educational assistant salaries.
- (b) Services and programs for parents and resources such as family support and parent education.
- (c) Materials and equipment specific to the child's individual educational needs, and which are not already in the day care, nursery school, or preschool.
- (d) Therapy and consultation from speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, music therapists, vision consultants, or psychologists.
- (e) Specialized transportation as defined by Alberta Education.

Program Unit Funding may be used for a maximum of three years.

Fees: (*Child Care, Preschool or Kindergarten*)

Parents are responsible for paying child care, preschool or nursery school or Kindergarten fees. Each individual agency, program or school determines their fee.

Day Care Subsidy and/or other agencies may help parents with fees. Information about these community funding sources can be provided by the In-Home Specialist.

The Staff

(Child Care Staff, Preschool Staff, Nursery School Staff)

All staff are encouraged to work as a team to see that all the children take an active part in the program. Staff include all children in activities and encourage children to play together and learn from each other. The staff make sure that each family's confidentiality is respected.

The Educational Assistant

The "educational assistant" is the staff person who will work at the program site to help your child participate fully in the program. Though involved with all the children in the facility, the educational assistant will document your child's progress, meet with the Teacher and other therapists (if required), and share all relevant information about your child with you.

Other Services

It is possible for the Teacher to arrange for additional services, if your child needs them. These may include speech-language pathologists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, or music therapists. If your child has already been seen by specialists, their recommendations will be part of the I.P.P. If you or one of the program staff notice a need for other services, then the teacher may arrange for the appropriate specialist to assess your child and their recommendations will become part of the I.P.P.

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Community Options is committed to protecting your privacy. Any information we collect will be protected from misuse and used only by those staff who are providing direct service to you.

For a complete privacy policy, call 455-1818 and we can provide you with the documentation.

What is it?

Our Philosophy and Intent

Community Preschool Education (CPE)

Community Preschool Education is an inclusive multi-disciplinary educational program for preschool children who have disabilities. Your child will learn with age appropriate peers in community settings such as child care centres, community kindergarten programs and preschool programs. Each child's parents, teacher, and program personnel work together to create an individual program plan.

Our Philosophy

Community Preschool Education responds to family and community needs. Parents of young children who have specific educational needs may choose to have their child in a community program. We provide these programs with resources to meet individual children's needs.

We believe that children's programs should provide experiences that foster each child's growth and development. Children learn with their peers by playing and experimenting in a community setting, where friendships are encouraged and each child learns a positive sense of self.

Our Intent

Community Preschool Education aims to help children grow in independence, gain self-confidence, develop initiative, creativity, and self-discipline. The program encourages the child's development by fostering children's social, physical, intellectual, and emotional growth through programs developed for the child, parents and staff.

The Teacher writes a mid-year and year-end report that includes information obtained from the parents and other team members. Parents may choose to meet with the Teacher and therapists to review the progress reports. Teachers are available to meet with parents at any time throughout the year.

The Teacher also supports parents in transition planning, and can accompany parents when visiting new programs.

The Director (Child Care Director)

The Directors are responsible for all the children in their centre or agency. They may attend the I.P.P. meeting to share what they know about your child, and sit in on some of the weekly meetings with the Teacher and educational assistant. The Director in consultation with the Teacher arranges staffing to support your child. They submit monthly invoices for approved program expenses to Community Options.

Preschool or Nursery School Teachers

Preschool and Nursery School teachers are also responsible for all of the children in their programs. They may also attend the I.P.P. meeting, or meet with the teacher and the educational assistant to discuss a child's educational program.



Who Will be Involved with my Child?

In addition to you, the parents, several other people will be involved with your child's program. These will include the C.P.E. Teacher, the Educational Assistant, the child care centre, preschool or nursery staff, or kindergarten teacher as well as any specialists who work with your child. There is an In-Home Specialist available to provide more specific family support or assistance if requested.

You, The Parents

Parents choose their level of involvement, which will vary depending on the family, as is true for all parents with children attending the program. Some parents have been interested in being on a Parent Committee, helping out at the program, or talking about the importance of quality child care with people in their community. We want parents, the Teacher and program staff to talk together often about what is happening with your child.

The Teacher

The Teacher co-ordinates your child's educational program. He/She organizes the I.P.P. meeting and supervises the program throughout the year. The Teacher works closely with the child care centre administrator and staff to provide a vibrant learning environment for your child.

The Teacher and program staff/educational assistant choose objectives to meet the goals you have chosen. The Teacher visits the program once each week or as required to observe the child and meet with the educational assistant. Written program suggestions are given to the educational assistant at each week's meeting.

Who, When, Where?

Any child who is at least 2 ½ years old, but not yet 6 years old on September 1st, and who has a severe disability as defined by the Program Unit Funding Criteria from Alberta Education is eligible for Community Preschool Education.

When does Community Preschool Education Happen?

Community Preschool Education takes place during the school year (September to June). Children can be involved in this program for a maximum of three school years as long as they continue to meet the Program Unit Funding Criteria.

Where Can My Child Attend?

You may choose to have your child enrolled in a child care centre that meets the minimum requirements set out by Community Options. These requirements ensure that children supported by Community Preschool Education go to quality child care programs. At approved day care centres the Director and at least 50% of the child care staff must have Early Childhood Development diplomas (Level Three provincial certification) or equivalent.

Community Preschool Education may also be able to provide education programs for children in nursery schools, playschools and in the child's Community Kindergarten program. Services may be provided in the child's home to augment program hours or when a child is unable to attend a program.



Individual Program Plan (IPP)

Parents, teacher, program staff, and other people involved with the child work together on a child's education program. These people meet in the fall to create an **Individual Program Plan (I.P.P.)**.

We recognize that parents know their child best, so we ask them to share their wisdom during the I.P.P. meeting (and throughout the year). The Teacher arranges the meeting at a time and place that suit the parents. Some parents like to meet at the child care centre and other parents prefer to meet in their home in the evening. The I.P.P. is developed from information shared at this meeting. **An I.P.P. usually includes:**

- (a) Identifying family members directly involved with the child.
- (b) The child's preferences.
- (c) Any health or medical issues.
- (d) STRENGTHS (those things that the child is doing)
- (e) NEXT STEPS (those skill areas which the child may accomplish next in each area of development) in the following areas:
 1. Personal Attributes and Relationships: The child's social and interpersonal skills/how the child interacts with others.
 2. Communication: The child's oral interaction system, imitations of actions, sounds and words.

3. Educational: The child's participation in educational activities, and understanding of concepts about themselves, others, and the environment. Learning through play is also encouraged as an enhancement tool
4. Movement and Mobility: The child's fine and gross motor skills.
5. Self-Care Skills: The child's abilities in eating, drinking, dressing and undressing, toileting, and grooming.

At the end of the planning meeting, parents choose the most important areas for growth for their child. For example, some parents may feel that developing communication skills is most important for their child. Other parents may decide that their child needs to learn to play co-operatively with other children. These become goals for the child for the year.

The Teacher prepares the written I.P.P. and a copy is sent to the parents for their signature. Additional copies will be provided for those identified at the I.P.P. meeting.

(* Parents may request alternative planning processes.)

