# Little Stars Calgary Preschool and Junior Kindergarten

For Parents

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# Campus Details

## Address

100, 3730 Westwinds Dr NE
Calgary, AB T3J 5H3

## Telephone

(403) 457-7787

## Hours of Operation

*All sessions run Monday through Friday*

Session 1 8:00 AM – 10:45 AM
Session 2 11:00 AM – 1:45 PM
Session 3 2:00 PM – 4:45 PM

## Key Contacts

| Area | Title and Name | Telephone and Fax |
|---|---|---|
| Subsidy Information, Parent Service, New Enrollments | Executive Director | Telephone<br>403-457-7787 |

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**Introduction to Little Stars' Science, Technology and Arts Preschool Program**

We offer a Science and Technology Preschool Program on our beautiful, large campus at the Westwinds location. Our program is designed for developmentally appropriate activities, interactions, resources and environments to maximize physical, emotional, creative, social and creative learning.

We believe that technology is making faster and deeper inroads on our children than we have the capacity as a society to thoroughly and constructively assess at the moment. Based on our experience in managing various schools and Kindergarten programs in and around Calgary, we have developed our Preschool Program with a science and technology enrichment component, which aims to incorporate major elements from the *Early Learning and Child Care Curriculum For Alberta.*[1]

It is our aim that along with the core features of healthy child development, children be invited to explore their role as active learners through play by using the Emergent Curriculum. The science experiments and the hypothesis-testing method in our Preschool Program will be a key feature in the Emergent Curriculum and technology will be used as a tool to reinforce further learning in areas of early literacy, creative expression, early numeracy and more.

Successful graduates of our Preschool Program will have knowledge and exposure to the following areas:

1. A love of learning by making reading, writing, mathematics, and arts a fun-filled activity.
2. Successfully managing digital resources and developing appropriate technology usage skills.
3. Early introduction to iPad usage, and integration of writing and technology.
4. Developing an outstanding character; a person who loves to contribute to society.
5. Emphasizing the importance of play during the learning process.
6. Being excited about the adventure of learning and developing a learning-based mindset about life.

[1] https://education.alberta.ca/media/482257/play-participation-and-possibilities-reduced.pdf

## About Little Stars Academy




Our Academy was formed on the belief that children deserve the best physical, emotional, social and intellectual development so that they can grow to become healthy and productive members of society. We achieve this by ensuring the focus on children always remains our highest concern in everything we do.

There are several stakeholders involved in a child's care; Parents, Academy, Government, and Community. By ensuring that we remain aligned with Child Care Licensing Regulation, and explore new and effective methods of child development, we remain on the path to providing excellent child care and preschool services.

Little Stars has developed and will continue to refine the four core areas as they relate to high standards of child care and preschool:

1. Physical Education
2. Intellectual Development
3. Social and Emotional Well Being
4. Healthy Nutrition

**Mission**

Little Stars provides an environment where children are given every opportunity to shine and build on diverse learning experiences for a successful future.

**Vision**

To provide a balanced educational and social experience to children by motivated teachers, creating peace of mind for parents and embodying the spirit of giving back to the local and global community.

**Core Values**

Caring. Innovation. Nurturing.

## Areas of Developmental Focus




### Preparing for the Academy

The first day of your child at the Academy is full of excitement, and some children are a little apprehensive about joining their teachers and classmates for the day. You can help prepare your child for the first day by showing him or her this handbook, taking your child to the playground to play and interact with other children and generally providing helpful information about their upcoming day at the Academy.

## What your Child Must Bring Each Day

- A healthy, nutritious lunch and a snack that meets Canada's food guidelines (Health Canada has more information here http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/choose-choix/advice-conseil/child-enfant-eng.php)
- Avoid giving foods with gravy or that require special utensils so children can eat comfortably.
- Indoor shoes with your child's name written on the inside, these can be left at the Academy.
- A backpack that fits well over the shoulders of your child and contains the lunch, snack, and other items, the child's name must be written on the backpack.
- A change of clothes in a plastic bag with your child's name written on each article of clothing, the clothes must be left at the Academy.
- Remember, if any item you send with your child has no name written on it, it can be difficult to retrieve.
- If your child takes medication, you must give us a written authorization to administer the dose; the dosage must be written legibly on the medicine container itself.



- Do not send food for other children as some children can be allergic to unknown items.

## Appropriate Clothing

- Make sure your child is dressed in comfortable, well-fitting clothes. Make sure every item worn by your child has his or her name on it. The uniform must be worn each day and kept in immaculate condition.
- Inappropriate Clothing and Grooming
    - Children cannot dye their hair in bright colours.
    - Children must be dressed in appropriate clothing, nails trimmed, bathroom trained (some training will be provided), and observe good hygiene.

## Punctuality and Timings

- Hours of Drop-off and Pick-up
    - Parents must drop off their child at the exact moment the program will start; we cannot accept children earlier as that is not allowed due to program availability. Children must be picked up at the moment the program ends, and not later. Punctuality must be regularly observed, or a fee of $25 may be charged for late pickup.



- Absences
    - We will record attendance for each child that attends the Academy every day.
    - Extended absences require a doctor's note or another reason for taking time off; we do not recommend extended absence for unnecessary reasons as we must partner with parents to prioritize the learning of each child.



## Security and Safety of your Child

- Please make sure your child is not authorized to be picked up by someone we do not have a record of at the Academy, as we will not release the child.
- If you wish to change an authorized person for your child's pick up and drop off, please notify us immediately in writing, we will require the authorized person's original driver's license and another form of ID on file and at the time of his or her visit for picking up the child.

## First Day at the Academy

- Our teachers will welcome your child into the Academy and request that parents let us take care of the child as soon as he or she is handed over.
- Children are remarkable at adapting to the new environment, and letting them express their emotions in a supportive environment helps them adjust quickly and healthily.

- We will put name tags on each child, and ensure they are allocated to the right teacher.

## Academics and Technology Usage

- Comprehensive education in early literacy and early numeracy is the cornerstone of our preschool program, and we will ensure children are at or above the age-level expectations for their specific literacy and numeracy targets.



    - The following areas will be covered:
    - Early Literacy.
    - Early Numeracy.
    - Citizenship and Identity.
    - Environment and Community Awareness.
    - Personal and Social Responsibility.
    - Physical Skills and Well-being.
    - Creative Expression.
    - All programming will be designed around learning-through-play and incorportaing the *Areas of Developmental Focus.*



- Physical education will be provided on our premises consisting of a beautiful, 17,000 square foot playground which is fully fenced, with multiple options of outdoor play.
- There will be one comprehensive report card sent home during each semester your child is enrolled at the Academy.
- Teachers will introduce indoor activity concepts such as yoga, mindfulness, and dance tailored to young minds and indoor play equipment to meet the various learning needs of children.



- Introduction to both iPad and iMac technology as it relates to Information and Communication Technology – ICT, will be introduced, with an early introduction to iPads connected wirelessly to Apple TV (which will be displayed on a projector) to allow a child to highlight his or her skills to the group.
- Children will use the iPad to highlight their skills to the group and develop their leadership, social speaking and confidence abilities. Also, the teacher can create a few written letters on the iPad, and the children can trace them on the whiteboard, enhancing both their learning experience and engaging them in a creative and academic endeavor.



## Physical Curriculum

### Outdoor Play Area

Little Stars Academy provides a large, 17, 000 square foot fenced natural play area with age-appropriate toys that encourage social interaction, learning, safety and a positive environment for children.

### Homework

Children will receive homework once a month in the form of booklets. Teachers will begin by teaching days of the week, weather, alphabets and letters and the homework will help strengthen these skills. Preschool children can try to do 20 minutes of homework each day.



Parents will be encouraged to work through the homework with their child, and send it back the Monday following the initial two-week period.

## Report Cards and Parent Teacher Interviews

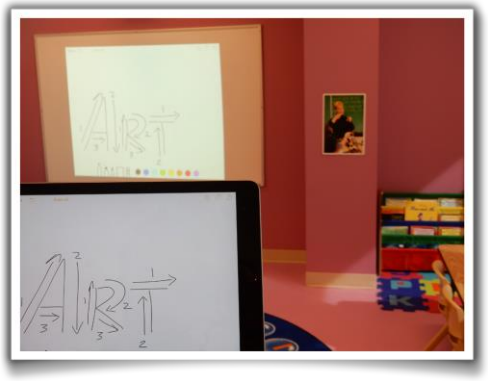


One printed report cards will be sent home in a semester. Parent-teacher interviews will be scheduled one week after each of the report cards are sent. There is one parent-teacher interview in a semester.

## Extracurricular

### Outdoor Sports

- Children will have access to a large playing field with year-round access to develop a variety of sports skills, including soccer.
- Our goal is to ensure each child gets a reasonable amount of training in learning to be an excellent sportsperson.



### Discipline and Ethics

Children will develop their discipline and ethics through the following activities:

- The weekly virtue will be explained to the teachers by the Executive Director at each assembly and simplified and explained to children to follow and understand for each month.

## Field Trips

Children will attend up to 2 field trips in a typical year, pending agreement from the majority of parents. Children go to the following locales:

- Telus Science Centre.
- Butterfield Acres.
- Calgary Zoo.



A chaperone with a police background and vulnerable sector search is on hand for every four children, and each field trip has a leader at the site and at the Academy to ensure the safety of everyone involved.

### Volunteers

We take pride in being able to attract volunteers, whether they be parents or other stakeholders. Please remember we require the following before approving someone to volunteer at the Academy:

- A volunteer application
- Clear police background and vulnerable sector search
- Reference check from two unrelated individuals

## Staff and Parent Interviews

We conduct two interviews with Parents to bring attention to what is going well with their child, areas of greater focus and attention and if we can better serve the needs of their child.

One interview is scheduled in June and the second in December, at least two weeks prior update will be provided to Parents to accommodate various schedules.

## Child Discipline Policy

Children cannot be disciplined using any of the following methods:

1. Time out or seclusion
2. Any type of physical disciplining
3. Physical, verbal or emotional disciplining that is harmful to the Child's healthy development

## Professional Development of Staff

### Continuing Education

In addition to sponsored child care enhancement training, our Staff also receives internal training to meet or exceed the highest levels of child care service.

### Performance Benchmarks

Little Stars ensures all Staff is working towards the wellbeing of children in everything they do. One of the ways to ensure Parents receive peace of mind for their child is by setting, monitoring and providing feedback on performance for each staff member. Examples of such benchmarks include meeting licensing requirements at all times, preparing fresh and healthy food, and observing the security and safety of each child.

### Performance Evaluation

The Executive Director regularly reviews the Staff's performance by conducting performance evaluations with the objective of providing the best possible child care by following the Child Care Licensing Regulation. This ensures children receive appropriate care; Staff is mentored towards greater competency and standard of care and Parents are satisfied with the level of service.

### Coaching and Needs-based Development

We regularly train Staff in our internal policies to ensure the highest level of child care and provide individualized learning opportunities which allow new and existing Staff to improve their skills, competency and workplace satisfaction.

## Health and Safety

### Pick up and Drop Off Security

Parents will be provided a keycard to enter the Academy. The keycard cannot be shared with anyone else and must be signed out at the time of admission and returned when the child is no longer attending.

Should a Parent be unable to pick up a child for whatever reason, the following procedure applies:

1. The Parent must authorize the person on the emergency contact list to pick up the child
    a. A government approved ID (driver's license, Canadian passport) must be presented before the child will be released
2. We will not release a child for whom we do not have prior written authorization from the parent or who does not have a valid ID that is satisfactory to us

### Medication Disbursement Protocol

| Type | Protocol | Information Required | Consent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Prescribed Medication | We will provide medication to your child and store it in the fridge or the medicine cabinet. Each dosage given will be recorded in the child's file (name of a child care worker, time, dosage) | Must be printed on the medication container (child's name, prescribing doctor's name, date prescribed, frequency and quantity) | Parents must give consent in writing before the administration of medication; we cannot administer outside of doctor's instructions |

## Days of Operation

Little Stars will be closed on all statutory holidays including, without limitation, the following holidays:

| Days Off in a Year | | |
|---|---|---|
| New Year's Day – January | Alberta Family Day – February | Good Friday – March/April |
| Victoria Day – May | Canada Day – July | Easter Monday – March/April |
| Labour Day – September | Thanksgiving Day – October | Civic Holiday – August |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Christmas Day - December | Boxing Day - December | Remembrance Day - November |

# Medical and Fire Safety

## Common Medical Conditions and Procedures

| Child not to Attend Child Care Academy | A child can Return When the Following is Followed |
|---|---|
| Fever of 100 degrees F (38.8 C) | Fever remained below 100 degrees F (38.8 C) |
| Diarrhea | No diarrhea in the past 48 hours and at one normal bowel movement |
| Vomiting | No vomiting for 48 hours without medication |
| Skin infection, rash, any sign of contagious disease | Examined by a doctor and received clearance, with a medical note |
| Untreated infestation (lice, scabies, etc) | Treated for all infestations<br>Lice infestation must be treated with two treatments and no evidence of infestation left |
| Pink eye | No discharge or redness and at least 24 hours have passed since drops put in eyes |
| Medication is given in the last 24 hours | Has had no reaction on medication for past 24 hours |
| Any communicable disease | The doctor has given medical clearance, along with a note, can return after 48 hours |
| a. Requires greater care than can be provided without affecting the care of other children<br>b. Any sign or symptom Staff member knows or believes may be posing a risk to the child or others within the child care Academy | The child has been symptom-free for at least 24 hours and can participate in regular activities.<br><br>Doctor's note and medical clearance may be required on an as-needed basis |

## Treatment of Child at the Academy

By the signed Enrolment Form, Staff at the Academy can contact the Parent along with the order of priority determined in the form, to pick up a Child requiring medical care. If the Parents or Guardians indicated in the form are not available at that time, Staff can contact any or all of the following: physician, ambulance, and hospital services, as authorized by the Child's Parents or Guardians. Staff at the Academy can contact the Parent to pick up a child requiring home or medical care.

When a Child with an illness is waiting to be picked up, he or she will be comfortably placed away from other children to minimize the spread of possible illness. A blanket and pillow may be used to help the Child feel comfortable while the Parents are on their way to pick him or her up from the Academy.

## Fire Drills

We conduct twelve fire drills in a year. There are fire exit diagrams posted in each classroom, and children exit the building based on the safest exit route.



### Health Inspection

All our facilities are approved by Alberta Health Services, and we work towards maintaining high standards of health and safety for ongoing compliance.

### Playground Inspection

All staff must inspect the playground every morning for weeds, rocks, unsafe objects and to ensure safe usage by children.

## Internet and Cell Phone Usage Policy

We allow usage of cell phone and other communication devices by Staff when they are not in classrooms to care for children. This ensures full attention is paid to children and Staff can deliver on our Mission and Vision.

A daily report is a value-added service. Therefore, we prioritize the safety and care of children and then enter report data. To ensure a higher level of accuracy and feedback regarding nap time, nutrition and bathroom routine, please speak with the teacher or the Executive Director.

## Social Media Policy

Digital Media Usage and Consent Policy

We may utilize a child's picture or video for marketing or quality control purposes. We will ensure the method of advertising respects the dignity of each child, and the cultural, religious, race or any other aspects that are protected under Human Rights legislation are duly observed. Should a parent wish not to authorize their child(ren)'s picture or video to be used, please e-mail such request to the Executive Director. We will ensure such video or image is removed within two weeks. We request that parents do not post any digital or print media of a child other than their own on any communication or advertising platform.

## Facility Maintenance

### Monthly Facility Review

We review our facilities regularly to ensure it is safe for children, potential hazards are addressed in a timely fashion, and all visitors have a pleasant and safe experience at the Academy.

### Cleanliness Standards

We comply with Alberta Health Services standards as required by the Health Inspector and Child Care Licensing Regulation to ensure the highest standards of cleanliness are constantly met.

## Festivals and Birthdays

### Festivals

We celebrate all cultural festivals equally, for example, Christmas, Diwali, Eid, Vaisakhi, Hanukah, Halloween, Easter, Alberta and National events.

### Birthdays

At Little Stars we celebrate each child's birthday, it is an important day for them, and it is essential they feel the joyful participation of their friends and Staff. Parents are advised not to send any food items for other children to minimize allergic or other food reactions. We typically provide vanilla ice cream to children, as appropriate, to celebrate birthdays.

## Parents' Advisory Council

Parents are welcome to get involved in the direction and philosophy of their Child's care. For this purpose, we have developed a Parents' Advisory Council which meets at least every three months at the Academy. Suggestions are reviewed and implemented, as appropriate. The goal is to maximize healthy child development, and we welcome new ideas and practices to incorporate in our Academy.

Should a Parent be interested in joining the Parents' Advisory Council, we have an application process to review and possibly accept qualified individuals who wish to make a positive difference at the Academy.

### Parental Involvement

### Parent Satisfaction Survey

We send two online surveys each calendar year to parents to see if there is anything we need to improve on, are doing well or modify to serve our children best.

### Suggestion Through Email

Parents are welcome to suggest improvements or ideas for better serving the wellbeing of children to the Executive Director.

## Enrollment and Fees

1. Fees are charged as per approved rates by the Board of Little Stars.
2. Fees are not reduced under any circumstances; including, but not limited to, absence, illness, vacation or closure due to severe weather. Fees, as per the Enrolment and Fees Policy, are due on the first of each month.
3. Space is not guaranteed if a child is withdrawn and returns at a later date for whatever reason.

a. Part-time Enrolment and Converting to Full-Time Enrolment

Parents of a child with part-time enrolment will be given five business days' notice if a full-time child needs to enroll in the same spot as a part-time child. The parents of the part-time child can choose to

enroll their child full-time within five business days by 5:00 PM by signing a new Child Care Enrolment Form, or the seat will be given to the full-time incoming child.

b. Cancellation or Modification of Program
Thirty days' notice is required for cancellation or any type of modification of Child Care and Preschool Program service by the parent who signed for financial responsibility of fees. The notice must be on a ***Cancellation Form*** signed by the parent and the Executive Director, available in Director's office.
E-mailed notice is acceptable, but verbal notice is not acceptable. If notice is not given as indicated above, then 30 days' fees are due as already existing and signed on the ***Enrollment Form.***

   i. Compassionate grounds for waiving notice period are available, but they must meet certain criteria which are pre-approved by the Board of Little Stars. Please ask the Director for assistance.

# Complaint Resolution Process

## Grievance and Complaints Process

Parents can request a copy of the ***Updates, Grievance and Complaint Form*** from the Director's office, which is used to update information, register a grievance or take official action for a complaint.

The Executive Director follows the policies of the Child Care Licensing Regulation, the Academy's Handbook for Parents and ensures his or her decision is in line with all Governmental and internal policies.

**Complaints of an urgent nature, such as child safety and wellbeing, will be dealt with promptly, please call or visit the Academy to have your concern addressed.**

Non-urgent complaints, such as accounts payable, refunds, or other concerns will be responded to within ten business days.

## Appealing a Decision

If a Parent is not satisfied with the decision of an Executive Director, it can be requested to be escalated to the **Complaint Resolution Board**. The Complaint Resolution Board will uphold all valid decisions made by the Executive Director but will review anything that it feels better serves the child and to ensure compliance with all Government policies.

# Community Resources

Little Stars believes in creating healthy relationships with parents, and to be able to provide advice and access to resources that better serve the needs of the communities it operates in.

# For Further Information

Please contact us at (403) 457-7787 if you need assistance in something not covered in this Handbook. The policies, hours, timings and other processes are in full effect as of the writing of the Handbook.