



**Welcome to Fernie Creative Minds Preschool and
Fernie Forest School Society Handbook (updated Sept. 16, 2018)**

www.creativemindspreschool.ca fernieschool@shaw.ca

Our preschool was established September 2009 by Heather Skaien at the former
Max Turyk School at 44 Mount Washburn Street Fernie BC.

Our Philosophy is to ensure that all children have the opportunities, encouragement and tools to be successful in anything and everything they choose.

We encourage the children to be independent while having fun socializing with other children their own age. While play is our main focus we also emphasize learning activities such as social listening, crafts, pencil skills, songs, stories, creative play with loose parts and of course exploring the great outdoors.

Our Wonderful Teachers have their own special way of completing the full picture of our preschool. Check out our staff profiles on the bulletin board outside of the classroom.

Our Program has general monthly themes that lead us into areas that children are interested in and talking about. We start each day with free play and crafts. This is followed with circle time with song, story book etc. Then a game to transition to washing hands for snack time. After snack it is quiet reading followed by outdoor play or gym time. That is followed by goodbye song and handing out crafts to go home. The classroom door is opened and the children wait on the mat until their parents arrive and their name is called.

Birthdays Celebrations: Please check with your teacher for allergies before bringing in snacks and treats.

Snack Calendar: We serve nutritional snacks such as; fruits, vegetables, w/w crackers, white cheese, milk and water. You may bring in alternate milk choices for your child. The calendar of snacks is posted on your class room board (sign in/out area) for your reference only. We file them along with the attendance records for allergy concerns.

Snack Time Procedure: The children line up to wash their hands with warm water and soap. They dry their hands on individual small towels each time and are then taken away daily to be washed. The tables where they eat are cleaned with bleach and water before and after snack. The children place their dishes in the dishwasher to be cleaned. The children are taught proper table manners.

Toys from Home: If your child brings a toy from home it will be shared with the other children. If your child cannot share the toy please leave it at home. We cannot be responsible for toys brought to school.

Things to bring to preschool:

Please bring comfortable shoes that your child can put on themselves and leave at school. Velcro fasteners are best. Tying laces is a Kindergarten to Grade 2 activity. Please no sparkles or heels just something that fits well that they can run in.

Each day please bring your child's back pack with a full change of clothing including shirt, sweater, pants, underwear, hat, socks and shoes. For winter full snowsuits, rainwear, warm boots hat, water resistant mitts and a spare pair for really wet days.

An empty water bottle for all year round. We can fill it up at school.

Everything should be labelled with their **name**, as so many things look the same. We find most children do not recognize their own stuff at school!

The Preschool Registration:

We start the registration procedure mid January for the following September. Copies of fillable forms are available in the classroom or online www.creativemindspreeschool.ca

Late fees policy: Our morning classes run from 9 am until 12 noon and the afternoon class runs from 12:30 until 3:30 pm. As you can see our opening and closing hours are rigid with no children able to start earlier or stay later at the preschool. There will be a charge of \$1.50 per minute per child to offset the cost of the staff to remain at school after their shift. Staff will ask parents to sign a "late form" to acknowledge the late charge, for which payment is due before your child's next class.

Illness Policy:

All children are welcomed at our school. Some children do not have strong immune systems.

We want to protect our children from illness so if your child is sick please arrange for them to stay at home where they would be more comfortable.

Parents must not bring their child to preschool if they show any of these symptoms:

- Fever of 100 degrees under the arm.
- Vomiting. Keep your child at home for at least 24 hours **after** vomiting has ended.
- Colds: If your child has a runny nose that is not clear please keep them at home until they are healthy. If your child is sneezing and coughing please keep your child at home until this stage is over to minimize the spread of infection.
- Diarrhea. Keep your child at home for at least 24 hours **after** diarrhea has ended.
- Cold sores or any open sores. They may return after sore is scabbed over.
- Conjunctivitis or pink eye. Your child may return after using an antibiotic for 24 hours.
- Head lice. Your child may return the next day once they have had their scalp and hair treated with a medicated shampoo from the drug store and the eggs have been removed.
- Unexplained skin rash. This should be diagnosed and cleared by a physician before returning to school.

If any other these symptoms present themselves at preschool we will phone you so you can make arrangements for your child to be picked up.

We will keep them as comfortable as possible on the couch in the classroom and monitor their condition and if the symptoms become serious we will call 911. Please have an alternate adult noted on your registration form if you would be unable to pick up your child.

If you are unsure if your child is healthy enough for school, contact your teacher or email me at:

fernieschool@shaw.ca

Any communicable diseases will be posted when we have been notified.

Medications

Medication will not be administered, unless in an emergency, as in an allergic reaction.

Epi-pens

If the parent provides an epi-pen we will keep it in the emergency medical kit. Before administering the pen we would first call 911. Next the pen is checked for child's name, the name of the medication, and compared to the Medication Consent Form and Record Sheet. The pen is then placed on the child's thigh over their clothes except if they are wearing a snowsuit, and administered. Then, the parents are called or their doctor if we cannot get hold of the parents.

Epi-pens are checked every three months or sooner (if medication has changed) to check expiry dates. A Medication Permission form must be filled out and signed by the parent or guardian when the epi-pen is first presented to us.

Absent: Please notify your teachers if your child will be late or absent for class.

Income Tax Receipts are sent out twice a year in October and February. They will be emailed out under hskaien@gmail.ca

Screen Time Policy: We know children at this age should have very limited screen time. They are going through a huge learning curve of what are appropriate social interactions. They need their parents and teachers to guide them. Our screen time policy is the following:

- Five minute video of something we are studying like animals in the wild.
- On pyjamas day we watch a 5 or 6 minute video of Peppa Pig or something similar.
- Picking out pictures to color.

Outdoor Play is at least 30 minutes a day except when the weather is bad and we are in the gym. Sunscreen and or bug spray should be applied before coming to school.

Statutory Days and Storm Days

For the Safety of our staff and your children we are closed on Storm or bad weather days. If the school bus is not running then we are closed. You can also text your teacher to see if we are open. To see when we are closed for Statutory Holidays check our website www.creativemindspreschool.ca for the yearly calendar. Print it off and keep it handy during the year for the days the preschool is closed. If you don't have a printer, pick up a copy outside the classroom.

Power Outages: When the power goes out at the preschool the emergency lighting comes on for 15 minutes. We will contact you or the people on your emergency contact list. We will take the children outside in the fenced playground unless it is too cold. If it is too cold (minus 10 with or without wind chill) we will leave a note on the front door of the building telling where we are.

In case of Fire/ Building Emergency for All Classes:

Staff and children, if already in the outdoor playground will remain in fenced area until it is safe to leave or preschool is over and parents pick them up. If children are in the classroom the children will follow the established fire drill procedure and established safe zone which is the outdoor playground. If it is too cold to be outside we will be in warm spot in the neighbor hood.

Minor accidents and Critical Incidences: All minor accidents such as bumps and scrapes are written up, placed in the child's files and the parents are told about it when picked up. All critical accidents are sent to hospital by ambulance and the parents are called immediately. The accident is written up, a copy is given to the parents and a copy is emailed to Interior Health. If it is a minor accident and needs hospital care, a staff member will take the child to the hospital in a taxi and phone the parents.

Communications Policy, Complaints and Confidentiality

If you have any concerns of comments please contact Heather Skaien fernieschool@shaw.ca If you have concerns with a specific teacher, please work with them first. As per government regulations your child's information will be kept confidential.

Field trip and off site plan:

Permission forms need to be completed by parents before a field trip. Any off site field trip that is not within walking distance parents will be required to drop off and pick up their child.

To ensure the children will be able to follow the rules and listen to the teachers while on field trips and outdoors, staff will use the beginning of the school year to play games related to outdoor safety, stamina and good listening. Teacher will assess children's ability to understand boundaries and classroom rules in an outdoor environment.

Procedures on walks for Field Trips and to James White Park

A field trip starts with the teacher assembling the emergency files, first aid kit and a cell phone. The group walks to the gate on the southwest corner of the soccer fields. There the children grab the rope two by two, one teacher at the back and one at the front.

James White Park will be the most common field trip. It is 5-6 minute walk with the preschool class from Max Turyk. We will walk across the fenced soccer field, access the sidewalk for 2 blocks and enter the park at the south entrance. There will be designated areas of the park that we will utilize. This includes the 'main loop road', the tennis courts, the baseball diamond, the area adjacent to the Frisbee golf area.

Care plan for preschool aged children 36 months to school aged in our program

We will provide an indoor classroom and an outdoor play area/classroom for children. The outdoor play area is enclosed with a chain link fence. The play structures and items in the outdoor play area are appropriate height and size for the age and development of children. These items will be inspected by staff weekly to ensure items are in good repair. The items in the playground will be safely constructed and will be free from hazards in accordance to licensing regulations.

Staff will be vigilant that children do not have access to any natural or foreign substance that may be hazardous to the health of children in our program especially in regards to our raised garden beds.

Staff have valid first aid and CPR certificates and are either a current registered ECE or an ECE Assistant.

Parents need to fill out a specific care plan for their children if there are aspects of their child's health that staff need to know, such as allergies. Staff will be knowledgeable of each or any child's medical condition and follow the set care plan. Staff will have open, ongoing communication with parents in regards to their children's health. Stocked, updated first aid kits will be accessible to all staff at all times. If a child should become ill with a cold or flu, caregivers will be called for pick up and staff will stay with child until they have been picked up.

The preschool will also coordinate a visit from the local Bear Aware, Wildness BC branch. This special guest will demonstrate and reenact what to do with East Kootenay wildlife encounters educating the children in an age appropriate setting.

While spending time outside staff will be conscious of insects bites, plant safety, heat related issues, proper clothing for changing seasons and warmth in cold settings.

Fernie Forest School Society Policies

General Health and Safety

- obey whistle signals.
- stay within boundaries.
- hold safety rope when walking on streets.
- hand washing after being outdoors, using the washroom and before eating.

Age

- children under the age of four require an interview to ensure they are ready for the program.
- if a child is not showing the maturity to safely participate in the program they will be asked to withdraw from the program until they are fully ready.

Toileting

- Children are expected to be fully toilet trained prior to entering the program.**
- If a wet or soiled accident occurs a teacher will assist the child in clean up and change of clothes.

If a soiled accident happens more than once in the 3 hour time we are at school. We will clean up your child but ask you to take them home.

If there is diarrhea we will call you and clean up your child the best we can. We will ask you to keep your child at least 24 hours after diarrhea has stopped.

If more than three soiled or wet accidents occur the child will be asked to withdraw from the program and they may re-enroll when they are fully ready.

If a child needs to use the washrooms while outdoors they may use the outhouse located in the James White Park or the portable toilet in the Max Turyk playground area.

-if all available toilets are out of reach the child will be asked to have a 'nature' pee followed by the use of hand sanitizer.

-please have your child use the washroom prior to the beginning of class.

Clothing

-children must be appropriately dressed for the weather! We go outside for long periods of time in all types of weather and a properly dressed child is a happy child. (See "what to bring to preschool")

-play clothes are encouraged as the children are often exploring and learning with mud and paint and other messy fun things.-a full change of clothing must be in your child's backpack every class in case of spills etc.

-sunscreen and or bug spray must be applied by the parent or caregiver prior to class.

Weather

-in the case of extreme weather, the children will be taken indoors. This includes temperatures that drop below minus 10 with or without the wind chill

Animal in Area

-in the event of a wild animal such as a moose or bear being in the area, the teachers will escort the children back to the fenced nature playground or into the school building.

Food for the Forest School

-children are required to bring a cold nutritious lunch and a water bottle (water only please) each day

-please notify the teachers if your child is having a birthday and you would like to bring a treat to share with the class

-we are a nut free school!

Late/Absent

-please notify the teachers if your child will be late or absent from class.

-children must be picked up promptly to avoid late fees.

Daily Routine for Forest School

8:35am staff arrives prep for day may include off site visit for risk assessment, prep snack, and craft

9:00 am staff welcome children to the first informative circle time for the day.

9:30 am get ready for walk to James White Park for weekly observation changes of environment. Educational outdoor activity includes (Examples: gardening, nature walks, snowshoeing and tobogganing.)

10:15 am sanitize hands for snack and rest at the park then carry on

11:00 am Picnic or inside class lunch (sanitize hands or wash with soap and water)

11:45 am Craft/art inside or in outside classroom

12:15 pm Free play, stories, songs or circle

1:00 pm Pick up by parents



Fernie Forest School Goals and Vision (established September 2016)

Our goal:

-to provide an engaging and safe outdoor school for children to develop a curiosity about an appreciation for and connection to the land and our community as well as a sense of stewardship to our planet.

Our Vision:

-to develop gross motor skills through outdoor activities such as snowshoeing, cross country skiing, walking and running over uneven ground, balancing on found objects such as logs and rocks.

-to develop fine motor skills through hands on work with small, sometime delicate found items. This could include building structures, sorting items, pattern work, art work or developing collections.

-to develop literacy skills through asking questions, seeking answers through child led investigations, storytelling with books as well as oral stories and dramatic child centered play.

-to develop a deeper understanding of our four seasons. This learning is supported by the teachers as they encourage them to use all their senses to witness changes, notice details in nature and ask questions.

-to develop a sense of wonder and life long love of learning through child led curriculum in a rich and inspiring natural setting.

-to develop a knowledge base of local, native plants and trees.

-to develop safety procedures regarding and identifying wildlife, plant life and risk management in an outdoor setting.

The policies and forms will be updated as needed.