



2023/2024

PARENT HANDBOOK

Wee Kare Preschool

www.falconridgefamily.com/weekare

weekare@falconridgefamily.com 403.669.2613

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Welcome

At Wee Kare Preschool we believe that **play is a child's work** and that learning happens when activities are developmentally appropriate and centered around a child's interests.

We encourage the child to learn through exploring their environment and provide interesting, relevant and challenging experiences. Our teachers act as guides: equipping, encouraging and empowering the child to explore, ask questions, develop skills and make discoveries. Learning is accomplished through creative play, engaging group activities and meaningful one-on-one instruction that is catered to the individual child.

Teacher Message

September 2023

Dear Parents,

We are very excited to start this school year with you. We look forward to learning and growing with your child and connecting with your family. Shaping little minds is big work! Children are shaped primarily by their families and then by their communities - we are honored to be part of that process. Our main goal is to help your child become a mighty learner and a citizen who is ready to successfully navigate whatever comes their way. We want to encourage them to naturally develop social, emotional and cognitive skills through play. Not only do children learn as they play, but they learn *how to learn* through play. We have many exciting activities planned for the upcoming year that will engage your child and encourage them to explore the world around them and discover how they fit into that world.

We can not wait to see where this year takes us!

On behalf of all of our staff - ***Welcome to Wee Kare Preschool!***

Sincerely,

Stephanie Henshaw

Marj Semple

"We have forgotten that children are designed by nature to learn through self-directed play and exploration, and so, more and more, we deprive them of freedom to learn." - Peter O. Gray

General Information

We are licenced under Social Care Facilities and will diligently follow their Health and Fire regulations, which will include a visit from their community Health and Fire Inspectors as well as Licensing Officer.

Objectives

Early childhood education is aimed at making the child independent, creating a positive and well-balanced self-image and developing intellectual abilities. Young children are curious about every new thing they see, every new word, and often have unlimited questions for every unique experience they go through. Enrolling a child in preschool makes him/her adapt to new surroundings and also contributes to overall development.

1. Wee Kare fosters socialization skills. We provide your child with an environment that encourages interaction with other kids, builds strong friendships, and also helps them come out of their comfort zones.
2. Wee Kare promotes an enthusiasm for learning. As children learn their lessons through different play and activities, it lays the foundation for learning and also develops their imagination power.
3. Wee Kare develops the whole child. Our environment lays the foundation for a kid's physical, social, emotional and mental development, which are crucial factors for later stages in life.
4. Wee Kare develops sharing and teamwork. Our activities are aimed at building an ability to respect the opinion of others, develop listening skills and promote teamwork. We teach resilience to children through experiences.
5. Wee Kare instills knowledge and values. We teach children basic education and life skills through active and hands-on experiences. We help them develop positive self-esteem, love for learning and mutual respect for others.

Fees

1. Pre-registration will begin in March for the following school year. A non-refundable registration fee of \$50 will hold the child's space for fall registration.
2. Monthly tuition is due on or before the first class day of that month.
3. Monthly Fees can be paid by cash, credit card or e-transfer @ payment@falconridgefamily.com Please enter child's name in comment.
4. If you are paying by post-dated cheques or pre-authorized credit card, please refer to the NSF section below.
5. One month's written notice is required if you choose to withdraw your child from school.
6. No refund is given for holidays or days absent.

NSF (Non-Sufficient Funds)

In the event a tuition payment is NSF, a service fee will be applied in the amount of \$40.00. We realize that sometimes these situations occur, however the following policy applies to all NSF's:

1. **First Occurrence:** A letter will be sent home requesting payment in cash to be provided within one week of notice. If payment has not been received in the allotted time, a phone call will be made advising that payment is required. If in the event that payment has not been received prior to the end of the current month, your child will not be permitted to return to class until this has been resolved.
2. **Second Occurrence:** Same as above.
3. **Third Occurrence:** A letter will be sent home advising that you will be on a cash or debit only basis, which is due on or before the last school day prior to the start of the month. Failure to do so will result in your child being automatically withdrawn from the school.

Program Schedule

TYPICAL “CLASSROOM” DAY

9:00 am: Children Arrive

9:15 am: Guided Free Play, Art, One-on-One Learning

10:30 am: Circle Time

10:45 am: Snack

11:00 am: Gym

11:20 am: Circle Time, Prepare for Home

11:30 am: Dismissal

Policies and Procedures

Hours of Operation & Contact Information

HOURS OF OPERATION: Monday - Friday, 9:00am - 11:30am

ADDRESS: 155 Falconridge Crescent NE Calgary, AB T3J 1Z9

EMAIL: weekare@falconridgefamily.com

PHONE: 403.669.2613

WEBSITE: www.falconridgefamily.com/weekare

SOCIAL MEDIA: fb.me/weekarepreschool

General Policies

1. Everyone must enter the building using the WEST entrance. Doors will be unlocked 15 minutes prior to class and relocked 15 minutes after class begins. Doors will be unlocked again 10 minutes before the end of class.

2. If a child arrives late to class, or needs to be picked up early, it is the parent's responsibility to coordinate with the teacher so that the door can be unlocked. Please note that ratios must be maintained at all times within the classroom. Teachers may not have the ability to let in late-arriving children.
3. Children will be assigned a coat hook at the WEST entrance. Coats, outdoor shoes and items not necessary for class should be left there.
4. Children must wear footwear at all times while inside the building.
5. An adult must accompany the child directly to the classroom and pick them up directly from the classroom.
6. All children MUST be toilet trained, by the start of school, and be able to use the washroom independently.
7. No siblings or other children are allowed in the class during regular class hours, unless prior arrangements are made with the Administrator.
8. An adult must be prompt and waiting in the hallway outside the classroom at the end of class. Parents/guardians are responsible for the safety and behavior of the child after that time. If a person who is not listed on the registration form will be picking up the child, a parent/guardian must inform the school in writing (note or email) or by phone message the day of preschool. Children will only be released to adults authorized by a parent/guardian.
9. If a child has an aide or EA from an outside program they will not be permitted to class if the Aide/EA is absent for any reason.

Parent Volunteers - CLASSROOM VOLUNTEERS

Parent Volunteers offer a huge resource and support base for the school community. They also show their children the importance of their education and participation in the community as a whole. Most Parent Volunteers at Wee Kare will serve in the classroom on a rotational basis as needed. Please make sure you are available at least once during the year to help (wash toys, field trip etc).

CLASSROOM VOLUNTEERS - Each family must provide a scheduled parent helper for each child attending the class. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that he or she knows when his or her parent helper day is. Parents who are unable to fulfill their Classroom Volunteering due to extenuating circumstances should try to sign up for all Special Activities or contact the Administrator to discuss being on a committee (such as Fundraising or Mother's Day Tea prep).

SPECIAL ACTIVITY VOLUNTEERS - Parent Volunteers are needed for field trips, parties and other special activities. Parents are encouraged to share a special talent or interest with the class especially during our Community Helper Month. A sign-up sheet will be available during our parent orientation and on the Parent Information Board.

School Closures, Inclement Weather and Extended Absences

Parents have the responsibility of keeping their children at home if they display ANY symptoms of illness or have been in close contact with someone who is ill. We diligently follow all health and safety directives given by the Department of Children and Families, the Alberta Government, Alberta Health Services and the City of Calgary. Despite our best efforts, school may be ordered to close should an outbreak of illness occur. There will be no refunds given for closures due to an outbreak of illness.

Thirty days written notice must be given to the Administrator when withdrawing your child from the program, in order to receive full refund of tuition fees for the remaining months.

The teachers are entitled to ask a parent to withdraw a child if it is in the best interest of the child or the program. If a child is asked to withdraw, the balance of the year's monthly fees will be refunded.

Class will be canceled if the actual temperature drops below -30C (regardless of wind-chill), if the temperature feels like below -35C or if the temperature is forecast to be below -35C on a class-day. School cancellations will be posted on Social Media (Facebook) and by email so please make sure to check.

No refund is given for school closures, holidays or days absent.

Illness and Medication

If a child exhibits signs or symptoms of illness or is injured while at preschool, the parent/guardian will be called to pick up the child immediately. If the condition of the child is considered serious enough, EMS will be summoned and the parent contacted.

If an ambulance (emergency health care) is called, parents must assume the cost of this service. Staff will not transport sick or injured children for treatment.

All accidents will be recorded on an Incident Report Form and submitted to the administrator of the preschool.

For the health and safety of all children and Staff, the program has the right to refuse participation given specific circumstances as follows. Children will be excluded from participating if they exhibit any of the following symptoms:

- Have vomited in the past 24 hours.
- Have a fever.

-
- Have a persistent cough/sneeze.
 - Show signs of a contagious illness.
 - Complaints of dizziness, blurred vision or pain.

Should the teacher know or have reason to believe that a child is exhibiting the signs or symptoms of illness, a parent must immediately remove the child from the Wee Kare premises.

A child who has been removed from the program due to illness will not be readmitted until the teacher is satisfied that the child no longer poses a health risk to others or the program premises. Acceptable evidence may include that a child is symptom free for at least 24 hours or has a Physician's Note. Please also see the COVID-19 Handout (found on the website).

Should a parent be unable or unwilling to arrange for the immediate removal of a sick child, the teacher will make the determination to keep the child as isolated as possible from the other children or contact emergency health services. The child will not be readmitted to the program until the parent can satisfactorily demonstrate to the teacher and the Administrator that they have made the proper arrangements for immediate removal should the child become ill in the future.

Emergency prescription medications (such as Epipens and inhalers) must be accompanied by clear instructions and a Medication Form. Medications are to be clearly labeled and stored in the high cabinet above the sink. Non-emergency medications will not be administered by Staff or Volunteers.

Smoking/Vaping

Smoking/vaping is not permitted on the Falconridge Family Church premises, including the building and the grounds. No staff or volunteers shall smoke during any off site activity of Wee Kare Preschool.

Offensive Language

Offensive language (derogatory terms, profanity, swearing, cussing, taking the Lord's name in vain) is not permitted in the school building or in the presence of the children. We ask that everyone refrain from using mean or unkind words.

Fire Drills and Emergency Procedures

Emergency Drills

1. Emergency procedures and fire drills are held a minimum of once per month to educate, teach and prepare the children if an emergency should arise and children and staff are required to evacuate the preschool.
2. Children will be age appropriately educated on the process, who will come and help, and why evacuation procedures are practiced and needed. Emergency procedures will be a mandatory activity for all children, staff and adults attending preschool on the day the drill is practiced.
3. In the case of an actual evacuation, parents/ guardians will receive written notice/ information of the situation within 24 hrs of emergency evacuation detailing the situation and steps taken by the preschool Staff.
4. Evacuation procedures are posted on the inside of the preschool classroom by the door.

In the Event of a Fire

1. The teacher in charge will raise the alarm through the alarm system.
2. The teacher in charge will be responsible for calling 9-1-1.
3. Teacher will line up the children at the door.
4. Assistant will check the washroom.
5. Assistant is responsible for taking attendance sheets and portable records.
6. Teacher leads the children out of the safest door with the assistant at the rear.
7. Muster Point Is the grassy area west of the building by the fence.
8. If it's cold, see below.
9. Teacher/assistant will make sure all children are accounted for from the attendance sheets.
10. Remember to remain calm and reassure the children.
11. Leave all personal belongings behind - the children are the only priority.
12. The teacher in charge will meet with Fire/Emergency personnel on their arrival.

In the Event of a Lockdown

1. Teacher in charge will instruct all children, staff and volunteers to move to a location within the classroom where they cannot be seen by windows.
2. Assistant will lock the classroom door(s).
3. Assistant will call 9-1-1.
4. Teacher will take attendance.
5. All doors will be locked and the lockdown will remain in place until direction is given by the Police.

Cold Weather Evacuation

1. In Case of Emergency Evacuation, the children will be instructed to exit the building quickly and if it is cold outside, will be walked over to McDonalds (5219

Falsbridge Drive NE). Parents will be contacted by telephone to come and pick up their children there.

2. The teacher in charge will determine if it is cold enough outside to move to McDonalds.

Teacher Conduct Policy

Effective supervision is one of the most important tasks staff and volunteers must perform throughout the class. We are caring for the most precious treasures – children! With this in mind, All staff and volunteers must avoid carrying out activities that may draw their attention away from active supervision. Examples of such activities include: administrative tasks, texting, reading, using the phone, and visiting with co-workers.

Child Guidance Policy

Our primary concern is that all children at the Preschool are safe, feel secure, are comfortable and can develop their imagination and learn with confidence. Guidance action must be reasonable to the situation, age-appropriate and respectful to the child. Child guidance must not be in the form of physical/corporal punishment, neglect or emotional abuse.

Should a child's behavior pose a threat to the safety, comfort and learning of the group, a conference with the parent will be held and the possibility of professional intervention addressed. The last recourse would be to withdraw the child from the program.

Classroom Specifics

Our teachers have designed our program to meet the physical, emotional and social needs of each child that attends. Learning and special activities are included to provide an exciting environment while a general structure is followed to provide security and familiarity. Please carefully read the following information to help your child acclimate to the preschool classroom and get the most enjoyment out of their time with us.

Monthly Calendars

Calendars are posted each month and will be sent by email. Newsletters / calendars are very important as they contain all the information you will need regarding monthly themes, schedules and important news. Copies will not be provided. Please take a picture of the calendar each month.

Dress

Please dress your child in “play” clothes as he/she will be using paint and glue on a regular basis. Due to fire regulations, shoes must be worn in the classroom.

Shoes, boots, backpacks and outdoor clothing should be identified with your child’s name. Each child will have their own coat hook, and will be responsible for hanging up their outdoor items. We do not encourage children to wear jewelry or precious items to class due to safety and loss.

Inside the classroom your child will have their own “cubby”. This is where your child should place their snack and backpack. Art work will also be placed in your child’s cubby.

Drop-off Instructions

The outer doors of the school will be unlocked 15 minutes prior to class starting. Please come in and assist your child in hanging up their outdoor items on their assigned coat hook. Place any outdoor shoes under the bench. Backpacks and snack bags should be brought into the classroom.

Please supervise your child carefully and wait in the hallway until the teachers open the

door. Once the doors have been opened, children will be screened for illness and their attendance recorded. Children will then enter the room and place their snack/backpack in their cubby.

The school will be locked 15 minutes after the start of classes. Teachers may not have the ability to let in late-arriving children.

Personal Items

We ask that no personal items/toys are brought to school.

Snack

Healthy nutritious snacks such as fruit, vegetables, crackers, cheese, cereal are to be brought by each child for snack time. Please, NO candies, cookies, or pastry on regular snack days. Please see the attached “Snack Ideas” list.

Wee Kare Preschool is a nut-free zone. Do not send any food containing nuts with your child to school. If your child consumes nuts for breakfast, please wash their hands thoroughly and brush their teeth before bringing them to class.

Birthdays

We celebrate children’s birthdays in the classroom. When it is your child’s birthday, they will be the “special helper” of the day and will be celebrated through song. Your child is welcome, should you choose, to bring store-bought, individually wrapped snacks for each child in their class to take home. These individually wrapped snacks must be nut-free.

Pick-up Instructions

The outer doors will be unlocked for pick-up 15 minutes before class ends. Please gather in the hallway to wait for the teachers to open the classroom door. Remember to check the Parent Information Board while you are waiting. You are expected to be waiting in the hallway when the classroom door is opened. In the case of an emergency where you know you will not be on time to pick up your child, please call 403.669.2613.

Our teachers are not paid to stay after class time so please ensure you pick up on time. We understand that things happen and people can run late but please give us a call to let us know. If you are frequently late a late fee will be applied

The late pick-up fees are as follows:

5 - 10 minutes late = \$5.00 | 11 - 20 minutes late = \$10.00 | 21 - 30 minutes late = \$15.00

This fee must be paid prior to your child returning to the program by cash to the teacher. After repeated occurrences, your child's position in the program may be reviewed.

Daily Activities

The preschool program is filled with different activities to inspire your child to learn and grow! Guided Free Play makes up a large portion of our program and provides the greatest opportunity for your child to develop necessary skills and behaviours. We actively engage in 2 forms of Art. Each has its own unique benefits to the child. Circle Time provides inspiration and information in a highly focused way to excite the child to learn.

Here is a little bit more about the goals for each area.

Guided Free Play

While playing in our play centers, such as the kitchen centre, block area, construction zone, dress-up area and our table top area, your child will be learning:

- Cooperating with others (taking turns, sharing)
- Using language skills
- Verbalizing ideas
- Developing and using fine and gross motor skills
- Classifying by shape, size and colour
- Experimenting with balance and form
- Using imagination
- Testing ideas
- Recognizing quantity
- Understanding number concepts
- Improving hand-eye coordination

Circle Time

While we are having group/circle time children are learning:

- Language skills
- Pre-reading skills
- Learning to follow directions
- Working independently and as a group
- Gathering information
- Connecting stories to pictures

Abstract Art

In Abstract Art, the child is allowed to explore, discover and manipulate supplies to create something unique. Our role is to provide interesting materials, sit back and watch closely, but unobtrusively.

With Abstract Art, the children are:

- Expanding creativity
- Increasing communication skills
- Improving hand-eye coordination
- Exercising fine motor skills

Your job as the parent/guardian is to ask your child open-ended questions that will encourage your child to feel free to explore.

- Tell me about your creation.
- I love the colours you have chosen!
- This is one of a kind!

Representative Art

In Representative Art, the child is given a physical example to emulate, enhance or improve. Specific materials, that look like the example, are provided so that the children can use them to reach the artistic goal.

In Representative Art, the children are:

- Following directions
- Using new and exciting creative materials (scissors, pencils, paint-brushes, glue)
- Developing necessary skills (cutting, colouring in the lines, controlling portions)
- Exploring ideas for enhancement and improvement

Physical Literacy

Physical literacy is about developing the fundamental movement skills that all children need. These are skills such as running, hopping, throwing, catching and jumping. Children who are physically literate will be more likely to participate in physical activity

and will have more fun because they know how to run, jump, and throw and more. Activities and games are to physical literacy what nursery rhymes are to language; a fun and simple way for your child to develop the skills they need.

Activities also reinforce skills such as teamwork, problem solving, participation and cheering others on. Children who have positive experiences with physical activity in the preschool age-level are far more likely to enjoy good physical health as they grow older.

Kindergarten Readiness (Friday program)

For children going into Kindergarten the following year we offer a readiness program. Getting your child ready for success in Kindergarten, and beyond, is our goal. On Fridays, we work diligently with the children to obtain the skills needed for Kindergarten. These include:

- Recognise the alphabet letters
- Sounds the letters make
- Cutting (holding the scissors properly)
- Drawing (tell a story with their drawing)
- Social Skills (interacting with others, turn taking, etc)
- Large Motor Skills - Hopping, jumping, running, skipping, galloping.

Special Activities

In addition to our in-classroom activities, Wee Kare has designed many Special Activities to enhance the learning experience of our students. Special Activities are important to help bridge the gap between education and hands-on experience. They are crucial for every student to acquire increased knowledge, culture and hands-on experience. Hands-on experience produces questions and answers that help shape a child's future.

- Creativity and imagination
- Learn new words and concepts
- Explore cause and effect
- Develop large motor skills
- Improve balance, coordination and rhythm through dance and movement activities
- Improve small motor skills (learning fingerplays and playing musical instruments)

Special Visitors

We are excited to welcome a variety of special guests during the spring as we learn about our Community Helpers. Children will never know who will be stopping by to share about how we can all be productive members of our community, city and world.

Celebrations

Everyone loves a good party! Our Celebrations are a great opportunity to rejoice in accomplishments, learn about cultural traditions, explore our relationship with God and mark milestones in development.

In October we will have our famous “Noah’s Ark Party”. This costume party is designed to be fun and exciting, without being spooky or scary. Children are invited to dress up as their favorite animal.

In December we will celebrate Christmas in both religious and secular ways. Children will learn a variety of Christmas music and explore the many cultural traditions associated with the holiday season.

In March we will celebrate St. Patrick's day with our annual Leprechaun Hunt.

In April we will have an Easter Egg Hunt and celebrate the power of forgiveness, the excitement of growth and the fun of springtime.

In June we will celebrate all that has been accomplished this school year in our Graduation Festivities.

We will celebrate various holidays and events throughout the year that are relevant to our families. Parents are encouraged to share event ideas with the teachers to be incorporated into the year.

Off-Site Activities (aka Field Trips)

Off-Site Activities (commonly referred to as Field Trips) are a fun day outside the classroom. Stepping away from the regular preschool environment entails so much more than a welcome break in routine, it provides students with a hands-on learning experience that involves various elements they can touch or interact with. Through field trips, children can have amazing learning experiences while they are having fun. It actually opens up their minds and helps them retain lessons better!

Our planned Field Trips for this school-year are:

- ★ October: PUMPKIN PICK (walking trip)
- ★ To Be Determined: FIRE STATION (parent-driven trip^{***})
- ★ May: EARTH DAY (walking trip)

^{***}NOTE: Parents who are unable to drive their child will need to arrange transportation with other parents in the class. Wee Kare will not be arranging transportation to or from this trip.

Parents are notified of all Off-site Activities through our Student Calendar and in our newsletter, which is sent out by email at the beginning of each month. Both the Calendar and the Newsletter are also posted on the Parent Information Board.