



# **New Sarepta Playschool Association**

## **Handbook And Policies**

**2025 - 2026**

## **About New Sarepta Playschool**

New Sarepta Playschool has been in operation since 1986. It is a parent-run, parent-funded program aimed at providing young children with the opportunity to socialize with their peers in a group setting. Our goal is to nurture our students in a healthy, safe environment and to promote their development and learning.

### **Our Philosophy**

It is important for children to have life experiences with real objects before they can understand abstract concepts such as letters and numbers. For this reason we take a hands-on approach to learning, which provides such an important opportunity for the students to experiment, touch, manipulate and interact with their environment.

Play is the work of the child. It is the means by which children explore their world. It's how they develop and practice the physical, intellectual and social skills they'll need in life. Play teaches skills and behaviors that help form young minds and bodies.

Play unlocks the world of social relations for your child – a journey that lasts until adulthood! Your child is learning to get along with peers and play is how this happens. Some very important personal development happens at the same time: your child is getting to know themselves. They are developing their concept of self and where they fit in, all as a result of play with other children.

The measure of childhood development is in six general domains:

- Cognitive Skills
- Emergent Literacy
- Physical Wellbeing
- Social Competence
- Emotional Maturity
- Creative Development

New Sarepta Playschool provides a child-centered and play-based approach to support students' development in all these domains. Through quality play activities children gather valuable information about the world as they develop important skills for future academic success!

### **Cognitive Skills**

A child's cognitive development is encouraged by the richness and variety of educational material available to them. By providing a range of experiences through books, games, toys, sensory material, math manipulatives, early literacy experiences, crafts, dramatic play and field trips, we encourage cognitive growth and creative thinking.

### **Emergent Literacy**

Literacy embodies communication in the form of reading, writing, listening, and vocal/non vocal speaking. Our program provides opportunities for literacy development through both structured activities and free play. Children are encouraged to explore environmental print, print media, stories, rhyming/repetition and writing skills.

## **Physical Wellbeing**

The role of the Playschool is to make sure that all the physical needs of a child are met in a safe environment. Physical activity strengthens the body and the mind. Outdoor physical play strengthens bones, muscles, the heart and lungs. It also improves flexibility, coordination, balance, maintains a healthy weight and improves sleep. It increases a child's self esteem, is an outlet for stress, improves learning and builds co-operative skills. When outdoor play is not possible, creative movement experiences will be offered indoors.

## **Social Competence**

During the early years, initiating and nourishing a friendship is a step along the path of social development. This path changes as children mature, but those first steps set the foundation for social interactions in the future. Playschool provides children the opportunity to practice the skills (turn taking, reading social cues, working as part of a group and problem solving), which will support their ability to create good interpersonal relationships.

The children are taught to use all equipment according to the purpose that it is designed for, use it with care and respect, share and return it to its designated spot. Manners and table etiquette are encouraged at all times.

## **Emotional Maturity**

To feel prepared for school, children must be excited and curious about learning and confident that they can succeed. Our aim is to facilitate a smooth transition from home to playschool and later from playschool to school. The Playschool strives to create this excitement while guiding children's ability to understand their own feelings and the feelings of others, control their own behaviors and get along with peers.

## **Creative Development**

Creative development is encouraged through art, imaginative play, music and stories. Process is emphasized rather than the end product as they experiment with concepts, colors, sounds and textures. Skills and knowledge are developed through opportunities for independent and cooperative play.

## **Child Guidance Policy**

Students' behavior will be guided in a positive manner at a level that is appropriate to their age, actions and attitudes. This serves to promote self - discipline, respect for the rights of others and to ensure health and safety. Child guidance will in no way include physical or emotional punishment. It will instead focus on supporting skill development, self control and providing opportunities for children to problem solve. The teacher will encourage children to work out their own solutions. Quieter children will be encouraged to assert themselves; more aggressive children to verbalize their needs. Other strategies will include redirection, distraction and, when needed, time to themselves until the student is ready to re-enter play.

Positive reinforcement will be communicated through verbal praise and through non - verbal communication, such as a pat on the back or a hug. Consistent acknowledgement of acceptable behaviors will send messages to the child of acceptance and self - worth.

Simple Safety Rules will be explained to the children. Reminders will be in the form of verbal explanations from the adults, and/or signs throughout the Playschool.

The Playschool will use three simple rules for children to govern their behavior:

- You may not hurt yourself
- You may not hurt others (emotional or physical)
- You may not hurt things (furniture, toys, etc.)

The Playschool will not permit or engage in:

- Corporal punishment of a student by a staff, parent, volunteer or by another other child
- Deliberate degrading measures that would humiliate or undermine a student's self - respect
- Deprivation of a student's basic needs, including food, shelter, clothing, etc

Discipline at the Playschool is the teacher's and Education Assistants responsibility. Any discipline issues are to be handled by the teacher and EA. Recurrent discipline difficulties with a child will be discussed by the president and the teacher to design a program to assist the student in dealing with their inappropriate behavior. At this time the teacher may request assistance with developing a plan from partner programs such as The Early Childhood Resource Program, Occupational Therapy, etc.

The Playschool reserves the right to discharge a child who, in the opinion of the teacher and the board, has additional needs that cannot be adequately met by the program. Parents will be involved in this process and all efforts will be made towards avoiding the discharge.

## **Parental Involvement Policy**

**The playschool is a Parent Cooperative program that cannot exist without strong parental involvement.** Involvement opportunities are available based on interest. Families can participate in field trips and special event supervision, share a talent with the class, provide laundry support, class material prep and joining the parent board.

**\*\* All volunteers and staff must provide a Criminal Record Check and Vulnerable Sector Check obtained from the RCMP (within the past 6 months) to the playschool prior to the first day of classes. For parents or staff attending the playschool for multiple years a new security clearance will be required every 3 years unless certain events arise, in which we may request an updated one throughout the year. These records are confidential and are kept in a secure locked file cabinet.\*\***

## **Arrival/Departure Policy**

Arrival:

Parents are asked to arrive a few minutes before class starts in order to help their child with clothing and shoes. Parents cannot leave until the playschool door is open and both the teacher and EA are present. **Please be sure to take your child to the washroom before class.**

The door will open at 9:00 a.m., providing the Teacher and EA is present.

Departure:

Parents/caregivers are responsible for picking up children promptly at 12:00 p.m. PLEASE DO NOT BE LATE. Being the last one to be picked up can be very distressing for your child. If you are going to be late, due to circumstances out of your control, please call the school to inform the teacher.

Late pick up is subject to an additional fee of \$10.00 for every 10 minutes late, rounded up. Those fees must be paid in cash before your child attends the next class.

Unusual or emergency circumstances will be considered prior to late fees being assessed.

If late pick up is an ongoing problem and reasonable effort has been made to solve it, then notice of termination of services may be given.

Please remember that this is the teacher and EA's personal time that you are taking up. It is unfair to both them and your child.

If a child has not been picked up and the playschool has not been notified that a parent will be late these steps will be followed:

- A phone call will be made to the primary parent or caregiver
- A phone call will be made to any other guardian listed
- The playschool teacher or EA will attempt to reach the emergency contact

**\*\*\*If none of these contacts can be reached within 30 minutes of class ending, the playschool teacher is legally required to notify Child and Youth Services\*\*\***

The teacher must be notified if a child is to be picked up by anyone other than the primary caregiver. If this is to be a regular occurrence, the person(s) allowed to pick-up and/or drop-off, should be listed on the registration form. Otherwise, your child will not be released

without first gaining your consent. This person **MUST** be over the age of 16 years.

**No child shall be released from our care to anyone other than the parents or persons authorized on the consent form. Please advise in writing, of any custody agreements that pertain to the child and submit a photocopy of any such court ordered papers. The first time an authorized person picks the child up, they will be required to show identification e.g. valid drivers license. If an authorized person comes to pick up a child and appears to be incapable of doing so (e.g. he/she is intoxicated), an alternate person on the authorization form will be contacted. Our teacher is obliged to consider the health and safety of all involved and should a parent/guardian choose to drive while intoxicated, our staff will report this to the police. If the teacher feels that the health and welfare of the child is at risk, they may also contact the Ministry of Children & Families.**

## **Health and Wellness Policy**

The playschool is committed to the health and well being of the families enrolled.

### **Fire drill/Emergency/Evacuation**

- Our program has immediate access at all times to a working phone within the building
- Emergency evacuation route and procedure is posted in the classroom
- Our program has fire drills once a term. A record of our drills is available at the playschool
- The playschool emergency exit route is through the back doors and the muster point is at the back of the ball diamond next to the walking path. In the event of long term evacuation, extreme weather conditions or that the playground is deemed an unsafe place to muster, the children will be taken to the New Sarepta Elementary School and families will be contacted
- An emergency bag including portable records with families' contact information, emergency contacts, Alberta Health Care numbers and medical information including allergies, a first aid kit, emergency medications and the attendance sheet are taken when evacuating
- In the unlikely event of an environmental threat or threat of violence, the teacher will secure the children in the safest location within the Agriplex, contact and follow directions given by the proper authorities and contact the parents as soon as the situation allows. An incident report would also be provided to the parents.
- In any emergency children will be reassured by the teacher/EA and talked through the procedures they have practiced during drills.

### **Evacuation Procedure**

- In the event of an evacuation emergency (including fire), children will be calmly led by the teacher out of the room. The teacher will take the attendance sheet, portable records and emergency bag with her.
- The EA will ensure all children are out of the room and close doors as they exit

behind the children

- The teacher and/or EA is responsible for calling emergency services, if required
- The playschool emergency exit route is through the back doors and the muster point is at the back of the ball diamond next to the walking path
- Once at the muster point the teacher will take attendance
- Re-entry into the playschool will only be permitted after the appropriate authority has given the all clear signal

## **Medication Authorization**

Prescription medications must be in the original packaging and clearly labeled with the child's name and administering instructions. Medications will only be administered if a completed medication form is on file. This must include specific instructions on time, dosage and a record of the last time medication was given. We cannot administer medications under directions such as "as needed". Administration of medication by the teacher will be recorded accurately with time and amount given. Parents will be required to initial the form each day to acknowledge the administration of the medication. Permission forms for medication cannot exceed two weeks unless it is an emergency medication (i.e. epi-pen). Emergency medications must have permission forms signed every 6 months. Emergency medication forms must include clearly outlined conditions required to make the medication necessary.

Expired medications or medication that has not been signed for cannot be kept at the playschool.

## **Medication Storage and Administration**

- Medication must be stored in its original, labeled packaging in a locked box, in the filing cabinet, inaccessible to children
- Emergency medications are stored in the room, out of children's reach and are taken along on outings, kept by the teacher
- No medication (prescription or otherwise) should be kept in student bags or cubbies
- Tylenol cannot be kept at playschool in case of fever unless we have a doctor's note stating it is medically necessary
- Only the teacher may administer medications. Should a substitute teacher not have a valid first aid certificate, the Board member with first aid will administer medication

## **First Aid**

The teacher and EA required to hold a valid first aid with CPR certificate (relevant to children).

A first aid kit that meets the Health and Safety regulations is on site. It is:

- Taken on all outings
- Regularly checked by the teacher and a designated board member and restocked as necessary
- Easily accessible to adults
- Kept out of reach of children

Any time that first aid is provided to a child an incident form will be completed by the teacher, signed by the parents and kept on file. Parents will be informed of incidents at pick up or contacted by phone for serious injuries.

### **Serious Incidents, Injury or Illness**

This includes any situation occurring while a child is at playschool that requires emergency medical treatment, professional consultation or transport for emergency treatment.

In the event of a medical emergency, the teacher may give a child first aid. The EA will attempt to contact the parent/emergency contact and all events will be recorded on an incident form, with a copy provided to the family.

The teacher must request emergency medical care through 911 at any point that it is deemed necessary. In the event an ambulance is required all related expenses are the sole responsibility of the family.

**\*\*\*Any critical incident or injury will also be reported to the Childcare Licensing Authority. Emergency evacuation, or closure, a child being removed from the premises without authorization, injuries requiring medical attention or a child being left unsupervised on or off site must be reported as a critical incident to the Childcare Licensing Authority within 48 hrs\*\*\***

### **Illness**

To ensure the health of our community, it is the New Sarepta Playschool's policy that children must stay home if they exhibit the following symptoms or conditions:

- Illness that prevents a child from participating comfortably in playschool activities
- Illness that results in a greater need for care than we can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children
- Fever of 39 degrees C and above
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Severe coughing
- Mouth sores
- Rash: unless a physician has determined it is not contagious
- Purulent conjunctivitis: defined as pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge
- Impetigo: until 24 hours after treatment
- Strep throat: until 24 hours after treatment
- Head lice: until after treatment and all nits are removed
- Scabies: until 24 hours after treatment has begun
- Pertussis: (whooping cough) until 5 days of appropriate antibiotics
- Hepatitis A virus: until one week after onset of illness, after immune globulin has been administered.
- H1N1 flu



- COVID19: Follow COVID19 Alberta Health Checklist

We will send children home (or call an emergency contact) if they exhibit any of the above symptoms. Children must remain home for 24 hours without symptoms before returning to school. In the case of a contagious disease or continuing symptoms, a doctor's note is required before your child is permitted to return to school. As soon as your doctor determines that your child has a communicable disease, please inform the Playschool immediately. Please note that in the case of H1N1 or any other pandemic illness, recommendations as outlined by Alberta Health Services will be followed.

**Excluded children may return when:**

- They are free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea for a full 24 hours
- They have been treated with an antibiotic for a full 24 hours
- They are able to participate comfortably in all usual preschool activities, including outdoor time
- If a child is excluded due to a reportable communicable disease, a doctor's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return is required

**The final decision about whether a child is excluded will be made by the Teacher.**

**Nutrition**

Eating is a sensory, social and learned behavior. Establishing a pleasant and proper atmosphere in which children can enjoy their snack is a goal of playschool. In an effort to support children's learning about good nutritional attitudes we ask that families follow the Canadian food guide and refrain from sending candy and other low nutritional value items.

Snack will:

- Support the learning of social cues, table etiquette and healthy choices
- Be offered approximately half way through class
- Be provided by families and include a minimum of two food groups

The playschool has a very limited amount of emergency snacks available for times when a snack is forgotten. We would ask families to replace emergency snacks used by their child.

The program may not accept snacks containing nuts depending on room allergies.

**Smoking**

New Sarepta Playschool is a smoke free environment intended to prevent or minimize the risk of children inhaling environmental smoke or witnessing others smoking.

Due to the acknowledged health threat to young children from exposure to tobacco smoke pollution; it is the policy of this organization to provide a smoke-free environment for staff, children, and parents. This policy covers the smoking of any tobacco product and applies to employees, parents and visitors to the program.

The smoke – free policy applies to:

- Any area of the Agriplex at any time (both indoor and playground areas)
- Tobacco use in personal vehicles when transporting children other than your own to and from playschool activities
- Field trips, walks and all other off-site activities and functions

## **Records Management Policy**

The playschool will ensure that all records are accurate, up to date, relevant and factual. At all times the overall confidentiality of records will be maintained. Upon request, the playschool will provide families and staff with access to their own records in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act. All records will be kept for the required periods of time to ensure that legal obligations are met.

Board members, the teacher and/or the EA cannot provide information on matters relating to any child in care, to anyone other than the parent/guardian of the child. Exceptions to this include:

- The exchange of information with Alberta Children's Services
- When required in a Court of Law
- When the welfare of the child is at risk and the appropriate government agencies need to be notified

All Records will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at the playschool.

### **Administrative Records should include:**

- Daily attendance records
- Sign in and out sheets with record of time of arrival and departure for children ✓ Staff members timesheets
- Board meeting minutes
- Board financials
- Fundraising records
- Copies of all policies relating to the Playschool Cooperative
- A copy of the Orientation and Parent handbooks

All records will be kept in a professional manner and updated as required.

A backup file of important board-related information must be stored in a locked cabinet at the FCSS office.

### **Staff files will include:**

- Evidence of the child care certification of the staff member
- A record of any training taken while employed with the program
- A current first aid certificate

- All performance appraisals received while employed by the playschool
- A copy of their Professional Development Plan
- Employment forms
- Occupational Health and Safety forms and detail

**Family Records should include:**

- Parent and Student's names, date of birth and current address
- Emergency contact and approved pick up information
- Registration forms
- All medication authorizations for the school year
- Incident forms from the school year
- Family communication
- Volunteer criminal records check
- The particulars of any health care provided to the child, including the written consent of the child's parent
- Any other relevant health information about the child provided by the child's parent, including the child's immunizations and allergies, if any

**Students' developmental files may include:**

- Observations of the student at playschool
- Any information collected by the teacher on the student's development
- Checklists
- Art and photos of student's work

These files will be kept for a period of 3 years and then shredded.

A portable file with the following information will be kept accessible in case of an evacuation or emergency.

- Student Information, including birth dates and Alberta Health Care Numbers
- Parent/Guardian and Emergency Contact Phone Numbers and Addresses
- Approved Pick Up Persons
- Student Health Information, including allergies

## **New Sarepta Playschool Program**

### **OUR TEACHER**

A playschool is your child's first school encounter and first experience with a teacher. Please communicate with your child's teacher to make learning and school an enjoyable experience.

### **PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

Children must be 3 years of age by October 31st and toilet trained to attend the program.

### **COMMUNICATION**

Daily/Weekly:

Please check the Communication Book in your child's backpack daily. This is your opportunity to communicate back and forth with the teacher about concerns/comments. It is also important that parents share pertinent information about significant occurrences at home, ie. dreams, changes at home, etc. We will also use this to remind you of upcoming events, fundraising deadlines, etc. We will also use the website, facebook, email and class fan out to relay information.

There is also an EA in the classroom that families can connect with and have information forwarded to the teacher. Families are encouraged to schedule a time to meet with the teacher if needed as her time before and after class is limited. The teacher will check the playschool voicemail prior to class start each day. During classroom hours the priority is the students, calls may or may not be able to be answered during class time.

Monthly:

A monthly calendar with information about class events and special programming will be provided to families. The teacher and board will also prepare a monthly newsletter.

### **PLAYSCHOOL PARENT BOARD**

As a parent cooperative, in order for New Sarepta Playschool to run, a Parent Executive Board is needed. We strongly encourage you to take a role on the Board as parental involvement is vital to a successful school year.

Meetings are held once a month and provide an excellent opportunity to become actively involved in issues and events that will ultimately benefit your child. All parents are welcome to present concerns or questions regarding school, fundraising or areas of improvement.

### **FUNDRAISING**

Fundraising is an essential part of Playschool, as it allows us to keep our fees reasonable. The Playschool solely relies on a combination of fees and fundraising to pay for rent, utilities, insurance, supplies, field trips and the teacher's salary.

Each family is asked to raise \$200 profit (or \$250 opt out option) throughout the school year to contribute to playschool. We ask that each family do their best to fundraise and volunteer for at least one of our community events. You can meet your obligation by participating in any and all of the different fundraisers for the year. Regular fundraiser updates will be sent home to keep you informed of your status.

## FEES

Registration – Fees are set in accordance with operating expenses

- \$50.00 non - refundable registration fee
- All payments are to be made payable to New Sarepta Playschool and given to the treasurer
- Subsidy is available to all families that qualify. Please request information from a board member or Leduc County- Community Support Services, 780- 955-6424
- We do receive government assistance; therefore, fundraising and fees are reviewed on a yearly basis based on grant funding guidelines.

Payment Options:

- Full payment for the year
- Term payment at the beginning of each semester (Sept & January)
- 9 post dated cheques dated for the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month

In the case of application for playschool subsidy (Provincial or County), the parent portion is still payable by one of the previous options. Families are responsible for all fees until subsidy is approved.

**Failure to pay fees in accordance with the above schedule or make alternate arrangements with the treasurer will result in your child being withdrawn from the program.**

**2. Withdrawals-** The playschool requires one month's notice or one month's payment in lieu of notice for any withdrawal from the program. If fees were paid in advance, a refund (less the months notice and any outstanding fees) will be provided to you. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure they have fulfilled their roster and cleaning days, prior to the last day of class.

NSF or RETURNED CHEQUES:

A \$30 fee will be charged for processing any NSF or returned cheques issued to New Sarepta Playschool.

## PARENT/CHILD ORIENTATION

The first week of school is set up as staggered entry or meet the teacher night, depending on class size. You will be notified in August or the first week in September when the first day of school commences. This is a time for children to meet their teacher, see the classroom environment and for parents to ask questions about their child's program.

## SCHOOL CLOSURE

The playschool operates on the same schedule as Black Gold Schools. Non instructional school days are closure days for the playschool. In inclement weather, the playschool

executive board will make the decision if class is cancelled on days that the Black Gold School buses do not operate. Parents will be notified by phone and Facebook for unexpected closures.

### **BRINGING PERSONAL ITEMS TO SCHOOL**

Children are encouraged to leave personal toys at home. If a child needs a security item they may bring it, however children will be asked to keep those items in their backpacks as much as possible during school hours. Arrangements can be made with the teacher to share items brought back from a special trip, cultural items or other special event items from a child's life.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Your child will be participating in field trips during the course of the school year. An appropriate 'Field Trip Information Notice' will be provided to the parent/guardian stating the details of each field trip well in advance. In order for your child to participate in field trips we need a signed 'General Field Trip Consent'. Parents are responsible for transporting their child on any field trips that require travel. The teacher supervises all field trips and a minimum of 1 parent helper with the exception of community walks.

# **New Sarepta Playschool promotes Learning through Play!**

## **AN EXAMPLE OF DAILY ACTIVITIES**

**Class will be 9:00am – 12:00pm**

**Circle Time** – attendance is taken and the teacher leads activities related to the day or month's topic. Activities may include games, songs, charts, weather, letters and numbers

**Centre Time** – playtime in different themed areas of the room

**Craft Time** – this provides opportunities for creative expression, emergent literacy and comprehension tasks

**Literacy Corner** – children are involved in storytelling or other literacy related activities

**Phys Ed** – children are provided with daily physical activities/creative moment and gross motor games

**Snack Time** – to recognize an opportunity for developing social relationships / developing healthy choices for snack time

**Clean Up** – children assist with cleaning up centres and line up for gym/outdoor activities

**Free play** – encourages children to visit with their friends and teacher and play together

Each month will be themed: all crafts and stories will be related to that theme.

A Daily Schedule will be available in September when classes begin.