

Roots and Wings Early Learning Program Family Guide



The École Jasper Elementary School Roots and Wings Early Learning Program believes that early childhood is a magnificent time of imagination and exploration; it is also a critical period of growth and development in supporting positive outcomes in all areas of life. We believe that **high quality early childhood education lays the foundation for lifelong learning.** Our program is designed to offer top quality early education for children who are three, four and five years old, with priority registration given to four year olds. The program is offered **Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 8:45 a.m-3:15 p.m. during the school year and following the ÉJES calendar.** Families can choose full day or half day (8:45-12:00 PM or 12:00-3:15 PM) programming to best suit their child's needs.

Our Philosophy

The Roots and Wings Early Learning Program is a play-based program that takes its primary inspiration from the Reggio-Emilia approach, but borrows from other philosophies such as Waldorf and Montessori in order to create unique and responsive **programming that supports the holistic development of each child.** Our program encourages learning through play with a focus on strong social-emotional development, community building, enjoyable early numeracy and literacy experiences, and creative expression in a diverse and inclusive environment. Roots and Wings strives to facilitate child-led learning with head, heart and hands. The program is led by a qualified director who specializes in early childhood development.

The Child

Roots and Wings Early Learning Program will ensure the developmental needs of your child are met throughout each learning day, including their physical, social, intellectual, creative, spiritual and emotional needs. These needs will be met through planned programming, high-quality responsive interactions with program staff, and the provision of a supportive environment that encourages children to develop the skills necessary to build positive relationships while growing in their own unique way.

Program

Roots and Wings educators will work to create an engaging and inspiring program for all of the children. Curriculum is evolving and co-created with children. Each day the lead teacher will guide the class through the daily rhythm, generally following this structure:

- Free choice centre time (with play-based options including art and sensory play)
 - Story time
 - Snack time
 - Outdoor adventure
 - Lunch time
 - Quiet (rest or deep focus) time
- Free choice centre time (with play-based options including art and sensory play)
 - Learning and Music Circle time
 - Snack time
- Goodbye time (goodbye circle and unstructured outdoor play until pickup)

Program staff will supervise the children, guide the children while playing and communicating with others, ensure the children's needs are met, and ensure the children are safe. Staff will meet the staff/child ratio requirements at all times - at maximum, one staff member for every ten children with a maximum class size of 20 students. At minimum, all staff will meet appropriate child care certification requirements and provide a current favourable criminal record check for the vulnerable sector, a current favourable child intervention check and have current first aid certification. All staff will participate in ongoing professional development to support our value of lifelong learning for all.

Our Neighbourhood

The Roots and Wings program feels it is valuable for children to learn about the community where they live. We have adventures throughout the community all year long. These adventures include (but are not limited to) visiting different playgrounds, exploring the community garden, seasonal outdoor activities, hiking or playing in the woods, visiting the municipal library, and joining local cultural activities & community events. Roots and Wings strives to be **inclusive** and to not only practise non-discrimination, but celebration of diversity in all its forms. We also participate in developmentally appropriate ÉJES school events, such as assemblies or school-spirit days. We always prioritise health and safety and outings will comply with all public health recommendations.

Your Role

Roots and Wings encourages family involvement. Families are invited to participate throughout the year in a variety of events, and each family is sent a questionnaire before your child starts the program, so we can incorporate the things that your family wants to share with our class. Whether you have a story to share, a skill to teach, or hands to lend for setting up at seasonal events, we want to learn from your family! Family volunteers are never left alone with children or expected to supervise the class in any way. **We also rely on family volunteers as playdough makers each week**, and there is a sign-up sheet outside the classroom for families to help out.

Before Your Child Begins

In order to create a smooth transition for your child, we offer an open house orientation day in the late spring for new families. In September we offer a staggered start with half the group attending on the first day, the other half attending on the second day, and all students together for the third day.

If your child is starting part way through the year we will arrange an orientation day with you before your child starts. This will be about 45 minutes during the free play time, and we ask that you stay with your child during this time.

At these visits, children will have a chance to check out the space, meet the teachers and meet the other children. You will have the chance to meet the teachers and other children and to ask any questions you might have.

Before the start of preschool you will receive a list of what to bring to preschool each day. **Please be sure to clearly label all of your child's belongings!**

Toilet Learning

We respect that not all children are able to toilet themselves independently, and we understand this is a developmental process that occurs at different times for all children. If your child is not “potty trained”, please send lots of extra pull-ups, underwear, pants, and diaper wipes.

Communication with Families

A monthly newsletter is sent via email. E-mail and the Lillio app will be used throughout the school year to communicate with you about all program related matters. Please be sure to check these regularly. You are always welcome to set up a meeting with the program director to discuss any concerns you have about your child's development. The program director's email address is lauroric@gypsd.ca.

Additional Services

Developmental screening and early intervention services by specialists (e.g. speech therapy, occupational therapy, EYE-DA screening, etc.) are offered during program hours. You will be advised of these opportunities throughout the year and these services will only be provided with your informed consent.

Our Policies

Child Guidance Policy

Children deserve respect at all times and we always encourage children to express themselves in a respectful manner. According to the Alberta Child Care Licensing Regulations, Roots and Wings early learning program will not inflict or cause to be inflicted any form of physical punishment, verbal or physical degradation, or emotional deprivation; will not deny or threaten any basic necessity; and will not use or permit the use of any form of physical restraint, confinement or isolation. All disciplinary action will be reasonable in the circumstances.

Off-site Activity and Emergency Evacuation Policy

We have frequent off-site activities on foot during program hours, especially during our morning outdoor adventure. Parents or legal guardians are not likely to be informed in advance of the precise location of each of our offsite activities since they happen as part of our daily programming, but the teacher will always be contactable by phone (with the phone number posted on the classroom door) during these outings. Some special outings may require an additional permission from parents or legal guardians, but in the registration package you are asked to provide consent for our regular off-site programming. **Consent for off-site activities is required for participation in Roots and Wings.** Portable emergency records, an enhanced off-site first aid kit, any emergency medications, and cell phones are carried by staff on all off-site activities. In the event of an emergency evacuation, our first muster point is the school yard, and if this is unsafe, our second muster point is the Jasper Activity Centre. In the unlikely event of a community-wide evacuation ordered by officials (e.g. during wildfire), every effort will be made to contact parents/legal guardians or your emergency contact, but if such contact cannot be immediately established, your child will be supervised by teachers and will be evacuated in whatever way deemed necessary by emergency response personnel to ensure your child's safety.

Accident or Illness Policy

Roots and Wings follows all public health and licensing requirements. In case of a significant accident or if your child becomes ill while at school, parents or legal guardians will be notified immediately by telephone. Emergency contacts will be called if we cannot reach the parent or legal guardian. Roots and Wings early learning program staff will seek immediate emergency medical attention as necessary (e.g. by calling an ambulance). The program will track and analyse all accidents and illnesses to identify trends and issues. Accidents, illness outbreaks and significant incidents will be reported to Child Care Licensing in accordance with any relevant legislation.

Potential Health Risk Policy

A child cannot attend the program if they exhibit any symptoms of illness that lead staff to believe the child poses a risk of contagion to other children, or that require greater care than can be provided without compromising the care or safety of other children in the program, or that it is outside the training and scope of staff to safely provide. Examples of illness that would temporarily exclude a child from program participation include but are not limited to fever, vomiting, diarrhoea, unexplained rash, head lice, pink-eye, lethargy, etc. **You must not send a child to preschool when they are ill.** Children exhibiting symptoms of illness will be sent home immediately: a parent or guardian will be contacted and if they cannot be immediately reached, your emergency contact will be asked to come to pick up your child. **In general, the child will be allowed to return once they are symptom free for 24 hours or a parent/legal guardian submits a doctor's note confirming that the child's symptoms are non-contagious.** (This means if your child is sent home sick, they will not be permitted to attend the program the following day unless a doctor's note is submitted.) Some symptoms and illnesses require a longer time away from the program after resolving. Our policies will always reflect public health guidelines, best practice suggestions and restrictions: if more current public health information becomes available than what is outlined in this handbook, we will follow the most current guidelines. Please contact the director if you are unsure when it is safe for your child to return after illness. If your child is home sick, please let us know so we can track and manage any outbreaks. Your child's health and medical information is kept confidential.

Administration of Medicine Policy

Only medication prescribed by a physician, in the original labelled container, prescribed in the child's name according to labelled directions with the child's name, date, medication name, time and dosage to be given can be administered. All medication will be stored in a locked box on a high shelf in the classroom. Any emergency medication (eg: epipen) will be stored in the original container with the child's name and prescription on it, in a place inaccessible to children in the classroom and will be carried in the field trip backpack on all outings. Administration of medication to a child can only occur where the written consent of the parent or legal guardian is obtained.

Health Care Policy

Health care to a child will occur only under the following conditions:

- If the written consent of the child's parent or legal guardian has been obtained OR;
- If the health care provided is in the nature of first aid.

Smoking Policy

No person is permitted to smoke or vape on the program premises (i.e. the school grounds). This includes parents or guardians at pick-up and drop-off times.

Nutrition Policy

Please send a nutritious **nut-free** ready-to-eat morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack. Please also send a water bottle with your child each day. As per licensing requirements, food sent to the program must follow Canada's food guide and be served in a way that lowers choking risk. **Any tube shaped or round foods such as hotdogs/grapes need to be cut in half lengthwise to help prevent choking. Some foods such as popcorn or hard candy are considered choking hazards** and cannot be safely modified to prevent this; therefore they cannot be sent to the program.

Late Pick-Up Policy

The latest allowable pick-up times are 12:00 PM for mornings and 3:15 PM for afternoons or full days. Formal programming ends at 11:45 in the morning and 3:00 PM and most families choose to pick their child up closer to these times. Pick-up is usually on the playground; otherwise wait by the drop off doors. Late pickups will be subject to a \$15 fee, and consistent late pickups may result in the need to change your child's schedule. Parents or legal guardians will be called if a child is late being picked up, and if we cannot reach them, we will contact the emergency contact. In the event of a late pickup when we cannot contact parents/legal guardians or an emergency contact, child protective services may need to be contacted.

Fee Schedule

Current monthly out of pocket fees are \$217.50/month for full-time programming and \$100/month for part-time programming; however, these are subject to change depending on government funding models. There is also a \$100 non-refundable registration fee. **Most families qualify for a government subsidy to offset these fees.** Apply online at www.childcaresubsidy.gov.ab.ca

Payment Policy

We require your child to sign up for the duration of the program in order to maintain our rates. Fees are prorated so the month-to-month fee remains the same regardless of how many programming days are in the month. Once your child has been registered and is accepted into our program, you will be provided with instructions for logging into an online Parent Portal account, where you will be able to pay monthly fees. If you have applied and been approved for subsidy, that amount will be applied to your Parent Portal account monthly. If this is your child's first year in the program, the \$100 non-refundable registration fee can be paid by cash or cheque in the school office.

All payments are due before the first day your child attends each month and a \$25 late fee will be charged for fees later than the 5th of the month. If, for any reason, you need to terminate your child's spot, 30 days' notice is required. **We are unable to offer a fee reduction if your child is on vacation for an extended period of time, and cannot hold a for your child if you remove them from the program for vacation.**

Roots and Wings Early Learning Program Parent/Legal Guardian Declaration

Please keep the family guide for reference but return this page.

By signing, you confirm that you have read, understood and agreed to abide by the policies and procedures of the Roots and Wings Early Learning Program as outlined in the Family Guide (Feb 2024 update).

Print child's name: _____

Print parent(s)/legal guardian(s)' names:

Signature of parent(s) or legal guardian(s):

Date: _____