



# **PARENT HANDBOOK**

## **2026/2027**

*(revised January 2026)*

### **Rio Terrace Community Preschool**

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## Welcome to the Rio Terrace Community Preschool!

We are thrilled to welcome you to our preschool family! Established in 1968, Rio Terrace Community Preschool is a parent cooperative program that is part of the Rio Terrace Community League. Our mission is to cultivate a community of families and teachers working together to provide a safe, stimulating and positive environment that enhances and fosters the physical, emotional, cognitive, creative, and social development of individual children through play-based learning and discovery. We practice an emergent and constructivist curriculum; children learn through doing.

Guided by Flight: Alberta's Early Learning and Care Framework ([www.flightframework.ca](http://www.flightframework.ca)), our emergent curriculum strives to meet the unique needs and interests of each child, fostering growth and learning through exploration, play, and meaningful interactions. We recognize children as curious, creative, and competent. The rhythm of our days includes play and discovery, centres, snack, meeting time, music and movement, literacy, art, outdoor play and large-muscle group games.

### Our learning environment

Our bright and spacious playroom features a variety of learning centres where children are encouraged to explore and engage in different activities. These include blocks and manipulatives for building and problem-solving, sensory play to explore textures and materials, process art for creative expression, and dramatic play to encourage imagination and social skills. STEM opportunities are woven into our emergent curriculum, encouraging children to explore, experiment, and learn in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and math. We also have gross motor activities like a climbing wall and slide, and time for outdoor play in the Rio Terrace Hall gym, playground, and surrounding green spaces. Our environment is flexible and evolves and changes over the days and the year to spark your child's sense of wonder and support their growth and curiosity in a fun, interactive way.

While we encourage each child to try different activities, we also value autonomy in learning. Children have the freedom to decide how they want to engage in their day, allowing them to focus on what excites them most. This flexibility fosters a sense of

self-confidence, critical thinking, and self-motivation. For example, some children may bring home many pieces of art, while others may have only a few. Some may love to play games in the gym and some may not. That's okay! What matters most to us is that your child is exploring and expressing themselves in ways that resonate with them. In doing so, they are building a lifelong love of learning, where every experience is valued and every discovery is meaningful.

## Programming

We have three programs, each supervised and supported by a lead teacher, assistant teacher, and a volunteer parent helper.

- The three-year-old program, the Jack Rabbit Class, runs on Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 8:45 to 11:15AM. Children must be three years old by January 1st of the graduating year to enroll in the three-year-old class. Enrollment in the three-year-old program is limited to sixteen children. Children must be fully toilet trained.
- The four-year-old program, the Caribou Class, runs on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings from 9:00-11:30AM. Children must be four years old by January 1st of the graduating year to enroll in the four-year-old class. Children must be fully toilet trained. Enrollment in the four-year-old programs is limited to eighteen children.
- The afternoon Explorers program is a mixed age class open to four and five year old children that runs Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 12:30-3:00PM. Children must be at least four years old by January 1st of the graduating year to enroll in the afternoon class. Children must be fully toilet trained. This class is an outdoor focused class and children will spend at least half the class outside. Please make sure your child has appropriate gear for all weather.

## Registration

All children who have previously attended Rio Terrace Community Preschool (and their siblings) have first priority in the program and are able to register prior to other families for the following year (generally late January). Children whose families live in the Rio Terrace, Patricia Heights, and Quesnell Community, are eligible to register

one week later. Non-alumni out-of-area residents are eligible to register following one additional week. Children within these categories will be enrolled in the order that a fully complete Registration Application Form and all supporting documentation have been provided to the registrar. All registration documentation can be completed online at [www.rioterracepreschool.ca](http://www.rioterracepreschool.ca).

## Fees

To register your child at our preschool, a \$105 registration fee is due when your child first registers. This fee is non-refundable. If your child is on a waiting list for one of our programs, the registration fee is not required until a spot becomes available and is accepted by the parents.

Our yearly tuition fees, after applicable government subsidies or grants, are:

- \$750.00 for the three-year-old Jack Rabbit program
- \$1,100.00 for the four-year-old Caribou and afternoon Explorers programs

All fees and tuition payments should be submitted with your registration application. Please make cheques payable to the Rio Terrace Community Preschool.

For your convenience tuition payment can be made in one of the following two ways:

- A single cheque for the full tuition amount (i.e. \$750.00 or \$1,100.00).
- Monthly payments via automatic withdrawal through online banking, from September 1 to June 1 (\$75 or \$110 per month for 10 months).

Please note that fees are payable in full, whether or not your child attends all sessions. We are unable to offer refunds for absences due to illness, holidays, or inclement weather. If a N.S.F. cheque or declined automatic banking withdrawal occurs, a \$17.00 fee will be charged, and payment will be requested promptly.

## Withdrawal policy

One full calendar month's written notice to the president of the preschool is required to withdraw from the preschool. A "Rio Terrace Community Preschool Withdrawal Form" must be filled out and submitted to the president. If you withdraw part way through a month (i.e. January 15th) the next month's full tuition will be cashed (i.e.

February). If you withdraw after August 1 for the upcoming school year, September's full tuition will be cashed. There will be no refunds for partial months.

## **Community league membership**

As the preschool is part of the Rio Terrace Community League and is covered under the Community League's insurance policy, a current community league membership is required for your child to attend Rio Terrace Community Preschool. This membership can be from the Community League of your choice.

## **Medical considerations**

Our staff have certified CPR training. In the event of an emergency the duty parent/aide or teacher MUST remain with the child until the parent arrives. We will phone an ambulance if necessary ((780) 426-3232 or 911).

If your child has health concerns, it is your responsibility to discuss this with the teacher, preferably before registering. If the child requires emergency medication or special care, a parent or assistant may be required to attend with the child. It may also be necessary for you to provide the preschool with a signed waiver of responsibility absolving the staff and parent helpers from legal responsibility.

In the event that your child comes down with a communicable disease, you are required to inform the teacher of the illness as soon as it has been diagnosed. This will permit other parents to be warned to look for the symptoms and limit the spread of the disease.

## **Illness policy**

We understand that children sometimes fall ill, and we appreciate your cooperation in helping us keep everyone healthy. If your child isn't feeling well, we kindly ask that you keep them at home to prevent the spread of illness to others. If your child has a fever, please wait until they are fever-free for at least 24 hours before returning to preschool. For diarrhea or vomiting, your child should remain at home for 48 hours after the last symptom has passed.

If your child becomes ill while at preschool, we will contact you immediately to arrange for pick-up. If we are unable to reach you, we will reach out to the

emergency contact listed on your child's registration form.

Thank you for helping us to keep a safe and healthy environment for all of our families.

## **Parental involvement**

At our preschool, we operate as a parent cooperative, meaning that active parent participation is essential for the success of the program. We believe that when families are involved in their children's early education, it fosters a strong sense of community and provides valuable support for both the children, families and educators. As part of this cooperative, each family is expected to contribute in various ways throughout the year. In return, parents gain a deeper connection to their child's learning experience, a greater sense of involvement in the preschool community, and the opportunity to build lasting friendships with other families. This shared commitment creates a nurturing and vibrant environment for everyone.

As members of the preschool cooperative please plan to:

1. Attend the preschool's general meetings, 3 times per year.
2. Support in the classroom every four to six weeks.
3. Be responsible for a parent job or serve on the Executive Board.
4. Assist with fundraising.

If you have special skills, hobbies, or work in a particular profession that you think could benefit our preschool, please share with Ms. Jules. We are always excited to involve parents in new and creative ways that enhance the learning experience!

## Fundraising

Parents are required to participate in fundraising initiatives throughout the year. Through these efforts, we enrich our students' learning with special guests, field trips, community days and events, and purchase resources and materials to support each class's emergent curriculum. During the first General Meeting of each school year, the Fundraising Committee will present a fundraising commitment signup and details of the fundraising plans for that term.

As part of the registration package, two deposit cheques of \$300.00 each will be collected as a Fundraising Deposit.

- The first cheque, covering the September–December Term, should be dated September 30th, 2026.
- The second cheque, covering the January–June Term, should be dated February 5, 2027.

The Fundraising Committee will evaluate whether the required fundraising commitments have been met. If they are fulfilled, the corresponding cheque will be returned. If not, the "Fundraising Deposit" cheque for that term will be cashed.

## Fundraising Requirements

### ***September–December Term:***

Parents are expected to actively participate in:

- Product and raffle ticket sales
- Procure a silent auction item (minimum \$50 value)
- Sell at least 2 tickets to Rhythm and Boos Pub Night or work a shift at the event in October 2026 (exact date to be announced).

### ***January–June Term:***

Parents are expected to actively participate in:

- Product and raffle ticket sales
- Bottle Drive Contribution

If you are unable to fulfill your responsibilities in a specific fundraiser (e.g., due to religious or personal reasons), it is your responsibility to notify the Fundraising Committee at [fundraising.rtpcs@gmail.com](mailto:fundraising.rtpcs@gmail.com). Please explain briefly why you are unable to participate and ensure that you fulfill your commitments for the remaining events in the term.

### **Opt-Out Option**

Families may choose to opt out of fundraising each term by electing to have their deposit cheque cashed instead of participating in fundraising activities. This option must be confirmed a few weeks after the start of each term. Opting out allows the school to still benefit financially, while offering families flexibility based on personal circumstances.

### **\*Mandatory Participation in Family Fun Day in June.**

Regardless of whether a family chooses to opt out of fundraising, attendance and participation in Family Fun Day in June is mandatory for all families. Each family must attend and complete at least one volunteer shift during the event. This day is a key community celebration and requires the involvement of every family to be successful.

### **Special helper days**

On your child's "Special Helper" day, they will have a few exciting tasks and responsibilities, including bringing in a special item from home to share with the class. It's a wonderful opportunity for your child to feel special and take on a leadership role among their friends.

On this day, we kindly ask that a parent or caregiver join us in the classroom to assist. Your support will be needed with activities, supervision, and helping ensure that everything runs smoothly throughout the day. You may also be asked to help with clean-up after class. This special volunteer opportunity allows you to connect with your child's classmates, learn more about their strengths and interactions, and build a stronger sense of community within our preschool.

Please be prepared to assist in the classroom according to the schedule provided. For safety and insurance reasons, we ask that siblings not attend on Special Helper

days. We want to ensure that your full attention is on your child, so please plan on focusing on them during preschool hours. Please minimize texting and emailing unless there is an emergency.

To make the most of your time in the classroom, we ask that you arrive 5-10 minutes before class starts. This will give you time to:

- Help set up any necessary materials
- Review the day's plan with the teacher
- Receive any extra instructions for the day
- Acclimate yourself to the room and get settled before the children arrive
- Enjoy a quiet moment with your child, allowing them to show you their favorite things at school

If for any reason you are unable to attend your scheduled Special Helper day, please reach out to the class contact list (*sent via email*) to find a substitute, and be sure to notify Ms. Jules as soon as possible

## **Snacks**

Snacks are provided by each family and should be packed in a small labeled bento box or tupperware that stays in our lunch cubbies until snack time. Please send a labeled water bottle—no juice or milk, please.

Healthy snack ideas include fruit, veggies, beans, cheese or meat cubes with crackers, store-bought muffins, yogurt, granola bars, etc. Please avoid cookies, cake, candy, chips, and chocolate bars, as these provide little nutrition and energy for growing bodies.

Remember, snack time is brief (5-10 minutes), so keep snacks simple and easy to eat! Just because your bento box has 6 compartments, doesn't mean you need to fill them all.

## **Monthly calendars and newsletters**

Our teacher will prepare monthly calendars and share them via email at least 2 weeks before the start of the next month. Parents should review these carefully as they inform you about your special helper days, classroom and community

celebrations, and field trips.

## School year

Classes commence approximately two weeks after the start of the Edmonton Public Schools in September and end in mid-June. All scheduled holidays or non-operational days follow the Edmonton Public School Board calendar.

## Preparing your child for school

Talk positively about school and share with your child all the exciting, fun things they will experience each day. Your enthusiasm and excitement will help create a positive anticipation for their time at preschool! To make the most of all the wonderful new experiences, it's important that your child gets adequate sleep and enjoys balanced meals. This helps them stay energized and ready for the new stimulation and activities each day brings.

Please try to arrive on time and stay with your child until the classroom door opens, signaling that school is starting. For some children, saying goodbye is a smooth and easy process, while for others, the fear of separation can take a little longer to overcome. We understand that every child transitions at their own pace, and our teachers are here to offer guidance and support for both children and their grown-ups during this adjustment period.

Equally important is being on time for pick-up at the end of the day. Consistency and routine help children feel secure, and your punctuality reinforces the trust they have in the structure of their day.

## Educator illness/absence

In the event that one of our educators is unable to attend class, the following actions will be taken:

- *Notification Timeframe:* The following people will be notified by email at least 90 minutes before class begins: the other educator, the board president and the Last Minute Hero Volunteers from the class.
- A *Last Minute Hero Volunteer* must be secured at least one hour before the start of class and the educator and president notified by email.

- *Cancellation:* In the rare instance a parent cannot be secured within the specified timeframe the preschool class may be cancelled for the day.

## Parent-Teacher communication

The teacher would appreciate being told of any concerns such as sickness, trauma, or anything causing great excitement or joy, which would affect your child's behaviour at school. Knowing the above will assist the teacher in finding a suitable activity for your child or to anticipate any problems in the classroom. If you have any worries, please bring this to the teacher's attention by special appointment or when the children are not around so that matter can be given full attention.

### Preferred Communication Method:

- *Email:* Our primary mode of communication is email. Please send all non-emergency communications, including illness reports and absences, to Ms. Jules at [rtpedm@gmail.com](mailto:rtpedm@gmail.com). We will check emails before and after each class to address any inquiries or updates.

### Emergency Contact Information:

- ***Emergency Phone Number:***
  - For urgent matters or emergencies, please contact us at (780) 718-0230. ***This number is reserved exclusively for emergencies.***
- ***Text Messages:***
  - While we encourage the use of email, we understand that urgent matters may arise. However, please note that text messages will not be checked in a timely manner. For immediate assistance, call the emergency phone number mentioned above.

### Response Timeframe:

- Before/After Class: We will diligently check and respond to emails before and after each class. This ensures that we can address non-emergency matters promptly.

- During Class: Any emails sent during class hours will not receive a response until after the class is complete. We are busy working with your child during class and not attending to emails.

### **Illness and Absence Reporting:**

- Email Notification: If your child is unwell or unable to attend preschool, kindly report their illness or absence via email to [rtpedm@gmail.com](mailto:rtpedm@gmail.com) before class begins.

### **Communication protocol**

Do you have a wonder, question or need more information about preschool? We are always available to chat and clarify your queries. Our parent board and educators strive for a program that supports and keeps the best interest of children in mind and the way for us to achieve this is through open communication. Contact the educators when you are wondering about something!

Do you have a concern? Each situation is unique and parents are encouraged to reach out to the educators to discuss concerns. Open and constructive dialogue to address and resolve any issues is important in maintaining relationships between the teaching team and parents. At times, a parent might be apprehensive talking with the educators or feel that their concern has not been satisfactorily addressed. If so, please contact the President of the Parent Executive at [president rtcps@gmail.com](mailto:president rtcps@gmail.com). The Board President will be available to address and assist with any unresolved issues.

### **Social media**

Social media is a wonderful tool to highlight and share our exceptional preschool program and learning approaches with children. As parents, you are an integral part of building our preschool community and encouraging others to get involved with Rio Terrace Preschool. The online presence of the Preschool and parents in our preschool community is one key aspect of building and maintaining a positive and supportive environment for our children, families, staff and future families. We encourage all our families to follow Rio Terrace Preschool on Instagram and Facebook.

## **Confidentiality**

Preschool is an exciting time for your child's growth and learning and, as proud parents, we often want to share this widely! Please refrain from sharing personal information or photos about other children and families or teachers on social media without explicit consent. Respect the privacy of all members of our preschool community.

## **Advocacy**

Parents are the Preschool's best advocates! We encourage you to share information and comments on social media with the intention of promoting positive aspects, achievements, or events. Did you know that Rio Terrace Community Preschool received an award as one of the top three preschools in Edmonton? That was due, in part, to our excellent parent engagement on social media!

## **Child guidance policy**

Our purpose includes providing a supportive environment in which children can enjoy the company of others, play with new friends individually or in a group continually learning how to respect one another. Demonstrating, modelling, and acknowledging examples of positive ways of interacting with each other is the basis of our policy. Providing a flexible and responsive atmosphere through the organization of the day, and the physical set up of our preschool helps to prevent behavioural challenges.

Our educators will model appropriate behaviour. If a problem does arise, the educator will first encourage conflict resolution. Then the educator will then redirect the child to a different activity and suggest appropriate behaviour. If the child is harming themselves or others, they will be safely removed from the situation.

It is best if children can work out their own conflicts and they will be encouraged to do this by our educators. Should a difficulty arise with a child that appears to be negatively affecting the child or other children in the class, the teacher will notify the parents.

*In general, volunteering parents should refer child guidance to the staff to ensure consistency.*

The Executive Board reserves the right, upon recommendation of the teacher, to remove a child from the program if their behaviour becomes a very serious problem that cannot be resolved.

## **Field trips**

Parents are encouraged to suggest field trips, and all three programs may have outings throughout the year. We love exploring our community and would appreciate any invitations to visit backyards for activities like leaf collecting in the fall, exploring vegetable gardens, meeting outdoor pets, or observing caterpillars, spiders, and spring flowers. Field trip sign-ups will be sent electronically via Google Forms, so please ensure your email address that can receive them.

## **Clothing**

Please pack a change of clothes for your child and label all clothes. According to health and safety regulations, children are required to wear shoes with non-slip soles. **Please label footwear and leave it in our boot room or bring it along daily.** Children should wear washable and durable play clothes to school, preschool is messy business!

Dress children appropriately for outdoor play. *If it is colder than -20 degrees Celsius, wind chill considered, the class will not be going outside.* During the winter months, snow pants, mitts, hats etc. are required. **PLEASE LABEL ALL OUTDOOR GEAR!!**

## **Birthdays**

On your child's birthday or as close to the day as possible, we will celebrate with a new tradition! Inviting the birthday kiddo to sit on a chair on the snack table, the class will sing them a special song and cheer, and invite them to choose a small toy from our treasure chest! Due to allergies we will not be allowing any food or treats shared with the class at this time.

## Rio Terrace playground policies

1. Assemble in the front entryway until all children and adults are prepared.
2. Each child must wear a "pinnie" (for easy spotting and identification).
3. Only an ADULT opens the door to the outside.
4. We inspect the playground each morning before 10 a.m. to determine safety hazards and gauge the weather conditions for our students. Although we endeavour to go outside every class, some days we may enjoy our gross motor play in the hall due to outdoor conditions.
6. As recommended by AHS and our licensing officer, we do not use the playground equipment when the ground is frozen. The playground is "closed" until spring thaw and instead we use the hill just north of the playground for sledding or play in the snow around the playground or in the tennis courts.
7. Please check the sign on the exterior preschool door to see where we are playing at the end of the class and where you can pick up your preschooler. Remember to sign out with a teacher by handing them your child's pinnie so we can be aware of the number of children in our care at all times.

## **FIRE DRILLS (Teacher's routine printed here for your information)**

We conduct fire drill procedures regularly and inform the children about fire safety, and fire drill regulations, as well as evacuation procedures. In the event of an evacuation, children will walk to Rio Terrace Elementary School at 7608 154 St NW ((780) 481-6866).

### **Fire drill procedure**

1. Conduct at least one fire drill per month. (Keep a record of performance on the chart.)
2. Maintain and know how to use fire equipment (extinguishers and alarm systems).
3. After a drill, reset the alarm system in the control panel to the right of the main door.
4. Children will learn to acknowledge the alarm immediately, quickly, and quietly, and exit out the south door.
5. Explain that they must not wait to dress or take belongings.
6. The teachers and the adult volunteer will then follow evacuation procedures of the emergency plan.

### **Evacuation procedure**

1. SOUND ALARM IMMEDIATELY.
2. EVACUATE:
  - (a) Duty Parent/Assistant leads children out south preschool door. Alternative exit through yellow door to main hall exit.
  - (b) Teacher takes registration forms and emergency ponchos, checks storage area, playroom, washrooms, and entrance. They exit via the main south door. Close doors if practical to do so.
3. PHONE fire department (911 or (780) 496-3900).
4. ASSEMBLE CHILDREN: Duty Parent assembles children west of the building (100' clear in case of an explosion). An actual accounting of the children will be made when the building has been evacuated. Provide children with emergency ponchos if necessary and possible. Meet the Edmonton Fire Department to direct and to report

any missing children if possible.

5. If the Fire Department decides it is safe to do so, orders will be given to return to the building, otherwise all children and staff will move to the predetermined and approved premises.

### **Relocation procedures**

1. Walk children from Rio Terrace Community Hall to Rio Terrace Elementary School (7608-154 Street, & (780) 481-6866). In the event of an evacuation of a wider area, proceed to Patricia Heights Elementary School (16216-78 Avenue, (780) 487-0550).
2. Assemble children near the principal's office. Duty Parent/Assistant remains with the children while the teacher advises the principal we are there.
3. Begin contacting parents to inform them of the children's whereabouts.