

Kids Connection

Connecting active bodies and minds

Parent Handbook

Genesis Place

800 East Lake Blvd. NE

Airdrie, AB

Growing
the **whole**
person

The preschool where kids
develop healthy habits
that last a lifetime.



Email: kidsconnection@airdrie.ca

Phone: 403.948.8804 ext. 8262

Our program

At Kids Connection, we believe that our program allows children the opportunity to develop and use new talents, skills and interests that will assist them when they enter the school system and set them up for success throughout their life.

Our philosophy is that all children will be provided an environment where their developmental needs are met, and their sense of self-worth is respected.

We are a recreational based preschool and believe that by introducing fun recreational opportunities to young children we help foster a healthy, active lifestyle. By spending 45-60 minutes a day having fun and being active, we promote the development of good physical fitness and help meet the physical needs of growing children. By utilizing our gym, dance studio and other areas in and outside our facility, we offer a variety of large motor skills experiences.

Our objective is to provide the opportunity for your child to develop to his or her fullest potential socially, emotionally, physically, intellectually, and creatively.

We believe that children get the full enjoyment and learning experiences through guided play. The children are encouraged to choose their own activities with the assistance of qualified instructors. We feel that a secure, nurturing environment and a challenging education for all children is the main ingredient in the learning experience. The environment is prepared in such a way that as a child interacts within it, they are guided toward sensory experiences, experimentation, and arrival at conceptual conclusions. Creative needs are developed when the children are encouraged to explore, invent, and discover through play.

Our program is committed to working with the whole family. Family members are encouraged to actively participate by volunteering in the program; on whatever level they can, whether that is by coming into the class and being an assistant or taking home materials to help with arts and crafts preparation.

Our unique approach

What sets us apart is that in addition to exploring the foundation of reading, writing and arithmetic, and working and collaboration with others, we also believe in developing a strong foundation in physical literacy. While children master their 123's and ABC's they also master hopping, throwing, kicking, catching, and simply being active. By balancing classroom time with physical activities, our program will prepare all children for a lifelong, healthy and active journey.

A physically active life starts now

We are intellectual, social, and physical beings. We want our children to be smart and well-adjusted, but first and foremost we want them to be healthy. A physically active life is a healthy one and it starts early in life by developing skills, confidence and a love of movement. The Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for children state that being active can help young children maintain a healthy weight, improve movement skills, have fun, be happy, develop self-

confidence and improve learning and attention. We focus on the foundations of physical literacy and ensure your child meets the recommended time guidelines each day.

Expanding minds through cognitive learning

Circle and table times create opportunities for children to develop their cognitive learning skills. At circle time we explore numbers, letters, counting, pattern recognition and listening skills. This group time allows learning to be shared with friends and makes it fun and challenging at the same time. During table times, we work together on fine motor skills like cutting, pasting and other important skills such as letter identification and following directions. Early literacy and language skills are explored by combining calendar activities, name recognition activities, letter of the week program, special helpers, reading and listening centres.

Kids Connection is fun and challenging

At Kids Connection, your child will dive into themes related to the world in a way that they can relate these ideas to their everyday life. Children are encouraged to participate in a variety of fun and challenging activities that involve music and small equipment to explore creative movement in the dance studio, games and skill development in the gym and outdoors, learning centres and group activities in the classroom to provide a well-balanced program and help develop well rounded participants.

We look forward to working with your child through play to set them up for success not only for school, but for all aspects of their lives. Together we will master the foundations of cognitive, social and physical literacy.

4 - 5 year old program

These classes are a preparation for kindergarten. Children will work on letter identification, number identification, printing their names, patterns, and early math activities. Group activities at the table will focus on crafts and learning games. Socially this program encourages building relationships and understanding friend's feelings and their own feelings. In the gym and dance studio we focus on group play, skill development and activities with simple rules and directions. The Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth recommends "An accumulation of at least 60 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous physical activity involving a variety of aerobic activities." These classes will spend 60 minutes per day in the gym or dance studio focusing on physical literacy skills.

3 to 5 year old program

This program introduces children to a social, learning environment. Children will work on letter identification, basic counting, group activities and identifying feelings. Physical literacy and skill competency is developed when in the gym and dance studio. The Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years recommends "At least 180 minutes spent in a variety of physical activities spread throughout the day, of which at least 60 minutes is energetic play". These classes will spend 45-60 minutes per class in the gym or dance studio focusing on physical literacy skills.

Research shows that without the development of physical literacy, many children and youth withdraw from physical activity and sport and turn to more inactive and/or unhealthy choices during their leisure time.

All our classes will develop these skills both indoors and outdoors as we will go outside for recreation time as often as the weather allows and in every season. Outdoor play is a critical component to all our classes and provides all children a chance to explore nature activities.

Special events and parent participation

Throughout the year we have special theme days and celebrations, field trips, special guests, class photos, special helper program, and Scholastic book orders to name a few. Each month we will send home a newsletter and calendar to highlight the special activities taking place and to share important information about our programs.

At the end of the year, we host a special graduation ceremony for all classes where you will get a scrapbook and photo CD of the class.

Parents are encouraged to participate and support their children in the program.

We have regular volunteer opportunities throughout the year both in and out of the classroom. Special events such as Christmas concerts, sharing days and graduation ceremonies are wonderful opportunities for parents to get together with other families and participate in our classroom.

There is no fundraising involved for parents as all costs are covered by our registration fees.

Our teachers

Our instructors are required to have a minimum of Level One Early Childhood Educator from the Alberta Government, current Standard First Aid and CPR certification, and current Criminal Record Checks with the Vulnerability section.

Ratio

4–5-year-old programs: 1 instructor to 12 children. Capacity: 24

3–5-year-old programs: 1 instructor to 9 children. Capacity: 18

Program structure

It is important to dress your child for active play. Comfortable clothing and velcro shoes are the best. Please do not send your child in flip flops as they are not appropriate for active play.

Your child will experience the following activities in a typical day:

Welcome, circle time, recreation activity, craft, free play, story time and snack.

Recreation activities include modified sports/fitness, and outside activities.

Creative movement activities include music, drama and imaginative movement.

Participant birthdays and cultural heritage

We will celebrate your child's birthday at our circle times as close to their actual birthday as we can. For children born in August we will celebrate at the end of September and for those born in July, we will celebrate in June.

All the Kids Connection programs celebrate multi-culturalism. Children will have the opportunity during the year to share their culture and traditions with the class. Families are welcome and encouraged on their child's special day to wear any traditional clothing that they may have, to bring in items or stories that they would like to share about their culture and traditions. Please check with the instructors beforehand regarding any classroom allergies.

If you would like to discuss a sharing time with the instructors, please book a time either before or after class time.

Volunteers

This is a non-parented program. However, we encourage parents to volunteer throughout the year in the classroom, during special events and on field trips. Parents can sign up to be volunteers and will be contacted by the instructors starting in mid-October with schedule information. This is not an obligation for parents but an opportunity to be involved in our program.

Confidentiality and Volunteer Agreements must be signed by all those volunteering in the program. Any information gained, in any way, while in the classroom cannot be repeated outside the classroom, shared with other parents, or used as the basis for comparison or criticism of any child.

What to bring to class

Labelled backpack with a complete change of clothes in a plastic bag.

Small healthy snack in a labelled snack bag.

Water bottle

What not to bring

Toys from home except on planned show and tell days.

Candy or junk food.

Peanuts or peanut products.

Snacks

To ensure that children are receiving the needed energy to participate in an active program, we request that all snacks follow the Canada Food Guide and consist of two food groups plus a drink.

Snack examples: grapes cut in half and cheese
 small apple slices and yogurt
 bite sized carrots and whole wheat crackers

We ask that you send snacks that your child can open easily on their own. Snacks that present a choking hazard like grapes and round fruits and vegetables must be cut in half or they will be sent home.

Drink examples: water, 100% fruit juice or milk

If the snacks do not meet the Canada Food Guide criteria, we will send a note home to the parents to remind them of the snack policy.

Child guidance approach

Our approach to discipline is based on helping children to build and maintain positive self-esteem, and to help them develop the skills for managing their own behaviour. We set and clearly define limits and standards of behavior for the group that promotes safety, harmony and responsibility. We support children as they learn and practice appropriate and acceptable behaviors. The children are encouraged to talk about their feelings of anger and frustration rather than acting out.

We will never use any form of physical punishment, unreasonable consequences, or verbal threats. We always emphasize the positive. Consequences are directed at the behavior, not the child.

Instructors will keep in touch with parents about their child's behaviour. If we feel that the behavior is not improving, we will contact the parents to discuss the concern.

We reserve the right to remove children from the program due to severe behavioral issues that are not improving. When the safety of the participant, other class members, instructors or volunteers are at risk, parents will be contacted to pick up their child from the program. Physical and verbal abuse will not be tolerated.

Children's well being

Our instructors will assist children to feel comfortable and welcomed into our program. When dealing with an upset child, we will always attempt to divert an upset child's attention to a toy or activity. If for whatever reason we are unable to help your child to settle down, we will contact you directly.

Meeting the developmental needs of the participants

Physical needs:

1. The first goal of our program is to promote a child's physical development by determining their needs and providing appropriate materials and activities. To meet this goal instructors will:
 - Assess physical needs of individual children and make appropriate plans to promote their development based on age and developmentally appropriate curriculum.
 - Provide equipment and activities to promote large and small motor skills in and out of the classroom.
 - Provide opportunities for children to move their bodies in a variety of ways.

- Provide opportunities for children to experience a variety of creative movement for at least 45-60 minutes per day.
- Follow physical literacy program plans for each age and class. Reporting periods of children's development will be 3 times per year.

2. The second goal of our program is to set up and maintain a healthy classroom that promotes good child health and nutrition and is free from factors contributing to illness.

To meet this goal instructors will:

- Encourage children to follow basic health and nutrition practices.
- Provide and use materials to ensure children's health and cleanliness.
- Recognize unusual behavior or symptoms of children who may be ill and provide support for them.

Social needs:

1. The first goal of our program is to promote children's social development by helping them learn to get along with others and interact in group settings. To meet this goal instructors will:

- Provide opportunities for children to work and play co-operatively.
- Help but do not pressure the shy child to participate and interact with others.
- Provide experiences to help the child respect the rights and understand the feelings of others.

2. The second goal of our program is to promote the development of self-control in young children through positive guidance. To meet this goal instructors will:

- Use positive prevention measures to help eliminate negative behavior in the classroom.
- Use positive re-enforcement techniques to help children learn appropriate behavior.
- Use positive intervention methods to help children control their negative behavior.

Intellectual needs:

1. The first goal of our program is to set up and arrange an early childhood classroom so that children will become self-directed in their learning. To meet this goal instructors will:

- Determine what activity areas can and should be included in the classroom based on program goals, space available and number of children.
- Separate activity areas and place them in appropriate spaces.
- Arrange equipment and materials so children can make choices easily and independently.

2. The second goal of our program is to promote children's questioning, exploring and problem-solving skills in order to develop their thinking ability. To meet this goal instructors will:

- Help children use all their senses to explore their world.
- Help children develop such concepts as shape, color, size, classification, and numbers.
- Interact with children in ways that encourage them to think and solve problems.

Creative needs:

1. The first goal of our program is to promote children creatively through playful expression and freedom of activity. To meet this goal instructors will:

- Arrange a variety of art materials for children to explore on their own.
- Accept children's creative products without placing a value judgment on them.
- Give children the opportunity to have fun with music.

2. The second goal of our program is to promote creativity and imagination expression through movement. To meet this goal instructors will:

- Allow scheduled time weekly for creative movement using language and music.
- Promote individualization of movement interpretation.
- Allow children to add input into programming with contributing in sharing circles and requesting musical experiences.

Emotional needs:

1. The first goal of our program is to promote children's verbal skills to help them communicate their thoughts and feelings. To meet this goal instructors will:

- Interact with children in ways that encourage them to communicate their thoughts and feelings verbally.
- Provide materials and activities to promote language development.
- Use books and stories with children to motivate listening and speaking. Also, books and stories that help children learn about their emotions and names for their feelings.

2. The second goal of our program is to help children improve their self-concept through your attitude and behavior toward them. To meet this goal instructors will:

- Accept every child as a worthy human being and let them know with non-verbal cues.
- Help children accept and appreciate themselves and others.
- Provide many activities and opportunities for individual children to experience success.

Toileting

As we know, toilet training can be ongoing at this age. However, we do require a few things:
Pull Ups are okay, but no diapers.

Parents should be actively working with their children to use the toilet independently
i.e., wiping and aim

We do not accept training potties or special seats.

Instructors are not able to wipe bottoms or change children if there is a bowel movement
accident.

If a bowel movement accident occurs, we will contact parents immediately.

If we have any ongoing concerns about toileting issues, the instructors will contact the parent
directly to discuss the situation and possible solutions.

Registration

Registration for Kids Connection preschool programs begin at the end of January. Registration
will be ongoing until classes have reached capacity. When classes are at capacity, parents will
have an option to be placed on a waiting list.

Please register in person between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m., Monday - Friday. Or by emailing
kidsconnection@airdrie.ca

Cancellation/withdrawal

30 days written notice is required to process any cancellations or withdraws from the program.

Arrivals and departures

Parents MUST bring children into the classroom, sign in and make sure instructors are aware
that your child has arrived. Please inform us in writing of anyone else authorized to drop-off
and pick-up your child. During pick-up at the end of class, please sign-out and notify the
instructor you are taking your child.

We will not release any child to an unauthorized adult.

ID is required for anyone new picking up a child. No exceptions.

Please be punctual in picking your child up as lateness can cause upsets and have a negative
impact.

Parking

When dropping off and picking up children please ensure that you use the parking lot and not
drop off in the front of the building, as this is a no parking zone. Cars parked in the drop off
zone may be ticketed and towed.

****Do not leave children unattended in your vehicles while dropping off or picking up****

Absence

If your child is absent, parents are still responsible for the full fee. Please notify the instructors
of an absence before the class starts by calling the program at 403.948.8804 ext. 8262 or ext.
5510 for the Programmer.

If the absence is planned, such as vacation or appointments, you can leave a note in the attendance basket prior to the event.

Illness

If your child is ill, he/she MUST be kept at home including bad coughs, temperatures higher than 101, diarrhea, infectious disease including pink eye, head lice or impetigo. If your child develops an illness during class time, we will contact you and ask you to pick them up as soon as possible. If your child appears to be too ill to participate in the program, instructors reserve the right to not have the child in the program for the day. We have a full list of communicable diseases available and information if you have any questions or concerns about your child's health.

Please inform us immediately of any illness, rashes, etc. that your child may have before they enter the classroom.

If your child is too sick to participate in the program activities, they are too sick to attend the program that day.

Medical emergency procedure

If any serious medical situation arises during class time, the Kids Connection program will call 911 for emergency assistance. Parents will be contacted as soon as the situation and child are safe. Any costs associated with 911 calls, transportation and further medical assistance would be the responsibility of the parent.

Emergency procedures

In the event of an emergency and evacuation of Genesis Place, we will follow the emergency procedures as outlined in the Genesis Place Evacuation Plan.

Inclement weather or other closure information

Kids Connection preschool will close due to inclement weather and other situations if Genesis Place is closed. When the building is open, so are we.

If you would like to confirm the closure with the preschool, please call 403.948.8804 ext. 5510 or ext. 8262

Off-site activities

Off-site activities occur in the forms of walking excursions around the community to field trips where transportation is required.

We will notify you by monthly newsletter, written notice on the bulletin board and an off-site walking excursion/field trip form that will be sent home for you to sign.

Children's records

A full set of records for all the children are always kept on the premises in the locked filing cabinet. This information must always remain current and up to date.

The information to be kept is:

1. A completed enrollment form that contains:

- A. The child's name, date of birth, and home address. The parent's name, home address and telephone numbers. An emergency contact with name, address and telephone number.
 - B. Any other relevant health information about the child provided by the child's parent including the child's immunizations and allergies.
 - C. The parent's signature stating they have read the Parent Handbook, and understood the program policies and procedures, including the Child Guidance Policy.
2. Any medication forms that have been filled in by the parent. This form contains:
The participant's name, any allergies or medical conditions, the exact name of the medication as it is seen on the original container, the exact time to be given, the exact dosage, the start and end dates of needed medication, and any special requirements. This form must then be signed and dated by the parent or guardian.

When the medication is given to the child by the instructor, the instructor must fill in the date the medication was administered, the name of the medication, the time it was administered, the amount of medication given, and the name and signature of the instructors administering the medication.

Administrative records

A full set of administrative records will be kept on the program premises and for a minimum of 2 years. These records will contain:

- A. In regard to the participants: arrival and departure times for each child for each day they attend class.
- B. In regard to instructors: a copy of their Early Childhood Educator certifications and current standard first aid and CPR, and verification of a current criminal record check.

This information is available for parent's inspection during regularly scheduled class time and to the Licensing Officer at any time the facility is open.

Portable records

Portable records are kept for each child and class. These are kept with the attendance binders in the home room and with the emergency backpack that always travels with instructors when they are away from the home room. This includes when they are in any other area of the facility. These records contain:

- A. Information concerning each child including child's full name, date of birth and home address, the parent's name, home address and telephone number, the name and telephone number of an emergency contact, and any other relevant health information about the child provided by the parent including the child's immunizations and allergies or medication.

B. The telephone numbers of the local emergency response service including fire, ambulance and police, poison control centre, the nearest hospital and the child abuse hotline.

Concerns or Questions

When concerned with the care of your child please feel free to contact the following individuals:

1. Kids Connection Instructors – please contact your child’s instructor directly.
2. Preschool, Children’s and Youth Programmer –403.948.8804 ext. 5510
3. Fitness and Leisure Team Leader –403.948.8804 ext. 5568

The process for dealing with concerns:

A discussion between the parent and the Kids Connection team (this could include instructors, Programmer and Team Leader if necessary) to resolve the issue.

If you are not satisfied that your concern or complaint has been dealt with you should contact:

Child Care Licensing
Human Services
Child and Family Services Division – Calgary Region
Westmount Regional Services Office
140, 4820 Richard Rd SW
Calgary, AB T3E 6L1
Tel: 403. 592.3032 Fax: 403. 297.7340