



**Chignecto Central**  
Regional Centre for Education

Pre-Primary  
**PROGRAM INFORMATION:**  
Handbook for Parents



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## **Pre-Primary Program Overview**

The Pre-Primary Program is a child-centered, play-based program for children the year before they start school. This opportunity will help them transition into the school system and provide experiences that give children the best start to succeed in school and life. Research shows that there is a critical link between a child's early experiences and later success in life.

In the Pre-Primary program we believe that a child learns best through play, so we work to create a rich environment in which children can explore and learn about themselves, each other, and the world around them.

## **Hours of the Program**

Pre-Primary programming runs for 6 hours each day, and reflects the operational hours of each site/school.

## **Staff Contact Information**

All pre-primary programs have their own designated cell phone that accepts calls and texts. The contact number will be shared with you when your child starts pre-primary. Staff are expected to check email daily, so this is also an acceptable communication tool for families.

## **Program Attendance**

Participation in the pre-primary program is voluntary and it is up to families to determine how often their child will attend. Attendance is taken manually and electronically via PowerSchool for tracking/reporting purposes only.

## **Program Eligibility**

Children in the school catchment area who will be 4 years old by December 31st of the current school year are eligible to attend the Pre-Primary Program. Children may attend Pre-Primary for one year only.

## **Transportation**

Busing is available to the Pre-Primary Program as long as children meet the eligibility requirements that are set out by the CCRCE transportation department. Parents/guardians are responsible for getting their children on & off the bus at their stop - this means that you must buckle & unbuckle your child - this is not the responsibility of the driver. Pre-Primary staff are responsible for getting children off the bus in the morning and buckling the children on the bus at the end of the day. All pre-primaries will be given an identifiable tag that will be attached to their backpacks. These tags will have the stop numbers and are meant to help the drivers identify the children in pre-primary. Children will be seated in the front rows of the buses and anyone under 40lbs (18kg) will be buckled in as long as belts are available. If no seat belts are available then they will be seated in the rows closest to the front.

## Allergies

Most schools in CCRCE are peanut free/aware. Please check with Lead ECE's to see if peanut products are allowed. Our schools are also scent free/sensitive.

## School Year

The Pre-Primary Program will follow the school calendar in terms of opening and closing for holidays, Christmas Break, March Break, summer, and professional development days in accordance with the CCRCE school calendar. A copy of the [school-year calendar](#) is available on the CCRCE website.

## School Closings/Delays

The pre-primary program will be subject to closures for inclement weather, facility shutdowns, and storm days. Unexpected closures will be announced on the CCRCE website [ccrce.ca](http://ccrce.ca) and on the [Facebook page](#) for Chignecto Central Regional Centre for Education. Families can sign up for text, email and phone alerts as well, once the school year begins.

## Contact Information

Please ensure that staff have up-to-date contact information for you in the case of an emergency. Pre-primary staff will call you directly.

## Releasing Children

Only authorized parents/guardians and hers identified and given written permission by the parents/guardians may pick up a child. We require contact information for all persons authorized for pick up.

## Alternate Pick-Up

Children will not be released from the program to anyone without prior written consent or a phone call directly to the educators. If someone not on the contact list will be picking up your child, please let staff know. Staff will ask for identification if they do not know the person picking up your child.

## Daily Routine

### Arrival

Children may be brought into the pre-primary learning environment by their parents or greeted outside by their early childhood educators at the beginning of the day.

### Free Play

Young children learn best through play. During the daily routine, children will have opportunities to participate and self-select from a variety of activities individually, in small groups, or large groups. The classroom environment is set up for daily experiences in dramatic play, block play, art, music & movement, science & nature, math & numbers, sensory experiences, language, gross and fine motor and literacy development. Staff will provide opportunities for activities that support children's interests as well as their overall development.



Often, a large group gathering time happens in the morning, which is an opportunity for children and educators to engage in stories, songs and shared experiences. Throughout the day, staff will observe and document children’s learning.

### **Open Snack** *(twice a day)*

“Open Snack” will be available during morning and afternoon play time. Children will have the opportunity to choose whether or not they want snacks and will decide if and when they want to go to the snack table. Children will serve themselves a healthy snack with the support of a staff member, maintaining good health practices. Children will have access to open snack for about 45 minutes every morning and afternoon.

### **Outside Play** *(twice a day)*

Rain or shine! In pre-primary, we view our outdoor environment as our second classroom, which means children spend a large part of the day outside. Outdoor activities are an important part of the curriculum. Children need time to use their large muscles and develop gross motor skills. While outdoors, children have learning opportunities in all curriculum areas through interaction with nature, developing social skills, and discovering their community and their environment.

### **Lunch**

Children bring their lunch from home, which only requires a main food item and one or two snacks. Children and staff will sit together in the classroom and in a “family style” setting.

### **Free Play**

As with the morning program, children will have an opportunity to choose from large groups, small groups, and individual activities. Staff will provide support, materials as well as document children’s learning.

\*Throughout the week, the children may have opportunities to participate in activities in the school, such as library, gym, Reading Buddies, cooking programs, and other school events that are determined to be appropriate for children in Pre-Primary.

### **Departure**

#### **At school pick-up**

Children will be released into the care of a trusted adult. Caregivers will have the opportunity to talk with staff about their child’s day. Any important updates or incidents will also be shared with parents at this time.

#### **Bussing**

ECE’s will board the bus and buckle children in at the end of the day. A parent or guardian must be at the bus stop for drop off at the end of the day. If a parent or guardian is not present, children will not be dropped off and will be returned to the school and parents contacted. The bus garage will call the Lead ECE to meet the child back at the school.

### **Safety Protocols**

Children in the Pre-Primary Program are part of the school community; therefore, they are required to participate in any safety protocols that are used to ensure the safety of all those using the building. These protocols may include fire drills, evacuation/relocation, Code Blue (Lockdown) drills, and/or any Hold-and-Secure situations.

Children in Pre-Primary are registered in Power School and their attendance is entered by staff on a daily basis. Attendance is tracked as an aggregate simply to provide information to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) about how Pre-Primary is being used in communities.

## Communication with Families

You will receive a monthly newsletter or calendar highlighting events that are happening throughout the month. Children in Pre-Primary may be invited to participate in school activities such as musical events, dramatic/theatre presentations, or other school-wide activities that are developmentally appropriate. Pre-Primary staff will communicate with school administration to determine which events may be of interest to our children.

While the Pre-Primary Program is in the school, it is not the responsibility of school administration. Pre-Primary Programs and staff are supervised by Nicki Beck, Manager of Pre-Primary Programs. If you have concerns or questions about the Program, please speak with the Pre-Primary staff in your school or contact Nicki at: [becknNL@ccrce.ca](mailto:becknNL@ccrce.ca) or 902-890-8413.

## Health Practices

If a child requires medication while at school, protocol will be followed according to the school policy and supporting procedures.

Children are expected to engage in all aspects of the Pre-Primary Program at their own level of interest and development. Staff will use their discretion in recommending exclusion from the Pre-Primary Program for health reasons in accordance with the Nova Scotia Guidelines for Communicable Disease Prevention and Control in Child Care Settings.

A child may be excluded and sent home from a Pre-Primary Program if any of the following conditions are noted:

- an illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in the program activities, including playing outdoors;
- an illness that results in a need for care that is greater than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children;
- fever and other symptoms (sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, earache) or behaviour change in children;
- Sudden change in patterns of behavior; listlessness or excessive sleepiness;
- Difficulty breathing or persistent cough;
- Diarrhea: 2 or more episodes or diarrhea with fever, vomiting or blood in the stool;
- Vomiting: 1 or more episodes;
- Severe abdominal pain or abdominal pain with any other symptoms of illness;
- Rash, fever or other sign of illness;
- The presence of scabies, impetigo, or other non-reportable infections, requires that a child be excluded from the program until they have been treated



## Identifying Special Health Care Needs

If your child has a life-threatening allergy or Health Care Needs, it is important to contact the Pre-Primary Programs Manager, Nicki Beck, before your child's first day. You will be provided with the necessary forms to be completed and help develop a plan to support your child. If necessary, Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) will be trained in the use of an epi-pen, puffers, or other specialized procedures. Students with chronic medical conditions, such as serious allergies, diabetes, etc., must have an annual Emergency Medical Plan Form developed, maintained and posted at the school. The Pre-Primary Program is subject to the health and safety policies and regulations of the Chignecto Central Regional Centre for Education.

## Inclusion

The Pre-Primary Program is an inclusive program. Children with special needs will continue to have access to the same services and supports they would receive at home or in a community-based program when they are in the Pre-Primary Program. Families should contact the Manager of Pre-Primary Programs to discuss your child's needs before they start, to plan for a successful Pre-Primary experience.

Modifications may be made to programs and environments in order to provide an inclusive environment for all children. If a child has identified/diagnosed special needs, staff will be made aware and trained in individual intervention plans. Individual programming is developed appropriately and incorporated within the classroom activities as much as possible, in consultation with parents/guardians and other service providers.

The community-based supports available to preschool aged children will continue to support children in the Pre-Primary Program. This includes Nova Scotia Early Childhood Development Intervention Services, Nova Scotia Hearing and Speech Centres, Early Intensive Behavioural Intervention (EIBI), among others.

ECEs will meet with you and any team members who support your child to learn about your child. They will want to know about what your child likes to do, what motivates them, and what your goals are for the child. They will use this information combined with their knowledge of the routine and the group of Pre-Primary children to develop a plan that outlines how your child will be supported during the day.

You will be involved in setting goals for your child. Staff will address the priorities and concerns of families of children with special needs in cooperation with other professionals working with the child.

## Nutrition

The Pre-Primary Program will provide nutritious morning and afternoon snacks. The snack menu will be posted in the classroom. Please inform staff of any allergies or dietary restrictions your child may have.

Pre-Primary Program sites are peanut aware environments. Please read food labels carefully, and do not send foods that contain or may contain peanuts or tree nuts.

## Playground

Due to insurance reasons, children in Pre-Primary will not be permitted to access playground equipment at the school intended for children aged 5-12. Outside play is an important part of our program, so we will be outside every day, exploring natural play spaces and ensuring children have rich and developmentally appropriate experiences while outdoors.

## Clothing

It is important that your child has the clothing he/she needs while at the school:

- Please bring sturdy shoes for running and active play. A pair of shoes may be left at the school for your child in their cubby. (sneakers, crocs, hard soled slippers)
- Play is messy! In order for children to participate freely in daily activities, they should not have to worry about their clothes getting dirty. Please send them in clothes that can get messy. We cannot promise that paint, mud, markers and other materials will wash out of clothing.
- Please send a complete change of clothes for your child (including socks and underwear) and check it daily in case an item has come home dirty or needs to be replaced. During the colder months, one or two pairs of extra (warm, water-resistant) mittens would be appreciated. We also ask that you send clothing for our changing weather. Days can start cool and become warm or vice versa.
- Outdoor play is a part of our daily program. We will be going outside every day, except for very inclement weather.
- Each Pre-Primary program will receive a set of Muddy Buddies for children to use while outside. They will be kept in the classroom for daily use.

## What is a “Play-Based” Program?

Play is very important for children. It is how they experience their world and bring meaning to it. Play engages young children and promotes learning in all areas of children’s development:

- Physical Health and Well-Being
- Social Competence
- Emotional Maturity
- Language and Cognitive Development
- Communication Skills and General Knowledge

We value the importance of play as the learning process for children. Play is powerful and child-centered. It is active learning for young children. Early Childhood Educators gather valuable information on skills, interests, and group dynamics during their observations of play.

- Play develops children’s creativity and problem-solving. For example, when children pretend they are actually role playing based on their own experiences.
- Play prepares children better for school learning. For example, talking about story books helps children expand their vocabulary and become familiar with print.



- Play is healthy. It promotes strength, coordination, and brain development. For example, when children build things with large and small blocks, they use their gross and fine motor skills.
- Play develops new skills that build self-esteem. Children try out materials and equipment at their own level, at their own pace. When they master a new skill, they feel good about their own successes.
- Play teaches social skills and helps children develop friendships. When children play together, they learn to problem solve and to help each other. They learn from each other.
- A play-based approach to early learning builds upon children’s natural inclination to make sense of the world through play. Early Childhood Educators guide the natural play process. They extend children’s explorations through narrative, novelty, and challenges.
- The Pre-Primary Program is child-led and play-based. The day is planned around the group’s interests. Your child’s interests and abilities are accounted for in this planning. Small group activities will be planned in a way to ensure your child is successful.

*A recent publication by the Council of Ministers of Education – Canada stated:*

*“Educators should intentionally plan and create challenging, dynamic, play-based learning opportunities. Intentional teaching is the opposite of teaching by rote or continuing with traditions simply because things have always been done that way. Intentional teaching involves educators being deliberate and purposeful in creating play-based learning environments - because when children are playing, children are learning.”*

## **Nova Scotia Early Learning Curriculum Framework**

Staff in Pre-Primary will use the new provincial early learning curriculum framework, “Capable, Confident, and Curious”, as a guide to their practice for the daily program. Your child will develop skills in four key areas:

### **1. Well Being**

Your child will:

- feel safe, secure, and supported.
- develop social skills and make friends.
- start to learn responsibility for their own health and well-being.

### **2. Discovery and Invention**

Your child will:

- be curious, confident, and creative – and use their imagination.
- learn through problem-solving, trying new things, and asking lots of questions.

### **3. Language and Communication**

Your child will:

- express themselves in a variety of ways.
- see different types of print and learn about symbols and patterns.
- learn how to find information and follow through with their ideas.
- develop a strong foundation in French, if they live in a French minority language community.

### **4. Personal and Social Responsibility**

Your child will:

- learn about respect, fairness, and the feelings of others.
- develop an awareness and respect for the world around them.
- feel a sense of belonging to groups and communities.

<https://www.ednet.ns.ca/docs/nsecurriculumframework.pdf>

## Program Manager & Assistant Manager

### Manager Pre-Primary

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### Assistant Managers Pre-Primary

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## Questions and Concerns

If you have any questions or concerns, please converse with early childhood educators first, as they are with your child each day and may be able to provide accurate and timely information. If you require further information or support, please contact Nicki Beck, Manager of Pre-Primary Programs at 902-890-8413 or [BeckNL@ccrce.ca](mailto:BeckNL@ccrce.ca).





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