

Edelweiss Preparatory School

Parent Handbook
2016/2017





We are glad you have chosen Edelweiss Preparatory School. We understand the importance of your decision to entrust us with the care and education of your child. In any group care setting, good policies are an important part of maintaining proper health and safety. Many of our policies are the result of our effort to ensure strict compliance with provincial licensing regulations. This Parent Handbook outlines some basic policies that help us to better care for your child. Please read and be familiar with these policies and do not hesitate to ask us for clarification. It is understood by enrolling your child at Edelweiss that you agree to abide by our policies and procedures.

We are delighted to have your child in our school and we look forward to working with you to make sure your child starts school on a positive note. Encourage your child to ask questions about school. Informed children are confident children. Talk positively about school. The way your child perceives your feelings about his/her school and teachers will have a direct effect on how she/he feels as well. We GREATLY appreciate your support and anticipate a fun and successful school year!

OUR CURRICULUM:

Edelweiss uses developmentally appropriate curriculum for our students. We incorporate Jolly Phonics, Handwriting Without Tears and Brain Gym into our curriculum. Using this framework, our teachers are able to teach in the ways that best match the way in which we know young children develop and learn.

Children learn best by doing and our curriculum uses a developmental "hands on" approach built around weekly or monthly themes. During each week we will address all areas of development: social, emotional, Physical (large & small motor), cognitive and language development. There is a balance between teacher-directed and child-initiated activities. Our classrooms are set up in a learning centre configuration, which allows each child to choose his/her activities in the different classroom areas. The activities in each learning centre are planned to facilitate discovery

learning. Our daily schedule includes large group, small group and individual activities as well as learning centre times. The children are guided and encouraged to learn new self-help skills, think for themselves, make choices, experiment, explore, make mistakes and have a lot of fun in the process!



POLICIES & PROCEDURES

The following are school policies and information that is important to read and refer to during the school year. Thank-you for taking the time to make your family familiar with the school operations.

ENROLLMENT & FEES:

All enrollment forms must be completed and up to date before your child may attend our school. Please inform us of any changes in addresses, work/home/cell phone numbers, places of employment or individuals authorized to pick up your child. Fees are withdrawn on the first banking day of each month from September through May. The June 2017 fee was withdrawn out on June 2016. An NSF charge of \$25 is charged on all returned items from the bank. Please notify us of any changes in banking two weeks prior to the next withdrawal.

WITHDRAWAL:

Registration and materials fees are non-refundable. There is a 90 day policy to cancel your child's registration. Tuition fees will be charged in lieu of notice. There will be no refunds issued for any withdrawals made on or after January 1st, 2017. Our school expenses and teacher's salaries continue based on their contracts and spaces are hard to fill after January 1st so we need to have this policy in place.

ACTIVITIES & DISMISSAL:

By enrolling your child at Edelweiss Preparatory School, you as a parent or guardian give permission for your child to be involved in the activities and events at Edelweiss Preparatory School. You further understand that Edelweiss is a private school whose goal is to provide a positive, enriching educational environment.

Children who are new to Edelweiss will be under a 30 day qualifying period. It is at the Director's discretion to determine each child's readiness based on observations and discussions with our teachers. Although rare, a situation may arise in which it becomes evident that the needs of a child cannot be met effectively by our school. A decision to dismiss a child will only happen after we feel every option has been explored. Every measure will be taken to meet the needs of the child in question, and our Directors will assess each dismissal not only with regard to the individual child's need, but also the needs of all the children served. The parent will be a central figure in the discussions regarding this issue, but the decision to dismiss a child must be left to the discretion of the Directors.

In the case of a child being dismissed from the program, the parent is responsible for the fee for the month in which the child is dismissed however the withdrawal policy is not in place.

ARRIVAL:

Teachers come to the coatroom and welcome the children to come and start the class. Parents and children are asked to remain in the coatroom until the teachers come to the coatroom to invite them in. **We ask that you do not wait at the classroom doors at the start of class but remain in the coatroom or take your child to use the washroom. You always will need to bring your child to the classroom door and make contact with the teacher when dropping off your child. Children are not to be left unattended in the coatroom or hallways at any time.** Parents are given a keyless entry code that works from Monday through Friday from 8:10 until 2:50 daily.

From time to time, your child may experience some separation anxiety. This is normal. Experts suggest you hug and comfort your child, let them know you are leaving and will see them later, and promptly leave your child with the teacher. While leaving a crying child can be a difficult thing, most children stop crying within a few minutes and your lingering most often makes matters worse. If your child does not settle in a few minutes, we would not leave them crying in the classroom for their sake and for the sake of the other children. You may remain at the observation glass windows and watch until you see your child is settled and if not then we can come to the door and find you there to help your child settle.

DEPARTURE:

Please be on time to pick up your child from the classroom they end in. What seems like just a few minutes to you seems like a very long time to young children, especially when they see all the other children leaving with their parents. Please notify the office and your child's teacher if anyone other than the authorized parent or caregiver may be

picking up your child. The person picking up must be listed on your registration form in writing. Anyone picking up your child may be asked for picture ID, so please make sure that individual has picture ID available when picking up. Children who are not picked up must wait in the classroom or office until the parent or caregiver arrives. If parents are more than five minutes late, they will be charged a late fee of \$20. Parents are asked to be prompt when picking up their child at the end of class time in their classroom. Late fees (\$20 per incidence) are added to your tuition if necessary. Based on past history and in order that our teachers can maintain their schedules, we feel it is necessary to have late fees. There will be a 5 minute "grace period", however, after that time, a \$20 fee will be charged for every 15 minutes after class time. (eg. 6 - 15 minutes would be \$20 and 16 - 31 minutes would be \$40, etc). Edelweiss does not gain any revenue from late fees as they are collected and paid in full to the teachers. We trust that this will not be necessary and that if you know you are going to be late picking up your child, you call another parent from the class to stay with your child until you arrive. This parent's name will have to be on your child's registration form as "authorized to pick up" so please update the form at the office when needed. Class lists with parent contact information are provided prior to school starting. All classroom clocks are synchronized at the school. It may be a good idea to note times on our clocks in order to eliminate any conflicts. We appreciate your co-operation in this area. It is the parent/caregiver's responsibility to put children's coats etc. on before leaving. Children do not leave the school without a parent or caregiver over the age of 18.

PARKING LOT SAFETY:

Please drive slowly and cautiously in our parking lot for the safety of our children and their parents. It is recommended that you hold your child's hand or carry younger ones as you walk to and from your car. Please be mindful to not block other cars, the grey and brown bins, the laneway entrance or the driveways in the laneway.

SCHOOL RULES:

It is a good idea to talk to the children about why certain rules are put into place (to keep us safe, to help others, etc.) so that they understand why rules need to be obeyed. Rules that parents can help enforce are:

- being respectful to teachers, friends, other families & school property
- following the teacher's direction
- no running in the school
- waiting **quietly** in the coatroom

- going to the washroom before class
- no chewing gum or eating food in the coatroom at school

CHILD GUIDANCE POLICY:

At Edelweiss Preparatory School we view Child Guidance as a positive approach to supporting growth and development in children.

Self esteem is an important part of who we are as individuals. For positive self esteem, children need to be comfortable with who they are, to feel empowered, and develop a healthy sense of self: a sense that they are worthy of being.

We aim to provide an environment that each child feels supported and safe. It is in this environment where we guide children's behavior using positive reinforcement and positive communication techniques. We are aware that children are unique individuals who react to feelings and stressors in different ways. It is our job to recognize this and encourage exploration of feelings; ways to problem solve and to continue to develop a healthy sense of self. When a child feels supported, safe and has developed a sense of self, they are more apt to try new things and feel comfortable exploring new ideas and places.

If we have any concerns regarding your child's development or behavior we will certainly notify you so we can explore strategies and be consistent between preschool and home.

Prevention of Problems

Unpredictability can cause stress which may manifest itself as anger or frustration. We aim to provide a program that is consistent and allows for children to know what to expect next. We have a predictable routine and we let children know ahead of time what to expect.

Communicating With Children

We value spending time and having real conversations with children. Talking with the child, rather than at, allows for opportunity to get to know them.

We state our expectations in specific ways and use positive statements to support them. Rather than saying the negative "stop running", we state the positive "use your walking feet".

We use active listening. Active listening is when we listen and respond to both what is being said and how. We need to be in tune with children and grasp their feelings and intent. This is a useful technique for helping children to learn to problem solve. 'It sure sounds like you are feeling frustrated. I wonder how we can work this out?' would be appropriate to say.

We also use I-messages. I-message is another communication technique. It allows caregivers to state their feelings without placing blame. An effective I-message would be "I'm scared when I can't see you"

Positive Reinforcement for Children

Our aim is to foster a sense of success in children. Children need to be encouraged for their efforts, rather than the product. Little Sally has been building in the block centre for a long time. Too often we hear the words "good girl" or "good job". These words do not recognize the effort Sally has put forth. Our focus is on positive reinforcement: "Wow Sally, you have been building a long time. Can you tell me what you have been busy building?" With this statement, Sally feels her efforts have been acknowledged, which is important in building self esteem.

Recognizing Children's Feelings

We recognize children experience an array of emotions; anger, happiness, sadness, frustration, fear and excitement, all of which are a part of who children are. Our goal is for children to learn to recognize their emotions, understand they are healthy feelings, and learn constructive ways to handle them. We validate their feelings by saying "I can see you are feeling angry" (or whichever emotion they display). With positive communication techniques we have the opportunity to model and teach problem solving skills.

ALLERGIES & MEDICAL:

Allergies can be very severe. Please remember we are striving to be a NUT FREE school. If a child has a serious allergy we require an EPIPEN to be kept on site at all times in the safe keeping of the teachers. There is to be no Epipens, inhalers or medication left in backpacks in the coatroom cubbies. This is a provincial licensing regulation. We will have you sign a medical form allowing us to administer your child's Epipen and/or inhaler or antihistamine. In case of a medical emergency we will contact 911 and then the parents. Parents shall be responsible for any cost incurred.

HEALTH REGULATIONS:

If your child is ill please keep them at home until they are better. This lessens the chance of making others, including the teachers, sick! **As of September 1, 2011 amendments to the *Child Care Licensing Regulation* were implemented related to the identification, response and management of children who are ill. Under this amendment an ill child will be defined as a child who:**

- is vomiting, has a fever, diarrhea or a new unexplained rash or cough;**
- requires greater attention than can be provided without compromising the care of other children in the program; or**
- displays any other illness or symptom the staff member knows or believes may indicate that a child poses a health risk to other children or staff.**

A child can return to the program if the child's parent provides a written notice from a physician indicating that the child does not pose a health risk or if the license holder (Edelweiss) is satisfied that a child no longer poses a health risk to other children, caregivers or staff. If your child has a communicable disease, you must observe quarantine regulations, as set by Alberta Health: 24 hours since the last symptom. The following are signs that indicate a communicable disease: earache, vomiting, fever, cough, unusual drowsiness, loss of appetite, sore throat, red or runny eyes, headache, irritability, a rash, runny nose of yellow or green, and diarrhea. If a child displays any of these symptoms, we will call you to come and pick them up. We have a forehead thermometer and check children's temperatures if they seem unwell.

If a child in our care displays symptoms of, or we have been made aware of, head lice, chicken pox, impetigo and pink eye, we will notify parents. *All matters will be handled in confidence*

If your child is going to be absent, please leave a message at the school (403)282-4220 stating the illness your child has. Please remember to specify which class time your child attends.

Parent Communication

OBSERVATION WINDOWS: As there are observation windows available in all classrooms, you are encouraged to drop by, to watch your child "in action". Please remember when viewing that the glass is not sound proof and that your conversations can be heard through the windows and can be distracting to

children especially during circle times when we require the children's attention. Please do not chat with other parents at the windows and instead go to the coatroom to have your conversations. There is to be NO filming of students from the windows or within the classroom as we cannot ensure the privacy of other students if this is taking place. No parents are to be in the hallways when classes are transitioning from room to room. Parents are NOT to open classroom doors at any time during instructional hours unless dropping off a child. The gate is to be kept closed at all times.

REPORTING SESSIONS:

Preschool Parent Conferences: Oct 18th, 2016 & March 2nd, 2017

2 Day JrK Parent Conferences: Nov 29th, 2016 & March 2nd, 2017

3 & 5 Day Jr K Parent Conferences: Nov 25th, 2016 & March 3rd, 2017

In 2, 3 & 5 day Jr K you will be given a report card with comments during the first week of March to indicate areas of growth and improvement for your child. For all Preschool, Jr K /K classes, a final report card will be sent home at the end of June. Parents are encouraged to attend Parent/Teacher conferences with or without their child (whichever is best for the family). Appointments for interviews are 10 minutes and sign-up sheets are posted well in advance so parents can choose a time that is convenient for them or they can make an appointment for a telephone interview. We ask that parents have their phones shut off during parent teacher interviews. Classes are cancelled on parent/teacher interview days in order that we can make time with each family.

MEETING WITH TEACHERS

We ask that prior to class and after class parents are brief with teachers as they have children to receive and dismiss. Informal meetings cut into their prep time/lunch time and should be scheduled as needed. Feel free to email or call the school office if you need to discuss anything with your child's teachers and they will get back to you when they are available.

ONGOING COMMUNICATION: In addition to the parent/teacher conferences, parents are encouraged to talk with their teachers if a concern or question arises. Teachers are busy prior to classes and directly after classes but you can ask them to contact you when they have time. There is also a teacher message centre by the children's mailboxes where you can leave a note or email epschool@telus.net .

SPECIAL HELPER/SHOW & TELL:

The Special Helper is indicated on the monthly calendar. He/she will do Show and Tell, Weather/Calendar and be the first to start the line up for transitions, ring the bell for tidy-up time and other special jobs to help the teachers in the class. They will also have a turn for Show and Tell. The Special Helper can bring 1 item only and will be encouraged to talk about what they have brought, to show his/her peers. We encourage educational items for Show and Tell, not favorite toys. We ask that children do not bring electronic games (Leap Pad, I Pad, DS, etc) as your child needs to be able to talk with the group about their show & tell rather than playing it. We suggest items like things from nature such as sea shells, rocks, leaves, insects, a plant; photos of family or places; something the child made like a painting, a drawing, a Lego sculpture, a play dough sculpture; singing a song; performing a dance with music; playing an instrument - even a maraca is great; dressing in their cultural clothing; a favourite book; coins from other countries; a puppet; or your child's fingerprints or footprint or that of a smaller or bigger sibling. The ideas are endless and are interesting for your child and for the other children. All preschool, 2 & 3 Day JK children get 1 turn during the year on one day. The 5 day program children get 1 turn to be the Student of the Week and their turn lasts for a week. Due to privacy issues of filming other children that we cannot control, parents may only watch their child do Show & Tell and take a still photo of their child only. If the date on the calendar does not work for your child, you may contact another parent whose child is listed on the calendar during the same months make arrangements to switch with them. Please let your child's teacher(s) know if you have done this.

SNACKS:

Parents provide a snack and one drink for their child. According to licensing regulations you need to send in 2 food groupings. So for example if you are sending fruit juice then you need to send in crackers which would be from another food group. Edelweiss strives to maintain a healthy environment for all the children. Therefore, non-nutritious snacks such as candy, cakes, puddings and cookies are not allowed. Foods such as grapes or cherry tomatoes need to be cut in quarters. **Please do not pack any chap stick, cough drops, medication or hand sanitizer in the snack container.** Children who need assistance opening containers/wrappers put up their hand and then a teacher will assist them. Upon finishing, children return their snack/juice containers to the snack bin. No snacks are to be sent in with nuts products in them for the sake of children with severe allergies. Be careful of labels that say "May contain nuts", as these are not allowed either. Products made at Dare are made in a peanut free facility.

Suggestions for snacks are sent out by email to parents at the beginning of the school year. All children use the washroom and wash hands before their snack time and after snack time they receive a small amount of teacher administered hand sanitizer (an alcohol-free natural product). On the first day, your child will receive a snack bag. Starting on the first full day of school, (not the Open House or the $\frac{1}{2}$ class) your child needs to bring a snack (Nut Free) and a drink in a reusable drink container (in the little snack bag we provide you with) that is clearly labeled with your child's name on it. Please make sure your child's name is clearly marked on the **outside** of their snack bag at all times and on their drink container at all times. We provide you with a set of Mabel's Labels for this purpose. You can order more labels including allergy alert labels from www.edelweiss.mabel.ca Please place snack bags in the appropriate snack container for your child's class located in the coatroom. We will not accept the tetra juice boxes at school as most children do not usually drink the entire box, and it is too time consuming to empty all the juice boxes out prior to recycling.

BIRTHDAYS:

Birthdays are special days for young children. Please make sure to check on your child's class calendar for the date when your child's birthday will be celebrated at school. If you need to change the date that the birthday is being held on, please talk to your teachers. Edelweiss gives your child a birthday gift of a book and a birthday crown and we all sing "Happy Birthday" to your child on their special day. Please note that children with August birthdays will be celebrated in September and children with July birthdays will be celebrated in June so that each child will have a "birthday" at school. **We will NO LONGER be accepting a birthday snack for the class on your child's birthday due to allergies. Please do not put treat bags into children's mailboxes.**

ACCIDENTS & INCIDENTS:

Even in the highest quality schools, accidents can and do happen as children explore the world around them. Whether in our care or yours, scratches, skinned knees, bumps and bruises are a natural part of growing up. Many precautions are taken to ensure a safe environment. If an incident of injury occurs, first aid is administered and a report is filled out and a copy is given to you. When you pick up your child, we will let you know about any incidents/accidents that your child may have had during the class. Please understand that in a group care setting, we do witness most incidents, but occasionally there may be an incident which we do not see. Our teachers simply cannot be expected to see everything. There are limits to what is seen in a group care setting. If we deem, the incident/accident to be of a more urgent concern to you, we will contact you by phone at the first possible

opportunity. If we cannot reach you right away, we will contact the person you designated as your Emergency Contact person. It is your responsibility to keep all emergency phone numbers up-to-date. If we deem it necessary to contact 9.1.1 you will be responsible for any medical or transportation fees incurred as a result of the incident/accident. We do not carry health insurance for the students at the school. We carry liability insurance.

EMERGENCY PLAN:

Because we strive to maintain a safe environment for your child, we make every attempt to be prepared to handle emergency situations. All of our staff is certified in First Aid and CPR. It is required that we have a designated meeting place in the event we need to evacuate the building. In case of such an emergency, the teachers and children will gather at the Cambrian Heights Elementary School across the field at 640 Northmount Drive N.W. (403) 777-6150. Parents will be contacted. It is important that parents keep their contact information up to date and accurate with the office.

MANDATED REPORTING INFORMATION:

Teachers and Directors are required by law to report evidence of child neglect or abuse. Those who fail to report according to provincial regulations can be held accountable under the law. No one, including school management and/or a child's parents can interfere with this reporting requirement.

FIRE DRILLS:

Monthly fire drills are required to provide safety and protection for children and staff. The drills enable students to practice how to recognize and respond to signals, listen to and follow specific directions and walk quietly outside the school building for a brief period of time, weather permitting. The Calgary Fire Department makes annual inspections as part of the provincial licensing regulations we adhere to.

UNIFORMS & CLOTHING FOR COLOUR DAYS

Please label all clothing with the labels we provide you with. We simply cannot be responsible for lost articles. Children are to wear uniforms purchased **ONLY** from Top Marks (www.topmarks.ca) at all times unless it is a "Colour Day". On the colour day students can wear clothing of that colour. We celebrate different colours throughout the year. **All children must wear non-marking, non-slippery shoes.** Indoor shoes can be left in your child's cubby if you prefer but please make sure they are clearly marked with your child's name on them. We have spare clothing for

children who have an accident at school. If this happens to your child, please wash and return all items borrowed promptly to the school so they are available for other children as needed. There are also spare shoes you may borrow for a class for boys and girls that have forgotten to bring shoes as children are required to be wearing shoes at all times in the school. These are kept behind the bathroom doors in shoe organizers in the girl's and boy's bathrooms and we ask that you return them after class if you have borrowed them.

CHILDREN'S MAILBOXES:

Each child has a mailbox in the hallway **under** their name. Teachers and administration will be putting things into mailboxes on a regular basis so please check for "mail" each class. If you wish to distribute birthday invitations in mailboxes, it is encouraged however any other mailbox submissions must be approved through the office. Mailboxes are **NOT** to be used for advertising, treat bags at birthdays or for holiday treats. **Not all parents appreciate these items in the mailboxes so we are asking that parents do not do this.**

LOST & FOUND:

Most lost items (clothing, snack container, etc) are placed in the LOST & FOUND baskets under the mailboxes. Valuables are held in the office. Please remember to label all uniform clothing and snack and drink containers clearly with your child's name on it. Edelweiss is not responsible for lost or stolen items. A set of labels are provided but more labels can be purchased through Mabel's Labels.

VOLUNTEERING:

We welcome parents to volunteer on field trips, as room parents (helping teachers outside of the classroom) or with sanitizing toys, sharpening pencils and with special project volunteering. Emails are sent to parents to request help for special projects when needed. Each class has a volunteer room parent who will help the classroom teachers outside of the classroom with prep work for their classes. You may be contacted by a room parent to help with something during the school year. This is optional of course as there is no requirement to volunteer at our school.

FIELD TRIPS:

You will have the opportunity to volunteer to be a chaperone for our field trips. Preschool children go on one trip; the 2 day Jr. Kindergarten children go on 2 trips, the 3 Day Jr K children go on 3 trips and the 5 day Jr. Kindergarten children go on

6 field trips. Field trips forms are sent out before each field trip and if you are interested in volunteering for the trip please fill out the form to let us know as soon as possible. Chaperones will be assigned on an as needed and then first come, first serve basis. If we have more volunteers than spaces you can follow the school bus in your own vehicle and meet us there if the destination allows it.

FUNDRAISING:

We do have fundraisers to help enrich the programs at the school. You are under no obligation to participate in any of them, only if it is something you feel you need. We appreciate it when parents take the order forms to work to see if any co-workers are interested. The following are some of our regular fundraisers.

Book Fairs



Usborne Books will be holding a Book Fair at parent/teacher interview times as a fundraiser for the school. We get a selection of free books based on sales received.

Magazines

The magazine campaign is a great one that we hold in the fall and it is wonderful savings for parents and provides for easy Christmas shopping as well. It is through QSP. If you have any renewals we would appreciate it if you could save them for our campaign. All special offers are honoured just keep your offer coupon. More information will be in the September newsletter about this and a brochure will be in your child's mailbox.

Cinnamon Buns

We will hold a Cinnzeo Cinnamon Bun Fundraiser in time for early Dec delivery. These buns freeze and refreeze and are handy to have for Christmas time.

Perogies

We hold a fall perogy fundraiser that is very popular and always requested by parents.

SPECIAL EVENTS:

In addition to having an exciting, well-rounded program, the students also enjoy many special events throughout the year. These are **some** of the events planned:

Halloween Parade: For Halloween, there is a parade and parents are invited to watch. After the parade, children return to their classrooms to have a fun class.

Christmas Craft Event with Parents/Caregivers: At Christmas the children and parents come together for a special craft making time. We also have special entertainment. The children also receive a Christmas gift book from the school. Gingerbread and other mascots come to visit.

Valentine's Day Celebration: On Valentine's Day the children bring in Valentines (no candy or chocolate please) for all their classmates. The children take home a bag full of valentines from each of their classmates.

St. Patrick's Day: On St. Patrick's Day, the children hunt for "gold" (pretend coins) and play games. We also invite an Irish dancing group to the school and all parents are welcome to bring their children to the event if it is not held during their child's class time. This year the event will take place on March 17th at 9:30 a.m. Bring your family to this colourful celebration!

COLOUR DAYS

We learn about a colour and children get to wear that colour instead of uniforms. For example, on "Green Day" the children all wear something green instead of their uniforms. Colour days are only on some month - not every month.

VIRTUE DAYS

Teachers implement a lesson to reinforce the virtue of the month for all Jr Kindergarten/ Kindergarten classes. Virtues covered are: Sharing, Thankfulness, Giving and Generosity; Truthfulness/Honesty; Respect, Patience, Responsibility, Fairness, Kindness & Caring. Preschool children are taught the virtues on an ongoing basis.

AUTHOR DAYS

Every month we learn about a children's author and we introduce the children to the author's literary works in addition to all our theme related books.

HOLIDAYS:

For the most part, Edelweiss Preparatory School follows the School Board holidays. All parents are given a list of holidays at the beginning of the school year and are reminded in monthly newsletters. It is also posted on the school website.

SCHOOL PHOTOS



We will have one photo session in the fall (Oct 13 for Pre & 2 day Jrk, Oct 14 for 3 day JK & 5 Day program) and one in the spring (May 2nd for Pre & 2 Day JK & /May 3 for 3 day JrK & 5 day JrK/K). In the fall the students will be in their uniforms for individual and class photos and in the Spring the Jr K children will be in cap and gowns for graduation. Photos are taken by La Vica Photos. These are optional for parents to purchase.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENT

Edelweiss is committed to having eco-healthy practices as a commitment to improving the environmental and developmental health of the children at Edelweiss. As part of this commitment we have become the first school in Alberta to receive certification as an ECO Healthy Child Care facility through the Oregon Environmental Council who is certifying centres worldwide. It's well documented that many illnesses (e.g., asthma, birth defects, learning disabilities, neurological problems and some childhood cancers) are linked to pollution and products we use every day. Children are particularly at risk because their bodies and organs are still developing and they have natural habits such as hand to mouth behaviour and crawling on the floor that increases their exposure to toxins. Many environmentally-related illnesses have grown at alarming rates in recent years and are of unique concern because they are preventable. By becoming Eco-certified, Edelweiss is helping to provide an environmentally healthy setting for your child to learn and grow in. Also, in recognition of the need to provide a healthy learning environment at Edelweiss, we have two "state-of-the-art" air purification systems in the classrooms. The units are the only F.D.A. recognized Class II Medical Device air purifiers on the market today. They constantly purify the air, going beyond HEPA standards (.3 microns) to capture 99.97% of airborne particles .1 microns and larger.

ENVIRONMENTAL THEMES:

In 2016/2017 Edelweiss has a monthly theme to teach children about our environment. Our Jr K environmental themes are as follows:

What is our environment?; Introduction to Recycling at School; Transportation Choices; Saving Power; Reusing; Reducing; Water Conservation; Recycling; Respect for Nature; Recycling

Recycling Program

We pay for a recycling bin in our parking lot. We teach children to put recyclable products into their respective containers in the classrooms. We also have compost containers for compostable items from children's snacks. There is also an "Edelweiss Green Corner" in the hallway for parents and others to use.

Spanish Program



All children in our school have a wonderful opportunity to learn Spanish as a second language. The Spanish Program at Edelweiss is exceptional and is designed to be an amazing experience for our students. Senorita Michelle from Venezuela is our Spanish teacher.

SPANISH LESSONS:

The children are taught Spanish weekly. The children receive a 15 minute lesson every week. Teaching methods utilize songs, storytelling, pictures and hands-on activities to expose the children to the target language in a natural way. Through songs, games, finger plays, movement and literature the students are motivated and introduced to the Spanish language. The Spanish program focuses on subjects the children are familiar with: colors, numbers, alphabet, the family, animals, food etc.



Music and Creative Movement Program

If your child loves to sing and move the Edelweiss Music Program will meet that need.

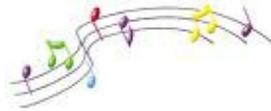
MUSIC LESSONS: The students receive a Music lesson once a week. For 3 & 5 Day JrK our Music classes are taught by Yoanna Mesa and for Preschool & 2 Day JK our Music lessons are taught by Mrs. Kelly. This lesson is usually based on the theme covered but also includes body awareness songs, practice on various rhythm instruments, movement activities, finger plays and an introduction to classical music. Mr Ryz (www.mrrayz.com) is our Artist in Residence for the 3 & 5 Day programs and comes monthly so work with the children.

INSTRUMENTS:

The children are introduced to a variety of rhythm instruments during the Music lessons. Lessons contain an instrument portion where the children are encouraged to play along with a song that is being sung, or to recorded music.

CREATIVE MOVEMENT:

The children are encouraged to move to and feel the music using their bodies, scarves, rhythmic ribbons and various props.



Gym Program/Physical Education



Edelweiss has a large, bright area and a wide variety of gym equipment that the children are introduced to. The Physical Education program is non-competitive in focus. The approach is child-centered with movement in the core. Children are encouraged to challenge themselves and progress at their own rate.

GYM LESSONS:

The children receive a gym lesson every day. The program is uniquely adapted to the needs and interests of the children at this age. During gym time, children start with warm up exercises, and then proceed to games and/or skill-based activities using equipment followed by cool down exercises. Through a series of cooperative games, students develop a sense of body awareness, good body aesthetics and body mechanics, sportsmanship, teamwork, cooperation and an appreciation of and respect for the rights of others.

GYM EQUIPMENT:

The equipment in the gym is changed on a regular basis to encourage the development of a variety of skills with equipment such as the parachutes, large and small balls, hoops, bean bags, lollipop paddles, tunnels, hobby horses, scooter boards, to name just a few. We have enough equipment to change to something new almost every week of the year.

GYM STATIONS:

The children participate in gym stations. When we do stations, there are usually multiple gym stations set up and children rotate to the different areas. This encourages group cooperation, sportsmanship, as well as allowing children to work on a variety of skills.



Drama Program

The Drama Program is a very exciting area for the children at Edelweiss.

PUPPET THEATRE:

At the puppet theatre children are encouraged to experiment with a wide variety of quality hand and finger puppets and to use hand movement and voice to present small plays or scenarios to develop their puppetry skills. This allows the children to present in front of an audience (their classmates). This encourages self-confidence and appropriate audience behavior as well.

DRAMATIC PLAY CENTRES:

The children are encouraged to visit the Dramatic Play areas where they experiment freely with costumes, props and role-playing with their classmates, etc. These areas are changed on a monthly basis and are located in both classrooms. Throughout the year, the children will have dramatic play centres set up to facilitate their dramatic play with one another.



Art Program



The Art Program is a well-rounded program, which provides for a variety of experiences with a multitude of media. Our goal is to develop an appreciation of art, while encouraging children to express their creativity and individuality. Children use: paper, fabric, items from nature such as leaves and pine cones, glue, wool, paint, pasta, glitter, wooden shapes, stamps, stencils, rubbing plates, foil, feathers, foam shapes and many other materials to create theme based crafts and free art activities.

Children are encouraged to create pictures/paintings related to the theme or to paint freely. The teacher then asks the child about their picture and records a caption of what the child has said about his/her creation.

The children also complete a number of gift items and seasonal art activities such as Christmas gifts, Mother's Day gifts, Father's Day gifts, etc for parents.

Science Program



The Science Program at Edelweiss is one of the "favorites" amongst the children.

SCIENCE EXPERIMENTS:

As students are introduced to Science, they will use all of their senses to begin learning how to observe and describe what they sense or see. Mr. Walter, known as "CAPTAIN SCIENCE" does weekly Science Experiments with the children. They will learn through a variety of hands-on experiences and will be involved whenever possible to add ingredients, mix solutions, etc. They will develop the skills of asking questions, gathering information and communicating findings. For every Science Experiment there is a handout "Today in Science we did..." sent home to encourage children to discuss the experiment with their parents and try it at home if they wish.

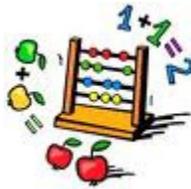


SCIENCE CENTRES:

Edelweiss has a large array of Science manipulatives and displays, which are changed weekly for the children. These items are set out for children to experiment with freely during center time and are usually related to the theme. The Science Centre is located in the Planet Room. By providing materials for them to explore and manipulate, the children can experiment and discover with gentle guidance from their teachers.

CRITTERS AT SCHOOL:

We have a classroom pet, Hazel the Hedgehog who the children adore! Throughout the year the children will experience various "live guests" coming to Science time. They will include caterpillars transforming to butterflies, earthworms, lady bugs and maybe some more surprises. There is also a resident African dwarf frog that reside in the school office on the desk of Captain Science. Please feel free to come and visit him. His name is Jengo but most children call him "Froggie".



Math Program

The Math Program at Edelweiss introduces many basic concepts to the children and allows them to discover math concepts during center time. Our math program uses hands on activities to reinforce basic math skills. We integrate Math into our calendar, literature and art activities and we also try to incorporate math skills into other areas of our curriculum. We play many games in groups, and the main goal of the program is to allow the children to have fun while learning. Throughout the year, the children practice printing numerals. The activity involves identifying the number, recognizing the concept of the number in quantity and practicing to print the numeral.



MATH CENTRES

With a large variety of math manipulatives, the Math Centre is located at the Apple Table in the Apple room and is changed on a weekly basis. Here the children are encouraged to learn and discover with hands on activities.

CALENDAR MATH

The monthly calendar is introduced to the Jr. Kindergarten students. The children are exposed to a number of mathematical concepts during this time. We emphasize patterning, number recognition, number writing, problem solving and place value.



LITERACY PROGRAM

ALPHABET BOOKS:

The Jr K children complete an award winning curriculum called Handwriting Without Tears (www.hwtears.com) throughout the year to develop their printing skills and letter and number awareness. HWWT uses fun, entertaining and educationally sound instructional methods to teach handwriting to all students. Children complete a page for each letter and number in their Edelweiss ABC/123 book while the HWWT activities are introduced. The books are kept at school and parents can see the child's progress at our reporting sessions. The Preschool children do a different ABC/123 printing and art activity throughout the year and will be introduced fully to HWWT in their Jr Kindergarten year.

JOLLY PHONICS:

The Preschool and Jr K children learn phonemic awareness through the use of the Jolly Phonics program (www.jollylearning.co.uk) where children learn an action associated with each sound. It is a fun and action oriented way to learn.

DAILY STORY TIME:

Story time occurs at closing circle and gives the children the opportunity to develop listening skills and it promotes strategies to predict events, characters actions and conclusions. Teachers use a variety of storytelling techniques such as flannel board stories, draw and tell stories, cut and tell stories and puppets.

JR. KINDERGARTEN JOURNALS:

The children in the 3 & 5 Day Jr K work on completing a journal entry based on the Handwriting Without Tears "Mat Man" character. Children bring the beloved Mat Man character to life with the Mat and Wood Pieces. This interactive activity helps young learners develop body awareness, drawing skills, socialization, and number awareness. We recognize that children are all at varying levels with fine motor/drawing skills and we encourage each child's best effort.

JR. KINDERGARTEN HOME READING:

2 & 3 Day Jr. Kindergarten children begin their Home Reading Program in March 2017 whereas 5 Day Jr. Kindergarten children begin their Home Reading program in January 2017. Children are encouraged to read with parents at home and to return the book when they are ready. There is no competition encouraged with returning books. Children should feel relaxed and "read" at their pace. Parents are given a handout to help teach reading strategies with their child.

Fine Motor Skills



DEVELOPING FINE MOTOR SKILLS:

Fine motor skills can be defined as small muscle movements: those that occur in the finger, in coordination with the eyes. Fine motor skills will develop with time and practice.

FINE MOTOR ACTIVITIES:

Activities that involve the use of manipulatives will support young children's fine motor development and will help to build the strength and dexterity necessary to hold a pencil appropriately. These are offered through the year such as:

- modeling clay, platercine, play dough
- drawing in sensory salt trays
- lacing and beading activities
- playing with finger puppets and doing finger plays
- scissor activities
- tracing activities
- tearing and crumpling activities



Theme Work

Edelweiss changes its themes school-wide several times a month. This keeps the children interested & makes learning fun. Themes are listed on the monthly calendars. Classroom materials, books and centres are changed to reflect the themes. The children complete art activities, hear stories, sing songs, explore at centres etc, based on the following themes to reinforce their learning.

SEPTEMBER

All About Me
My Senses

OCTOBER

Fall
Thanksgiving
Safety

Halloween

NOVEMBER

My World
Transportation
Outer Space

DECEMBER

Fairy Tales
Christmas

JANUARY

Winter
Penguin Day
Arctic Animals

FEBRUARY

Jungle /Forest Animals
Valentine's Day

MARCH

Dinosaurs
St. Patrick's Day

APRIL

Under the Sea
Spring
Earth Day

MAY

Mother's Day
Bugs, Birds and
Butterflies
Teddy Bear Picnics

JUNE

Father's Day
The Farm

SCHOOL CONTACT INFORMATION:

School phone: (403)282-4220

School fax: (403)282-3991

School email: epschool@telus.net

School website: www.epschool.ca

- Edelweiss Preparatory School is licensed through Alberta Children's Services
- All Edelweiss teachers hold membership in the Southern Alberta Preschool Teachers Association.