Yellowknife Playschool Association

Where children develop necessary life skills while participating in a fun and engaging environment.

MEMBER

HANDBOOK

Revised March 2026

REGISTRATION CHECKLIST

To register your child for Playschool please submit the following items:

√	**Item**	**Submission Date**
□	Lillio Online Registration (including supplemental forms)	Time of Registration
□	Tuition Deposit: $100	When invoiced upon confirmation of space
□	Housekeeping Deposit of $250	August 15
□	Signed Enrollment Agreement	When space is confirmed

If you have any questions, please call the Playschool at 867-873-3231 or email the Executive Director at:

ykplayschoolcoordinator@gmail.com

The Yellowknife Playschool Association is excited to provide you and your child with a positive Playschool experience!

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A. PROGRAM INFORMATION

1. Introduction to the Yellowknife Playschool Association

The Yellowknife Playschool Association is registered under the *Societies Act* of the Northwest Territories as a non-profit organization. Our mission is "*to provide an opportunity for children in the 2 to 4 year old age group to come together in an environment in which they can grow socially, intellectually and physically without the confines of measured achievement and strict schedules*."

The Playschool is situated at the corner of Burwash Drive and 56th Street. The building was constructed in 1981 and an addition was built in 2000. The facility includes a yard with a sandbox, outdoor toys, a small garden, and an age-appropriate playground structure.

a. Land Acknowledgement

We would like to respectfully acknowledge that the land that we learn and play on is on Chief Drygeese territory, the traditional land of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation descendants of Tetsǫ́t'ıné.

b. Inclusion and Accessibility

Our aims are to make the Playschool a safe space for children and our site on the Land accessible to all of our children. The Playschool prioritizes creating an inclusive space to acknowledge diversity, including race, nationality, ethnicity, colour, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, family status, ability, and socioeconomic status. The Playschool has inclusive material available to children within its general book rotation. All books of this type are reviewed by the Playschool to ensure that they are age appropriate.

2. Board of Directors

An elected Board of Directors consisting of 5-7, predominantly parent volunteers, operates the Playschool. This includes a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, Fundraiser, and Member at Large. Board meetings are held once a month. The Annual General Meeting is held in August or September, at which time Board elections occur for the following year.

The Board is governed by the Constitution & Bylaws of the Association and its Rules and Policies. Copies of these documents are all available for review at the Playschool. The Board of Directors can be contacted at YKPlayschoolChair@gmail.com.

3. Our Program

The program is based on the principle that children learn through participation in creative play. For this reason, the program is 'activity' based, to provide a wide variety of experiences. The indoor play areas include water and sand tables, building blocks, play dough, puzzle area, house and dress-up corners, art and book centers, science and environmental projects, puppets, climbing blocks, large table-top toys, manipulatives, and a craft area.

Each component of the Playschool program strives to provide opportunities for the children to develop and grow in the following areas:

- **Physical development** – Children gain a perception of their bodies in relation to the surrounding environment through activities designed to promote muscle development, hand-eye coordination, and gross and fine motor skills.

- **Intellectual development** – As children play, they are thinking, making discoveries and piecing bits of information together as a whole. Language skills and thought processes are developed through singing, drama, stories and imaginative play.

- **Emotional development** – Children are encouraged to explore a variety of real-life emotions through imaginary play, fantasy and stories. They develop a sense of security, trust and self-esteem while learning acceptable methods of dealing with frustration and anger.

- **Social development** – As children play in a group, they learn to pursue common interests and goals. This sense of 'belonging' is fostered through group activities, encouraging cooperation and mutual respect.

  Children spend the first hour of the day exploring the activity centers or participating in a craft project. After tidying up, there is 'circle time', with songs, stories, games, poems and conversation relating to the current theme or topic of interest being investigated. Children then eat a nutritious snack (from home) before going outside to play. After outside time is lunch (from home), and some quiet play time (books and puzzles) and then a story. The day ends with outdoor play. The children are encouraged to handle the routines as independently as possible.

  Each child develops at his or her own rate, according to their interest and skill level. They are encouraged to develop skills in Early Childhood concepts, i.e. colours, shapes, letters and numbers. Children are not expected to complete certain tasks before they can move on to other activities, however, any child showing an interest in doing so is encouraged by the teachers. Student progress is monitored by the teachers and they are available for consultation should you have any concerns about your child's development.

4. Forest and Nature Program

   Forest and Nature School's philosophy is based in place, and play and is guided by the child's interests. The children are free to explore all the while learning to trust themselves, the land, their playmates and teachers, who are co-learners. They do this by repeated exposure to the land, developing a relationship with the natural space and their co-learners as they have the freedom to explore through play and inquiry.

   The program values this relationship with the land, which will hopefully create a lifelong desire to advocate for the land, their community and the environment. You can find a lot of similarities between the Indigenous ways of knowing and Forest and Nature School's pedagogy. The oral tradition and experiential learning of Indigenous cultures are highly valued by Forest and Nature School, connecting the child to the natural world, the history of the land and the people who live here, both past and present.

   There is research documenting the benefits of outdoor play. At the Playschool, we hope to move in this direction. At the moment, we try to take the children out on the land across the street once a week. This is dependent on the weather. The time outdoors on the land will increase as the weather improves.

5. Educators' Responsibilities

   It is the teacher's responsibility to maintain a safe, inclusive and nurturing environment for all Playschool students based on the Playschool's principles of social and emotional development. The Playschool uses a positive, proactive and respectful approach to behaviour management. Visit the Student Conduct and Behaviour Management section for more information.

6. Class Schedule

The Yellowknife Playschool Association is predominantly a part-time program. Children can be enrolled in the Monday/Wednesday/ Friday program (3 days a week), or the Tuesday/Thursday (2 days a week) program. In each of these programs, children can be enrolled in the morning, the afternoon*, or the full-day options. This creates six unique part-time childcare options to meet your family's needs:

	Morning	Afternoon	Full-day
Monday, Wednesday, Friday	8:15am to 12:00pm	1:00pm to 4:00pm	8:15am to 4:00pm
Tuesday, Thursday	8:15am to 12:00pm	1:00pm to 4:00pm	8:15am to 4:00pm

Full week - Monday to Friday 8:15am to 4:00pm (please see Full Week Policy for student eligibility requirements).

**Should you like to register your child in the afternoon, it should be noted that not all special activities may be offered during that time slot. In an attempt to accommodate afternoon children, the Playschool may invite them to attend the special activity in the morning, however depending on the activity and our ratios this may not always be possible.*

Please indicate your preferred session when you register your child using the "Preferred Program Form".

There is a qualified teacher and assistant in attendance at all times. Classes are limited to 16 children who must be between the ages of 2 and 5 years and cannot be attending Junior Kindergarten. Children must be fully toilet-trained, and it is recommended that children have their immunizations up-to-date.

The Executive Director maintains a waiting list and vacancies are filled by the waiting list order. You may, when offered a space, wish to wait for a particular class opening. In that case, your name will remain in the same priority on the waiting list.

The Playschool observes all statutory holidays. The first day of school normally falls just before or just after the Labour Day long weekend. Please refer to the Playschool calendar detailing the school year, including the first day of school, planning days, holidays and breaks, which is available online, and is shared by email with current members. **Please note that the Playschool has several Professional Development days during the school year. There are no classes on these days. These days alternate between MWF and TTh.**

7. Attendance

Parents/guardians are asked to notify the Playschool through the Lillio app when a child will be absent that day, or in advance of any planned absences.

8. Arrival and Dismissal

Drop off begins at 8:15 a.m. or 1:00 p.m.

Pick-up times MUST BE by 12:00 p.m. or 4:00 p.m. Please be respectful of our teachers' designated schedules.

Children must be accompanied to and collected from Playschool by a designated, responsible adult. Under no circumstances should the child be left to find his or her own way to and from the Playschool.

The staff will not release any child to an adult who is not the parent/guardian of the child or another adult designated on the child's registration package as someone who is authorized to pick-up that child, without the prior consent of the parent/guardian.

If you are late picking up your child, you may be assessed at a $25 late fee.

9. Medical

Please **do not** send your child to Playschool if he or she has the following symptoms **within the previous 24 hours:** fever, rash, persistent cough, discoloured or profuse amounts of mucous from the nose, diarrhea, vomiting, sore throat, or has any communicable disease such as measles, chicken pox, pink eye, impetigo, whooping cough, head lice, or hand foot and mouth disease. Any communicable disease must be reported to the Playschool immediately.

Children who seem ill will be sent home at the discretion of the teachers and, in some cases, a letter from Public Health or from a primary care physician may be required to return to Playschool, depending on the illness. As indicated above, it is very important when your child is **ill or absent** that you notify the teachers through the Lillio app or with a phone call.

All efforts to maintain general sanitary conditions will be adhered to by the staff, visitors, volunteers and Board. Regular and frequent hand-washing is encouraged.

If your child is seeing a specialist or is on the waitlist to see someone, please speak with the Executive Director about this. This may qualify the Playschool for additional funding to support your child in our facility.

10. Participant and Staff Ratio

The adult-child ratio for a walking excursion within one block of the Playschool or to the Forrest Drive Park is 1 to 8. The adult-child ratio for a walking excursion beyond one block of the Playschool or the Forrest Drive Park, but that is within three blocks, is 1 to 6. The adult-child ratio for a walking excursion beyond three blocks is 1 to 4.

11. Emergency Procedures and First Aid Policies

In the event of an accident or sudden onset of illness, staff will seek proper care for the child and will immediately contact the child's parent/guardian or alternate emergency contact person. If deemed necessary by the teachers, medical assistance will be sought, as per the consent provided by the parent/guardian in the “Application for enrolment in a child daycare facility” document signed upon registration.

All teachers will have a current CPR and First Aid certificate. On any outdoor excursion, teachers will carry the emergency backpack which contains a First Aid Kit and a list of emergency contacts.

12. Risk Management

At the Playschool, we practise the concept of Risky Play. Within risky play there is a possibility of injury, but the child is given the opportunity to assess the risk in terms of their own ability. We demonstrate our belief that they are capable beings able to maneuver their way through the world. Through discussions together we introduce the children to a set of responses to specific situations. We develop the skills to help them think critically about risk and make decisions based on that thought process. A few examples of these risks are risky play, weather, wild animals or vehicular accidents.

13. Extreme Weather and Supply list for Outdoor Play

The Playschool Teachers consults the weather regularly during the winter. It is our goal to get outside every day even if that means we go out for a very short (5-10 minutes) excursion into the play area. Our temperature cut off is -30C

(temperature and windchill combined). We limit the amount of exposure based on the direction of the wind and the windchill, itself. Because of our commitment to get outdoors, it is very important that your child comes prepared for all different types of weather. We do have some extra clothing, which we are willing to share if a child is not dressed properly.

Here is a list of items that will keep them safe and healthy in any weather:

- Spring and Fall: Long socks tucked into long pants to keep the bugs away, running or hiking shoes (no open toed shoes), sun hat, sunscreen, rain gear, bug jacket, bug spray, and an extra change of clothes
- Winter: base layers, snow suit, 2 pairs of mittens, a warm hat and a neck warmer

14. Snacks and lunch (nut free)

The Playschool does not provide snacks or lunch. Please send nutritious snacks, such as fruit, veggies, yogurt, nutritious cookies, muffins, a slice of pizza, cheese and crackers (some suggestions) each day. We also encourage sending litterless lunches especially for when we go outdoors to spend time on the land.

Children attending full days will need two snacks and a lunch. Children attending half days will need one snack.

We do not share snacks. On special event/party days a snack may be provided. If your child has allergies, please notify staff immediately, and send an alternate snack the days that snacks are being prepared at Playschool.

NUT-FREE INFORMATION**:** The Playschool is a nut-free facility. Please do not send peanut butter, peanuts or snacks made with peanut oil, or any nut products or traces of nuts. Please keep this in mind when sending your child's regular snack and also when contributing food for special event days.

The Playschool may ban other allergy-provoking foods from certain classes if medically necessary to ensure the safety of our Playschool community. The Playschool will inform you of any such allergy bans.

15. Shoes and Clothing

Please send a pair of indoor shoes with hard, non-slip soles (no slippers) to be left at the Playschool. A change of clothing, consisting of a shirt, pants, socks and underwear should be kept in your child’s backpack each time they attend school. This is in case of messy play (water table play, painting) or in cases of an accident (spilling food or water) during snack time.

Please label the shoes, backpack, snack container, extra clothing and all outerwear (jackets, mittens, shoes, boots, snow pants, hats) clearly with your child’s name.

Clothing should be suitable for active play, mess, and weather. The goal is for the children to go outside every day, even for short periods of time on colder days. Whether the temperature or wind is too cold for the children to go outside is at the discretion of the teacher so please dress your child appropriately every day. The Playschool has some extra gear that can be used if needed. Outdoor play is scheduled before pick up times.

16. Special Occasions

Holidays, which are celebrated broadly within Canada, will be celebrated at the Playschool. These holidays may include, but are not exclusive to: Halloween, Diwali, Christmas, Lunar New Year, Valentine's Day, Easter, and Indigenous Peoples Day. Holidays will be celebrated at the Playschool in a secular and non-denominational fashion.

Information will be provided in the weekly email and posted on the notice board for any parent/guardian helpers or snack contributions, which are needed for special occasion celebrations.

17. Updates

The Executive Director will email updates and inform parents/guardians about special events, the current topic discussed at the Playschool and other relevant information.

Photos and learning stories will occasionally be posted on the Lillio app, or on the wall in our entry way.

18. Communication with Teachers and Observations

Parents/Guardians are always welcome at the Playschool and are encouraged to take part in any or all of the programs on a regular or spontaneous basis. Please contact the teachers if you wish to come and help or participate during the class. If you have a matter concerning your child or the Playschool, please contact either the Executive Director by phone or email. We make every attempt to communicate our activities with parents. If you would like more information, please speak with the Executive Director.

19. Privacy

All information concerning a child or a child's family, which is obtained by the Yellowknife Playschool Association from the registration package, shall be kept confidential, with the following exceptions:

- the child's parents or guardian shall have access to such information;
- the Director of Early Learning and Childcare may, on request, inspect the said application or the record maintained on each child at the Playschool; and
- as per the "Release of Information" consent provided in the registration package.

20. Student Conduct and Behaviour Management

Behaviour management will be approached in a positive, proactive and respectful manner. Children will not be subject to any form of physical, verbal or emotional abuse or be denied physical necessities while at the Playschool.

Behaviour management guidelines are followed to ensure protection of each child's emotional and physical safety as well as the safety of the environment. If a behavior becomes extremely upsetting or dangerous to others, a conference with parents will be held. If the measures to change the unacceptable behaviour(s) have been tried and have been unsuccessful, the Playschool Board has the right to ask the family to withdraw their child from the Playschool or to terminate their membership.

Parents will be consulted and will work in partnership with the Playschool staff to ensure behavioural standards are met. Should this turn out to be unsuccessful, the Playschool staff reserves the right to ask the child to refrain from attending Playschool until major improvements have taken place. The Behaviour Management Guidelines are available for review at the Playschool.

21. Children attending with an aide

The Playschool allows one child attending with an aide per class. This spot is held for children with an aide until September, after which there are no guarantees a spot will be available. Please contact the Executive Director prior to submitting your registration package if you have a child attending with an aide, if you have requested an aide or if you foresee your child requiring extra support. In cases the child needs additional help that cannot be provided by Playschool

staff, the Playschool reserves the right to ask the child to refrain from attending until additional help is provided in the form of a support worker. The Playschool works closely with the NWT Disability Council, so contact them if you believe your child will need support.

22. Toilet Training and Handwashing

All children attending Playschool must be fully toilet trained. Playschool staff can assist in the bathroom, but students need to be able to independently communicate their need to use the bathroom. A few accidents are normal at the beginning of the school year due to the new environment and from time to time, but students need to be aware when they have had an accident and be able to communicate it to teachers. Soiled clothes will be returned in a plastic bag the same day.

An accident log will be maintained by staff. Teachers will inform parents if accidents occur on a regular basis or the student is not communicating accidents to the teachers. The Playschool will work cooperatively with parents to try to reduce and eventually eliminate further occurrences. If no major improvement has taken place within the following six classes, the Playschool reserves the right to ask that the child refrains from attending Playschool until the child is ready. Playschool staff are not responsible for toilet training children.

Upon entering the building, children are asked to go wash their hands before they play. Before every meal they go and wash their hands or any time they sneeze or blow their nose. At the beginning of the year, we spend a lot of time discussing proper hygiene in order to help them become more independent and aware of the importance of hygiene.

23. Termination of Membership

Any parent/guardian whose conduct is considered detrimental to the Yellowknife Playschool Association, who fails to pay registration, or other fees, or whose child's behaviour is considered unacceptable or harmful as determined by the Board in consultation with the teachers may have their membership terminated by the Board.

B. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

1. Tuition Deposit

A deposit of $100.00 is required at the time when the child's space is confirmed. The receipt of this deposit and signed enrollment agreement serves as a contract that your child will attend Yellowknife Playschool. At the end of the year if all tuition has been paid, you will receive the $100.00 deposit back. If you have outstanding tuition, the deposit will be applied to the outstanding balance.

2. Monthly Fees

Tuition fees are set by and subsidized by the Government of the Northwest Territories' Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE). Tuition fees are paid monthly by the first of the month. All monthly fees are to be paid through the Lillio app. In special circumstances tuition can be accepted by cheque - please speak with the Executive Director if you need an exception.

2026-2027 Monthly Tuition Fees (portion paid by families highlighted)

Program	Tuition Fee (student portion)	ECE Subsidized portion	Total
MWF Full Day	$183.03	$450.00	$633.03
MWF Morning	$101.74	$250.00	$351.00

MWF Afternoon	$81.19	$200.00	$280.80
TTH Full Day	$122.23	$300.00	$422.23
TTH Morning	$67.97	$166.65	$234.00
TTH Afternoon	$54.26	$133.35	$187.20
Full Week (board approval required)	$305.25	$750.00	$1,055.25

3. Housekeeping Deposit

A housekeeping deposit of $250.00 is required when invoiced, by August 15th. Housekeeping deposits will be returned at the end of the school year if the volunteer obligations are complete. If you prefer, you can choose to pay the housekeeping fee ($250.00) in lieu of completing your volunteer duties.

4. Changes to a student schedule

If you would like to change your child's schedule, please email the Executive Director. Please give at least two weeks notice when requesting a change.

5. Withdrawal & Reimbursement

Withdrawals are accepted with one month's written notice to the Executive Director. Monthly fees are refunded for full months only, so please ensure that your one month's written notice is received no later than the first of the month in order for you to receive the full refund of the next month(s)' fees. If one month's notice is not given, the following month's fees are forfeited.

6. Late Payment

The parent/legal guardian has the responsibility to make sure payment to the Yellowknife Playschool Association is made on the first of each month. If payment is not received the Playschool reserves the right to ask the student to refrain from attending until payment is received. If there is a waitlist for the spot the student has it may be given to another student permanently. This applies to students attending who are receiving subsidised funding, for example, funding through the NTHSSA.

C. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

1. Housekeeping and Volunteer Obligations

The Playschool operates with a high degree of parental involvement. It is an aspect of the school that makes it unique and sets us apart from a daycare situation. As involved parents/guardians, you have the opportunity and privilege to share in your children's first 'school experience'. The hope is that the enthusiasm and positive attitude that is promoted by the Playschool will be carried on by all those involved, to Junior Kindergarten and beyond.

1. Volunteer Obligations

Parents/guardian members of the Playschool are required to participate **in a toy wash/weekend cleaning, AND an alternate volunteer task.**

Weekend clean: One family will clean the playschool the last weekend of each month. Cleaning instructions are posted at the Playschool and include: sweeping, mopping, vacuuming and bathrooms. The cleaning takes approximately two hours.

Toy wash: Two families will do a toy wash at the playschool the last weekend of each month. The toy wash takes approximately two hours.

Volunteer opportunities are as follows:

- **Weekly Recycling** (Terms: Sep-Nov, Dec-Feb, Mar-Jun)
  The teachers will set out recycling for a family to take to the recycling bins. This can include both blue box recycling and depot recycling.

- **Shovelling Snow - weekdays and weekends** (Terms: September/November; December/January; February/March, April/May)
  Requires shovelling the playschool ramp, steps and sidewalk and steps to the back door (FIRE EXIT) during the week at opening time (after heavy snowfall) and on the weekend to prepare for Monday arrival.
  Volunteers are responsible for cleaning off the sidewalk in front of the school and making sure the snow is clear on the ramp. This is imperative in order to allow access to the school during winter.

- **Shovelling Snow** (Christmas, March Break)
  Requires shovelling as needed over the holidays to ensure snow doesn't build up on the playschool ramp, steps, sidewalks and steps to the back door (FIRE EXIT).

- **Raking**
  We require a rake of the outdoor playground area before winter. The rake should include the inside and outside of the fence area, with leaves bagged and disposed of. Sometimes if leaves are left over from the previous year, a second rake will be done in the spring. This isn't scheduled and needs to be requested of a parent volunteer as the need arises.

- **Furniture Removal for Carpet Cleaning** (Fall & Spring)
  This task involves moving all furniture and toys off the carpets to allow for the cleaning company to come in on the weekend or over the Christmas break. The family must also return and replace the items back where they were once the carpet is dry. The timing for both these cleans is flexible, but this last year it was December and June.

- **Window Coverings**
  To save fuel costs and keep our kids and teachers warm, we add insulating plastic to some of the windows each winter. The plastic will be provided, the family need to go into the playschool in the fall to apply it to the windows.

- **Fish Tank Cleaning** (Terms: Sep-Jan, Feb-Jun)
  A quick clean of the fish tank is required every week. The sides will need to be scraped and ⅛ of the water will need to be replaced. This should take about 15 minutes and can be done at the time of pick up/drop off of child if suitable. Filter parts will be to be replaced once/twice a year as laid out in the detailed cleaning schedule that will be provided with the aquarium supplies. It is amazing how much our students love the fish!

- **Christmas Break fish feeding/maintenance** (Christmas Break)
  One family will be required to go into the playschool every 2 days over the Christmas break to feed the fish and flush toilets, run faucets and check heating. A detailed list will be provided.

- **Dump Runs:** Ideal for a family with a pick up truck. Periodically throughout the year we have to dispose of old toys or furniture.

- **Maintenance Helper:** This family would be called in the event of minor repairs or troubleshooting. Ideal for a family with a parent who works in the trades.

- **Other Tasks**

  The teachers will have other tasks come up throughout the school year, including dump runs, assembling toys or furniture, mending and sewing, participating in field trips or helping out with the Forest and Nature School program etc. The executive director or teachers will put a call out to parents to get a volunteer to do these tasks as needed.

  The teachers may also request any donations from parents throughout the year, such as costumes or themed-toys.

  If you are unable to attend at your assigned time, you must arrange to switch with another family. If you do not switch and miss your assigned time you will forfeit your Housekeeping deposit.

  If you prefer, you may pay $250 and be exempt from volunteering. We do, however, strongly encourage families to participate in our school community by volunteering!

  Note that if a parent/guardian sits on the Board, that family is exempted from both the weekend cleaning and toy wash requirements.

2. Fundraising

   In the past, the Playschool has held a community bake sale with the expectation that all parents assist by baking and volunteering for the various tasks (ie; manning the table, pricing items). The fundraising goals are set each year by the Board of directors. The Playschool has been financially stable for a number of years, and has not required a lot of fundraising, however, this may not always be the case. Parents will be expected to volunteer and support fundraising efforts if there is a need.

3. Volunteer Participation

   All parents/guardians are also expected to assist in specific aspects of the operation and maintenance of the Playschool. Please familiarize yourself with the following tasks as sign up will be at the AGM.

Board of Directors - brief description of roles:

- **Chairperson -** oversees the work of the Board members and chairs all meetings.
- **Vice-Chairperson** - assists the teachers with volunteer coordination and housekeeping organization.
- **Secretary** - maintains minutes of meetings and filings with the Societies registry.
- **Treasurer** - provides bookkeeping and financial assistance for all financial matters.
- **Member at Large** - actively assists other members with various duties

Note that all Board members are exempt from housekeeping duties!

Become involved in our little Playschool!