



2026 - 2027

Parent Handbook

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Classes for  
3 & 4 year olds



**NEW!**  
"Kickstart to Kindergarten"  
Afternoon class for  
4-5 year olds



Registration opens April 15 for the  
2026/2027 School Year!



AGM: May 21 • 7:00PM  
Water Valley Arts and Wellness Building.



[president.westbrookplay@gmail.com](mailto:president.westbrookplay@gmail.com)



<https://westbrook-play-school.yolasite.com>

Scan to Register!



# Introduction

Westbrook Playschool is a non-profit organization, planned and operated by the parents of the attending children. Playschool meetings are approximately once every 2 months and are open to all parents. These meetings provide families with the valuable opportunity to be an integral part of the program's development and his/her child's playschool experience. The Executive Committee, elected from the parent group each school year, oversees the day-to-day operation of the playschool including: general administration, the annual operating budget, and establishment and enforcement of policies and procedures governing the playschool. You are invited to take an active role in your child's playschool program; your involvement, ideas and suggestions are welcome and encouraged. Our goal is to provide the children of the Water Valley and surrounding communities with a positive introduction to the formal learning system through an exciting and rewarding playschool program.

## Mission Statement

To provide a supportive and nurturing space where children can explore and learn through play in a positive, caring environment.

# The School

## Meet the Staff

### Lead Teacher – leads all classes

*Laura Armstrong "Mrs. Armstrong"*

Hello families, I am so grateful to be teaching at this amazing playschool and want to take a moment to introduce myself and tell you a little bit about myself. I have worked in the early childhood field for over twenty years. I have taught preschool previously for many years in the small city of Drumheller, and have held a few different jobs in related fields. I have been an EA in Kindergarten and grade two classrooms, have worked for in-home visitation specializing in child development and parental supports through a program called Healthy Families and have spent over ten years as a literacy specialist with Drumheller Family Literacy. Through these various programs I have ran multi-aged parent/ child groups, kindergarten readiness classes, in-home literacy support and positive parenting groups. Teaching preschool however, has my heart and holds my passion! I love this age and the huge developmental learning that goes along with it. I believe in a play-based approach to preschool with the focus of building strong loving relationships with the children first. I cannot wait to meet your child and you will be so thrilled with our small-town community feel!

Personally, I have been married to my wonderful and supportive (he cuts a ton of art materials for me in his woodshop lol) husband for over 30 years and we have two grown children and two very large dogs. We love to hike and spend time with family, friends and in nature. We are thrilled to be living and working in this tranquil town of Water Valley.

## **Teacher Assistants – work alongside our lead teacher**

*Careen Rohleder “Mrs. R”*

My name is Careen Rohleder, Mrs. R. I have been with the Westbrook Playschool for 16 years and was a parent board member for a number of years before that. I have sure seen a lot of change at our small little country school over the years.

I have had various roles in early childhood education over the last 26 years. I do my best to bring a wealth of knowledge and a nurturing touch to our classroom. As a loving parent of 3 children, I have a natural affinity for working with kids and a deep understanding of their developmental needs. Passionate about watching children grow and develop, I am dedicated to preparing them for the exciting journey to grade school. Coming from a farm background, I bring a down-to-earth approach to the classroom, creating a warm and supportive environment for all the little ones.

Welcome to Westbrook Playschool and I look forward to getting to know your family.

*Kelly Weir “Miss Kelly”*

I live in Water Valley and have been enjoying the community for 27 years. I have a 22 year old son who is my miracle. He was born at 22 weeks and together we've worked for him to become an awesome young man. I worked at the Westbrook Play School when it was in Westbrook for about 13 years and have returned to teaching in Water Valley last year. It is so fun and rewarding watching the little kiddos develop and grow and build new friendships.

I was mainly a PUF aid for over 5 years at Westbrook school dealing with speech therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy. I learned most of this with my son and I'm very proud to apply it to a classroom. It's because of him that I wanted to work at a playschool. It is very rewarding to see their accomplishments over such a short time. Young minds need guidance and fun and early learning is the best start. Every child is a miracle.

## **Administrator – a new position started in 2024**

*Ceanna Tannas*

I am happy to assist the playschool to be a more sustainable operation. Parent volunteers have operated this school for many years but we have been growing and the need for this position quickly became apparent. I do many things in the background including managing government grants, payroll and any little project that will help our school run smoothly or keep our board from being over-worked! I have loved learning about the school and how to operate a non-profit this past year. This fall, my second child will be attending the school and I have a third that will attend as well.

## Substitute Teachers

If you are interested in being on our substitution teacher list and you meet the following required qualifications, please let us know:

1. Child Development Certificates Level 1 or 2 or 3, OR Bachelor of Education
2. Criminal Record Check, including a Vulnerable Sector Check (a letter to take to your local RCMP detachment can be made upon request)
3. Current First Aid

## Eligibility

Children must be **3 years old by December 31st, 2026** in order to register and cannot start classes until after their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday. For children with October to December birthdays, a family may choose to make the full payment to ensure their child has a spot reserved in class while they remain at home until they turn 3 or they can inquire about vacancy after their child turns 3. Children must be fully toilet trained in order to attend the playschool.

## Programs

Our school operates September through May; a calendar will be emailed out following our AGM with specific closures & holidays. The playschool runs different programs for various age groups as outlined below. Children may be enrolled for 2 days per week (Mon/Wed or Tues/Thurs), or the 4-year-olds are able to be enrolled in a 3 day per week program (Mon/Wed/Fri or Tues/Thurs/Fri).

**2 Day Morning Program** (3- & 4-year-olds): Is a play-based program focusing on developing social-emotional, cognitive, gross and fine motor physical skills. We lay the foundation for early math and literacy in our creative circle time. We encourage growth through imaginative, sensory-rich indoor and outdoor nature play, music and movement, gym & yoga time, open-ended art/ crafts and science experiments, storytelling and cooperative group activities in a fun-filled, loving classroom.

**3 Day Morning Program** (4-year-olds): On Fridays, we focus more heavily on kindergarten readiness. Skills such as cutting, printing, letter and number recognition, letter sounds, drawing a person, math concepts (ex: one to one ratio) and independence skills including dressing themselves in their outdoor clothes.

**2 Day Afternoon Program** (4–5-year-olds): “Kick Start to Kindergarten!” This immersive program will foster school readiness or offer wrap around support for children already enrolled in kindergarten. We will focus on all areas of child development: personal /social, fine and gross motor, literacy, numeracy, critical thinking and creativity. We have a play-based approach and a fun-filled, loving classroom that balances indoor and outdoor nature play as well as gym, yoga, music and movement.

AM Classes	Fridays	PM Class
Mixed 3 & 4 year-old program	4 year-old program	4 & 5 year-old program; children in kindergarten welcome to attend
2022 & 2023 Birthdays	2022 Birthdays	2021 & 2022 Birthdays

# Operating Information

## Schedule & Daily Routine

Classes run on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9:00AM-11:30AM and Friday mornings from 9:00AM-12:00PM. The afternoon class will operate Monday and Wednesday from 12:30PM-3:00PM.

The following is a general outline of the daily routine at the playschool:

1. **Welcome**
2. **Free Play**
  - Playdough
  - Fine motor
  - Gross motor
  - Cutting skills
  - Printing practice
  - Social skills
  - Independence skills
  - Painting
3. **Carpet Time**
  - Music
  - Movement/yoga
  - Letter sounds & recognition
  - Number recognition
  - Rhyming words
  - Storytime
  - Listening skills
  - Critical thinking/comprehension
4. **Art**
  - Process art
  - Exploratory
  - Crafts
5. **Outdoor Play or Gym Time**
  - Child led imaginary play in the beautiful treed backyard
  - Playground time weather permitting
  - Indoor gym time
  - Gross motor skills
6. **Dismissal**

## Arrival & Dismissal Procedures

Safety is of utmost importance to us. The following information details our procedures that ensure the safety of our students and playschool staff.

Playschool doors will be open from 8:55-9:05 (AM class) and 12:25-12:35 (PM class) for student drop off. Please refrain from coming to the Playschool before this time as the teachers will be preparing the classroom and activities for the day. Pick up times are 11:30 (AM class) and 3:00 (PM class) Monday through Thursday and 12:00PM on Fridays. **Please promptly pick up at these times, if you are going to be late, please contact the teacher as soon as possible.**

## Absences

Please inform teacher of any absences so they are able to prepare for the day.

## Snacks

Please send a healthy snack and a water bottle with your child. Please refrain from sending candy or high risk choking foods (such as whole grapes, hot dogs and popcorn). Keep in mind the children have about 10-15 minutes to eat, so limit the amount of food brought to allow them to finish before outside play time.

Children are discouraged from sharing their snacks due to health concerns. As per policy, food restrictions will be enforced if a playschool child is determined to have food allergies.

## Clothing

In case of a fire alarm, or another situation requiring quick exit from the building, children are required to have indoor shoes for each class. Socks are highly encouraged, especially in the winter months. To address accidents or other unexpected happenings, please also send a full change of indoor clothing (including socks and underwear) to store in their cubbies.

The playschool program has an outdoor/playground component. The outside playground area is often cold with strong winds. Please ensure your child is dressed appropriately and has outdoor gear for outside play and seasonal variations.

## Toilet Training & Washroom Use

Children must be fully toilet trained in order to attend the playschool. **Children cannot wear pull-ups/ diapers** (licensing requirement). If a child has been registered with the expectation that he/she would be toilet trained at the start of the school term, and the child is not ready, a parent has two options. The first option is to make the full annual/biannual payment to ensure the child has a spot reserved in class while he/she remains at home until they are fully toilet trained. The second option is to withdraw the child's registration, and have the child's name placed on a waiting list for the next available vacancy.

Children may use the washroom any time they wish and should be dressed in clothing they can manage on their own. However, if assistance is required, the teacher or assistant teacher will be available to help.

## Birthdays & Special Days

We love birthdays and welcome parents/caregivers to bring in a special treat to share with the class for their special day! Be in contact with your teacher to arrange this and discuss any allergies in your child's class. We will make the birthday child feel special with a birthday hat and the opportunity to pick from the treasure chest. Please feel free to bring one special item from home for a Show and Share this day as well.

We love having parents in the classroom and if you would like to come spend a few hours with us, please reach out to the teachers to arrange a visit. We will show you how much fun and learning through play that we can have in a day (wear your running shoes 😊).

# Volunteering

Westbrook Playschool operates thanks to many volunteers and we welcome all parents to be a part of the board and help with making the school year successful.

## Parent Annual Volunteer Requirements

Our playschool is parent/ board run and in order to continue successfully functioning we need the help of parent and caregiver volunteers! Each family will be expected to contribute to the following throughout the school year in order to fulfill their volunteer commitments:

- Contribute to parent helper week (~1-3 hours during your sign-up week)
- Sell at least \$100 worth of raffle tickets during our annual raffle/50:50
- Assist with our annual fundraiser (ex: ladies' night, golf tournament, etc.)
- Attend board/parent meetings when possible
- Contribute to casino shifts (happen every 3 years- next casino is 2027)

A fee of \$200 will apply for families who committed to volunteering but did not complete the above requirements.

All extra activities including donating supplies and bringing snacks in for special events and parties are sincerely appreciated and make for special memories, but are not included in the mandatory volunteer duties.

## Parent Helper Week

Each family will be assigned one week during the school year to help lighten the load of our teachers and help our school run smoothly. Approximately 1-3 hours of your time will be expected during your week. Grandparents or other caregivers are welcome to help too! You do not have to be available the whole week or even necessarily be there in person. Here is a list of some examples you may volunteer to help with:

- Cleaning and disinfection of in-classroom items
- Deep cleaning of specific areas of the classroom
- Washing stuffed animals/dress-up clothes, etc. at your home
- Supply runs (approved expenses will be reimbursed)
- Making playdough or a sensory item (ex: oobleck, slime, cloud dough)
- Craft preparation (cutting, laminating, etc.)
- Special occasion craft preparation
- Book/ toy sorting and organization

Please be in touch with the teacher prior to or during your week to see what the classrooms most pressing needs are (an assignment list will be emailed out in September).

# FEES

## Registration Fee

There is a one-time fee of \$50 that is **due upon registering** your child into the program. This fee is non-refundable.

## Volunteer Opt-Out Fee

If families do not wish to participate in volunteer activities, they can provide a one-time fee of \$200 at registration. There will be no expectations for volunteering or fundraising for that school year. **This fee will also be invoiced to any families who did not fulfill their volunteer requirements during the school year.**

## Annual/Bi-Annual Fees

The tuition fees you are required to pay for 2026/2027 are as follows:

Two Day Program		Three Day Program	
Annual Fee	Biannual Fee	Annual Fee	Biannual Fee
\$540	\$270	\$810	\$405

**First payment is due upon registration to secure your spot.**

Options for payments are:

1. A cheque OR e-transfer for biannual fee **due upon registration** or by June 15th at the latest and a second biannual fee due by December 1, 2026.  
**OR**
2. A cheque OR e-transfer for the entire annual fee due upon registration or by June 15th at the latest.
3. Special considerations for payment plans will be made upon request to:  
president.westbrookplay@gmail.com

Cheques payable to: **Westbrook Playschool Association**

E-transfers to be sent to: [treasurer.westbrookplay@gmail.com](mailto:treasurer.westbrookplay@gmail.com) using password: playschool. Always include your child's name in the e-transfer note.

There will be a \$25 NSF fee charge for all returned cheques. If late payments become a recurring issue Westbrook Playschool Association reserves the right to withdraw the child from the program.

## Affordability Grant

As we are a licensed childcare program, Playschool fees are reduced by the affordability grant (federal-provincial initiative) through the Child Care Subsidy Program. We apply for these funds as a school so that your fees are reduced by \$100/ month. The playschool receives these funds directly. Before this subsidy, our fees would be \$1440 for the two-day program and \$1710 for the three-day program. A unique child care participant number (CCPN) will be created for each child

through the Child Care Accountability Program and be used as a basis for government to pay the playschool.

Unfortunately, additional subsidy is no longer available as of April 1, 2025.

## Scholarship Program

We do not wish fees to be a deterrent for children to attend our playschool. This is an anonymous program. Money will be fundraised and donations will be accepted to provide families in need with a scholarship to cover their child's tuition fees for the year. This program is on a self referral basis and is available at the discretion of our scholarship sub-committee. Please specify you require financial assistance on your registration form.

# Policies

## Withdrawal Policy

We understand that family circumstances can change. Tuition will be refunded for any full months not attended by your child at the rate of \$60/month for the 2-day program and \$90/month for the 3-day program. Partial months will not be refunded.

## Allergen Policy

Parents will refrain from sending any food or non-food products with their child to Westbrook Playschool upon notification that a child in the class has a severe hypersensitivity or allergic reaction to such an item (ex: peanut allergy). Class allergies will be emailed out in September.

## Child Guidance

The key approach to child guidance is creating a positive environment that focuses on respect. When children respect themselves and others, negative behaviour is reduced and therefore the need for guidance is subsequently reduced as well. Positive reinforcement and rewarding desirable behaviour is an effective method of establishing a positive environment. It is important to set out clear and simple guidelines for children to follow in the classroom. It is necessary to establish that each child is responsible for his or her self and to help children understand that there are consequences for their actions.

The roles of the teacher and assistant teacher(s) is to first encourage children to work out the problems on their own. The next step would be to guide children to talk through the problem and come to their own resolution. If this is still not successful, it may be necessary to redirect the child's attention to another activity or form of play.

Westbrook Playschool will not deny or threaten to deny any basic necessity or permit the use of any form of physical restraint, confinement or isolation. There will not be any form of verbal or physical degradation or emotional deprivation and all disciplinary action taken must be reasonable in the circumstances.

## **Inclement Weather Policy**

If the decision is made to close the playschool for severe weather and/or road conditions, each family will be contacted the morning of the cancelled class. Please familiarize yourself with our private Facebook page as updates and reminders are frequently posted there.

## **Illness Policy**

Refer to the following chart for when children can return after an illness:

Respiratory Illness	Stay home until: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All symptoms have improved AND</li><li>• Feeling well enough to resume normal activities AND</li><li>• Fever-free for 24 hours without using fever-reducing medications.</li></ul>
GI Illness	Stay home until 48 hours after the last episode of vomiting and/or diarrhea.
Rash/ Other Illness	Stay home for the length of time recommended by a physician, nurse practitioner or the AHS Public Health Outbreak team.

As parents/caregivers, you know your child best. If they are “off” or seem to not be themselves we encourage you to keep them home for a day.

## **Personal Belongings Policy**

Children are to keep personal belongings in their backpack at all times except for show and share purposes as determined by the playschool teacher. Toys, stuffies, blankets, etc. are encouraged to stay home unless it is a special occasion (ex: show and share, movie day).

## **Communication Policy**

Please direct any concerns or problems directly to the president. An email can be sent to [president.westbrookplay@gmail.com](mailto:president.westbrookplay@gmail.com). You may be asked to submit your concern in writing so that it can be addressed at the next executive meeting. If you cannot get in contact with the president, submit your concern to any member of the executive listed in our executive members list (emailed after AGM). Our teachers are here to teach, so unless you have concerns related directly to in-classroom learning, please voice your concerns with the executive.

Mrs. Armstrong is open to phone calls or messages if a parent/caregiver has any questions or needs to talk about anything classroom related about your child at any time. Please contact [lauraarmstrong061@gmail.com](mailto:lauraarmstrong061@gmail.com) with any questions relating to the classroom.

# Board / Executive Information

## Board Members

A full list of board members will be emailed to all parents following our AGM on May 21, 2026.

## Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting for the Westbrook Playschool Association will be held on **May 21, 2026** at the Water Valley Arts and Wellness building. Please plan on attending as the 2026-2027 executive committee will be formed this night. Join us on Facebook for updates closer to the date!

This is a parent-run program, therefore the assistance of all families, in various capacities, is vital to the success of the upcoming year. Please know that any and all help is more than welcome.

## Westbrook Playschool Association Board Duties

### President

- Responsible for general management and supervision of operation of the society
- Hire teacher for coming year (confirm with teacher re: continuing)
- Give teacher letter of reference at the end of the year if necessary
- Conduct registration and organizational meeting for coming year
- Ensure that other volunteer positions are filled
- Conduct all meetings throughout the year
- Decide with the teacher if class is to be cancelled due to poor weather conditions
- Act as mediator between parents and teacher unless concern directly involves your own child
- Contact a substitute teacher
- Administer the Service Plan and By-Laws and keep them current
- Organize/purchase of year end gift for the teachers

### Vice President

- Take over the president's job if they are unable to fulfill their duties
- Aid the president in conducting business
- Seek and apply for appropriate grants
- Communication with landlord
- Attends all meetings

### Treasurer

- Arranges for the payment of the teacher's salary at the end of every month
- Collects the fees as they are received and deposits them
- Arranges for reimbursement for expenses as they incur
- Arranges for payment of bonus or gifts for the teacher
- Provide the audited financial statements as required by the by-laws
- Responsible for keeping the books up to date

- Attends all meetings

### **Secretary**

- Takes notes at meetings
- Ensures that all families receive the minutes or a newsletter
- Finds a replacement in event that she/he cannot attend a meeting
- Attends all meetings

### **Director**

- Aids in making decisions that affect the playschool program
- Attends all meetings

### **Fundraising/ Casino Coordinator**

- Offers fundraising suggestions to the board
- Contacts the involved agencies regarding casino
- Distributes information to parents
- Attends all meetings

### **Field Trip/ Special Events Coordinator**

- Offers field trip suggestions to the board
- Organizes, books, and arranges payment for function with the Treasurer
- Distributes information sheet and consent forms to parents
- Attends all meetings

### **Auditor (2)**

- Reconcile all transactions for the previous year
- Submit an audit statement to the board
- Attends all meetings