

**BRANDON NURSERY
SCHOOL**

**PARENT
MANUAL**

1. INTRODUCTION

Welcome!!! Brandon Nursery School Inc. is a non-profit organization as well as a registered charity and has been in operation since 1975. We are licensed by Child Day Care to provide a nursery school program to children ages 2 and 8 months to 6 years old and are also funded by them through a yearly grant. The Brandon Nursery School is run by a volunteer Board of Directors which consists of parents with children in the program and staff from the nursery school.

Even though we are funded by Child Day Care, we are required to generate our own revenue to cover our program costs. There are usually 3 or 4 fundraisers held during the year. Fundraising money is used to cover additional programming cost, as well as to further enhance the program by purchasing additional supplies, curriculum items and toys.

At Brandon Nursery School we have highly trained, competent, committed early childhood educators (level III) who plan and work together to provide mutual support and individual attention to each child. We also have a lower staff to child ratio. We have 2 teachers and 15 children per class. This allows for a higher degree of adult and child interaction.

2. PHILOSOPHY

At Brandon Nursery School we believe that each child is unique and individual with the rights to love, respect and quality care.

Every child should be cared for in a safe, nurturing environment that promotes their physical, social, emotional, and intellectual and language development.

Each child should be encouraged to develop creativity, self-confidence and a positive self-image.

Children of all abilities learn from each other. We encourage the development of caring relationships, a sense of belonging for all children and respect for dignity and equality.

Each child follows their own pattern of development. Each child has his/her own learning styles, preferences, interests, personality traits, abilities, difficulties and challenges.

Our goal is to gain knowledge of each child's abilities, characteristics and needs for support to ensure that each child has the best opportunity to learn and grow. This knowledge will allow the teachers to change the program and /or integrate support services into the program to enhance the learning conditions of all the children.

Children are born with natural curiosity and inquisitiveness about the world around them. It is important to keep this spark alive and make learning fun.

Young children are active learners and they need to play. When they play, they are choosing, thinking, doing, exploring and experimenting. In the process of play they discover creativity, joy, mystery and frustration, which are all important pieces of the puzzle of learning.

We believe that all children can learn school readiness skills through play. School readiness skills are best taught in a fun way, in small doses and with repetition over time without pressure.

School readiness skills can be reinforced during group times involving a variety of meaningful developmentally appropriate activities, including music, literature, science, movement and special visitors.

We believe a parent's interest and input into his/her child's development is valuable. We share that interest and wish to form meaningful relationships with the parents.

It is important to work with other professionals who have valuable knowledge and expertise to share with us.

We are committed to learn more about current child development practices, theories, and research and inclusion principles so we can continue to support the abilities and needs of every child and his or her family.

3. CURRICULUM

While we observe and interact with each child during the day, we reflect on what we see and hear and document these observations through notes and photos. We use these to determine areas of interest for the children, their prior knowledge and their abilities. We use these interests, abilities and needs of the children as the basis for our interactions, the play space and materials and activities we provide. We continually make changes as the children's interests, abilities and needs change. The teachers take time to discuss ways the interactions, play space and materials and activities are working for the children and changes are made to support the children as they learn and grow.

Interactions and Relationships

Teacher's attitudes and interactions have an important role in children's learning and development and influence every aspect of the program. From the moment a child walks into the room until he/she walks out the door at home time the teacher will engage in meaningful communication and interactions with each child. The more positive, caring and enthusiastic the teacher is the more enthusiastic and happier the children will be. During free play the teachers help children learn by asking them open ended questions, by answering questions, extending information, introduce concepts, and help children problem solve. Children are encouraged to express themselves, their ideas, feelings and experiences and to engage in dialogue and discussion during free play and throughout the day. Teachers take time to listen to each child's

comments and statements. What children have to say is important to them. The teachers will acknowledge and admire the efforts and achievements of all the children by using positive language and guidance.

Children's learning and growth are profoundly influenced by the quality of their relationships and interactions with each other. Teachers emphasize relationship building and cooperation among children. They set the emotional environment that reflects a sense of belonging and acceptance where each child experiences a feeling of being valued by others. Teachers model acceptance, respect and flexibility through their interactions with all children. Teachers also model positive social skills such as how to make friends, sharing and sustaining play by engaging in play with the children, offering toys, taking turns and exchanging ideas with them.

The teachers also engage in meaningful communication with the parents daily. They inform them of the activities their children were involved in that day and talk about their child's accomplishments. Parents are invited to come to class to help with special activities. The teachers engage in ongoing exchange of information with the parents about the program through monthly newsletters and email. Songs and poems that the children learn at school are emailed to parents so they can sing them at home too. Photos of the children's daily experiences and children's art work are displayed for the parents and children to view. This also is an opportunity for the parents to see and understand how children learn and develop. Teachers' welcome parent's involvement and questions or concerns about the program any time.

Environment

The teachers set up the classroom into play areas or learning centers. Each center is designated for certain play activities and promotes different areas of development. We have an art area where children learn to be creative, make decisions and communicate, Block and building area where children learn problem solving skills, to get along with others and self esteem, a dramatic/pretend play area where children develop a positive self-image, creativity, negotiate and take on roles, a library area and listening center where children develop pre-literacy skills and attending skills, a scissor table, a puzzle table, a play dough table where children build hand and finger control and pre-math skills, a science area where children can predict, experiment and explore, a water table, a small muscle area and a sensory table where children build dexterity, coordination and language. The teachers provide learning materials in these centers based on the children's interests, experiences and abilities. Many of the centers may have learning materials and activities that relate to a theme or topic. For example, if some children brought apples into class from their apple tree and we chose to talk about apples as a theme we would set up the centers and provide experiences to help children learn about apples. We would add books about apples in the library area, parts of real apples would be in the science area for the children to investigate, we would pretend to make apple pies at the play dough table, and we would make apple sauce and have it at snack time for the children to

taste. Our alphabet box would have different items that start with the letter “A” like apples, apron, angels, ambulance and airplane. At circle time we would sing songs about apples. When the learning centers are connected around a theme, it helps children organize and categorize information many different ways and provides for a wide variety of interests and learning styles of all the children in the group.

We follow a schedule each day which helps children feel secure and helps them know what is next during the day. When children arrive, they have free play time. Free play makes up the biggest portion of our schedule where children are encouraged to move around to the different learning centres and engage in activities. The pathways to the centres are open and learning materials are easily visible and accessible so all children can choose materials independently. The children are also encouraged to use the materials at the learning centres in a variety of ways. Teachers choose equipment and learning materials that support different developmental levels of the children and support their interest and curiosity so children make the most of the learning opportunities. Equipment and learning materials are added or changed to sustain interest, spark curiosity and encourage growth of all children in the group.

Teachers provide a variety of learning materials such as play food, dolls, toy people, photos and books that represent our diverse population. We have many children in our program with different levels of ability including some who need additional support. During free play the children are encouraged to play with each other, be friendly and be understanding and tolerant of each other’s abilities and differences. Teachers choose books, songs, stories and model behaviour that encourage empathy and kindness. These experiences and learning materials provide the children many opportunities to learn about similarities and differences between children and help the children feel unique and special. During free play teachers observe children, move around spending time with individual and groups of children, helping them learn and develop.

Our schedule is very flexible and is determined by the interests and needs of the children. Free play is often extended, if the children are engrossed in play. Our schedule including our transitions help children get ready for the next activity. We have a clean-up transition where all the children are encouraged to clean up the play materials.

Planned and Spontaneous Activities

A good program includes a combination of planned activities and unplanned spontaneous activities. A spontaneous activity is an unexpected event that captures a child’s interest and provides the teacher with an opportunity for enhancing or expanding the child’s learning also called a teachable moment. Spontaneous activities happen throughout the day and teachers use these as valuable learning experiences. For example, some children might hear someone playing a violin in another room; the teacher will take the group to watch and listen. Because of our lower staff to child ratio, the teachers can be more observant and involved with the children and this creates more teachable moments.

We have one circle time or group time where we sing songs, read a book, have show and tell or activities related to learning centres that include music and movement. Routines such as snack time is another time where teachers and children can interact with each other and other children and learn many skills such as self help and getting along with each other. The children are encouraged to open their snack bags and their containers and put their garbage in the garbage can when they are done. The teachers set up different equipment and learning materials in the gym and the children choose what they want to do. In the gym the children develop their large muscle skills and they more opportunities for pretend play and creative movement. Like the learning centres in the classroom the teachers change the equipment and materials in the gym according to the children's interest, abilities and developmental needs. All experiences help keep the children interested and help them to learn.

4. DAILY PROGRAM

9:00-10:10 am. 1:00-2:10 pm.	Free play and art
10:10-10:15 am. 2:10-2:15 pm.	Clean up time
10:15-10:30 am. 2:15-2:30 pm.	Circle time/Show and Tell
10:30-10:50 am. 2:30-2:50 pm.	Snack time
10:50-11:20 am. 2:50-3:20 pm.	Gym time
11:20-11:30 am. 3:20-3:30 pm.	Lockers and Home time

5. BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT POLICY

At Brandon Nursery School we will establish a supportive environment that encourages positive interaction among staff and children, realistic expectations of children capabilities and natural consequences for behaviour. Such a policy is intended to enable a child to learn independence and appropriate and acceptable behaviour. The following techniques will be practiced to establish a positive harmonious atmosphere for staff and children.

1. Expecting and respecting developmental, personality and cultural differences in children and designing our program around them.
2. Establishing clear, consistent and simple limits of behaviour and providing explanations for those limits. (e.g., "When you sit down, your friends can see the book." Rather than: "Sit down.")
3. Positively reinforcing and encouraging desired behaviour.
4. Providing opportunities for children to make choices. (e.g., "Would you like to clean up the blocks or puzzles?" Rather than: "Would you like to clean up?")
5. Setting realistic age-appropriate goals for behaviour.
6. Modeling desired behaviour
7. Interacting with children. Joining in children's activities by being involved and responsive.
8. Help the children express their feelings with words.

Brandon Nursery School provides a safe, happy, healthy and caring environment. It is understood that some children may have minor adjustment problems when initially starting nursery school and possibly throughout the year. This is very normal and anticipated. Our teachers are qualified in dealing with these situations and will work with you and your child to make nursery school a happy experience and further develop each child's independence. It is also understood that children may have times where they display undesirable behaviours. The following intervention practices will be used to provide guidance and support:

1. Using physical closeness and touch. (E.g., holding a child in your lap)
2. Reminding children of rules and, if necessary, redirect.
3. Getting children's attention respectfully.
4. Acknowledging children's feelings.

5. Help children solve problems.
6. Removing a privilege when all strategies have proven ineffective.
7. Temporarily separating a child from the group when all strategies have proven ineffective. A teacher will accompany the child to assist the child in calming down and to evaluate when the child is ready to try again.

When a child is temporarily separated from the group due to disturbing or inappropriate behaviour which is disrupting the school program the child's parent will be informed regarding the incident on the day which it occurs. The teachers will work with children and parents to work through inappropriate behaviour issues if needed.

As per the Manitoba Day Care Licensing Manual Regulation 11(1) "A licensee shall not permit, practise or inflict any form of physical punishment, or verbal or emotional abuse upon, or denial of any physical necessities to any child in attendance at the child care facility" Physical punishment includes striking a child, either directly or with an object, shaking, grabbing, shoving or spanking. It also included forcing a child to repeat physical movements, force feeding or any other action carried out which results in physical injury to the child. Verbal and emotional abuse includes any harsh, belittling or degrading response by an adult in the child care facility which humiliates or undermines a child's self-respect. The denial of physical necessities includes normal comforts such as shelter, clothing, food, bedding or toileting. Brandon Nursery School **will** follow such guidelines as are established above, always seeking to maintain the goals and objectives of our philosophy.

6. CODE OF CONDUCT

At Brandon Nursery School, we strive to provide a safe, respectful, loving, stimulating learning environment for children, staff and families. We encourage the development of caring relationships, a sense of belonging and respect for dignity and equality.

The following people are expected to behave in a respectful manner and comply with this code of conduct:

- management and staff members
- children
- parents/guardians of children enrolled
- all others involved with our nursery school

a) Guiding Principles for Appropriate Behaviour

1) Be Respectful

We are respectful of ourselves and other people. We are respectful of the ideas and feelings of others.

We are respectful of the environment, equipment and materials.

2) Be Safe

We work and play safely to help keep ourselves and other from getting hurt.

3) Be Cooperative

We solve our problems by talking and listening to each other respectfully to find a solution. When we cannot solve a problem ourselves, we ask for help.

4) Be Supportive of Learning

We learn to the best of our abilities and support the learning of others.

b) Developmental Capabilities of Children

We understand that it is normal for children to display inappropriate behaviour at times for a variety of reasons. The developmental capabilities of each child will always be considered when determining both the expectations for behaviour and consequences of inappropriate behaviour.

c) Appropriate Use of Technology

All children, parents, staff and others involved in our school must use e-mail, electronic devices and the internet according to our policies. This protects people's privacy and the confidentiality of information.

d) Unacceptable Behaviours

The following behaviours by children, staff, parents and others involved in our school are unacceptable:

- *All forms of bullying (physical, verbal, emotional, social or cyber bullying), including comments, actions or visual displays that are intentional, hurtful and repetitive
- *Harassment, including behaviour that degrades, demeans, humiliates or embarrasses someone that a reasonable person would know is unwelcome.
- *All forms of abuse (sexual, physical or psychological), including verbally, in writing or otherwise
- *Discrimination against any person or group because of their race, colour, ancestry, nationality or place of origin, ethnic background, religion, age, sex, gender-determined characteristics, sexual orientation, marital and family status, source of income, political belief and physical or mental disability
- *Actions that put another person at risk of harm, including violent physical acts (with or without a weapon) and threatening someone

7. EMAIL, ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND INTERNET POLICY

a) Staff and all others using email, social networking websites and any other internet website must:

- *Respect and protect the privacy of others
- *Respect and protect the integrity of all electronic resources
- *Respect and protect intellectual property (the ideas, creations and copyrights) of others
- *Communicate in a respectful manner
- *Report threatening or inappropriate material

b) Inappropriate use includes:

- *Intentionally accessing, transmitting, copying, or creating material that:

- violates the confidentiality of children, parents, staff or nursery school
- violates the nursery school's code of conduct (such as messages that are pornographic, threatening, rude, or discriminatory, or meant to harass)
- is illegal (such as obscenity, stolen materials, or illegal copies of copyrighted works)

*using the technological resources for personal use without the nursery school's permission

c) Staff member' use of cell phones and other personal electronic devices

- *Staff do not use cell phones and other personal electronic devices when they care for supervise children.
- *Staff makes sure that anyone who may need to contact them during working hours knows to call the nursery school's phone number.
- *If staff takes a personal cell phone for safety purposes on outings with children, it is only used for emergency contact with the nursery school or a child's parents.
- *If staff use a personal cell phone or other device to photograph or videotape children (with permission of the school and parents), the data is downloaded on a computer and deleted from their phone or device.
- *Information about children, parents, staff and the nursery school (including photos or video) are not posted on:
 - a staff member's personal web space
 - social networking web sites (for example, blogs, Myspace, Face book, etc.)
 - public networking or file sharing sites (like Photo bucket, Flickr, YouTube, etc.)
 - any other type of internet website
- *Staff does not accept children as "friends" or "buddies" when using social networking sites such as Face book or MSN.

8. REGISTRATION POLICIES

a) Hours of Operation

Monday and Wednesday	9:00 - 11:30am.
Monday and Wednesday	1:00 - 3:30 pm.
Tuesday and Thursday	9:00 - 11:30 am.
Tuesday and Thursday	1:00 - 3:30 pm.

b) Monthly fees

Monthly fees are based on the number of scheduled classes in each month x \$10.40. Fees can be paid by E transfers or post-dated cheques. Please submit your E transfer fees as close to the first day of the month as you can. Information required for the E transfer will be given to those parents who choose to pay fees this way. If you are paying fees with cheques, they should be dated the first of the applicable month and are payable to Brandon Nursery School. 10 post-dated cheques are required before the first day of classes.

c) NSF cheques

Brandon Nursery School charges \$10.00 for all cheques which are returned (i.e., non-sufficient funds, account closed etc.) If you are aware the cheque will not go through, please notify the Accounts Receivable board member and make arrangements for payment before the first of the month to avoid the NSF service charge.

d) Tax Receipts

Tax Receipts will be issued for Income Tax Purposes in February and June of the following year. Please notify the nursery school if you have a change of email address, as these receipts are emailed out to parents.

e) Refunds

If for any reason you wish to withdraw your child from our program at any time, we require at least 2 weeks written notice of the intent to withdraw. This ensures we have an opportunity to fill the vacant spot. If for any reason you do not give sufficient notice of withdrawal, you will be charged for the 2 weeks before any of your monies will be returned to you. If sufficient notice is given, your outstanding monies will be returned to you. (Post-dated cheques that have been cashed will be returned) Please contact the Program Director/ECE if you will be withdrawing your child from the program.

f) Pick up time

We encourage all parents/guardians and/or alternate pickup persons to be prompt when picking up their child from nursery school. We do understand that there are times that for some reason beyond your control you may not be able to get to the nursery school on time to pick up your child. We ask that you phone the nursery school as soon as you are able to let the teachers know that you are going to be late.

g) Attendance

Please inform the nursery school if your child will be absent (725-2226) or text Director (720-7030).

Parents wishing to change the day(s) of enrolment may do so as long as there are available spaces in the alternate day of choice.

9. HEALTH AND SAFETY

a) Nutrition

We ask that you follow the guidelines of the Canadian Food Guide and supply healthy food for the children. A list of healthy foods was provided in the first school newsletter. If your child has allergies for food or drink, these will be listed near the snack area. Brandon Nursery School is a peanut free environment.

b) Housekeeping

Parents are asked to help with the cleaning of the nursery school. One parent per week will be asked to help clean the nursery school room. The name of the parent will be listed on the show and tell/cleaning schedule. Should the date be inconvenient please let the board member who does the cleaning schedule know as soon as you can, so she can arrange for another parent to clean. It is important to keep the nursery school room clean and healthy.

c) Sickness

i) Children entering nursery school should be fully immunized to their age level.

ii) The nursery school director should be informed by parents of any medical condition past or present that a child has i.e. epilepsy, diabetes, heart disease, eczema, allergies etc.

iii) No child is permitted to be in nursery school if they are ill. Please keep children home if they have any of these symptoms: slight fever, excessively runny nose, diarrhea, bouts of coughing.

iv) Any time a child is diagnosed with a communicable disease, parents/guardians are asked to notify the nursery school as soon as possible.

v) No child may attend the nursery school with an undiagnosed rash.

vi) If at any time a child should become ill at nursery school, a parent or emergency contact person will be notified immediately to pick the child up as soon as possible.

d) Fire Drill and Evacuation

Fire drills are carried out on a monthly basis. The smoke alarm is sounded and the children are evacuated with teachers. Daily attendance books and children's files are taken. In case of an emergency our place of shelter is at First Christian Reform Church, 1509 Victoria Avenue.

e) Toilet Training

All children should be completely trained prior to attending the nursery school program. The nursery school does not have changing facilities for diapers and or pull-ups.

10) PARENT COMMUNICATON

Parents/guardians are welcome to drop in and observe the program at any time. If consultation with the director is desired, please let her know ahead of time.

Parents are encouraged to communicate using email. Telephone communication is also welcome. Please check with the director/teacher for mutually convenient times.

Parents/guardians can expect ongoing communication with staff concerning:

a) Your child's progress

i) Verbal communication whenever possible

ii) Parent/teacher interviews in February for Kindergarten children and non Kindergarten children.

b) Program activities

i) A monthly newsletter is sent out to parents through email to keep them informed of nursery school events, monthly program themes, etc.

ii) Our website also provides information about our program, including our show and tell/cleaning schedule and fundraising events.

iii) We also have a Facebook page.