



Early Learning Program



Mighty Teams, Mighty Learners

Preschool **R**eadiness **E**ducation **P**rogram

Family Handbook

Just Playing

When I'm building in the block area,
Please don't say I'm "just playing."
For you see, I'm learning as I play,
About balances and shapes.
Who knows, I may be an architect someday.

When I'm getting all dressed up,
Setting the table, caring for the babies,
Don't get the idea I'm "just playing."
For you see, I'm learning as I play;
I may be a mother or father someday.

When you see me up to my elbows in paint
Or standing at an easel,
Or molding and shaping clay,
Please don't let me hear you say, "He is just playing."
For you see, I'm learning as I play.
I'm expressing myself and being creative.
I may be an artist or an inventor someday.

When you see me sitting in a chair
"Reading" to an imaginary audience,
Please don't laugh and think I'm "just playing."
For you see, I'm learning as I play.
I may be a teacher someday.

When you see me combing the bushes for bugs,
Or packing my pockets with choice things I find,
Don't pass it off as "just play."
For you see, I'm learning as I play.
I may be a scientist someday.

When you see me engrossed in a puzzle
Or some "plaything" at my school,
Please don't feel the time is wasted in 'play.'
For you see, I'm learning as I play.
I'm learning to solve problems and concentrate.
I may be in business someday.

When you see me cooking or tasting foods,
Please don't think that because I enjoy it,
It is 'just play.'
I'm learning to follow direction and see differences.
I may be a cook someday.

When you see me learning to skip, hop,
Run and move my body,
Please don't say I'm "just playing."
For you see, I'm learning as I play.
I'm learning how my body works.
I may be a doctor, nurse or athlete someday.

When you ask me what I've done at school today,
And I say, "I just played",
Please don't misunderstand me.
For you see, I'm learning as I play.
I'm learning to enjoy and be successful in my work.
I'm preparing for tomorrow.
Today, I am a child and my work is play.

- Anita Wadley

Pembina Hills School Division

Early Learning Program

Preschool **R**eadiness **E**ducation **P**rograms available at
community Schools within the division

When: The program will run Mondays through Thursdays.

Start: Classes begin on September 2, 2025 and will end on June 4, 2026.

Note: Play Partner start date will be the same.

Time: Start and end times vary depending on school. The Early Learning teacher will be in contact with you.

Special No School Mondays - Team Planning Days

Monday, October 27

Monday, January 05

Monday, March 09

Monday, May 04

Please take some time to review our handbook. We hope that this will help make your family's transition to our school a little easier. We are so excited to have the opportunity to work with your child and we would like to take this time to welcome you to our school.

The following are some information items about the program:

Early Learning Team consists of:

Early Learning Teacher

Program Assistant(s)

Speech Language Pathologist

Occupational Therapist

Inclusive Specialist

Early Learning Principal

Philosophy of the Early Learning Program:

Early Learning programs are play-based inclusive preschool programs for children 2.8 to 4.8 years of age. The programs may be comprised of play partners and children with identified needs. Our classrooms are overseen by an Early Learning Teacher and supported by Program Assistants. The Early Learning Team are wonderful, qualified staff with growing experience and training in working with preschool aged children. This enables Early Learning to provide a quality program striving to meet the individual needs of children.

Our classroom is guided by an early learning and child care curriculum framework for Alberta called Flight. Children's play is central to this curriculum framework as an active, exploratory, creative, expressive process, deeply embedded in children's everyday experiences and through which children participate in, learn about and actively make sense of the world.

Daily Activities:

PLAY is our main language in the Early Learning classroom. Research shows that PLAY is the most effective way for children to learn the early skills necessary to be successful in their school experiences. Not free-for-all play, but intentional play and learning through play activities that will be structured and offered for the children to explore, inquire, create and learn through active engagement.

Daily activities are designed to increase children's abilities in a wide variety of developmental areas. The daily program includes some of the following activities:

- Music and Movement activities
- Structured group times
- Provocations and Invitations
- Creative art times
- Snack
- Indoor and outdoor play times
- Individual and group speech language and gross/fine motor activities

Through these daily activities the children learn and develop at their own individual rates.

Concepts and Skills Developed Through Early Learning:

- **Self-help skills** (ie: dressing, eating, toileting)
**When dropping off or picking up your child, we would encourage you to allow them to enter the classroom on their own. This will enable them to develop their independence. (ie/coat off/on, backpack zipper/lunch-kit in and out, shoes on and off) This will enable them to develop their independence over the course of the year. Please send VELCRO shoes.
- **Fine motor development** (ie: beading, coloring, scissor skills, pre-printing skills)
- **Gross motor development** (ie: running, jumping, coordination skills)

- **Speech language development**
 - **ie: receptive language (what your child understands through listening)
 - **ie: expressive language (what your child says)
 - **ie: phonological skills (how your child makes speech sounds)
- **Social skills** (ie: sharing, turn-taking, playing)
- **Participation and ability to follow routines** (ie: joining in class activities)
- **Literacy & Numeracy skills** (ie: exposure to early numeracy & literacy skills through music, literature and classroom activities)
- **Self-regulation skills**

****Funding for Early Learning:**

Funding is available through Alberta Education for children who meet specific qualifications in areas identified for early intervention.

The number of days of your child's program will be determined by the Early Learning School Team.

Children attending Early Learning Programs as Play Partners are required to pay fees.

Once invoiced, payments can be made online through PowerSchool Parent Portal <https://powerschool.pembinahills.ca/public/home.html>. Prompt payment is required for continuation of preschool services. If you have any questions, please contact our Early Learning administration office at 780-674-8545.

Individual Support Plan (ISP):

An ISP is developed for children with special needs by your child's education team. This is a plan outlining your child's history, assessment information, relevant medical information and their strengths and areas of need. Long-term goals are identified with strategies to help reach these goals. Regular meetings with members of your child's educational team are held three times each school year to develop and review the ISP. **Parents/guardians MUST commit to attending if your child is receiving funding.**

Program Closures

1. When PHSD schools are closed - the Early Learning programs are closed.
2. When buses are not running and schools are open, Early Learning programs will be open.

Check the PHSD website for bus and/or school cancellations.

On very cold days, parents are urged to use their best judgment concerning sending/bringing their young child to school.

Medications/Allergies:

If your child needs to take any medication at school, form F5-24 is required to be completed before medication can be administered for your child. Please contact the

school for forms and more information. For the safety of your child, please inform us of any allergies or medical needs they have (nut allergies, bee allergies, asthma, etc.).

Illness/Absence:

If your child is sick, please keep them at home to avoid the spread of illness and inform the Early Learning team by calling the school. If your child will be absent, we also request that you call the school/Early Learning program or send a note.

Parental visits to the classroom:

Parents are welcome to visit the Early Learning classroom. Please be respectful of other children and happenings in the classroom. It is important to maintain the confidentiality and privacy of the children. If you have any questions regarding something you see in the classroom, please ask our staff or our Early Learning Teacher.

We would also ask you to wait outside the door of the classroom or designated space, at the end of our class time as we work to establish a home time routine and encourage students to practice their self-help skills.

There are PHSD guidelines for visitors and volunteers that we will be abiding by in our classroom

Notes to parents and notes from parents:

Communication items may be sent home in a variety of forms. Some programs may use a communication envelope and be placed inside your child's backpack therefore, please check the envelopes and backpacks daily. We ask parents to call the school or send a note to let us know of anything that is happening at home that may affect your child's day. We will use technology to communicate, the app used will be shared at the start of the school year. This will be another way that we communicate with home by way of announcements and pictures/videos.

Home/School Communication:

Feel free to contact the classroom at any time. Program Assistant staff can answer your questions about day to day events. The Early Learning Teacher/Early Learning Principal are available to speak to you regarding any **questions or concerns** about your child's **program or progress**.

Dropping off & Picking up:

For the safety of your children, unless picked up by a parent or guardian we ask that you send **written permission** for your child to leave the premises with another adult.

- The Teacher will instruct which door to use and school protocol regarding the boot room for outside footwear. The children's footwear space will be labeled when they arrive.
- Parents, at pick up time, please wait outside the door of the classroom until the children are brought out. This ensures proper closure to our day and an environment to encourage independence in dressing skills and preparing to leave. When the class is over, your child will come out to you.

*****Transportation:**

- Transportation to and from the program is primarily the parents' responsibility. Specific questions about bussing can be discussed with the Early Learning Principal, or by contacting Pembina Hills Early Learning Department 780-674-8545.

What to send to school: *(please label all items clearly with your child's name)*

- An extra set of clothing *(to be left in the classroom in case of emergencies)*
- Inside shoes (shoes should be Velcro if possible)
- A Family picture—Family is important as your child comes to school from home. We acknowledge that families can get complex, but a photo of whoever your child might call their family...this could even include pets! Thank-you so much!
- 1 Box of Kleenex (to use in the classroom throughout the year)
- **Purple** Elmer's Glue Stick (2)
- Backpack
- Lunch kit with a healthy snack. This might include fruit, vegetables, yogurt, crackers and cheese or nutritious granola bars (not covered in chocolate).

Thank you!!!

***Please label shoes, backpacks and lunch kits clearly with your child's name.

Please Note:

To ensure a quality program, our Early Learning staff regularly observe and document for all Early Learning students. This is a tool to encourage and manage positive behaviors as well as to assist us in the planning of developmentally appropriate activities.

Please feel free to contact the Early Learning Teacher if you have any questions or concerns about your child's program. We look forward to working with you and your child and being part of their growth and learning.

We are so excited to have the opportunity to work with your child this year!!! Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Your Early Learning Team

Thank you for being a part of the Early Learning Program. We look forward to a great year!



Please visit our Early Learning Website

<https://earlylearning.pembinahills.ca/>