



Box 809 • 121 Collins Street
Warman SK CAN • S0K 4S0
Phone: 306-683-2800
Fax: 306-934-8221
www.spiritsd.ca

Welcome to Prairie Spirit School Division!

We believe our schools are an engaging and safe space for our learners to come to. As you embark on this learning journey into Kindergarten with your child, I can just feel the excitement and butterflies that come with this new adventure. Whether before the morning bus or car ride or on your walk to school, your words of encouragement and comfort will help to provide the assurance your child needs to step confidently into this next phase of their life.

You will see in your Kindergarten teacher, a partner in supporting you and your child as they encounter new environments and experiences, filled with curiosity and wonder. It is my hope that no matter who you meet as you enter your school, you will recognize that Prairie Spirit cares deeply about all of our learners big and small.

My hopes and dreams for all our learners in Prairie Spirit would best be captured in this quote, "...we want our learners to engage the world, change the world, do good, learn always, and to know that, without a shadow of a doubt, they matter to the world..." (Fullan, 2018). Our Aspirational Learning Goals captured in our Division Strategic Plan describe what our learners look like. *We want our learners to be able to access information from print, technology and people, and to be able to communicate in a variety of ways. We want them to know not just their number facts, but how to use numeracy skills in the world around them. We want them to be able to cooperate with others, to ask and answer questions, to give and follow directions and to treat themselves and others with compassion. In other words, we want them to be independent learners and curious, caring and engaged citizens of the world.*




Our goal is that your child's sense of wonder and imagination will find a home in our learning environments inside and outside our classroom walls. Their curiosities will help determine what should be learned in an environment where play and exploration combine in a blend of learning opportunities. They will learn that mistakes are stepping stones to success and that school experiences will build friendships, skills and memories that will last a lifetime.

I wonder what hopes and dreams you have for your child? How might we honour those together with you? Would you share those with us? What might you and your family bring to our classrooms, hallways and communities that would allow us to celebrate your passions, culture and dreams? How might we learn with and from each other?

Prairie Spirit School Division is committed to partnering with you on this journey – families and school together. We are humbled by your trust and grateful for the opportunity to support and nurture the learning development and wellbeing of your child together with you. We look forward to working and learning together with you as we support your child's passions and dreams.

Sincerely,



Lori Jeschke
Director of Education



Welcome to Kindergarten



An Effective Kindergarten Program

An effective Kindergarten program builds on the principles of early learning and pays particular attention to the environment and the roles of conversation and play in children's learning experiences. The teacher facilitates inquiry through the children's play and is continually reflecting to ensure opportunities are provided to support and encourage holistic learning and deeper understanding.

The Principles of Early Learning

Kindergarten programs in Prairie Spirit School Division are based on the following principles about children and their early learning experiences. These principles guide the kindergarten program.

- ***Children as Capable and Competent Learners***

Children have different strengths, interests, and ways of learning. They come to school competent, inventive, and full of ideas that can be expressed in many ways.

- ***Development and Learning as Holistic***

Holistic development and learning is based on the premise that each person finds identity, meaning, and purpose in life through connections to people, places, values, and beliefs.

- ***Relationships as Opportunities***

Children develop many relationships with their families, with other people, and with the physical and spiritual worlds. Relationships are opportunities for young children to create a sense of self, identity, and belonging while learning about the world around them.

- ***Environments as Stimulating and Dynamic***

Stimulating and dynamic environments are carefully designed to be aesthetically pleasing and inspire children to wonder, ask questions, and be curious. Children are active learners and construct their own understanding of the world by reflecting on and responding to their environments.

Distinguishing Features of an Early Childhood Education Program

The distinguishing features of environment, conversations, and play provide the foundation for children's learning. It is through these features that relationships among peers and with the educator can be established and strengthened.

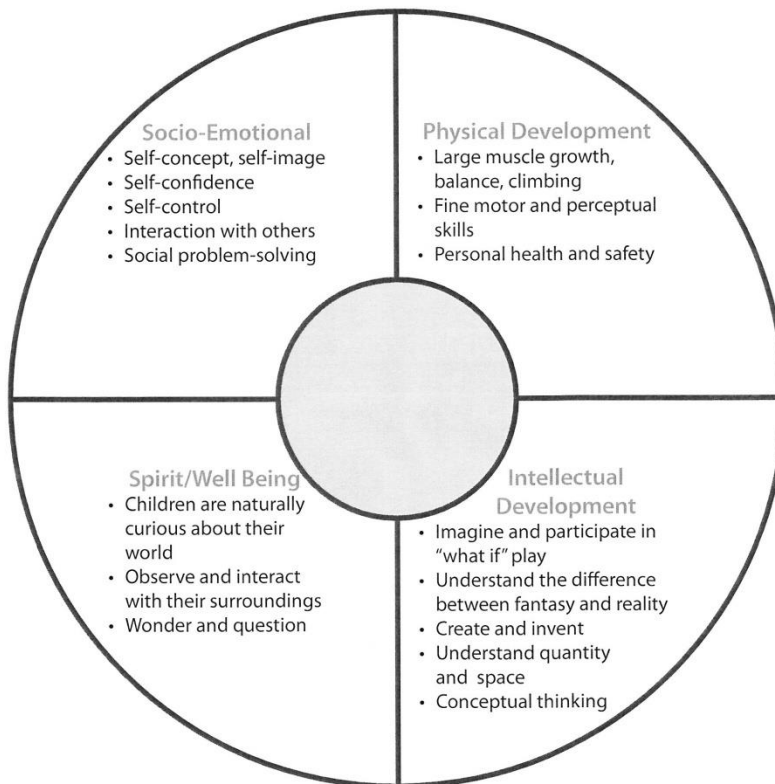
"Play is a child's work..." (Alfred Adler)

Kindergarten Report Card

The report card is completely **comment-based**. There is no check-list saying whether or not students know or do not know certain things. Through the comments, the teacher will highlight your child's strengths and next steps.

The report card gives equal weight to the following four developmental areas: socio-emotional, physical, spirit/well-being, and intellectual (see diagram below).

This report card also leaves space for parents and their child to comment. This is an opportunity for you and your child to reflect on some of the learning that takes place at home and what kind of person your child is within your family. This bridges the learning that goes on at school and at home and demonstrates that they are both important. We hope that you take the time to fill this out with your child. They are helpful to teachers to further understand who your child is and where they come from.



As Kindergarten Teachers, We Appreciate How You.....

- ☐ Understand that your child will learn at their own pace.
- ☐ Foster a love of reading by reading daily.
- ☐ Encourage your child to be independent.
- ☐ Work in cooperation with your child's teacher by communicating questions or concerns.
- ☐ Ensure that your child has adequate rest.
- ☐ Help your child to feel confident.
- ☐ Celebrate your child's successes, big or small.
- ☐ Encourage your child to dress independently.
- ☐ Communicate changes in your child's daily routine (i.e. absences, appointments, transportation...)

"Reading is the single most important thing you can do to help your child become a better reader." (Susan Kempton, *The Literate Kindergarten*)

UNITY

I dreamed I stood in a studio
And watched two sculptors there
The clay they used was a young child's mind
And they fashioned it with care
One was a teacher – the tools he used
Were books, music and art,
The other, a parent, worked with a guiding hand,
And a gentle, loving heart.
Day after day, the teacher toiled with touch
That was deft and sure,
While the parent labored by his side
And polished and smoothed it o'er.
And when at last their task was done,
They were proud of what they had wrought,
For the things they had molded into the child
Could neither be sold or bought.
And each agreed they would have failed
If each had worked alone.
For behind the teacher stood the school
And behind the parent, the home.

Author Unknown

Independence Activities

Encourage self-help skills at home such as:

- ⇒ Dressing – dress and undress with minimal help, put on socks and shoes, understand front versus back of clothing, hang up clothes, zip and unzip zippers, do snaps and large buttons
 - ❖ Remember undressing is easier than dressing
 - ❖ Try using loose fitting clothing when practicing
 - ❖ Practice dressing when schedule allows for extra time
 - ❖ Practice with toys such as dolls or teddy bears
- ⇒ Toileting – use alone, wipe self, manage clothing.
- ⇒ Basic hygiene – wash and dry hands by self, use a tissue when needed.
- ⇒ Eating – use fork and spoon with little to no spilling, open containers and packaging or ask for help if needed.
- ⇒ Establish habits of independently cleaning up materials/toys, opening and closing doors, opening and closing backpack and lunch kit.



If you have any concerns about your child's development of physical, attention and independence skills please connect with your child's teacher.



Activity Ideas to Develop Physical, Attention and Independence Skills:

Movement and touch are valuable learning tools. Children develop and acquire skills through exploration of the world and how their bodies work in it. During their early years, allow them to learn through their entire bodies!



As Occupational Therapists (OTs) in Prairie Spirit School Division, we work with children and school staff to help with their learning and functioning in the Kindergarten classroom: gross and fine motor skills (ie: their ability to jump, skip, colour, cut, print); being able to pay attention; and completing routines (ie: bathroom, locker, snack). We do this by working with teachers in the classroom to develop strategies to promote learning for all students. We may also make suggestions for individual children struggling with specific skills (fine and gross motor, attention/focus, independence) through informal assessment, consultation and recommendations for play-based programming.

Here are some ways to play and explore with your child to get ready for their transition to Kindergarten!



Gross Motor Activities

Gross motor skills are the foundation for developing good eye-hand coordination two-hand use, trunk control and fine motor control; participating in gross motor play is also important for learning.

- ⇒ Play on lots of different playgrounds. This encourages imagination and motor skills (climbing, crawling, sliding, swinging, etc.)
- ⇒ Play hopscotch and other jumping games.
- ⇒ Play with balls. Work on catching and throwing a big ball. This develops eye-hand coordination.
- ⇒ Ride a bike.
- ⇒ Pretend to be an animal (i.e., bear, frog, duck, inchworm, crab, etc.).
- ⇒ Play wrestle with your child.
- ⇒ Make obstacle courses, play Follow the Leader or Simon Says.
- ⇒ Encourage your kids to get outside and play. Limit technology use.
- ⇒ Encourage your kids to play board games, look at books or watch TV while lying on their tummy; this strengthens their trunk and shoulders.
- ⇒ Get to work! Have your kids help with chores (i.e., shoveling, raking leaves, sweeping, carrying the laundry basket, etc.). These are great two-handed activities to improve strength and coordination!
- ⇒ Play in the snow, sand, water.



Fine Motor Activities

There is no rush to get to printing! Encourage your child by doing a lot of play to develop their small hand muscles as well as draw basic shapes and pictures.

- ⇒ Play manipulative games such as Connect 4, Marbles, card games, Pick-up Sticks, Barrel of Monkeys, etc.
- ⇒ Play with Playdoh, modelling clay, etc.
- ⇒ Do puzzles.
- ⇒ Make jewelry. String beads, cheerios, etc.
- ⇒ Cut up construction paper, Playdoh and straws with scissors.
- ⇒ Play with finger puppets, do finger songs and clapping games.
- ⇒ Build with Lego, Duplo and other blocks.
- ⇒ Paint or draw at an easel.
- ⇒ Makes lots of crafts that include ripping paper, gluing, colouring, hole punching, cutting, etc.
- ⇒ Put money into a piggy bank.
- ⇒ Eat finger foods (pick up one raisin at a time using a pinch grasp).
- ⇒ Makes cookies (stir the batter, roll out cookies, use cookie cutters, etc.)
- ⇒ Open containers, twist off caps, rip open bags, etc.
- ⇒ Try buttoning, lacing and snapping activities.
- ⇒ Use small pieces of crayon or chalk.
- ⇒ Do simple tracing, mazes, and dot-to-dot activities
- ⇒ Finger paint in: pudding, sand, shaving cream, grains, water, etc.



- **Read rhyming books together:** Talk about how the words have the same endings, listen to and play with rhyming words together.
- **Encourage pretend play:** playing with your child is a wonderful way to have fun and build language skills!
- **Sing songs together:** have fun singing songs, use actions with songs.
- **Read words on signs and labels:** explore print in the environment through reading and talking about signs and labels. Talk about the sounds within the words, for example, McDonald's sign has a big M, M says "mmmmm".
- **Explore interesting books together:** read books that are of interest to your child, allow them to help "tell" the story through pictures. Remember to follow his lead, if he wants to stop and look at a favorite page, spend time talking about and exploring together.

****If you have any concerns about your child's speech, language or hearing, please connect with your child's teacher.**



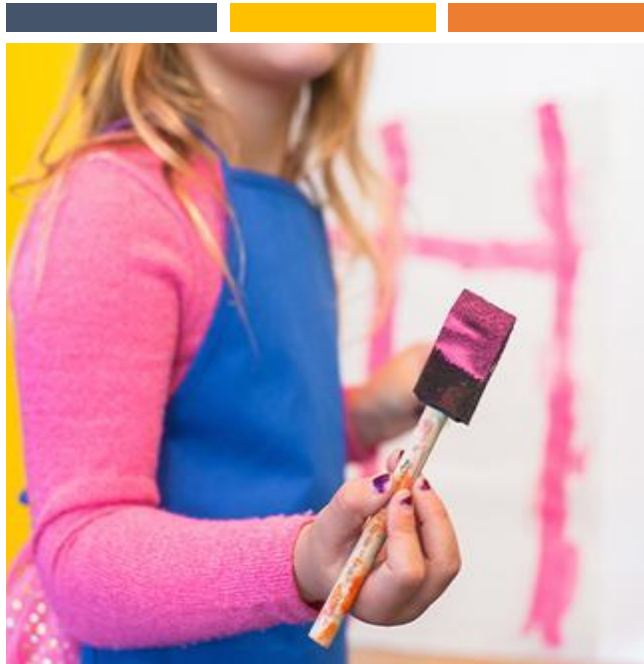
**Supporting Speech
Language and
Communication**



Here are some ways to play, explore and build communication skills with your child:

Retrieved from Talk Box Newsletter, Your 4 Year Old: A parents Guide to creating language-rich environments. <http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/documents/talk-box-newsletter-four-year-old.pdf>; Capital Health, 2007.

- ***Let your child lead:*** Talk about what he is doing or things he is interested in. Follow his interests.
- ***Be face to face:*** Get down to your child's level so she can see your face while playing.



Language is learned during back and forth conversations in everyday activities.

Dear families,

The school Speech Language Pathologists work on supporting communication and learning in the following areas:

- Using and understanding language
- Articulation (speech sounds)
- Social skills
- Hearing loss supports
- Phonological awareness (Pre reading)
- Augmentative/Alternative communication
- Fluency (stuttering)
- Voice

Support can be provided in various ways including: observing and interacting in the classroom, providing formal and informal assessments/reviews, consultation, direct therapy and programming supports.

- ***Add new words and ideas to what your child says:*** expand your child's speech, add new, interesting words and discuss and show meanings. Talk about how things work and explore together.
- ***Repeat what your child says using the correct words:*** she needs to hear the correct form, for example if she said "Him goed to the store" repeat the correct form such as "Yes, **HE WENT** to the store".
- ***Use describing words:*** expose your child to describing words when you talk together. Use words that describe, size, shape, color, texture, etc. Play games together that explore describing such as eye spy.