

PARENT HANDBOOK

2025/2026

Updated January 9, 2025

<mark>General Registration</mark> Monday, January 27 – Begins at 7:00pm spac.ca/treehouse

TREEHOUSE PRESCHOOL

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ABOUT US

TreeHouse Preschool offers a Christian-based program that encourages children to love learning though creative, hands-on activities engaging the whole child. Our goal is to assist young children in the growth of their social, mental, emotional, spiritual and physical development.

TreeHouse Preschool is a ministry of Sherwood Park Alliance Church. We are a government licensed preschool facility that is regulated by Alberta Child Care Services. Many children who attend TreeHouse Preschool continue on to Strathcona Christian Academy but our registration and governance are separate because SCA is an Elk Island Public School. If you would like your child to attend Kindergarten at SCA, please contact the SCA Elementary office at 780-449-2787.

OUR STAFF

All of our staff at TreeHouse are:

- caring Christian individuals, committed to connecting with parents
- passionate about creating age-appropriate, safe but fun learning environments for young children that will challenge each one to grow as an individual to make a successful transition to kindergarten
- government certified to work in an early childhood setting
- first aid (Level C)/CPR certified
- hold clean criminal record checks

ADMISSION

Mon/Wed 3 year old classes are for children who are at least 3 years old by August 31, 2025 and toilet trained. Unfortunately, we are not able to accept children into the program who have birthdays after August 31. These classes are for children who are planning to attend two years of preschool before going to Kindergarten.

Tues/Thurs PreK classes are for children who are 4 years old by December 31st of the year they are attending and planning on attending Kindergarten the following year.

CLASS DESCRIPTIONS

Monday/Wednesday Classes (3 year olds)

Mornings:	Doors Unlocked: 8:30am Doors Unlocked: 10:45am	Drop Off in Class: 8:45am Pick Up from Class: 11:00am
Afternoons:	Doors Unlocked: 12:15pm Doors Unlocked: 2:30pm	Drop Off in Class: 12:30pm Pick Up from Class: 2:45pm

Ratio: 2 teachers (Mrs. Amyotte & Mrs. Davis): 14 children per class

Tuesday/Thursday Classes (PreK)

Mornings:	Doors Unlocked: 8:30am Doors Unlocked: 10:45am	Drop Off in Class: 8:45am Pick Up from Class: 11:00am
Afternoons:	Doors Unlocked: 12:15pm Doors Unlocked: 2:30pm	Drop Off in Class: 12:30pm Pick Up from Class: 2:45pm

Ratio: 2 teachers (Mrs. McLean & Mrs. Wenger): 18 children per class

We ask that children stay close and are quiet before and after class times as there are SCA Secondary classes and church staff offices close by our classroom/hallway.

START UP DATES

Parent Meeting: Tuesday, September 2, 7pm

We encourage **ALL** parents and guardians who may drop off or pick up a child this year to attend.

Orientation Sessions: September 3/4

One parent or guardian is required to accompany his/her child to their Orientation. It will be a shortened session introducing what preschool will be like. Our goal is that you and your child will feel comfortable with the routines and excited/confident for your child to attend independently on their first day.

Morning Classes

Session 1 – 8:45 – 9:45am Session 2 – 10:00 – 11:00am

Afternoon Classes

Session 1 - 12:30 – 1:30pm Session 2 – 1:45 - 2:45pm

First Day of Regular Classes: September 8/9

Children are encouraged to attend class independently. "Hallway Goodbyes" is our method of transitioning children into the classroom. Caregivers are encouraged to say goodbye to their child in the hallway, teachers greet the children at the door and children independently enter the classroom.

Our teachers are committed to warmly welcoming and working with the children to calm them and help them transition into the classroom. If a child is not successfully transitioning into the classroom, teachers will collaborate with the parents to create a plan to help the child attend independently.

REGISTRATION

A \$50 non-refundable registration fee per child is required at the time of registration.

Monthly Tuition (Sept 2025- June 2026)

• \$79 per month* for 10 months

*Actual cost is \$154 per month but the Federal-Provincial Child Care Agreement will automatically cover \$75 per child. Additional Child Care Subsidy is available for families making \$180,000 or less so the full tuition cost can be covered if you are using preschool for childcare purposes (ie. work, attending school, special needs). Apply at https://www.alberta.ca/child-care-subsidy.aspx. If the government programs change, rates may increase up to the \$154 per month. In this case, if a family is unable to cover the tuition cost, please give 2 weeks written notice for withdrawing from the program.

- This is a flat rate per month, regardless of the number of actual class days as the number of days per month fluctuates.
- Tuition is non-refundable for absences or holidays including Covid-19 isolation/at-home learning days, inclement weather cancelations, vacations, EIPS calendar changes, etc.
- NSF withdrawals or cheques will be charged \$25

Payment Options

 Monthly - Automated credit or debit withdrawals on the 1st of each month, beginning September 1st. Set up payment at spac.ca/treehousepayment

Special Event Fee

• A one-time \$125 special event fee (for special guest visitors, field trips, celebrations, etc.) will be collected in September.

Withdrawal

• 2 weeks written notice is required for early withdrawal. Failure to provide written notification signed with the date effective will result in a forfeit of one month's tuition fee. There will be no refund of tuition for withdrawals after April 1st. Any summer withdrawals should inform the office by August 18th. Withdrawals after August 18th will still be charged for September.

DAILY ACTIVITIES

A typical day in TreeHouse Preschool will include Centers, Circle Times, Snack and Outdoor Play or Music/Movement and Story Time. Children should dress in clothing that is washable and will allow them to move freely in the classroom, large play spaces and outdoors.

Appropriate footwear is necessary. Indoor non-marking shoes should be sent at the beginning of the year and remain at preschool. These shoes should be slip on or velcro runners; no lace up shoes please. Indoor shoes will be worn whenever the children are indoors. Boots or outdoor shoes (slip on or Velcro) will be worn to preschool and used for outdoor play.

One of our preschool goals is for children to learn to put on their own shoes, coats and other winter items. Having clothing and footwear that are easy for children to put on is very helpful for your child to feel successful and for the teachers to manage the class. Check to make sure the zipper is easy enough for the child to do or learn to do – doesn't easily get stuck.

We will continue to play outside unless the temperature drops below -17°C with wind chill. Please make sure your child is dressed appropriately for the winter weather.

Please send these items with your child:

- Backpack
- Indoor shoes (Velcro or slip on)
- Nutritious Snack and water bottle in a lunch bag (details on Page 10)
 - The snack should be in packaging that your child can open
- Appropriate outdoor clothing for outdoor play
 - Running shoes (Slip on or Velcro) that are easy to put on, but not flip flops
 - Appropriate jacket
 - Snow pants, mitts, toque (when it's cold)
- Clean change of clothes (shirt, pants, underwear, socks) in a Ziploc bag

A TYPICAL DAY AT PRESCHOOL

Morning Program	Components	Afternoon Program
8:45am	Drop Off	12:30pm
8:45 – 9:50 am	Circle Time/Centers	12:30 – 1:35 pm
9:50 – 10:10 am	Snack Time	1:35 – 1:55 pm
10:10 – 10:40 am	Outdoor/Music & Movement	1:55 2:25 pm
10:40 – 11:10 am	Story Time	2:25 – 2:45pm
11:00am	Pick Up	2:45pm

Drop Off

- 1. Please assess your child/family health before leaving home. Keep child at home if they have any symptoms or health concerns.
- 2. Before leaving home, have child use the washroom. If this is not possible, have child use washroom when arriving at preschool before entering the classroom.
- 3. When you arrive, put child's items in their locker.
- 4. Check In your child on Ipad in the hallway outside the classroom.
- 5. When the classroom door is open, children may enter the classroom.
- 6. Teacher will mark each child as 'present' when they come into the class.

Circle Time

Children sit as a group to practice listening to others and group social skills. Our classroom safety, Red/Green Choices, and Letterland literacy will be introduced through puppets and props. Prayer, stories, and birthday recognition are a part of this time as well. Children will take turns being recognized as the "Leader" and share a photo or video of a special person, place or thing in their life.

Centers

Children will be invited to participate in art, fine motor, science, sensory, dramatic play, literacy, and numeracy activities.

Snack Time

- 1. 20 second handwashing
- 2. Prayer
- 3. Parents are required to provide a healthy snack and drink for their child each day. Please be sure that all containers are labeled with your child's name and easy for your child to open so that teachers don't have to touch each child's food containers. The snack must include two or more food groups but must not contain any peanuts or nut-based foods. A supply of pre-packaged snacks (as nutritious as possible) will be kept in the classroom if a child arrives without a snack. A snack will be given to the child and the parent will be notified of what the child ate.
- 4. Children enjoy their nutritious snack from home as they sit around tables and have time to talk to each other. Social skills such as talking, listening, waiting, and cleaning up are all practiced.
- 5. Children will hand sanitize or wash hands again after snack.

Birthday & Special Event Snacks

A special day to recognize your child's birthday will be scheduled on our calendar. They will be the special leader and you are welcome to bring store bought, nut-free, individual treats to share. Examples - mini cupcakes, Rice Krispie treats, Bear Paws, fruit snacks, ice cream cups (Save On Foods). Feel free to ask your teachers questions and confirm what you would like to bring.

Outdoor Play/Music & Movement

Each day the children leave the TreeHouse classroom. Our preference is to play outside as often as possible, but we also have access to an indoor playground and a large space to have active games and music/movement activities.

Story Time

The teacher will read a story, sing songs and play games with the children during the transition as parents pick up their children.

Pick Up

- 1. Children are not permitted to leave the classroom until their parent/guardian has arrived and we have marked them as 'checked out'. If your child is being picked up by someone other than a parent/guardian/emergency contact, a written notification must be provided.
- 2. Guardians, please line up by the door, ready to receive their child.
- 3. One at a time, our teachers will release children to their guardian's care.
- 4. Guardians help their child put on outdoor clothing and backpack.
- 5. Please be **on time** to allow teachers time to prepare for the next class.

EXTREME WEATHER

If Elk Island Public School buses are not running, please watch for a text message from our staff regarding the status of TreeHouse classes. We will do our best to still offer class, but class may be canceled if our staff feel unsafe traveling to school due to road conditions. No make up days are scheduled or refunds given for cancelled classes.

SPECIAL EVENTS

In School Field Trips

We welcome special guests in our classroom to enhance our lessons.

Off Site Field Trips

Off-site trips will be planned to correspond with one of our themes. Information letters and consent forms will be sent home with the children to prepare for this event. Depending on the event we may offer bussing, but you have the choice whether to send your child on the bus or arrange your own transportation. We have a 1 adult: 4 children ratio during field trips so if you are a parent helper, we ask that you find alternate childcare for other siblings. According to government licensing, any parent helper responsible for supervising other children will need a criminal record check.

Holiday Celebrations

Check the key dates on page 18 for special celebrations we will incorporate throughout our school year (ie. Christmas concert, in class holiday celebrations, Year End/Graduation).

Parent/Child Night

Preschoolers are welcome to bring 1 or 2 adult guests to Parent/Child night. We ask that siblings do not attend so it's a special night to focus on your preschooler. If parents are unable to attend, grandparents, relatives or a family friend is welcome to attend.

CHILD GUIDANCE

1. Clear communication of positive ways to interact in our classroom:

From the first day of school, children will be taught in age-appropriate ways at circle time and small groups and reminded throughout the year on how to be safe, kind to each other, respect the teachers, respect the classroom, and make positive choices at preschool. Children engage in talking about ways to solve potential problems before they occur and how to treat others with respect in the classroom. Appropriate read aloud books and visual prompts help remind children of how to make positive choices.

2. Staff Assessment of Situation/Child Reminder and/or Redirection:

When a child's choices are unsafe or negatively impact others or the classroom environment, the child will be encouraged to make safe, positive choices and redirected if necessary. The staff will assess the classroom environment to ensure the setup is empowering children to learn/discover and adjust as needed.

3. **Verbal Intervention:** If a child continues to make unsafe choices, the teacher/assistant will talk with the child to help him/her understand how their behavior could be unsafe, hurt other children or causes problems in the classroom. Children will be encouraged to use words to express their feelings, wants and needs and to work towards a peaceful resolution.

4. **Developmentally Appropriate Consequences**: However, if the child is struggling to make safe, positive choices, the teacher/assistant may need to intervene more formally to ensure the safety of all children. This may involve asking the child to play in a different area of the room or putting a toy away for a period. If the unsafe behavior continues, the child will spend time with the teacher and participate in the activities the teacher is doing until they are ready to make positive choices again. In every situation, the goal is to help the child learn to make safe, positive choices to be successful in social situations.

Unacceptable forms of punishment that will not be tolerated include:

- o a child placed in an isolated spot like a time out chair
- o embarrassment or verbal abuse
- o spankings or any use of physical force against a child

5. Parent Communication: Teachers speak directly to the parents regularly regarding the care of their child. When a child needs more assistance in making safe, positive choices in class, teachers will communicate the situation to parents at the end of the day. If more intervention is necessary, a meeting will be arranged with the parents, teacher, and Preschool Manager to discuss solutions and supports required to help the child participate safely at preschool.

PARENT / GUARDIAN BEHAVIOR

For staff, children, and families to be able to enjoy a positive environment at TreeHouse Preschool it is important that some behaviour expectations are followed. In registering your child to attend TreeHouse Preschool it is assumed that you understand and will abide by these expectations.

Parents and guardians are to show respect and concern for others by:

- treating each child the way they would wish their child be treated.
- using speech that is not offensive or abusive when speaking with staff, preschool children, and families.
- assisting staff in developing strategies to address child behavioural concerns.
- communicating directly with TreeHouse staff instead of other parents when dealing with issues involving their child or another child.
- refraining from negative comments concerning TreeHouse Preschool, the staff, or students to others through social media.

If parents or guardians feel they are not being dealt with satisfactorily by TreeHouse staff, please bring your concerns to the Preschool Manager.

TreeHouse Preschool reserves the right to decline registration privileges for families that are unwilling to follow these behaviour expectations.

BATHROOM PROCEDURES

It is a registration requirement of TreeHouse Preschool that all students attending classes must be able to toilet independently. Pull ups are not permitted.

Encourage your child to use the bathroom before coming to preschool. If you are not able to use a washroom before arriving at preschool, please have your child use the washroom when you arrive.

The bathrooms are always available for use by students and children can use them whenever necessary. It is not necessary for children to request use of the bathroom as they are encouraged to grow in self-confidence through choosing to use the washroom when they need to. Children are expected to wipe their own bottoms and staff are not able to do this for them. Children must wash their hands for 20 seconds after using the washroom.

We understand bathroom accidents do happen. If a child wets their pants a staff member will locate the child's extra clothes and help them change. The staff will do this as private as possible for the child, but without closing doors to maintain safety for both staff and child. The parent or guardian will be called and asked to help child or take child home if the accident is too messy for a simple change of clothes. If accidents become a regular occurrence, a plan will need to be created with the staff which may include taking time off attending preschool until the child is able to toilet independently.

SMOKING

Smoking is not permitted at the TreeHouse Preschool. This applies to all staff, volunteers, and guests within the preschool, on the school grounds, on field trips, or any place where childcare is being provided.

MEDICATION

TreeHouse Preschool will NOT administer non-prescription or prescription medication to the children. The only exception to this is prescribed medication for emergency situations, such as severe allergic reactions. In this case a parent must complete and sign a medical consent form. The medication must be in its original container with clear usage instructions.

SICKNESS

Out of respect for the other families and teachers, we request that children who are ill be kept at home to avoid passing along viruses and communicable diseases. These include Covid-19, fevers, vomiting, diarrhea, body rash, chicken pox, measles, mumps, pink eye, strep throat, and head lice. Please contact your family doctor or the Strathcona County Health Authority as to when it is appropriate for your child to return to class.

Please keep in communication with preschool staff so that we are aware of your child's health and able to facilitate a healthy, safe environment for all children and families.

On days when you child will not be attending class, please contact us:

- Before or after class please email your teacher:
 - Mon/Wed classes <u>lindsay.amyotte@spac.ca</u>
 - Tues/Thurs classes -<u>raelene.mclean@spac.ca</u>
- During class time text or call our TreeHouse Classroom Cell 780-239-1995

If a child becomes ill at school or exhibits signs or symptoms of illness, parents will be contacted to pick up their child as soon as possible. If a parent is unavailable, emergency contacts will be called. He/she will be kept comfortable and supervised apart from other students, until a parent/guardian arrives.

According to licensing and school policy, we are not able to have a child sit out of specified activities so if your child is not able to participate in all the class activities, we ask that your child stays home.

No refunds are given for missed days of school.

SAFETY

While every effort is made to provide reasonable supervision for the children it is not possible to prevent accidental incidents. Our staff have valid first aid certificates. Staff will ensure proper ratios of child/staff are maintained inside and outside of the classroom. Regular number counts will be done upon entering and leaving areas to ensure that all children are accounted for.

Facility staff regularly maintain all areas that children play in to ensure a safe environment. TreeHouse staff will survey all areas before children are introduced to them and will report any deficiencies to facility staff. If TreeHouse staff deem any area as unsafe, the children will not enter it and will be redirected.

If an injury occurs during the Preschool program, the staff will survey the situation and proceed with the steps in our Incident Policy.

INCIDENT POLICY

For minor injuries (scratches, minor cuts, bumps), the staff will provide first aid to the child along with gentle care. If deemed necessary, an incident report will be completed by the teacher and signed by the parent at the time of pick up. The report will be kept on file.

If the injury requires immediate medical attention but is not life threatening, the teacher will provide initial first aid and comfort the child until a parent can be contacted to come to the Preschool. If neither of the parents can be reached, the emergency contact will be called. An incident report will be completed by the teacher, signed by the parent, and kept on file.

If the injury is life threatening, an ambulance will be called, and a teacher will accompany the child to the hospital. The parents will be contacted immediately and told to proceed to the hospital. If neither of the parents can be reached, the emergency contact will be called. An incident report will be completed by the teacher, signed by the parent, and kept on file.

All incidents are analyzed annually, and a report is submitted to the regional childcare office.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The teachers, children and parents will be made aware of the appropriate procedures for evacuating the building. Fire drills and safety procedures will be taught and practiced throughout the year.

When the fire alarm is heard:

- 1. Children form a line at the classroom door.
- 2. The classroom teacher collects the attendance book and emergency file box with family information.
- 3. The teacher and children exit the building through the door at the east side of the building.
- 4. The classroom assistant will check the play areas, centers, washrooms, close windows, turn off lights, and close the door before following the class outside.
- 5. The class will proceed to the designated meeting area where attendance will be taken.
- 6. The class will return to the building once permission has been granted by the appropriate authorities.
- 7. If the children are unable to return to the building, teachers and children will walk across the street to the Strathcona Christian Academy Elementary School Campus (52362 RR 231). Parents will be contacted to pick up their children at this location.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

At TreeHouse Preschool, we recognize the importance of partnering with parents in their children's development. We also believe that preschool is an opportunity to build developmental bridges between the home and school experiences as children are allowed to attend preschool independently.

Parents will be welcomed as guests into our classroom twice during the school year. One parent/guardian (no siblings please) is welcome to attend with their child. This is an invitation, not required if parent/guardian is working or unavailable. The parent/guardian will not be responsible for supervising children or providing behavioral guidance to other children. This is a special time for the parent to experience preschool with their child. If a parent is not feeling well, please let a staff member know and we will do our best to reschedule the leader day.

COMMUNICATION

Classroom activities and events will be communicated through:

- monthly calendar and newsletter in print/emailed at the end of the month prior
- reminder emails/text messages
- Parent Only Instagram Account ("treehouseparents2025")

Private Instagram Account

We have a private Instagram account for parents to see all the fun and learning happening at TreeHouse. Parents agree to participate with the Instagram account on the registration form. Only photos/videos of children we have received authorization to share will be posted. Only parents of current TreeHouse students will be allowed access to the account.

Open communication between parents and staff is essential to ensure continuity and a successful learning experience for the child. Parents are encouraged to speak directly to a teacher regarding any questions or concerns and/or provide comments they may have in writing. In the same way the teachers will communicate in writing, verbally or make further arrangements to meet with a parent if there are any concerns.

WHAT IF....

Reading this Parent Handbook, you may have more questions. We cannot cover every scenario in the handbook. We hope to never experience another pandemic, but if government regulations require a shut down for any reason, we will need to comply and adjust our program. If we must shut down, we will follow proper protocols and reopen under AHS guidance. No refund will be given for missed days.

If we must shut down for a longer period, no refund will be issued for the current month's tuition, but we will not process any further tuition payments until we can return to class.

Feel free to contact the Preschool Manager, Heather Spronk, with any questions.

2025/2026 TREEHOUSE DATES

Our class schedule is built off the Elk Island Public Schools calendar. This is subject to change based on AHS Guidance and Elk Island Public Schools calendar adjustments.

Class Schedules

Mon/Wed AM 8:45-11am	Tues/Thurs AM 8:45-11am
Mon/Wed PM 12:30-2:45pm	Tues/Thurs PM 12:30-2:45pm

Mark Your Calendars

Special Event dates are tentative at this point. Confirmed dates will be available in September. Field trip dates will be communicated throughout the year in monthly calendar/newsletter.

CONTACT INFORMATION

TreeHouse Preschool

Sherwood Park Alliance Church 1011 Clover Bar Road Sherwood Park, AB T8A 4V7

Main Church Office: 780-467-8404

TreeHouse Classroom Cell: 780-239-1995 (text or call during your child's class)

TreeHouse Reminders: 587-905-0055 (reminder service, do not reply)

During non-class time, please email your teacher directly.

Website: <u>www.spac.ca/treehouse</u>

Heather Spronk

Kids Pastor & TreeHouse Preschool Manager (780) 467-8404 x 315 heather.spronk@spac.ca

Lindsay Amyotte

Mon/Wed Head Teacher (780) 239-1995 lindsay.amyotte@spac.ca

Jenny Davis Mon/Wed Assistant Teacher

Raelene McLean Tues/Thurs Head Teacher (780) 239-1995 raelene.mclean@spac.ca

Sherri-Lynn Wenger Tues/Thurs Assistant Teacher