

General Information

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If the Small Set program is not for you, please pass this package on to a friend that may benefit.

- ❖ Please review the General Information & Registration pages in full.
- ❖ Contact us with any questions or concerns. We will be happy to clarify.



GENERAL INFORMATION

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Thank you for your interest in Midland Small Set Co-operative Nursery School. Preschool is a wonderful opportunity for your child to develop many life-long skills including making friends, group collaboration, creative expression and being a valued member of a community. Many families have told us that participation in the Small Set program greatly facilitates the transition to kindergarten.

OUR PROGRAM:

Founded in 1981, Small Set Cooperative Nursery School is a not-for-profit licensed preschool offering half day childcare in Midland, Ontario. Parents take an active role in creating a nurturing community optimal for learning. Our program is run by educators who engage children in play-based learning with curiosity, empathy and respect. Activities and experiences are developmentally-appropriate and support children's physical, cognitive, social and emotional learning. We operate out of our bright and spacious classroom in St. Paul's Church.

Our cooperative is rooted in the values of:

- Empathy and Respect
- Learning through play and curiosity
- Transparency and Accountability
- Community Belonging

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Midland Small Set Co-Operative Nursery School is licensed to enroll a total of 16 preschoolers per day (maximum 8:1 student/teacher ratio). Our classes operate from the upper level of St. Paul's United Church, 308 King Street, which is fully licensed and inspected annually. The school year begins the Monday after Labour Day in September and continues until the third week of June. Classes run from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. Following the Simcoe County District School Board schedule, we are closed for Christmas break, Spring Break, Statutory holidays, July and August. Inclement weather closures (snow days) are determined by staff, board discussion and conferred with SCDSB, North Zone bus cancellations and/or recommendations. Notifications via text message aim to be sent before 8am.

Midland Small Set Co-Operative Nursery School is licensed by the Ministry of Education, Child Care Quality Assurance and Licensing, Barrie Region. Children must be a minimum 30 months of age before their first day of class.

WHAT IS A CO-OPERATIVE SCHOOL?

A co-operative school is a not-for-profit organization, administered and maintained by its members. Being a member of a co-operative school involves **parent participation** which includes active involvement in all phases of the program. Parents and/or guardians are welcome to assist in the classroom, under the supervision of our qualified educators. In an attempt to help ensure that all involved contribute equally and fairly, **each family is asked to complete a minimum of 10 volunteer hours throughout the year.** Details to follow.

CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION

Parents/Grandparents/Guardians are invited (but not mandatory) to join in the classroom routine and experience throughout the school year. However, participants are required to submit a Criminal Reference Check (CRC) before volunteering. **Please note; CRC's may take up to 4 weeks to obtain.** For your convenience, a CRC request letter is available upon request to submit to the local OPP. Children not enrolled in the school (i.e. siblings) MAY NOT be brought to school during classroom participation days (as dictated by insurance and licensing).

SUPPLY TEACHER LIST

Like many preschool programs, we are struggling with a shortage of available Supply Teachers. Similar to the paragraph above, all participants would require a valid CRC as well as a submission of personal references. He/She would work alongside at least one current staff member in order to avoid temporary closures. This position would be on an as needed basis and compensated.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Programs are evaluated regularly to reflect changes within the Child Care Early Years Act and ideologies on Early Childhood Education. A newsletter and calendar will be available regularly informing you of topics of interest, including program themes, events and preschool news. Families are invited to contribute to these newsletters.

INCLUSION

Small Set is a place where children of all abilities are invited to participate in the program in a meaningful way. If your child has inclusion needs, please inform the Small Set Administrator at your earliest convenience. Small Set educators work with families, community partners and a child's support network to enable participation in the classroom and may request a meeting with you prior to your child starting in the program.

An environment of inclusion starts at home and we encourage all families to discuss the importance of tolerance and diversity at home.

EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES

Together with an Early Learning Professional, a screening initiative program is offered through Community Living Huronia and RVH. An *Early Referral Identification Kit* (ERIK) is a questionnaire available to help caregivers and educators determine if your child is or is not meeting his/her developmental milestones. This project aims to help families identify what services, if any, may be beneficial to support their child. We encourage you to share any concerns about your child's development with staff. Research tells us the earlier a child receives intervention, the better the outcome. We want to help your child be as ready as possible for kindergarten.

STUDENT NEEDS

Small Set may need to make modifications to your child's involvement with the program if it is not developmentally appropriate. Our program may not be able to meet all needs if 1:1 support is required. These modifications may include, but not limited to, if a child is showing aggression to other students or staff (ie. biting, hitting and/or throwing toys) on an ongoing basis, the in-class time may be shortened.

HEALTH SCREENING AND COVID PROTOCOLS:

Families are required to self-screen each morning for COVID or other symptoms. If your child or a member of your household is sick, you are required to keep your child at home. COVID vaccination of all eligible community members is an essential layer of protection for vulnerable members of our community, including the children in our care who are not yet eligible for vaccination. ***It is an expectation that all eligible members of your child's household have received all eligible doses of vaccination for COVID-19. We will not require documentation but appreciate your cooperation to adhere to this expectation.***

VOLUNTEER HOURS

With the guidance and direction of the elected Board, all families are asked to volunteer approximately 10 hours throughout the year. These hours will consist of various tasks including attendance to all required general meetings, any fundraising event attendance and/or facilitation. Full participation is required for all members including those that have opted to the fundraising buyout.

Some of you may recall Duty Days from previous years. The Board has decided to discontinue duty days going forward. There are several reasons for this decision, most notably due to the increased obligations on parents and caregivers. Participation in Duty days became a barrier for many families. If you would like to know more about the decision, please feel free to reach out.

In the past, duty days were an important part of building the sense of community amongst the Small Set families. Many parents, including current Board Members report meeting other parents at Small Set helped reduce the isolation of parents of young children. There will be several ways we look forward to continue to build the sense of community that has made Small Set a success for 4 decades - including community outings, community meetings, and volunteer opportunities. Volunteer opportunities include, but not limited to:

- Organizing community outings
- Classroom cleaning/Housekeeping (deep clean twice yearly)
- Social media and community outreach
- General Meetings twice annually
- Board of Directors
- Fundraising activities
- Small Set Celebrations

BOND CHEQUES

Bond cheques are mandatory. If the first 3 hours of the volunteer commitment is missed or fundraising requirements are not met, the bond cheque of \$200 will be cashed and a replacement cheque of \$200 would be required in order to continue. Any further hours missed and the second cheque will be cashed.

FUNDRAISING & DONATIONS

Donations and fundraising is a crucial part in the financial maintenance of our school and requires the maximum cooperation of all parents for its efficient operation. Each family is required to provide an additional \$200 per school year. This can be done through fundraisers held throughout the year or added to monthly program fees. Fundraisers can be great opportunities to make new friends and participate with/for your child. There can be few or several opportunities throughout the year, subject to member discussion and agreement. Fundraising can feel overwhelming and time consuming but these events are only successful with your support and effort. Fundraising ideas and suggestions are encouraged and will be discussed at General Meetings.

There are 3 fundraising options:

Option 1: I will fundraise \$200.

Option 2: I will fundraise only \$100. Add \$10 extra per month to my monthly fee.

Option 3: I will not fundraise. Add \$20 extra per month to my monthly fee.

Donations are always welcome (but separate from fundraising requirements) to assist in keeping costs low. Items like, but not limited to: **Dollar Store and/or Walmart gift cards, paper towels, Kleenex, dish soap, hand soap, bleach, play doh, markers, glue sticks, craft supplies** are appreciated. A list of supplies may be posted from time to time on the information board outside the classroom as needed.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Small Set is owned and operated by the enrolled families each year. The legally constituted Board of Directors administers the school on behalf of the families. Without it, the school would not be able to operate. Board meetings are held approximately 5 times during the school year or on an as needed basis via email. **Board members receive a small monthly fee discount and registration priority preference.** The Board and Committees are a collective effort. While individuals are given particular roles and responsibilities, all families participate in making sure each task is completed successfully. The following list gives an overview of each position (more information available upon request):

President (Board Member); 2nd Year Family

The President oversees the entire operation of the centre on behalf of the families and the Board of Directors and works in close co-operation with the Supervisor, who runs the centre on a day-to-day basis.

Vice-President (Board Member)

The Vice-President fills in for the President when the President is absent. The primary responsibilities of the VP are advertising, promotion and marketing.

Treasurer (Board Member)

The Treasurer's primary responsibility is working closely with the President, communicating between the bookkeeper and Board when/if required.

Secretary (Board Member)

In addition to being a member of the Board of Directors, the Secretary's responsibility is to provide administrative services to the Board and the Centre. To oversee and maintain meeting minutes and communications are the primary tasks.

Fundraiser (Board Member)

Fundraiser is responsible for coordinating, organizing and overseeing fundraising campaigns throughout the year. Maintain up-to-date, accurate fundraising files including inventory, orders, expenses and surplus.

SUMMARY

The requirements of the co-operative may seem overwhelming at the start. For most families time is already stretched thin and the 'extras' outlined may be off putting. We are confident that the benefits your child will receive from this program far outweigh the temporary commitment being asked of its families within. Preschool classroom skills are a valuable stepping stone on your child's educational path. Welcome! 😊