



WELCOME TO KINDERGARTEN

At Chinook Winds Adventist Academy



Dear Kindergarten Parents,

I wish to take this opportunity to introduce myself to you. I am the kindergarten teacher at Chinook Winds Adventist Academy and teaching kindergarten is a wonderful job! There is probably no career better than this one! I love seeing children grow the way kindergartners do. At the beginning of the year, they are just babies, but by the end, they are “big kids.” Each student is very dear to me. I consider it an honor to teach each child.

LET’S GET ACQUAINTED... I have been a Classroom Teacher and Resource and Reading Teacher for 19 years: 11 years in England and 8 years in Canada. My specialization is in literacy and elementary education. Besides teaching, I love to spend time with my son Elliot, my daughter Caldora, my husband Les, and family and friends. I also enjoy travelling, scrapbooking, making my own personalized cards, reading, and walking. I am passionate about relational and social activities at my local church, and love being a member of the Sabbath School Department and the Nurture Team.

KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM.... Kindergarten has a very exciting curriculum! We learn our ABC’s, 123’s, learn the sounds letters make, and adding and subtracting. We work on social skills, rules and singing songs. We will encounter many new experiences. One of our important goals is to help your child become a responsible and independent learner.

DOING OUR BEST... I believe that it is my responsibility to provide each and every student with an educational experience that is enriching and rewarding. I plan to invite each student to take a pledge with me on the first day of school stating that we will invite Jesus to be with us every day and that we will do our best in kindergarten this year. My goal is to encourage the students to strive to achieve their own personal best during this very important year in their educational experience. Each day we focus on making good choices and resolving conflict in positive ways.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL... Communication between a teacher and parents or guardians is vital for a child’s success and happiness in the classroom. I take a “team approach” concerning each child’s education, where we will form collective goals for your child. We will work together to ensure your child is happy, challenged, comfortable, and secure at school. Parents are asked to be involved on a daily basis having fun...reading books daily, playing word games, reviewing letters/sounds, and numbers, etc. I will send out weekly newsletters to keep you informed about everything that we are working on in school.

VOLUNTEERING IN OUR CLASSROOM... It's such a special moment when a child shares their parent with the rest of the class! And so at the beginning of the year I send out a sign-up sheet for parents to share the ways in which they would like to volunteer within the class. Volunteer opportunities could include accompanying us on a field trip, joining the class for 30 minutes or even an hour, to read a story, help with a craft activity, share a gift or talent (eg. playing a musical instrument, sharing a mission trip with artefacts/photos, a trade or craft that is visual or kinesthetic), share about your job or career, bring your pet dog to class, or set up a bulletin board or photocopy!

I am excited and looking forward to a growing partnership with you as we nurture, educate, have lots of fun with and make lasting memories as we build relationships with your dear children.

God’s blessings on you as you make this important decision!

Hilary Blackburn



KINDERGARTEN READINESS

How do I know if my child's ready?



At Chinook Winds Adventist Academy, we are intentional about developing your child's fullest potential in all areas—physical, social, mental, and spiritual. We believe that each child is unique and we strongly encourage parents to consider carefully the readiness of their child to begin the educational journey.

Young children grow quickly and develop skills at different rates. While there is no perfect formula that determines when your child is truly ready for kindergarten in every aspect, he or she will have a journey that leads to success. Your child will be more likely to be comfortable socially, adjust to the regular demands of a school program, be engaged and emotionally secure, and have an easier time discovering who God has created them to be.

Readiness is the fundamental principal of learning. A young child is like a butterfly—when they are truly ready to begin the schooling process, they begin to emerge from their cocoon, that safe place they have been for the first years of their life, surrounded by their family. When a child is pushed into an environment where too much is expected of them too soon, it is a similar experience to that of a caterpillar pulled by human hands from its cocoon – the caterpillar never fully develops into its full potential as a butterfly. Research has shown that this early, premature pushing of a young child can seriously impact the quality of life that they might have otherwise experienced, if they had been allowed to develop at their own pace.

Here are some important factors to consider about your child's readiness for kindergarten:

- In kindergarten, your child will be asked to participate in many different activities. Is your child ready to follow routines and keep up with social and academic expectations? Is your child able to manage independent transitions from one activity to the next? Is your child able to regulate their emotions and independently problem-solve with their classmates?
- In order to prepare for Grade 1, there are certain accomplishments that will help with academic success, for example, letters and sounds, sight words, initiating their own writing. Consider the academic stress that your child will be exposed to - and then imagine the difference a year might make in their development.
- How is your child's coordination? A year of growth may mean that there is no pressure on learning to hold the pencil and scissors correctly. These issues are about maturity, not intelligence.
- Is your child able to confidently lead or are they unsure of what to do and easily follow other children?
- Is your child excited to come to school? Kids who are ready to be in kindergarten are generally enthusiastic about learning to read and write. If your child isn't ready to be in kindergarten, these expectations are going to feel wrong to them and they will lose interest. We find an increase in school absences as the year progresses when a child is not ready for kindergarten.
- We teach children to be proactive and make good choices. If they are truly ready when they begin this journey of life they will be open to learning to solve problems in a proactive manner – which requires maturity.

Heading off to Kindergarten is a big step for kids! It is a child's first introduction to formal education. Even if your child meets the age requirement for Kindergarten (5 years old by September 30), if they are not physical, social, or mental ready, it could have a serious and negative long-term impact on their perceptions and feeling about school and about their own abilities.

For this reason, we invite you to make an appointment for your child to come for a kindergarten readiness assessment at the school. This child-friendly diagnostic assessment serves as a baseline for moving forward; this assessment is conducted by our Kindergarten Teacher in a 1:1 setting. The benefits of this are two-fold: 1) It provides a great opportunity for the teacher to build rapport with your child, and gain insights into your child's thinking and how they respond to their learning environment, and 2) for your child to feel at ease as they carry out basic cognitive assessments. Your child also has the opportunity to preview their new learning environment, and this familiarity anxiety-reliever as they anticipate starting Kindergarten.



We are also proud to offer an optional second year Kindergarten Program for students who are not yet ready to enter Grade 1. Through the years many parents have chosen to give their child the gift of an extra year in Kindergarten. And while we can think of several who didn't – and regret it, we have, to date, never encountered a single parent who regrets giving their child one more year.