



Bright Beginnings

Fine Arts Preschool

Welcome to Bright Beginnings!

We are a licensed preschool offering high quality daily artistic programs for children aged 3-5, staffed by educators who are passionate and dedicated to enriching young lives; we believe that using a well-rounded arts education at a young age promotes physical, emotional, social, intellectual, and linguistic development.

We recognize that for young children art is a language and that children express themselves through play, art, music, and storytelling, and that they may instinctively use dramatic play to express feelings of real thoughts and emotions. With the understanding that it is important to create valuable and meaningful experiences for young children to discover their talents, explore their world, and create a strong foundation for learning and success, we looked and found that arts programs & curriculums for young children were lacking and so the idea for Bright Beginnings was formed.

Our program is founded on and guided by a single basic philosophy - that childhood academic success comes more readily when children are prepared with a creative and inquisitive mind. Each week our children are exposed to dance, music, art, theatre, storytelling, and more; our core belief is that within the structure of each art form there is no right or wrong way and that the focus should be on **art as a process and not a product**. We ask that our parents embrace this philosophy as well and understand that our goal is to provide world citizens with pro-social skills, emotional literacy, and a creative spirit.

Denise Akester

Owner/Director - Bright Beginnings

Art is a language

Even as toddlers, children understand how to integrate music & movement. Preschoolers show their delight in music when they dance, and they often use colour to match their moods in order express their ideas and feelings. Puppetry and creative play help children express real thoughts and emotions.

Art helps us understand how the world works

As children make marks and then draw on paper, they figure out how people use symbols to communicate and represent ideas. When they build, they're learning physics principles, such as balance, stability, and weight. In music they learn rhythm & musicality, and in dance they learn coordination, weight transference, and an awareness of their surroundings.

Art builds lifelong abilities

Skills that people need to lead productive lives are built through regular experiences with the visual and performing arts and these abilities are essential in both childhood and adulthood:

- understanding of cause and effect
- motor control and sensory awareness
- appreciation for beauty and diversity
- reflecting on ideas
- independence
- cooperation and sharing
- ability to make informed choices
- communication through a variety of media
- creative and flexible thinking
- problem solving with materials and people
- awareness of own and others' interests and skills
- determination to stick with a project until it is complete

Art is about learning & creating, and our focus is for young children to be hands-on learners. As explorers they can:

- glue textured collages with colorful craft materials
- roll and press their fingers into brightly colored modeling compounds
- color with crayons and markers on plain paper
- pile blocks into towers and then gently knock them over to build something else

"Art has the role in education of helping children become like themselves instead of more like everyone else." ~~Sydney Gurewitz Clemens

“Certain arts activities promote growth in positive social skills, including self-confidence, self-control, conflict resolution, collaboration, empathy, and social tolerance. Research evidence demonstrates these benefits apply to all students, not just the gifted and talented. The arts can play a key role in developing social competencies among educationally or economically disadvantaged youth who are at greatest risk of not successfully completing their education.” (2006 report Critical Evidence – How the ARTS Benefit Student Achievement)

PROGRAM LAYOUT

The fundamental pillars of our program are:

- Music & Rhythm: rhythm, musicality, instruments, singing, melody
- Dance & Yoga: gross motor skills, proprioception, balance, free movement
- Visual Arts & Creativity: painting, drawing, sculpture, crafting, architecture
- Drama & Imaginative Play: puppetry, drama, dress up, performing, pantomime
- Stories & Language: fiction, non-fiction, poetry, folktales

LEARNING TOOLS

- Music Arts: castanets, egg shakers, tambourines, hand bells, xylophones, hand drums
- Drama Arts: puppet theatre, dress up, props
- Visual Arts: clay, watercolours, crayons, charcoal, modeling, painting, drawing, sketching
- Dance Arts: creative movement, ballet, tap dance, tumbling, trampoline, yoga
- Literary Arts: picture books, chapter stories, letters & word tracings

FIVE AREAS OF DEVELOPMENT

- Physical: large & small muscle appropriate to level of development, self-help skills, health & safety habits
- Intellectual: curiosity, reasoning & problem solving, concept building, classifying, ordering, direction, spatial relationships
- Language: modeling, listening, receptive & expressive language, communication
- Emotional: positive self-concept, accurate perception of self, expressing positive & negative feelings in appropriate ways, encouraging cultural heritage
- Social: pro-social skills, cooperative play, fostering positive behavior, respecting feelings & property, belonging to family, community & world at large

PREPARATION FOR KINDERGARTEN

Our philosophy of 'ready for kindergarten' is that our children can sit in a circle, are good listeners, good friends to their peers, can share, and have a creative spark which helps them problem solve and think outside of the box.

We use the arts as a tool for both gross and fine motor skills, executive function, self regulation, and cognitive flexibility and our goal is to set children up for success in kindergarten by providing the foundations for a lifelong love of learning.

We are very mindful of research that indicates that there is no evidence of long-term success in school for children with preschool age pen & paper academic skills and rather, that play, mimicry, and creativity are the primary tools for young learners. As such, we hope parents understand our goals for 4-5 year-old kindergarten readiness:

- Your child knows their first and last name and can recognize it in print.
- Your child can manage their own clothing, and knows how to button, buckle, zip and fasten.
- Your child can open **lunch or snack containers** and feed themselves.
- Your child can follow rules and instructions with little reminding; and ask for help if needed.
- Your child can use words like please, thank you, and you're welcome.
- Your child understands and handles transitions between activities with little difficulty.
- Your child tries to self-regulate and articulate their feelings in words.
- Your child can play cooperatively with others.
- Your child can identify colours and can recognize the difference between numbers and letters.
- Your child can identify how objects are the same and different.
- Your child can hold a crayon or pencil correctly and can cut with scissors.
- Your child will sit and listen quietly to a story, following the plotline.
- Your child will look at the pictures in a book independently.
- Your child can explain what happens to a character and how they might feel.
- Your child can draw pictures to tell a story.
- Your child can make more-or-less comparisons.
- Your child can count using one-to-one correspondence.
- Your child can recognize and name basic shapes.
- Your child is starting to notice patterns in their everyday environment.

SAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULE

Every day our children participate in multiple artistic activities both in small and large groups. A typical morning or afternoon might look like:

- Arrival, change to our indoor shoes, organize our belongings & snack
- Free play while waiting for our friends to arrive
- Movement class working on creative movement, ballet, yoga & gross motor skills
- Drama class with puppets, working on sharing our feelings through stories
- Handwashing, followed by snack with directed sensory & social time with their friends
- Circle time with teacher led literature, discussion and sharing our ideas
- Music class learning about rhythm using castanets, egg shakers, or hand bells
- Art class working with clay, painting, drawing, cutting & fine motor skills
- Cleaning up, shoes & coats on, our goodbye song, and pick up by our grown up

A NOTE ABOUT SNACK TIME

Eating is sensory, social, and learned. We ask parents to provide their child a nutritious snack and a water bottle each day with any unfinished food to be returned when your child is picked up. Some suggestions are fruit, veggies, cheese and crackers, or a small sandwich. This water bottle will go back home daily with your child for cleaning.

We do understand that many children have food aversions and that sometimes there are limited choices for what your child will actually eat. If your child is a picky snacker please talk to us and we may be able to make some suggestions. Please understand that not only do we aim for maximum nutrition but also to reduce social disruptions since children will compare their snack choices.

BEHAVIORAL GUIDANCE

Children's behavior is influenced by their overall development, their health, their environment, their family culture, and by their caregivers. Our goal is to assist children in developing respect, self-control, self-discipline, sensitivity, and compassion while fostering their creative spirit and exposing them to a well-rounded artistic program.

Guidance Strategies

Most critical is that we lead by example and provide a positive and nurturing environment which sets the stage for successful development and opportunities for growth and desirable behavior. This can be accomplished by:

- Gentle and calm explanation about limits and expectations
- Focusing on the behavior and not the child
- Allowing an adjustment period to learn new environment and expectations
- Reinforcing positive behavior
- Providing an open and welcoming atmosphere where children can feel comfortable, safe, and supported
- Observing children to anticipate and avert potential difficulties
- If all else fails, such as natural & logical consequences and/or redirecting to another activity, a child may be placed in a brief 'time away' before allowing them to return and giving them an opportunity to make amends.

GRADUAL ENTRY & SEPARATION ANXIETY ISSUES

It is normal for children to be hesitant and sometimes even cry when starting at school; we have found that gradual entry does not reduce these issues but merely prolongs them as children take longer to adjust and want their parents to stay long term. Our typical routine is that on the first day of school, all children are dropped off for our regular hours. Any tears generally last only a short time, and your child will engage with us and in our activities quickly. It also helps for new children to see that any of our existing students are brave and happy at school without their caregiver.

For drop off please be very brief (no more than 2-3 minutes during drop off times) as prolonged departures can make drop offs more difficult and the area congested. A quick, consistent goodbye routine is best; a cheerful goodbye kiss with reassurance that you will be back is all your child will need.

GENERAL INFORMATION

ARTWORK

Some of our art projects may be worked on for multiple days and some of your child's artwork will remain at the preschool on display for a short time. The amount of work that comes home on any given day is generally unrelated to that day's activities.

HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

Throughout the year, our themes may reflect special holidays happening each month (Halloween, Valentines Day, Christmas, Thanksgiving etc.). We respectfully ask that if there are any holidays or traditions that you would not like your child to participate in that you please let us know and we will work with you to come up with some alternatives.

BIRTHDAYS

We realize that birthdays are only once a year and that they are very special and exciting. Each child's birthday is celebrated at our school but due to concerns about allergies and food issues we do not celebrate with treats or food of any kind. Children receive a birthday crown and there are other birthday traditions and songs that they will enjoy. We also have a special "un-birthday" day at the end of the school year for children with summer birthdays. As such, we request that you please do not send in any food treats for your child's birthday.

SHARING

Show and share is an exciting part of the preschool year and children enjoy bringing special items from home. This activity encourages self-esteem and confidence and we encourage children to bring in things that are important to them to discuss with their friends. Please do not send in toys, even if they are their 'favourites', and instead have your child focus on items that bring them special memories and stories.

NEWSLETTERS

A monthly calendar will be emailed to all families, and we will print and post a hard copy each month. Our newsletters will be sent out three times each year (October, January, & April.) with additional emails to update families whenever necessary.

CLOTHING

Please dress your child in comfortable play clothes and provide indoor shoes which can be left at school. It is important that your child feels free to engage in messy activities without being concerned about his/her clothing. We also require a complete change of clothing in case of accidents.

ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES

Please wait at the bottom of the stairs until we open our doors for the morning. We treat our facility as our home, so 15 minutes after dropping off all exterior doors are locked; if you are going to be later we ask that you text or call us to let us know in advance and we will let you in whenever our activities safely allow us to do so. For pick ups, please wait at the bottom of the stairs and we will bring your child down to you. If there is anyone other than yourself picking up, please advise us so that we can identify the person you have authorized, whether it be a relative or neighbor. **Under no circumstances will we release a child to someone without your authorization.**

PHOTOS

Photos may be taken of your child during normal school activities and may be used on our website, social media, or in printed publication; these photos are also transferred to parents each year as a keepsake of your child's year. No identifying information about children is ever released, but please inform us if you would prefer that we do not take your child's photo.

ILLNESS

A parent must inform the facility within 24 hours of:

- The diagnosis of a serious illness or communicable disease in their child
- The exposure of their child to a serious illness or communicable disease in any other member of their family

Please do not bring your child to school if they experience any of the following:

- Undiagnosed or unexplained pain
- Fever greater than 100 F or 38.3 C
- Sore throat or trouble swallowing
- Wheezing or persistent cough with trouble breathing
- Infected skin, eyes, or undiagnosed rash
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
- Undiagnosed itching of body or scalp
- Known or suspected communicable disease (doctors note may be required before child may return)

If your child becomes ill, you will be called and either you or your alternate must come and pick up the child. We will keep the child quiet and comfortable until you arrive. In an emergency, we will call an ambulance or contact you to pick up immediately.

A note about the common cold:

Please keep children home if they are experiencing listlessness, runny nose & eyes, coughing and/or sore throat. They may return 48 hours after their wellbeing and energy return to normal although coughing & runny nose may persist.

SCHEDULED CLOSURES

With our enrollment in the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative, we will now be open all twelve months of the year with 20 days of closure, in addition to statutory holidays.

Our 2023 - 2024 schedule (with closures):

- School Opens September 5th
- Truth & Reconciliation Day October 2nd (school closed)
- Thanksgiving October 9th (school closed)
- Remembrance Day November 13th (school closed)
- Winter Vacation December 23rd - January 1st (school closed)
- School Reopens January 2nd
- Family Day February 19th (school closed)
- Spring Vacation March 23rd - March 28th (school closed)
- Good Friday March 29th (school closed)
- Easter Monday April 1st (school closed)
- School Reopens April 2nd
- Victoria Day May 20th (school closed)
- June Break June 24th - June 28th (school closed)
- Canada Day July 1st (school closed)
- School Reopens July 2nd
- August Break August 26th - August 30th (school closed)

UNSCHEDULED CLOSURES

Inclement weather:

To ensure the safety and well-being of our families, children, & staff we will be closed on all days that Burnaby school district closes but may also close on other days if we feel that the roads or local area are unsafe to travel on.

Power outage:

In the event of a power outage families will be notified for pickup as we can not provide proper sanitation, hygiene, or heat in cooler months.

Extreme heat warning:

We may need to close if we cannot maintain a cool enough temperature to ensure the health and safety of our staff and children.