

Play & Learn Program

FAQ's For Schools and Families

For The 2026-2027 School Year

1. WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF ATTENDING THE PLAY & LEARN PROGRAM IN ADDITION TO KINDERGARTEN?

Medicine Hat Public School Division (MHPSD) believes in the importance of building a solid foundation in the early years. To enhance our strong early childhood programs, we offer the **optional** Play & Learn program, in addition to kindergarten. The Play & Learn program engages children in holistic play-based activities through playful exploration and problem solving to develop literacy skills and physical well-being in an inclusive environment.

2. DO ALL KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN HAVE TO ATTEND THE PLAY & LEARN PROGRAM?

No, Play & Learn is optional.

3. WHAT WILL IT COST FOR A CHILD TO ATTEND THE PLAY & LEARN PROGRAM?

The Alberta Government announced a common fee structure for all licensed childcare programs that took effect April 1, 2025.

The parent portion of the fees for a part time program will be \$230/month.

Early Learning Program fees are subject to change based on Alberta Child Care Licensing regulations, government funding, and other applicable guidelines.

4. IF MY CHILD IS ABSENT FROM SCHOOL WILL MY FEES BE REIMBURSED?

No. Fees will not be reimbursed due to illness, personal holidays, etc. Fees will only be reimbursed if the program has been closed by MHPSD. To withdraw your child from Play & Learn provide written notice to your school (email is fine). Notice must be provided ten business days prior to the end of the month to avoid further fees being withdrawn from your account.

5. IS THERE A SUBSIDY AVAILABLE FOR FAMILIES?

The Alberta Government no longer offers the subsidy program for children 0-6 in licensed childcare programs.

Low-income families are invited to complete a MHPSD application to have the parent fee portion waived or partially waived. Please contact the school office for a copy of the Fee Waiver Application. Families will be notified within 30 days if their fee waiver application has been successful.

6. WHY IS THERE A COST TO ATTEND?

Play & Learn Program

The fee will support the additional staff costs associated with running this optional program in addition to kindergarten. Alberta Education provides funding for a half-time kindergarten program only. MHPSD has chosen to invest additional time and resources into extra play-based programming to support the critical period of development for young children.

7. WHAT OPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE FOR PAYING MONTHLY FEES?

Fees will be collected through a Pre-Authorized Debit (PAD) agreement.

8. IF MY CHILD IS ABSENT FROM SCHOOL WILL MY FEES BE REIMBURSED?

No. Fees will not be reimbursed due to illness, personal holidays, etc. Fees will only be reimbursed if the program has been closed by MHPSD. To withdraw your child from Play & Learn provide written notice to your school (email is fine). Notice must be provided ten business days prior to the end of the month to avoid further fees being withdrawn from your account.

9. WILL A RECEIPT BE PROVIDED FOR INCOME TAX PURPOSES?

Families will be provided with a receipt annually in January to use for income tax purposes.

10. CAN A CHILD WHO ATTENDS PLAY & LEARN AND KINDERGARTEN ACCESS THE YMCA BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE PROGRAM?

Yes. MHPSD and the YMCA have partnered to support families accessing Play & Learn and the YMCA Before & After School program. The combined parent portion will be \$230.00 to reflect the part time child care rate. Families will pay \$115.00 to the YMCA and \$115.00 to MHPSD.

If your child is attending **both** programs, please reach out to the school for a fee waiver.

[YMCA Before and After School Care Program](#) – REGISTER

11. HOW CAN FAMILIES APPLY FOR THE PLAY & LEARN PROGRAM?

Families will choose the Kindergarten and Play & Learn option when completing the Kindergarten application on line or contact your neighborhood school directly. You will be notified by mid-June if your application has been approved. If you are applying after mid-June, you will be notified as soon as possible to let you know if your application will be approved.

12. ARE ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS AVAILABLE IN PLAY & LEARN?

Since Play & Learn is an optional program and it is not funded by Alberta Education, there are no additional services provided as part of the program. Please ensure you have had a discussion with school administration if your child requires additional supports so they can determine if the Play & Learn program can accommodate your child at the time of the application.

13. IS THE PLAY & LEARN PROGRAM AVAILABLE AT ALL OF THE MHPSD ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS?

It is our intention to run Play & Learn Program in all our elementary schools. Medicine Hat Christian School partners with KidsPlay Preschool for families who require additional programming at that location. Play & Learn spaces are filled on a first come first serve basis, if the program fills up you will be notified if your child is placed on a waitlist.

14. WHO WILL INSTRUCT THE PLAY & LEARN PROGRAM?

A Play & Learn staff member will be assigned to work with each class for the Play & Learn portion of your child's day.

15. WHAT IS A PLAY AND LEARN STAFF MEMBER?

A Play & Learn staff member will meet the childcare staff certification requirements set out by the Alberta Government.

16. HOW OLD DO CHILDREN HAVE TO BE TO ATTEND PLAY & LEARN?

Children enrolled in kindergarten are eligible to attend. Children need to be **five years old by December 31** to attend kindergarten in September.

17. WHAT ARE THE HOURS FOR THE PLAY & LEARN PROGRAM OPTION?

Each school has a unique bell schedule. Children attending the Play & Learn program will attend in the morning or the afternoon – opposite of their kindergarten program. The children will be at the school all day.

If you have any questions or concerns, please email playandlearn@sd76.ab.ca