

# North East School Division Prekindergarten Program Handbook



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Table of Contents	
PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT	1
WHO DO PARENTS CONTACT?	1
HOW ARE CHILDREN ASSESSED?	1
PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS IN THE NESD 1	1
PREKINDERGARTEN ENTRANCE CRITERIA	
INTAKE COMMITTEE	1
INTAKE PROCESS	1
PREKINDERGARTEN SCREENING TOOL	1
TOILET TRAINING PROCEDURES/EXPECTATIONS	1
EARLY CHILDHOOD ENVIRONMENT RATING SCALE – THIRD EDITION	
(ECERS-3)1	1
EARLY YEARS EVALUATION - DIRECT ASSESSMENT (EYE-DA)	1
HELP ME TELL MY STORY	1
PREKINDERGARTEN YEARLY GUIDELINES	1
AGENCIES	1

1

# PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT

<u>The Prekindergarten Program Handbook</u> is intended to be used by school administrators, prekindergarten teachers and in-take committee members. The <u>Prekindergarten Program Handbook</u> is also an appropriate document to share with partner agencies that may refer children to a prekindergarten program. The *Handbook* provides guidelines for the pre-kindergarten program. Although every prekindergarten program in the school division is unique and attempts to meet the needs of each home community, the *Handbook* outlines common expectations regarding entrance criteria, in-take committees, the in-take process, etc.

The work of the Prekindergarten Program in NESD is directed by the philosophy and policies developed by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education. Research done at the provincial level provides the raison d'être for the development of prekindergarten programs throughout the province:

During the 1980's research showed that quality early intervention and prevention programs have both long-term and short-term benefits for children who are at risk of failure in school and in life. In the short-term, early intervention improves cognitive functioning, strengthens social skills and results in healthier children with higher self- esteem. In the long-term, the program results in major savings related to lower rates of juvenile crime, fewer failed grades and drop-outs, fewer teen pregnancies, fewer referrals for special education, and less dependence on social programs. Although prevention can occur at any stage in a child's life, research shows that programs that focus on children from the prenatal stage to the age of six or seven are most effective for the children themselves and their families.

(Saskatchewan Ministry of Education-http://www.learning.gov.sk.ca)

## No index entries found.

The Prekindergarten programs in NESD rely on four documents entitled:

- Prekindergarten Essentials: Effective Practices, Policies and Guidelines
- Play and Exploration: Early Learning Program Guide
- Family Engagement in Prekindergarten: A Resource Guide for Prekindergarten Teachers and Associates
- Essential Learning Experiences For Three, Four, and Five Year Olds

These guides are essential tools for administrators and prekindergarten teachers.

<u>Prekindergarten Essentials: Effective Practices, Polices and Guidelines</u> provides a philosophical background as well as practical guidelines for administrators and teachers to follow. These documents begin by explaining in a very concise manner, that pre-kindergarten is:

- developmentally appropriate educational program:
  - active, experiential learning through play
  - comprehensive, integrated program within a prepared environment
  - child-centered, self-directed, choice
  - focused on development of whole child physical, social, emotional, spiritual and intellectual
- meaningful family involvement
- active parent/community council, community partnerships and shared ownership

- integrated health, social services and educational supports
- culturally affirming for all
- mixed age groupings
- intensive exposure minimum 12 hours per week
- professional teaching staff with a focus in early childhood education

The <u>Play and Exploration: Early Learning Program Guide</u> is very valuable to the Prekindergarten teacher and administrator. The *Guide* affirms the importance of high quality experiences for all Saskatchewan children during their preschool years – three to five years of age. The *Guide* is based on early childhood research and provides examples and practices for early childhood teachers to utilize in and within their learning environment. The purpose of the Guide is to promote high quality, age-appropriate, play-based learning experiences for young children in a variety of settings.

<u>The Family Engagement in Prekindergarten</u> guide assists teachers and education assistants in creating respectful, reciprocal relationships with families. It provides support in promoting authentic shared responsibility for children's learning and development. This guide provides key practices to supporting families to engage in their child's education.

<u>The Essential Learning Experience</u> document released in 2013 is designed to be used primarily by educators of 3 and 4 year olds in early learning and child care settings, including Prekindergarten, child care, and preschool. The resource is intended to support and guide program development and to assist early childhood educators to monitor, facilitate, and scaffold young children's development.

The NESD currently supports nine prekindergarten programs for children aged 3 and 4 years old, in four different communities. Each prekindergarten program is staffed with a qualified teacher and an educational associate. Quality play experiences, social interactions and language development is promoted and nurtured. Parent and family involvement is encouraged.

The prekindergarten program is intended for young children who are considered to be at-risk for poor outcomes in future school and life endeavors. Pre-kindergarten programs are expected to provide successful early learning experiences that will help these students to have better outcomes in their school careers. The prekindergarten program is intended to serve young children in the school's catchment area. The criteria for the NESD pre-kindergarten programs can be found in later sections of this <u>Handbook</u>.

There is another group of young children that the school division also serves. These young children are ones with significant and diagnosable medical conditions, such as autism, an intellectual disability, a hearing impairment, a visual impairment, etc. In many cases, the school division is able to assist with some early educational programming, typically in partnership with other agencies. Parents of young children with these types of special needs may apply to the school division for **early entrance** consideration. Early entrance programming can begin as early as age three for some children with special needs.

It is important to note that young children with special needs who participate in an early entrance program with NESD **may qualify** for admittance to a prekindergarten program. Prekindergarten

programs are limited to a maximum of 16 student placements. The 16 pre-kindergarten participants must keep to the entrance criteria as outlined by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education and NESD. As mentioned earlier, the criteria for entrance into a prekindergarten program can be found in later sections of this <u>Handbook</u>.

#### WHO DO PARENTS CONTACT?

Typically in a prekindergarten program, families are referred to the in-take committee by partnering agencies, such as Public Health, Kid's First, or the North East Early Childhood Intervention Program (NEECIP). However, parents may also express an interest in having their young child participate in their local pre-kindergarten program. Parents are encouraged to contact the principal of their local school which houses the prekindergarten program. The school principal will be able to provide information regarding the prekindergarten program, the entrance criteria, the application process, etc. The school principal can forward parent referrals to the in-take committee for consideration.

# HOW ARE CHILDREN ASSESSED?

In order to achieve quality programming and enhanced learning outcomes for young children in Saskatchewan, it is critical to have a clear understanding of the essential learning experiences for preschool aged children. As educators observe, listen, and respond to the play interaction, interests and experiences of young children in their classrooms, they need to be able to detect a set of observable, developmentally significant behaviors and discoveries that can be documented over time and referenced to as milestones of growth and development. This is referenced in the research as authentic assessment. Authentic assessment takes place in the child's learning environment, amidst the child-directed play, exploration and learning.

In the NESD this authentic assessment is documented through children's portfolios. Teachers can document pictures, videos, and anecdotes on the child's learning experiences, and assess the child on a continuum (or rubric) to identify developmentally where the child is currently at.

In addition to collecting assessment evidence, teachers must respond to the evidence with responsive teaching. Teachers can utilize the Responsive Teaching, Practice and Assessment in the Early Learning Programs document to assist in providing deliberate, thoughtful, and intentional planning.



# PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS IN THE NESD

	Prekindergarten Program	Community	Phone Number
1	Central Park AM	Nipawin	862-5303
2	Central Park AM	Nipawin	862-5303
3	Central Park PM	Nipawin	862-5303
4	Central Park PM	Nipawin	862-5303
5	Reynolds Central AM	Melfort	752-2525
6	Reynolds Central PM	Melfort	752-2525
7	Maude Burke AM	Melfort	752-2391
8	Tisdale Elementary	Tisdale	873-4533
9	Hudson Bay Community	Hudson Bay	865-2515

### PREKINDERGARTEN ENTRANCE CRITERIA

The following criteria must be considered when students are registering for a pre-kindergarten program within the NESD:

- Low economic status
- Parents have a less than a high school education.
- Parents speak a language other than English as their main language;
- Parent is young and unmarried.
- > Would benefit from a parent education component.
- Child displays social, behavioral, emotional, and cognitive or communications challenges or delays.
- Family is committed to participation of the pre k program.
- Family cannot afford any other program.
- Speech and Language concerns
- Recent traumatic experiences

## **INTAKE COMMITTEE**

The Intake Committee is responsible for reviewing the criteria and determining who should be accepted in the prekindergarten program. The following personnel should be included in the intake process:

#### IN SCHOOL TEAM

Principal or Vice Principal Prekindergarten Teacher Diversity Education Teacher Speech Language Pathologist \*\*Optional Other (Teacher, Outreach Worker, EAL Consultant, Learning Coordinator etc.)

#### **OUTSIDE AGENCIES** (optional)

Saskatchewan Health Authority (Early Childhood Team, Public Health Nurse) NEECIP KidsFirst Day Care Staff Social Services Eastern Metis Region Two

# **INTAKE PROCESS**

The following process will be followed:

1. Checklist/brochures/application form to be sent out to referring agencies by the end of March by the Administrator, Prekindergarten Teacher, or Outreach Worker. (Ensure agencies are

aware this can be done throughout the year). Forms to be shared with families by agencies and follow up by the prekindergarten teacher will be done after a list is provided to the school.

- 2. Interested parents can be given an application form which they will submit directly to school.
- 3. Completed information (checklist and applications) to be gathered by the principal by the end of April.
- 4. Prekindergarten teacher, school administrator, and outreach worker will review the applications, request further information from the parent or agency if necessary, and review catchment areas of the school the child should attend (this is important for rural or Melfort students).
- 5. By the end of May, an Intake Committee will host a meeting and review applications, review the checklists, and prioritize students. Within the first two weeks of May, other agencies on the committee could be brought into this process.
- 6. A list is compiled of students that have been accepted and families are contacted by the prekindergarten teacher. An official approved NESD/School registration form will be given to the family once formally accepted.
- 7. A wait list will be compiled and families will be contacted. Those families that have not been accepted will also be contacted.

# PREKINDERGARTEN SCREENING TOOL

# Prekindergarten Screening Tool



Thank you for completing this **confidential** screener. Saskatchewan's Prekindergarten programs admit children based on eligibility criteria. It is important to share as much information about your child's growth and development as possible.

#### Submitting this screening tool does not guarantee your child's enrollment in the program.

You will be contacted by the school division if your child qualifies.

Child Inforn	nation						
Last Name:			First Name:				
Child's Date of Birth (DD/MM/YYYY):			Current Age:				
Address: (Hou:	e number, Street, City/Land Location,	Postal Box number:					
Neighbourho	od School Name:						
Family Infor	mation						
Child lives with:							
Contact Info	ormation						
Home #:							
Cell #:							
Work #:							
Email:							
What is the b	est method to contact you?						
Email      Phone Call      Text      Other							
Whom shou	Id we contact if there is no	answer at hom	e?				
Emergency Contact #1:			Phone Number:				
Relationship t	o the Child:						
Emergency Contact #2:			Phone Number:				
Relationship t	o the Child:						
Significant Others: Living in the Same House (brothers, sisters, aunt, uncle, etc.)							
NAME		AGE	RELATIONSHIP				



Has any other child(ren) in the family attended Prekindergarten?								
□ Yes □ No								
Do you require interpretive services?								
Yes No If yes, language of choice:								
Criteria for Admission to Prekindergarten								
Prekindergarten spaces are filled throughout the year as they become available. The screening tool is reviewed by a selection committee and children will be accepted based on the following criteria.								
	Yes	No	Unknown					
Is your child experiencing speech or language difficulties? Comments:								
Is your child experiencing challenges with social, emotional development?								
Comments:								
Does your child have little or no opportunity for contact with other children?								
Is your child learning English as an additional language? Comments:								
Is your child currently living with only one parent?								
Are any of the child's family members absent from the home for long periods of time?								
Does your child live with a teen parent?								
Does either of your child's parents have less than a high school education?								
Has there been any impact in the family from a traumatic experience?								
Is the family experiencing financial need?								
Is the family experiencing a health care crisis?								
Is there limited extended family support?								



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Does your child attend or receive support from?

- KidsFirst
- Licensed Child Care
- Early Childhood Intervention Program (ECIP)
- Preschool/Playschool
- Aboriginal Head Start
- Other (please list): \_\_\_\_\_

- Social Services
- Speech and Language Pathologist
- Occupational Therapist
- Early Childhood Psychologist
- Autism Consultant or Resource Centre

How will you be able to transport your child to and from Prekindergarten?

Do you have any additional concerns or information regarding your child that we need to be aware of? Please specify:

### \* Please submit this completed form to the local school.

\*\* NOTE: The completion of this application from does not mean that your child has officially been accepted to the Pre-Kindergarten program. You will be contacted directly by the school's pre-kindergarten teacher when the intake committee has completed the intake process.

You will be contacted regardless if you child has been accepted, not accepted, or placed on the waiting list.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date of completion

Saskatchewan 💋

## TOILET TRAINING PROCEDURES/EXPECTATIONS

Toilet training is an important step in a child's development. Toilet training takes time, understanding, and patience. Each child is an individual and develops at his or her own rate. There is no set age at which toilet training should begin. The right time depends on the physical and emotional readiness. It is important that the child be ready before beginning training. This is usually between the ages of two and three years and sometime even later for boys. If training is started before the child is ready, training will be more difficult and take longer. Toilet training can provide a child with feelings of achievement and self-control, and give him or her added strength and pride. Each step that is taken toward the goal of becoming trained paves the way for the next step of the child's development.

As the prekindergarten program is open to children that are considered to be at risk, the NESD feels that a student cannot be denied access to the program if he/she has not been toilet trained prior to registering for the program. Students that wear "pull-ups" or disposable diapers are permitted to register. However if there are concerns such as medical conditions that may lead to a student not being able to manage with wearing diapers or a pull up and consistent accidents occur and continuous monitoring is required, the division will review these situations case by case basis. If this is something that is a concern within a program, the administration is encouraged to contact the Coordinator of Learning that is responsible for that specific prekindergarten school and a decision will be made.

The prekindergarten staff will develop a supervision schedule to ensure that no students are left unattended because of toileting issues. A secondary plan can be developed if necessary.

It is important to remember that a child must also be emotionally ready. He or she needs to be willing and cooperative, not fighting or showing signs of fear. If a child protests vigorously to training, it may be best to wait for a while. It may also be best to delay toilet training if a child is experiencing stress such as a family move, a new baby in the family, a major illness, or a big change in a child's routine such as starting the pre kindergarten program. If a child within the program is struggling with this process then a plan should be put in place that is administered between the educational associate, classroom teacher, administration and parent.

#### **POSSIBLE QUESTIONS TO ASK FAMILIES REGARDING TOILET TRAINING:** (examples)

- 1. Where is your child at in the toileting process?
- 2. If in pull ups, are they independently able to handle this on their own? Explain why in pull ups.
- 3. Explain your child's bathroom schedule in regards to when accidents most commonly occur.
- 4. Are you willing to have extra change of clothes?

#### **TOILETING TIPS**

When a child shows signs of readiness and the parents are ready to begin toilet training at home the parent and classroom staff will discuss plans to begin toilet training. Communication between staff and family is very important during this time. Parents and caregivers need to discuss what words will be used to describe body parts, urine, and bowel movements, what type of training pants the child will wear, and the routine at home and pre-kindergarten for taking the child to the potty.

The following are tips that may help the pre-kindergarten staff and parents assist a child who is physically and psychologically ready for toilet training:

- Encourage the child with lots of praise for his or her efforts. Expect accidents and treat them lightly and don't get upset. Punishment and scolding makes children feel bad and may prolong the process. Clean up calmly without scolding, shaming, or punishing the child. Reassure the child that the next time he or she will remember to use the potty.
- Teach the child good hygiene habits, including wiping from front to back and to wash his or her hands thoroughly after using the toilet.
- Think positively. Toilet training is a natural step in a child's development.

# E.C.E.R.S.-3.

# Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Third Edition



# EARLY CHILDHOOD ENVIRONMENT RATING SCALE – THIRD EDITION (ECERS-3)

The NESD has committed to conducting the ECERS-3 evaluation of their prekindergarten programs. The data will be collected yearly by a trained observer and used as a tool for each of the prekindergarten schools to set goals and to create an environment that meets the requirements and ensures more consistency between each of the programs within the division.

# <u>Overview of the Subscales and Items of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Third</u> Edition (ECERS-3)

#### **Space and Furnishings**

- 1. Indoor space
- 2. Furniture for care, play, and learning
- 3. Room arrangement for play and learning
- 4. Space for privacy
- 5. Child-related display
- 6. Space for gross motor play
- 7. Gross motor equipment

#### **Personal Care Routines**

- 8. Meals/snacks
- 9. Toileting/diapering
- 10. Health practices
- 11. Safety practices

#### Language and Literacy

- 12. Helping children expand vocabulary
- 13. Encouraging children to use language
- 14. Staff use books with children
- 15. Encouraging children's use of books
- 16. Becoming familiar with print

#### **Learning Activities**

- 17. Fine motor
- 18. Art
- 19. Music and movement
- 20. Blocks
- 21. Dramatic play
- 22. Nature/science
- 23. Math materials and activities
- 24. Math in daily events
- 25. Understanding written numbers
- 26. Promoting acceptance of diversity
- 27. Appropriate use of technology

# Interaction

- 28. Supervision of gross motor
- 29. Individualized teaching and learning
- 30. Staff-child interaction
- 31. Peer interaction
- 32. Discipline

# **Program Structure**

- 33. Transition and wait times
- 34. Free play
- 35. Whole-group activities for play and learning



# EYE

# **Early Years Evaluation**



# EARLY YEARS EVALUATION – DIRECT ASSESSMENT (EYE-DA)

Four-year-old prekindergarten children entering Kindergarten the following year are assessed with the Early Years Evaluation-Direct Assessment (EYE-DA) in the fall. The EYE provides information about each child's development and early learning associated with readiness to learn in formal settings, including an emphasis on reading readiness skills. This assessment helps teachers organize instruction and monitor each child's progress in school. The evaluation engages families through respectful and collaborative ways to help families support their child's learning at home and in the community.

Prekindergarten EYE-DA (Direct Assessment)

- Completed in the fall with four year old students in Prekindergarten; those students entering kindergarten the following year.
- This is a direct assessment; whereby the teacher assesses the child one-on-one. The
  assessment takes approximately 45 minutes per child. The assessment can be chunked.
  As well, there are division support personnel who are trained in administering the EYE to
  assist the teacher; however, preference is given to the prekindergarten teacher to
  administer the assessment.
- **Data is entered by a due date set by the NESD**. Teachers will receive their own username and password.
- Administrators will receive a username and password to review the data for their school.
- Administrators can request sub coverage for the teacher to administer the assessment. Request will be approved through the Coordinator of Learning.
- Inter-professional meetings will occur between data entry deadline date and Studentled Conferences. Inter-professional teams include Prekindergarten teacher, Diversity Education Teacher, SLP, and/or Principal.
- Success plans are prepared and monitored through CLEVR.
- Information from the EYE-DA will be shared with parents at the Prekindergarten Conferences. These conferences allow teachers to share the EYE data face to face with parents. Printed reports of the EYE-DA do not need to be given to parents; however, information about their child must be shared.



# Oral Language Development Assessment Prekindergarten and Kindergarten

# HELP ME TELL MY STORY

In some Prekindergarten programs, students may be assessed with an oral language assessment titled, Help Me Tell My Story. This is an engaging holistic assessment which is delivered using iPads and a turtle puppet, Askî. Caregivers, teachers and elders also complete a survey to support the children's oral language development. Once the assessment and surveys are completed, parents are invited to view their child's data and become a part of the various learning ideas posted on the Help Me Tell My Story caregiver portal.

# PREKINDERGARTEN YEARLY GUIDELINES

#### **General Information:**

Staff will start on the first day of school and will work until the last day of school as outlined by the NESD calendar.

Prekindergarten students will begin prekindergarten classes no later than one week after school start date. Prekindergarten students will finish classes no earlier than one week prior to the close of school.

The following items reflect monthly activities that occur in prekindergarten.

#### <u>August</u>

- Orientation with families. Home visits should occur during this time.
- If home visits are unable to be accommodated, teachers should contact parents by telephone, email, or set up an open house or conference at the school or someplace convenient for both.
- Welcome letters, school calendar, school guidelines, etc. should be provided for the parents.
- During home visits or conferences, collect some basic information about the student. You may create student an inventory, interest profile, and ask the parent if you can take pictures or video of the child playing.
- If Prekindergarten enrollment is not full, collect and send out application forms to new families. Review class list and determine priority, those that qualify. Check list of prekindergarten criteria should be completed for new applicants.
- Host a Prekindergarten Intake Committee Meeting, if necessary.
- Send out information to new families that have been accepted into Prekindergarten.
- Confirm transportation arrangements.
- Send Prekindergarten Calendar to the Coordinator of Learning.

#### **September**

Options for student first few days of school:

- Orientation is the first week after Labour Day. This could include home visits and/or small group orientation in the classroom.
- Classes begin the first full week in September with all students and agreed program times.

Other monthly tasks include:

- Home visits with E.A. (or outreach worker), if required.
- Family Sessions begin once a month.

#### <u>October</u>

- Begin reflecting on documentation and determine projects that are emerging.
- Create invitations and environment to address the emerging topics.
- Develop play and learning activities.
- Enter documentation into StudentsAchieve.

- Prepare questions and conversations that will occur with the emerging topics.
- Meet with administrator to review ECERS-3 data from the previous year and begin purchasing resources or making adjustments to improve the quality of early learning in your environment.
- Begin EYE-DA assessments according to NESD/ Ministry assessment window.

# <u>November</u>

- EYE-DA for four year olds are due. See NESD/Ministry assessment window.
- EYE-DA Team Meetings occur between EYE-DA data due date and Prekindergarten conference dates.
- Prekindergarten conferences: Share EYE-DA data and documentation with families.
- Prepare referral for Student Support Services Personnel, if further data needs to be gathered for some children.
- Reflect on documentation. Monitor projects that are emerging from documentation and student interests.
- Create invitations and environment to address the emerging topics.
- Develop play and learning activities.
- Enter documentation into StudentsAchieve.
- Prepare questions and conversations that will occur with the emerging topics.

# <u>December</u>

- Identify and make plans for students who have not been observed in all developmental categories.
- Enter documentation into StudentsAchieve.

# January.

- **Essential Learning Experience documentation is due at the end of the month.** Be sure all documentation is updated to StudentsAchieve.
- Reflect on documentation. Monitor projects that are emerging from documentation and student interests.
- Create invitations and environment to address the emerging topics.
- Develop play and learning activities.
- Prepare questions and conversations that will occur with the emerging topics.
- Clean toys.
- Clean fridge/freezer of food before holidays.
- Schedule and conduct home visits.
- Review printed Prekindergarten Essential Learning Experience Developmental Report and send home to parents.

# **February**

- Reflect on documentation. Monitor projects that are emerging from documentation and student interests.
- Enter documentation into StudentsAchieve.

## <u>March</u>

- Reflect on documentation. Monitor projects that are emerging from documentation and student interests.
- Create invitations and environment to address the emerging topics.
- Develop play and learning activities.
- Prepare questions and conversations that will occur with the emerging topics.
- Send brochures and application forms to referring agencies.
- Enter documentation into StudentsAchieve.

# <u>April</u>

- Student led conferences: Share documentation with families.
- ECERS-3 assessment facilitated.
- Reflect on documentation. Monitor projects that are emerging from documentation and student interests.
- Set a date for the Prekindergarten Intake meeting. Contact Intake committee.
- Enter documentation into StudentsAchieve.

# May

- Reflect on documentation. Monitor projects that are emerging from documentation and student interests.
- Create invitations and environment to address the emerging topics.
- Develop play and learning activities.
- Prepare questions and conversations that will occur with the emerging topics.
- Collect and review applications for the following year and collect further information if needed.
- Conduct home visits and/or host a Children's Fair/Open House to review new applications.
- Host the Prekindergarten Intake Meeting.
- Enter documentation into StudentsAchieve.
- Organize transition meetings for Prekindergarten students entering Kindergarten in the fall.

# <u>June</u>

- Enter final documentation into StudentsAchieve.
- Review printed Prekindergarten Essential Learning Experience Developmental Report and send home to parents.
- Inventory of toys and learning materials.
- Clean/disinfect toys and learning materials.
- Create list of toys/materials that need to be replaced or purchased.
- Meet with Kindergarten teachers about student transitions. Include DET when necessary.
- Clean fridges, freezers, and cupboards.
- Notify families that are on a waiting list.

- Clean up classroom; put everything away for summer clean up.
- Conduct home visits with families that are returning.



# AGENCIES

- \* Libraries
- \* KidsFirst
- \* Social Services
- \* NEECIP
- \* Eastern Region 2 Métis Nation
- \* PA Grand Council
- \* Local Daycares
- \*Saskatchewan Health Authority
  - Public Health
  - Early Childhood Team
  - Mental Health

#### Facebook Pages:

0-3 Task Force Eat Well, Play Well

Websites: 211 Saskatchewan Healthy Start