



SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 53 STRONGSTART CENTRES

Parent Handbook



*“We acknowledge the financial support of the
Province of British Columbia through the
Ministry of Education”*

Welcome to the StrongStart Centres

These early learning programs are designed to work in partnership with parents/caregivers, their children, an Early Childhood Educator and community partners. Community partners include School District No. 53 (Okanagan Similkameen), Child Care Resource and Referral, Interior Health, Speech and Language, Supported Child Development and other community agencies. These programs are funded by the Ministry of Education and sponsored by School District No.53, for parents and their children ages 0-5. They are in cooperation with our Elementary School Principals.

The program is planned with the understanding that children learn through PLAY! We understand that the years between birth and school age is a critical time in a child's life and that the experiences that children have in the early years influence their future health, well-being and life-long learning. Carefully selected materials and activities will promote the social, emotional, physical, cognitive and early literacy development in each child. Opportunities will be provided to practice skills and develop concepts that will lay a foundation for a life time of learning. Parents will share in their child's early learning experiences, connect with other parents and receive valuable child development information.



Hours of Operation



The programs run:

Monday to Fridays: 8:30 am – 11:30 am at:

- **Okanagan Falls Elementary School**
- **Oliver Elementary School**
- **Osoyoos Elementary School**

Cawston Elementary School

- **Monday to Fridays: 8:45 am – 11:45 am**

The StrongStart Centres will operate in accordance to the school year calendar. A district Calendar is available on our website (www.sd53.bc.ca).

During the 3 hour program, please feel free to drop-in whenever it is convenient for you and your family. A variety of centers and activities will be offered daily to promote language, physical, cognitive and social-emotional development such as painting, water play, puzzles, dramatic play, crafts, music, reading, circle time, play dough and a nutritious snack will be provided.

Early Childhood Educator's

We feel that this program provides a wonderful opportunity for parents and caregivers to meet and make connections with other families. It also offers an opportunity for parents/caregivers and children to share in early learning experiences outside of their home environment. We believe that by working together we can create a successful program for our community and that we can make this a very positive early learning experience for your family. This program will provide a natural link between home and school.



Oliver Elementary StrongStart Centre

Facilitator: Shannon Koteles – E.C.E.
or
Jason McAllister – Principal
(250)498-3468



Okanagan Falls Elementary StrongStart Centre

Facilitator: Samantha James – E.C.E./
Montessori Teacher
or
Karen Sinclair – Principal
(250) 497-5414



Osoyoos Elementary StrongStart Centre

Facilitator: Cindy Garnahm – E.C.E.
or
Dave Foster – Principal
(250) 495-7248



Cawston Primary StrongStart Centre

Facilitator: Lynda Alkestrup – E.C.E.
or
Shannon Miller – Principal
(250) 485-4434

Program Philosophy

At the StrongStart Centres, we understand that:

- 😊 each child/family is unique and deserves to be treated with respect and dignity;
- 😊 all children will be included and made to feel a valuable member of the group;
- 😊 parents are an integral part of their child's early learning and will be included in all aspects of the program;
- 😊 it is important the program and environment be designed to promote each child's emotional, social, physical, cognitive and early literacy development - all areas are of equal importance;
- 😊 children need a variety of opportunities to explore and express themselves creatively;
- 😊 involvement from community partners will enhance the program and the learning that takes place;
- 😊 parents are interested in keeping informed of child development issues;
- 😊 children and families deserve to be in an environment that is safe, positive and promotes a healthy lifestyle; and
- 😊 children will learn to be respectful of themselves, others and their environment.



Policies

Health/Illness

Program participants may not attend the StrongStart Centre if they are ill or have a communicable disease/condition. A program participant may return to the program once the disease or condition is no longer contagious and/or with approval of a family physician or the medical health officer.

Please keep your child/children home if:

- 😊 they have, or have recently had, flu like symptoms i.e. vomiting, diarrhea, fever or chills;
- 😊 they have pink eye and have not had treatment;
- 😊 they have any communicable disease/condition i.e. chicken pox (a list of communicable diseases will be posted on the parent board);
- 😊 they are continually coughing and sneezing on other children and toys;
- 😊 they have head lice and have not had treatment; or
- 😊 they are not feeling well enough to play.

This policy is set in consideration of others at the centre and we appreciate your cooperation. Please call your public health nurse for further information regarding communicable diseases.

Smoking Policy

No smoking is permitted on any school grounds, this includes all types of electronic/vapor e-cigarettes.



Guidance and Discipline

1. Prevention

Prevention methods help create a positive atmosphere and encourage desirable behavior.

The following strategies are prevention methods:

- 😊 establish clear, consistent and simple limits
- 😊 offer straightforward explanations for limits
- 😊 state limits in a positive way, rather than in a negative way
- 😊 state what is expected, rather than pose questions

Reinforce appropriate behaviors with words and gestures



2. Intervention

The following intervention methods will be used:

- 😊 gain a child's attention in a respectful way
- 😊 use proximity and touch
- 😊 remind child of the expectations
- 😊 acknowledge the child's feelings before setting limits
- 😊 distract or divert when appropriate
- 😊 model problem-solving skills
- 😊 offer appropriate choices
- 😊 use natural and logical consequences
- 😊 redirect
- 😊 limit use of equipment when not being used properly
- 😊 play by self (in situations that other children are at risk, only to be used with extreme forms of aggression or destructive behavior).



Parent/Caregivers Role

- 😊 Parent/caregivers must be in attendance with own child at all times.
- 😊 Parents/caregivers are expected to be an active participant in all activities with the children. Join in their play rather than watching them play.
- 😊 Encourage sharing, taking turns and being kind to one another.
- 😊 Encourage your child to join circle (even if it is only for a few minutes), if your child doesn't want to come to circle, help them find something quiet to do.
- 😊 Encourage your child to put toys away before moving to something else.
- 😊 Encourage your child to use an inside voice, walking feet in the classroom and hallways.
- 😊 Please keep personal belongings out of reach of children.
- 😊 Please come prepared to play, laugh and have fun interacting with your child/children.



If you have any suggestions, questions or concerns please feel free to contact the program facilitator or the school principal.

A list of community phone numbers
are available from your facilitator



School District No. 53 Website:
www.sd53.bc.ca

A School Based Early Learning Program

