



Parent Handbook

Welcome

The Didsbury Preschool is a not-for-profit society. Our preschool was established in 1978 by a very dedicated group of parents whose purpose was to provide their preschool children with the opportunity to learn through constructive play and development of social skills prior to entering the school system. When you register your child here, the Didsbury Preschool becomes your school. Together we are building your child's first steppingstone in the pathway of education.

Mission Statement

The Didsbury Preschool is a licensed, registered, not-for-profit society that provides a supportive, safe and age-appropriate learning environment for children three to five years of age. The goal of the Didsbury Preschool Society is to provide a pre-k program where children can learn through play. Thus, fostering the academic, social, physical and emotional development of the preschool child.

Philosophy

Our program is a "Learning and Succeeding Through Peers & Play" format. This means that through free play such as, but not limited to: water table, sand table, play dough, dramatic play, etc. and through structured play such as, but not limited to: stories, songs and our music program, gym days, crafts, worksheets and games the children learn early academic concepts, forming the basics for their journey to educational needs and discovering the world.

Licensing Requirements for Children

Children must be a minimum of 36 months of age and must be potty trained. Pull ups and diapers are not allowed as children must be able to attend to themselves when using the washroom.

Registration

Non-refundable: A registration fee of \$85.00 is required at the time of pre-registration for each new student entering the preschool program, or \$50.00 for each returning student, at any time during the school year. This fee includes the \$1.00 Society Membership Fee. **This is non-refundable.** Should you choose to or need to withdraw your child after pre-registration, you do so at a financial loss. Registration Fees can be paid by cash, cheque, e-transfer, Visa or MasterCard.

Please be aware there is a service fee of 2.9% + \$0.30 for payments made by credit card.

Withdrawal of a Child

The preschool requires a one-month written notice by the first of the month, or the deposit collected at the beginning of the year of \$140.00 for children registered 2 days/week or \$120.00 for children registered 1 day/week will be kept and not reimbursed

School Confidentiality - *Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA)*

All parents including the Executive Board Members, as well as the Teacher and any Teacher Assistants will be asked that all activities and the operations of the Didsbury Preschool be kept completely confidential. This is to ensure the privacy of all children and their families attending the Didsbury Preschool. This ensures that every incident, activities, affairs and happenings, will not be

discussed outside of the preschool. We appreciate your cooperation in this matter. For the privacy of your child and your family all personal information including all records (registration forms, portable records, etc.) will be kept in a locked area on the preschool premises.

For information about PIPA, visit the Private Sector Privacy website at pipa.alberta.ca

**It is the families responsibility to keep all information, on all Registration Records up-to-date!
Please notify the teacher of any changes immediately.**

Class Cancellation & Make-Up Classes

Any classes that are cancelled or cut short, whether due to teacher illness, severe weather, or other uncontrollable reasons, class will not be able to be made-up, due to licensing and insurance policies. You will, however, be ensured 53 classes/2 day per week program and 23 classes/1 day per week program, with the exception of snow days.

Didsbury Preschool will follow Chinook's Edge Inclement Weather policies and if a "Red Day" is declared and Chinook's Edge school busses are not operating, Didsbury Preschool classes will be cancelled. Parents may use their own discretion and choose to keep their children home when they deem the weather to be too cold.

Please be sure to check your email as sometimes classes are cancelled at the last minute due to temperatures.

Please be sure to fill out the email portion of your child's registration form. Email is used for receipts, newsletters, last minute class cancellations or up-dated preschool program information. Please be sure to notify the teacher if any of your contact information changes.

COVID-19 and Communicable Disease Clause

If schools are shut down indefinitely (at the governments request) due to a COVID-19 lockdown, fee reimbursement will be reviewed at the end of the school year if applicable.

If the preschool program is shut-down due to a positive COVID-19 case being identified within the program, there will be no fee reimbursement for the 14 days of isolation.

Preschool Fees

Class Options – Each class is 3 hours in length:

2 days per week program at \$1,400.00 per year based on a minimum of 53 classes/year.

1 day per week program at \$1,200.00 per year based on a minimum of 23 classes/year.

April 1, 2025, the Government of Alberta announced an Affordability Grant, this Affordability Grant reduces fees by \$100.00/month for each child registered in the Didsbury Preschool Society program.

2 days per week program at \$140.00 per month minus the \$100.00 from the Government of Alberta = **\$40.00 per month** based on a minimum of 53 classes per year.

1 day per week program at \$120.00 per month minus the \$100.00 from the Government of Alberta = **\$20.00 per month** based on a minimum of 23 classes per year.

The Affordability Grant is subject to change at any time. Should the Government of Alberta cancel the Affordability Grant, families are responsible for the full month fee as stated above.

Preschool Fees are due at the beginning of the year for the entire year

Fee payment plans are offered for the convenience of the families.

- Half Year Payment Plan requires two payments – one in September and one in February.
- Tri Year Payment Plan requires three payments – one in September, one in December and one in March.

Post-dated cheques must be filled out, signed and turned in prior to program start to secure your child's spot.

All payments can be paid by cash, cheque, e-Transfer, Visa or MasterCard.

Please be aware there is a service fee of 2.9% + \$0.30 for payments made by credit card.

Any unpaid fees by the 10th of the month will automatically be charged a \$55.00 late penalty, unless prior arrangements are made with the Treasurer.

If fees are not received in the current month, you may be asked to withdraw your child from the program and will still be obligated to pay any outstanding fees plus the \$140.00 withdrawal fee for the 2 days per week or \$120.00 for 1 day per week. (This is not paid/covered by the government subsidy program)

There will be an automatic \$55.00 charge on any returned cheques

All fees are based on a **YEAR TOTAL**, therefore the monthly fee of \$140.00 or \$120.00 will remain the same regardless of the number of days a child attends or the number of class days due to holidays, school closures, etc.

The fee for a child registered and entering the program mid-month will be calculated based on the number of days left in the month for the remainder of the month at a rate of \$28.00 per day or monthly fee + the \$85.00 registration fee, whichever is less.

If the three offered payment arrangements do not work for you, please reach out to the Treasurer to discuss other payment options.

Arrival & Departure

Morning Classes: 8:45am – 11:45am Do NOT drop off before 8:45am

Afternoon Classes: 12:15pm – 3:15pm Do NOT drop off before 12:15pm

Preschool begins the first Monday/Tuesday after September 15th each preschool year. The teacher is at the school 15 minutes before class begins, and for 15 minutes after class. Drop off period is the first fifteen minutes of class. Do not bring your child before 8:45am or 12:15pm. Please pick up your child promptly at the end of class, as children tend to get anxious or upset if their pickup person is late and their friends are gone.

In cases where a parent is continuously late picking up their child, a charge of \$10.00 per 15 minutes may be applied.

Sign-In & Sign-Out Sheets

Our Policy & Licensing Requires the preschool to have the children and adult helpers signed-in and time stamped upon arrival and signed-out and time stamped upon departure for each child and adult in attendance.

Only authorized people listed on the registration form will be allowed to pick up your child. Authorized persons must be a minimum of 16 years old to pick up your child and may be required to show ID upon request.

The sign-in/sign-out sheets are located in the entrance of the school on the sign-in centre. Please advise the teacher of any changes throughout the year.

Please be sure to sign your child in and out!

Absenteeism, Communicable Health Risks & Accidents

If your child will not be attending school, please contact the school to advise the teacher. **Leave a message at 403-335-8818 or email the preschool: didsburypreschoolsociety@gmail.com.** If your child has contracted a communicable health risk, such as chick pox, pink eye, measles or others such as head lice, etc. **You must advise the teacher and your child is not permitted to attend school until notified by health professionals that they are able to return.**

We are a “Stay Well School” children who are sick with colds and the flu including coughs and runny noses, should be kept home from preschool. This prevents illnesses from being passed back and forth between children. Your child is to be absent from the program until he/she is well and in cases of communicable health risks, you are notified by your physician or health authority, that your child is able to return.

In Case of Illness if your child comes to the preschool and appears not well, your child will be supervised by a primary staff member in another room, away from the other children, and you will be notified to return to the school immediately to retrieve your child. We are a stay well program and cannot allow for the other children in our program to be at risk.

In Case of Accident or Injury the Didsbury Preschool will ensure your child be provided with medical attention in the form of first aid by a certified staff member. The child will be cared for by the staff member until he/she is picked up by the parent or guardian, or the child is given medical attention by a doctor or other health care professional (i.e. paramedic, EMT, etc.) Any incidents requiring medical attention will be reported to the parents on the same day of the incident and the licensing officer or regional office within two working days.

The Didsbury Preschool Society staff will allow for the provision of health care to a child only with the written consent of the child's parent/guardian (as stated on the Didsbury Preschool Registration Form). The health care provided will be in the nature of first aid by a qualified staff member.

COVID-19 Clause: If your child is experiencing any of the listed symptoms, your child is required to stay home and is not allowed to attend the program. Your child must remain home for 10 days from the on-set of symptoms, or until symptoms have subsided **whichever is longer** or until a negative COVID test is received.

Label All Items

Please label all your child's personal belongings, including clothing, lunch boxes, backpacks and shoes. It helps the teacher, educational assistants, and parent helpers to locate items and prevent tears. Mable's Labels are great for all your labelling needs. www.mabelslabels.ca – choose the Didsbury Preschool from the fundraiser menu.

Parent Helper & Special Day

1. Our policy, and as required by licensing for our program, children must be 3 to 5 years of age and potty trained. Potty trained meaning they must be able to attend to themselves when using the washroom facilities.
2. Licensing requires two adults in attendance at all times when there are more than six children in attendance: the teacher and another adult (parent helper).
3. Your child's name will be listed on the monthly calendar throughout the school year. This will be your parent helper day. Names will be rotated through each month in order for all classes to be covered and each family to have as close to equal program helper days. We will assign parents as Parent Helper as close to their child's birthdate as possible. The monthly calendars will be emailed to the parents, up to three months in advance, allowing families to make arrangements for their required helper days. Please notify the teacher 72 hours prior to your parent helper day by email (didsburypreschoolsociety@gmail.com) if you need to change your helper day, parents can also change helper days with other parents.
4. Parents helping at the preschool require a vulnerable sector/criminal record check. A letter to take to the RCMP to attain yours will be in your child's registration package. **Please have it completed to be handed in prior to the start of the program.**

Please note: If you are unable to help on the day(s) you are assigned, you must let the Preschool Board know **72 hours or 3 days** in advance or you will be charged \$25.00 per hour, to pay for a licensed childcare worker to replace you on short notice, to ensure classes are not cancelled for other children.

Unfortunately, absolutely no siblings are allowed to be in attendance during your parent helper class, this includes nursing babies. Licensing requires the help of a second individual in case of an emergency.

The parent helper duties are posted on the utility room door (black door) in the front entrance of the preschool. Parent helpers will assist the teacher with crafts, snack time, and assist with the children as needed. No cell phones are permitted in the main play area. Please take this opportunity to enjoy your time with your child and their friends.

On your child's "Special Day", your child is encouraged to bring one item (toy or other personal item) from home to share as a "show and tell" during circle time.

Snack Time

At approximately 10:15 am for morning classes and 2:00pm for afternoon classes the classes will sit down for snack time. Each child is to bring his/her own nutritional snack. Snacks should consist of two food group items from the Canada Food Guide (see below). Drinks must be juice, milk or water. Please **NO** pop or Koolaide. Water is available for the children at all times.

Food Allergies

Our school is a peanut, nut, and peanut aware facility.

Please do not send items listed as “may contain” or “contains” nuts, peanuts or peanut products to school with your child!

Some of our students may have life-threatening allergies to a variety of nuts (typically, but not only peanuts). The only way we can ensure a safe environment for these children is to try and make our school **nut aware** (we cannot guarantee a completely allergen free environment). We ask you to please only send food items that do not contain nuts/peanuts.

If your child has other allergies, food or other, please be sure to list them on your child’s registration form. A list of food allergies will be posted on the door and reminders sent home. Should an allergy arise during the year, with any child, teacher or educational assistant, an “Allergy Alert Letter” will be sent home notifying each family of the item of concern and a request that children do not bring these items to class.

Canadian Food Guide

**Have plenty of
vegetables and fruits**

Eat protein foods

**Make water
your drink
of choice**

Just a reminder: Please send your child’s snack in labeled and reusable containers. Please do not send pop, juice boxes, koolaide, or other such items.

We encourage only reusable containers at preschool, and water is available at all times.

**Choose
whole grain
foods**

Allergies

It is the responsibility of each parent to notify the school of any allergies your child may have. Please be specific, especially with food allergies when filling out the registration forms. In some cases where a child has severe food allergies, we may recommend all parents not to send those foods with their children for snack.

Licensing policy is: The **Administration of Emergency Medications** such as rescue inhalers and EpiPens, etc. will only occur with the written consent of the parent or guardian, where the medication is in its original labeled container and only according to the labeled directions. The Didsbury Preschool staff will ensure a record of the name of the medication administered, the time the medication was administered, the amount of medication administered as well as the initials of the person/staff member whom administered the medication is kept of file. In such cases the medication must be kept in an inaccessible area to children or your child must wear a fanny pack and keep his/her medication on their person while at school. We are not permitted to have such medications left in the children's backpack, etc.

We do not administer oral medications of any kind to the children

The Health of our Children

The policy of the Didsbury Preschool Society is there is to be absolutely **No smoking** on or within 30 meters of the Didsbury Preschool property at any time whether children are present or not. This is strictly enforced by the Didsbury Preschool, as well as the town of Didsbury and the Government of Alberta to include all staff, volunteers, family, friends, any and all persons.

Fundraising

Fundraising is a very important aspect of the Preschool's budget. In order to keep our monthly fees affordable for all families, yet maintain a safe, enjoyable and licensed environment for our children, the Preschool must generate revenue from other sources.

The preschool participates in a minimum of four guaranteed fundraisers during the school year as well as continuously looking for others. Timelines and Fundraisers are subject to change.

"Mable's Labels" (does not count towards your yearly fundraising amount) which continues all year. Get yours before school starts – they are an easy and great way to label all of your child's belongings.

Families are expected to contribute to at least one fundraiser per semester with a sale value of \$100.00+ (September – December and January – June). If the sale value of \$100.00 is not met, the post-dated cheques provided at the beginning of the year will be deposited. We have a variety of fundraiser's throughout the year and we are always looking for new ideas!

Scholastic Canada Book Club

Families will be able to purchase age-appropriate books for their children, through the monthly **Scholastic Canada Book Club**. All purchases by families count as credit towards a pre-set total, once the school reaches the pre-set total order value, we are eligible to purchase books and learning tools for the school at no charge. This program enables us to increase our library which

benefits your child's learning experience. This is a wonderful program for our school. Order at scholasticcanada.ca and use the Didsbury Preschool class code: **RC234818**.

Holidays

The Didsbury Preschool mostly follows the Chinook's Edge School Division Yearly Calendar, with some exceptions varying, such as start-up, November (fall) break, Christmas break, and Year-end. When Chinook's Edge School Division schools have non-attendance days and holidays, so will the Didsbury Preschool. Fall and Christmas break tend to be a few days longer for the preschool. January School Organization Day is at the discretion of the Didsbury Preschool and may be an attendance day (as loss day make up day) for the preschool. Please follow the preschool calendar and monthly newsletter for holidays and non-attendance days each month.

Class Equalization

As part of our equalization policy, when there is no school, due to a stat holiday, that missed day will be made up on the Friday of that week. This will be the same for any holiday. This is to ensure equal days per class regardless of the class a child is registered in.

I.e.: Truth and Reconciliation Day, Thanksgiving, Fall break, Remembrance Day, Semester Break, Easter/Spring break, etc.

Safety & Emergency Procedures

Each child must have **indoor footwear** (not slippers) for both safety reasons and in case of an emergency exit from the building. Sneakers are recommended as they are required for "Gym Days".

Fire Drills will be practiced bimonthly throughout the school year. In case of an emergency, the parent helper and/or Educational Assistant are to exit first; followed by the children, and lastly the teacher after making sure all of the children are safely out of the building. All parents must be familiar with emergency procedures.

A map is posted on the East Emergency Exit Door, and in the Main Entrance above the sign-in center. Please take time to become familiar with it.

Our policy is in the case of an emergency evacuation, program closure due to an emergency, intruder on the premises, a child removed from the program without parental/guardian consent, an injury requiring emergency medical attention, or a lost or left child on the premises after operating hours will be reported to Government Licensing.

In the case of an **Emergency Evacuation**, children will be escorted by the teacher/staff and other adults to the Didsbury Complex Multipurpose Room where parents will be notified to pick up their children. The teacher will have the Portable Off-Site Information Cards with them at all times when classes/children are not on the school premises for any reason.

Field Trips

The children will be taken on a number of field trips throughout the year. A general permission form is on the registration form to be filled out and signed when registering. For the field trips that are not within walking distance, we will be using the Lion's Community Bus to transport children to and from

the Preschool and the field trip destination. A \$30 bus fee will be collected at the beginning of the school year with registration fees if you choose to use the bus (you can opt out and drive your child if you choose). Parents are welcome to join us for field trips; however, they will have to meet the children at the field trip destination due to restrictions on bus capacity. A specific field trip permission form will be sent home only at the parents/guardians request. Please make sure your child is properly dressed for the weather on the field trip day as the children will usually be walking to their destination, unless other arrangements have been made, for which parents will be notified. We always try to notify families of field trips in advance, via the monthly schedule/class dojo/emails. However, sometimes field trips may be cancelled, changed or booked in short notice. Please be understanding if this happens, as the field trips are booked at the convenience of the businesses we visit.

Off-Site Information Cards are taken on all Off-Site activities or emergency evacuations.

Special Parties & Celebrations

Special parties will be held throughout the year to celebrate the various holidays including Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's Day, Easter, and the Year End Celebration & Graduation Party. With respect to different religious backgrounds the program does not include religious teachings but reflects the 'festive air' of the holiday.

Mailboxes

Each child will have his or her own mailbox. This is for their classroom projects, newsletters, calendars, payment receipts, etc. It is the responsibility of their parent/guardian to check their child's mailbox daily. Your child's mailbox is the space **above** their name.

Newsletters & Parent Helper/Special Day Calendars

Please be sure you have provided the preschool with your email address as email notifications are sent out for newsletters, classes/program changes, or class cancellations.

All newsletters and class calendars will be sent out by email and class dojo. The newsletters will layout what the children will be working on that month, and any upcoming important dates. The class calendar will have parent helper days listed along with important dates such as field trips and special guests.

Class Phone Lists & Phone Contacts

A class phone list will be provided to the phone tree contacts at the beginning of the year, and it will include the parent's and child's name and parent contact information including phone numbers. An updated list will be sent out as needed. Please be sure to let the teacher know if any of your child's information changes i.e. phone number, address, etc.

The school has a phoning policy, which enables all parents to be notified by phone of pertinent information and short notice information, such as class cancellations, unscheduled fieldtrips, etc. If you **do not** want your name, your child's name, or your phone number listed, be sure to check off the "do not list personal information" box on the registration form. Your information will be given to the "phone contact" person, Board Members and Teacher only.

Gym Day at the Elks Hall

Approximately once a month, thanks to the generous donation of the Didsbury Elks, the preschool program is operated at the Elks Hall. We call this our “Gym Day”, a day when your kids can run, play and build their gross motor skills. These days you will drop-off and pick-up your child at the Elks Hall – 1914 20th Street, Didsbury. Please watch the monthly calendar for Gym Days dates. If the weather is nice, Gym Day may be outside, where the teacher can take the children to a playground, or go for a walk.

Board Members & Monthly General Meetings

The Didsbury Preschool Society is a Licensed, Registered Non for Profit Organization that requires an Executive Board of Members. The Executive Board requires the following positions be held: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Fundraising Coordinator, Phone Tree Contacts and Parent Rep. *For more information on positions, see page 14.*

By Society requirements, we must have a Prent Executive Board. If you are interested in helping, by holding one of the positions and serving on the board, please fill out a volunteer form. The director with just cause and support of either current or present volunteer board, may decline or remove any volunteer from serving as a board member at any time either before or during any term.

The Board meets monthly to go over any updates to the operation of the school and to table events or concerns of the school. All parents are welcome and encouraged to attend these meetings. Your input to the program is very important to the continued success of the school.

Code of Conduct

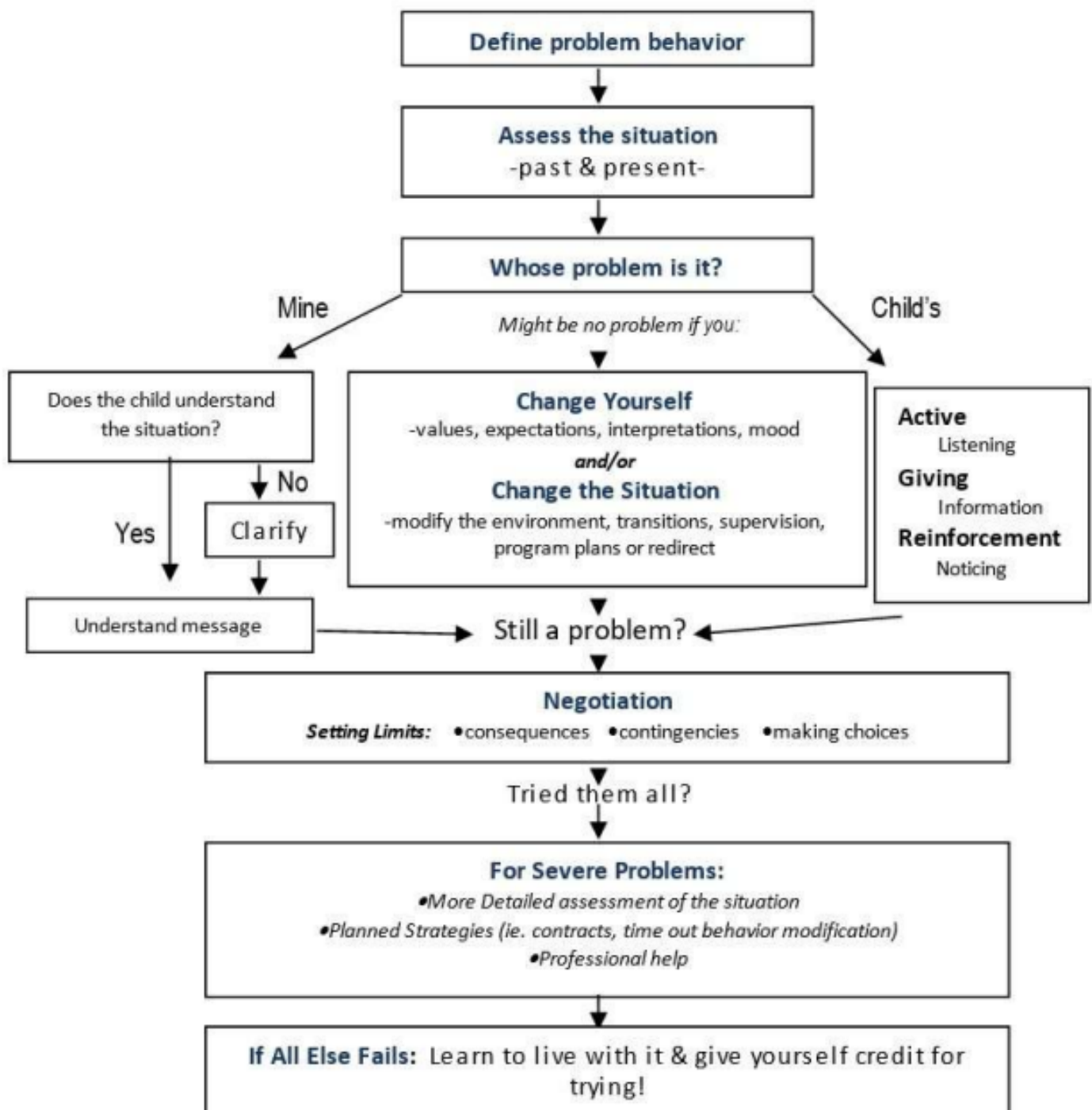
At the Didsbury Preschool Society, we strive to provide a safe, welcoming environment. Didsbury Preschool Society's Code of Conduct sets clear expectations regarding behaviour that apply to everyone involved in our Preschool community, including parents, guardians, grandparents, volunteers, teachers, board members, and other related individuals.

We require all adults who will be participating in your child's experience at the Didsbury Preschool to review and sign the Code of Conduct and abide by them at all times. Decisions regarding Code of Conduct issues will be at the Board's discretion, and all decisions will be final.

Discipling Policy

Our discipline policy is one of prevention. Our teacher uses a problem-solving technique that encourages the children to become more responsible for their behaviour instead of replying on adult intervention. This has had great success teaching children mutual respect for their peers and adults. Any child disciplinary action taken will be reasonable in the circumstance, no physical or verbal punishment, no physical degradation or emotional deprivation will be tolerated. We will not, nor permit the denial or threaten the denial of any basic need. We will not, nor permit the use of any form of physical restraint, confinement or isolation of any child. **See Problem Solving Flowchart below.**

Problem Solving Flowchart



Board Positions

The Members of the Society are you, the parents/guardians. \$1.00 from your registration fee goes towards paying your membership fee.

The Directors and Officers of the Society are the people elected or appointed by the Members to represent the preschool in decision making. The following positions make up the Board of Directors, who have a vote at Board meetings:

President – Helps the Teacher/School Coordinator with the daily operations of the Didsbury Preschool, including setting up and operating board meetings, preparing funding applications and attending funding meetings (2/year).

Vice President – Fill in for and assists the President & Teacher/School Coordinator with the daily operations of the Didsbury Preschool.

Secretary – Takes and records all meeting notes and helps with all paperwork including grants, funding and other such correspondences, where required. Date and distribute monthly Scholastic book orders.

Treasurer – Keeps daily books, applies for grants & funding, does deposits and pays bills and presents a balanced budget at each meeting, etc.

Parent Representative – Acts as a liaison between the families and board/teacher in decision making. If a problem or concerns arise, or you have any questions regarding the policies or operations, etc., of the preschool parents are expected to contact the Parent Representative **first**. They will in return bring all questions or concerns to the board at the regularly scheduled monthly meeting or in serious situations, call an emergency meeting.

Additional Directors - As per the bylaws, there can be no more than 3 additional directors. These individuals may be assigned responsibilities as required.

Additionally, there may be individuals or committees of the Board at Board meetings who do not have a vote, such as:

Fundraising Coordinator – This can be an individual or a committee that helps the board plan and come up with ideas for the fundraisers throughout the year.

Field trip Coordinator - This can be an individual or a committee that helps the teacher plan and come up with ideas for field trips throughout the year. They may be asked to reach out to businesses around town and help coordinate times for the classes to attend the business.

All parents are welcome to and encouraged to attend meetings to help brainstorm ideas on all things preschool. This helps make our school a better program for years to come! New ideas are a great addition and fresh outlooks are always a huge help!