



**EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES PROGRAM**

# FAMILY MANUAL

2024-2025





## Welcome to Pacekids!

### We are thrilled to have your family as a part of our ECS Program!

We hope this Family Manual will help answer some of your questions. Please keep it as a handy reference. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us!

#### **Our Mission:**

Pacekids empowers children with diverse needs and their families through excellence in therapy, education, and play.

#### **Our Story:**

Pacekids Programs offers various programs to children in the Calgary area, including our Early Childhood Services (ECS) preschool and kindergarten program. Pacekids is an approved site for ECS programming, which is funded by Program Unit Funding (PUF) from Alberta Education. Our ECS program is led by teachers and includes interdisciplinary support for children from Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists, Speech-Language Pathologists, Behaviour Strategists, and Classroom Therapy Aides (CTAs).

### Overview of Our Program







**Programs:** Pacekids follow the standards set by Alberta Education for ECS programs. Our morning and afternoon programs focus on helping children reach their potential in multiple areas of development.

**Therapy Involvement:** The Pacekids therapy team includes Speech Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, and Behavioural Strategists. Our therapists are available onsite to provide support and strategies for the classroom team, which includes our teachers and classroom therapy aides (CTAs). We follow an evidence-based consultative model, which ensures that strategies are implemented consistently in the classroom.

**Common Approach:** Children in the Pacekids ECS program who are receiving Specialized Services through Family Support for Children with Disabilities (FSCD) are eligible for a collaborative approach. This allows for coordination and collaboration among the teams involved in both programs. If you currently have an FSCD contract in place for Specialized Services, please contact your ECS Coordinator.

**Transition Planning:** According to Alberta Education and the Alberta School Act, all relevant information in a child's file, which has been used to develop or implement program plans, can be sent to the child's next placement upon written request. Our teachers and coordinators will work closely with families and prospective schools to find the best-suited program for your child. We will start having these discussions with our kindergarten families to understand where families would like their child(ren) to transition. In January, we will host a transitions evening dedicated to helping families understand the transition process and provide them with valuable information. This event aims to support families in navigating the next steps for their child's educational journey.



## Key Contacts

Office Administrator	Crystal Lachance	403-234-7876 Option 2	<a href="mailto:crystal.lachance@pacekids.ca">crystal.lachance@pacekids.ca</a>
ECS Manager	Kerri Witherspoon	587-674-2544	<a href="mailto:kerri.witherspoon@pacekids.ca">kerri.witherspoon@pacekids.ca</a>
ECS Coordinator	Rebecca Harrow	587-674-2687	<a href="mailto:rebecca.harrow@pacekids.ca">rebecca.harrow@pacekids.ca</a>
ECS Managing Director	Kacie Dougherty	587-200-0913	<a href="mailto:kacie.dougherty@pacekids.ca">kacie.dougherty@pacekids.ca</a>

## Your Child's Team

**Teacher:** Early literacy, concept development, numeracy, social skills, cognitive development, and transition planning.

**Speech Language Pathologist:** Speech development, augmentative/alternative communication, language development, swallowing/feeding, social communication.

**Physiotherapist:** Mobility, adaptive equipment, gross motor development, body awareness, balance, and coordination

**Occupational Therapist:** Fine motor development, splinting, adaptive equipment, positioning, sensory processing, self-care skills (toileting, dressing, feeding), vision, wheelchair mobility.

**Behavioural Strategist:** Classroom behavioural support, play skills, learning and coping strategies, transitions/ rigidities.

**Classroom Therapy Aide:** Support the development of key children, follow through on Individual Program Plan (IPPs) goals and strategies provided by the teacher and therapy teams, support the overall running of the classroom.

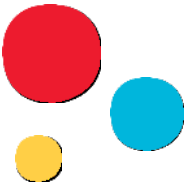
## Enrollment, Fees, and Payment Terms

**Registration:** Each year there is a non-refundable \$40.00 registration fee to cover administrative costs. Before your child's first day of school, please ensure that you complete the intake package, which will be sent to parents/guardians via email. Intake packages must be filled out before your child's first day of school. These forms are sent to parents/guardians by SignNow. It is important to submit any diagnostic letters and assessments before the start of school to secure funding for your child's programming.

**PUF Programming Supply Fees:** There is a \$30/ month supplies fee that supports purchasing sensory materials, special activities, art and craft supplies, and other classroom items.

**Mild/Moderate Supply Fees:** Due to the difference in funding, there is a \$75/ month supplies fee for children coded as mild/ moderate, that supports purchasing sensory materials, special activities, art and craft supplies, and other classroom items.





**Transportation Fees:** If your child qualifies for PUF programming and starts the program by September 30th, 2024, there is a monthly fee of \$104 per child, or \$154 per family. Transportation fees can be paid in one lump sum at the beginning of the school year or monthly through Lillio. Please note that transportation services are not guaranteed for children accessing Mild/Moderate funding.

**Fee Payment:** Fee payment is set up through the Lillio (formerly known as HiMama) App at the beginning of the school year. Fees are posted on the 26th of the previous month and due on the 5th of the month.

**Fee Waiver:** Families requiring financial assistance can request a Fee Waiver Applications from the ECS Coordinator. Fee waivers must be applied for annually, and proof of income is required.

**Child Information Changes:** Please inform the school of any changes to your child's information, including addresses, medication changes, home environment changes and contact details.

**Extended Vacation:** If your child will be absent from the program for more than four consecutive school weeks, we cannot guarantee their spot will be available upon their return. Please communicate with your child's teacher about any vacations or extended absences.

**Withdrawal from Program:** If you plan to withdraw your child from the program, please give at least two weeks' notice to the ECS Coordinator.

**Refunds:** Refunds are not provided for partial months, as our program costs are fixed. However, refunds will be provided for future months paid for in advance, with proper notice of withdrawal.

## Documentation

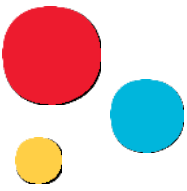
**Individual Program Plan:** Each child at Pacekids has an Individual Program Plan (IPP) tailored for their developmental level, needs, and family priorities. Our team regularly review and update IPP goals. The initial IPPs will be developed in October and formally updated in February and June. Families will receive the IPP via email.

**Year-End Reports and Assessments:** At the end of June, Pacekids prepares year-end reports for each child which are sent via email. If your child requires a formal assessment to secure funding for the following school year, the appropriate therapist will complete the assessment between March and June. The assessment results will be shared with parents/guardians and included in your child's file. If requested by the family or child's school, year-end reports and assessments can also be forwarded to the child's next school.

**Provincial Approach to Student Information (PASI):** As per Alberta Education requirements, IPPs, reports, attendance and documentation demonstrating your child's diagnosis will be uploaded to Alberta Education's online system called PASI.

**Custody Arrangements:** If you have a legal agreement outlining custody or restraining orders, please provide a copy to the school for our records. Our schools will strictly adhere to the guidelines specified in the custody arrangement or restraining order that has been signed by a judge. Parents/Guardians are kindly requested to notify the School's Manager immediately if these legal circumstances change.





## School Information

**Daily Schedule:** Our program operates Monday through Friday. The morning program runs from 8:15 to 11:35, while the afternoon program runs from 12:55 to 4:15.

**Classroom Calendar:** Pacekids will provide a school calendar to all families at the beginning of the school year. Please note that the school will be closed for regular professional development days, winter break and spring break, which will be shown in the school calendar.

**Staggered Start:** To ensure a smooth transition for children and their families at the start of the school year, Pacekids implements a staggered start for all students. Your child's classroom teacher will inform you of the specific start date for your child, at least one week prior to school starting.

**Reporting Absences:** If your child is going to be absent, please notify the school as soon as possible using the Lillio app, as well as 4Seasons if you are receiving transportation. If your child is ill, please notify us as to the nature of the illness, particularly if it is contagious, for the well-being of others in the program.

**FSCD Services:** If your child is receiving FSCD support, please inform your teacher or the ECS Coordinator. This allows us to share information amongst all those supporting your child and ensure that strategies are aligned where possible across environments.

### → **What to Bring to School:**

Please dress your child in comfortable, weather appropriate clothing for school. As our program is play-based, expect your child and their clothes may get messy. **We highly recommend labelling all personal items that your child brings to school.**

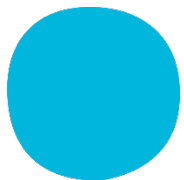
Send the following items will your child:

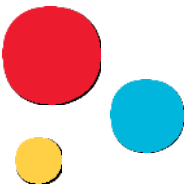
- A healthy snack that is **NUT FREE**
- Indoor, closed toe running shoes
- Water bottle
- An extra change of clothing (messy play is a part of our program)
- Diapers and wipes as needed

Pacekids is a nut free and fragrance-free service provider. Please refrain from bringing any food containing nuts (including almonds) into Pacekids facilities. Additionally, kindly avoid wearing perfume, cologne, or any fragrant products when in Pacekids facilities.

**Celebrations:** We celebrate special occasions, including children's birthdays, in the classroom! However, we kindly request that you **DO NOT SEND FOOD OR GIFTS** as part of your child's celebration, due to allergies and other safety concerns.

**Diaper Changes:** It is not a requirement for children to be toilet trained to attend our program. Families are responsible for providing disposable diapers and wipes for their child daily in their backpack. If your child requires diaper cream, please fill out a medication administration form to provide permission. Please ensure your child is in a clean diaper before leaving for school.





**Planned Outings:** Whenever there is a planned outing, staff members will provide written notification to parents/ guardians at least three days in advance. This gives parents/guardians ample time to ensure their child will arrive on time. Parents/guardians must give their permission by signing the field-trip form which will be sent to families before the field trip.

**Music Therapy:** Pacekids is pleased to offer music twice each week, provided by our Music Teacher. Music has proven to be incredibly valuable in opening doors to communication, supporting creativity and expression, and enhancing quality of life. Music also promotes social interactions and helps gross motor movement skills.



**Physical Education:** Pacekids has a robust physical education program to ensure the ongoing physical literacy and motor development of our children. Each class has gym every day, as physical activity is key in regulating bodies to ensure they are ready to learn.

**Online Learning Extension Programming:** Beginning this school year we will be working to extend our programming into children's homes through online programming! Programming will focus on literacy, numeracy, movement, music and more! Watch for more information in the fall about how you and your child can partake in this programming.

## **Behaviour Policy**

Pacekids prioritizes the safety and well-being of our children, families, and staff in all the services we provide.

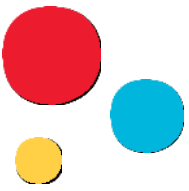
**Discipline Approach:** We believe in using positive behaviour supports and proactive strategies when addressing disciplinary action. If disciplinary action becomes necessary, staff members must ensure that the action is reasonable given the circumstances.

### **Guidelines for Disciplinary Strategies:**

- The strategies should be in alignment with specific directions or guidance from a Behaviour Strategist and/or Psychologist, who will determine the function behind the behaviour and suggest effective replacement strategies.
- The strategies should be appropriate to the developmental level of the child.
- The aim of the strategies is to assist the child in learning appropriate behaviour.
- Strategies should be implemented as soon as possible after the incident.

### **Prohibited Disciplinary Practices:**

- No form of physical punishment, verbal or physical degradation, or emotional deprivation will be inflicted or caused.
- No denial or threat of denial of any necessity will be imposed.
- No form of physical restraint, confinement, or isolation will be used or permitted.
- Children will not be left unattended for any period.



With the written approval of a Parent/Guardian and in consultation with a Pacekids' Behaviour Strategist and/or Psychologist, the use of punishment strategies (i.e. time outs or removing desirable objects/ activities) may be implemented, if deemed appropriate.

Our approach is rooted in creating a safe and supportive environment for all children, promoting positive behaviour, and using discipline to teach and guide appropriate behaviour.

## **Health and Safety**

**First Aid & CPR:** All CTAs and Teachers are required to maintain updated certifications in Standard First Aid and CPR.

**Injuries:** If an incident or injury occurs during programming hours Pacekids has procedures to ensure proper documentation and reporting to administration and Parents/Guardians, including written documentation will be completed. If a serious injury or medical emergency occurs, an ECS staff member will call 911 and your family will be contacted promptly.

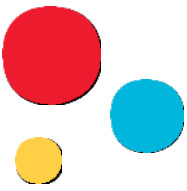
**Fire Evacuation and Lockdowns:** Pacekids buildings are regularly inspected for fire safety compliance. Evacuations and lockdown drills are practiced during the school year to prepare for potential emergencies.

**Medication:** A signed medication administration form, found in your intake package, is required for staff to administer any medication to a child, including non-prescription, during school hours. If you need one of these forms after your intake package is completed, contact your ECS Coordinator. It is the primary responsibility for the administration of medication rests with each child's parents/guardians. Any changes in a child's medical condition or medication are to be brought to the attention of the ECS Manager, accompanied by a doctor's prescription. Please note that staff members are limited to actions that can be performed within a school setting and by individuals who are not trained in medical procedures.

**Illness/Vacation:** If your child is sick or going on vacation, it is your responsibility to notify the 4Seasons transportation and their classroom teacher through Lillio. Please refrain from sending your child to school if they are unwell.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- Fever (anything above 38 degrees celsius)
- Vomiting or diarrhea that has occurring two or more times in the past 24 hours
- Continuous cough
- Contagious viruses or diseases such as COVID-19, chickenpox, strep throat, hand-foot-and-mouth, pink eye, etc.
- Unidentified rash
- Constant, thick, coloured nasal discharge
- Lethargic and/or unable to participate in class as usual



If your child is prescribed medication for a contagious virus or disease, they must be on medication for at least 24 hours before returning to the program. Please note that if your child exhibits any of the above symptoms at school, they will be moved to an isolation space with a staff member, and you will be expected to pick up your child within one hour of receiving the notification. Children should not be sent to school if they require medication to alleviate any of the above symptoms. If your child has allergies that may result in some of these symptoms, please ensure that the school is aware of these allergies and symptoms. Documentation may be requested for consistent symptoms not related to illness i.e. a runny nose caused by allergies.

**Progressive Accountability:** Pacekids employs a zero-tolerance policy regarding aggressive or abusive language or actions toward any Pacekids employee. This includes yelling, swearing, using intimidating or threatening language, engaging in physical and verbal aggression, harassment, or any behaviour that creates discomfort or unease for a staff member. If a Parent/Guardian or Family Member(s) demonstrates any of these behaviours, the Program Manager will meet with all involved Pacekids' employees as soon as possible. A plan of action will be discussed, and the Parent/Guardian or Family Member(s) contacted immediately after the Program Manager meeting. It is expected that all parties are expected to work together to find a resolution. However, if this behaviour persists or is severe enough on the first occurrence, it may result in the termination of our services.

### Families at Pacekids


**Communication to Families:** We are excited to provide family communication through the Lillio app. This app allows Pacekids staff to share activities and updates with you, giving you a glimpse into your child's experience in our program. Photos are stored securely in a journal format, providing a safe and convenient way for you to stay connected. We encourage families to check the app daily and to communicate any changes or updates regarding your child, such as changes in sleep routines or upcoming holidays. Please note that our primary focus in the classroom is to spend quality time with your child, so while we strive to provide daily updates, there may be occasions where circumstances prevent us from doing so. The level of detail in the updates may also vary. Your child's work will be sent home in their backpack, so we kindly ask that you check it regularly.



**How to Participate:** Parents/Guardians are always welcome at our school. We invite you to participate in their child's programming in various ways such as joining field trips, attending bring your parent/guardian to school days, and participating in special events. Your involvement is valued and greatly appreciated as we work together to support your child's development.

**Pacekids Fundraising:** Pacekids is a registered charity and relies on fundraising efforts to support program delivery. While our ECS programs receive funding from Alberta Education, not all costs are covered. To continue delivering the best programs and services possible, Pacekids must fundraise approximately \$3,000 per child. The support of our generous donors and supporters ensures that every child can thrive!





**Champions for Children:** You can make a significant impact by joining Pacekids' monthly giving program, becoming a Champion for Children! By donating an amount that makes sense for your family each month, you can directly support the children at Pacekids. To learn more and become a Champion, please visit [Pacekids.ca/champion](https://Pacekids.ca/champion) or email [getinvolved@pacekids.ca](mailto:getinvolved@pacekids.ca).

**Events:** Participating in our events, purchasing raffle tickets, or exploring our online auctions directly contributes to supporting Pacekids. We will always share event information on our website, social media platforms, and through email. We encourage you to share these events with your friends, family, and colleagues to help spread the word and make a difference.

**Community:** Our families play a vital role in advocating for Pacekids and creating a stronger community. Sharing our social media posts, connecting Pacekids to businesses and organizations, and sharing your experiences at Pacekids with family and friends are invaluable contributions. Stay updated on our community activities by following us on Facebook @PacekidsPrograms and on Instagram @Pacekids.

Our Fund Development team is always available to address any questions you may have about our fundraising efforts or to discuss any community connections you would like to share. Feel free to reach us at [getinvolved@pacekids.ca](mailto:getinvolved@pacekids.ca). Your support and involvement make a meaningful difference in the lives of the children we serve. We are deeply grateful for your contributions to our Pacekids community.

### Transportation

Driven by a family member:

- If you or a family member are driving your child to school, please ensure your child arrives on time. If you arrive early, you will be asked to wait with your child in the front lobby until the classroom staff are available at the beginning of programming.
- Please do not park in any Pacekids van spots, or other parking that is designated for the surrounding businesses.
- As per Alberta Education requirements, Parents/ Guardians will be required to sign a "Parent/ Guardian Transportation Agreement" document.

**For information about 4 Season Transportation, please see their family manual.**

**We look forward to working with you and your child  
during the 2024-2025 school year!**