



# EARLY YEARS PARENT HANDBOOK

## CHILDREN COME FIRST

Because children matter, Provo Primary Early years programme provides high quality early childhood educational programmes, and advocates for children, parents and families.

Box 329, Flamingo Park  
Graceway, Providenciales  
Turks and Caicos Islands  
British West Indies  
649.941.5638  
[www.provprimary.com](http://www.provprimary.com)  
[www.provprimaryblog.com](http://www.provprimaryblog.com)  
[principal@provprimary.com](mailto:principal@provprimary.com)  
Dear Parents,

Welcome to the early years programme at Provo Primary School where Children COME FIRST. We are excited to be partnering with you during the most intense period of development your child will ever experience. In these wonderful early childhood years, your family will develop patterns and habits, and your child will develop brain architecture and learning styles, all of which will shape your lives. Research tells us time and again that wonderful and supportive environments can help families make the most of these years. We hope that at Provo Primary you will find just such an environment. We invite you to help us develop an organization that is responsive to families and that provides the highest quality programmes possible.

The early years programme at Provo Primary is devoted to the welfare of young children and their families. We offer programmes for parents and children in the early childhood years (eighteen months to age five). These are housed in our beautiful purpose built buildings that include their own play ground areas and are distanced from the primary school classrooms.

The school runs from September to June. Our classes include:

- Toddlers: A part-time programme for 18 months to 2 year olds.
- Preschool: A part-time programme for 2 and 3 year olds.
- Junior Kindergarteners: A part-time or full-time programme for 3 and 4 year olds.
- Kindergarten: A full-time programme for 4 and 5 year olds (North American Junior Kindergarten or K1 class).

To enter Junior Kindergarten a child should have turned three prior to the beginning of the school year.

Our Early Years Unit provides:

- Home visits
- Summer programmes for children of various ages.
- Developmental screenings as and when possible, and Parent education.

## MISSION STATEMENT

***Children Come First! Because children come first, the Early Years programme at Provo Primary provides high quality early childhood educational programmes, and advocates for children, parents and families.***

## KEY VALUES

*Children Come First- the following values will help keep kids healthy, excited, nurtured and successful:*

Community • Equality • Education (British curriculum based) • Acceptance • Respect • Environmental awareness • Children Come First!

## PHILOSOPHY

The Early Years programme operates under the belief that the early childhood years are a period of dynamic and extraordinary development. Your young child is building his /her brain architecture, learning habits and social skills that will carry her/him through life. We believe that careful attention to development in these years can make a world of difference to each child. We follow the British Early Years

Foundation Stage framework (EYFS) incorporating both Emergent and Highscope curriculums. This is based on four important themes and each theme is linked to an important Principle:

**Theme: A Unique Child**

Principle: Every child is a competent learner from birth, who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

**Theme: Positive Relationships**

Principle: Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person.

**Theme: Enabling Environments**

Principle: The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.

**Theme: Learning and Development**

Principle: Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of Learning and Development are equally important and interconnected.

Our curriculum helps children learn to: design and implement projects based on their own interest areas, develop social and emotional skills such as initiative, problem solving, conflict resolution, relationship building, the ability to gather information from a number of sources which will later translate into academic disciplines, and synthesize the information into theory.

Young children are active observers of the world; they are curious and anxious to make sense out of the many amazing questions that face them. The great difference between a young child and their older peers however, is that they are still very concrete thinkers, so their hypotheses are often very limited. Our primary goal is to not only teach children facts and figures, but to teach them thinking skills and to help them (and you) to recognise their own learning style.

Our curriculum and practices fully support and encourage parental involvement. You are your child's first and most important teacher. Our job is simply to help you be the parent you want to be. We will introduce you to other families with young children. We will help you find resources, will introduce you to child development information, will bring you great activities to do at home to support your child's development and will help you to assess your child's development.

At school, our teachers plan varied themes and activities and observe and assess children under six areas of learning:

- personal, social and emotional development
- communication, language and literacy
- problem solving, reasoning and numeracy
- knowledge and understanding of the world
- physical development
- creative development

Children will experience the following elements in the course of their day with us:

- Arrival/welcoming time
- Singing, music and or movement
- Center choice time
- Clean up
- Small group time
- Large group time
- Outdoor play
- Meals – snack and lunch times
- Rest

Children enrolled in our early years programme will experience a model of teaching commonly referred to as 'primary caregiving'. The primary caregiving model assures that the growth and development of each child is closely monitored. This oversight is provided by the teacher who has been assigned to your child. Your child's primary teacher will observe and record indications of your child's development, will plan daily activities and experiences specific to the interests and skills of your child, and will serve as the primary advocate for your child. This teacher will lead your parent-teacher conferences and will be your primary source of information specific to the development of your child. We certainly assume and expect that all of the teachers in your child's classroom will develop a relationship with your child, and will have frequent and meaningful interactions, but it is important to us to know that someone is keeping a special eye on each child in our care.

## ENROLLMENT POLICIES

Application for enrollment can be made by making an appointment at the school. Our registration forms are also available on our website. A program tour is a prerequisite for enrollment. We want you to visit Provo Primary before you enroll your child; we believe that this procedure ensures that we are a good fit for your family's needs.

Applications are considered in the order in which they are received, with priority granted to returning families. Application forms must be completed and returned to Provo Primary with the non-refundable enrollment fee.

You may like your child to have a physical examination, a hearing and vision assessment by qualified physicians before starting school. We request that all vaccination and relevant medical information is shared with us at the time of enrollment.

Provo Primary School has an equal opportunity policy that states that we do not discriminate on the basis of race, colour, nationality origin, sex, age or disability.

Copies of passports need to be seen by our Administrative assistant to verify information regarding your child.

## STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Provo Primary is staffed by an extraordinary group of talented and skilled professionals. We also seek to include volunteers in our program whenever possible. All staff undergo a background check on a criminal record check.

Our staff receive great pre- and in-service training, thus are constantly working on their own teaching skills. All of our teachers and most of our teaching assistants have certification and degrees in fields related to early childhood education. Teaching assistants are encouraged to complete an early childhood development certificate program if they come to us with no formal education in early childhood education. Our staff also participate in an on-going performance management evaluation cycle, which allows them to set goals for themselves and to see their progress in achieving their goals.

If you are interested in volunteering with us, please let us know. We know that our programs are extraordinary because of the many hands, hearts and minds at work, at play and thinking with us every day.

## DISCIPLINE

Disciplined behaviour and self-regulation are primary goals at Provo Primary. Our curriculum focuses on social skill development, providing children with many opportunities to learn appropriate ways to express themselves and to manage their wants, needs and emotions. Most early years conflicts occur over misunderstandings or a desperate desire for an object. Each conflict presents an opportunity for children to learn conflict resolution skills, which we delight in teaching. Many parents tell us they have adopted the practice at home, so here are the essential steps to our conflict resolution ‘formula’:

### Conflict Resolution Steps

1. Observe.

Don't step in unless needed and step out whenever possible!

2. Name It! – “Looks like there is a conflict here.”

Create visuals, use touch, talking stick, sound, etc.

3. Neutralize.

Neutralize any objects – “I'll hold this while we work this out”, encourage breathing, allow space/time for cooling off.

4. Identify the problem/players/feelings.

Children do this, adult facilitates and helps non-verbal children express in other ways. Ask more, talk less. Consider using a variety of strategies: drawing, clay, dictation, etc. Use feelings cards/books. Remember developmental level of child.

5. Identify an appropriate place to work on the issue

Children need to feel safe. Provide a variety of tools to help kids practice conflict resolution skills (i.e. conflict caddy, peace table etc. Don't draw negative attention to the players, though others may wish to observe)

6. Restate the original problem

Have players do this if possible or adult help give the words. Bathe children in an emotional vocabulary.

7. Generate Solutions

Children do this when possible. Adult can give some options – “hmm looks like you are stuck...this has worked for others in the past. Want to try?” Great time to call on local experts! (other children, peacekeeper, kid facilitators, a neutral adult, a character from a book)

8. Agree upon solutions

Or at least agree upon the compromise and actions that will take place. Ask if it is a win/win, a lose/win, or a lose/lose solution.

9. Players carry out solutions

When possible encourage the solution to be something the children can be in charge of themselves. (example: If they say, “you can have it in 9 minutes” how will the child know when the time is up. Make it concrete and real for them, like 9 times around the circle...something they can count themselves.)

10. Evaluate solutions

In large and small groups through storytelling, class meetings, making books to read to others.

Avoid praise and focus on how the actions affected the different players.

Other thoughts to keep in mind:

- Think of conflicts as problems to be solved rather than infractions to be punished.

- Empower and focus on the victims.
- Refer players to their past experiences or experiences of other children or yourself.
- You may need to help speak for the non-verbal child. Consider alternative strategies for expression.
- Remember Alfie Kohn's 3 C's...Caring Community, Choices, and Curriculum.
- People's experiences/age/learning style will influence how they respond to conflict.
- Young children are egocentric! Continue to refer players to others feelings and thoughts to help build empathy. It takes time and lots of practice.
- Keep it short and simple and focused on the observable with young toddlers.
- Avoid rescuing children from conflict. Try to see it as an opportunity instead of a disruption.

In the event of discipline problems that concern us, we will notify parents and together we will develop a discipline plan. In the event of extraordinary and irresolvable discipline problems, Provo Primary reserves the right to terminate services.

## COMMUNICATION

We consider regular and frequent communication a vital aspect of our program. We hope that we can spend a moment each day briefly describing your child's day and catching up with you. We will need help from parents whose children carpool in order to find communication strategies that suit your schedule and ours.

For our preschool classroom, our school year begins with a home visit from our Early Years Coordinator, Miss Evieann Barber. She will call you in late August to set up a time to come and visit. Our one and only goal with the home visit is to begin and strengthen child-teacher and parent-teacher relationships. The base of most of our work is relationships, and we want to get them off to a good start. The home visit often puts new children at ease on the first days, and gives you and your child's teacher a relaxed chance to talk about your family's culture, hopes and needs. We offer home visits to families throughout the year. Many parents tell us that home visits help them understand their child's development more fully and/or work through issues that have been stressful for the family. Please let us know if you are interested in regular home visits.

We can best support your child and family when we know a bit about your life. Changes such as starting a new job, moving to a new home, new people moving into your home, illness, deaths, births in the family, visiting friends and/or relatives, etc. are all situations which may disrupt a child's routines. Please keep us posted.

The daily sign in sheets have a space at the bottom for comments- when you give us messages about your child—*grandma is picking up today, Fred may be sleepy due to a late night, etc*—we encourage you to both TELL us and WRITE it. Many conversations occur in the course of a morning and we don't want to lose track of any of them. You are expected to sign your child in every day, and then find a teacher to let us know that your child is at school. Departures observe the same pattern – let us know that you are leaving, and sign out.

To encourage parent education we have articles and books that provide interesting reading about child development, parenting and or family. Please feel free to contact Miss Evieann so that your individual interests and needs can be met.

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled three times a year near the end of terms. Our goal at conferences is to discuss the developmental journey we (you and the teachers) perceive your child to be on for the year. Together, we may set some goals and talk about strategies we'll employ to support your child. We will have tracked your child's development using The British curriculum's Early years foundations stage

profile. The general areas of development that we'll be noting are: social-emotional, cognitive (language, space, time, number, classification), initiative, movement and the arts (creative representation and music), periodically, we may offer additional conferences throughout the year. If you would like a conference, please let us know at any time. Newsletters are printed on a mid term basis. We try to keep you abreast of the goings on at Provo Primary and describe an area of child development that we are exploring through themes and projects. If you have any other thoughts about written information we might provide you with, please don't hesitate to let us know.

If you feel that a translator would help you better understand communications, please let us know.

If there arrives a time when you feel that you are unable to communicate effectively with your child's teacher or a Provo Primary staff member, we encourage you to take your concern to the Programme coordinator, Miss Evieann Barber. She will do her best to understand your concern and will work with you to establish more effective communication and/or address your issue. If working with the Programme Coordinator is ineffective, you are welcome to contact the Principal, Miss Sian Jones. While we hope never to have to resort to a chain of command sort of communication structure, we are committed to ensuring that you are able to air your concerns and promise that we will do our best to work with you.

We believe that education is most effective when relationships are meaningful and based on trust. Please note that we will hold our conversations with you in all confidence, we will not share sensitive information about your family unless you authorize us to do so. Please help us build relationships with you and your children. Effective relationships are grounded in frequent and meaningful communication, which is what we hope you will find at Provo Primary. Please let us know if there is anything more we can do to promote open communication with you and your family.

## WHAT TO WEAR

Think of your child's comfort and developmental needs when you dress your child—clothing free of complicated fastenings and easy to move about in is important for your child to develop self help skills such as dressing and toileting. We are messy, we paint, play outdoors, cook and play on the ground – please send your child in clothing that will allow him/her to feel comfortable about paint drips, spills, sand, etc. We provide paint smocks and try to keep things neat, but we are not able to prevent all spills and accidents. Some families choose for their child to wear our school uniform. This is mandatory from Kindergarten up, but we do supply smaller t-shirts for younger children. Please supply your child with a hat for outdoor play.

Toileting accidents are frequent occurrences, especially for the younger preschoolers and at the beginning of the year. Please provide extra sets of clothing—several pair of underpants and pants are a good idea. Any clothing soiled during the day will be plastic-bagged and placed in your child's cubby.

Please LABEL all clothing- Unlabeled items end up in the lost and found, or more often, travel home with the child in the adjacent cubby. We cannot be responsible for wandering articles of clothing. We work hard to help your child develop the habit of putting things away. Cubbies are meant to store clothing that is not in use.

## FOOD AND SNACKS

Nutritious snacks and lunches are encouraged at Provo Primary. Children need to have nutritious foods for proper brain development and functioning as well as a well needed supply of energy for the day. Please send your child's lunch in a labeled bag or lunch box, and include a 100% juice drink and plenty of water.

We do not have room to refrigerate lunches, so freeze a juice box, include a freezer pack or send non-perishable lunches.

## REST TIME

Every Early Years child staying beyond 11:30 is encouraged to take a rest. Junior Kindergarten children are expected to lie on their mat for a rest time. Kindergarteners may rest briefly together on the carpet. Some children fall asleep, and some do not – our expectation is simply that they rest. Our school is a busy place and these young developing bodies need some downtime.

## ITEMS TO AND FROM HOME

Each child is provided with a cubby in which s/he can store clothes, toys and artwork. Please clean it out daily. You can help us by not sending your child to school with toy weapons (guns, tanks, bombs, etc), nor candy, gum, sharp objects or money. In fact, we prefer that your child arrive with no play items from home, as sharing personal items can be difficult and not every child has the ability to bring play items from home. Our school is well stocked with toys and equipment. If you do decide to send something from home, please label it and make sure that your child understands the early years sharing policy—*any item in the classroom (or on the playground) must be shared*. We often ask children – are you sure you'll be okay with other children playing with that? We will not assume responsibility for lost or broken items brought from home.

## ADJUSTMENT PERIOD

Coming to school can be an overwhelming experience for some children. Your child will have to learn to trust new adults and to live in a very social setting. This process may take some time, which is why we insist that children have a fixed schedule and we will encourage you not to make any changes in your child's schedule during the adjustment period. If it appears that your child is struggling with the morning drop off at school, we will work with you to develop a predictable and stable routine – children do better when they can anticipate the sequence of events. If the adjustment appears to be unusually rough, we will work with you to develop some plans to ease the situation to the best of our ability. An attitude of trust toward our program on your part will help your child believe that s/he is safe with us.

## THE SCHOOL DAY

Provo Primary School is open for children between 8:15 am and 3:00 pm Monday through Friday

Our preschool programme runs from 8:30am – 11:30pm

Part-time JK runs from 8:30am – 12noon, full-time JK runs from 8:30am – 3:00pm

Kindergarten runs from 8:30am – 3:00pm

After school clubs are available for Kindergarten children and up.

We expect you to drop off and pick up your child in a timely manner. Any child left at Provo Primary after closing hours will be cared for by an overworked staff person, and a charge of \$15.00 per 10 minutes will be added to your bill. The first late occurrence will result in a verbal warning, the second a written warning and the third a late fee. Be timely on your pick ups!

## FINANCIAL POLICIES

For a complete list of fees and financial policies, please see our fee schedules.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

Staff are expected to maintain a healthy environment. This shall be accomplished by frequent hand washing by children and adults (always before/after handling food and toileting), using gloves, when handling bodily fluids and seeing that toys, equipment, and sleeping mats are sanitized regularly. Teachers instruct children in how to effectively wash hands using adequate soap, warm water and drying hands with paper towels. When a child is ill with an infectious disease, parents of children who may have been in contact with the infected child will be notified. If your child develops symptoms of illness during the day, we will notify you and request that you pick your child up as soon as possible. If we are unable to reach you and are very concerned about the health of your child, we will call the emergency contact people on your emergency card. Depending on the severity of the symptoms, we may remove the child from the classroom while we await your arrival. A call from us is no reflection of your parenting; symptoms of illness often develop rapidly. In the event of a health emergency, we will transport your child to the medical centre.

Our health policy requires that children be kept home if they have any of the following:

- a profusely running nose,
- running or pink eyes
- a rash
- a deep seated cough
- vomiting
- diarrhea

Children must be free of an elevated temperature for 24 hours before returning to school. Medications mask fever (and other) symptoms, so please do not administer any unprescribed medications in the morning when sending your child to school. When antibiotics have been prescribed, they must be taken for 24 hours before the child may return to the school, unless your Doctor tells you otherwise.

Children who are under a doctor's care may return to the school when the Doctor feels they are well enough to do so; a Doctor's statement so indicating may be requested. Please notify us if your child will be absent. We worry about you all when we don't know where you are.

Please notify us immediately if your child develops a communicable disease. We will then notify parents whose children may have been exposed. The Principal and parents will determine when children with communicable diseases may return to the school. Parents of children with serious communicable diseases must consult with the Principal about admission or continued enrollment.

If your child is taking prescribed medication and you need us to administer it during the day, bring it to the school and give it to the teacher. Do NOT send the medication with your child. A permission form must be signed and dated by the parents; we'll initial it as we administer the medication. We also ask that you remind us about the medication by placing a note at the bottom of your child's sign in sheet. All medication must be in the original container and have the pharmaceutical label with your child's name, physician's name, dosage and the name and strength of the medication. We are not allowed to administer non-prescription medication.

In case of an accident, whereby medical treatment is necessary, every effort will be made to notify parents or emergency contact people. Your child will be transported to the nearest medical centre, accompanied by a staff person and your child's doctor notified.

Children at Provo Primary are constantly on the go. The recovering or somewhat ill child who appears on the mend at home may wilt at school. The activity and social level of life at school can make it difficult for children to muster the energy to fight an illness and keep up with their peers at the same time. Our final health policy statement is: if children are well enough to come to school, they are well enough to participate in ALL of our activities, indoors and out.

As this lengthy section demonstrates, your child's health is of critical importance to us. We will do our best to promote a healthy lifestyle by encouraging nutritious foods, encouraging physical activity and teaching problem solving and self-management skills.

## TODDLER/PRESCHOOLER SPECIFIC SECTION

### AGES SERVED

The Toddler/Pre-school program is set up for children who can manage a fair amount of independence—they feed themselves, are expected to sit in small chairs at the table, and are expected to be able to navigate around the classroom independently.

Children will transition out of the preschool room when they are potty trained and able to manage the complexities of life in the junior kindergarten world. Most often the toddler-preschool transition will occur at the beginning of a new session (September). Children need to have already turned 3 (usually before September) to be accepted into the JK programme. Parents will be included in planning the toddler-preschool transition.

### DIAPERING

Parents must provide us with disposable diapers and wipes for their child (so that we will use the size and type you use). If you prefer the use of cloth diapers, you must make arrangements with us for the collection and cleaning of the diapers as we are unable to wash them at school. We will diaper toddlers in a designated area, within the children's bathroom so that the toddlers can practice and observe the toileting. The diaper area will be wiped with a bleach solution subsequent to each diapering and all diapering supplies will be kept in the diapering area. Teachers will wash their hands with soap and water before and after each diapering (as well as any other body fluids clean up).

Diapering is scheduled regularly; diapers will be also be changed when the teacher notices that they are wet. We will take advantage of diapering moments to engage your toddler in conversation and to cuddle for a moment. Toilet training will be planned with parents, so that our efforts are consistent with yours. We will encourage the use of our wonderful child sized potties as soon as children demonstrate an interest.

### CLOTHING

Please send your pre-schooler/toddlers in clothing they are comfortable in and can easily get out of. We'll need two sets of extra clothing for your pre-schooler/toddler, and perhaps several sets of underpants when we are toilet training. Soiled clothing will await you in your child's cubby.

## PTA (FOPPS – Friends of Provo Primary School)

We work hard to make our programme a place where children and families come first. Our buildings, playgrounds and quality care demonstrate our commitment to families. Many people have worked hard, contributing time and money, over the years to make Provo Primary a comfortable and appropriate place for families to grow safely with support. Thanks are due to all of those who have helped us in innumerable ways. We will count on your help to help us maintain and improve our programmes in the coming years.

There are several ways in which you can become involved. You are welcome to join committees, to volunteer in our classrooms, and to participate in fundraising.

We have several fundraisers throughout the year that we believe serve two purposes: of course the lucrative aspect and of equal importance is the social aspect. You will be raising your children with the other parents at Provo Primary for hopefully many years and we encourage you to get to know them and learn how to work and play together. Fundraisers also provide a venue for community members to show their support for Provo Primary.

The PTA (FOPPS) is comprised of parents and community members. Members devote hours and hours each year to Provo Primary. We consider them our invisible heroes. Please thank them when you see them. FOPPS meetings are held bi termly and are open to all. Please join us.

Most of all, we hope that you will join us in planning and participating in your child's early childhood education. Study after study indicates that parents who are actively involved with their child's education raise successful students. We hope that you will share your thoughts, ideas, concerns and talents with us— as together, we can make the unit a great place to grow up.

If you choose to enroll in Provo Primary Early Years Program, we look forward to experiencing all that will grow between your family and the Provo Primary family. We know that these early childhood years are critical foundation years and we are honored that you have chosen to share these most precious years with us. We will do our utmost to provide you and your child with the support and resources that will help you all grow to meet your optimal development.

Please stay in touch with us, let us know how we are doing, share your hopes and dreams, and help us do all that we can to support children and families.