

December and January Newsletter!

Please remember that we are closed inclusively
Monday, December 23rd, 2024 to Friday January 3rd, 2025.

School will reopen on Monday, January 6th, 2025.

Dates to Remember:

December 6th - Oak Lunch Bunch and Maple Families - pick up by 12:15pm today.

December 10th - Winter Family Fun Night 5:00pm-7:00pm

December 20th - Last day of school until January 6th 2025

December 23rd - January 3rd - Centre closed for Christmas Break

December 25th - Merry Christmas

January 1st - Happy New Year!

January 6th - First day back to St. John's in 2025!

January 13th and 14th - Pajama Days!

January 24th - Centre Closed for parent connection meetings, please book a time to meet your child's educator

January 27th - Family Literacy Day! Bring in your favourite book to share.

Save the Date and spread the word: Saturday, May 3rd 2025 - St. John's 40th Anniversary Event!

Saying Goodbye is Hard

We are very sad to be saying good bye to educator Allison from the Maple room. Her last day with us will be Friday, December 20th. She is moving up north with her husband and her two cats. She is looking forward to enjoying her new home and enjoying the wilderness. We are really going to miss her leadership and the wonderful program she brought to the children both indoors and outside. We wish her all the best as she takes on this new adventure in her life. We will update you once we have hired a new educator to join the maple team.



Early Pick-up for Maple and Oak Families:

On **Friday December 6th** the St. John's team will be having their Christmas Lunch. We are asking all Maple and Oak families to please pick your child up at **12:15pm instead of the usual 12:30pm**. We would like to close the school quickly and allow our educators time to get to our 1:00pm reservation. If your family cannot pick up by 12:15 that day, please let Christine know. We will be feeding the children earlier so they will still have lunch done by 12:15 pick up. Thank you so much for your cooperation.

New Snack Menu

With January comes a new winter snack menu. The menu will be posted in the hallway in the January along with copies outside the office or on our website.

Portfolios:

We encourage families to take your child's portfolio home over the holidays. Inside you will find the wonderful documentation of the learning that has been taking place in your child's classroom. Please feel free to add photos or stories of your holiday to the portfolio so your child can share them with their friends when everyone returns to school. Don't forget to bring back your child's binder in January so we can continue to add documentation.

Class Composites:

A Big shout out to Erin (George's mom from the seedling room) for taking the time to create the wonderful class composites that your child will be receiving. These are a wonderful keep sake for all the families and we wanted to thank Erin for taking time to create them! Its a great way for your child to talk about their friends from school. Your classroom educators will be handing them out next week.

St. John's is Turning 40!

In 2025 St. John's Nursery School will be celebrating our 40th Anniversary. We will be hosting an event to Celebrate with all our past, present and future families on Saturday, May 3rd. Please spread the word to everyone you know. More details will follow.

Outdoor Clothing:

Just a reminder that now the weather is starting to change, your child and every other child in the centre will be wearing different clothing. Please remember to label each piece of clothing as it is hard for the educators to keep track of who's is who's without your help. Please also include a pair of indoor shoes that can stay in your child's cubby during the wet winter months. We are looking forward to all the fun adventures and enriched learning that will be happening as the season begins to change. Please see below for an outdoor clothing resource from Bienenstock.

OUTDOOR CLOTHING RESOURCES

Clothing that allows children to go outside in all types of weather is imperative and directly related to the amount of time spent outside. This also helps with conversations with parents about outdoor play and helps alleviate the mess and cuts down on laundry for families. It makes outdoor play accessible and equitable for all children and we are seeing more and more child-care centres and facilities providing outdoor gear for the children in their



Tuffo Muddy Buddy

One piece rain-suits that cover children's warm clothing are perfect for fall and spring weather when it can be rainy and cold. They are ideal for going over top of children's snowsuits as additional protection and

Reima Rain Pants

Stay dry all day, in very wet conditions. The waterproof fabric is excellent for very wet surroundings, active play and outdoor life in heavy rain or wet snow. This style is also good for warmer days and climates and keeps shirts dry and clean.



Mittens That Support Proper Grasp

Keeping mittens on in the winter is key to playing outdoors. It is imperative that children have proper grasp when wearing their mittens. This means that children's thumbs are in the thumb spot which will allow for children to grasp items and support outdoor unstructured free play. If children do not have proper grasp with their mittens on, they cannot interact with tools, loose parts and other wintry materials. This equates to stationary, bored and cold children who cry to go inside within 5 minutes. Our favourite mittens are from H&M and the key is to size down. Children up to 3 years old will fit in the 9-12 month size and children up to 5 in the 18 month-2T size.

**If your child is still having trouble keeping their thumb in the thumb spot of their mittens, try mitten magic. It's a sock hack that reminds children to keep their thumb in the thumb spot. Please refer to our Mitten Magic Handout.*



Playground Update:

In May 2024 we got an initial quote for changing our landscape terrain on the preschool playground. Our next step was to get a professional landscape design and topographical survey. The topo survey and initial landscape design has been drawn up. We are now in the process of going back and forth with our landscape designer to finalize the details. Once that is completed we will be showcasing our playground plan and moving forward with getting an official quote from SG Cunningham and approvals from the Ministry and Trillium Church. We have currently raised \$50K towards the playground project (\$40k from our reserve and approx. \$10k in donations) We have spent \$10K for the design and \$2500 for the topo survey taking us back down to \$38K in our playground fund.

Looking to find a new home for your live Christmas tree?

In the past few years many children have discovered the value in exploring families discarded Christmas trees on our playground. We have made forts, an accessible place to hang bird feeders, and an interesting, safe place for children to practice climbing. Who knows what creative

outcomes might come from this experience. If you can donate your tree, we ask that you please drop it off to either the seedling or preschool playground. We appreciate your help in creating an outdoor environment that promotes problem solving, curiosity, risk taking, engagement, connection to nature and fun for the winter months ahead. You are welcome to drop off the trees during the Christmas break. You can just throw them over the fence of either playground. Thank you in advance! **We can also take any real wreaths.**

Winter Outdoor Family Fun Night!

This year we will be hosting our Outdoor Family Fun Night on Tuesday, December 10th from 5:00pm to 7:00pm, come anytime as this is a drop in event. This event will be fun for the whole family, and all are welcome to join us. We will be having a community campfire sing along with a live (St. John's) band, hot chocolate station, photo booth, a tour of a fire truck and a gift for your family. Please bring cans of soup that will be donated to Food4Kids.

There is no sign-up required, just come dressed for the weather and get ready to sing along! We hope to see you all there!

Parking will be limited and you can either enter off Allen Street and park behind the preschool playground, or you are welcome to park in the City of Waterloo Parking Lot on William Street and walk up through the Church front driveway.

This Holiday Season:

We reflected as a staff, and we would like to ask that families do not gift our educators with personal gifts for the holiday season. Other ways to show educators holiday spirit is with kind words in a lovely card or donating cans of soup to our food drive for Food4Kids. We hold Food4Kids close to our hearts and we will be filled with joy knowing the children in our community are nourished over the winter break. Thank you.

Poinsettia Fundraiser:



This year we have raised \$1800 from our poinsettia fundraiser! This money will go towards our outdoor revitalization project. A big thank you to all who contributed to making this a successful fundraiser and the volunteers who helped make this happen. A special thank you goes out to Doreen and Rick for all the behind-the-scenes work. The poinsettias will be arriving Friday November 29th, so please make arrangements to pick them up that day. They will be available for pick up anytime between 9am and 3pm. Plants will be in the chapel (door in our front entrance hallway).

The children will be spreading some Christmas cheer to the seniors at Luther Manor. The Seedling, Oak and Maple children will deliver a card along with a poinsettia plant to all the residents of Friday, November 29th.

Inclement Weather:

When there is inclement weather in the region, you can find out if St. John's is closed for the day by checking [City News 570](#) for cancellations. We will also update our out-going voicemail and add an update to our school Facebook page, along with sending you a message in Kindertails by 7:00am.

We follow the school board regarding snow closure decisions. St. John's will be closed when schools are closed. We will remain open if just the buses are cancelled.



Fence Protection

You have probably noticed our new black fence fabric around both our playgrounds. We have put the fabric up temporarily for the winter months to help with the wind during the coming snowy months and allow us more time outside in a protected area.

We are looking for

Do you have any interesting fabric scarves or material at home that we can add to our dramatic play? We would love to add some different cultural fabrics. Please add any material or scarf donations to the bin outside the office.

Parent Connection Meetings:

The centre will be closed on Friday, January 24th 2025 for parent connection meetings. The meetings will take place between 9:00am and 3:00pm. Please email Marianne at admin@stjohnsns.ca to book at time to come to meet up with your child's educators. Meetings will be 15 minutes in length, giving staff enough time to connect with every families throughout the day. We ask that you do don't bring your child as the staff would like an opportunity to have some time with you undistracted. Thank you.

Child Development:

It can be challenging to know how your child's development milestones are progressing. Here at St. John's we have access to several services who help with children's overall development. These services are free and are a valuable aid to Educators and parents alike. We encourage anyone to take advantage of these services as we know early intervention is the key to helping development. If you have a concern about anything, big or small, please speak with an Educator about which services you and your child could benefit from. This includes, speech and language development, eating habits, sleep habits, social behaviour, cognitive development, gross or fine motor development, muscle tone, sensory issues or anything else you might have questions about. We understand that these services can seem over-whelming, but we would just like to remind you of the importance of early intervention. These free resources are often not available once a child enters the school system, and wait times are considerably shorter when referrals are made through us. **Referrals for children off to school in September 2025 need to be made before February 2025 to ensure your child is seen before we close for the summer. If you think your child could benefit from a referral please speak to your child's educators or Christine.**

Parent Resources:

We have some wonderful resources for for families on the board above the leading library. Please take a moment to look through them and take anything you would like to read, also if there is anything that you would like us to provide you with resources for please reach out to us. We would be happy to find some for you.

Skills to Foster at Home:

When children are at school, they are encouraged to dress and undress independently. These are skills that most children are capable of mastering at a young age. Families can help with this busy transition at home by encouraging your child to dress and undress independently. It will

take some practice, a little bit of time, and a lot of patience, but children have a sense of pride when they can do things for themselves.



Registration for 2025-2026:

For families already attending St. John's. A link will be sent out in March to reserve spots for the upcoming school year.

Drop off and Pick up:

Just a reminder that drop off and pick up time is always very busy. Please still check in with your child's educator. If you have any changes in who is picking up your child, if your child is not attending school due to illness or you are going on holidays, please email Marianne at admin@stjohnsns.ca

Pajama Days!

Is it difficult to get your child out of their pajamas in the morning? No need to worry on Monday January 13th and Tuesday January 14th we will be hosting pajama days! Please come to school in your comfy cozy jammies and we will share our favourite bedtime stories and songs.



Family Literacy Day:

January 27th is Family Literacy Day. Let's promote the love of reading and celebrate this day together. Please have your child choose their favourite book and send it to school throughout the

week of January 27 to January 31. We will take time to share the stories throughout the week. Please remember to label the book with your child's name so we know where to return it too. In addition, please let your child's educator know that they brought a book to share as we don't always check in their backpacks. Thank you!



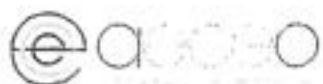
CWELCC Update:

New fee reduction for 2025 starting on January 1st, 2025. All fees will be reduced to \$22.00 per day. This fee reduction only applies to our 6 hour program as our ½ day programs are already less than \$22/per day.

CWELCC Reduction for 6hr Maple Program:

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| 1 day 6hr/week \$93.50 | 1 day 6hr + Fri with lunch \$168.63 |
| 2 days 6hr/week \$187.00 | 2 days 6hr + Fri with lunch \$262.13 |
| 3 days 6hr/week \$280.50 | 3 days 6hr + Fri with lunch \$355.63 |
| 4 days 6hr/week \$374.00 | Friday only (9am to 12:30pm including lunch) \$75.13 |
| 5 days 6hr/week (Friday 9-12:30) \$449.13 | Daily Rate: \$22.00 |

From all of us, to all of you,
we wish you and your family a happy and healthy holiday season!
See you in 2025!



Better Child Care

Hands up for high-quality early learning and care!

Decorate and sign a handprint in support of the Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) workforce!



I believe that ECEs are the key to quality. We call on the Ontario government to invest in the ELCC workforce (wage grid, paid planning/collaboration time) and to fund child care infrastructure. It's the only way to preserve quality and expand the system so that more families can access high-quality early learning and child care in the \$10aDay Child Care Plan.

Sincerely,

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Sincerely,

Centres: Please prepare handprints for decoration/signature. If affixing to a wall/display, share a photo of your display on the Early Years Coalition Waterloo Region (EYCW/R) social channels. In January, carefully remove the handprints and cut off or fold tape before sending them to the EYCW/R. We will use them at an upcoming event ahead of the next election. Submit all hand prints to Lori or Christa at the CCNWR meeting in January or drop off at one of our centres.



Mitten Magic - A Helpful Strategy To Keep Mittens On All Winter Long

Keeping mittens on in the winter is key to playing outdoors. It is imperative that children have proper grasp when wearing their mittens. This means that children's thumbs are in the thumb spot which will allow for children to grasp items and support outdoor unstructured free play. If children do not have proper grasp with their mittens on, they cannot interact with tools, loose parts and other wintery materials. This equates to stationary bored children who cry to go inside within 5 minutes.

Here's how to make it work: (pictures below)

- Children need mittens that are easy to put on. Short mittens allow for greater success and permits adults to assist children's thumbs in the thumb spot of the mitten.
- Our favourite mittens are from [H&M](#) and the key is to size down. Children up to 3 years old will fit in the 9-12 month size and children up to 5 in the 18 month-2T size.
- Adapting a pair of children's socks. (Cut the toe of the sock, Create a small slit in the heel of the sock)
- Children put on their mittens first and place the adapted socks over top. The sock will reinforce keeping the thumb in the thumb spot and will allow extra coverage on wrists. All socks are easy and inexpensive to attain from the dollar store.

Outdoor winter play is successful when children have proper grasp and warm hands. Children will be able to use shovels in the snow, mallets to break up the ice, basic grasp for transporting materials and friends in their toboggans, making forts, and using toilet brushes for painting the snow. Whatever the provocation or planned winter activity, if you don't have proper grasp, your time outside will be minimal. Let's make it work for little hands and pass on this info to colleagues and families that you work with.

1. Short mittens and a pair of children's socks



2. Cut the toes off the socks



3. Cut a slit in the heel of the socks



4. Mittens on first and then add the adapted socks



Thumbs up! Ready to Play!