



SEVEN OAKS  
SCHOOL DIVISION  
*community begins here*

# Community

B E G I N S H E R E

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## Bringing Community and Care Together

### Before and After School Programs Offer Options... and Education

Five days each week, 10 months each year, the schools of the Seven Oaks School Division provide students with places to go to grow both as learners and as people.

But what about before and after school? Learning doesn't start and stop when the school bell rings. Young people still need safe places and positive activities to occupy their minds and their time. They still need opportunities to explore their interests and socialize with others. And – just as importantly – parents still want the reassurance of knowing their children are in good hands when they aren't in class.

That's what makes child care a vital connection between the Division and the community. It's part of the shared commitment to protecting, teaching and caring for the young learners in the Seven Oaks area.

#### **O.K. Before & After School Child Care Centres, Inc.**

One organization that's been building strong connections with the Division is O.K. Before & After School Child Care Centres, Inc. The non-profit organization has been a presence in the Seven Oaks community since 1984, providing care and education to over 100 children, ages six to 12.

"We primarily provide child care services, but it's more than that," explains Jodie Kehl, Executive Director of O.K. Before & After School Child Care

Centres. "People talk about how important the zero to five year old ages are for learning, but learning is an ongoing activity. That's why we provide educational programs based on curriculum areas and on developing the whole child – physically, emotionally, cognitively and socially."

One example of the Centre's educational aspects can be found in the Elwick location's "Creation Stations" which have included lessons in cooking, art and science. For the recent "Fatty Food Tests" science experiment, children had to predict which foods had the most fat. Foods were placed in paper bags and left overnight so the grease spots on the bag would show which foods had a higher fat content.

"Activities like this offer the children an opportunity to develop predictive skills and learn how to form a hypothesis," explains Kehl. "Science activities are included often in our programs to help children form critical thinking abilities."

O.K. Before & After School Child Care Centres have a unique advantage in that their existing programs are located on the grounds of four Division elementary schools: Arthur E. Wright Community School, École Constable Edward Finney School, Elwick Community School and O.V. Jewitt Community School. While they aren't officially part of the schools, the close



proximity provides a number of benefits. For example, children don't have to travel far to get to the Centres. In fact, they often don't even have to go outside, which means parents can feel more assured of their children's safety.

Another big benefit is that the Centres get to build strong relationships with the schools where they are located, which gives them an opportunity to share information and advice.

"We try to work closely with the schools," says Kehl. "After all, we're working with the same children and the same families, so chances are we'll have to address some of the same issues"

"For example, one of the issues being focused on at one of the schools was bullying. At that time, our staff developed a presentation on bullying for our families, to educate them about the effects of bullying and ways to reduce it at home, school and day care.

We did present subsequent workshops for our children to help them learn to recognize bullying and how they could learn to be responsible for their actions, what to do if they were being bullied etc.

The school was really impressed by the work and has asked us to share our presentation with them."

Whether at school or at one of the Centres, having added consistency in messages, surroundings and people makes the day more comfortable and familiar to children – and that gives children the confidence, assurance and freedom to learn.

## Teen Family Resource Centre

Child care is as much about the parents as it is about their children. It's about providing parents with the opportunities to focus on their work or studies, knowing their children are safe and cared for.

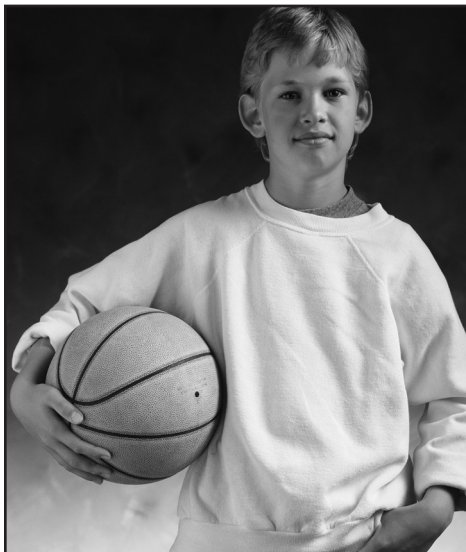
This is especially true of the child care provided through West Kildonan Collegiate's Teen Family Resource Centre. Though the Teen Family Resource Centre is an information resource for all neighbouring parents, its primary focus is on assisting young parents still attending high school. The Centre provides information on children's development and offers classes that teach basic independent living skills, nutrition and even sewing.

But the main advantage of the Teen Resource Centre is that it enables young parents to continue their high school studies and get their high school diplomas. Without the Teen Resource Centre, many of these young parents might struggle or drop out of school altogether.

Instead, young parents get the advantage of a high school education, the ability to continue on their career path or explore the possibility of pursuing their post-secondary education. It keeps the doors to future success wide open and gives those students the opportunity to build the life they want for themselves and for their children. At the same time, they know their children are nearby and can visit their children during the day. That's an advantage most parents would love to have!

## MYAC and KYAC

Another Division/community care connection can be found in the long-running Maples Youth Activity Centre (MYAC) and Kildonan Youth Activity Centre (KYAC).



The two non-profit youth drop in centre programs have been running for years, giving young people between the ages of nine and 16 (17 for KYAC) somewhere to go most weekday evenings and some weekend evenings as well.

Various Division schools provide MYAC and KYAC with facilities where kids can play sports, watch movies, play board games or work on a variety of arts and crafts projects – all guided by a professional, on-site staff.

Best of all, all the activities are free, thanks to the support of a multitude of community groups. That support also enables the groups to occasionally go offsite to enjoy activities at other locations.

It's a great place for older kids to gather, socialize and to keep away from the temptations that can lead to trouble.

## The Strength of Community Care

There are many different ways that Seven Oaks School Division and the community come together to care for young people in the area. Every time those connections are made, every time people come together to help each other regardless of age or cultural background, the community becomes stronger.

It's a community built on caring... and community begins here.

For more information on O.K. Before & After Child Care, Inc. visit <http://www.okbeforeandafter.com>

For more information on the Teen Family Resource Centre, MYAC and KYAC, visit the Seven Oaks School Division website: [www.7oaks.org](http://www.7oaks.org)

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