

## PROFILES IN EXCELLENCE

## MORVEN MCCLEAN

ELC Principal, Dog Lover, Aspiring Globe Trotter, and Beach Volleyball Weekend Warrior



## Q&amp;A WITH MS. MCCLEAN

**Q BEST SURPRISE GIFT?**

**A** I love to travel and explore so it would have to be a gift card to any airline that will take me to a far-away land or an incredible tropical destination.

**Q WHAT CAN WE FIND YOU DOING ON A LAZY WEEKEND AFTERNOON?**

**A** Depends on the season. In the summer, it's likely at the beach with Ayla. Independent of the weather, it would have to entail enjoying the outdoors or playing some sport - I love beach volleyball.

**Q BEING NEW TO VANCOUVER, WHAT ARE SOME THINGS THAT HAVE STRICKEN YOU ABOUT YOUR NEW TOWN.**

**A** Vancouver is such a vibrant city. There is never a dull moment. Three words I often use to describe it to friends are: active, fun and lively. I could do without the traffic on the Lions Gate Bridge, but then again even that offers an amazing view.

**AGE OF MORVEN'S DOG PAL - AYLA**

A self-admitted dog person, Morven considers Ayla much more than her most prized possession - she is family.

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**WHAT TO DO ON A 6-MONTH SABBATICAL?**

New Zealand would be my first stop. Meeting people and getting to see the country as a local. Love those unscheduled times.

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**WORDS TO LIVE BY**

“If you want to GO FAST, GO ALONE, if you want to GO FAR, GO TOGETHER.”

**ONE THING YOU COULD NOT LIVE WITHOUT?**

Family, of course. But, besides that, I would have to say I couldn't live without books - paperback/hardcover not electronic ones.

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# IS MY CHILD READY FOR KINDERGARTEN?

The transition into Kindergarten can often be an overwhelming time for young children. For some it means leaving the safety of their home environment for the first time, while for others it means saying goodbye to the familiar PreK environment that they have known for the past year(s). Morven McClean, Preschool Principal at Mulgrave School, shares tips on how to prepare students for the transition. According to Morven, the ideas mentioned are meant to be implemented in a fun and engaging way and she encourages parents to avoid the temptation to treat them as guidelines.

## LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

- Read to your child as often as you can!
- While you are reading with them, ask them questions that encourage them to think about what they are listening to (How do you think this character felt when? What do you think will happen next? Why do you think he/she made that choice? etc.)
- After you have read the story, ask your child to retell the story (what happened at the beginning, middle, and end of the story).

## SOCIAL EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Play board games to practice turn-taking.
- Organise many play dates with your son/daughter's peers and children of various ages.
- Set-up the expectation that your child pick-up after themselves once they have finished playing.
- Allow your child to stay with other trusted adults in your life for a few hours at a time prior to Kindergarten to help foster their sense of security when separating from Mum and Dad.
- Encourage your child to persist in tasks that are slightly above his/her ability level to encourage problem-solving. If he/she cannot find a solution on their own, rather than telling them the answer, encourage them to ask for help calmly and solve it together.
- Provide your child with opportunities to develop age-appropriate independence - dressing themselves, putting their things away on their own, ensuring that they are able to manage the bathroom on their own, etc.

## NUMERACY DEVELOPMENT

- Positional language can take some time to comprehend for children of this age. Talk about positional and directional concepts like up/down, over/under, in/out, in front of/behind, beside/between, on/off when you are together.
- Practising sorting household items (laundry, silverware, toys etc.) according to size, colour, and/or shape.
- Practice counting and have your son/daughter point to objects as he/she counts to encourage one-to-one correspondence.
- If your child has a solid understanding of numbers, have them explore concepts such as 'more' or 'less than' a given number when counting or playing games (what's one more than 5 for example).
- Play with shapes - send your child on a shape hunt when you are in your house or out in the community. Ask them to find squares, rectangles, circles, triangles and ovals. If they can find these easily - ask them to tell you what makes a specific shape.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT (GROSS & FINE MOTOR SKILLS)

- Play! Play! Play! Play! This is crucial to children's gross motor skill development along with their social and emotional development. Find opportunities (outside as much as possible) to run, jump, skip, and climb.
- Give your child as many opportunities as possible to cut with children's scissors, ensuring they are holding them properly and cut on simple lines carefully.
- Provide your child with the opportunity to trace, ensuring that they are holding their pencil/crayon properly (search online for the Handwriting Without Tears Pencil Grip.)
- Play with playdough or other materials that allow your child to roll, squish and can be easily manipulated with their hands.

## PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT & SUPPORT

- Get together with other families who will be in the kindergarten grade as well.
- Reach out to your son or daughter's teacher in order to help ease any apprehensions you may have about the upcoming year.
- Display confidence and provide reassurance to your child during drop-offs in the morning.
- Have open and honest discussions when answering any questions your child may have about Kindergarten.
- Make sure to maintain regular bedtimes leading up to the start of school. It is recommended that children between the ages of 4 and 5 get an average of between 11 and 13 hours of sleep a night.

