



# ROOTS

Supporting and Assisting  
Christian Home Educators

[www.roots-homeschooling.com](http://www.roots-homeschooling.com)

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Home Education Program of Morinville Christian School

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Parent Handbook 2018-2019



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**ROOTS:**

a parent-directed home education community seeking to *LOVE* God above all, *DISCIPLE* our children according to God’s Word, and *SUPPORT* one another in brotherly love.

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# ROOTS HOME EDUCATION, A PROGRAM OF MORINVILLE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

## Benefits and Responsibility of Community

Roots' unique governance enables it to be dedicated to home education and flexible to accommodate the changing priorities of home education families. This approach is both empowering and a big responsibility. By giving Roots parents the ability to direct the Roots Society, Roots Christian Home Education Fellowship, Roots parents are empowered to organize, direct and guide a program that fully supports home education. However, with this privilege also comes the responsibility for dedicated Roots parent volunteers to lead and guide with excellence. If you would like to volunteer to join the Roots Christian Home Education Fellowship Board of Directors, assist the Roots Parents Supporting Parents mandate, or participate in some other manner, please contact a board member or the Roots Principal-at-Large. Together we can support and enable one another.

*“Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.” (Ecclesiastes 4:12)*

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## Discipleship

Throughout the Roots community, we as a body, within our families and individually seek to love God above all and our neighbor as ourselves (Mark 3:30-31). We wish to be discipled and to disciple. Through Christian discipleship we as parents continue to learn the teachings of Christ, internalize these teachings and then act upon them, resulting in a life of increased obedience and service to God. Discipling our children follows the same practice of learning, internalizing and acting that they too may live a life of obedience and service to God.

## Roots Parents are Roots Experts

Within the broader Roots community, parents encourage, challenge and enable one another throughout their home education journey. Roots parents are Roots home education experts. Through this learning community's experiences, studies, successes and failures, both parents and students benefit from one another's prayers, experiences, inspiration and practical tips.

*In Roots parents have the primary responsibility for the planning, delivery and assessment of their child's home education program.*

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## Program Plan (PP)

The PP is the parent's annual plan which outlines the goals, materials, methods and assessments planned for each of their students. Fillable forms are available on the Roots website [www.roots-homeschooling.com](http://www.roots-homeschooling.com). Parents desiring assistance are encouraged to contact their facilitator, read the online directions or ask your home education friends.

Plans are made to be changed, and this document is no exception. Therefore, contact your facilitator for major changes so your original document can be adjusted. Your facilitator desires to help you meet your goals; the better he or she understands your goals, the better she can assist you.

Before September 30<sup>th</sup>, submit your PP to your home education facilitator as he is responsible for accepting it and keeping it through your final visit. Once your PP is accepted by your

facilitator, you are officially accepted into the Roots program (finalizing your provisional acceptance you received when you submitted your notification form.) When your facilitator submits their final annual report to the Roots office, she will also submit your PP. All facilitator reports and PPs are filed in your child's student record. If you would like to access your child's student record, please contact the Roots office. You may access your records on location.

### **Your Home Education Facilitator**

Every Roots family is assigned a home education facilitator who wants to help you meet your home education goals for your child. This support is unquestionably available through your home visits. As well, don't hesitate to contact your facilitator for assistance writing your PEPs, to address a concern at a support group or Roots event, or to brainstorm through a phone call or digital device. Facilitators want to help, and their experience both in their own home education experience and in working with other families has given them a wealth of information to share.

Your facilitator will meet with your family two times a year: once in the fall and once in the spring. Preparing for this visit results both in a more comprehensive student report and in increasing your understanding of your child's strengths and weaknesses. The more information your facilitator has, the more he can include in his report. If your child is struggling academically, emotionally, physically or spiritually, please let your facilitator know. She will do her best to assist and encourage you. Here are some examples of things to have ready when your facilitator arrives:

- dated samples of student work
- tests and/or quizzes
- project work, presentations
- progress made in a workbook or textbook
- the opportunity to hear a young student read
- book lists
- parental assessments and student's self-assessments
- something that challenges your child
- something in which your child excels and finds pleasure.

Facilitators have the responsibility to evaluate your child according to your goals as outlined in your Program Plan. Once your facilitator has completed your progress report, she will send you a report electronically, and one copy of the report will be filed in your child's student record. You may access your child's student record on site by contacting the Roots office.

***“For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.” (Galatians 6:3)***

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### **Additional Standardized Assessments**

#### **CAT-3 Tests**

Roots parents may choose to have any child in grades 3 through 12 take the Canadian Achievement Test, CAT. Parents may request these tests by contacting their facilitator. These standardized, cross-Canada assessments are distributed to parents the beginning of February, and tests are administered in February. Administration instructions and tips are included in the distributed packages.

Parents, these tests may be more difficult for you than they are for your child. You absolutely must refrain from assisting your child in any way while he is taking this test. It may be helpful to talk to your child about the test before he begins. Let him know that there will be questions on this test to which he won't know the answer. He's expected to do the best he can and to keep working through the questions in a careful and timely manner. Once your child's tests are completed, return all the materials to your facilitator who will correct the test and provide you a report containing your child's test results. If your child performs below the fourth stanine or if you'd like additional assistance on how to help your child improve in a specific area, your facilitator can provide additional details on how you can help your child improve.

### ***Provincial Tests***

The Alberta Provincial Achievement tests are available to Roots students in grades 6 and 9. Parents, notify their facilitator of your intent to have your child write these tests. These standardized tests are based on the Alberta Program of Studies and written on designated days and at designated times in May and June. Schedules are available on the Alberta Education website, <https://education.alberta.ca/provincial-achievement-tests/about-the-pats> and the Alberta Program of Studies is available at <https://education.alberta.ca/programs-of-study/programs-of-study>. Roots arranges a writing venue and writing supervisor. Once received from Alberta Education, test results will be sent to parents and filed in the child's Student Record. The results will show approximate student achievement in comparison to students across Alberta. For more information, contact your facilitator or principal-at-large.

## **PARTICIPATING IN THE ROOTS COMMUNITY**

### ***Safety - Always a Priority at Roots Events and Activities***

Within the Roots community, Roots staff and families desire to live life in all its fullness. Understanding the need to be wary of danger, we at the same time want to live a life of faith and fellowship, and we want to do so with passion and excitement. We live in a world filled with God's handiwork and rich with beauty, science and history. We also desire a life rich with friendships and filled with God's goodness, a life immersed in faith that's fueled by the Holy Spirit.

Within this context of a rich, full life filled with faith and hope, the need to be wary of danger remains. We live in a sinful world, and parents and staff must be vigilant to protect one another and especially our vulnerable children. Some claim that Christian organizations are especially vulnerable because purposeful child abuse is so far from our realm of acceptable behaviors. Therefore, consistently be on guard!

### ***Parents have Ultimate Responsibility for their Children***

Within Roots, parents always retain ultimate responsibility for the safety of their children. As a home education parent, you are responsible for your child's education; likewise, parents are responsible for their child's well-being. If a parent cannot be on site, he or she must provide written verification to delegate the safety and supervision of their child to another adult on site. Please take this important obligation seriously.

## ***Student Behavior***

Of course, student discipline remains under the authority of the child's parents. However, within group settings student misbehavior can quickly become a safety issue. Roots general discipline process is to (1) issue a warning to the child, (2) remove the child from the activity for a short spell, (3) have the child leave the activity (i.e., leave the support group gym activity to sit with his/her mother in the support group, or leave the fieldtrip activity.) Although no one likes to remove a child from an activity, parents need to support the instructor or organizer who takes this step, remembering that he is considering the well-being of the whole group. It can be helpful to review expectations before attending a group activity.

Families choosing to participate in events outside of Roots will follow that organizer's discipline policy.

## ***Waivers Required, Attentive Parents Needed***

All Roots parents must annually complete and sign a waiver for each child that participates in a Roots activity or event. This includes preschool children left in the care of a provider during the Roots support group meetings. If a parent must leave a child under the supervision of another adult, the parents need to sign a waiver that they don't hold Morinville Christian School, the Roots CHEF or Roots staff liable. However, as a Christian community Christ calls us to love our neighbors; we want to protect one another. With this spirit, all in the Roots community are strongly encouraged to promote and protect the safety of all children. Continually keep your eyes alert and your ears tuned to pick up comments or actions of people who may wish to take advantage of our children.

## ***Insurance Coverage for Roots Events and Fieldtrips***

Roots events are insured. Praise God for His provision. Refer to the Roots Field Trip guide for guidelines to organizing a fieldtrip. You'll find it online at [www.roots-homeschooling.com](http://www.roots-homeschooling.com).

## **Roots Events**

Roots staff and volunteers organize events to promote community, to provide learning opportunities for parents and students, to support Roots parents, and to celebrate the success and achievements of students and families.

## ***Support Groups***

Monthly Support Groups are organized to enable parents to come together regularly to support one another, pray together, share announcements and learn with and from one another. Through these groups, parents get to know other parents while students befriend other students. Parents also gain access to library materials, bring materials they're no longer using to share with others, and share ideas through the parent sessions. Parents do not need to register in advance; please join us. Updated locations, dates and support group chairs will be provided this fall.

## ***Roots PE Program***

The Roots PE program runs on a weekly basis from September to the end of May. This program offers a variety of physical activities taught by certified instructors throughout the Calgary area. Please see the registration form found on the Roots website for details on each session.

Roots also encourages parents to organize their own physical activities; Roots PE equipment is available for group use. Contact the Roots office for more details.

## Fieldtrips

Roots parent volunteers organize a variety of fieldtrips throughout the school year. New fieldtrips are being released monthly through the school year. Details for each fieldtrip and registrations can be found on Eventbrite online under Roots Homeschool as the organizer. Parents are encouraged to consider organizing fieldtrips that are of interest to their children, the Roots office will walk parents through the planning process, it's quite easy!

## Seasonal Events

Additional Roots events may be organized based on the interest of Roots families. Past events have included a September Showcase, a Christmas Social, a spring celebration of student achievement, a high school mini-conference, a fine arts week, and a Christian worldview conference. Volunteers are needed to organize and run these or other events. Get involved!

## Parents Supporting Parents

Roots parents are encouraged to organize events, fieldtrips, gatherings in the park, co-ops, etc. that provide a valuable service for their children as well as to the Roots community. When numerous parents contribute in small ways, the Roots community benefits as a whole with more support for all.

*So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people,  
and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.  
(Galatians 6:10)*

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## Google Groups

Participation in Roots-talk, a parent Google-talk group begins by contacting the Roots parent moderating that group. The moderator's names and contact information will be available after registration.

**Roots-talk** is set-up to enable Roots parents and staff to share ideas and ask questions pertaining to home education. Posts share or look for curriculum, ask for suggestions in specific areas, request prayer, share interesting articles someone has read, and post questions regarding related matters such as discipline, fieldtrips and scheduling.

Would you like to set up your own group, perhaps on a topic of passion for you (perhaps special needs, home educating through high school without a diploma or the fine arts)? Contact the Roots office at [office@rootshomeed.com](mailto:office@rootshomeed.com) or Roots CHEF chairman for more details.

## Communication

Roots' staff, board and parents pass information to other parents for the purpose of supporting one another. This communication comes through a variety of formats:

- Roots parents or staff pass pertinent information to home education families through **Roots-talk**, sometimes resulting in parents receiving a large number of e-mails. To reduce the number of incoming e-mails, parents can sign up for the digest version which sends out groups of e-mails at a time.
- The Roots office will send out group **e-mails** to all families usually once or twice a month, often packing a lot of information into an e-mail. Please ensure that you read through the whole e-mail!

- The monthly **Roots e-zine** is distributed electronically once a month. Parent contributions are welcome. The Roots e-zine could include articles, a monthly calendar, information on coming events, etc. Be sure to let the e-zine volunteers know you appreciate their work!

## RESOURCES

### Roots Library

Roots has a library of books and some DVDs stored in a Roots' family's basement. Books are available to be signed out at the support group meetings, and families may contact the host family to peruse the whole library. For a list of available books, go to [www.roots-homeschooling.com](http://www.roots-homeschooling.com), sign in, and click on the library button. Online you will find lists of books, organized by title, author or Dewey Decimal Number. You may request a book, and it will be delivered to the next support group meeting.

### Roots Website, [www.roots-homeschooling.com](http://www.roots-homeschooling.com)

The Roots website includes the library list, a wide variety of articles and links, the Roots directory, and important forms. To obtain access, go to the Roots home page, and click on "contact us." Fill in the form to obtain access to the website membership area. It's important you use the same e-mail address here that you used in your notification paperwork. Within a few days you will receive an e-mail instructing you how to set your username and password. Enjoy!

## UNDERSTANDING ROOTS LEADERSHIP

### Roots Christian Home Education Fellowship (Roots CHEF) Board of Directors

The Roots CHEF Board of Directors is Roots society's leadership body with the mandate to provide direction to the Roots society. This Board of Directors interviews parents who are joining the Roots CHEF, hires some administrative staff, advertises the Roots program, manages the society's budget, and builds and promotes the Roots community. The board members are listed on the front page of the Roots directory; please contact them if you have any questions or concerns. To remain a parent-run, grass-roots organization, parental involvement and participation is crucial. Roots is indebted to our volunteer Board of Directors.

### Roots Staff

The Roots **principal-at-large** works with Alberta Education, the administrative team of Morinville Christian School, Roots facilitators, and Roots CHEF Board of Directors to ensure government home education requirements are met. The **executive director** reports to the Roots CHEF Board, and works alongside the Roots office staff and Roots Bookkeeper to serve the Roots families.

Roots **facilitators** strive to assist Roots parents to meet their goals for their children. They are available to help families with the development of their Program Plan, meet with Roots families at least twice a year to support and encourage them, record achievements, assess CAT testing results, and write student reports. Roots facilitators are Christian Alberta-certificated

teachers who are either currently home educating their children, have home educated their children in the past, or were home educated themselves. They are here to support you.

The Roots **Executive Administrator** is the keeper and manager of the paperwork, Roots community-builder, program manager and a great support for the Roots program. She accepts and processes registration paperwork, accepts and processes family reimbursement requests, manages the Roots Student Records, works with Roots parents to organize and develop programs that build community, and plays a vital part of the Roots administration. The Executive Administrator reports to the Roots CHEF Board and works alongside the Roots Executive Director and Bookkeeper. If you would like to view your child's student record, please contact her directly. Student records may be viewed on location.

The Roots **bookkeeper** processes cheques, keeps Roots financial records up to date, and answers questions that arise during our annual audit. She works closely with the Roots CHEF board and Morinville Christian School. Her services are greatly appreciated!

### **Morinville Christian School (MCS)**

Roots is a home education program of MCS, a church-run school in Morinville, AB, with a strong history of serving Christian families well. They have students in kindergarten through grade twelve and are located north of Edmonton. Roots' principal-at-large works closely with Morinville Christian School. Roots thanks God for MCS's support of Christian home education.

## **MONEY DOES MATTER**

### **Parent Resource Funding**

Roots parents have access to 50% of the Alberta Education Home Education Grant for home education resources. This funding can be accessed in two ways:

**Reimbursement Forms** are used when a family has already purchased an item and wish to be reimbursed. Complete instructions will be available after acceptance into the Roots program. When it doesn't provide a financial burden, Roots respectfully requests families postpone asking for reimbursement until the latter part of the school year. If parents are able to wait without a financial hardship do so, parents needing all their parent resource funds at the beginning of the year can have their needs met. If helpful, families may submit their receipts as they are available and still request they be paid later in the school year. Fillable reimbursement forms are available online at [www.roots-homeschooling.com](http://www.roots-homeschooling.com).

**Purchase Orders (P.O.)** are used when parents want a resource provider to bill the school directly for a purchase. Although a P.O. does not give you access to more funds, it can provide access when a parent doesn't have the cash to pay for materials directly. Please note the need to allow sufficient time to obtain a P.O. before you wish to make the purchase. Further instructions will be available after registration.

The deadline for submitting receipts is the first Monday of each month. Morinville Christian School will do their best to get your cheques mailed to you by the end of the month.

The annual deadline for submitting receipts is **May 31st**. Do not miss this deadline! Funds not claimed by that time will be considered declined and used for school programming.

## Roots Budget

The Roots CHEF board treasurer annually presents a budget to the Roots Christian Home Education Fellowship Board of Directors and then to the society for approval at the Annual General Meeting. Budget items include some staffing, office expenses, support group and special event expenses, advertising, conferences, traveling costs, testing, etc. If you would like more information on the Roots budget, please contact the Roots CHEF Board Treasurer, whose contact information is on the cover of the Roots Directory. Roots strives to act prudently, using designated funds serve the Roots community well.

*“Then he (Jesus) said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.” Luke 12:15*

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## Stewardship

Jesus commands us to keep our lives free from the love of money and be content with what we have. Likewise, the Roots program of Morinville Christian School encourages you to be a good steward of your home education resources. MCS has the right to require all home education materials be returned to the school, but they have chosen to not act on that right. Likewise, Roots encourages you to use home education resources and services provided in the spirit of providing a quality Christian education for your children. Develop a strong program for your child, determine what is needed for that program, obtain what you need, and then use what you have fully. If you no longer require the resource, please loan or gift it to those in need, thereby honouring God for His provisions.

## Accountability

Morinville Christian School and Roots takes our responsibility to be accountable for government funding seriously. Balancing granting parents the flexibility needed to provide their children the best home education program possible and ensuring the auditors and Alberta Education that funds are handled appropriately can be difficult. The July 2017 Standards for Home Education Reimbursement is the guideline we are legally required to follow. [https://education.alberta.ca/media/3615919/standards-for-home-ed-reimbursement\\_july11\\_2017.pdf](https://education.alberta.ca/media/3615919/standards-for-home-ed-reimbursement_july11_2017.pdf) . The key word in managing parent funding is reasonableness and a clear connection to a student’s Program Plan. Morinville Christian School has a several-step process for handling questionable requests. Resource requests must (1) comply with the Alberta Education Home Education Regulation and (2) follow the Morinville Christian School Home Education Parent Funding Policy. The Principal-at-Large approves all the reimbursement requests. Finally, the parent resource account is audited annually.

## ROOTS POLICIES

Roots policies are posted on the Roots website, [www.roots-homeschooling.com](http://www.roots-homeschooling.com). To view them, sign in to the website or contact the Roots office. If you have any questions or concerns, don’t hesitate to contact the Roots Principal-at-Large.

## Additional Information

Contact information, the Roots annual calendar, details on parent resource funding, support group specifics, fieldtrip options, volunteer opportunities, etc. will be available after registration.

