

EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

Background

Early Childhood Services (ECS) refers to the broad system of programs that meet the developmental and individualized needs of young children before they enter Grade one. The focus of Early Childhood Services is the development of the child's sense of self-worth and dignity. The emphasis will be on providing experiences that promote the complete development of the child in all areas of growth, including physical, emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual.

In addition, through the permeation of Catholicity within the District, our kindergarten and Pre-Kindergarten programs are presented from a Catholic perspective with learning opportunities that intentionally invite and nurture a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Our Kindergarten programs are guided by Alberta Education and the Ten Principles of Programming (Kindergarten Program Statement – Alberta Education, 2008) and will be in harmony with the mission, beliefs and value statements of the Division.

We have Pre-Kindergarten programs that support both PUF (Program Unit Funding) Supported Learners and Independent Learners. The integration of Catholic values into the total early childhood experience forms a Christ-centred environment which supports the spiritual dimension of learning.

Definitions

Early Childhood Services programs provide services to address the developmental needs of children before they enter grade 1. In ECS programs, young children participate as active partners in learning, build a set of shared experiences and develop knowledge, skills and attitudes that prepare them for subsequent learning. ECS programs provide additional support for children with special needs to assist them in reaching their full learning potential.

Kindergarten means one (1) component of the total ECS program funded by Alberta Education, and refers to the year immediately prior to grade 1. Kindergarten, although not mandatory, is an important component of Early Childhood Services

Pre-Kindergarten: We have Pre-Kindergarten programs that support both PUF Supported Learners & Independent Learners:

- PUF Supported Learners: Alberta Education provides Program Unit Funding (PUF) for children between 2.8 and 4.8 years of age who have a severe developmental delay or a severe delay in speech and language and have been identified as needing early learning intervention.
- Independent Learners - Children who are 4 by December 31st in their year prior to Kindergarten.

Procedures

1. Enrolment in an ECS program is voluntary.
2. The Principal shall administer the ECS program in the school.
3. PUF Programs: Pre-Kindergarten
 - 3.1. PUF is a program for Pre-Kindergarten children between the ages of two years and eight months (2.8) to four years and eight months (4.8). who have a severe developmental delay or a severe delay in speech and language.
 - 3.2. Depending on the EICS Pre-Kindergarten program your child is enrolled in, our programs are either teacher instructed or led by an Early Learning Program Assistant (Teacher directed).
 - 3.3. PUF Program staff work collaboratively with our EICS Inclusive Learning Team, community agencies, and other Multi-Disciplinary teams, as needed.
 - 3.4. Program Unit Funding (PUF) is available dependent on eligible criteria.
4. Children attend their community school for their kindergarten program, which is consistent with Division inclusive education practices.

Reference: *Education Act* Sections 3, 21, 42, 56
 Early Childhood Regulation 31/2002
 Funding Manual for School Authorities
 Kindergarten Program Statement
 Primary Programs Framework for Teaching and Learning
 Standards for Special Education
 Standards for the Provision of Early Childhood Special Education