

Background

Early Childhood Services (ECS) are programs designed to meet the developmental and individual needs of young children before they begin grade one. The primary goal of ECS is to nurture each child's sense of self-worth and dignity, emphasizing experiences that support their holistic growth—physical, emotional, social, intellectual, and spiritual.

Within the division, early learning programs (ELPs) and kindergarten programs are rooted in Catholic values, offering learning opportunities that intentionally foster and nurture a personal relationship with Jesus Christ through the permeation of Catholicity.

Definitions

Early Childhood Services: Programs are tailored to support children's developmental needs before they enter grade one. These programs encourage young learners to actively engage in their education, fostering shared experiences that help develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for future learning. ECS programs also offer additional support for children with diverse needs to help them reach their full potential.


Kindergarten: One component of the ECS programming, funded by Alberta Education, that serves as the final year before grade one. While not mandatory, kindergarten is a vital aspect of Early Childhood Services.

Early Learning Programs: Fee-based programs that support the development of children for up to three years before they enter grade one. These programs may include both PUF-eligible and non-PUF-eligible children.

Procedures

1. Enrolment in Early Childhood Services is voluntary.
2. The principal is responsible for administering the early learning programs within the school.
 - 2.1 Early learning programs are fee-based services. Students may qualify for up to two years of half-day funding in ELP programs, provided they meet PUF eligibility requirements.
3. Early Learning Programs

- 3.1 PUF-Eligible Children: Alberta Education provides Program Unit Funding (PUF) for children aged 2.8 to 4.8 years who have been identified with severe developmental delays or significant delays in speech and language, and who require early learning intervention. Funding is available for a maximum of two years, contingent on eligibility criteria.
- 3.2 Non-PUF-Eligible Children: These children must be at least 3 years old by the start of the school year and can continue in the program through to the end of their kindergarten year.
- 3.3 Early learning programs are facilitated by early learning educators.
- 3.4 Learning support teachers provide teacher-directed programming for PUF eligible students as outlined by Alberta Education and work collaboratively with school-based team members, learning services, community agencies, and other multi-disciplinary teams, as needed.
- 4. 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.
 - 4.1 The learner expectations of the kindergarten program statement will be adapted and modified to meet the needs of each child.
 - 4.2 Kindergarten funding is available for a maximum of one year, contingent upon eligibility criteria.

References: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Act Sections 3, 21, 42, 56 • Early Childhood Regulation 31/2002 • Funding Manual for School Authorities • Kindergarten Program Statement • Standards for Special Education • Standards for the Provision of Early Childhood Special Education 	Approved: 
	Date Approved: February 2008
	Reviewed or Revised: May 2008; December 2024

Note: References shall be updated as required and do not require additional approval

