

Early Childhood Services

1. Age of Eligibility

Background

Early childhood services (ECS) program means an education program offered by a school authority or, with the approval of the Minister, a person, to a child who is younger than 6 years of age as of September 1, School Act, s30(1). The last year of an ECS program prior to Grade 1 is considered the kindergarten year.

Age of Eligibility

The following table outlines the age of eligibility for funding for all types of ECS programming. No child can receive ECS funding for more than three years. Detailed information is located in the current [Funding Manual for School Authorities](#).



Funded ECS Child	Type of ECS Funding Provided	Minimum Age of Child on Sept. 1 (Born on or before March 1)
<p>Regular ECS child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a child who is attending an ECS program on the September count date of the current school year operated by a school authority. <p>Please see the current Funding Manual for School Authorities for further information.</p>	<p>Base Instruction (Maximum 1 year of funding)</p>	<p>4 years 6 months</p>
<p>ECS child with a <u>mild/moderate disability/delay</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a child who is assessed as having mild or moderate cognitive disabilities; visual or hearing impairments; emotional/behavioural, physical, medical or multiple disabilities; or communication delays. 	<p>Base Instruction and Mild/Moderate (Maximum 2 years of funding)</p> <p>For School Jurisdictions only, the funding allocations for ECS mild/moderate and gifted/talented are now included in the new Inclusive Education allocation (section 1.10 of the Funding Manual)</p>	<p>3 years 6 months</p>

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Funded ECS Child	Type of ECS Funding Provided	Minimum Age of Child on Sept. 1 (Born on or before March 1)
<p>ECS child who is <u>gifted and talented</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a child who is assessed as having exceptional potential and/or performance across a wide range of abilities in one or more areas. <p>For further information, please see the <i>Special Education Coding Criteria</i> that is available through the Extranet. In order to access the Extranet website, go to https://phoenix.edc.gov.ab.ca/login/default2.asp</p>		
<p>ECS child learning <u>English as a Second Language (ESL)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a child who is assessed as having insufficient English language skills to succeed in school. <p>ECS child with <u>Francisation</u> needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a child who is attending a Francophone program and is assessed and coded as having insufficient French language skills to succeed in school. <p>Please see the current Funding Manual for School Authorities for further information.</p>	<p>Base Instruction (Maximum 2 years funding). ESL/Francisation and if eligible, Enhanced ESL/Francisation</p>	<p>3 years 6 months</p>
<p>ECS child with <u>severe disabilities/delays</u></p> <p>a child who is assessed and coded as having a severe disability/delay according to the criteria and categories set out in the current <i>Special Education Coding Criteria</i>. For further information, please see the <i>Special Education Coding Criteria</i> that is available through the Extranet. In order to access the Extranet website, go to https://phoenix.edc.gov.ab.ca/login/default2.asp</p>	<p>Base Instruction and Program Unit Funding (Maximum 3 years of funding)</p>	<p>2 years 6 months</p>
<p>ECS child who is <u>developmentally immature</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a child who is enrolled in an ECS program for a second year because the parent and the school authority agree that an ECS program is the most appropriate placement for the child. The child is less than seven years old on September 1 and has not been previously coded as a child with special needs. <p>Please see the current Funding Manual for School Authorities for further information.</p>	<p>Base Instruction (Maximum 2 years funding)</p>	<p>5 years 6 months</p>

The minimum age for school entry varies among school authorities. ECS children who meet the age requirement listed on the table are eligible for ECS Base Instruction funding if registered on or before September 30. Care should be taken to ensure that school entry into Grade 1 will follow the final year of eligibility for ECS funding.