

Early Childhood Services

Early Childhood Programming

Early Childhood Services (ECS)

Early Childhood Services (ECS) refers to the broad, co-ordinated system of local and provincial programs that are developmentally appropriate and meet the diverse learning needs of young children and their families, prior to Grade 1. Please see [Early Childhood Education](#) for more information.

In ECS programs, young children participate as active learners, build a shared set of experiences and develop knowledge, skills and attitudes that prepare them for future learning.

Kindergarten, as part of ECS programming, is intended for children in the year prior to entry into Grade 1 and is planned and implemented to help children achieve the learner expectations outlined in the [Kindergarten Program Statement](#).

Funding is also provided for individualized programming that meets the education needs of children with identified **mild, moderate or severe disabilities/delays**, who are **gifted and talented** or who are **English language learners**. Children as young as 2 years 8 months may be eligible for these programs. These programs may be offered by local school boards and/or private ECS operators.

Young children learn in a variety of environments including home, daycare, preschool or other community environments. For more information on child care and preschool programs, please see [Child Care Information for Parents](#).

Early childhood is a significant period in human development. Independence, initiative, decision making, creativity, the ability to learn, the ability to relate to others and feelings of self-worth all have their beginnings in early childhood. What young children learn at this stage will have a major impact on successful learning experiences in school, on personal development and on future participation in society.

Family Oriented Decision Making

Parents and families are valued education partners and, as such, have meaningful opportunities to participate in and support their child's learning and contribute to decision making about their child's education.

Appropriate educational programming for young children respects family differences, builds on family strengths, draws on the knowledge and expertise of children's parents and is sensitive to the demands placed on families.

The Kindergarten Program

The Kindergarten program uses the Primary Programs Guiding Principles as a basis for planning the learning activities for children. The principles reflect current understandings and contemporary education research on young children, families, communities and schools.

The purpose of the guiding principles is to help Kindergarten to Grade 3 teachers reflect on the nature of young children and their learning to make informed instructional decisions and

create learning environments that are responsive to children's diverse needs; capabilities; learning styles; dispositions and cultural, social and linguistic backgrounds.

The guiding principles, more fully described in the [Kindergarten Program Statement](#), are:

1. Childhoods differ depending on social and cultural circumstances.
2. Children's development is influenced but not determined by their early experiences.
3. Children interact and learn in a variety of contexts.
4. Children are co-constructors of knowledge and partners in learning.
5. Children are unique and active contributors to their learning.
6. Children construct and represent knowledge in a variety of ways.
7. Children are citizens and active participants in school and society.
8. Children are active collaborators in and users of assessment.
9. Children may require specialized programming and supports to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes that prepare them for later learning.
10. Children and their families may need coordinated community services to meet their needs.

Kindergarten Learner Expectations

These Kindergarten principles set the context for programming by fostering opportunities for children to develop and accomplish new understandings. Kindergarten strengthens a foundation for forming ideas, developing language, solving problems and expressing thoughts and feelings. The learner expectations in the [Kindergarten Program Statement](#) are composed of seven learning areas which interrelate and meet the social, physical, intellectual, cultural, creative and emotional needs of young children. The learning areas provide a transition to the subject area expectations of elementary school.

