

The District may provide an Early Childhood Services Program (ECS) in each community to facilitate the transition from home to the school setting for children who meet the eligibility criteria for the program.

Definitions

Early Childhood Services (ECS) programs provide services to address the developmental needs of children before they enter grade one. 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 component of the total ECS program funded by Alberta Education, and refers to the year immediately prior to grade one.

Special needs means a child with a mild, moderate or severe mental disability, visual impairment, learning disability, hearing impairment, emotional/behavioral disability or a child who is gifted and talented. All children with special needs require an Individualized Program Plan (IPP).

Procedures

1. Enrolment in an ECS program is voluntary. Children will be admitted into an ECS program when they have reached the age of five years on or before December 31 in the year in which they are enrolling, or if they are eligible for Program Unit Funding. Whenever possible the enrollment date will be aligned with the admission date of the public school boards.
2. Program Unit Funding (PUF) will be sought for all children that have special needs and require a wide range of supports and assistance, in accordance with Alberta Education criteria.
3. The Principal shall act as the Program Coordinator for the ECS program in the school.
4. The Principal and staff shall ensure that the conditions required for the Program Unit Funding are met.
5. All ECS programs operated by the District are strongly encouraged to have an active Local Advisory Committee (LAC) consisting of administration, teachers and volunteer parents/guardians that act in an advisory capacity to the Principal.
6. Evaluations of child participation in the ECS program will address the social, emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual growth of each child. Progress reports will be made available periodically to parents/guardians.

7. Children are normally enrolled in an ECS program for one year. The decision to maintain a child in an ECS program for more than one year will be made jointly by the teacher and Principal, in consultation with the parents/guardians.
8. Principals shall ensure that ECS programs serving students with special needs meet the following requirements:
 - 8.1 Screening/assessment information is maintained on file;
 - 8.2 Parents are consulted on all program placement decisions and informed of all program planning, implementation and evaluation activities directly involving their child; and
 - 8.3 An Individualized Program Plan (IPP) is on file for each child with mild, moderate or severe disabilities and for gifted and talented children.

Reviewed/Revised: March 2014 April 2020