

EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

Background

Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools' Early Childhood Services (ECS - PreKindergarten and Kindergarten) programming is faith-based and designed to meet the diverse needs of young children and students who are eligible to enroll in such programs and who qualify for funding or who pay fees in accordance with Alberta Education funding criteria and the Education Act.

Our mission is to awaken the hearts and minds of ECS learners through purposeful, inquiry-based learning experiences that develop their literacy and numeracy skills and contemporary competences. Individualized developmentally appropriate programming challenges children and students to grow spiritually, socially, emotionally, intellectually, and physically, providing a foundation for future success in school and life.

Guidelines

1. Enrollment and Residency

- 1.1. Enrollment in ECS programs are optional.
- 1.2. Commencing in the 2020-2021 school year, for the purposes of entering kindergarten, a child must be at least five years old as of December 31 of the respective school year and enrollment in ECS programs depend on the request of the parent for a child who is younger than six years of age on September 1.
- 1.3. Kindergarten, as part of ECS programming, is intended for children in the year prior to entry into grade one.
- 1.4. If parents request a second year of Kindergarten, a child may qualify to attend as a code 10 (Developmentally Immature). This decision will be made jointly with the parent and the principal, and in consultation with the teacher and the Director, Early Learning and Learning Supports. Children who have a code of 30 (Mild Moderate), 301 & 303 (English Language Learners), or 80 (Gifted and Talented) cannot be coded 10 and must register in grade one.
- 1.5. Registration in grade one follows the Division Resident Status/Admissions Administrative Procedure 300. For non-resident students, the Principal is responsible for determining whether sufficient resources and space exists to accommodate the student.
- 1.6. Enrollment in ECS programs for a student who, as of September 1, is younger than seven years of age, may enroll in an ECS program if the Board and parent of the student are of the opinion that the program will benefit the student.

2. **ECS Programs and Supports**

- 2.1. ECS programs use a collaborative approach to learning which positions parents as partners in educational decision making related to their child's progress and development.
- 2.2. ECS programs will be consistent with the philosophy, goals and program requirements (i.e., age and years of eligibility, funding criteria, coding, programming hours, etc) and curriculum as legislated by Alberta Education. Current ECS frameworks published by Alberta Education will be used to guide programming in the classroom. (e.g., Flight - Play Participation Possibilities).
- 2.3. Religious Education instruction is part of programming in ECS.
- 2.4. ECS programs are responsive to children's diverse learning needs and backgrounds.
- 2.5. Specialized services and/or supports are integrated into the programming for ECS children and students as provided by the classroom teacher.
- 2.6. Evaluation processes will emphasize individual growth and development. A variety of assessments both formal and informal will be ongoing throughout the school year and will be used to guide instruction and intervention strategies.
- 2.7. Current provincial regulations with respect to safety standards, programs, policies, teachers, records, finance, and insurance will be strictly maintained.

3. **ECS Funding**

- 3.1. Children entering Pre-Kindergarten who qualify for Program Unit Funding (PUF) will receive an individualized program plan (IPP) prepared by the teacher in consultation with the School Principal, Director of Early Childhood Education and Learning Support Services, and the family.
- 3.2. Families whose children are accessing Program Unit Funding are strongly encouraged to participate in Family Oriented Programming Sessions (FOS), which support programming needs of children accessing Program Unit Funding.
- 3.3. While Early Learning programs operate in designated schools, they are in effect, one program with several locations of service. As such, the Program Unit Funding and other revenue will be collected and managed as a division and distributed by the Director of Early Childhood Education and Learning Support Services.
- 3.4. The Pre-Kindergarten program is intended to extend Early Childhood Services prior to Kindergarten to support children with identified needs. Children who qualify for Program Unit Funding (PUF) may receive an additional two years of ECS prior to entering into Kindergarten.

- 3.5. Screening assessments are required for children seeking placement in GSACRD's Pre-Kindergarten programs to determine eligibility unless the child has prior qualifying documentation that supports eligibility for PUF.
- 3.6. Children who do not meet the criteria may be accepted in the program and tuition fees will apply with a one year placement to the program for the year prior to entering Kindergarten.

Procedures

1. The Superintendent or Delegate is responsible for:

- 1.1 Developing and maintaining policies and programs that are consistent with the Minister's early childhood services policies and programs.
- 1.2 Employing certificated teachers.
- 1.3 Utilizing approved facilities that comply with all applicable municipal and provincial public health, safety, fire and building standards.
- 1.4 Assessing children for whom special needs grants will be claimed.
- 1.5 Developing procedures for ECS registration, safety on field trips, health protocols, assessment and evaluation of children, and teacher growth, supervision, and evaluation.
- 1.6 Monitoring and evaluating the ECS program according to the Divisions Program Evaluation AP 280 and Alberta Education guidelines and regulations, and ensuring that the early childhood services program keeps records in accordance with the Student Record Regulation.
- 1.7 Submitting annual reports as required by Alberta Education.
- 1.8 Monitoring financial and insurance requirements as required by Alberta Education.

2. The School Principal is responsible for:

- 2.1 Supervising ECS programming, including duties of the teacher who is responsible for such programming based on Alberta government requirements.
- 2.2 Ensuring requirements of the superintendent or delegate are met through the operation of the ECS program in the school.

3. The ECS teacher is responsible for:

- 3.1 Program planning, implementation and evaluation in accordance with the Alberta Education program statements and guidelines.
- 3.2 Working with parents as partners in their child's or student's education as outlined in the *Education Act*, *Alberta Education's Teaching Quality Standard*, and *Early Childhood Services Regulation*.

References:

Education Act, Section 21, 1(1) f; 41, 42 (2)

[Teaching Quality Standards](#)

Resident Status/ Admissions AP 300

Program Evaluation AP 280

[Early Childhood Services Regulation 87/2019](#)

[Early Childhood Services Age of Funding Eligibility Change April 2018](#)

[Funding Manual for School Authorities](#) 2019-2020 (note: annual changes occur)

Revision Dates: February 19, 2020