

EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

Background

The District shall provide an Early Childhood Services Program designed to enhance student abilities and skills, and address children's developmental needs.

Early Childhood Services (ECS) is a voluntary program the objective of which is to integrate educational, health, social and recreational services for preschool-aged children. The program should strengthen the sense of dignity and self-worth of the child and provide parents opportunities to actively participate in their children's programming.

Guidelines

1. ECS programs will utilize an integrated approach to learning which involves parents, staff and community, and reflects the basic principles documented in Appendix 210A.
2. The program will be consistent with the philosophy, goals and program dimensions prescribed by Alberta Education.
3. Eligibility for entrance to ECS programs will be as outlined in Appendix 210B.
4. Enrollment in ECS is voluntary.
5. Current provincial regulations with respect to safety standards, programs, policies, teachers, records, finance and insurance will be strictly maintained.
6. Each severely disabled child for whom a program unit grant has been accessed will be served through an individualized program plan.

Procedures

1. The Superintendent is responsible for:
 - 1.1 Establishing and meeting Alberta Education program and policy requirements.
 - 1.2 Employing certificated teachers.
 - 1.3 Utilizing approved facilities.
 - 1.4 Assessing children for whom special needs grants will be claimed.
 - 1.5 Monitoring and evaluating the ECS program.
 - 1.6 Submitting annual reports as required by Alberta Education.
 - 1.7 Monitoring financial and insurance requirements.

2. School administration is responsible for:
 - 2.1 Assisting teachers in areas of program planning including development of individual program plans (IPP), implementation and evaluation.
 - 2.2 Assisting in the identification of staff development needs.
 - 2.3 Monitoring and evaluating the operation of the ECS program.
 - 2.4 Establishing a local parent advisory committee.
 - 2.5 Ensuring that enrollment and attendance records are adequately maintained.
3. The ECS teacher is responsible for:
 - 3.1 Program planning, implementation and evaluation in accordance with the Early Childhood Services program goals.
 - 3.2 Developing an individualized program for students identified as mildly, moderately or severely disabled.
 - 3.3 Providing parents opportunities to actively participate in the ECS program.
4. Parents are responsible for:
 - 4.1 Assisting in the identification of program needs in relation to the philosophy, goals and program dimensions.
 - 4.2 Being involved in the local parent advisory council of the ECS program, and/or the school council.
 - 4.3 Supporting the program through activities such as assisting in the classroom as an aide or a special resource person and attendance at education programs for parents and other locally planned activities.

Reference: Section 30, School Act
Early Childhood Services regulation 31/2002
Early Childhood Services policy 1.1.3

EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES PRINCIPLES

Early Childhood Services is based on the following principles:

1. Human development is a continuous, sequential, interactive process.
2. Early childhood is a particularly significant period in human development.
3. The self-concept is important in human development.
4. Children learn through interaction with their environment.
5. Play is essential to the child's development.
6. Parents are primary agents in the child's development.
7. There is need for coordinated responsive services.

**AGES FOR ELIGIBILITY IN ECS PROGRAMS
DEPENDING UPON STATUS OF CHILD**

Funding Status of Child	For funding in an ECS program, the minimum age of the child on September 1 of program year must be the greater of
Severely Disabled Child	2 years, 8 months or 3 years less than minimum school age*
Hearing Impaired Child	
Mildly or Moderately Disabled Child	3 years, 6 months or 2 years less than minimum school age*
Regular Program Child	4 years, 6 months or 1 year less than minimum school age*
Developmentally Immature Child	5 years, 6 months or minimum school age*

* The younger of the school entrance age as set:

- a. By the Board of the District or District in which the parents or guardians of the child reside, or
- b. In the School Act, which is 6 years of age as of September 1.

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