

EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

Background

The Division may operate Early Childhood Programs for eligible children in the Division. These programs will adhere to the philosophy, goals, objectives and program dimensions as outlined by Alberta Education and will be in harmony with the mission, beliefs and values statements of the Division.

Brighter Beginnings is an Early Intervention Program specifically tailored to meet the individual needs of each child. Elements of the program include faith-based curriculum, learning through play, early literacy and multi-disciplinary assessments, including outside referrals if necessary.

Definition

Early Childhood Services programs provide services to address the developmental needs of children before they enter grade 1. 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 (1) component of the total ECS program funded by Alberta Education, and refers to the year immediately prior to grade 1.

Procedures

1. Enrolment in an ECS program is voluntary.
2. All ECS programs operated by the Division are strongly encouraged to have an active Local Advisory Committee (LAC) consisting of administration, teachers and volunteer parents that act in an advisory capacity to the Principal. In specific cases where the creation of a LAC is not feasible, the program shall attempt to provide various opportunities for parental development.
3. The Principal shall act as the Program Coordinator for the ECS program in the school.
4. Brighter Beginnings
 - 4.1 Brighter Beginnings is an ECS program for children between the ages of two and a half (2 ½) to five and a half (5 ½) years who may have a severe and/or moderate delay in two (2) or more developmental areas, such as speech and language, fine and gross motor, or a medical condition.

- 4.2 Staff utilize a wide variety of teaching strategies and methods including assistive technology and precision teaching to help each child develop to their potential.
 - 4.3 Brighter Beginnings works collaboratively with agencies such as Family Support for Children with Disabilities (FSCD), Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) service providers, CASA, Glenrose and pediatricians.
 - 4.4 Staff conduct family visits approximately once per month to share strategies and discuss the family's needs.
 - 4.5 Parents are invited to attend workshops to help address their child's needs.
5. ECS program funding is available through Alberta Education under Program Unit Funding (PUF) and is available for up to three (3) years.
 6. The Principal and staff shall ensure that the conditions required for the Program Unit Funding are met.
 7. Children attend their community school for their kindergarten program, which is consistent with Division inclusive education practices.

Reference: Section 8, 30, 60, 61, 113 School Act
Early Childhood Regulation 31/2002
Funding Manual for School Authorities
Kindergarten Program Statement
Primary Programs Framework for Teaching and Learning
Standards for Special Education
Standards for the Provision of Early Childhood Special Education