

Administrative Procedure 210

EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

Background

The Division may provide an Early Childhood Services Program (ECS) in each community to facilitate the transition of children 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 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.

Special needs means a child with mild, moderate or severe disabilities, who is assessed as having 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.
2. Program Unit Funding 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. Children will be admitted into an ECS program when they have reached the age of five (5) years on or before March 1 in the year in which they are enrolling, or if they are eligible for Program Unit Funding.
4. The Principal shall act as the Program Coordinator for the ECS program in the school.
5. The Principal and staff shall ensure that the conditions required for the Program Unit Funding are met.

6. 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/guardians that acts 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.
7. 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.
8. Children are normally enrolled in an ECS program for one (1) 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.
9. Principals shall ensure that ECS programs serving students with special needs meet the following requirements:
 - 9.1 Screening/assessment information is maintained on file.
 - 9.2 Parents are consulted on all program placement decisions and informed of all program planning, implementation and evaluation activities directly involving their child.
 - 9.3 An Individualized Program Plan (IPP) is on file for each child with mild, moderate or severe disabilities and for gifted and talented children.

Reference: Section 3, 21, 32, 41 to 43, 197, 222 Education Act
Early Childhood Regulation 31/2002
Funding Manual for School Authorities
Standards for Special Education
Standards for the Provision of Early Childhood Special Education
Kindergarten Program Statement
Primary Programs Framework for Teaching and Learning

Administrative Procedure 210 – Appendix

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 March 1 of program year must be the greater of
Severely Disabled Child Hearing Impaired Child	2 years, 6 months or 3 years less than minimum school age*
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.

- i. By the Division in which the parents/guardians of the child reside, or
- ii. In the School Act, which is six (6) years of age as of March 1.

Reference: Section 3, 21, 32, 41 to 43, 197, 222 Education Act
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