

Purpose/Background

The Division supports Early Childhood Services (ECS) programs as outlined by Alberta Education that address the learning needs of children before they enter grade one. Programs and services may be provided to children with special needs in accordance with the Alberta Education Standards for the Provision of Early Childhood Special Education and related policies.

Procedures

1. The programs will serve children prior to grade one. Those with special needs may be served up to three years prior to the grade one entrance age.
2. Kindergarten is considered to be the last year of ECS programming before grade one.
3. Parent registration of children in an ECS program is voluntary.
4. ECS children with severe disabilities may qualify for support through Program Unit Funding (PUF) for a maximum of three years.
5. ECS programs may include programs and related services such as the Preschool Intervention Programs (PIP), Kindergarten programs, and other Division authorized preschool programs.
6. ECS teachers of children with special needs shall consult with and inform parents of all program placement decisions and of all program planning, implementation and evaluation activities directly involving the child. Parents are to be informed of the avenues of appeal, which are available.
7. The Division is not required to transport ECS children to programs. However, some provisions for transportation may be offered for children in the Kindergarten program subject to Board Policy 17 Transportation.

Reference:

- Section 3, 21, 32, 41, 52, 53, 197, 222 Education Act
- RVS AF210-A Kindergarten Learning Plan
- RVS AF210-B ECS Transition Notes
- RVS AF210-C Kindergarten IPP PUF
- RVS AF210-D Early Intervention Program Staff Allocation
- Early Childhood Regulation 31/2002
- Guide to Education ECS to Grade 12
- Funding Manual for School Authorities
- Standards for Special Education
- Standards for the Provision of Early Childhood Special Education

Appendix A – KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

1. Principals shall seek the advice of parents regarding the operation of the program. A parent committee may be established in order to consult with the teacher(s) and Principal on:
 - 1.1 The kindergarten school calendar;
 - 1.2 The length and configurations of school days
 - 1.3 Parent volunteer program;
 - 1.4 Field trips; and
 - 1.5 On-going activities.
2. All field trips shall comply with Administrative Procedure 260 - Educational Excursions.
3. Registration:

Schools designated by the Board to offer a Kindergarten Program shall accept all children of kindergarten age, as defined in Administrative Procedure 300 - Access to Education, living within the school attendance boundary and children living outside the school attendance boundary if sufficient space and resources are available as defined in the School Act.
4. Minimum Enrollment:

For a kindergarten program to be offered at a designated school, a minimum of thirteen (13) children must be registered.
5. Non-Instructional Fee:

A non-instructional fee may be established by the Board. This fee shall only be utilized to cover the cost of field trips and expendable materials for crafts that kindergarten program children take home. The waiver provision under Board Policy 24 - Student Fees shall apply to this non-instructional fee.
6. Kindergarten School Calendar:

The Principal, in consultation with the parents and the school staff, will outline the kindergarten program calendar in the School Handbook.
7. Transportation:

Transportation may be available to children attending a kindergarten program on the basis outlined under Board Policy 17 Transportation.

Appendix B – ASSUMING RESPONSIBILITY FOR KINDERGARTEN

The Division recognizes that some private operators offer kindergarten programs within the boundaries of the Division. If private operators decide to discontinue operation, they may request the Division to assume the operation of the kindergarten program.

Procedures

1. The Division will consider assuming responsibility for an existing kindergarten operation if:
 - 1.1 There has been a minimum of thirteen (13) students enrolled in the program in each of the past five (5) years of operation.
 - 1.2 The projected kindergarten enrollment in each of the following two years is at least thirteen (13) students.
 - 1.3 The request to assume the program has been received by the Superintendent by December 31 of the year prior to the year in which the kindergarten program is to be assumed by the Division.
 - 1.4 The instructional program can be accommodated in Division or other facilities.
2. A request must be supported by at least two-thirds of the participating parents present at a meeting called to explain the implications of changing from private to a Division-operated kindergarten program.
3. Any funds previously held by the private kindergarten operator when the Division takes over the program are transferred to the Division, and will be used for that kindergarten program for the following future expenditures:
 - 3.1 Providing and/or replacing kindergarten program equipment.
 - 3.2 Covering any operational deficit of the kindergarten program operating at that school.
 - 3.3 Any other kindergarten program purpose approved by the Superintendent.
4. General management of the program, which will be coordinated by the Associate Superintendent of Learning, will be assumed by the Division and will include budgeting, staffing, supervision, provision of facilities, attendance boundaries, and determining the length of school year.
5. Certificated teachers already employed and recommended by the private operator will be given a probationary contract with the Division during the first year according to established hiring practices for all professional staff. These teachers will be required to make formal application stating their intention to teach kindergarten with the Division.
6. Kindergarten programs assumed by the Division will be operated in accordance with Alberta Education requirements.