



Background

An integrated Early Childhood Services Program (ECS) will be provided to children in order to facilitate the transition from home to the school setting. The intent of the ECS Program is to strengthen the sense of dignity and self worth of the child and permit parents with opportunities to actively participate in their children's education.

The ECS Program is a voluntary program and will be provided in accordance with provincial legislation and requirements.

Procedures

1. A minimum of five eligible children must be enrolled in a regular ECS Program in order to open and operate an ECS Center in a community.
2. The ECS projected enrollment form shall be submitted by the principal to the superintendent, on or before June 30th of the preceding school term.
3. An eligible child may be admitted to an ECS program during the month of September in any school year provided that child's 5th birthday falls on or before the 1st day of March of that school year.
4. The principal, in consultation with the Local School Board Committee, shall submit notification of an intention to participate in an ECS Program to the superintendent, on or before January 31st of the preceding school term if they do not already have an ECS. Program in operation.
5. The 'per child served' count shall be submitted by principals on the last operating day of the beginning month in which the ECS Program commenced operation in order to verify enrollment for funding purposes.
6. Once an ECS Program is in operation, it will be allowed to continue for the remainder of the year provided enrollments remain at an acceptable level.
7. The superintendent will ensure that the following responsibilities will be completed within the appropriate time frames as set by the division or Alberta Education:



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- 7.1 Establish and maintain the legal status for each ECS Center.
 - 7.2 Employ a qualified instructor/teacher to implement the ECS Program.
 - 7.3 Establish approved facilities.
 - 7.4 Procure assessments of special needs children in application for special government grants.
8. A combined ECS/Playschool Program may be established where there are less than the five eligible ECS children that are required to operate an ECS Program if the Local School Board Committee approves.
- In such cases the superintendent will make contact with the appropriate agency and establish a contract that includes a financial commitment from the agency that is responsible for playschool.
9. In order for a playschool child to be eligible for the combined ECS/Playschool Program, the child must be 3 1/2 years of age on or before September 1st.
10. A combined ECS/Primary Grade Program may be established where there are less than five eligible ECS children required to operate a regular ECS Program.
11. ECS centers will operate in accordance with the following:
- 11.1 Provide services for at least nine months of the school year. The Local School Board Committee will recommend the hours, days, and months of operation in accordance with the policies and regulations governing teacher contracts and in the best interest of the child and school operation.
 - 11.2 The instructional program shall consist of a minimum 475 instructional hours.
 - 11.3 ECS Centers should be open for three full days each week or the equivalent.
 - 11.4 Where the number of children enrolled at the ECS Center is 14 or more, and when the Local School Board Committee determines that the ECS or a combined ECS/Playschool enrollment at an ECS Center



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- merits consideration for special programming, one of the two following options may be exercised:
- 11.4.1 The program may be split and the groups cycled on a rotational basis of 3 days one week and 2 days the following week. Each group would receive the same number of instructional hours.
 - 11.4.2 An ECS assistant may be hired to assist the ECS instructor.
 - 11.5 Where special circumstances require some other type of program arrangement, the principal shall prepare a proposal describing the circumstances and the proposed program arrangement to the Local School Board Committee for consideration and approval
 - 11.6 An ECS assistant may be hired to assist the ECS instructor if an ECS class is in excess of 14 children.
 - 11.7 Holidays for the students and staff will correspond to those of the school.
 - 11.7 Professional days, conventions and in-service training may coincide with those of teaching staff.
 - 11.8 In the absence of the ECS instructor, the principal shall make arrangements to have the centre remain open with the children in attendance.
 12. The Local School Board Committee shall act in the capacity of a Local Advisory Committee (LAC). The LAC Committee will make recommendations to the school principal in regard to the following items:
 - 12.1 ECS facilities.
 - 12.2 Program needs.
 - 12.3 Hiring of the ECS instructor/teacher.
 - 12.4 Parent involvement.
 - 12.5 Program plans that involve school and community activities.
 - 12.6 Days of operation.
 13. The ECS Program shall be recognized as a part of the school program and the principal shall:



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- 13.1 Coordinate the activities of the ECS Center as part of the overall administration of the school including such areas as supervision, transportation, budgeting allocation and involvement in the implementation of the instructional program.
- 13.2 Ensure that the identification and program development requirements of special needs children are met. Parents, local community members and central office staff may also make a contribution to the special needs requirements.
- 13.3 In consultation with the ECS instructor/teacher, ensure that a minimum of one developmental checklist per student is completed during the school term and kept on file.
- 13.4 Ensure that parent – teacher interviews are conducted throughout the school term.