

Early Kindergarten Information for teachers

Early Kindergarten in-school programming is for children who are 4 years old on or before December 31st of the school year. It is an optional program that provides literacy rich, play-based learning opportunities to support the transition to Kindergarten.

Early Kindergarten programs can support and enrich children's early learning experiences through building strong relationships, nurturing well-being and belonging, promoting communication and literacies, and helping children to build a positive personal and cultural identity.

These programs provide children with everyday moments to inquire, wonder and explore their world through play. Playing helps young children's brains to develop and their language and communication skills to mature. Through play, children use their creativity and imagination to develop multiple literacies as they explore their world with the gentle guidance of caring adults. Play gives children the opportunity to interact with others, to learn about relationships, to share, to negotiate, to resolve conflicts, and to learn self-advocacy skills.

Programming and Curriculum

Curriculum and delivery begins with coming to know the learner and building a strong relationship with each child as an individual. Shared positive experiences between educators and children serve as the building blocks for early learning.

The Early Kindergarten program will follow one or a combination of both the Preschool Curriculum designed by the Yukon Child Development Center and the BC Kindergarten Curriculum. These curricula are informed by the BC Early Learning Framework and the BC Play Today Handbook. The Early Kindergarten program is meant to provide children the opportunity to engage in an early learning environment over a two-year period.

Goals of Early Kindergarten

- Foster strong relationships with other children and caregivers
- Participate in a literacy and numeracy rich environment
- Learn with others through play and inquiry
- Practice social-emotional and problem solving abilities
- Develop and nurture positive self-esteem
- Encourage lifelong learning and well-being
- Improve fine and gross motor skills

Structure

The structure of Early Kindergarten programs can vary among schools based on local needs and whether the program is integrated with the local Kindergarten program. Some components will be consistent in all programs.

Early Kindergarten students:

- Participate in and follow an established curriculum;
- Participate in play-based learning;
- Build connection to land, culture, community, and place;
- Engage with others, materials and the world around them;
- Gain an understanding of Yukon First Nations ways of knowing, doing and being;
- Participate in open-ended activities which allow for a wide range of abilities and needs.

Currently, Early Kindergarten students who are being seen by the Child Development Center may require special support and are assigned a Child Development Center outreach worker who works in the classroom.

Communicating Student Learning

Informal communication on student learning is part of the Early Kindergarten program. This includes communication between teachers, parents and students to support learning and involving parents as partners in dialogue about their child's progress.

Teachers will reinforce the importance of self-assessment and goal setting and will articulate next steps for learning. Teachers will also provide meaningful, relevant descriptions and concrete evidence/artifacts of student learning.

Narration can take various forms; however, educators are encouraged to keep the learning process alive by sharing learning stories also referred to as pedagogical narration. This is the process of noticing and collecting moments from daily practice and sharing these with colleagues, children, and families to make children's learning processes and inquiries, as well as educators' pedagogical choices, visible and open to interpretation and reflection. Engaging with pedagogical narration is central to the vision of the B.C Early Learning Framework.

Professional Development

The Government of Yukon recognizes that professional learning opportunities and training are essential for educators to effectively support the success of their students and to improve their students' learning outcomes. With the recent increased focus on early learning programming in rural Yukon, we look forward to continuing to support educators with learning opportunities through professional development offerings.

A key professional learning opportunity for Early Kindergarten teachers that is offered through the Curriculum and Assessment Unit is the Primary Learning Network. Through this network, educators are able to:

- Access resources;
- Collaborate with Yukon teachers;
- Engage with academic expertise relating to areas of learning;
- Think deeply about student learning and personal teaching practices; and
- Engage in opportunities to try something new in a safe space.

Recordings of past professional development offerings can be found on the Yukon Teachers' Association website in the Google document on professional development. The Department of Education Curriculum and Assessment website also has information on past professional development events.

Recent topics include:

- Inquiry and competency-based curriculum;
- Yukon First Nations ways of knowing, doing and being;
- Flexible and personalized learning; and
- Assessment and reporting practices.

An additional resource for delving further into the B.C. Early Learning Framework online is [*Introducing The Early Learning Framework – respectfully living and learning together.*](#)

FOR MORE INFORMATION, EMAIL:
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