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**HORIZON SCHOOL DIVISION****POLICY HANDBOOK**

**Policy Code:** HGBJ  
**Policy Title:** Early Childhood Services  
**Cross Reference:**  
**Legal Reference:**  
**Adoption Date:** November 28, 2000  
**Amendment or Re-affirmation Date:** **April 25, 2017**

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**POLICY**

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF HORIZON SCHOOL DIVISION BELIEVES THAT EARLY CHILDHOOD IS A PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT PERIOD IN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT THAT NEEDS TO BE SUPPORTED BY EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES PROGRAMS

**DEFINITIONS****Early childhood services program**

Early Childhood Services (ECS) refers to programming offered by school authorities prior to compulsory schooling that meets the diverse needs of young children and their families. It includes Kindergarten and Pre-Kindergarten (Early Learning).

**GUIDELINES**

1. Early Childhood Services programs provide learning experiences designed to build foundations for entry into Grade 1.
2. Participation in Early Childhood Services Programs is voluntary
3. An Early Childhood Services program shall be provided at each school where there is adequate eligible enrollment.

**REGULATIONS**

1. Early Childhood Services programs shall operate in accordance with the requirements of Alberta Education.
2. Early Childhood Services programs shall operate in accordance with the following provisions.
  - a) Fees are charged for Early Learning as these programs are not currently government funded. Children who are learning English as a second language and children assessed with disabilities and/or developmental delays in areas, such as, speech, language, hearing, vision, etc. which meet Alberta Education criteria may qualify for special funding and additional supports.

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- b) Programs with 10 or more students will operate within the limits of available resources. Special consideration may be given to providing a program with less than 10 children if the number of children receiving program unit funding in the program warrant a program;
  - c) The following options are available to parents and schools with fewer than 10 children in their Early Childhood Services programs;
    - (i) transport children to another Early Childhood Services program;
    - (ii) convert regular teacher time to Early Childhood Services teacher time;
    - (iii) combine the Early Childhood Services program with other grade level classes; or
    - (iv) pay for the cost of additional teacher time;
    - (v) any other solution approved by the Superintendent.
  - d) Assistant time, other than that provided through program unit funding for individual students, may be provided at the discretion of the Supervisor of Early Learning;
  - e) Parents shall be encouraged to participate in Early Childhood Services programs;
  - f) Additional Early Childhood Services programs shall be considered when a school's enrollment reaches sufficient numbers or the needs of the students within the program warrant it.
3. As an Early Childhood Services operator serving students with diverse learning needs, Horizon School Division shall:
- a) maintain screening/assessment information on file;
  - b) consult with and inform parents of all program placement decisions and program planning, implementation and evaluation activities directly involving their child;
  - c) have on file an ELP (Early Learning Plan) for each child identified with severe or mild moderate learning needs;
  - d) apply for Program Unit funding for each eligible child; and
  - e) coordinate with service providers to best meet the programming needs of the individual student.