
HORIZON SCHOOL DIVISION**POLICY HANDBOOK**

Policy Code:	HGBJ
Policy Title:	Early Childhood Services
Cross Reference:	
Legal Reference:	
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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.

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 provide learning experiences designed to build foundations for entry into Grade 1.
2. Participation in Early Childhood Services is voluntary.
3. An Early Childhood Services shall be provided at each school where there is adequate eligible enrollment and no private program operating within the school.

REGULATIONS

1. Early Childhood Services shall operate in accordance with the requirements of Alberta Education.
2. Early Childhood Services shall operate in accordance with the following provisions.
 - 2.1. Fees are charged for Early Learning as these programs are not currently government-funded. Children who meet Alberta Education criteria may qualify to have fees waived and receive additional support. Some of the criteria that may qualify children to have fees waived are learning English as an additional language and children assessed with disabilities and/or developmental delays in areas, such as, speech, language, hearing, vision, etc.

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- 2.2. 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;
- 2.3. The following options may be available to parents and schools with fewer than 10 children in their Early Childhood Services;
 - 2.3.1. transport children to another Early Childhood program;
 - 2.3.2. convert regular teacher time to early learning educator time;
 - 2.3.3. combine the Early Childhood program with other grade level classes;
 - 2.3.4. pay for the cost of additional teacher time; or
 - 2.3.5. any other solution approved by the Superintendent or designate.
- 2.4. Assistant time, other than that provided through program unit funding for individual students, may be provided at the discretion of the Coordinator of Early Learning in consultation with senior administration.
- 2.5. Parents shall be encouraged to participate in Early Childhood programs;
- 2.6. Additional Early Childhood 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:
 - 3.1. maintain screening/assessment information on file;
 - 3.2. consult with and inform parents of all program placement decisions and program planning, implementation and evaluation activities directly involving their child;
 - 3.3. have on file an ECSP (Early Childhood Support Plan) for each child identified with severe, mild or moderate learning needs;
 - 3.4. apply for Program Unit funding for each eligible child; and
 - 3.5. coordinate with service providers to best meet the programming needs of the individual student.