



FOOTPRINTS FOR LEARNING ACADEMY



HOLISTIC

AUTHENTIC

PURPOSE DRIVEN

ENTREPRENEURIAL

GLOBAL

Required Program Policy

KINDERGARTEN - Senior ECS Programming

Motto: Explore Achieve Excel

Explore Entrepreneurship Achieve in Core Learning

Excel in Defining your Educational Journey

KINDERGARTEN

OVERVIEW

The FFLA Board believes that Early Childhood Services (ECS) programs at the Kindergarten level are designed to and enhance the progress of children prior to their entrance into Grade One, to provide an introduction to the learning programs unique to FFLA (e.g. Spanish, Entrepreneurship, and Global Awareness), and to address individual developmental and learning needs programs with special education needs in accordance with Alberta Education Standards for the Provision of Early Childhood Special Education and related ECS policies. With case by case assessment an external provider organization will be used (e.g. I'm For Kids - <https://imforkids.org/>)

DEFINITIONS

1. Early Childhood Services (ECS) refers to the continuum of local and provincial programs that meet the developmental and special needs of young children and their families. Kindergarten refers to the specific final year of ECS before Grade One. Alberta Education LINK:
<https://www.learnalberta.ca/content/mychildslearning/kindergarten.html>
2. Program Unit Funding (PUF) is funding available to approved ECS operators, in addition to Base Instruction Funding, for young children to the age of 5, who have been assessed with a severe disability/delay.
3. EAL - An ECS child whose home language is not English and whose oral language proficiency in English has been assessed as non-fluent.
4. Individualized Program Plan (IPP) means a plan of action designed to address special education needs of a child or student, based on diagnostic information.

GUIDELINES

1. Parent enrolment of children in Early Childhood Services programs is voluntary.
2. The Board supports active parental participation in Kindergarten program.
3. The FFLA ECS program accesses a provider for students of identified special needs. Our current provider is I'm For Kids.

PROCEDURES

1. Footprints for Learning Academy will provide Early Childhood Services, Kindergarten, for applicants in two half-time (2.5 day) programs of 26 students.

- a. Children must be five years old by December 31st of the current school year to attend the regular kindergarten program.
- b. Kindergarten programs will include a minimum of 475 instructional hours. The calendar for kindergarten and pre- kindergarten programs will be developed by the designated administrator, in conjunction with the board.
- c. Kindergarten is considered the last year of ECS programming before Grade One. A child who is developmentally immature will be permitted to spend a second year in the program, as outlined by Alberta Education.
- d. The assessment and placement of children having special needs will be in accordance with Alberta Education guidelines. It should involve a coordinated team approach that includes the child's family, teachers and an external provider organization. Children having recognized special needs are eligible to attend the program under a provider organization (e.g. IM FOR KIDS).
- e. EAL programming may be provided eligible ESL children who are 5 years old by December 31st.
- f. A severely disabled/ delayed child enrolled under a Program Unit Fund will be served through an individualized program plan with the provider organization.
- h. The Board is responsible for establishing and maintaining legal status, employing certificated teachers, and utilizing approved facilities.
- i. Staffing and budgeting decisions for Kindergarten/ ECS will be made as per grades one to twelve, taking into account provincial funding provided for early childhood programs.

2. The FFLA principal will review the required Alberta Education documents and implement the guidelines provided therein. The following details provide a summary for the principal in the programming of Kindergarten in Alberta. There are five reference sections:

SECTION I - Government Documents

1.1 The following documents need to be reviewed by those leading the ECS/ Kindergarten Programs for FFLA. This list should be updated with time as Alberta Education publishes new documentation.

1. Alberta Government (September 1st, 2019), EDUCATION ACT SECTIONS 29 and 33;
2. Alberta Education (September 3, 2019), 2019/2020 GUIDE TO EDUCATION;
3. Alberta Education (September 1st, 2019), PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE STANDARDS;

4. Alberta Education (September, 2018), EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMMING;
5. Alberta Education (Updated September 6, 2012), KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM STATEMENT 2008 and (2006) STANDARDS FOR THE PROVISION OF ECS EDUCATION;
6. Alberta Education (2006), INDIVIDUALIZED PROGRAM PLANNING and (2009) ECS SPECIAL EDUCATION HANDBOOK;
7. Alberta Education (February 28th, 2020), INTERIM FUNDING MANUAL FOR SCHOOL AUTHORITIES 2020/2021 SCHOOL YEAR;

SECTION 2 - Frame of Reference

1.2 The Education Act (September, 2019), along with the current Guide to Education and the current Professional Practice Standards for Alberta must be referenced in all final decision-making.

In reviewing Sections 29 and 33 of the Alberta Government's Education Act (2019), these following directives are given:

1. The Minister approves the education programs offered to its students and its programs of study, and any modification of them, and
2. The Minister is satisfied that the person responsible for the operation of the private school continues to meet the requirements, and
3. The person responsible for the operation of the private school has the capacity, in accordance with regulations, to deliver an appropriate education program to its students, and
4. The individuals employed to teach at the school have the qualification approved by the Minister. (and all other aspects of Section 29)
5. The Board delivers appropriate education programming to meet the needs of all students enrolled in a school operated by the board and to enable their success, and
6. The Board be accountable and provide assurance to students, parents, the community and the Minister for student achievement of learning outcomes, and
7. The Board provide a continuum of supports and services to students that is consistent with the principles of inclusive education. (and all other aspects of Section 33)

In reviewing Alberta Education's 2019/2020 Guide to Education, these reference points are provided:

- 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. Kindergarten is part of the ECS continuum of programs and refers specifically to the education program for children in the year prior to Grade 1.
- As per the Funding Manual for School Authorities, ECS operators shall provide access to a minimum of 475 hours of instruction for each child during a school year. For individual children, modification to these hours based on the child's developmental level and educational needs is possible and should be recorded in the child's individualized program plan.

Instruction is the process in which Alberta certificated teachers take responsibility for ensuring that learning activities for children are directed toward achieving the outcomes of approved programs of study and/or individualized program plans through:

- face-to-face interaction with children for the purpose of teaching and assessing children's achievement of outcomes, and/or
- interaction with children who are engaged in classroom learning in a Kindergarten, preschool, playschool, daycare or child-care setting, and/or family-oriented programming sessions

In reviewing Alberta Education's (2019) Professional Standards of Practice, further understanding of role responsibility is provided with these descriptors:

- Quality leadership occurs when the leader's ongoing analysis of the context, and decisions about what leadership knowledge and abilities to apply, result in quality teaching and optimum learning for all school students;
- Quality teaching occurs when the teacher's ongoing analysis of the context, and the teacher's decisions about child pedagogical knowledge and abilities to apply, result in optimum learning for all students.

SECTION 3 - ECS/Kindergarten Programming

1.3 The current documents from Alberta Education that outline the learner expectations for Kindergarten, as in the Kindergarten Program Statement must be followed directly in all program planning for Kindergarten.

- Kindergarten, as part of the ECS programming in the year prior to Grade 1, is intended for children that turn 5 years on or before December 31st of that school

year and is planned and implemented to help children achieve the learner expectations of the Kindergarten Program Statement. (2012). These would embrace child development within:

1. Early Literacy
2. Early Numeracy
3. Citizenship and Identity
4. Environment and Community Awareness
5. Personal and Social Responsibility
6. Physical Skills and Well-being
7. Creative Expression

• The Kindergarten program must use the PRIMARY PROGRAMS GUIDING PRINCIPLES as a basis for planning the learning activities for children. The principles reflect current understandings and contemporary education research on young children, families, communities, and schools. The purpose of the building principles is to help Kindergarten to Grade 3 teachers reflect on the nature of young children and their learning to make informed instructional decisions and create learning environments that are responsive to children's diverse needs; capabilities; learning styles; dispositions and cultural, social and linguistic backgrounds. These ten principles are:

1. Childhoods differ depending on social and cultural circumstances;
2. Children's development is influenced but not determined by their early experiences;
3. Children interact and learn in a variety of contexts;
4. Children are co-constructors of knowledge and partners in learning;
5. Children are unique and active contributors to their learning;
6. Children construct and represent knowledge in a variety of ways;
7. Children are citizens and active participants in school and society;
8. Children are active collaborators in and users of assessment;
9. Children may require specialized programming and supports to develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes that prepare them for later learning;
10. Children and their families may need coordinated community services to meet their needs.

SECTION 4 - Inclusive Education and Individualized Program Planning for ECS/

Kindergarten

1.4 Templates and Guidelines from Alberta Education for Individualized Programs Plans should be adhered to and be done in consultation with FFLA Administration, and as needed, Alberta Education directly.

In reviewing the Individualized Program Planning comprehensive document from Alberta Education (2006) and focusing on Chapter 10- Getting Off to a Good Start in ECS, the following should be noted to guide schools and educators in the design of learning programs for the those of unique needs:

- Individualized program plans (IPPs) are important components of quality educational programming for young children with special education needs. Young children have a range of developmental needs and require flexibility in program delivery. Early childhood services (ECS) programming may take place in a variety of environments such as home, inclusive classroom programming in neighborhood schools and preschools, or specialized sites. Given the wide range of individual needs, potential settings and instructional philosophies among parents and various professionals, it is essential that the child's learning team take a collaborative approach to individualized program planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting.
- The learning team refers to the small group of people who consult and share information relevant to the individual child's education, and plan special education programming and services as required. The team may consist of the classroom teacher, parents, the child (when appropriate), other school and jurisdiction staff aware of the child's needs, and child development specialists, as required.
- ECS IPPs are developed for children aged 2.5 to 6 years of age with mild, moderate or severe disabilities and/or delays, and for children who are gifted and talented. Like an IPP for older students, an ECS IPP is not a daily lesson plan nor is it meant to be all-encompassing.

An ECS IPP is an evolving, flexible and future-oriented plan that:

- meets the special education needs of an individual preschool child
- promotes child development by building the child's independence, competence and meaningful participation in daily activities in a variety of environments
- addresses the specific priorities of the child through functional goals

which guide classroom activities and routines

- summarizes essential information, including the level of programming, the settings where programming will take place, necessary coordinated support services, and other services to facilitate teaching and learning in the classroom and other environments
- is developed, implemented and evaluated by a collaborative learning team, including parents, teachers, resource personnel and, when possible, the child
- provides an ongoing record to monitor and communicate child growth, and ensure continuity of programming
- guides planning for transition.

The development, implementation and monitoring of an ECS/Kindergarten IPP involves the following interrelated steps:

1. Identifying areas of need and strengths
2. Setting the direction
3. Creating a plan
4. Implementing the plan
5. Reviewing, revising and reporting

• Although the requirements for ECS IPPs are consistent for children with mild, moderate or severe disabilities as well as for those who are gifted and talented, the degree of complexity and detail will vary. In general, the greater the needs of the child, the more detailed and comprehensive the IPP will be. The components and ideas discussed in the next few pages are applicable to all IPPs.

Gathering essential information - IPPs for young children should include the following essential information:

- assessment data
- current level of performance and achievement
- identification of strengths and areas of need
- measurable goals and objectives
- level of programming and settings where programming will take place
- procedures for evaluating child's progress
- identification of coordinated support services (including health-

related), if required

- relevant medical information
- required classroom accommodations (e.g., any changes to instructional strategies, assessment procedures, materials, resources, facilities or equipment)
- transition plans
- year-end summary
- parent signature.

Note that reference to the entire IPP document and the online resources from Alberta Education in consultation with their Field Offices would ensure that the IPP's are completed as required and as best for the child, parents, and school. Templates and exemplars are also provided.

SECTION 5 - Funding for ECS/Kindergarten Students of Special Needs

1.5 - In the application for Alberta Education Funding Grants for ECS/Kindergarten students of special needs, all criteria outlined in the current Alberta Education Funding Manual must be addressed and adhered to.

In a review of Alberta Education's INTERIM FUNDING MANUAL FOR SCHOOL AUTHORITIES 2020/2021 SCHOOL YEAR released in February of 2020, the following directives are given:

CRITERIA FOR FUNDING SEVERE UNIQUE LEARNERS

1. PUF (Program Unit Funding) will be allocated for students who have been assessed and diagnosed with severe disability or severe language delay;
2. PUF is paid when a complete program is in place for a maximum of 3 years, including Kindergarten;
3. The age range for eligibility is from 2 years 8 months through 5 years 8 months as of September 1st of that school year;
4. Special coding must be used according to Alberta Education guidelines (41 through 46) where a professional assessment has been done;
5. Operators determine eligibility and all documentation must be completed and maintained - the Assessment and the IPP with follow-up documentation;

6. Student must be registered as of September 30th of the school year, using WMA for the student enrolment to assess amount;
7. Program offered must have 475 hours with accommodations to 400 hours as determined necessary for student (with WMA is at 50% of a full 800 hour program);
8. Teacher must be certified by the Ministry of Education for Alberta;
9. Only one ECS can register a student (i.e. two separate 400 hour programs cannot be combined for double registration);
10. A WMA child for severe cannot be also designated as mild/moderate, gifted, refugee, or EAL;
11. Compliance will be verified by Alberta Education in both desk and on-site assessments.

Further details should be confirmed on in the Alberta Education manual on pages 54 though 62.

CRITERIA FOR FUNDING MILD/MODERATE/GIFTED UNIQUE LEARNERS

1. Student is coded and registered as 30 (mild/moderate) or 80 (gifted);
2. Age range for students is at least 3 years 8 months and less than 6 years as of September 1 of school year;
3. Student has documentation of professional assessment for the coding;
4. Student has IPP prepared according to all Alberta Education guidelines by certified teacher;
5. Program for half day schedule offered must have 475 hours;
6. Funding is based on WMA;
7. Funding will be in place for a maximum of two years, including one year of Kindergarten;
8. Compliance will be verified by Alberta Education in both desk and on-site assessments. Further details should be confirmed on in the Alberta Education manual on pages 54 though 62.

