



Saskatchewan
Ministry of
Education

Better Beginnings, Better Futures

**Effective Practices
Policy and Guidelines
for Prekindergarten
in Saskatchewan**



2008 Edition

Early Learning and Child Care Branch
Ministry of Education
Originally published in August, 1997
Revised June 2004
Revised September 2008

This publication can be found on the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education's
web site at www.education.gov.sk.ca/Prek/

ISBN 978-1-897211-62-5

Acknowledgements

Appreciation is sincerely extended to the many dedicated people who contributed their expertise to the development of the original *Better Beginnings, Better Futures: Best Practices Policy and Guidelines for Prekindergarten* in 1996-97, including:

Cathy Arthur-MacDonald	Regina Public School Division
Dr. Mary Cronin	Faculty of Education, University of Regina
Dr. Sandra Finney	Faculty of Education, University of Regina
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In addition, this handbook draws extensively on the literature of early childhood development and education. A full list of references is included in the appendices.

Notes:

In this policy framework and guide, the term "parent" is used to refer to a child's primary caregiver. This may include a child's mother, father, grandparent, aunt, uncle, sister, brother, foster parent or other guardian.

The policy and guidelines outlined in this document complement the following Ministry documents:

- *Play and Exploration: Early Learning Program Guide* (2008)
- *Assessment and Evaluation in Prekindergarten: A Planning Guide for School Divisions and their Partners* (2005)
- *Building Communities of Hope: Effective Practices for Meeting the Diverse Learning Needs of Children and Youth: 2004*, the policy of the Community Schools Program.

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I. Prekindergarten: Educational Support for Young Children

Introduction

Research and experience demonstrate that high quality early childhood education in the first years of life represent a positive investment in a child's development. The benefits range from increased school success and improved cognitive functioning to fewer failed grades and lower rates of juvenile crime.

In 1996, the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with school divisions, implemented the Prekindergarten Program for Community Schools. The Prekindergarten Program enhances the capacity of communities and school divisions to provide early educational supports for young children.

This handbook, *Better Beginnings, Better Futures: Effective Practices Policy and Guidelines for Prekindergarten in Saskatchewan* provides the conceptual framework for a high quality, holistic early childhood educational program. It incorporates approaches and supports that have proven effective in nurturing success in school for three- and four-year-old children. The handbook provides the vision, principles and key elements that emphasize developmentally appropriate practice and a child-centred approach to the social-emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual development of children.

The Prekindergarten Program described in this handbook will help give children the opportunity to start Kindergarten with the social, emotional and intellectual skills necessary to succeed. Efforts spent on enabling better beginnings will support better futures.

Ideally, the life of a child is full of wonder, excitement and exploration. It can be beyond the means and ability of some families to provide a stimulating environment and appropriate supports during the critical stage of early childhood. The school can play an important role in providing supports to children and their families.



Challenges and Opportunities: Why Prekindergarten?

There are a number of compelling reasons for high quality Prekindergarten programming for children in Saskatchewan schools. These include:

Significant Numbers of Vulnerable Children

Children who display intellectual and social-emotional challenges during their early years are vulnerable to poor social, economic and health outcomes as young adults. Analysis of the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth found that approximately 25% of Canadian toddlers and preschool-aged children experience vulnerability (Willms, 2002).

Enhanced Educational Supports Make a Difference in the Lives and Futures of Children

Research has demonstrated that high quality early learning programs, such as Prekindergarten, have both short and long-term benefits in the lives of children, especially vulnerable children. The short-term benefits include improved cognitive functioning, increased social skills, improved health and higher self-esteem, all contributing to greater success in school. The long-term benefits include lower rates of juvenile crime, fewer teen pregnancies, fewer failed grades and school drop-outs and fewer referrals to special education services (Elkind, 1987; Canadian Public Health Association, 1997; Garbarino, 1990; National Crime Prevention Council Canada, 1996; Schorr & Schorr, 1989).

Early Childhood Education Programs Are Cost Effective

High quality educational supports in the first years of life represent a positive investment in a child's development and avoid the need for costly interventions later in life (Schweinhart, Barnes, Weikart, 1993).

Ensuring a High Quality of Life for All Saskatchewan People

The principle of equity is fundamental to Saskatchewan people and a foundation of our education system. Providing all students with equitable opportunities and benefits means that some children require additional supports in order to participate and achieve in school and to develop into caring, competent and contributing citizens (Madden, Slavin, Dolan, Wasik, 1991; Pollard, 1990).

Prekindergarten at a Glance

The goal of the Prekindergarten Program is to create an enhanced learning environment. Prekindergarten programming incorporates what is known from the literature and practice about early childhood education and the needs of vulnerable children. The chart below provides a brief description of the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education's Prekindergarten Program.

Prekindergarten is:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• developmentally appropriate educational program, founded on early childhood research and practice:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• active, experiential learning through play• comprehensive, integrated program within a prepared environment• child-centred, self-directed, choice• focused on development of whole child – social-emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual• meaningful family engagement• active parent/community council, community partnerships and shared ownership• integrated health, social services and educational supports• culturally responsive for all• mixed age groupings• intensive exposure – minimum 12 hours per week• professional teaching staff with a focus in early childhood education

Prekindergarten Programs stress the uniqueness of each individual child's trajectory of development and the importance of self-selected, experimental activities.

(Molnar, 1991)

II. Prekindergarten Conceptual Framework

Vision

Prekindergarten in Saskatchewan incorporates a comprehensive range of effective educational practices to support young children's total development and to lay the foundation for school success and lifelong learning. It provides a holistic, responsive, developmentally and culturally appropriate and caring learning program. The focus is on the healthy development of the whole child—social-emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual. Family members and caregivers are active participants in the children's development and are provided with parenting skill development opportunities and social and health supports. Development and support for Prekindergarten is the shared responsibility of school divisions, community agencies, family members and the province.

Holistic

A holistic approach is foundational to the Prekindergarten program. This means that all aspects of a child's life are considered within the program – the family, the community and his or her social-emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual development.

Goals

The goals of the Prekindergarten Program are:

1. School and Life Success for Children

Children are able to achieve their full potential and to succeed in school and in life through appropriate developmental opportunities and supports provided for them at an early age.

2. High Quality Prekindergarten Programming

Prekindergarten early childhood programming is of the highest quality: holistic, responsive, developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive. It is delivered in a safe and caring environment and provides young children with the physical, social-emotional, intellectual and spiritual supports they require.

3. Increased Parenting Effectiveness and Shared Responsibility

Through their active involvement in the Prekindergarten Program, parents enhance their parenting skills and share responsibility for the well-being and education of their children.

Principles and Strategies

1. Child-Centred / Family Focus

Children ages three and four are the heart of the Prekindergarten Program. Their positive development is the focus of all programs and services. Emphasis is on the development of the whole child, providing balanced opportunities for children to develop socially, emotionally, physically, intellectually and spiritually.

Prekindergarten affirms that children are usually best served in the context of their families.

2. Cooperation and Shared Responsibility

Teachers work in partnership with family members, the parent groups and community agencies to strengthen the learning program and to provide the range of supports children need.

Teachers recognize the central responsibility of parents for the development and well-being of their children and encourage the active involvement of family members in the classroom.

Through shared funding and support for Prekindergarten programming, school divisions, community organizations and the province demonstrate their shared responsibility for early intervention initiatives.

3. Equity and Respect for Diversity

The unique potential, cultural heritage, gender, life experience and capabilities of each child and adult are respected and reflected in the program and environment. Foundational to the program and environment of each Prekindergarten is the belief that each individual child is worthy of respect and encouragement.

4. Preventive, Responsive and Holistic Approaches

Programs and services are designed to anticipate and offer supports to young children to reduce the incidence of significant problems developing that require major intervention. They are also responsive to the unique and varied needs of each child. As well, a comprehensive range of supports and services is provided in a coordinated and integrated manner to holistically meet the needs of children and their families.

5. Continuous Learning

Children's growth and learning are continuous processes. Learning begins at birth and continues through life. It is enhanced by a strong foundation established early in life.

6. Accountability: Continuous Assessment and Renewal

Educators, school councils, parents, boards of education and community members each have a role in ensuring that the Prekindergarten Program meets the needs of children in preparing them to succeed. There is continuous assessment of the effectiveness of the program in meeting its objectives and improvements are made to ensure the very best early childhood educational practices are implemented.



III. Prekindergarten Program Components

The key components and characteristics of a quality Prekindergarten Program are based on elements that have proven to be effective in meeting the needs of young children. The illustration on page 8 depicts these components.

Responsive Learning Program and Caring Environment (p. 9)

Characteristics of the Learning Program

1. Developmentally Appropriate Programming
2. Prepared Environment
3. Development of the Whole Child
4. Active/Experiential Focus to Learning
5. Child-Centred
6. Specialized Education

Characteristics of the Caring Learning Environment

1. Caring, Nurturing and Safe
2. Culturally Responsive
3. Open and Welcoming

Parent and Family Engagement (p. 14)

Characteristics of Effective Parent and Family Engagement

1. Families in the Classroom
2. Home Visiting/Liaison
3. Input and Advice from Families
4. Family Education Programs

Community Partnerships and Integrated Services (p. 17)

Characteristics of Effective Community Partnerships and Service Integration

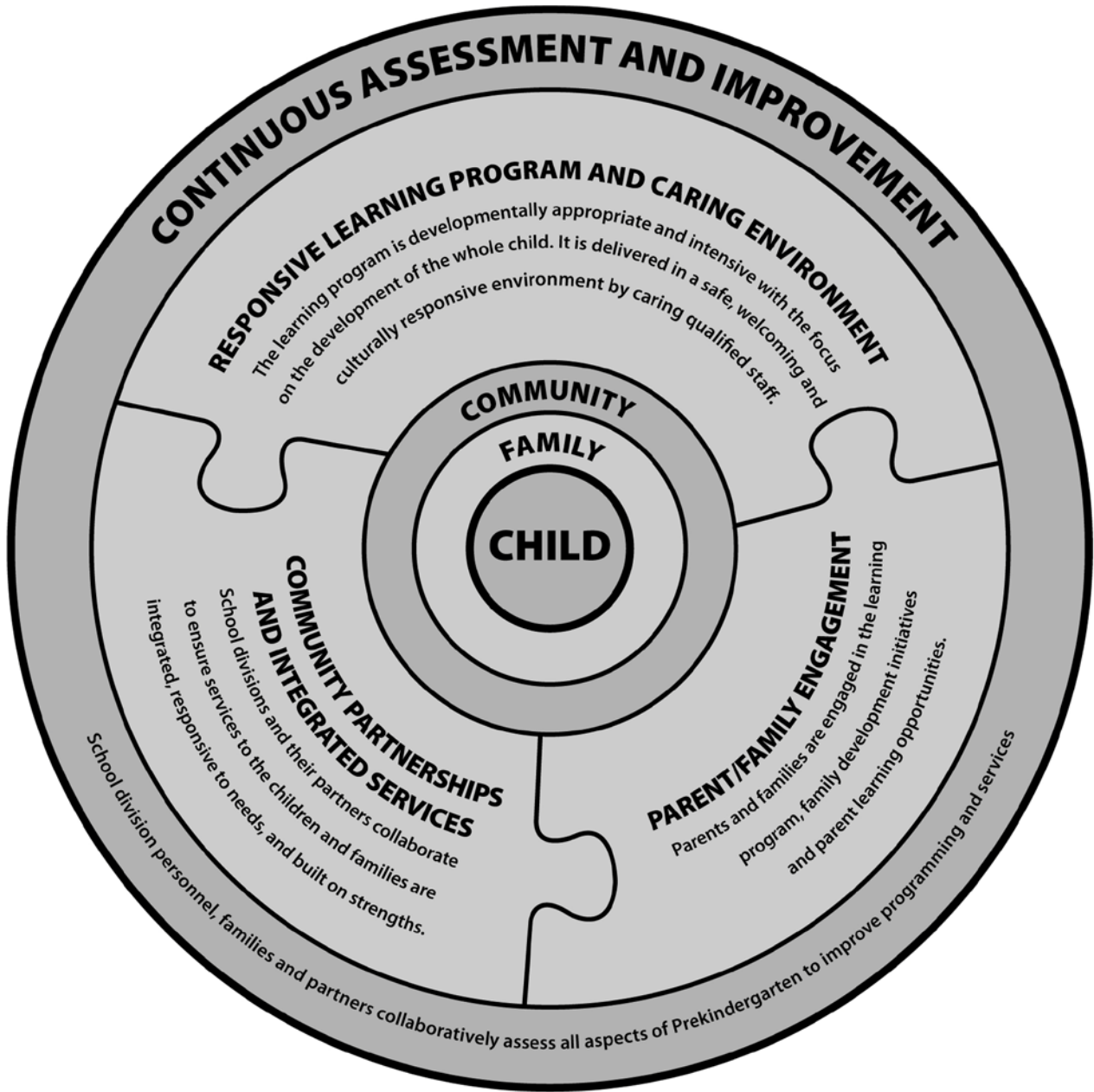
1. Coordination and Integration of Community Service Resources
2. Community Partnerships
3. Effective Case Management

Continuous Assessment, Evaluation and Improvement (p. 19)

1. Assessing the Prekindergarten Environment
2. Assessing Adult Child Interactions and Teacher Practices
3. Assessing Child Development
4. Assessing Family Engagement
5. Assessing Partnerships
6. Assessing Long-Term Effects

Program Components Illustration

The illustration below depicts the major components of the Prekindergarten Program.



Responsive Learning Program and Caring Environment

Prekindergarten is a developmentally appropriate early childhood education program. The program incorporates effective practices to meet the needs of young children. Specifically, Prekindergarten focuses on:

- fostering social development and self-esteem;
- nurturing educational growth and school success; and
- promoting language development.

Characteristics of the Learning Program

The effective practices incorporated into the learning program include:

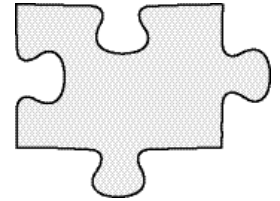
1. developmentally appropriate programming;
2. prepared environment;
3. development of the whole child: an integrated, balanced focus on social-emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual development;
4. active, experiential focus to learning: an environment that promotes play and exploration;
5. child-centred; and
6. specialized education supports.

1. Developmentally Appropriate Programming

Children go through stages of development as they come to understand and to know themselves and the world around them. (See Appendix A for Developmental Benchmarks.) These stages serve as general guidelines and not as fixed boundaries.

All young children learn best through active exploration; thus, play is a key component of a developmentally appropriate program. In creating learning experiences for very young children, it is important to focus on their interests, experiences and background knowledge, as well as on their abilities. The learning program must be flexible and responsive to the varying and unique abilities of each child.

Developmentally appropriate programming takes into account those aspects of teaching and learning that change with the age and experience of the learner (Katz in Willis, 1993). The developmental levels of the children within the Prekindergarten may range from 18 months to seven years in some areas, requiring a broad range of appropriate materials and approaches.



Quality, developmentally appropriate Prekindergarten is intellectually rigorous. This means it focuses on supporting the development of insight, understanding, knowledge, truth and solving intellectual puzzles.

(Katz, Rath & Torres, 1987)

The emphasis is on creating an environment where children are actively involved in learning through play. This reflects the understanding that the more direct involvement young children have with their learning activities, the more effectively they learn.

(Beaty, 1992)

2. Prepared Environment

A prepared learning environment established and maintained by the Prekindergarten teacher, is central to guiding and facilitating children's learning. In the prepared environment, there is purpose behind every prop, manipulative, activity and experiential centre. Children are given many choices, but the teacher has carefully considered and planned the array of options for children. Children's varied developmental levels, abilities, interests and contributions are part of the planning process. The focus is on providing opportunities for play and exploration that facilitate learning.

Teachers are encouraged to engage children in the planning process: what changes the children would like to see in an experiential centre, what materials would they add, what new centres could be created. Including children in the planning process enhances children's critical and creative thinking and language development and promotes collaborative planning and feelings of belonging and contribution. It also helps the teacher better understand children's interests and thought processes.

The preparation of the learning program is based on the establishment of a wide range of experiential centres. See pages 26-30 for more detailed information on experiential centres. Establishment of a full range of experiential centres is particularly critical for children with emotional and behavioural challenges.

3. Development of the Whole Child: An Integrated, Balanced Focus on Social-Emotional, Physical, Intellectual and Spiritual Development

The learning program emphasizes meeting the developmental needs of the whole child. It strives for a balanced and integrated focus, providing opportunities and supports for children to develop in each of the social-emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual domains. Thus, the learning program is comprised of a broad range of program focuses and supports, including such things as:

- language and speech development;
- fine and gross motor skill development;
- social, problem-solving, self-regulation and coping skills;
- development of intellectual capacities and critical and creative thinking skills;
- health and nutrition programming;
- involvement of Elders and other cultural representatives;
- referral to early childhood psychology and mental health services; and
- continual attention to nurturing self-esteem and responsibility.

Neglect in one area jeopardizes achievement in the others. Family and community engagement is encouraged to provide the broad range of supports needed.

4. Active/Experiential Focus to Learning: An Environment that Promotes Play

Children learn by actively interacting with their environment – the teacher, other children and people in the classroom as well as with the materials and experiences provided. A rich, supportive environment provides many opportunities for learning. (See Section IV for details on creating a responsive learning environment.)

Young children learn best through direct, concrete experiences of the world, rather than through the symbolic manipulations more often associated with formal instruction (particularly reading instruction) (Molnar, 1991).

Quality Prekindergarten Programs intellectually challenge young children while they play. The Prekindergarten Program emphasizes experiential, play-based learning and social interactions to enhance growth and development. While children choose where they play within the experiential centres of the classroom, the teacher has given thoughtful attention to selecting developmentally and culturally appropriate materials for each centre. When the children are playing, the teacher moves around to both small groups and individual children to listen, observe, document and scaffold learning. This includes explaining, modelling language and behaviour, encouraging, extending play and creating learning situations.

5. Child-Centred

Children are the heart of the Prekindergarten Program. In developing learning opportunities and activities with children, teachers build on children's experiences, interests, abilities, ideas and developmental levels rather than relying on only ready-made, paper-and-pencil activities.

Choice is key in a child-centred environment. Trusting children as capable to choose where they will play and explore facilitates child-initiated learning. This choice is not haphazard given the prepared and carefully developed nature of the experiential centres and the environment. Allowing children choice validates and strengthens their capacities as:

- observers (looking at a variety of centres within the classroom);
- thinkers (determining options within each centre); and
- decision makers (selecting and focusing on an experiential centre).

The Canadian Association for Young Children believes that:

- *play is natural;*
- *play is essential for children;*
- *play is fun, exciting, adventurous, open-ended;*
- *play is creative and spontaneous;*
- *play is magical and complex;*
- *play is rewarding and stimulating;*
- *play is non-threatening;*
- *play is non-judgmental;*
- *play is directed by the children;*
- *play is full of choices and decision-making opportunities;*
- *play is posing questions and hypothesizing; and*
- *play is focused on the process not the product.*

(2004)

The role of the teacher includes involvement as an observer, co-learner, facilitator, and guide.

The teacher develops opportunities for engagement, supports social relationships and creates a stimulating environment so children can make decisions about learning and interacting in the classroom.

6. Specialized Educational Supports

The learning program is supplemented by an array of specialized educational supports and services to meet the complex and diverse needs of the children. Some supports and services include:

- language and speech assessment and enrichment;
- developmental assessment;
- technological supports; and
- referral for psychological assessment.

The section on Community Partnerships and Integrated Services on page 17 provides information on additional supports to the Prekindergarten, such as social workers, family case workers, nutrition and cultural programs.

Characteristics of the Caring Learning Environment

The effective practices incorporated into the caring learning environment include ensuring that it is:

1. caring, nurturing and safe – focus on the development of a positive self-concept within each child;
2. culturally responsive; and
3. open and welcoming.

1. Caring, Nurturing and Safe – Focus on the Development of a Positive Self-Concept within Each Child

Children develop and learn most effectively in an environment where they feel respected, cared for and safe to explore and take risks. Prekindergarten teachers create an environment that is nurturing and respectful and develop trusting relationships with the children and their families.

A key focus is the development of a positive self-concept within each child as the foundation for his or her overall well-being. The development of positive self-concept requires an environment that provides for personal acceptance and achievement. Such an environment enables children to be actively involved in learning and to expand the boundaries of their private worlds (Saskatchewan Education, 1994).

Safety is a key consideration in creating an effective learning environment for vulnerable children. It encompasses both

Children learn through play. Through their play, children develop sensory motor control, eye-hand coordination and problem solving skills. Physical, social, intellectual and emotional development are all enhanced through play.

(Canadian Association for Young Children, 2006)

physical and emotional safety. Children must be safe from physical and emotional harm or threats. Just as the physical setting is carefully planned and maintained to ensure the absence of any physical dangers, the interactions between adults and children and among the children are guided by principles of respect, consideration and non-violence. The teacher has the responsibility to ensure that all of the children are safe.

All staff interacting with the children adhere to the guidelines of the *Provincial Child Abuse Protocol* (see Appendix B) that requires school personnel to report concerns or suspicions about the well-being or treatment of a child to a child protection worker (Saskatchewan Social Service) or police officer.

Other safety considerations include procedures regarding the handling of food, distribution of medications, the awareness of significant allergies and the transportation of children. In addition, careful attention is paid to ensuring that children are picked up or dropped off by their designated caregiver.

2. Culturally Responsive

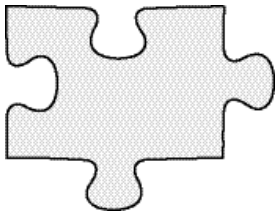
Children's diverse ethnic backgrounds and ways of knowing are mirrored and affirmed throughout the classroom and learning program. Care is given to ensure that pictures in books, displays and experiential centres, as well as props and other toys and materials reflect the diverse background of the students and the community.

Respect for the diversity of the children is a foundational principle in the Prekindergarten and is reflected in all of the activities of the program. The cultures, experiences and values of the students' families are affirmed and celebrated through storytelling, music, dance, sharing food and involving family members in the program to share information about their culture or experiences. In addition, visitors to the classroom such as Elders, storytellers, language instructors and community members affirm the children's varied backgrounds.

3. Open and Welcoming

Families are welcome and encouraged to visit the classroom whenever they can, both as observers and active participants. An open door policy and a welcoming atmosphere promote the active engagement of families, encourage communication between family members and Prekindergarten staff and create an opportunity for young children to experience learning from their parents as well as from the teachers. More information on parent and family engagement is provided in the following section and on pages 47-49.

The environment is also welcoming to the children. Teachers greet the children warmly and are accepting of whatever concerns or issues the children bring to the Prekindergarten at any time, such as their physical hygiene, dress and time of arrival or emotional state. They work with parents in resolving concerns.



Parent and Family Engagement

Parent and family engagement is central to the operation of an effective Prekindergarten and to the children's learning. Prekindergarten staff actively encourage the participation, advocacy and leadership of parent and family members in the education and development of their children. The objectives are to:

- foster shared responsibility for the development and well-being of the children;
- provide opportunities for parents to participate directly in their children's learning and to be perceived by their children as role models, "teachers" and as key people in the learning program;
- provide learning opportunities for parents to develop and enhance parenting and other life skills; and
- encourage shared ownership for the Prekindergarten among families.

This focus on family and parent engagement reflects the importance of the family in the development of children. Researchers have demonstrated the significant benefits of parent engagement in children's learning, ranging from improved intellectual functioning to greater school success. Teachers also benefit from direct contact with families, gaining greater knowledge and understanding of the children, their families and the communities in which they teach. For many vulnerable children, parent and family engagement is the single most important factor in their school success.

Characteristics of Effective Parent and Family Engagement

The effective practices for successful parent engagement include:

1. families in the classroom;
2. home visiting/liaison;
3. input and advice from families; and
4. family education programs.

1. Families in the Classroom

The direct engagement of parents and other family members in classroom activities provides benefits for both the children and the families. When parents are interested and involved in their children's education, the parents' self-esteem is enhanced as is their interest and willingness to participate in Prekindergarten activities.

Families have the opportunity to learn about the program, become comfortable in the school atmosphere and to observe their children's socialization and participation. The children are able to see their family members as active participants and role models in their education. As well, when family members have a clear understanding of what takes place in the Prekindergarten, they are better equipped to discuss the program with the teacher, educational assistant and other school personnel and to talk to their children about the learning experience.

Parents can play a variety of roles in the program, including providing feedback, organizing or assisting with outings, assisting with food preparation, reading stories, helping with classroom activities, playing games, preparing educational materials and talking with or listening to the children.

Family members' experience of direct participation in the Prekindergarten Program contributes to strengthening their self-confidence and skills and establishes a solid foundation for engagement as the children continue their education.

Some families may find it difficult to become involved in the Prekindergarten classroom activities. Factors that contribute to this difficulty include shift work and other work responsibilities, enrolment in an educational program, family responsibilities, transportation difficulties, health problems and social, cultural, language or economic differences. When families find in-school involvement difficult, the teacher and family can discuss other possibilities to be engaged in the child's learning.

2. Home Visiting/Liaison

Home visits are an important element of the Prekindergarten program. Visiting with parents and family members in their homes is a highly effective way to establish and maintain communication and to foster trust between home and school. The more relaxed atmosphere of their home might be more conducive to conversation and trust. Often parents will share personal information about both the child and the family that they would not necessarily share in the formal school environment. This information can aid the teacher in providing a caring atmosphere and the most effective learning opportunities and supports. For those family members who may have unpleasant memories of their own school experience, meeting in their home may be a positive option.

Sensitivity is needed in approaching parents for a home visit. Some families may be shy or embarrassed at the prospect of a teacher coming to their home. In these cases, meetings can be arranged at a neutral location, such as the library or local coffee shop.

3. Input and Advice from Families

On the continuum of family engagement, one of the higher levels of engagement is providing input and advice into program direction (*Saskatchewan Learning, 2004, p. 51*). Obtaining the input of families on the strengths and weaknesses of the program is important for both Prekindergarten Program improvement and family awareness of their critical role in education.

Processes to obtain input and advice and to assist families to develop advisory/feedback skills include:

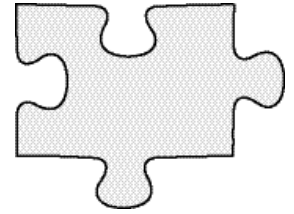
- informal chats at drop-off or pick-up time or family events;
- home visits;
- surveys and questionnaires;
- discussion groups;
- interviews and focus groups;
- Prekindergarten family advisory committee (may be linked to the School Community Council); and
- participation on School Community Council.

4. Family Education Programs

The family education component of the Prekindergarten Program provides learning opportunities for parents and family members. The objective of this component is to strengthen the ability of parents and family members to provide their children with the necessary and appropriate social-emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual developmental supports so that their children can grow into healthy and contributing adults. Learning opportunities and support materials requested by families are provided in areas such as family literacy, parenting education, and self-esteem and life skills development.



Community Partnerships and Integrated Services



Cooperative and collaborative arrangements with community agencies and human service providers extend the capacity of the Prekindergarten to meet the needs of the child in a holistic and coordinated manner. Forming partnerships with local groups such as churches, businesses and community service organizations, as well as collaborative relations with initiatives such as *KidsFirst* and human service agencies such as the Ministry of Social Services and the Regional Health Authority, are critical to the success of Prekindergarten.

Characteristics of Effective Community Partnerships and Service Integration

The effective practices for successful community partnerships and service integration include:

1. coordination and integration of community services and resources;
2. community partnerships; and
3. effective case management.

1. Coordination and Integration of Community Services and Resources

Supports to meet many of the needs of Prekindergarten children exist beyond the boundaries of the school. Services from health, mental health, social services, justice and recreation professionals as well as supports from community organizations such as churches, service clubs and businesses contribute to meeting the needs of the whole child. In order to accommodate the full range of diverse supports for Prekindergarten children and to ensure that they are coordinated and appropriate, partnerships and collaborative working relationships are formed with key service providers in the community.

Examples of integrated community services for Prekindergarten children include:

- a food and nutrition program;
- access to health programs such as immunizations, hearing and vision screening for children and child health education programs for the parents;
- mental health supports for children and families;
- dental hygienist services for dental screening; and
- social and cultural programs such as an Elders program or involvement with the Open Door Society.

2. Community Partnerships

Community partnerships are collaborative arrangements between Prekindergarten classes or schools and community organizations such as churches, service clubs and businesses.

Partnerships with community organizations can provide:

- fund raising and other financial supports to the Prekindergarten ;
- volunteers to assist with parenting and adult education programming;
- clothing exchanges and winter clothing provision for children and families if needed;
- additional supports to the food and nutrition program;
- transportation services when necessary; and
- curriculum enhancements.

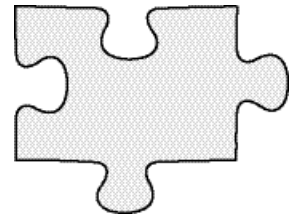
3. Effective Case Management

Case management involves creating a team to address the particular needs of the child in a holistic, child-centred manner. This team will involve the family of the child, representatives from all of the service agencies or organizations providing services to the child or family, the teacher and the principal.

In Community Schools, this may also include the coordinator.



Continuous Assessment, Evaluation and Improvement



To ensure the Prekindergarten Program is effective, it is critical that school divisions implement continuous assessment and evaluation processes. In the Prekindergarten there are six main areas of focus for assessment and evaluation:

1. The Prekindergarten Environment
2. Adult Child Interactions
3. Child Development
4. Family Engagement
5. Partnerships
6. Long-Term Effects.

For a more detailed discussion of Prekindergarten assessment and evaluation considerations, processes and tools, refer to *Assessment and Evaluation in Prekindergarten: A Planning Guide for School Divisions and their Partners* (2005).

1. Assessing the Prekindergarten Environment

There are advantages to looking with a critical but constructive eye at the classroom environment. The prepared environment is essential to a quality program. The Prekindergarten Program is structured around the physical arrangement of furniture and organization of experiential centres, materials and activities. Children will interact in the learning environment based on choices they make and opportunities the teacher provides. An example of a question a teacher could ask is: “Is there a physical arrangement of furniture, materials and experiential centres that facilitates children engaging with each other and the materials?” The children’s response to the prepared learning environment can give the teacher important information about adaptations and/or modifications that are necessary to respond to the ongoing development and ever-changing interests of young children.

The teacher and the students are partners in an evolving learning process. The teacher structures a learning environment to facilitate child development, curiosity and wonder. Through systematic and continuous assessment, the teacher is aware of the abilities of the children. The teacher makes adaptations to the learning environment to continue to scaffold child development. Through ongoing and thoughtful assessment and evaluation of the Prekindergarten Program, the process of refinement enables there to be congruence between children’s abilities and interests and the opportunities provided for them.

Section 4.1 in *Assessment and Evaluation in Prekindergarten: A Planning Guide for School Divisions and their Partners* (2005)

provides suggestions on tools to assess the early childhood environment.

Play and Exploration: Early Learning Program Guide (2008) and the supplementary *Into Practice* resource booklet on the environment provide more details on assessing the environment.

2. Assessing Adult Child Interactions

The quality of the interaction between the adults (teacher, educational assistants, volunteers, support personnel) and the child has a profound impact on the child's feelings of belonging and his/her development.

Considerations for assessing adult child interactions include:

- focus on interactions that create a caring and safe atmosphere as well as interactions that enrich children's holistic development and foster independence;
- third party observation and feedback using a reliable assessment tool; and
- reflection, discussion and planning on areas to strengthen.

Section 4.2 in *Assessment and Evaluation in Prekindergarten: A Planning Guide for School Divisions and their Partners* (2005) provides suggestions on tools and processes to assess the adult child interactions.

3. Assessing Child Development

Assessment of child development refers to the collection of information about children's holistic development. Assessing child development plays a critical role in the ongoing improvement of the Prekindergarten Program. Assessment information will contribute to a teacher's understanding of children's interests, abilities and ways of thinking and doing. Teachers can adapt the learning environment and practices based on this information.

The purpose of assessment and evaluation of child development is to determine what children do, how they do it, why they do it and how to scaffold their learning. The teacher collects the assessment information through observation of children actively engaged in developmentally appropriate activities in experiential centres and projects and interactions with peers and adults. Specific methods of data collection are discussed in Section IV beginning on page 52 and in *Play and Exploration: Early Learning Program Guide* (2008).

The widest range of child development in a school program occurs during the Prekindergarten years. Sometimes changes occur rapidly and may be observable while other times it may seem that

Child assessment is the process of observing, recording, and otherwise documenting work that children do and how they do it, as a basis for a variety of educational decisions that affect the child.

(NAEYC & NAECS/SDE, 1991 in Jasmine, 1995)

development is not occurring. Remembering that children need time to grow and develop provides teachers with the advantage of continuous recording of observations done over a period of months. In doing so, even subtle changes will be noted.

If there are concerns about the development of a specific child, an examination of the physical interaction and learning environments as well as teacher expectations need to be explored. The program should be tailored to meet the uniqueness of the child. If after careful observation questions still remain, a specialist such as a child psychologist may be of assistance in providing information to guide the program development for that child.

4. Assessing Family Engagement

A key component of Prekindergarten is parent/family engagement. The purpose of the assessment is to determine which program/school practices are working well in engaging families, which need improvement and what new practices and initiatives are needed.

The first source of information will be the families themselves. Information can be gathered through a combination of informal (conversations, observation) and formal (interviews, focus groups, questionnaires) methods. Questions or discussion topics may include:

- what activities/events the parents found most useful or interesting;
- parents' preferred ways of involvement, times and days;
- suggestions for changes to the family component; and
- suggestions for future family activities/programs.

After receiving input from the families, Prekindergarten personnel may wish to host a gathering to review the input and reflect on the next steps, and/or assemble a team (including families) to evaluate family engagement objectives and practices, including:

- early learning at home;
- classroom participation;
- home visits/liaison;
- parent/school committee or council; and
- parent/family education and support programs.

5. Assessing Partnerships

Prekindergarten children and their families benefit from a range of services and supports, often provided by community agencies and organizations. School divisions are encouraged to engage in formal and informal assessment and planning practices with community partners to evaluate the support services provided to

Prekindergarten children and their families. It is important to include the parents, Prekindergarten teacher, educational assistants, school principal, speech language pathologists, social workers, parent educators, public health nurses, nutritionists, dental health nurses and other essential partners in the discussions.

Assessment and evaluation considerations include:

- needs of children and families;
- desired outcomes for children and families;
- existing services, skills and resources; and
- ability of partners to enhance existing services or establish new initiatives.

More detailed information is available in *Assessment and Evaluation in Prekindergarten: A Planning Guide for School Divisions and their Partners* (2005).

Prekindergarten personnel are encouraged to become involved in bringing together local early childhood organizations to assess and coordinate initiatives for young children. Organizations may include child-care centres, preschools, Early Childhood Intervention Programs (ECIPs), *KidsFirst* initiatives, Aboriginal Head Start Programs, First Nations and Tribal Councils.

6. Long-Term Effects

Assessment and evaluation of the long-term effects of the Prekindergarten Program is usually undertaken to:

- track progress of individual or groups of children to determine future supports;
- to inform Prekindergarten programming; and
- to inform resource allocation at local and provincial levels.

More detailed information is available on pages 57-63 in *Assessment and Evaluation in Prekindergarten: A Planning Guide for School Divisions and their Partners* (2005).



IV. Practical Guidelines for Developing a Prekindergarten

This section provides practical "how to" suggestions for creating a Prekindergarten, integrating a full range of effective practices in the following areas:

Responsive Learning Program and Caring Environment (p. 23)

1. Creating a Caring, Safe and Culturally Responsive Environment (p. 23)
2. Creating Experiential Centres (p. 26)
3. Facilitating Learning through Play (p. 32)
4. Selecting the Best Materials (p. 41)
5. Ensuring Effective Operations (p. 42)

Parent and Family Engagement (p. 47)

1. Suggestions for Engaging Parents and Family Members in the Prekindergarten (p. 47)
2. Suggestions for Effective Communication (p. 48)
3. Suggestions for Building Home Liaison/Visits (p. 48)
4. Suggestions for Providing Family Education Opportunities (p. 49)
5. Establishing an Advisory Body (p. 49)

Community Partnerships and Integrated Services (p. 50)

Continuous Assessment and Improvement (p. 51)

Responsive Learning Program and Caring Environment

1. Creating a Caring, Safe and Culturally Responsive Environment

The following are suggestions to create a Prekindergarten environment that is warm, caring, safe and culturally responsive.

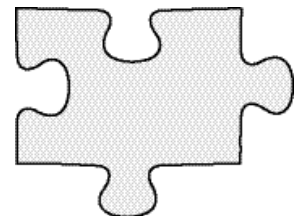
Warm and Caring: Child Guidance

In the Prekindergarten, teachers and educational assistants provide guidance and support to each child. They create a warm, caring and respectful environment where children know they are safe from humiliation or hurt and are encouraged to explore, take risks and enjoy learning through play.

Dealing with Negative Behaviour and Discipline

Some children may display negative behaviours due to any combination of the following:

- they don't know what positive behaviours are because they have not seen them modelled;



- they know the positive behaviours cognitively, but may have not had the chance to practise them in a safe and accepting environment; and
- they have emotional responses (such as anger, fear and anxiety) that prevent positive behaviours.

A CHILD

*I am a little child
I hammer loudly
I build recklessly
I read imaginatively
I work originally
I sing rapturously
May no one ever quell
my creativity
Just refine it.*

(author unknown)

In dealing with negative behaviour, teachers provide guidance, model positive behaviours and reinforce and celebrate the positive. Most importantly, they provide children with the opportunity to practise replacing negative behaviour with acceptable actions in an environment of acceptance, support and patience.

Children are guided and supported to develop self-regulation capabilities and an ability to make good decisions by being taught appropriate alternatives to negative behaviours. All of their endeavours are recognized and their efforts are validated. Teachers work to ensure that the children feel good about themselves and that they enjoy school.

Appropriate Adult Interactions with Children
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • using a quiet, gentle voice • using a respectful tone of voice and caring, attentive facial expressions and body language • calling children by their first names • offering genuine praise for children’s endeavours, efforts and successes • commenting realistically, but positively about less than successful efforts • talking patiently and privately (when possible) with a child about inappropriate behaviour

A safe and stimulating environment in which to play and explore helps young children develop the learning and coping skills they will need as they grow into adulthood.

(Health Canada, 1997)

Creating a Safe and Accessible Learning Program

School divisions are encouraged to consider the following points to ensure that the Prekindergarten space is safe and accessible.

Physical Environment

- Ensure that the classroom, hallways, stairs, playgrounds and other areas of the school are safe and accessible for children. Ensure cleaning and maintenance supplies are not accessible by children.
- Store fire extinguishers and first aid supplies in an appropriate and convenient location.

- Orient children to safety procedures and fire drills.
- Ensure that doors are easily opened by small children.
- Check equipment frequently for cleanliness and loose parts.

Personal Safety

- Ensure that all Prekindergarten staff are aware of and adhere to the guidelines of the *Provincial Child Abuse Protocol* (see Appendix B) that requires all school personnel to report concerns about a child to a child protection worker or police officer.
- Establish procedures requiring visitors to report to the school office before proceeding to the Prekindergarten classroom.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to ensure that children are picked up by designated caregivers.
- Establish procedures to follow if children are not picked up after school.
- Request that parents provide the name of an emergency contact person in the event that the parent cannot be reached.
- Ensure that children who are transported by bus or taxi are familiar with the routine.
- Include a space on the registration form for parents to list allergies and/or medication. Share this information with other staff and file in the school office. Post the allergy list within the Prekindergarten room and where food is prepared and served. Special certification may be required for children to receive medication at school.
- Request written permission any time children leave the school grounds for educational tours. Have parent chaperones show proof of a valid driver's licence and valid vehicle registration. Follow the applicable laws concerning seat belt and booster seats in cars or vans.

Food Safety

- Follow public health guidelines in the preparation, serving and storage of food.

Ensuring a Culturally Responsive and Gender Equitable Learning Program and Environment

Throughout the classroom and the program, ensure that the cultures of the children and their community are reflected and that there is attention to gender differences. Consider carefully the activities chosen, classroom displays and materials within experiential centres. Suggestions for promoting multicultural and gender awareness and understanding include:

- choosing appropriate games, stories, legends, poems, finger plays, music, dance, songs and celebrations from a variety of cultures;

The unique potential, cultural heritage, gender, life experiences and capabilities of each child and adult are respected and reflected in the program and environment. Foundational to the program and environment of each Prekindergarten is the belief that each individual child is worthy of respect and encouragement.

- creating documentation and displays that include photos of the children in the classroom, positive pictures of children and adults from many cultures and of both genders engaged in a variety of activities and objects characteristic of familiar and unfamiliar cultures and customs;
- exhibiting multicultural materials, objects, fabrics, pictures, books, postcards and clothing;
- including in experiential centres materials and activities that promote understanding of diverse cultures (such as bamboo scoops, saris, peacock feathers, cooking utensils, food samples, baskets, puppets, masks and tools) and opportunities for both genders; and
- asking family members to share cultural information, materials, food, stories, music and activities with the children in the class.

When selecting materials that are appropriate for the classroom, refer to the guidelines in *Selecting Fair and Equitable Learning Materials*, Saskatchewan Education (1991) and *Diverse Voices: Selecting Equitable Resources for Indian and Métis Education*, Saskatchewan Education Training and Employment (1995). These guidelines will help to assess and evaluate classroom materials and resources. (Refer to page 41 for more information on materials selection.)

2. Creating Experiential Centres

Young children need opportunities to play and experiment with materials and activities. Experiential centres provide a way of organizing the Prekindergarten classroom so teachers can promote independent learning and decision making. When children play at centres they are exploring, learning and experimenting.

The following are suggestions that teachers may wish to consider when creating appropriate experiential centres.

- Organize the Prekindergarten classroom into as many experiential centres as possible to stimulate active learning and allow children to make choices as to where their learning-play will occur.
- Establish experiential centres (e.g., construction centre, dramatic play and housekeeping centre, discovery centre, writing/message centre) that promote holistic development: social-emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual development.
- Ensure that experiential centres are child-friendly, providing easy access to all materials and equipment. Items should be attractively displayed, without clutter and easy to tidy when a child is finished.

An Invitation

An invitation is a collection of interesting and carefully combined materials that may be used in a number of ways.

(Curtis, 2004)

- Introduce new ideas and materials (or existing materials used in new ways) as “invitations” at experiential centres to scaffold learning and complement children’s interests.
- Clearly define each experiential centre by the organization of the furniture and materials so that children can distinguish among them. A table and chairs are needed for some experiential centres. A round table (for the creativity centre) promotes socialization and modelling among children and by adults.
- Indicate the number of children participating at a particular centre by placing an appropriate number of chairs or shirts at the centre.
- Encourage the children to select the experiential centre(s) of their choice. Provide daily opportunities for them to participate in play that promotes social-emotional, emerging literacy, mathematics, science, arts education and fine and gross motor development.

For more information about experiential centres, see pages 60 and 61 in *Play and Exploration: Early Learning Program Guide* (2008).

Experiential Centre Suggestions

- 1. Quiet:**
listening, contemplating, reading: puzzles, books, CD player, pillows, soft chairs, hide-aways
- 2. Discovery and Inquiry:**
exploring, experimenting, sensory awareness (touch, taste, smell, sounds): sand (wet and dry), water, natural materials, living things
- 3. Creativity:**
expressing, experimenting, interacting: collage table, art easel, light table, musical instruments, dramatic and dance props, puppets
- 4. Relationships:**
interacting, role playing, communicating, building friendships: housekeeping area, dramatic play props, blocks/construction materials, writing materials
- 5. Construction:**
building, creating, experimenting: large blocks, tiles, carpentry tools, props, materials
- 6. Gross Motor Skills:**
running, jumping, climbing, pulling, lifting, balancing: large equipment, vehicles, props, bean bags, lofts, stairs/ramp

Considerations for Preparing Experiential Centres

Experiential Centres	Example of Equipment and Props	Enhancements and Ideas	Sample Concepts and Objectives
1. Water Table	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> plastic-lined, solidly constructed table, approximately child's waist height that allows about 35-45 cm depth of water and has a flat bottom and lid squeezable plastic containers and lids, sieves, funnels, water wheels, clear plastic hoses, sponges corks and other materials that sink and float plastic shirts/aprons (painting shirts can double) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> enhancements: food colouring, anti-bacterial soap, snow, whipped laundry detergent change the water daily keep a short-handled mop or rags close by so children can clean own spills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> experiment, compare, demonstrate, predict, plan, interpret, extend, explore, discover, conclude, feel, determine emergent writing, math, science, language
2. Sand Table	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> plastic-lined, solidly constructed table, approximately child's waist height that allows about 35-45 cm. depth of sand and has a flat bottom and lid sanitized sand is preferred variety of containers and lids, sieves, funnels, sand wheels, plastic hoses, pails, shovels, spoons, various sized cylinders, trowels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> enhancements: grain, water and sand, dirt, snow or aquarium gravel keep short handled broom and dust pan close by so children can clean own spills keep sand damp to prevent dust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> repeat, describe, explain, estimate, predict, measure, assess, judge, fill, organize, resolve, pour emergent writing, math, fine and gross motor development
3. Creativity Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> round table and chairs and/or easel(s), drying rack different colours and forms of paint: powder, premixed, tempera blocks, finger paint, water colour, acrylic, pastels brushes: varying sizes and textures: round, flat, thick, thin paper: varying sizes, textures, weights paint shirts/aprons, artists' palettes storage for supplies and shirts (accessible to children) water source 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> enhancements: soap, glue, sand, sparkles, still life (flowers, fruit, vegetables) place centre near natural light add double easel to enhance collaboration, conversation and interaction colour wheel books and photos of artists' work as inspiration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> repeat, express, select, recall, imagine, interpret, create, experiment, transfer, produce, plan, design, organize, choose
4. Play Dough Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> containers for storing play dough flour, salt for making dough variety of cutlery, cookie cutters, rolling pins, wooden dough tools, modelling and sculpture tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> add natural scents to dough (e.g., lavender, rosemary) use real clay sculpture books and photos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> manipulate, demonstrate, select, create, compare, explore, feel, determine

Experiential Centres	Example of Equipment and Props	Enhancements and Ideas	Sample Concepts and Objectives
5. Dramatic/ Dress-Up Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • container for storage of dress-up clothes children can access • plastic hats (easy to keep clean) • mirrors (full-size allows child to view full self) • variety of clothes, hats, purses, scarves, belts, shoes and props • fiction and non-fiction books 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • add clothing and props to represent people in neighbourhood, different cultures, various occupations • enhancement: safety – e.g., add fire fighter and police shirts and make badges to complement safety topics • hem clothing and add Velcro closure instead of back buttons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • relate, identify, select, express, present, infer, speculate, imagine, identify, create, consider, plan, respond
6. Domestic/ House-keeping Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • table and chairs • baby beds, cribs, high chair, stroller • refrigerator, stove, sink, cupboard, iron, ironing board • dolls • dishes, pots, cutlery • telephone(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhancement: store – e.g., add fruit, authentic empty cans and boxes, cash register, calculator, paper and pencils for lists/inventory, bags for groceries, play money, sale flyers, stickers for pricing • adapt equipment for safety – e.g., cut off electrical cords 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discuss, restate, predict, speculate, match, label, speak, listen, estimate, assess, project, imagine, resolve, establish, pursue
7. Library/ Private Quiet Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an area of the room away from traffic flow • ever changing selection of children's literature • stuffed animals, pillows, pictures, carpet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhancements: upholstered furniture, plants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • model, listen, speak, predict, repeat, interpret, discover, verify, analyze, count, tell, imagine, infer, explain, read
8. Listening Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CD player and CDs with stories and songs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhancements: add a listening post for headphones and multiple copies of storybooks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • repeat, name, listen, speak, predict, operate, discover, review, read
9. Science/ Discovery Table	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plants, seeds, rocks, cones, shells, nests, terrarium • magnifying glass, magnet, batteries, wire • multi-sensory materials • pets, aquarium • fiction and non-fiction books 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhancement: materials found by children • prisms, kaleidoscopes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • find, label, select, predict, speculate, estimate, compare, manipulate, experiment, imagine, decide, feel, verify

Experiential Centres	Example of Equipment and Props	Enhancements and Ideas	Sample Concepts and Objectives
10. Writing/ Message Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • table and chairs • bins, baskets and containers to store materials • writing and illustrating materials: chalk, markers, crayons, pencils, scissors, glue • paper: lined and unlined, variety of colours, textures and sizes • recycled material: catalogues, magazines, cards, ribbon, foil packing chips, buttons, foam containers • containers and packaging with print that children can copy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • print from additional languages of families • written documentation of children's voices and experiences • create message centre or post office with mail boxes for all children and staff, envelopes, recycled stamps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • record, explain, identify, express, label, create, plan, imagine, measure, solve, experiment, adapt, judge, design, invent, form, integrate, write, respond, compare, read • emergent literacy, reading, writing and math
11. Construction Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • storage shelves and bins, table and chairs • puzzles of various sizes and themes with different numbers of pieces and materials • lace-up cards, different colour and texture • stringing beads, string, shoelaces, wool, plastic for lacing • zipper, snap and tie materials • blocks of varied shapes, sizes and textures (Duplo, Lego, wooden) • pegboards, pegs, elastics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhancement: add buttons and beads to make necklaces and bracelets • collection of natural materials • platforms or trays so creations may be saved and revisited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • repeat, locate, select, demonstrate, tinker, manipulate, plan, classify, estimate, measure, experiment, judge, plan, build, consider
12. Workbench	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hammer, nails, vise, screws, screwdriver(s), saw, hand drill • boards and scraps of wood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhancement: large tree stump • cardboard • styrofoam packing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • operate, know, demonstrate, measure, experiment, explore, manipulate, create, choose, design
13. Large Motor Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • space for use of riding toys, running, climbing, jumping, tumbling • storage and carpet • large blocks and interlocking toys of different textures and sizes, interlocking road track • games 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhancements: props such as toy vehicles, animals and people • large items for pushing/pulling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify, select, sequence, plan, compare, operate, decide, invent, build, devise, consider, respond, discover, match

Experiential Centres	Example of Equipment and Props	Enhancements and Ideas	Sample Concepts and Objectives
14. Computer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • table, chairs, computer, programs (age appropriate) • program for reviewing photos of children (e.g., slide show) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhancements: mouse and printer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • operate, manipulate, demonstrate, solve, discover, choose, respond
15. Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • variety of commercially produced and handmade rhythm instruments • CDs featuring various genres of music and from various areas of the world • CD player 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhancement: instruments used in different cultures (e.g., rain sticks, maracas) • children's songs illustrated into books (e.g., Six Little Ducks, Ten in a Bed) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify, experiment, create, devise, imagine, manipulate, pattern



3. Facilitating Learning through Play

Suggestions for organizing the learning experience are categorized under the following headings:

- Ensuring Developmental Appropriateness
- Assessing a Child's Developmental Level
- Facilitating the Development of the Whole Child —Integrated, Holistic Programming
- Encouraging Learning Through Play
- Developing a Child-Centred Learning Program
- Daily Schedule
- Assessing the Learning Program

Ensuring Developmental Appropriateness

Plan the environment to meet the children's developmental levels, varied interests and diverse abilities. To gain an accurate awareness and understanding of the children's abilities, teachers and educational assistants can observe, talk with and play with the children. In this way, teachers and educational assistants observe and document children's capabilities and behaviours. The information gained can then be used to develop, adapt and extend play situations and to introduce or change topics, projects and experiential centre materials. Creativity, close observation, thought and listening to children's contributions are the key tools in tapping into children's interest.

Accommodate the various levels of development of the children by ensuring that each experiential centre has a broad range of open-ended materials. The developmental range the materials should address is from 18 months to six years or more to ensure appropriateness for all students. (See Appendix A for Developmental Benchmarks.)

Be flexible and ready to make changes. Prekindergarten teachers are challenged to continually adapt the learning program and environment to ensure that the children's exploration of materials, play and learning is challenging and satisfying.

Children have a natural mechanism that enables them to make sense of their world – that mechanism is play. For over 100 years, researchers have studied play and have found that play:

- *Child-initiated play lays a foundation for learning and academic success. In play, children learn to interact with others, develop language skills, recognize and solve problems and discover their human potential. Play helps children make sense of and find their place in the world.* (Alliance for Childhood, 2004)
 - *Play is regarded as interpretations of the situations of everyday life. In play, children interpret their experiences and give them life.* (Sandberg and Pramling-Samuelson 2003)
 - *Play is an integral part of a child's being. It is the business of childhood, and it has a unique and vital role in the whole educational process.* (Weininger, 1994)
- (The Canadian Association for Young Children, 2006)

Holistic Education and the Early Learning Program		
	Child Development	Learning Program
Social-emotional	<p><i>Self-Image</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-concept • Self-confidence <p><i>Self-Control</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-regulation <p><i>Interaction With Others</i></p>	<p>Large mirrors for children to build an awareness of what they look like</p> <p>Positive reinforcement, opportunities to achieve and to become self disciplined</p> <p>Opportunities for children to make choices</p> <p>Activities that engage individual, small and large learning groups</p>
Physical	<p><i>Gross Motor</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large muscle growth, balancing and climbing <p><i>Fine Motor</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hands, feet • Eye-hand coordination <p><i>Sensory</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body movement self control 	<p>Large equipment, space, objects for pushing and pulling, loft with stairs and/or ramp</p> <p>Construction and collage work</p> <p>Small objects for beading, lacing, building</p>
Intellectual	<p><i>Imagination</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinguish between fantasy and reality <p><i>Creativity & Invention</i></p> <p><i>Conceptual Understanding of Quantity and Space</i></p> <p><i>Literacy and Language Development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • viewing, representing, listening, speaking, emergent reading, emergent writing 	<p>Dress-up props for children to role play</p> <p>Children’s literature that features real and authentic photos and illustrations</p> <p>Opportunities for children to interact with paint, wire, clay</p> <p>Construction centre that features a variety of blocks, tubing, levels, shapes and sizes</p> <p>Small group activities that build on oral language and conversation and encourage children to view environmental print and represent their ideas through drawing, drama, painting, or creating 3-dimensional structures</p>
Spiritual	<p><i>Wonder and Curiosity</i></p> <p><i>Observe Beauty</i></p> <p><i>Understanding and Appreciation of the Physical and Natural Environment</i></p>	<p>Objects in the environment that foster wonder and curiosity (e.g., prisms, wind chimes)</p> <p>A discovery area that includes outdoor objects and photographs</p>

Education at this age is not about imparting facts and imposing strict schedules. It's about listening, guiding, helping individual children to make sense of the real world. The curriculum is learning to say goodbye to Mom, forming relationships with others, feeling competent, exploring their world.

(Hancock & Wingert, 1997)

Assessing a Child's Developmental Level

When children first begin to participate in Prekindergarten they need time – a transitional period – to adjust to the new setting, establish relationships with the teacher(s) and develop a level of comfort and trust. Only after this period of time, which will vary among children, will it be effective to assess the child's developmental level.

Assessments can be either formal or informal. Informal screens, based on observation and anecdotal notes recorded over a period of time, can provide valuable information about young children. Not every child requires a formal assessment, but all children will benefit from informal and continual observation of their abilities, interests, needs and transitions. This information allows the teacher to provide developmentally appropriate learning opportunities.

Formal assessments are needed when the teacher or the parents have concerns about a child's behaviour or developmental abilities. Formal assessment should be administered and interpreted by trained professionals. These professionals will then assist the teacher and family in providing appropriate supports.

Facilitating the Development of the Whole Child — Integrated, Holistic Programming

The elements of the Prekindergarten Program work together in a holistic manner to promote the social-emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual development of each child. The chart provided on the following page outlines a number of suggestions to aid in the development of the whole child.



Facilitating the Development of the Whole Child

Social-Emotional	Physical	Intellectual	Spiritual/Cultural
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help children feel comfortable in the classroom by using facial expressions, tone of voice and body language that show acceptance of each child. • Accept children's developmental levels and willingness to participate. • Create opportunities for children to engage in activities individually, in small and large learning groups. • Plan field trips and outings. • Encourage sharing of materials, props, manipulatives and space among children. • Ensure that children have a sense of belonging (e.g., display photos of children and their families; put their name/photo on their locker, coat hook and /or cubby). • Trust children to make choices and suggestions about their own learning by allowing them to select books from the library, move learning materials from one experiential centre to another and select which pieces of their work will be displayed. • Encourage independence by giving children responsibilities, such as putting away materials in an experiential centre, getting their shoes for gym time or delivering a message to the office. • Validate the contributions of the children by engaging them in genuine conversations, acknowledging their ideas and using their suggestions. • Build confidence and self-esteem by offering genuine praise for effort, accepting a wide range of abilities and giving many opportunities for each child to experience success. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide regular access to the gym or multi-purpose area. • Plan opportunities for outdoor play. • Provide daily opportunities to run, jump, climb, swing and participate in other cardiovascular exercise. • Provide activities that promote flexibility and coordination, such as yoga, dance and playing with balls, hula hoops and skipping ropes. • Provide access to tricycles and riding toys. • Plan neighbourhood walks or hikes. • Participate in swimming lessons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide materials, experiential centres and activities that are developmentally and culturally appropriate. • Observe the children and listen to the children as they interact and extend their play. • Pose open-ended questions and engage in genuine conversations as the children interact with the environment. • Challenge the children's thinking by modelling and asking questions as they play. • Stimulate their thinking and their play by changing, adapting and extending the environment regularly. • Extend learning by using a variety of open ended props that encourage children to use their imagination. • Provide opportunities for children to solve problems, improvise, investigate, modify and create. • Encourage decision making by providing opportunities for children to make choices and take risks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote wonder, curiosity and imagination. • Create an environment that honours children and their families. • Provide places to reflect, wonder and think. • Encourage children to investigate, ask questions, be curious and creative. • Accept children's creative endeavours and do not judge them by adult standards. • Develop children's appreciation for natural objects and the environment. • Consider how to incorporate natural light. • Provide pictures, books, materials, photos, and music that represent children in the class and from around the world depicting a variety of cultures and languages. • Use real natural materials to "bring the outdoors in" (e.g., rocks, plants, bird's nest, feathers, seashells, tree stumps). • Encourage appreciation for natural life cycles (e.g., provide habitats such as an aquarium or cage). • Foster a special connection to the relationships, materials and activities that happen within a space. • Invite families to share their culture and traditions with the program.

Encouraging Learning Through Play

Suggestions to encourage young children to learn through their play include:

Play is a child's work.

(Maria Montessori)

- establishing a variety of experiential centres to provide a broad range of opportunities to stimulate play and exploration;
- selecting a rich and full range of materials and activities for the program and continually assessing, adapting and extending experiential centres to ensure sustained interest and appropriateness for the children;
- participating as a "master player" who acts as observer, listener, co-constructer, documenter, guide and supporter of the children as they make choices about their learning within the prepared environment in the classroom; and
- encouraging and fostering children's capacity for choice by inviting children to play, modelling the play and by talking about the possibilities of an experiential centre.



Developing a Child-Centred Learning Program

The following are suggestions to consider in order to create a learning program that is centred on the child's individual development, interests and preferences.

- Encourage children to provide ideas for investigations, activities, experiments, projects and the use of materials.
- Be open and willing to accept rejection or modification from the children for adult suggestions of themes or other ideas.
- Play and experiment with materials before introducing them to the classroom to ensure that they are open-ended and appropriate.
- Provide children with many opportunities and encouragement to make their own choices. It may be necessary to demonstrate the play possibilities in an experiential centre or to simply observe until they have achieved their own comfort level.
- Acknowledge and celebrate when children have discovered new ways of playing in a centre, a creative or different interpretation or a learning that they can share.

For more information about play and learning refer to Play and Exploration: Early Learning Program Guide.

(Ministry of Education, 2008)

Daily Schedule

While recognizing that young children feel secure with a certain amount of predictability within a day, some key points to consider when developing schedules are:

- flexibility to accommodate children's exploration, small group projects and unplanned events that capture the children's curiosity;
- minimum 60 – 90 minutes of uninterrupted experiential play and interaction. This block of experiential centre play time gives the teacher opportunity to interact with individual children or small groups of children directly to observe, document, assess and scaffold children's learning;
- language and literacy opportunities (including mathematic and science exploration) incorporated throughout the environment and experiential centres;
- creating balance and keeping transitions and interruptions in children's activities to a minimum;
- age and development levels of the children; and
- planning opportunities for family engagement and relationship building, such as the beginning and end of the day.

The schedule should reflect a balance of:

- active and quiet times;
- child-initiated and educator-framed activities;
- indoor/outdoor activities; and
- family and community engagement.

(Adapted from *Play and Exploration: Early Learning Program Guide*, 2008)

Considerations for Daily Scheduling

Large Group Time

This provides an opportunity to gather as a whole class to build relationships. The length of the group time depends on the age and developmental level of the children. If children are fully engaged this can be extended. Be attentive to the children; if they are restless or distracted it may be time to move on to other activities.

Large group time can be used for sharing stories of daily life, reading books, reviewing what children have been working on, collaborative planning for the day, music and dance.

The use of a talking circle allows and encourages each student to speak. Select an object to pass around the circle. Only the child who is holding the object speaks. Each child can share news and then pass the object to the next child. This activity helps develop self-esteem and language and provides an opportunity for the educators and the children to learn more about one another. Discretion and professionalism may be important here as children will sometimes disclose confidential or personal information about their families.

Experiential Centre Time

Children have an opportunity to select the centre they wish to use. A minimum time block of 60 minutes is provided for play. This allows freedom of choice and for extended uninterrupted learning. The experiential centres should be open for play every day. Based on observation of children at play and listening to their conversations, educators can collaborate with children to modify centres to enrich the play. If no one plays at a centre for a few days, then this is a cue to reassess the centre. Perhaps the materials are too difficult or the children have grown tired of them, or the area may have too many or too few things. The solution may be as simple as adding a new invitation, changing a few props or materials.

This time can be used for the educator to observe children, document conversations and the questions of the children. It also allows opportunity to be involved in an activity with an individual child or small groups of children. Taking part in the play, modelling language and appropriate behaviour builds relationships.

Snack time or Nutrition Break

Gathering at a table, sharing food is an important part of human culture. It not only provides physical nutrients for healthy mind and body development, it also promotes conversations and sharing. Canada's Food Guide provides ideas for a variety of healthy snacks. Food experiences can be an excellent opportunity to learn about nutrition, personal hygiene, mathematics, science and other cultures.

To avoid another transition, snack time can be open-ended. Attractively set out snack on a table and allow children to come and go as they are hungry. The table should be monitored to ensure children wash hands and to engage children in conversation.

Outdoor Experience

Daily time outside is important for healthy physical, intellectual and spiritual development. Exercise is good for muscle development, eye-hand coordination and flexibility. Outdoor experience develops a closer connection to nature, creating wonder and curiosity in children. Observing seasonal changes, growth of plants, insects, and birds teaches respect for the world and leads to many learning opportunities. With proper rain boots and umbrellas, children and educators can enjoy the rain.



Assessing the Learning Program

The chart below can assist teachers and supervisors in assessing the learning program, setting professional goals and identifying topics for professional development.

Program Assessment Tool			
DESCRIPTOR	YES	MOVING TOWARDS	NOT YET
Physical Organization The classroom is set up in experiential centres. Numerous materials, props, books and manipulatives are accessible to children. Displays include documentation of learning, including children's work, language and conversations.			
Active Learning Children select and are actively involved in real day-to-day problem solving.			
Program Planning, Scheduling and Flexibility The schedule is divided into large blocks that are flexible, involve minimal transitions and accommodate projects and investigations.			
Child-Centred Programming The classroom focus is child-centred, creating optimum conditions for children's learning. The teacher anticipates how to support children's growth in skills, knowledge and values based on knowledge of developmentally and culturally appropriate skills and content.			
Guided Interaction The teacher assists, encourages and extends, working with small and large groups and individuals. The teacher circulates and scaffolds children's learning through experiential learning opportunities.			
Choice Children are free to choose, plan and make decisions. Experiences are presented and time is provided to include choice.			
Child Initiated Learning Children often initiate activities that support play and investigation. Exploration emerges from the child's interests. Children are encouraged to make choices and to be risk takers.			
Individualization Modifications to accommodate individual abilities are clearly evident.			
Language Development Children are free to talk among themselves. The teacher asks many open ended questions that follow the children's lead. The child's response is used to further learning.			
Assessment and Evaluation of Children's Learning Teacher observation and holistic documentation of children's learning forms the basis of assessment of child development.			
Classroom Management Rules for behaviour are generated by child input. Children are given responsibility for choices about their behaviour and experience logical consequences for acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. The relaxed classroom atmosphere is a result of cooperation and mutual respect. Focus is on the positive (good choices, fair play, meeting personal needs).			

Adapted from Hewitt, 1990

4. Selecting the Best Materials

There are five key guidelines in selecting the best materials to support the Prekindergarten Program. Resources should be:

- Culturally responsive and gender balanced;
- Open-ended;
- Developmentally appropriate;
- Non-violent and with limited commercial content; and
- Durable and safe.

Culturally Responsive and Gender Balanced

Choose books and pictures that:

- reflect a broad range of individuals and groups;
- represent society as a whole;
- portray both genders, people with disabilities and people of various ages and cultures involved in a variety of tasks, such as taking initiative and providing leadership; and
- portray a range of emotions in the faces and body language of the characters.

Choose props and dolls that provide a realistic portrayal of both genders and a variety of cultures. Modify an experiential centre if you observe that it has become a "boys or girls only" play area.

Refer to *Selecting Fair and Equitable Learning Materials*, Saskatchewan Education (1991) and *Diverse Voices: Selecting Equitable Resources for Indian and Métis Education*, Saskatchewan Education, Training and Employment (1995) for more information on assessing and choosing learning materials.

Open-Ended

Select props, furniture, equipment and materials for the classroom that encourage a range of imaginative play, serve a variety of purposes, encourage exploration of a range of investigations, scenarios and directions. Objects and materials should extend play as they are incorporated into different experiential centres.

Developmentally Appropriate

Choose props, equipment, materials and investigations that suit the wide range of learning abilities of the children in the Prekindergarten Program. Children should be challenged but not frustrated as they learn and play.

Non-Violent and With Limited Commercial Content

Children are often influenced and limited in their play by television, movies, advertising and video games. Plan the Prekindergarten Program and select open-ended materials that encourage children to use their imaginations, think creatively and

solve problems through non-violent play. Avoid toys that encourage violent interaction or are based on commercial promotions.

Durable and Safe

When selecting materials, props and equipment consider their durability and safety. Considerations include choosing learning materials that:

- do not have a number of small, brittle accessories and parts;
- do not have parts and openings that might trap or pinch small fingers;
- do have rounded corners and smooth edges; and,
- are sturdily constructed and made of durable materials that can be washed.

Children

*Deciding, Discovering,
Challenging, Creating,
Seeking and Sharing.*

Risk Taking.

Teacher

*Moving and Modelling,
Instructing, Involving,
Chatting and Caring.*

Facilitating.

Atmosphere

*Fostering, Freeing,
Stirring and
Stimulating,
Inspiring,*

Encouraging.

Liberating.

(Stewart, Toronto, in
Schwartz and
Pollishuke, 1990)

5. Ensuring Effective Operations

The effective practices incorporated into the operation of a quality Prekindergarten include:

- Qualified teacher and educational assistant;
- Low child/staff ratio;
- Entry age;
- Selection of students;
- Mixed-age groupings;
- Consistent attendance;
- Intensive exposure to learning opportunities;
- Effective use of extended blocks of time; and
- Sufficient space.

Qualified Teacher and Educational Assistant

Fundamental to a quality Prekindergarten Program is the provision of a qualified teacher, knowledgeable and experienced in early childhood education philosophy and practice. Prekindergarten teachers have the ability to assess student developmental levels and to provide appropriate programming that includes stimulating thinking, extending knowledge and building confidence.

In addition to the professional educator, each Prekindergarten classroom has an educational assistant. This position provides key supports in the classroom and to the learning program and serves to reduce the student/staff ratio. The person often has significant knowledge of the community and is a critical link between the program and families and communities. In addition, it is advantageous if the educational assistant has a background in early childhood education, philosophy and practice.

Section V, Roles and Responsibilities, provides detailed descriptions of the duties and responsibilities of Prekindergarten staff.

Low Child/Staff Ratio

A ratio of eight children for each adult provides opportunity for quality interaction, modelling and teaching. Teachers are better able to provide developmentally appropriate programming, as fewer children mean more time for interaction. In addition, there is a significant positive impact on adult behaviour and child functioning when the child/teacher ratio is low:

- adults have the opportunity to become more actively involved in activities with children and to respond to their needs;
- adults spend less time in managing children;
- adults and children have more time to interact, which promotes social stimulation and teaching;
- children are better able to regulate their own behaviour; and
- teachers and parents have more opportunity to interact (Canadian Child Care Federation, 1993, in Doherty-Derkowski, 1995, Howes, Phillips & Whitebrook, 1992).

Selection of Students

The objective is to ensure that the most vulnerable children are served by Prekindergarten. A team comprised, for example, of the teacher, principal, Community School Coordinator, social worker, public health or community nurse and speech language pathologist will be able to prioritize registration and waiting lists. Depending upon the community, other potential selection team members may include representatives from *KidsFirst*, child care, family resource centres, immigrant settlement organization and other local early childhood initiatives.

It is recommended that the school division adopt a continual entry policy for the program, permitting new children to enter whenever there is an opening during the school year.

In addition to vulnerability factors, other selection considerations include:

- child's access to other early learning opportunities such as child care or preschool;
- balance within classroom, such as gender, age, abilities;
- referral from partner agencies; and
- family commitment to the program and child's attendance.

Entry Age

Prekindergarten primarily targets three- and four-year-old children. Kindergarten eligibility or family preferences may mean some five-year olds are served. The date of birth for eligibility will follow school division guidelines. Children with the greatest needs should have the opportunity for two years in the program.

Vulnerability

For the purpose of Prekindergarten, the Ministry of Education defines vulnerability broadly, including:

- *family has low socio-economic status;*
- *mother has less than a high school education;*
- *home language other than English;*
- *mother is young and unmarried;*
- *lone parent;*
- *child abuse or neglect;*
- *family crisis;*
- *child/family isolation; and*
- *child experiencing challenges in areas such as social-emotional and language development.*

Mixed-Age Groupings

The Prekindergarten Program is made up of mixed groups of three- and four-year-old children. These mixed-age groupings resemble family and neighbourhood groupings that historically have provided much of children's informal socialization and education. Today, many young children spend relatively little time in either family or neighbourhood settings and consequently are deprived of the learning made possible by mixed-age contact.

Researchers indicate that children's social development can be enhanced by interaction in mixed-age groupings. For example, leadership and pro-social behaviour increase. As well, current concepts of intellectual development suggest that children with similar but not identical knowledge and abilities stimulate each other's thinking and intellectual growth.

Peer tutoring and cooperative learning between less able and more able children benefit each both intellectually and socially. In addition, mixed-age groupings relax the learning environment and age-graded expectations (Berk & Winsler, 1995; Katz, Evangelou & Hartman, 1990).

Consistent Attendance

The school division may wish to consider establishing a policy on minimum attendance requirement to ensure children attend and gain maximum benefit. This policy will help ensure that the parents of those who are enrolled are committed to the program. If families are unable to attend consistently a space will become available and a child on the waiting list will have access to the program.

Encourage a high rate of attendance by:

- serving healthy food (a nutrition component of the Prekindergarten Program). This is especially effective when the children prepare the food, extend the invitation to family members and serve the snacks at school.
- taking photographs of the children regularly to demonstrate learning and to promote child and family feelings of belonging. When children know that there are special activities where a photograph will be taken they are often anxious to attend. This also seems to be a strong motivator for parents when they understand that they will eventually be able to keep the photographs.
- organizing special events such as educational tours, children's conferences, classroom visitors and displays of children's work/projects.
- using live and pre-recorded videos of the children as they interact in the classroom. This keeps parents motivated and children excited about being part of the Prekindergarten program.

Children's play is a means of making sense of their world. For the young child, play is the single most effective means to accomplish integration and growth.

(Spayth, Riley in Hendrick, 1990)

- Ensuring appropriate transportation arrangements are made between home or child care and the school.

Intensive Exposure to Learning Opportunities: Hours of Operation

The Ministry of Education recommends that each half-day program operate for a minimum of 12 hours per week. Ideally, however, the children will attend Prekindergarten for three hours a day, five days a week. This significant amount of time provides them with the opportunity to experience the greatest benefit from a quality program.

If the children attend only 12 hours per week, the remaining three hours are used by the teacher and educational assistant to provide family education opportunities. There are many options for structuring this time. For example, family education might be scheduled for:

- one "day" per week;
- four "days" per month; or
- four one-week blocks throughout the year.

Each Prekindergarten will determine the option that works best in its program and community including evening or weekend events.

Extended Time Blocks

Children need large blocks of time allocated for play and investigation during the Prekindergarten day. Time blocks of a minimum of 60 to 90 minutes are recommended for children to play at the experiential centres each day. Three- and four-year-old children can take 20 minutes to sit and observe other children, or to walk around the classroom and inspect materials at different experiential centres. After this initial exploration time, it is not unusual for children to become absorbed in play for 30 to 40 minutes. As well, an extended time period allows children to play at more than one experiential centre. It also allows time for small group projects and in-depth investigations.

Sufficient and Appropriate Space

Prekindergarten children will need sufficient physical space that ensures their safety and meets programming needs. When determining the location of the Prekindergarten classroom, considerations include:

- building and fire codes;
- sufficient window area and natural lighting – refer to *The Child Care Regulations, 2001* on natural lighting (Sec. 56);
- a minimum of 4 square metres of usable floor space for each child;
- access to toilets and sinks;

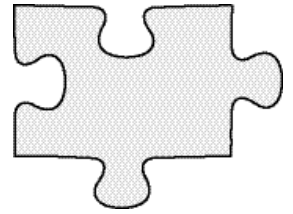
- ease of providing nutrition snacks;
- access to an outside exit; and
- access to a community room or room where family activities can take place.

In most situations, some renovations are required to ensure the space meets the needs of the program. School division secretary-treasurers or facility superintendents will have knowledge of building and fire codes and approval processes, as well as knowledge of Ministry of Education facility guidelines for Prekindergarten/Kindergarten specifications.



Parent and Family Engagement

Prekindergarten classrooms are open and welcoming. Teachers and educational assistants encourage open communication and the participation of parents and family members in classroom and family events.



In addition, Prekindergarten personnel develop positive relationships with families. This helps build family attachment to the school and sets the foundation to help families take an active role in their child's education.

1. Suggestions for Engaging Parents and Family Members in the Prekindergarten Program

- Set up comfortable seating in the classroom (or near the classroom if space is an issue). Parents and family members picking up or dropping off a child will then have a comfortable place to stop for a minute. This is a great place to make and maintain contact with families. This contact is a means of establishing a sense of trust between school staff and families.
- Design signs and posters that warmly welcome parents and visitors within and outside of the classroom. Post signs to help family members find their way to the Prekindergarten classroom and school office.
- Seek information and suggestions from family members about their children and act on this information. Parents know their children best and will have a wealth of information regarding children's interests, needs and preferences.
- Provide food at events. The sharing of food contributes to a warm and more informal atmosphere, putting family members at ease and emphasizing that they are welcome.
- Build on successes. Involve those family members who are already participating in encouraging other families to attend. Ask them for suggestions on how other families might be encouraged to participate.
- Ensure that those parents and family members coming into the classroom to volunteer are given meaningful tasks or functions to perform. Be sensitive and respectful of parents' strengths, abilities and confidence in assigning tasks.
- Involve grandparents and extended family members whenever possible.
- Make it clear that parents and family members can drop in at any time. However, parents need to understand that their child should be able to separate from them and be comfortable in the classroom.

2. Suggestions for Effective Communication

- Ensure all written and verbal communications are in clear, non-technical language that is easy to understand. Consider family members' literacy level and facility in English in developing written items.
- Send home positive personal notes providing regular updates on the children. Establish a way of ensuring that the notes are delivered home. This is particularly important when families do not have telephones.
- Send home monthly newsletters or calendars of activities and events.
- Develop a telephone tree and use it to invite parents, family and community members to events or to participate in the classroom. Remember to make arrangements for families who do not have a telephone. Check with families before giving their number to a telephone tree. Some family members have and need unlisted numbers for security reasons.
- Conduct home visits to establish and maintain communication and foster trust between home and school.

3. Suggestions for Conducting Home Liaison/Visits

- Phone ahead to arrange a time for the visit.
- Plan the topics of conversation before the visit. A home visit should focus on the positive and be informal. The purpose is to build a bridge between home and school.
- Explain and model to the family members how the teacher interacts and plays with their child in Prekindergarten.
- Demonstrate the use of materials in the home that can be used to engage the child through play. For example, setting the table can be used to understand one-to-one correspondence (one cup for one chair).
- Plan with the family members how a shared effort with the teacher can benefit the child.
- Let families know which areas and materials in the classroom are of particular interest to their children. Explain how learning occurs as children play at their favourite centres.
- Talk to family members about child development. Some families need to be advised and reassured as to what development is appropriate in their child.
- Explain how children offer suggestions for topics of interest and how the teacher negotiates the program around children's input and interests so that family members understand that the children can influence their own learning.
- Ask about families' expectations of the Prekindergarten Program.

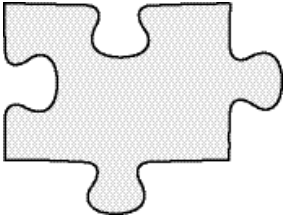
4. Suggestions for Providing Family Education Opportunities

- Use the extra hours per week outlined on page 45 to develop family education opportunities.
- Determine, through discussions with the family members and observations, the types of educational opportunities that might strengthen their parenting effectiveness. It will be critical to involve the parents in the decisions about which opportunities will be offered.
- Determine which areas will be covered in home visits and which will be addressed through specifically developed learning opportunities offered in the school or from some other community source. In Community Schools, coordinators will be of significant assistance.
- Use a variety of approaches. Some learning opportunities can be provided to individual parents, some to parents in small groups and others to parents with their children. Some learning opportunities can be offered within the Prekindergarten classroom and others will need to be provided in the nutrition room or other location in the school or community.
- Vary the length of the learning opportunity. It may range from an hour in the home to a series of half-day sessions that run over a six-week period.

5. Establishing an Advisory Body

Parent/family councils or advisory committees provide a useful mechanism for families to provide input to strengthen the Prekindergarten Program and ensure the success of their children.

As most Prekindergarten classrooms are located in schools and all schools now have established school community councils, it may not be necessary to have two councils in operation, one for the Prekindergarten and one for the school. The School Community Council may be able to serve both functions. In such cases it is important to ensure that families of Prekindergarten children are actively involved. The School Community Council may wish to consider establishing a sub-committee of the council to focus on early learning and its impact on the Learning Improvement Plan.



Community Partnerships and Integrated Services

The Prekindergarten staff work with the families, principal, other school staff, school division personnel, parent advisory bodies and community agencies in assessing needs and coordinating and integrating services. Steps in planning and implementing integrated services include:

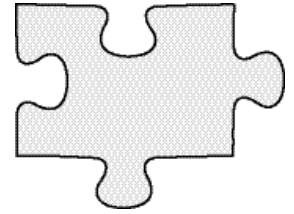
- identifying needs;
- identifying potential partners;
- developing plans and partnerships;
- identifying resources, services and gaps;
- matching needs with services;
- identifying possibilities for integrated services
- implementing programs and plans; and
- evaluating.

For more information on integrated services, refer to the Human Services Handbook Series. These handbooks can be downloaded from the Ministry of Education web site www.education.gov.sk.ca/Regional-Human-Services under Human Services.



Continuous Assessment, Evaluation and Improvement

For a more detailed discussion of Prekindergarten assessment and evaluation considerations, processes and tools refer to *Assessment and Evaluation in Prekindergarten: A Planning Guide for School Divisions and their Partners* Saskatchewan Learning (2005).



Assessing Young Children

In a Prekindergarten Program there are a number of points for special consideration in carrying out assessment on young children.

Developmentally Appropriate

In order for child assessment within the Prekindergarten setting to be meaningful, it needs to be based on the individual child. This acknowledges that children are individuals who develop according to their own speed and readiness. The uniqueness and individuality of each child is stressed and the development of natural curiosity, exploration and intelligence is encouraged (Jasmine, 1995).

Based on Continuous Observation

Careful observation of children as they play in real situations is more effective and efficient than contrived situations. Continuous observation in the Prekindergarten environment provides information to the teacher who can then make adaptations.

Assessment is developmentally appropriate and is:

- about exploration, discovery, potential, change, and creativity. Children are creative and curious and like to explore their environment. They also can move from activity to activity or devote extended periods of time to one area. The purpose of assessment is not to label children, but rather to better understand how they learn and what they want and need to learn. Teachers need to be flexible in order to meet the ever-changing needs and desires of the children;
- exciting, informal and empowering to children and to adults. Developmentally appropriate assessment is exciting because it gives teachers regular opportunities to observe change and development. Informal assessment procedures allow teachers to quickly change methods as the children change course in the classroom. Emphasis is not on wrong and right or on a product. There are many ways to do a good job and to be competent;
- about exploring a variety of intelligences. There are many types of intelligence so an open mind to assessment is

Assessment in Prekindergarten does not:

- *classify children. Children are at different levels of development. The purpose of assessment is to determine the best way to enhance the experience of each child based on what is important, of interest and appropriate.*
- *set a standard that all children must achieve. Children are viewed as individuals and all achievement is celebrated*

(Jasmine, 1995)

important. Examination and exploration of new and different kinds of assessment tools is essential; and

- about helping children develop as individuals. Assessment focuses on the whole child and teachers acknowledge each child is different even though there are many similarities in development. Teacher practices and assessment tools need to celebrate diversity.

Variety of Methods

Assessment of child development involves a systematic process for gathering evidence that reflects what a child can do. Information is collected through observation of process, product, conversations and conferences. Some examples of methods to gather evidence are:

- portfolios of writing and art;
- videotapes;
- audiotapes;
- anecdotal vignettes;
- learning stories;
- journals;
- case studies;
- photographs;
- documentation posters, panels and books;
- observation forms;
- interviews with caregivers;
- interviews with children; and
- checklists.



For more information on observation methods see pages 37 & 38 in *Play and Exploration: Early Learning Program Guide* (2008) and the supplementary Into Practice resource booklet on observation and documentation.

V. Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities outlined below are intended to describe what is needed from all involved for the Prekindergarten program to be a success. This outline is not intended to be exhaustive or prescriptive. It describes expectations of roles and responsibilities, but provides flexibility for variations in contributions, capacities and roles from one Prekindergarten to another.

Teachers

Teachers in a Prekindergarten have a strong commitment to children and a specialized knowledge of their learning needs and life experiences. They are innovative, flexible, cooperative and caring in their approach to teaching.

Teachers hold professional qualifications with a focus on early childhood education or a related field. This allows them to assess developmental levels and to create a learning environment and program that is appropriate for the range of developmental levels of the children. Teachers hold a belief in the importance of family engagement and home visits and in child-centred learning. As well, they are committed to the community education philosophy and practice.

The teacher's primary roles in Prekindergarten are facilitator, co-constructor, master player and guide rather than dictator of what and how learning occurs.

The roles of teachers include:

- establishing and maintaining the caring, safe, enriched, culturally responsive and challenging learning program and environment to promote play, thinking and children's self-confidence;
- observing children, conducting assessments and evaluations and providing individualized, developmentally appropriate program responses;
- documenting children's learning, accomplishments and progress;
- establishing and maintaining close communications with parents and family members, including home visits;
- organizing, modelling and instructing parent/family education opportunities in the home and in the school;
- working in a diverse, multi-ethnic community and establishing mutual respect and trust with children and families;
- assisting in research and tracking of Prekindergarten children's development; and
- working with other professionals and participating in case planning to meet the needs of the whole child, including speech

"We need a teacher (educator) who is sometimes the director, sometimes the set designer, sometimes the curtain and the backdrop and sometimes the prompter {...} who dispenses the paints and who is even the audience – the audience who watches, sometimes claps, sometimes remains silent, full of emotion."

(Loris Malaguzzi, in Rinaldi, 2006, p. 73)

and language pathologists, child psychologists and other human service providers from the community.

For more information about the role of the educator see pages 13 – 21 of the *Play and Exploration: Early Learning Program Guide* (2008).

Educational Assistants

Educational assistants work in partnership with the teacher to deliver a high quality Prekindergarten Program in a warm, safe and culturally responsive environment. Where possible, the educational assistants come from the community in which the school is located, providing information about the culture and the community to help the teacher and other school staff become more aware of, and sensitive to, the cultural and socio-economic characteristics of the community.

The educational assistant has completed Grade 12 and has a combination of experience and training in early childhood development. The position requires strong interpersonal and problem-solving skills, a respect and affection for children and an understanding and appreciation of the cultures and experiences of the children and the community. Educational assistants have a commitment to the philosophy and practices of community education.

The roles of the educational assistant include:

- working closely with the teacher in the development and delivery of the Prekindergarten Program;
- establishing and maintaining close relationships with the family members, including participating in frequent home visits and maintaining up-to-date knowledge of the home situation of the families;
- assisting in preparing instructional materials and collecting resource material;
- working with the children in the experiential centres providing stimulation, extending knowledge, listening and playing;
- participating in case management and planning sessions with the teacher and other service providers to coordinate support services for children; and
- assisting in the development and delivery of family education programs and initiatives.

Family Members

Family members play a key role in the effectiveness of the Prekindergarten Program. Their involvement is encouraged and actively sought as it is critical to the well-being and development of their children.

The roles of the family members include:

- providing information and advice to the teacher and educational assistant regarding their child's needs, interests and preferences;
- volunteering, when feasible, in the classroom by providing assistance such as reading/telling stories, helping dress the children and taking them outside for play, helping with the experiential centres and listening to and playing with the children;
- ensuring their child attends regularly;
- attending Prekindergarten events;
- participating in educational opportunities; and
- extending opportunities for their child's learning in the home.

Community Members and Agencies

Community members and agencies provide a variety of important supports, enabling the Prekindergarten to meet the needs of the children and their families in a comprehensive, holistic manner. They include: human service agencies, such as the Ministry of Social Services, health authorities (public health, mental health and speech language services); businesses; libraries; post-secondary training institutions; churches; service clubs; and community associations. They provide supports and services such as food and nutrition, clothing exchange rooms, immunizations, counselling, parenting supports and literacy initiatives.

The roles of community members and agencies include:

- working with the teacher, council and family members to provide a range of supports to meet the needs of the children and their families;
- respecting the values and rules of the school; and
- maintaining the confidentiality of student records and information.

Boards of Education

Boards of education that administer Prekindergarten Programs work in partnership with the provincial government, communities and families in the development, maintenance and evaluation of high quality Prekindergarten Programs. They provide direction and support to the program.

Saskatchewan Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education works in partnership with boards of education to provide the vision, policy, guidelines and funding support for Prekindergarten programming. The Ministry collects data and evaluative information, preparing reviews and reports as needed. It maintains close links with the schools and boards of education and provides developmental supports, consultation and advice upon request.

APPENDIX A: DEVELOPMENTAL BENCHMARKS

Ages	Emotional and Social Skills	Intellectual Skills	Fine Motor Skills	Gross Motor Skills
Two-Year-Olds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plays near but not with other children Seeks teacher's attention Observes others to see how they do things Asserts independence Exhibits high degree of self-interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talks mostly to self Uses "me" instead of name Enjoys showing and naming objects Uses a 200 to 300 word vocabulary Speaks in phrases or three-word sentences Answers yes/no questions Follows two-step commands Constructs negative sentences (no truck) Uses modifiers such as "some", "all", "one" Understands big and little Uses adjectives like "red", "old", "pretty" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turns pages of a book Imitates drawing a circle or line Can work fingers to scoop up small objects Constructs simple two and three-piece puzzles Enjoys short, simple finger play games Strings large beads on shoelace Builds tower of up to eight blocks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kicks large ball Jumps in place Runs without falling Walks up and down stairs alone Marches to music Tends to use legs and arms as pairs Uses whole arm usually to paint or colour
Three-Year-Olds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plays in groups of two or three children Begins to take turns Shares with friends Enjoys independence by doing things for self Yells "stop it" at times instead of striking another child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asks "how", "what", "when" and "why" questions Uses verbs such as "could", "need", "might" and "help" Understands pronouns "you" and "they" Understands smaller and larger Answers "how" questions appropriately Loves words such as "secret", "surprise" and "different" Uses words to define space such as "back, up, outside, in front of, behind, over, next to" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cuts paper Builds tower of nine small blocks Pastes using a finger Pours from a pitcher Copies a circle from a drawing Draws a person with three parts Strings beads and can arrange by colour and shape Uses a knife to spread food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Catches ball with arms extended forward Throws ball underhand Completes forward somersault Walks up stairs with alternating feet Rides a tricycle skilfully Runs, walks, jumps and gallops to music Throws ball without losing balance Hops on one foot
Four-Year-Olds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loves other children and having a "friend" Bases friendships on shared activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has trouble telling difference between reality and fantasy Exaggerates in practising new words Loves silly words and repeating them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buttons and unbuttons Cuts on a line with scissors Completes six to eight- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walks up and down stairs one foot per step Skips on one foot Rides a bicycle with

Ages	Emotional and Social Skills	Intellectual Skills	Fine Motor Skills	Gross Motor Skills
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Seeks approval of friends ● Plays in small groups ● Delights in humorous stories ● Shows more interest in other children than in adults ● Excludes children they do not like ● Loves to whisper and tell secrets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Vocabulary of 1200 to 1500 words ● Begins to identify letters in own name ● Begins to appreciate bugs, flowers, birds ● Learns simple card games and dominoes ● Develops awareness of "bad" and "good" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● piece puzzle ● Copies some letters and numbers ● Buckles a belt ● Zips separated fasteners ● Adds five parts to an incomplete drawing of a person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● training wheels
Five-Year-Olds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prefers playing in small groups ● Prefers friends of same sex and age ● Protects younger children ● Plays well with older siblings ● Washes hands before meals ● Respects property of others ● Becomes competitive ● Develops sense of fairness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Retells main details of stories ● Recognizes the cause and effect of actions ● Tells original stories ● Follows three-step commands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Uses a knife ● Copies many letters and numbers ● Traces objects ● Draws crude objects ● Colours within lines ● Copies square, triangle and diamond shape ● Models objects from clay ● Laces shoes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tries roller and ice skating ● Catches ball with hands ● Jumps from heights ● Jumps rope ● Walks on stilts ● Skips ● Climbs fences
Six-Year-Olds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prefers friends of the same sex ● Engages in cooperative play involving role assignments ● Enjoys being praised and complimented ● Enjoys "show and tell" ● May be argumentative ● Competitive and wants to win 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identifies penny, nickel and dime ● Counts ten objects ● Completes a 15-piece puzzle ● Acts out stories ● Plays Chinese checkers and dominoes ● Recognizes letters and words ● Identifies right from left hand ● Repeats an 8-10 word sentence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ties bows ● Establishes hand preference ● Reverses letters while printing ● Paints houses, trees, flowers and clouds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Plays hopscotch ● Enjoys ball play ● Plays simple, organized games such as hide-and- seek

Adapted from Herr and Libby, 1995

APPENDIX B: EXCERPTS FROM THE PROVINCIAL CHILD ABUSE PROTOCOL (2006)

Indicators of Child Abuse and Neglect

There are a variety of physical and behavioural indicators suggesting **possible** abuse and neglect. While one indicator may not provide sufficient proof, a **pattern of indicators** increases the likelihood of child abuse or neglect.

	Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
Physical Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> injuries (bruises, cuts, burns, bite marks, fractures, etc.) that are not consistent with the explanation offered (e.g., extensive bruising to one area) the presence of several injuries that are in various stages of healing the presence of various injuries over a period of time facial injuries in infants and preschool children (e.g., cuts, bruises, sores, etc.) injuries not consistent with the child's age and development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> runaway attempts and fear of going home stilted conversation, vacant stares or frozen watchfulness, no attempt to seek comfort when hurt describes self as bad and deserving to be punished cannot recall how injuries occurred, or offers an inconsistent explanation wary of adults or reluctant to go home, absences from school may flinch if touched unexpectedly infants may display a vacant stare or frozen watchfulness extremely aggressive or extremely withdrawn displays extremely indiscriminate affection-seeking behaviour extremely compliant and/or eager to please sad, cries frequently
Emotional Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> bed wetting and or diarrhea which is non-medical in origin frequent psychosomatic complaints headaches, nausea, abdominal pains child fails to thrive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> mental or emotional developmental lags, behaviours inappropriate for age fear of failure, overly high standards, reluctance to play unusual fear of consequences of actions, often leading to lying extreme withdrawal or aggressiveness, mood swings overly compliant, too well-mannered, too neat and clean extreme attention-seeking behaviours extreme inhibition in play poor peer relationships severe depression, often suicidal or constantly apologizing

	Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
Sexual Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sores in the mouth • eating or sleep disturbances • recurring physical ailments • unusual or excessive itching in the genital or anal area • torn, stained or bloody underwear (observed if the child requires bathroom assistance) • pregnancy or venereal disease • injuries to the vaginal or anal areas (e.g., bruising, swelling or infection) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reluctance to participate in physical activities or to undress or take a shower after sports • fear of normal physical contact, especially when initiated by an adult • self-mutilation, depression, suicide attempts, anxiety, withdrawal, phobic behaviour • dramatic behavioural changes, sudden non-participation in activities • poor peer relationships, self-image, overall self-care • overly compliant or conversely, overly aggressive and destructive behaviour • age-inappropriate sexual play with toys, self, others (e.g., replication of explicit sexual acts) • age-inappropriate, sexually explicit drawings and/or descriptions • bizarre, sophisticated or unusual sexual knowledge • promiscuity, prostitution, seductive behaviours directed towards members of opposite sex • fear of home, excessive fear of men or women
Neglect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • abandonment • unattended medical and dental needs • lack of supervision • consistent hunger, inappropriate dress, poor hygiene • persistent conditions (e.g., scabies, head lice, diaper rash or other skin disorder) • developmental delays (e.g., language, weight) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demands for constant attention • lack of parental participation and interest • delinquency or abuse of alcohol or drugs • regularly displays fatigue or listlessness, falls asleep in class • steals food, begs from classmates • reports that no caretaker is at home • frequently absent or tardy • self-destructive • school dropouts (adolescents)

Rarely is any one indicator conclusive proof that a child has been harmed. In most instances, neglect or abuse is indicated when children present a cluster of behavioural and physical indicators.

Involvement of Schools (Section B from the Provincial Abuse Protocol, 2006)

Introduction

Society considers the neglect and abuse of children to be unacceptable. Neglect and abuse in the family is often physically and always emotionally devastating, not only for the child, but also for the entire family.

Schools play a significant role in the lives of children and their families. Teachers, principals and school support personnel can play an essential role in protecting children from abuse and neglect and ensuring their safety and well-being.

Reporting Suspected Cases of Child Abuse and Neglect Mandate

If school personnel have reasonable grounds to believe that a child may be abused or neglected, *The Child and Family Services Act* requires them to report their concerns directly to a child protection worker or police officer. As part of the education system, school divisions should have procedures in place to assist school personnel with reporting.

The Child and Family Services Act deals with the protection of children from abuse and neglect by their parents/guardians. Parents/guardians include all persons who provide the day-to-day care and supervision of the child. Section 11 defines the circumstances in which a child is in need of protection and generally includes:

- Child physical abuse;
- Child sexual abuse, including involvement in prostitution and including conduct that may amount to an offence within the meaning of the *Criminal Code*;
- Emotional maltreatment of a child;
- Parental failure to provide essential medical treatment to a child, or failure to remedy a mental, emotional or developmental condition of a child;
- Exposure of a child to domestic violence or severe domestic disharmony;
- Child neglect or abandonment; and
- Children under 12 who have committed criminal offences and cannot be charged under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* because of their age, but require services to prevent reoccurrence.

School personnel are not responsible to determine if a child is being abused or neglected before they report; it is their

responsibility to report suspected cases of abuse or neglect. If it is not clear that reasonable grounds to believe a child is in need of protection exist, then consultation with other teachers and school personnel is acceptable. Informal consultation with child protection workers or police is encouraged and may occur without making a formal report.

The Education Act, 1995 provides teachers and principals to act as a “wise and judicious parent.” School personnel are required to provide police and child protection workers with access to children who may be abused or neglected. The responsibilities of the teacher and principal are to:

- ensure all staff are familiar with school division procedures with regard to reporting suspected cases of child abuse and neglect;
- make reports of suspected child abuse or neglect;
- facilitate contact with the child by child protection workers and police during an abuse investigation; and
- monitor the progress of the child as required throughout the investigation, assessment and treatment of the child and his or her family.

School staff shall not investigate the allegations and shall not contact the child’s family, the alleged abuser or other individuals either to inform or further investigate the cause or circumstance of the suspected abuse. This is the role and responsibility of the child protection worker and the police.

Procedures

Any person (e.g., teacher, principal or other school division employee) who suspects a case of child abuse or neglect must immediately report the case to a child protection worker or police officer. The school principal must be informed that a report has been made to a child protection worker or police officer.

The person reporting the suspected abuse or neglect shall maintain a written record of all his/her observations and discussions with, or relating to the child to aid both in reporting and recall. A teacher or principal may consult with school guidance counsellors, school social workers, school nurses or other involved persons, but should not contact the suspected abuser or his/her family. This consultation cannot cause a delay in making a report to a child protection worker or police that would further put the child at risk.

Interviews of Children by Child Protection Workers and Police

Whether a report originates from the school or from another source, it may be necessary for the child to be interviewed in the school setting without parental consent. In cases of suspected abuse, a child protection worker or police officer may jointly conduct the investigation, and would likely come to the school together to conduct the interview. The interview of a child without parental consent is done routinely in cases of physical or sexual abuse. It is critical to the child’s safety that the child be

interviewed before parents are notified, and receive protection from his or her parent, if that is required.

In cases of suspected neglect, a child protection worker may not be accompanied by a police officer. This is because neglect, unless it is very severe, is not a criminal offence. When an interview is requested by a child protection worker or police officer, direct access to the child in the school is to be allowed.

The child protection worker and police will usually interview the child alone. This procedure must be observed because of the sensitive nature of some investigations and to ensure that individuals who may not be comfortable with the subject matter do not hinder the effort to provide protection services to the child. The child protection worker or police may request that a teacher, principal or someone from the school be present to support the child during the interview.

A staff member may ask to be present at the interview; however, by being present at the interview, there is a possibility that the staff member may be subpoenaed to give testimony at a child protection hearing or any criminal proceedings.

Procedures

A child protection worker or police officer wishing to interview a child at school shall direct the request to the principal. The child protection worker will provide written confirmation of the request as soon as possible.

The written confirmation shall confirm the meeting arrangements, acknowledge the assistance of the principal, and indicate the general outcome of the investigation with respect to the child in the school setting.

The principal shall make the necessary arrangements for such confidential interviews and shall retain written confirmation in school files.

Receiving Disclosures of Abuse

Whether a child reports physical abuse, emotional abuse or sexual abuse, all disclosures must be treated in a similar fashion. Without conducting the investigation personally, it is impossible to know whether or not the case will go to court. Therefore, for teachers and school personnel to be most helpful they should:

- support the child;
- acknowledge the child's right to have his or her concern investigated;
- listen openly and calmly;

- reassure the child;
- record what the child has reported and their observations; and
- report the suspected case of abuse immediately.

Treatment and Follow-up

Integrated services facilitate a coordinated effort among Education, Health, Community Resources and Justice professionals and other service providers to address student needs that go beyond the professional mandate of educators. Follow-up services to child victims of abuse and neglect require that these service providers work together in the development and delivery of a coordinated case plan for the child and family. Mutual sharing of confidential information among the professionals and individuals involved is essential to maximize satisfactory outcomes during assessment, treatment and follow-up of a child abuse case.

Where a child has been found to be in need of protection, services will be provided to the child and family. The role of the teacher is to:

- observe the child's progress, including the child's behaviour, academic progress, emotional functioning and physical well-being;
- participate in the agreed-upon case plan; and
- share information with the child protection worker and any other persons involved in the family's treatment and support.

The degree of observation and participation required from the school should be agreed upon between the child protection worker, school personnel and any other persons involved with the child and family.

In some cases, a child may have to be removed from the parent's care to ensure the child's continued safety. Where a child has been apprehended, he or she may be placed with extended family, foster family or other residential programs outside the school or school division where the child normally attends school. In this case, the child protection worker is responsible to advise the principal of the child's new location. The principal of the sending school shall be responsible for notifying the principal of the receiving school about the circumstances. The child protection worker would also contact the principal of the new school to inform him/her of the child's circumstances. Any files or documentation (e.g., cumulative folder) at the school may be transferred with the child as agreed between the principals.

APPENDIX C: PREKINDERGARTEN BASIC FURNITURE AND MATERIALS INVENTORY

Furniture and Facilities	Manipulatives	Teacher Materials/ Teaching Tools	Classroom Consumable Supplies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CD player • bathroom (easy access) • bulletin boards (hung low for child viewing) • carpeted area • child-size chairs • computer and software • containers for access of materials on shelves and for storage in classroom • crib or bed for playhouse • cupboard for storage • dust pan and short-handled broom • easel • experience chart stand • filing cabinet • flannel board and felt figures • light table • listening post and headphones • lockers or coat hooks • magnet board and figures • mini gym or access to play area • mirrors, small and full length • (short-handled) mop and bucket • overhead projector (access to) • paint shirts/aprons • parachute (access to) • pocket chart • pots and pans for playhouse • puppet theatre • refrigerator and stove (access to food for nutritious snacks, nutrition exploration and hands-on preparation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • animals (variety of toy stuffed, realistic wooden and plastic) • beads and other lacing materials • blocks (variety of sizes, textures and composition, e.g. Duplo, Lego, Tinker Toy and wooden) • books • cash register and Canadian money • chalk slates, brushes and chalk • cutlery for playhouse • dishes for playhouse • doctor/medicine kit • dolls and clothes (fair, equitable, both genders and multicultural) • dollhouse and furniture (model) • dress-up accessories (purses, shoes, plastic hats, ponchos, kimonos, etc.) • dress-up clothes • garbage cans • props (miniature signs, vehicles, people, animals, buildings, etc.) • puppets • puzzles • rhythm instruments • sand table materials (pails, shovels, sand wheel, etc.) • science supplies (batteries, wires, bulbs, collections of natural items, magnets, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aquarium • balance scale • bean bags • cages, supplies and food for pets • camera • cookie sheets, bowls, utensils for food experience (access to) • date stamp • day book • hula hoops • hole punch • educational kits (MOKAKIT, CARE KIT, etc.) • magnifying glasses • measuring sticks, cups, cylinders and containers of various sizes and shapes • pet supplies and food • plants • scissors • stapler • straight pins • utility balls • stethoscope • thermometers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • film and processing • food for nutrition exploration and hands-on preparation (children and families) • “fun tack” • glue • markers, crayons, pencils, pens • miscellaneous treasures including buttons, shells, rocks, etc. • paint • paper (chart, note, lined, unlined, coloured, etc.) • play dough • staples • tape

Furniture and Facilities	Manipulatives	Teacher Materials/ Teaching Tools	Classroom Consumable Supplies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● refrigerator for playhouse ● sand table ● shelves ● sink ● stove for playhouse tables (child-size) ● teacher workspace (shelves, counter/desk, chair) ● water shirts/aprons for water table ● water table ● whiteboard ● workbench ● light table 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● materials that can be sorted and classified ● sorting trays ● sponges for water table, paint, etc. ● telephones for playhouse ● transparent and non-transparent materials (variety of coloured plastic objects, netting, cellophane, paper) ● vehicles (variety of boats, planes, trains, trucks, etc.) ● water table materials (pails, jugs, hoses, funnels, etc.) ● wood scraps and carpentry tools (3 inch) vice, 8 oz. hammer, push drill, sand paper, nails, screws, etc.) 		



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