

EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

Background

The Division believes that early childhood experiences have a significant impact on shaping behavior and that positive, stable relationships and nurturing environments during a child's early years provide the basis for a lifetime of healthy growth and development. In short, the experiences of the early years can indeed last a lifetime. The Division will provide Early Childhood Services programming in each community.

Definitions

"Early Childhood Services" (E.C.S.) programs provide services to address the developmental needs of children before they enter grade one. In E.C.S. programs, young children participate as active partners in learning, build a set of shared experiences and develop knowledge, skills and attitudes that prepare them for subsequent learning. E.C.S. programs provide additional support for children with special needs to assist them in reaching their full learning potential.

"Kindergarten" refers specifically to the education program for children in the year prior to Grade 1. The Kindergarten program is an important part of ECS.

"Special Education needs" refers to a child with mild, moderate or severe disabilities/delays who is assessed as having a mild, moderate or severe mental disability, visual impairment, learning disability, hearing impairment, emotional/behavioral disability or a child who is gifted and talented. All children with special education needs require an Individualized Program Plan (IPP).

Guidelines

1. Prior to kindergarten, learning occurs primarily in the home environment and extends into the community. Parents have opportunity for meaningful involvement in the development of their child.
2. Educational programming for children with special education needs should be provided in natural settings to the greatest extent possible. Their programming needs vary in the number of hours provided, based on the children's needs and developmental levels and taking into account parental preferences and local resources.
3. In providing the most enabling educational environment possible for children with special educational needs, ECS teachers are encouraged to consider models other than direct one-on-one assistance including:
 - a. focused intervention in a small group
 - b. strategic use of educational assistant time
 - c. peer-model instruction

- d. environmental supports (e.g. visual schedules, well-established routines, warnings of transition, visual cues, adapted furniture, use of physical boundaries to define space)
 - e. embedding IPP goals in ongoing routines and activities.
4. Very young children who require extensive programming may benefit from family-oriented programming sessions, which are individually planned, developmentally appropriate intervention for children with severe disabilities/delays and their families

Procedures

1. The Principal (or designate) shall act as the Program Coordinator for E.C.S. programming in the school.
2. A certified teacher will be responsible for establishing the roles and responsibilities of support staff within E.C.S. programming.
3. Assessment and reporting processes for ECS students will comply with Administrative Procedure 360 – Assessment and Reporting of Student Achievement.
4. The programs for children with special education needs, including those who have severe disabilities/delays, shall be organized in accordance with Administrative Procedure 213.

December, 2003

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References:

Education Act Section 21

Early Childhood Services Regulation 31/2002

Early Childhood Services policy 1.1.3