



Education and Early
Childhood Development

Kindergarten Integrated Curriculum Document

A Handbook for Parents 2009-2010





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This document is also available at <http://www.gov.pe.ca/educ/>



**Education and Early
Childhood Development**

*A Message from the Minister of Education and
Early Childhood Development*



Dear Kindergarten Family

I am happy to welcome you to an exciting year of kindergarten in Prince Edward Island.

Kindergarten will offer many opportunities for your child to grow and develop through play-based, developmentally appropriate activities. We are committed to providing high-quality programs and resources to support this child-centered learning environment.

This handbook describes many aspects of the kindergarten experience including how children learn, how a child's learning can be assessed and how parents and educators can work together to make this year the best it can be for children. Your active involvement in your child's education is a very important contribution to his/her success.

I believe that giving children the best possible start to learning will help them in their journey to become life-long learners. I wish you and your child a wonderful kindergarten year. May you both enjoy each and every day.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gerard Greenan". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Gerard" and "Greenan" being capitalized and prominent.

Gerard Greenan, Minister
Education and Early Childhood Development

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Welcome to Kindergarten!

Beginning kindergarten is an important and exciting time for you and your child! The kindergarten year will be a time where they grow creatively, physically, socially, and intellectually. At kindergarten your child will have opportunities to learn by doing, exploring, discovering, creating, and questioning. Using the *Kindergarten Integrated Curriculum Document* in a play-based environment, educators provide children with daily opportunities to develop as *life-long learners*.

We hope your child's kindergarten year will meet your expectations and provide him/her with a sense of excitement and curiosity for learning.

If you have questions regarding your child's kindergarten experience, please contact your child's kindergarten educator or the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development of Prince Edward Island.



Vision

*The kindergarten program of Prince Edward Island
fosters children's growth and learning:
socially, emotionally, intellectually, physically, and creatively,
to become lifelong learners
in an environment that is nurturing, play-based,
and developmentally appropriate.*

-Prince Edward Island Kindergarten Integrated Curriculum Document



Kindergarten on Prince Edward Island

Kindergarten on Prince Edward Island is a community-based program offered to children in the year prior to grade one. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development provides funding and takes responsibility for curriculum and policy development. The program is three hours a day (two and a half hours of instructional time), five days a week or equivalent.

The purpose of kindergarten is to nurture the continuing growth of children's knowledge and understanding of themselves and their world by providing a safe, caring, stimulating environment where learning can happen.

The kindergarten program recognizes that children are individuals and every child is unique. Through developmentally appropriate play-based activities, each child will progress through the kindergarten year at his or her own rate of development, building the knowledge, skills, and attitude needed for successful learning.

Children will participate in a variety of learning activities that include:

- active exploration of the environment
- hands-on experiences
- opportunities for structured and unstructured play
- opportunities to apply what they learn through learning centres and projects.

Kindergarten children will be introduced to the following subject areas - Early Literacy, Early Numeracy, Social Studies, Science, Health and Physical Development, and Creative Development.



Kindergarten Children

The kindergarten program provides play-based learning experiences that meet the developmental needs of all children. Children move through similar stages, but with their own pattern and rate of development and learning.

The following developmental characteristics are typical of most, but not all children in kindergarten.

Creative Development

Most kindergarten children

- have vivid imaginations, a sense of wonder, and enjoy creating
- express their imagination and creativity through movement, dance, music, and play.



Physical Development

Most kindergarten children

- are full of energy
- can run, hop, skip, jump, catch, and throw
- are developing small muscle control which helps them string beads, build with small blocks, make puzzles, and use tools such as pencils, paint brushes, crayons, scissors, etc.



Social/Emotional Development

Most kindergarten children

- like to talk, but are learning to listen
- are learning to cooperate, share, and take turns
- are developing friendships.

Intellectual Development

Most kindergarten children

- show curiosity, imagination, and interest in learning
- use their five senses to explore and discover
- are developing problem-solving skills as they investigate, try things, and figure out how things work.

Numeracy Development

Most kindergarten children

- use mathematical vocabulary (how many, big, little, more than, the same, heavier, lighter, etc.) to describe the world around them
- are beginning to develop problem solving skills
- are starting to identify and describe similarities and differences in their environment.



Language and Literacy Development

Most kindergarten children

- have a rapidly expanding vocabulary
- ask many questions
- are interested in learning about and engaging in reading and writing activities.

Play and Learning

Play is a valuable and important way for children to learn, therefore, opportunity for play is a key aspect of the kindergarten program. As children play, they are clarifying information, integrating ideas from previous experiences, and exploring and experimenting with their environment. Play gives children opportunities to add to their knowledge, learn new skills, and practice familiar ones. Through play, children learn to deal with their feelings, interact with others, and resolve conflicts. They develop their imagination, creativity, and ability to solve problems. Play is a key part of the child's kindergarten experience.



The Kindergarten Learning Environment

The kindergarten environment is ever changing and dynamic. Children gather together as a whole group to listen to stories, sing songs, or share and discuss ideas. A child may choose to do a quiet activity alone, such as watching fish in the aquarium or working on a puzzle. Most of the time children will be joining others to talk, listen, work, and play together.

The educator guides children through the day by

- being actively involved in all activities
- planning activities based on careful observation that meet the needs, interests, and abilities of all children
- changing materials and resources to engage children at a variety of levels and interests.

In kindergarten, children often explore a topic of interest that comes from their interests and brings together learning from different curriculum areas.

For example, suppose that a child notices an ant crawling across the floor during story time and watches it closely, perhaps even interrupting the educator to announce what they have found. Other children gather to examine and talk about it and share personal experiences.

If the children demonstrate a strong interest, the educator may read them a book about ants. The children may decide to learn how to write “ant” in their journals. The educator could teach the children the song *The Ants Go Marching One By One*, and ask the children to look for ants near their homes. Several children may bring ants to kindergarten in jars to show their friends. Other children may bring in beetles, spiders, or caterpillars, and then the study of insects and bugs begins to emerge.

As they study a topic or engage in a project, such as insects, the children cover all six curriculum areas in the *Kindergarten Integrated Curriculum Document*. Ex.

- early literacy - stories and poems about bugs
- early numeracy - counting bugs, comparing bugs for size (bigger, smaller, longer, etc.)
- social studies - mapping a visit to a pond in the community, having someone come in to speak about bugs
- science - using their five senses to explore their environment
- health and physical development- developing fine motor skills in order to catch bugs, recognizing that some bugs might be harmful (safety)
- creative development - making models of bugs, singing action songs about bugs, moving like bugs.



Curriculum Integration

Although outcomes in the *Kindergarten Integrated Curriculum Document* are organized in separate subject areas, it is not intended that outcomes be introduced in isolation. Curriculum integration is a holistic approach that reflects the real world and prepares children for lifelong learning. It provides educators with a practical approach to connect outcomes in a meaningful way. The above example on bugs shows how integration happens naturally in the kindergarten environment.

Curriculum Areas

As previously indicated the *Kindergarten Integrated Curriculum Document* contains six areas of study. They include:

- Early Literacy
- Early Numeracy
- Social Studies
- Science
- Health and Physical Development
- Creative Development

Each area is presented in a four column layout.

Column 1: Outcomes

This provides specific curriculum outcomes indicating what children are expected to know and be able to do by the end of kindergarten.

Column 2: Elaboration-Strategies for Learning and Teaching

This column provides suggestions of possible strategies/activities which might be used to help children achieve the outcome.

Column 3: Worthwhile Tasks for Instruction and/or Assessment

This provides suggestions for ongoing assessment which is an important part of the learning experience.

Column 4: Resources

This column provides a list of resources issued by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development that can support the outcome and teaching strategies.

Early Literacy

It is important that children see themselves as individuals who talk, listen, read, write, and look at print in order to make sense of their world. Children will participate in large group activities such as read-alouds, shared reading, modelled and shared writing, and small group activities such as guided reading and writing as well as planned activities at various learning centres.

Children begin to make connections between what they know and see and read when they participate in shared listening, reading and viewing activities using picture books, fairy tales, rhymes, stories, photographs, illustrations, and educational videos. Children draw, record, act out, and tell about their own ideas and experiences showing their understanding of what has been read or viewed.

When stories are read aloud, educators encourage children to predict what the story might be about, to ask questions, and to make comments. Children read their own names, as well as some words that have personal significance. They form recognizable letters, print their own names, and explore and experiment with words.

You can support your child by:

- telling stories to each other and having lots of conversations
- reading to your child regularly - signs, labels, the newspaper, poems, a variety of books - alphabet, rhyming, fairy tales, information books, etc.
- visiting the library
- encouraging and providing opportunities for your child to write at home - letters, grocery lists, invitations, cards, etc. (resist the temptation to do it for them)



Early Numeracy

Children are curious, active learners who have individual needs, interests, and abilities. Early mathematical thinking is developed as they discover the importance of mathematics in their world. In kindergarten, children explore and describe numbers, patterns, measurement, and geometry through hands-on activities. Children will:

- count and compare objects
- identify and create patterns
- learn about measurement by comparing two objects
- sort, build, and describe 3-D objects.

Educators introduce mathematics in kindergarten through active, hands-on, child-centred, and problem-based exploration in a variety of learning centres.

You can support your child by:

- counting with your child - the number of stairs up to bed, the number of napkins for everyone at the table, the number of shells they find at the beach, the number of cars on their way to kindergarten, etc.
- talking about and comparing the shape and size of different objects - fruits, vegetables, blocks, books, toys, etc.
- encouraging them to solve problems on their own
- playing and inventing games with your child - card games, board games, memory games, hide 'n seek, etc.

Social Studies

Children bring their own perspectives, cultures, and experiences to kindergarten. The Social Studies curriculum builds on their natural curiosity as they explore and discover the world around them and make connections to people and places.

You can support your child by:

- sharing information with them about your family, traditions, and culture
- visiting places in or around your community
- attending community events

Science

In kindergarten, children will explore the world through the five senses and develop vocabulary to express what they have seen, touched, heard, tasted, and smelled. Through hands-on, whole-group, small-group, and individual investigation they begin to explore the scientific world around them.

You can support your child by:

- going for a walk and asking what they see, smell, or hear
- playing games like “I spy”
- encouraging them to taste new food
- asking them how the sand, snow, or grass feels
- asking them what they smell - Can they guess what it is by just using their sense of smell? Do they have to taste it, or see it?

Health and Physical Development

It is important for children to establish a positive attitude towards health, safety, and physical development in order to build a foundation for life long participation in, and appreciation for, healthy living. Supporting the future health and well-being of children involves providing many experiences for them to:

- participate in physical activities, games, and play
- begin to understand the importance of physical activities, nutrition, safety, health, and recreation
- develop independence and problem-solving skills



You can support your child by:

- involving them in packing healthy snacks/lunch for kindergarten
- playing tag, hide ‘n seek, going skating or for a walk, building a snowman, etc.
- wearing a helmet when riding a bike
- wearing sun screen and hat when playing outside
- making sure they know their phone number, address, and when to use 911

Creative Development

Creative development is more than a subject area. It is an important tool that children can use across the curriculum as they explore and express their ideas and feelings creatively through music and movement, artistic expression, and play. They become aware of their imagination and creativity and that of others as they interact with a variety of materials and experiment with different forms of expression.

You can support your child by:

- singing, listening, and dancing with them
- drawing, painting, and creating with them using play dough, paper plates, paper rolls, markers, crayons, pencils, egg cartons, etc.

Assessment and Evaluation in Kindergarten

Assessment and evaluation of a child's progress is a natural, ongoing, and important part of daily learning in kindergarten. Educators collect and record information about a child's knowledge and understanding by questioning and talking to the child, listening to their language, and observing their behavior. Children are usually unaware that they are being assessed on a daily basis, they just know that they are having fun.

Parents and educators can exchange ideas and information, and parents can learn more about their child's progress and achievements in many ways:

- oral and written communication
- parent information sessions
- parent-educator conferences
- provincial progress report
- child's portfolio



Parent-Educator Conferences

Educators will provide a minimum of two scheduled parent-educator conferences within the kindergarten year.

Provincial Progress Report

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development provides kindergarten programs with a Provincial Kindergarten Progress Report. The progress report represents a snap-shot of a child's development and progress in the following areas:

- Social/Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Creative Development
- Intellectual Development
- Early Numeracy Development
- Early Literacy and Language Development

The progress report is shared with parents/guardians a minimum of twice a year. At the end of the kindergarten year, with signed permission from parents, the progress report is forwarded to the child's school.

Portfolio

The portfolio is a purposeful collection of information compiled over the year, that shows the child's growth and progress. A portfolio can contain examples of the child's writing and drawing samples, artistic creations (paintings, sculptures, collages, etc.), photographs, observational notes, and any other information that is relevant.

Educators use the information gathered through ongoing observations, parent-educator conferences, the progress report, and portfolios to:

- organize the learning environment
- plan learning activities that will meet individual needs
- give the child feedback, helping them recognize what they know and are able to do
- inform parents of their child's ongoing progress and achievements.

A Final Note

Kindergarten educators will provide parents with information regarding hours of operation, phone numbers, holidays, storm closure policy, emergency procedures, field trips, as well as explaining the kindergarten program and daily routines.

First Day

*Every one has a "First Day"
When they feel sad and all alone.
It can be so scary
When you're out on your own.
Take my hankie, dry your tears.
You'll find lots of things to do
And you'll probably make new friends.
I promise we'll be together
When the kindergarten day ends.
Here comes the teacher,
Blow your nose and be brave.
Come on now wipe your eyes,
This is no way to behave.
"Well, good morning teacher.
We really must beg your pardon.
No, MOMMY doesn't always act this way.
But it's my first day of ...KINDERGARTEN!"
-Author Unknown*



Glossary

assessment -	is the process of gathering data on what children can do and how they do it
child centred -	focusing on the needs of the child, based on their development
developmentally appropriate practice -	doing what is best for children based on what is known about them
early childhood program -	a service offered to families providing a safe, caring, and nurturing place for their children to develop and learn about the world around them
guided reading -	educator supports small groups (no more than 5) of children in reading texts they are not able to read independently
guided writing -	educators work with individual or small groups of children supporting them in the writing process (letter formation, spelling, spacing, purpose for writing, simple punctuation, etc.)
independent writing -	children communicate through print using scribbles, drawings, approximations, letters, and words
learning centres -	spaces created within a kindergarten environment to support children's growth and learning in all areas
modeled writing -	educator demonstrates for a group of children the writing process (directionality, correct letter formation, spelling, topic, etc.)
read-aloud -	educator reads to children demonstrating fluency and the enjoyment of reading
shared reading -	using big books or enlarged print, the educator involves the children in reading and talking about the text
shared writing -	the educator, working with a large group of children, encourages participation in writing as they contribute to the content and physically attempt some parts of the writing

Parent/Guardian feed-back

Kindergarten Integrated Curriculum Document: A Handbook for Parents

We would like to know what you think about the information found in this handbook.

1. I found this handbook:

___ extremely useful

___ useful

___ somewhat useful

___ not very useful

2. We would appreciate any other comments or suggestions you may have regarding this handbook:

Thank-you for your feed-back.

Please send your completed feed-back form to:

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