



Kindergarten Transition Progress Update



Education and Early
Childhood Development

May 7, 2010

Early Years Assessment (EYE)

Almost 1200 Island children entering kindergarten this fall participated in an assessment of their developmental skills. The new Early Years Evaluation (EYE) gives a snapshot of how children are developing in four key areas, including self-awareness, cognitive skills, language and communication, and gross and fine motor development. A report of the child's assessment will be mailed to parents in early June.

About 170 children remain to be assessed. Further assessments will be scheduled in June so that every child entering kindergarten in September will have the opportunity to participate.

PEI Teachers' Federation Agreement

The recent agreement with members of the PEI Teachers' Federation is an important step forward in the process to hire kindergarten teachers for public schools.

Over the next three years any vacant kindergarten positions must be filled by an existing kindergarten teacher. Any position which can not be filled with a kindergarten teacher is then open to teachers in Grades 1-12. Kindergarten teachers working toward a B.Ed. degree will be required to have a *Kindergarten Letter of Authority* from the Certification and Standards Board each year until they complete the requirements to become a certified teacher.

Supporting Kindergarten Educators

Treasury Board has approved a payroll deduction program to assist kindergarten teachers in paying UPEI tuition fees. This program will be managed by school boards who will make payments directly to UPEI on behalf of participants and make corresponding deductions to the new teachers' salary.

Three important opportunities are being planned to support kindergarten teachers in the public school system. All kindergarten teachers will be invited to a province-wide information session with PEI Teachers' Federation, school boards and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development in May. An orientation will be hosted by the Department in conjunction with PEITF on August 31st and the Beginning Teacher Induction Program will be offered later in September.

Kindergarten Teacher Hiring Process

Most schools have completed their kindergarten assignments. During the next few weeks, the kindergarten teachers will be working with administrators and other school staff to prepare for the upcoming Welcome to Kindergarten™ program.

Welcome to Kindergarten™

Welcome to Kindergarten™ is a literacy-based program that brings parents and care givers, children and teachers together to begin the important home and school relationship that supports school success and life long learning.

This great introduction to school provides parents with helpful resources and great ideas for ways they can support their child's learning at home. During May and June, families will be invited to their school to participate in the Welcome to Kindergarten™ workshop, meet their kindergarten teacher and school principal, and possibly see a kindergarten classroom.

Much of the furniture and equipment will be arriving sometime in summer so this year, kindergarten students may have to wait until their first day at school in September to see their special learning space.

The Department will provide funding to school boards to ensure kindergarten classrooms are equipped with the supplies required to deliver the kindergarten program. Individual schools will be working with their new kindergarten teachers to ensure these supplies are ready for September.

Class Size Policy -The Flex Factor

The *Class Size Policy for Kindergarten* defines the minimum number of students in a class and addresses the possibility that additional children may enrol during the school year. Enrolments as of February 28 will determine the number of classes in a school based on a 15 to 1 class size.

A class of fewer than 8 children is considered a small class. For the next three school years, there will be one kindergarten teacher (1 FTE) for each small class. For operational reasons, schools may combine kindergarten and Grade 1 students for some or all specialist areas.

If kindergarten enrolment increases after February 28, school boards may adjust the class size to 17. If kindergarten enrolment reaches 18 or more, staffing will be as follows: .33 FTE for every 3 students over and above 15 students, to a maximum of 24 students. Nine additional students in a class will merit 1 FTE.

If space allows, a class with more than 24 students must become two separate classes, each with 1 kindergarten teacher. No class will be split after September 30.

Should a class have numerous *priority one* children or other significant special needs, it may be appropriate to split the class and allocate 1 FTE for each small class rather than assign a partial FTE to assist the home room kindergarten teacher. Each extraordinary circumstance will be considered as it arises.

This policy will be reviewed annually, in consultation with the school boards. A permanent policy will be developed within 3 years.

Delayed Start for Kindergarten

The first day of school is a very exciting time for children, parents and educators. Each year, much care and attention is given to the safe arrival and dismissal of first-time students. This is necessary to make sure all children are placed safely on the correct school bus at the end of the school day.

This year, there is a first day for both kindergarten and grade one students. In order to ensure the safety of every student, kindergarten children will begin school two days later on September 9, 2010.

Professional Development

Professional development sessions for school and board based staff will continue this May. This second round of sessions will also focus on the role of play in the learning environment and the integrated curriculum. Sessions will be offered to teacher librarians, school counsellors, resource teachers, board/district autism consultants, and literacy coaches. In addition, any staff who were unable to attend the first round (phys. ed., music, Gr. 1 teachers, etc.) may also register.

For more information visit the Kindergarten Transition website at www.edu.pe.ca