



Ministry of
Education

Prekindergarten Program

A Handbook for Administrators

Supplementary Resource to:

***Better Beginnings, Better Futures:
Effective Practices Policy and
Guidelines for
Prekindergarten in
Saskatchewan***



2009 Edition

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Welcome to Prekindergarten

If you are implementing a new Prekindergarten program in your school, or if you are a new administrator coming into an existing Prekindergarten program, you have the opportunity to experience and administer a unique program targeting three-and-four-year-old children and their families who experience some form of vulnerability. (Please see page 43 of *Better Beginnings, Better Futures* for a broad definition of “vulnerability.”) This program is exciting for children, educators, families and the community.

A quality Prekindergarten program offers opportunities for

- children in mixed age groupings to be engaged while they actively explore their environment through the provision of high quality materials and experiences
- children to build social competencies through interactions that support social, emotional, intellectual, physical and spiritual development
- teachers to experience the excitement of helping young children explore and understand their world
- administrators to build relationships with children and families early and to take on an exciting challenge by supporting innovative approaches
- families, through encouragement and guidance, to gain greater understanding and knowledge of how their children learn and how best to support them
- community members to participate in and support a quality program for all children

Research and best practice support quality early learning. A quality Prekindergarten program represents a positive investment in children’s development through improved social skills, better health and higher self-esteem, leading to increased school success and less likelihood of costly interventions later. A measure of professional pride and success for early childhood educators is to see children engaged in active, experiential learning about their world and everyone in it (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009, p. x).

Getting Started

Some suggestions for getting started are as follows:

1. Locate and Review Documents

- Familiarize yourself with the available documents related to the Prekindergarten program. Pay particular attention to developing your understanding of the philosophy of the Prekindergarten program and take note of what constitutes high quality programming in a Prekindergarten classroom.
- o A list of Prekindergarten documents and related Ministry of Education publications that may be useful are found in the next section, Ministry Supports, Resource Documents and Materials, page 3.

Read first: Better Beginnings, Better Futures; Play and Exploration; and Leading for Change (Into Practice Booklet written especially for administrators).

- Check the Reference sections of all the Ministry documents for additional information.
- Consult the Ministry of Education website at <http://www.education.gov.sk.ca/ELCC> to access documents online.
- Investigate another useful resource, C. Copple, & S. Bredencamp (Eds.). (2009). *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs* (3rd ed.). Washington DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

2. Tour Prekindergarten Programs in Your Own and Other School Divisions

- To assist you in what to observe, guidelines for site visits are found on page 22 of *Leading for Change* (Assessing the Learning Program).
- The Ministry of Education's website offers information about professional development events such as site visits.

3. Attend a Prekindergarten Basics Workshop

- In September, the Ministry of Education offers a Prekindergarten Basics Workshop, usually in Regina and Saskatoon.
- The workshop is intended for teachers, educational assistants, administrators, consultants and superintendents who are new to Prekindergarten.
- The workshop provides a foundation to understand the background to Prekindergarten and its key policies and procedures.



Appendix A, p.27,
features frequently
asked questions about
Prekindergarten.

4. Establish a Prekindergarten Budget

- Communicate to Prekindergarten staff the budget allocation for the next school year well in advance, if possible. Remember that family events, snacks, home visits and unexpected situations or activities will require funds. Check with school division central office regarding support for transportation and additional professional supports such as speech language services.

Ministry Supports

1. Funding

- Through partnership with boards of education, the Ministry of Education provides to school divisions a block funding amount for each half-time Prekindergarten program.
- Some start-up funding is also available the first year for new Prekindergarten programs.
- All school divisions are required to report on their Prekindergarten programs to the Ministry of Education each year.

2. Policy and Guidelines

- The Prekindergarten program is a developmentally appropriate early childhood education program for three- and four-year-old children and their families. While the focus is on serving vulnerable children, all children can benefit from a Prekindergarten program as resources allow. The program requires a qualified teacher and a designated educational assistant, both preferably having early childhood education training. Programming is provided for 16 children for a minimum of 12 hours per week. Refer to *Better Beginnings, Better Futures: Effective Practices, Policy and Guidelines for Prekindergarten in Saskatchewan* for detailed programming guidelines.

3. Resource Documents and Materials

- *Better Beginnings, Better Futures: Effective Practices, Policy and Guidelines for Prekindergarten in Saskatchewan* (2008)
- *Play and Exploration: Early Learning Program Guide* (2008)
- *Into Practice* Booklets to supplement *Play and Exploration* (*Leading for Change* written especially for administrators)
- *Early Learning Environment Grant: Resource Booklet* (2008) (PowerPoint presentation to accompany this resource can be found on the website)
- *Assessment and Evaluation in Prekindergarten: A Planning Guide for School Divisions and their Partners* (2005)



Resource Sheet F,
p.25, highlights
where to find
information by topic.

Related documents

- *Early Literacy: A Resource for Teachers* (2000)
- *Children First: A Resource for Kindergarten* (2009)
- *Core Learning Resources for Prekindergarten and Kindergarten* (2009)
- *Building Communities of Hope: Effective Practices for Meeting the Diverse Learning Needs of Children and Youth: The Policy of the Community Schools Program* (2004)

4. Professional Development

- The Early Learning and Child Care Branch of the Ministry of Education offers the following professional development opportunities:
 - o Prekindergarten Basics workshops held annually in September in Regina and Saskatoon
 - o Additional workshops related to the *Play and Exploration* document
- In partnership with the Saskatchewan Early Childhood Association, the Ministry of Education also sponsors inservice on the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R). This tool is used to assess the environment.
- For more information on all professional development initiatives, including times and locations, consult www.education.gov.sk.ca/ELCC

5. Consultative Services

- The Early Learning and Child Care Branch of the Ministry of Education provides consultative services.
- Each school division is assigned a program and policy analyst who
 - o consults with the school division to ensure high quality Prekindergarten programs
 - o distributes communication materials throughout the school year
 - o arranges a meeting every two years to review the school division Prekindergarten program
 - o organizes a Prekindergarten Basics Workshop for school division personnel who are new to the Prekindergarten program
 - o provides feedback and professional resources as requested by the school division



Appendix D, p.32, explains the roles and responsibilities of individuals involved with the Prekindergarten program.

Synopsis of Prekindergarten

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.

Goals

The goals of the Prekindergarten program are summarized below:

1. School and life success for children
2. High quality Prekindergarten programming
3. Increased parenting effectiveness and shared responsibility

Prekindergarten at a Glance

Prekindergarten programming incorporates what is known from the literature and practice about early childhood education and the needs of developing children. The chart below provides a brief description of the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education's Prekindergarten Program.

Prekindergarten is:

- a developmentally appropriate educational program, founded on early childhood research and practice:
 - 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
- 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

The Importance of Play and Active, Experiential Learning

Prekindergarten programs stress the uniqueness of each individual child's trajectory of development and the importance of self-selected, experimental activities (Molnar, 1991).

- Play is a key component of a developmentally appropriate program.
- Brain research confirms the importance of play in children's development. Links have been made between play and abilities such as memory, self-regulation, oral language abilities, social skills and success in school (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009).
- Play supports the abilities that underlie academic learning rather than detract from it. In a high quality program, children are intellectually engaged while they play.
- All young children learn best through active exploration and hands-on experiences. Children do this by interacting with the teacher and other adults in the classroom, other children and materials and experiences provided.

Prekindergarten from a Child's Perspective

- My teachers know my name and are always happy to see me. They don't get upset if I'm late for school or if something happened.
- There are lots of different things to play with, both inside and outside. I am able to play with other children.
- My teachers let me pick what to play with. I can explore, investigate and pretend with many materials.
- My teachers like the things I make and are always happy when I try hard. They display some of the things I make or draw.
- My teachers come to my house to visit.
- There are little chairs and tables for me to sit at in the classroom. There are pictures of me and my family and my dog in the classroom, too.
- The teachers ask me what I like to do at home. Sometimes we can do those things in the classroom. They talk to me a lot.

Family Engagement

"For many vulnerable children, parent and family engagement is the single most important factor in their school success"
(Better Beginnings, Better Futures, 2008, p. 14).

- Family engagement includes not only welcoming families in the classroom, but home visits, informal activities and input and advice from families regarding special events, program direction and family education programs.
- The focus on family engagement reflects the critical importance of the family in children's development. Close and frequent contact between teachers and parents/caregivers allows families to understand what their children are doing at school and in a sense, to share the responsibility with the teacher for the children's development and well-being. They can discuss with the teacher what they perceive to be their children's strengths and stages of development and provide suggestions for programming.
- Parents can be supported as role models for their children, benefiting both themselves and their children.

Role of the Administrator

Creating a Welcoming Atmosphere

A welcoming atmosphere is essential, not only in the Prekindergarten classroom, but also in the school building. To help establish a positive feeling in the school, administrators can

- post signage at the main entrance welcoming families and directing them to the Prekindergarten classroom
- address parents and children by name
- display Prekindergarten photos and children's creations in the school entrance
- visit the Prekindergarten classroom regularly to get to know the children and their families and to have them become familiar and comfortable with administration
- designate a family room for parents with or without their children where family activities can be held, parenting information can be shared, parents can access a computer or teachers and parents can use the space for other purposes
- enlist translators to support non-English speaking parents



Appendix C, p.31, features basic furniture and materials suggested for Prekindergarten.



Resource Sheet E, pp.23 and 24, provides information for school staff about the Prekindergarten program.

Promoting Prekindergarten to all Staff and the Community

In order for the Prekindergarten program to be effective, the staff and the community should be informed of the program's goals and objectives and any concerns or sensitivities should be addressed.

Inform the community through

- informational brochures
- information in the school newsletter and on the school website
- invitations for families to come to parent information meetings and to participate in various school events
- invitations to the local media to attend Prekindergarten events

Inform the staff through

- presentations at staff meetings
- guided discussions to explore why early intervention is critical to later school success
- individual and group discussions as needed to address concerns with staff members



Best practice considerations for administrators are found on page 22 of this handbook. Key practices of high quality programming are featured along with what each practice looks like. Examples of questionable practices are also included.

“To have a principal join children’s activity . . . is most unusual, and a powerful incentive to participate. The participation of a principal sets a tone for the entire school community”
(Wien, 2008, p. 150).

Staff may be concerned with some of the following questions:

- How will the program affect me as a classroom teacher (e.g., Will I have to move my classroom? Will my schedule be disrupted? Will I lose any prep time?)
- Will there be an expectation of me to be involved in some way with the Prekindergarten program? What might this look like?
- How can I support the Prekindergarten program in the community?
- Why does the program prioritize vulnerable families?
- What is the purpose of home visits and who does them?
- Is the Prekindergarten calendar the same as that of the rest of the school?
- When does the Prekindergarten teacher receive preparation time?
- How is compensation for time provided for evening and weekend family engagement initiatives?
- Will the administration explain to the custodial staff that young children learn through play and that the experiential centres in the classroom are an integral part of the program? Will the floor and carpet be cleaned daily?

Developing Appropriate School Policies to Implement Prekindergarten

Well-developed school policies ensure consistency in operations. Policies should be in place for the following:

1. Adult-Child Ratio

The Prekindergarten program recommends a maximum of 16 children at any one time for a minimum of 12 hours per week with an adult-child ratio of 1:8.

- This ratio of one adult for every eight children is very important to maintain in the Prekindergarten classroom.
 - o The low adult to child ratio contributes to enhanced interactions as well as to the comfort and security of vulnerable children.
 - o Liability issues could arise if one of the adults is left with the class while the other adult is out of the classroom for any reason; for example, to escort a child to the washroom if one is not located within the classroom.

“Prekindergarten teachers can display documentation of children’s thinking, ideas, activities and projects outside the classroom so that other staff members have a ‘window’ into what is happening in the classroom”
(Prekindergarten teacher).

2. Consistency in Personnel

Young children require the security of interaction with consistent teachers, educational assistants and substitutes.

- Administrators need to ensure that teachers and educational assistants, in particular, remain consistent throughout the entire school year.

3. Transportation

Transportation can be a barrier to participation and warrants serious consideration. A transportation policy is typically in place at the school division level.

- Contact appropriate school division personnel for further information.

4. Support Services

As many children in a Prekindergarten program are from families that may be vulnerable, some will need the support of professionals other than the classroom teacher. School division procedures outline how Prekindergarten teachers can access professional supports that may be necessary, such as speech-language and occupational therapy. In most instances, accessing support for Prekindergarten students will follow the same protocols as accessing support for any other students in the school, though for some children the services may be provided by the Regional Health Authority.

5. Supporting Staff Professional Development

Although it may be challenging, it is critical that administrators support staff professional development, especially if the teacher and/or the educational assistant do not have early childhood backgrounds.

- Teachers and assistants must be well-prepared and receive sufficient support to ensure that they are able to deliver a high quality program. Administrators can encourage staff to participate in ongoing professional development and give them significant time to interact with colleagues and mentors to discuss and observe best practices.
 - o The Prekindergarten teacher and the educational assistant require time to debrief and keep each other up to date. Administrators can support this time in whatever manner works best for the staff.
 - o Administrators can encourage the teacher to share all Prekindergarten-related communication with the educational assistant.
- Some professional development opportunities have been mentioned earlier, including Ministry initiatives such as the Prekindergarten Basics workshops, *Play and Exploration* workshops, ECERS-R training and site visits.

(Consult the Ministry of Education website at www.education.gov.sk.ca/ELCC for detailed information on professional development initiatives.)

- o Administrators can enable the educational assistants to attend professional development events along with the teacher to support teamwork and consistent best practice.

6. Entering Prekindergarten Students in Databases

Administrators are encouraged to enter Prekindergarten students in the Ministry of Education's Student Data System (SDS) and the Principal's September Statistical Report (PSSR).

7. Facilitating Processes for a Smooth Transition to Kindergarten

The role of the Prekindergarten teacher in preparing children for a smooth transition to Kindergarten extends beyond the children to teacher-teacher connections and relationships between teachers and families. The administrator enables teamwork among all those involved with Prekindergarten students: teachers, educational assistants, professionals offering support services and families.

- If Prekindergarten children will be going to another school, the school administration contacts the receiving school(s) and forwards relevant information. Arrangements can be made for the Prekindergarten teacher to visit the receiving school(s) to meet with the appropriate school team to share an understanding of the children who will be coming to their Kindergarten program. Conversely, Kindergarten teachers from receiving schools may be invited to the Prekindergarten classroom to meet the children and observe them in their home environment.
- Throughout the school year, Prekindergarten and Kindergarten children can be involved in field trips and other activities together. Prekindergarten children can also be integrated into the larger school community as the year progresses (e.g., participation in assemblies and other school-wide events).
- The administrator can provide time for the Prekindergarten and Kindergarten teachers to meet on a regular basis. The Kindergarten teacher can be encouraged to visit the Prekindergarten classroom often.
- Towards the end of the school year, Prekindergarten children may visit the Kindergarten classroom.
- Though based on a similar philosophy, Prekindergarten is not a downward extension of Kindergarten. Therefore, administrators are responsible for ensuring that staff employ age-appropriate practices that benefit young children and that they establish environments that allow children choice in activities.

Practical Suggestions for Establishing a Prekindergarten Program

Meeting Facility Requirements

Page 45 of *Better Beginnings, Better Futures* outlines in detail the facility requirements for a Prekindergarten classroom. These are summarized below:

- sufficient natural light
- a minimum of 3.25 square metres of usable floor space for each child
- sink and washroom access in classroom or nearby
- easy access to outdoors
- convenient for providing nutrition snacks and family activities

Consult school division secretary-treasurers or building supervisors for building and fire codes and approval processes.

Staffing the Prekindergarten

The Prekindergarten personnel and their ability to positively interact with the children are the most critical resources in the program.

- Teachers will have completed a Bachelor of Education degree. (Early childhood specialization is desirable.) Knowledge of and experience in the development and learning of three-, four- and five-year old children is a definite asset.
- Educational assistants, where possible, should come from the community where the school is located. Being a part of the community enables them to share knowledge about its culture and to be more aware of its needs and how they can be met.
- Educational assistants shall have completed Grade 12 and preferably have a combination of experience and training in early childhood education (e.g., ECE I, II or III).
- The Recruitment Suggestions charts on pages 29 and 30 of this handbook further detail qualifications, knowledge, skills, experience, interests, abilities and aptitudes of both professional staff and educational assistants.

Enlisting Support Personnel

If Prekindergarten teachers identify children with specific challenges, administrators should involve the teacher and assistant in team meetings that include the administration, speech language pathologist, learning resource teacher, psychologist, occupational therapist or any other relevant professional. See page 18 of *Better Beginnings, Better Futures* for suggestions for effective case management.

How does a school get a Prekindergarten program?

- consultation occurs between Ministry of Education and school division
- social, economic and demographic data, influence where to allocate a program, EDI results, capacity of school division to implement a program, and availability of resources



Appendix B, pp. 29 and 30, provides recruitment suggestions for a Prekindergarten teacher and educational assistant.

- Assist Prekindergarten teachers to coordinate meetings between family members and professionals from whom service has been requested.
- Encourage social workers, family liaison workers, nutrition counsellors, personnel who conduct hearing, vision and dental screening and hygiene, workers from child identification clinics and others to visit the Prekindergarten classroom.
- Clarify, if necessary, policies with Regional Health Authorities for services that children would typically receive from Public Health and Mental Health should Prekindergarten children require these kinds of services.

Selecting and Acquiring Materials, Furniture and Equipment

Page 41 of *Better Beginnings, Better Futures* provides guidelines for selecting the best materials to support the Prekindergarten program. The guidelines are summarized below, but for more detail regarding selection, consult the above resource. Resources should be

- o developmentally appropriate
- o open-ended
- o culturally responsive and gender balanced
- o non-violent and with limited commercial content
- o durable and safe
- The *Early Learning Environment Grant: Resource Booklet* (2008) contains suggestions for quality reference books, materials, furniture and equipment, as well as other resources. The PowerPoint presentation to accompany this booklet, which is found on the Ministry of Education's website, is a useful resource to assist both administrators and teachers in visualizing both indoor and outdoor Prekindergarten environments.
- *Better Beginnings, Better Futures* provides examples of furniture, equipment, and props on pages 28-31 in the section Considerations for Preparing Experiential Centres and on pages 60-62 in the section Experiential Centres in *Play and Exploration*.
- The Prekindergarten Basic Furniture and Materials Inventory is found on pages 64-65 of *Better Beginnings, Better Futures* and also in Appendix C (page 31) in this handbook.

Applying for Prekindergarten

Inform the community about the Prekindergarten application process through methods available in your community. Information may include

- o newspaper advertisements
- o informational brochures
- o posters in appropriate locations
- o open house events
- All of the methods of communication should explain to families that submission of an application does not ensure entrance into the Prekindergarten program: a selection committee prioritizes the admission of children into this targeted program where space is limited.
- Most school divisions have developed a common application form for all Prekindergarten programs. Contact the school division superintendent or consultant responsible for Prekindergarten for information.

“Teachers new to Prekindergarten may be uncomfortable seeing themselves as community developers as opposed to being strictly teachers in a classroom. Some professional development topics may address this concern”
(Prekindergarten administrator).

Preparing for Home Visits

Family engagement consists of many components that are described on pages 14-16 in *Better Beginning, Better Futures*. Home visits are one very important aspect of family engagement and may be new to both educators and families.

- Home visits can be a highly effective way to establish communication and to develop trust.
- The teacher and educational assistant often make an initial visit after applications have been received. After this visit, they may review the vulnerability criteria to determine which children should be considered for placement into the Prekindergarten program. This information should be kept confidential.
- Safety precautions are critical for the teacher and the educational assistant.
 - o Teachers do not make home visits alone.
 - o The teacher and the educational assistant inform the administration/school office of their destination and their approximate time of return and leave a cell phone number at which they may be contacted. They check in when they have returned or the administration checks to be sure that they have returned to the school. If the teacher and educational assistant are delayed, they must notify the office of the change in plans.
 - o If a question arises about the safety of a particular residence, administrators can suggest an alternative site. One such alternative may involve the Community School Coordinator



Resource Sheet A, pp.17 and 18, provides suggestions and guidelines for home visits.

“Never rush. Make it a visit, not a conference”
(School Administrator).

(in community schools) going to the home and providing transportation to bring the family to an agreed-upon location.

- o If hygiene in the home is a concern, the teacher and educational assistant may take their own portable chairs, choose to leave their shoes on and avoid unnecessary touching of furniture. A yoga mat may be used to play on the floor with the children.

Establishing a Selection Committee

While all children can benefit from a high quality early learning program, vulnerable children benefit most. Limited resources make it necessary to target the Prekindergarten program.

The Prekindergarten program continues to be targeted to vulnerable children and communities. A wide range of criteria exists for the determination of vulnerability. The input of other professionals or members of relevant community groups who deal with children of Prekindergarten age is very useful in screening; therefore, administrators need to establish a collaborative process with members of these groups.

- The administrator takes the lead to form a selection committee to prioritize registration and waiting lists. The committee can be composed, for example, of the Prekindergarten teacher, principal, Community School Coordinator, social worker, public health or community nurse, speech language pathologist, a representative from *KidsFirst*, ECIP or from other organizations depending upon the nature of the community (e.g., immigrant organizations, First Nations groups). A smaller, school-based committee may work to make the final selections.
- The criteria for selection are broadly based upon the definition of vulnerability as found on page 43 of *Better Beginnings, Better Futures*.
 - o Other criteria specific to a particular community may be added to this list.
 - o A child's access to additional learning opportunities (e.g., high quality childcare, community literacy programs) or interaction with siblings or other children may affect the selection process.
 - o A multiple effect of risk factors exists; that is, one risk factor may not place a child at risk, but risk factors typically appear as clusters. For instance, sometimes associated with poverty are family dysfunction and alcoholism, and taken altogether present problems for a child's well-being.



A sample template that may be used to create a selection criteria rating scale is found on p.19.

Involving Community Partners

Collaborative arrangements between schools and various community organizations such as service clubs, churches, businesses, arts organizations, libraries and others may already exist.

- Invite the community into the Prekindergarten classroom. With some degree of familiarity and comfort, community members can promote the program to others.
- Take the Prekindergarten to the community (e.g., senior citizens' centres, fire and police stations, libraries, others).
- Enlist the participation of volunteers in the Prekindergarten program: fundraising for family events, reading stories, accompanying children and teachers on field trips, helping with art experiences or the nutrition program or assisting in parent education programs
- See page 18, *Better Beginnings, Better Futures* for more information on this topic.



Resource Sheets

- A. Suggestions and Guidelines for Home Visits
- B. Sample Template: Selection Criteria Rating Scale
- C. Sample Daily Schedules (2)
- D. Considerations for Administrators
- E. Prekindergarten: Information for School Staff
- F. Where Do I Find Information on . . .?

Resource Sheet A: Suggestions and Guidelines for Home Visits

Some suggestions and guidelines for home visits are described below:

- Two people, usually the teacher and the educational assistant, conduct the home visit.
- Teachers call ahead to be sure that the parents are willing to have them visit and to select a convenient time. Parents could sign up for home visits beforehand to indicate what would be most convenient for them. If parents appear uncomfortable with the idea of a visit, suggest the school or a neutral location, such as a community facility or a local coffee shop.
- Teachers may wish to keep a log to document the visit. This documentation would be particularly relevant if the visit has to be scheduled on an evening, rather than on the day that the teacher typically plans for family activities.
- The Prekindergarten teacher and educational assistant determine key topics ahead of time, but they plan to keep the conversation informal and focused on the positive. The goal of the visit is for parents to feel that the visit is a form of support-building – a bridge, not a lesson in how to parent.
- If possible, teachers plan two or three visits per year.
 - o A visit can occur either in the spring or in the fall before the children begin the program.
 - o The first visit is an opportunity for teachers to meet the family and child and to communicate important information, such as the school calendar, Prekindergarten daily schedule, supplies required, important dates and other applicable information.
 - o Parents can share with the teacher the child's strengths and challenges and be invited to express their hopes, wishes and expectations for the child in the coming year.
 - o Parents should be assured that their input is valuable and that they and their child can positively influence the program.
 - o Teachers find it is useful to bring along a healthy snack, book, game or prop that will be used in the classroom at some point. The educational assistant can engage the child with one of these items or a favourite item of the child's while the teacher talks with the parent(s).

- o Teachers can also bring a few photos of the Prekindergarten environment to share with the family. Then, when the child first arrives in the classroom, he or she will be able to recognize aspects of the environment from the photos. This recognition will help the child to feel more comfortable.
- o In subsequent visits, the teacher and/or educational assistant may demonstrate or model how they interact with the child in the classroom and discuss how the child is progressing developmentally.

Resource Sheet B: Sample Template – Selection Criteria Rating Scale

The criteria listed below (as well as others that may be identified by the community) are used to broadly define vulnerability and can be helpful in selecting children for placement in a Prekindergarten program. For each applicant, a rating scale may be created where the selection committee assigns a numerical value to each criterion, from high impact for selection (5) to less impact for selection (1). A total numerical value may assist in prioritizing children for the program. A sample rating scale follows.

Name: _____ Age as of Dec. 31 _____

High Impact----->Less Impact						
Criteria	5	4	3	2	1	N/A
• Low income/poverty						
• Single parent						
• Teen parent(s)						
• Family abuse/neglect						
• Alcohol/drug abuse in family						
• Mother has less than high school education						
• Mother's mental health						
• Non-English mother tongue in home						
• Family isolation						
• Little or no contact with other children						
• Frequent parent absence						
• Communication/language delays/difficulties						
• Social/emotional/behavioural difficulties						
• Referral by partner agency						
• Family commitment to program						
• Child's consistent attendance						
• Previously enrolled in program						
• Other (e.g., child not living with parents, level of independence with toileting, family crisis, siblings have attended Prekindergarten program). Please list.						

Please note that a child's access to additional learning opportunities (e.g., high quality child care, community literacy programs) or frequent interaction with siblings or other children may affect the selection process.

Resource Sheet C. 1: Sample Daily Schedule

Adapted from Sacred Heart Community School Prekindergarten, Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Separate School Division, Moose Jaw

****Times are approximate depending on circumstances and children.**

Each day is structured to follow a similar routine.

8:45 a.m. Greeting Time (20 minutes)	Meet the children and assist with outdoor wear. Children listen to books read by parents or by the educational assistant.
School Announcements (5 minutes)	Sing O Canada and listen to announcements.
Learning Opportunities (20 minutes)	Children leave the classroom for gym, music or library.
Circle Time (15 minutes)	Circle time. Acknowledge special person of the day; share messages.
Snack (15 minutes)	<p>Snack. Children eat together in the community room. They try new foods, discuss various topics and practise table manners. While waiting their turn to brush their teeth, children use their fine motor skills to trace, cut or draw.</p> <p>The educational assistant takes care of the snacks while the teacher sets up invitations to encourage play when the children return to the classroom.</p>
Play Experiences (1 hour)	Play and exploration in the classroom.
Clean Up/ Sharing Time (30 minutes)	<p>Three children per day bring something from home to share with the class. The articles that children bring represent a certain topic; for example, things we can use for transportation, things we can see or do in spring, specific number of things from one to five or a specific shape. Sharing time helps to build vocabulary when giving clues.</p> <p>At the beginning of the year, we start sharing time by talking with the children about what makes a good speaker and what makes a good listener. Children are then guided how to give clues and ask questions.</p> <p>Weather permitting, children play outside. This time is often viewed as exploration as children look for bugs, notice leaves and other relevant details.</p>
Departure (15 minutes)	Children get ready for their departure. Children remove their indoor footwear. Children put on outdoor clothing with assistance from the educator if needed. The departure is pleasant. The educators use this time to share information with the family and dismiss children safely.
11:45 a.m.	Program ends.

Resource Sheet C. 2: Sample Daily Schedule

Adapted from Westmount School Prekindergarten, Saskatoon Public School Division

****Times are approximate depending on circumstances and children.**

Greeting Time (10 minutes)

The children come into the classroom, take off their coats and meet the adults on the carpet in the greeting area. The children bring their library books to the greeting area. The adults and children may look at or read the books. It is a time to say hello to the children. The children then come to the carpet and talk with each other and the adults. After 10 minutes we go to the library for book exchange (5-10 minutes).

Messages/Planning time (10-20 minutes)

The educator uses a wipe off board to write picture messages (e.g., no school tomorrow, field trip coming up, new materials in classroom or anything children should know). The educator leads the discussion of the messages and this discussion supports children to begin thinking of a plan for their play experience. The educational assistant joins in at the end and we both help all children make a plan.

Play Time (90 minutes)

The Prekindergarten staff plans the children's play time to include one or two new materials or experiences each day. As well, the children are involved in long term projects during this time. The adults are actively participating with the children during play time.

Bathroom/Snack (20 minutes)

A structured bathroom time is provided because the bathroom is downstairs and the children cannot go to the bathroom by themselves. After washroom time, everyone goes back to the classroom for snack. The children hand out the placemats and the cups, serve the snack and pour the milk.

Outside Time (15 minutes)

Outside time is provided every day all year (weather permitting). Indoor play time can be shortened to make a longer outdoor play time. Some indoor toys are taken outside (e.g., stroller, cars, blocks, paints, others) to enhance the outdoor play experience. There is a shed to store outdoor toys such as, tricycles, sand toys, parachute, tunnel and others.

Departure (10-15 minutes)

Get ready for departure and leave for home.

Resource Sheet D: Considerations for Administrators

Key Practice	Applaud	Question
Assessing Children's Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educator uses a variety of methods to collect information about children's unique qualities and develops appropriate goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educator sees only the needs of the children and does not plan to provide support to overcome the needs Unrealistic expectations for 3- & 4-year olds
Bulletin Boards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work displayed is created by children and is of interest to children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Features commercial posters and crafts that look all the same (e.g., turtle pattern animals)
Learning Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experiential Centres: provide a variety of open-ended materials and props to encourage children's investigations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial toys predominate and are used for a single purpose (e.g., pop-up toys)
Family Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A place for adult family members to sit while waiting for children Photos are displayed in the room so children can see their families throughout the day Events are planned that support families in their learning with their children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of dialogue between the educator and the family The same event happens each month (e.g., cookie baking)
Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educator allows large blocks of time for children to engage in activities, which provides fewer and smoother transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educator changes activities too quickly and controls children's time
Interacting with Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educator supports language, communication, initiative and problem solving by the children in individual, small and large groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educator primarily directs and infrequently interacts with children during experiential centre time
Learning Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safe and healthy indoor and outdoor learning environments Thoughtfully designed layout that is uncluttered and encourages investigation and exploration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children have no access to outdoor learning experiences Room overcrowded or unorganized
Long Range Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educator considers the ideas of the children and their interests when planning for the upcoming year. Plans may be summarized at the end of the month and submitted to administration (emergent curriculum) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educator has the entire year planned with themes, field trips and activities prior to meeting the children
Age-Appropriate Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large blocks of time allow children to engage in play experiences Interaction in small and large groups with ample opportunities for conversation and oral language development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educator tends to introduce the primary school curriculum into programming for preschool children Children sit at tables and chairs to complete individual worksheets
Build Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration to provide a seamless transition to Kindergarten. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educator works independently from other ELCC programs

Resource Sheet E: Prekindergarten Information for School Staff

How is Prekindergarten structured?

- Prekindergarten is a program operated by the school division targeted primarily to vulnerable children aged three and four years old and their families.
- Ideally, a selection committee composed of the Prekindergarten teacher, administrator, other school-based professionals and any other individuals from the community who are involved with children of Prekindergarten age, prioritize applications based on highest need. Children who are admitted to the program are given opportunities they may not have had otherwise.
- A qualified teacher employs educational practices that are appropriate to the individual and to the age of the children.
- Quality Prekindergarten programs challenge children while they play. Experiential play is critical for child development.
- Gymnasium, library and music schedules should be at the beginning or end of the Prekindergarten program to allow for large blocks of uninterrupted play experiences.
- The Prekindergarten program has a ratio of one adult to eight children and typically accommodates 16 children for a minimum of 12 hours per week. Prekindergarten teachers usually schedule family events, conduct home visits or prepare materials for the program one day per week, often on Friday.
- Prekindergarten operates on a slightly different daily schedule than the rest of the school building; for example, recess breaks are at a different time, and the children are accompanied outside by the teacher and the educational assistant. However, the Prekindergarten teacher's work schedule follows the same yearly calendar as the rest of the school. Prekindergarten students' first and last day dates may differ from other grade levels. Prekindergarten report card dates are different from the typical school calendar dates.
- Prekindergarten is as important to the school as any other grade. Research strongly supports high quality early childhood programs.

Why is the program important for the school and the community?

- The Prekindergarten program builds early relationships between the school and the families. Staff can create a support network for families that need it, and parents can access community resources earlier.
- Because children come into the school at age three or four, those with diverse abilities who may need supports to succeed can be identified earlier.
- The program provides learning opportunities for both children and parents.

What is the role of the school staff?

- The staff supports the Prekindergarten philosophy and practice and embraces it as part of the school.
- The staff promotes the program inside and outside the school. When a new Prekindergarten program is established, the principal promotes the program well before it begins.
- The staff makes the Prekindergarten teacher and educational assistant part of the school family by including them in staff activities as much as possible (e.g., take them a treat on birthdays if they aren't able to come to the staffroom, make sure that they are aware of activities going on within the school and include them in school events).
- The staff offers assistance to families who come into the school not knowing where to find the Prekindergarten classroom. Accompanying guests to the classroom and offering friendly words does much to dispel the discomfort some people feel when entering a school environment.

Resource Sheet F: Where Do I Find Information on...?

Topic	Source
Facility Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School division secretary-treasurers or facility supervisors • <i>Better Beginnings, Better Futures</i> (pp. 45-46) Facilities Requirements
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Better Beginnings, Better Futures</i> (pp. 53-54) • <i>Prekindergarten: A Handbook for Administrators</i>, Appendix B: Recruitment Suggestions (pp.29-30)
Selecting and Ordering Equipment and Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Better Beginnings, Better Futures</i> (pp. 41-42) and Appendix C (pp. 64-65) Prekindergarten Basic Furniture and Materials Inventory. Also found in Appendix C of <i>Prekindergarten: A Handbook for Administrators</i> (p.31) • <i>Play and Exploration</i> (pp. 60-62) Experiential Centres • <i>Early Learning Environment Grant: Resource Booklet</i> (November 2008) • PowerPoint to accompany the above resource, Ministry of Education website - www.education.sk.ca/ELCC
What to Look for in Site Visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Better Beginnings, Better Futures</i> (p. 40) Program Assessment Tool. This same assessment tool is found in <i>Leading for Change</i> (p. 22) • <i>Leading for Change</i> (pp. 19-23). These pages can also assist in directing professional development activities • <i>Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs</i>: Chapter 5 (pp. 149-183)
Suggestions/Opportunities for Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Leading for Change</i> (pp. 6; 10-12); Resource Sheets (pp. 14-18); Site Visit Observation (pp. 19-22); Program Assessment Tool (p. 22) could also be used • Ministry of Education website : Site Visit Project; ECERS-R training, Prekindergarten Basics workshops, <i>Play and Exploration</i> workshops
Additional Resources for Further Information and Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs</i>: Chapter 4 (pp. 111-148) "Developmentally Appropriate Practice in the Preschool Years Ages 3-5: An Overview" Chapter 5 (pp. 149-183) "Developmentally Appropriate Practice in the Preschool Years Ages 3-5: Examples to Consider" Chapter 10 (pp. 327-333) "Frequently Asked Questions About Developmentally Appropriate Practice" • Prekindergarten/Kindergarten Core Resources List www.education.gov.sk.ca/kdg-resources

Appendices

Appendix A: Frequently Asked Questions

Appendix B: Recruitment Suggestions – Teachers
Recruitment Suggestions – Educational Assistants

Appendix C: Prekindergarten Basic Furniture and Materials Inventory

Appendix D: Roles and Responsibilities

Appendix A: Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is Prekindergarten?

Prekindergarten is a program operated by the school division for children aged three and four years old. A qualified teacher carefully prepares experiential centres in the classroom where children play and actively explore their world. The teacher models language and behaviour and encourages and extends learning at every opportunity. The aim of Prekindergarten is to lay the foundation for school success and lifelong learning.

2. Why is Prekindergarten targeted?

Limited resources make it necessary to target this program primarily to vulnerable children. Research indicates vulnerable children benefit the most from high quality early learning programs, although high quality programs provide positive opportunities for all children.

3. How are decisions made about who can attend?

Information about the Prekindergarten program is communicated to the public, parents and early childhood organizations. Children can be referred by outside agencies, or parents can make application for their child to attend. A home visit may occur before selection is made. A selection committee composed of school personnel, outside agency personnel and/or relevant community organization personnel uses criteria to prioritize children who would benefit most from enhanced opportunities. Decisions are made by this committee or a smaller school-based team.

4. Why are groupings of three- and four-year-olds recommended for Prekindergarten?

Multi-age groupings are advantageous for both social and intellectual development, especially for younger children. Within a classroom of mixed-age children, more opportunity exists to develop relationships with peers who complement, match or supplement children's own needs and styles.

5. Does the program involve a cost to families?

No. The Prekindergarten program is supported by funding from the Ministry of Education through the school division.

6. What are expectations of families? What is involved in a home visit?

Family commitment to the program and involvement in its operation is a key component of the Prekindergarten program. Families are invited and encouraged to participate in planned events and informal visits to the classroom and to be involved in home visits.

Teachers usually visit families in their homes (or in another agreed-upon location) two or three times a year. The visit is informal – parents and teachers get to know one another and share information about the children. Children enjoy having their teachers over for a visit.

7. What options exist for transporting children to Prekindergarten programs?

School divisions use a variety of transportation options, depending on community and family circumstances. In some programs, parents are responsible for transportation of their children, whereas in others, the school division provides transportation or subsidizes parents for their costs associated with transportation.

8. What are the start dates and end dates for the Prekindergarten program? Are these the same as the rest of the school?

Prekindergarten is funded for ten months. School divisions make adjustments in the days of children's participation to accommodate family engagement activities, teacher planning, reflection and professional development. Prekindergarten teachers' work schedules follow the same calendar as the rest of the school.

The school division selection process may affect the start date and end date for children's attendance. If the selection process takes place in June, children's participation in the program may end in mid-June but begin early in September. If the selection process happens in September, children's participation may begin in mid-September and end in late June.

9. How can the school secretary support the Prekindergarten program?

The school secretary, who is often the first point of contact for families interested in the Prekindergarten program, is welcoming and friendly. The secretary provides the families with a Prekindergarten package (application form, brochure, letter from the teacher) and explains the application process, including the completion of the forms. The secretary may invite the families to the school to pick up the package or mail the package if coming to the school is not an option. In either circumstance, the secretary indicates that the Prekindergarten teacher will follow up with the families.

Appendix B: Recruitment Suggestions - Teacher

Category	Teacher Qualities	Importance to Prekindergarten
Aptitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible • Reflective practitioner • Continuously seeking best practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures that the Prekindergarten program adapts to the needs of children and their families • Assesses the effectiveness of the Prekindergarten program on an ongoing basis in order to implement best practices for three and four year old children
Interests & Abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing positive relationships with families • Organizing and facilitating events and activities to engage families • Involving community programming and partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging families is a primary goal of the Prekindergarten program. Children are the heart of Prekindergarten and are best served in the context of the family. • Building relationships that support families contributes to successful transitions into the learning environment and helps families better understand their important role in their child's education and development. • Working collaboratively with colleagues and community partners benefits vulnerable children and families.
Knowledge, Skills & Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong interpersonal skills • Collaboration skills • Bachelor of Education & Teaching Certificate* • Formal classes in early childhood education** • Knowledge of and experience in development and learning of 3-, 4- and 5-year-old children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability to interact with families from various backgrounds and to ensure families and children feel they belong is important to the success of Prekindergarten. • The Prekindergarten teacher is part of the team that includes an educational assistant and other support personnel such as speech language pathologists. Together the adults collaborate to provide a strong foundation for the children in the program. • The Prekindergarten teacher has theoretical knowledge to plan and implement a high quality early learning program. • The Prekindergarten teacher understands how to plan and program holistic (physical, social-emotional, spiritual and intellectual), age-appropriate activities within the classroom and outdoor environments. The teacher makes learning visible through children's work, photos and ideas.

Post-Secondary Qualifications

* Required

** Strongly Recommended

Appendix B: Recruitment Suggestions - Educational Assistant

Category	Educational Assistant Qualities	Importance to Prekindergarten
Aptitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible • Reliable in attendance • Reflective practitioner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prekindergarten children develop a sense of belonging when adults value and respect their ideas and capabilities. • The adults in the Prekindergarten program need to be flexible and reliable in their attendance, as these actions support relationship development with the children and their families. • Adults who reflect on observations about the children and offer additional props to support the children's learning contribute to high quality programming.
Interests & Abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing relationships with families • Assisting with planning, organizing, attending family events & activities • Supporting community programming & partnerships • Working as a team member • Facilitating children's development through play, exploration and investigation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging families is a primary goal of the Prekindergarten program. • Interacting with families from various backgrounds and ensuring that families and children feel they belong is important to the success of Prekindergarten. • Building relationships that support families contributes to successful transitions into the learning environment and helps families better understand their important role in their child's education and development. • Working collaboratively with colleagues and community partners benefits vulnerable children and families. • Participating as part of a team provides a strong foundation for the children in the program. The team includes the Prekindergarten teacher and other support personnel such as speech language pathologists. The educational assistant takes part in planning sessions with other support personnel and maintains confidentiality in all aspects. • Observing and listening to how children interact and manipulate materials in the Prekindergarten environment help the educational assistant and teacher plan how to extend the learning.
Knowledge, Skills & Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong interpersonal skills • Collaboration skills • Keen observation and listening skills • Knowledge of and experience in development and learning of 3-, 4- and 5-year old children • Effective working relationship with the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interacting with families from various backgrounds and ensuring that families and children feel they belong is important to the success of Prekindergarten. • Living in the community in which the school is located is desirable. • Assisting the teacher in understanding the community enhances family engagement and community partnerships. • Understanding young children and the importance of a play-based program increases positive interactions with the children and enhances oral language and social emotional development.
Post-Secondary Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Childhood Certificate or Diploma** 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The educational assistant has a background in early childhood education acquired through formal post-secondary training.

** Strongly recommended

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 • child size tables • 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) • refrigerator for playhouse • sand table • shelves • sink • stove for playhouse • teacher workspace (shelves, counter/desk, chair) • water shirts/aprons for water table • water table • whiteboard • workbench 	<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.) • 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.) 	<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.) • playdough • staples • tape

Appendix D: Roles and Responsibilities

1. Program and Policy Analyst, Ministry of Education, Early Learning and Child Care Branch

- Consults with the school division to ensure high quality Prekindergarten programs
- Distributes communication throughout the school year to the school division superintendent/consultant responsible for Prekindergarten
- Arranges a meeting every two years to review the school division Prekindergarten program
- Organizes a Prekindergarten Basics professional development event for school division personnel who are new to the Prekindergarten program
- Provides feedback and professional resources as requested by the school division

2. School Division Superintendent/Consultant Responsible for Prekindergarten

- Provides leadership and support to school division's Prekindergarten policy development
- Supports Prekindergarten professional development within the school division
- Supports new Prekindergarten program development and continuous improvement
- Provides ongoing consultative support to existing Prekindergarten programs
- Liaises with the Ministry of Education Program and Policy Analyst
- Distributes communication to Prekindergarten programs
- Participates in biennial review process
- Provides leadership to complete the school division Prekindergarten assessment and evaluation plan
- Oversees and submits the annual Prekindergarten reports to the Ministry of Education in June of each school year

3. Administrator

- Collaborates in the decision-making process regarding student selection
- Supports the Prekindergarten teacher in establishing community partnerships (e.g., OT, SLP)
- Supports and guides the Prekindergarten teacher and educational assistant/associate in professional development related to early childhood

- Becomes familiar with high quality early childhood research-based principles
- Promotes the Prekindergarten program to other teachers, staff and community
- Advocates for appropriate facility accommodations and student transportation

4. Prekindergarten Teacher (refer to page 53 of *Better Beginnings, Better Futures*)

- Obtains specialized knowledge with a focus on early childhood education or related fields
- Works in partnership with the educational assistant to deliver a caring, safe, enriched, culturally responsive learning program and environment to promote play, thinking and children's self-confidence
- Observes and documents children's learning
- Establishes and maintains close communication with families including home visits and family education opportunities
- Engages diverse, multi-ethnic communities and establishes mutual respect and trust with children and families
- Collaborates with other professionals such as speech language pathologists, child psychologists and other human service providers in the community

5. Prekindergarten Educational Assistant/Associate

- Works in partnership with the teacher to deliver a high quality Prekindergarten program
- Establishes and maintains close relationships with families, including participation in home visits and development and delivery of family education opportunities
- Interacts with children in experiential centres providing stimulation, enhancing language development and extending play and knowledge
- Participates in case management and planning sessions with the teacher and other service providers to coordinate support services for children
- Participates in professional learning to enhance knowledge and skills

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