

## **Prekindergarten Selection Criteria, Processes, and Considerations in Saskatchewan Rivers Public School Division (SRPSD): Parent Information**

### **Background**

Prekindergarten is a targeted program prioritizing three and four year old children living in vulnerable circumstances in the community. Research demonstrates that high quality early learning programs, such as Prekindergarten, have both short and long term benefits in the lives of children. Currently, Prekindergarten is not a universal program; there is more demand than available space.

In order to maximize early learning spaces and effectively meet the early learning needs of children and families, SRPSD has established Prekindergarten selection criteria and processes. The selection criteria and processes optimize the opportunity for children living in vulnerable circumstances in the community while avoiding duplication of services. SRPSD's selection criteria and processes are aligned with the Ministry of Education's document, *Maximizing Early Learning Spaces*.

### **Prekindergarten Selection Process**

- Application forms for 3 and 4 year olds are completed by parents and submitted to the school. Forms may be accessed through schools with Prekindergarten or through SRPSD's website under Parent Information.
- Prekindergarten applications and referrals go through a selection process.
- A selection team prioritizes applications and waiting lists.
- Selection is done using established criteria based on risk factors and vulnerabilities of the child and family. Those with highest levels of risk receive priority.

### **Selection Criteria: Risk Factors and Vulnerabilities**

In *Better Beginnings, Better Futures* (2008), vulnerability is defined broadly as follows.

- Family has low socio-economic status
- Mother has less than a high school education
- Home language other than English
- Mother is young and unmarried
- Lone parent
- Child Abuse or neglect
- Child/family isolation
- Child experiencing challenges in areas like social-emotional or language development

### **Additional Selection Considerations**

- Child's access to other early learning opportunities such as child care, preschool, Aboriginal Head Start, or Early Childhood Intervention Program (ECIP)
- Number of transitions in the day for the child
- Balance within the classroom such as gender, age, abilities
- Referral from partner agencies
- Family commitment to the program and child's attendance
- Neighbourhood school of the child
- Other vulnerability factors depending on community needs