

**Saskatchewan Rivers Public School Division
Prekindergarten: Information and Guidelines**

Prekindergarten Programs

- Prekindergarten is an early intervention, prevention program.
- Prekindergarten is **not** a universal program for all 3 and 4 year olds. **Space is limited.**
- Prekindergarten is a targeted program for our most vulnerable or at risk 3 and 4 year old children and their families.
- When space permits and/or attendance is irregular, SRPSD recommends a maximum of 10 children to 1 adult.
- Programs have been placed in schools where children living in the attendance area will benefit most significantly.
- Prekindergarten is a no barriers to access program. If families are hesitant to have children attend due to an inability to purchase supplies (shoes, backpack, etc.) the early learning budget can be used to purchase these items for the child so they can attend school as soon as possible.

Prekindergarten Selection Process

- Children who have the opportunity to socialize with same age peers in other settings, **including child/day care**, preschool, play groups, etc. already benefit and typically **do not need to attend prekindergarten**. The space should be for a child living in vulnerable circumstances who will benefit most significantly from the program.
- See SRPSDs Administrative Procedure 345, Admission of Resident Students. Note in AP 345 (#7) that children **need to be 3** before starting prekindergarten.
- When selecting students, **3-year-olds receive the same consideration as 4 year olds**. Research shows that vulnerable children benefit greatly from attending Prekindergarten for two years.
- The [Prekindergarten Application Form](#) guides the selection process. Based on the information and knowledge of the family, a team of 2 or 3 school-based educators (teacher and administrator along with an early learning coach or EST) review the application forms and select children to attend. Home visits serve to aid the selection process.
- The prekindergarten selection process begins in the spring and is finalized **in the fall** so that late applicants and vulnerable families new to a community have the opportunity to apply.
 - ◆ **Prior to June 30th, Schools may select ten children to enroll in the Pre-K program.**
 - ◆ By September 15, children are selected apart from 2 or 3 spots.
 - ◆ By September 29, prekindergarten programs are enrolled to 19. Schools may hold one spot to accommodate a vulnerable child applying later in the year or to accept a referral from a partner agency.
- **While children do not need to be independent with toileting to attend prekindergarten, a plan should be developed with families that includes a goal for toilet learning. This is an important developmental milestone for children to reach.**
- Prekindergarten families may be transient; prekindergarten is a continuous entry program. Therefore, a waiting list of 3 and 4 year olds is needed at each school. Waiting lists also help determine the need for additional prekindergarten programs.

Prekindergarten Timeframes

- Prekindergarten is a 10 month, 12 - 15 hour a week program. This includes family engagement time.
- **Start and end dates for prekindergarten coincide with the regular school calendar. This means that Pre-K programs end on the last day of school.**
- Home or Yard Visits at the beginning of the year are part of the program. With travel time, home visits may take up to 1 hour. Based on this, teachers and EAs can make at least 5 home visits a day. A program starting with 15 children (for example) may require 3 days of home visits. Teachers with more students will require more time; teachers with fewer children will require less time.
- Home visits may be scheduled to begin on the first day of classes. Following completion of the majority of home visits, Prekindergarten begins. Schools will have different start dates depending on the number of home visits.
- **Ideally students will attend by September 9 but should start no later than September 16.**
- Some teachers prefer to have a staggered entry with half of the children beginning on the first day, half the second day, and all of the children on the third day.

Quality Prekindergarten Programming

- Prekindergarten is holistic and focuses on the physical, social/emotional, intellectual, and spiritual domains. Children need to socialize and play, to be creative and become problem solvers, to be immersed in language and literacy, and to curiously interact with nature.
- **Essential Learning Experiences (ELEs)** act as the Prekindergarten Curriculum. ELEs serve to assist early childhood educators in planning for, monitoring, facilitating, scaffolding, and documenting the child development in prekindergarten.
- Phonological awareness is an important part of emergent reading. Prekindergarten children benefit greatly from the explicit teaching of phonological awareness using the Heggerty resource as well as many and varied opportunities to sing, play with words in books, play games with words and practice their language during play.
- **Developmentally appropriate phonics instruction in PreK includes the use of Zoophonics. A set of cards is required for daily instruction and review. Complimentary play-based activities are encouraged and support the explicit teaching of phonics during whole group time.**
- Three and four year olds need opportunities daily to run, dance, balance, climb, etc. to develop their gross motor skills. Scheduled gym time is important.
- Weather permitting, Prekindergarten children need to play outside daily. To maximize play time and minimize dressing time, time outdoors may be scheduled at the beginning or end of the day.
- The [Early Learning Portal](#) outlines available resources, guides, supports, information, and professional learning opportunities.
- See Prekindergarten documents [Prekindergarten Essentials](#) as well as [Play & Exploration](#). Both can be downloaded though the Ministry's website. New teachers receive documents.

Fridays

- Prekindergarten children attend on Fridays when family events are planned.
- Fridays provide teachers with prep time and time for family events or PD. Rather than weekly, this time may be calculated and averaged throughout the year.
- Typically, prekindergarten teachers and EAs work together on Fridays assessing and organizing documentation of students' work, planning, participating in home visits or family events, creating learning centres & invitations for learning, enhancing learning environment, shopping for program supplies or attending PD. **However, when EA time would be better utilized in other areas of the school, this can be accommodated.**

Rest Time in Prekindergarten

- Rest time is not a required part of the Prekindergarten program. If teachers choose to have children rest during the day, then the following guidelines should be adhered to:
- The entire time dedicated to resting should not exceed one hour.
- Children who do not need to sleep or who are not sleeping after 5-15min should be given the opportunity to engage in an activity.
- Children who fall asleep within the first few minutes should be gently woken at the end of rest time.
- All children should be awake for at least 1 hour prior to the end of the day in order to experience an additional opportunity to learn and have a meaningful conclusion to the day.
- In special circumstances, teachers are encouraged to have conversations with caregivers to understand the reasons why children may need to sleep longer than an hour during the school day.

Family Engagement

- Engaging families in positive ways is critical for learning success. A warm and welcoming space that draws parents into the classroom often includes a sitting area, books, culturally-diverse elements, documentation of children's work, and pictures of children and their families at the children's eye level.
- Prekindergarten programs engage families through events that include home visits, family days or evenings, and family education events (literacy, nutrition, immunization, etc.). Prekindergarten teachers are expected to organize these family engagement events as part of the program.
- Typically, family days/events occur monthly. Evening events including gym nights and family literacy events are gaining popularity.
- Family learning opportunities (e.g. PA Literacy Network, Nutritionist, Public Health Nurse, etc.) may be scheduled throughout the year.
- Parent/teacher/child interviews are required.
- [Family Engagement in Prekindergarten](#) (2012) for Philosophical Background, Expectations, and Key Practices (e.g.; Communication, Respectful Partnership, Home Visits, Goal Setting, and Child Development) that make a difference!

Nutrition

- Prekindergarten programs provide a nutritious snack daily along with another opportunity for communication and socialization. Teachers or EAs typically do the nutrition shopping on Friday.

Documentation of Students' Learning

- Documentation of student learning and portfolio assessment using Edsby are the required methods of assessing the learning of prekindergarten children. Rather than a report card, documentation shows children actively engaged in the processes of learning, captures milestones, and supports reflection in determining next teaching/learning plans. Portfolio assessment is purposeful, guided by the **Essential Learning Experiences (ELEs)**, and shows what children can do over the course of the year.
- Teachers require quality classroom cameras/iPads for the documentation process.
- **Cumulative folders are required for prekindergarten children.**

Professional Learning for the Early Years

- Prekindergarten teachers will participate in 3 days of professional development in the 2024-25 school year.
- All prekindergarten teachers and EAs are expected to attend and register online through the Professional Development link on the SRPSD Staff Room.
- Additional professional learning opportunities can be accessed through [STF Professional Learning](#).

Questions about Prekindergarten can be directed to:

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