

# Early Learning Intensive Support Program

## Information for Families

**The Early Learning Intensive Support (ELIS) Program** supports young children who require intensive supports to meet their potential by accessing an inclusive early learning environment. Space is available in a number of communities in Saskatchewan to join existing Prekindergarten classrooms. Please contact your local school division to see if ELIS access is available in your community.

**Prekindergarten (PreK)** is a high quality, halftime early learning program available in some schools. Each PreK program accepts sixteen children who are living in vulnerable circumstances. Selection criteria (low socioeconomic status, referral from a government or community-based agency, social isolation or not having access to early learning programs, family health care challenges, exposure to family trauma and delays in the child's development) are used to identify the children with the greatest need.



**The Early Learning Intensive Support Program** provides additional spaces in a limited number of Prekindergarten programs to provide opportunities for children to engage in inclusive learning with other children the same age. Support will be provided through a collaborative team approach to meet individualized needs and to promote strengths from learning and participation. The unique needs and circumstances of the child, the class and facility will be considered for each situation.

### Can my child access this support?

The Early Learning Intensive Support Program is for children who have significant developmental delays and require intensive support to meet their potential. This may include but is not restricted to children with visual impairments, who are deaf or hard of hearing, have autism spectrum disorder or complex medical needs. A medical diagnosis is not required to qualify but there are a limited number of spaces available so not all children will be accepted to receive this support. Factors such as the age of the child and other available services may impact which child is given priority. The school division determines which PreK programs will provide early learning intensive supports. Factors considered include the unique needs and circumstances of the child, the class and the school.

### **How old does my child have to be to attend?**

Children who are three or four years of age can attend the program, although priority will be given to four-year-olds.

### **What kind of support will my child have in the classroom?**

The Prekindergarten program is led by a teacher with the support of a Prekindergarten associate. An educational assistant will also be assigned to the program who will assist the teacher to support meaningful participation of all children in the early learning program through interactions with peers, the development of play skills and incorporating individualized goals. An Inclusion and Intervention Plan (IIP) will be created for children requiring intensive supports. IIPs are planning documents that describe a child's unique individualized plan. These plans are created by parents/guardians, teachers and others who may support the child and will outline the supports and services your child will receive.

### **What if my child is also attending another early learning program?**

Preference will be given to children who are not enrolled in another early learning program where intensive supports are being provided, including licensed child care. This is to reduce transitions for the child throughout the day, match family care needs with program hours and to ensure that the maximum number of children have access to an early learning program. Note: In licensed child care facilities, families may qualify for an enhanced accessibility grant which the centre can use to hire additional staff to support the integration and achievement of the child's individual goals in the early learning program.

### **What is the role of family in the Early Learning Intensive Support Program?**

Family engagement is an integral part of Prekindergarten. Many opportunities will exist to participate and support your child's learning experiences in meaningful ways within the program. In addition, you will be part of the collaborative team, identifying and planning individualized goals, planning for transitions and problem solving together.

### **How will my child be transported to the program?**

Families are responsible to transport children to and from the program.

### **How do I apply for Early Learning Intensive Supports?**

Contact your school division for an application form and more information.

An inclusive attitude, belief and approach, are embedded in the document, *Actualizing a Needs-based Model* (2015) which outlines the following inclusionary philosophy and beliefs:

- Focusing on the strengths, needs and interests of the student;
- Emphasizing the supports that the student requires and the elimination of barriers;
- Nurturing independence and interdependence by providing opportunities that promote the development of personal empowerment and self-determination;
- Maintaining a view that the student is an active participant within the immediate community and wider society;
- Embracing the belief that students are parts of an evolving society that believes all individuals belong in and are valued members of a diverse society; and,
- Fostering an attitude of respect, appreciation and acceptance of diversity.

For more information on inclusion, please visit the Early Learning Portal at:

<http://earlylearning.edonline.sk.ca>.

Choose the Resources tab and then the topic of Inclusion.

A variety of documents and resources are available such as:

- *Actualizing a Needs Based Model*
- *Inclusive Education*
- *Supports for All Learners*

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<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/early-learning-child-care.html>