

**OECTA Submission**  
to Curriculum Review of  
the Full-Day Early Learning  
Kindergarten Program

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**catholicteachers.ca**

ONTARIO ENGLISH  
Catholic  
Teachers  
ASSOCIATION



The Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA) represents 45,000 women and men who have chosen teaching careers in the Catholic schools in Ontario. These teachers are found in the elementary panel from junior kindergarten to Grade eight, in the secondary panel from Grade nine through Grade twelve, and occasional teachers in both panels, in publicly funded schools.

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## **PREAMBLE**

OECTA appreciates the continued focus on improving our education system through a movement towards fully implementing full-day early learning in kindergarten. We believe the program holds the promise of improving the social, emotional and cognitive development of children as they enter our school system. Our teachers have provided significant feedback on the many positive changes that the program has made both to their teaching and to the learning of students. Over the implementation period, they have accumulated sufficient experience to provide valuable insight into what has been successful and what needs to be significantly changed.

In order to respond to the Ministry's invitation for feedback, OECTA designed a survey and invited FDELKP teachers to respond. Many teachers took the time through the Christmas season to respond in great detail. A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix A. In addition to the OECTA survey, members were provided a link to the Ministry website and encouraged to complete the Ministry survey there.

This submission represents OECTA members' feedback, primarily from the survey but also from events of the past two years. For the most part, we have aligned our feedback with the section titles in the Ministry survey. However, this submission extends well beyond the restricted scope of feedback possible within the Ministry survey. OECTA wants to ensure that all of the information that follows will be considered as part of the Ministry's review of the FDELKP (draft version) document. We trust you will use this input to inform your decisions as you move forward with modifying the FDELKP document.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Full Day Early Learning Kindergarten Program (FDELKP) is now in its second year of implementation. OECTA has undertaken a number of steps in support of the program, which we feel, was rolled out in significant haste. Numerous issues have had to be addressed during implementation, as many teachers, Early Childhood Educators (ECE.) and principals were unsure about some very key components of the program (particularly play-based/inquiry based learning), and their roles and responsibilities. The delivery of the program has been hampered by insufficient space and limited resources. Many have had to deal with class

sizes well beyond the kindergarten class size cap (PCS-20) that teachers are accustomed to. Added to this burden is the lack of understanding by some principals, senior administration, ECEs and teachers, (especially those new to kindergarten) of the key tenets of the program and the roles of staff assigned to the program. This is most apparent with school boards' continuing expectations related to mandatory diagnostic assessment in the areas of literacy and numeracy. In the absence of clear direction, many teachers are being led in ways that are incompatible with the intention of the FDELKP as described in the Ministry's FDELKP document.

While the Ministry did initiate training for school and board teams, individual teacher access to this training was limited, as Boards also had to include senior administrators, principals, resource staff, and child care staff. To address this, OECTA delivered an FDELKP conference, in the spring of each of the last two years. In the first year, FDELKP teachers who were about to launch the program were invited. In the second year, Early Learning Kindergarten (EL-K) teams were invited along with principals and superintendents. Many teachers, ECEs and others had questions about all aspects of the program, which the conferences attempted to address. The 2011 conference was financially supported with some funds from the Ministry of Education. In both years Jim Grieve, Assistant Deputy Ministry-Early Learning Division as well as renowned speakers, Roberta Golinkoff & Kathy Hirsh-Pasek spoke about play-based learning and the FDELKP. In addition, sessions pertinent to roles and responsibilities as well as the program were offered. These included:

- Role of Kindergarten teacher
- Role of ECE staff
- Working as a team
- Collaborative planning
- Managing conflict
- Assessment & evaluation
- Pedagogy
- Resources
- Structuring the day

Over the summer of 2010, OECTA's Professional Development Department undertook to develop and deliver a kindergarten unit to help teachers get started with the implementation of the FDELKP when the program commenced in September 2010 (Appendix A). A poster to showcase play-based learning was also developed (Appendix B). Each teacher, currently teaching FDELKP, has received copies of these resources. Teachers' responses to both of these resources were overwhelmingly positive, particularly as teachers felt so unsure about the program, its commencement and ongoing implementation. In addition to resources, OECTA also created an online ELKP forum site to enable teachers to ask questions, seek clarification and share concerns and ideas with each other and with the Association. This has been a very dynamic site since its inception. Despite the success of these endeavours, teachers are seeking further clarity about the program, especially from the Ministry. Teachers feel it is very important that the Ministry clarify the intent, scope etc. of the program not just for the classroom team, but also for principals and senior administration so they may support the implementation as it was envisioned. Providing this much needed support would assist them in the uniform movement towards play and inquiry-based learning. The Association believes that the FDELKP document is one of the most important ways to provide that clarity, especially given how familiar the teachers have become with the document.

**Note:** For the purposes of the OECTA survey and this report, OECTA referred to the document in two parts. Part One referred to the following sections of the document:

- Introduction
- Building a Learning Community
- Teaching/Learning Approaches
- The Learning Program
- Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting
- Program Planning

Part Two referred to the Learning Areas: Program Expectations.

## 1. DOCUMENT

**Ministry proposed revisions:** Update language to align with that used in training as well as with current understanding of key messages (e.g., clarify ELK/FDK/FDELK, remove reference to calendar in an example in a math expectation, align language around generic work sheets with message from training.

- a. Acronyms used throughout the document are explained at their first occurrence and are consistent throughout the document. (rating scale)
- b. Key messages and language in the document will be consistent with those used in training, and be reflected in the document in a variety of ways (e.g., in the front matter, in examples, in Professional Learning Conversations, etc.) (rating scale)...

- 1.01** In response to the proposed Ministry revisions we concur with the need to align language and ensure that key messages are consistent and applied throughout the document. Clear and concise messaging are cornerstones for successful implementation.
- 1.02** OECTA believes that the Ministry needs to clarify an audience for this document. Part one is written for varied purposes and for too many different audiences. The first part could be streamlined for the target audience and information for supplemental audiences (superintendents, principals and the community) could be pulled out and put into their own stand-alone documents. For the FDELKP document, its key ideas could be worked into the Learning Areas section.
- 1.03** Most teachers really like the document and are seeking revisions rather than an entirely new document. As a whole, the document is found to be too large, containing too much information, difficult to navigate and missing some key features that would assist in managing and accessing parts that are needed by teachers on a regular basis (e.g. The Learning Areas). Teachers were nearly unanimous in requesting that the document be tabbed and have a sturdy (card stock) front and back cover to facilitate use. A sturdy format would ensure ease of access as well as facilitate ongoing use. In addition, OECTA concurs with the idea that charts will be added in a number of places.

**1.04** Throughout the Ministry’s feedback survey it is proposed that reflective questions will be used as starting points to clarify throughout the document-OECTA strongly discourages this approach. Teachers come to a curriculum/program document for answers not for more questions. In our feedback from members, teachers were seeking clarity from the document, including answering program questions such as ‘what should the classroom look like’. While there is no doubt that one answer does not fit all, posing a reflective question would definitely not be helpful. Instead, pictures of different classrooms, with and without students, would be much more useful. Videos would also be helpful especially for communicating/informing parents. The classroom pictures and videos should reflect the classes that teachers are teaching in, with 25 to 30 students in spaces designed for much smaller groups and with limited space and materials. Guiding questions would help the teacher set up the classroom more appropriately. Here are a few examples:

- Is sufficient room available for large blocks to be utilized fully?  
If not some suggestions are:
- Are quiet and more active/noisy activities set up away from each other?  
If not some suggestions are:
- Is there sufficient room for students with mobility issues to move around safely? If not some suggestions are:
- Is the environment over stimulating for students with Autism or other issues? If not some suggestions are:

**1.05** As to the suggestion of posting links with examples, examples should be embedded in the document. The chances of teachers and/or ECE educators accessing links within the context of a busy Kindergarten day are remote. Posting links clearly implies that some joint collaboration time will be made available for the EL-K team to explore these links and subsequently engage in Professional Learning Conversations. Joint time to collaborate is a cornerstone for the program to facilitate ongoing professional learning conversations about students and the program, but not something most EL-K teams have access to.

**1.06** The survey indicates that revisions are being contemplated based on messages from the training, yet many teachers have never attended a training session. They have used the document as the sole direction regarding program implementation. They have become familiar with it. As such, the Ministry

should update the language and references while being mindful about not undertaking a complete rewrite.

**1.07 OECTA Recommendations:**

- **rework part one of the document to reflect various audiences**
- **revise rather than rewrite the document**
- **tab document with sturdy covers**
- **use guiding rather than reflective questions to support clarity of the program**
- **embed examples within the document**

**2. THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

The learning environment is often referred to as “the third teacher”. Significant thinking and work has been done about the impact of the learning environment on student learning. Currently “The Learning Environment” is a stand-alone section in the front matter of the document.

**Ministry proposed revisions:** Revise the learning environment section or provide links to illustrate the importance of the learning environment on all aspects of student learning, and to make them a more reflective tool for FDELK teams.

- a. A series of reflective questions will provide starting points for FDELK teams and others to discuss the learning environment and to consider things that need rethinking/repeating and/or removing. (rating scale)
- b. The addition of similar reflective questions about the learning environment in other relevant sections of the document (e.g., Self-regulation) will help to emphasize its importance and will encourage FDELK teams to think about the learning environment in all aspects of their program. (rating scale)

**2.01** In response to the proposed Ministry revisions, the terminology of “third teacher” needs to be explained. Varied examples need to be provided that clarify the concept more fully especially in relationship to an emergent curriculum. Examples of the learning environment contributing to the program should be included in all learning areas.

**2.02** Many teachers referred to the concept of the emergent curriculum but did not know or understand it fully especially in the context of the program expectations. This concept needs to be addressed within the document.

In addition to the points above, teachers are looking for detailed descriptions of the day. Some sample schedules of what the day should look like need to be included in the document's revisions.

**2.03** OECTA believes that the learning environment poses challenges for many teachers on an ongoing basis. Challenges include large numbers of students and insufficient resources, facilities and space. Some of these shortcomings are unnecessarily creating discipline and behaviour issues directly linked to noise and activity levels. Referring to the learning environment as the "third teacher" would indicate that it has a significant impact on student learning, and as such, challenges associated with the learning environment should be given priority. To start, it would be helpful to provide examples of how to utilize the environment in ways that enhance children's learning and self-regulation. Fundamentally teachers want ideas and examples of how classrooms have been structured to successfully accommodate large groups of more than 25 children.

**2.04** All may be better informed if the learning environment was not referred to as the "third teacher."

**2.05 OECTA Recommendations:**

- **define and provide examples of how to utilize the environment as the "third teacher"**
- **explain the use and construction of the learning environment rather than coin the phrase the "third teacher"**

### **3. CONTEXTS FOR LEARNING: LITERACY THROUGH THE DAY**

**Ministry proposed revisions:** Revise literacy sections or provide links to illustrate, with examples, what literacy embedded in all aspects of the full-day Kindergarten program looks like and sounds like.

- a. This could include revisions to the front matter and overview sections (e.g., chart showing how children demonstrate they are learning to communicate effectively; graphic illustrating reading/writing/oral language

behaviours; graphic showing an analysis of assessment information to inform learning, etc.) and to other key components of the document (e.g., in literacy-related examples of professional learning conversations, interactions at learning centres, examples that accompany specific expectations) that will provide support for FDELK teams to align their classroom practice with the key messages related to literacy. (rating scale)...

- 3.01** In response to the Ministry’s proposed revisions, various examples of what literacy looks like and sounds like are essential. These examples need to be embedded in all aspects of the day, reflecting large & small group instruction as well as individual & group interactions. Teachers are very much caught up in the struggle of determining what learning, particularly in literacy and numeracy, looks like in a play/inquiry-based program. Often they are directed by administrators who are even less informed than the EL-K team themselves. Without sufficient training, resources and examples of how to build literacy throughout the day, some teachers are structuring their day to permit some play-based activities as well direct teaching of specific literacy and numeracy skills-sometimes in whole group lessons, including a number of pencil and paper tasks. We support the idea of charts showing how children demonstrate their learning accompanied by examples of interactions at learning centres. The revised program document needs to address this in sufficient detail, including many examples (print and video) to support explanations to parents, principals and their teaching colleagues, who will have the students in the upcoming primary years.
- 3.02** Often teachers speak of the disconnect between the philosophy of the FDELKP document and the philosophy of mandated diagnostic assessments required by boards. In addition to that, the focus of many of the kindergarten report cards is not compatible with the direction of the FDELKP (e.g., the primacy of oral language).
- 3.03** OECTA believes that there is differences in approach between EL-K teachers and the ECEs in relation to emerging literacy and numeracy. ECEs approach it from a developmental perspective while teachers approach it from knowledge of the upcoming Grade One to Eight curriculum. This curriculum emphasis was reflected in our survey feedback. A number of members outlined the need to state within

the document the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), Curriculum Based Math (CBM), and other levels, students should attain. Further inquiries were posed regarding appropriate targets in counting, sight words, writing high frequency words, etc. These requests are unrealistic in the FDELKP, but teachers perceive a need to have students attain particular milestones in preparation for the next grade and to address parental and administrative concerns.

**3.04** It would be beneficial to incorporate some of the early phases from the Reading, Writing and Oral Language Continuum charts contained in "A Guide to Effective Literacy Instruction, Grades 4 to 6, Volume One" as reference for the EL-K team. The 'Key Indicators' and 'Teaching Emphases' contained in these continuums would be beneficial in clarifying a student's literacy development and appropriate classroom practice, for both the teacher and the ECE. Charts such as these would be beneficial in both literacy and numeracy. While there is no doubt that there is a great deal of valuable information contained in the early reading and writing strategy documents, charts would be much easier to utilize and to share within the team on an ongoing basis.

**3.05 OECTA Recommendations:**

- **clarify the diagnostic assessment piece in this section**
- **incorporate information from other Ministry documents in this section**
- **charts are the ideal way to clarify meaning for EL-K teams**

**4. CONTEXTS FOR LEARNING: NUMERACY THROUGH THE DAY**

**Ministry proposed revisions:** Revise numeracy sections or provide links to illustrate, with examples, what numeracy embedded in all aspects of the full-day Kindergarten program looks like and sounds like.

- a. This could include revisions to the front matter (e.g., a graphic showing the concepts contained in the expectations; a chart describing the math that children typically demonstrate in their play, etc.) and to other key components of the document (e.g., in mathematics-related examples of professional learning conversations, interactions at learning centres, examples that accompany specific expectations) that will make math learning clearer for FDELK teams. (rating scale)
- b. In the space below please list up to three suggestions that would help to make math learning clearer for FDELK teams. (text input)

c. Key messages about mathematics instruction emphasize the need for it to be embedded in all aspects of the full-day Kindergarten program. Revise the document (e.g., a chart showing the role of the FDELK team, the role of the child and the intentionality of materials) or provide links that give examples of what this looks like and sounds like. This will help FDELK teams to align their practice to best practices in mathematics. (rating scale)...

**4.01** In response to the Ministry's proposed revisions we believe that further additions to Part One of the FDELKP document are not necessary, within a program document such as this. Some of the proposed revisions to part one which are pertinent for parents could be incorporated into information pamphlets.

'Intentionality of materials' should be embedded within the representation piece in the Making Connections section. The commitment to increase examples that reflect the various strands in Math is an excellent idea.

**4.02** OECTA believes that much of what was outlined in Section Three-Literacy Through the Day needs to be replicated for Numeracy. Numeracy has not had nearly as much training as literacy so the need is even greater in this area. This is further highlighted by the Ministry's increasing focus on numeracy from K-12. Expectations in Mathematics need to be clear in their intent with lots of examples of how to incorporate these expectations into activities including assessment. Part of the challenge in literacy and numeracy development is parents lack of understanding regarding how literacy and numeracy learning and assessment is demonstrated inside and outside the classroom. In both these areas, the document should include ideas that teachers can provide to parents to incorporate literacy and numeracy development in general everyday activities at home, including bath time, laundry and other chores, games etc. It is important that parents understand that literacy and numeracy development can be reviewed, reinforced and extended more readily in everyday activities, rather than pencil and paper tasks.

**4.03** **OECTA Recommendations:**

- **further training required in the area of numeracy**
- **incorporate examples for parents in revised document or supplementary resource**

## 5. CONTEXTS FOR LEARNING: PLAY-BASED LEARNING

**Ministry proposed revisions:** Revise sections in the document referring to play-based learning, or provide links, to illustrate, with examples, what learning through play in the full-day Kindergarten program looks like and sounds like.

- a. This could include revisions to sections of the document referring to play (e.g., a graphic showing the connections between play and inquiry, and real-life contexts, the roles of the children and the adults in play, examples of co-constructing play-based learning, etc.) and to other key components of the document (e.g., in examples of professional learning conversations, interactions at learning centres, examples that accompany specific expectations) that will make play-based learning clearer for FDELK teams. (rating scale)...

**5.01** Before embarking on a response here, there are a number of issues that have to be explained. Firstly, there is not widespread understanding of play-based/inquiry based learning. This permeates across a number of levels in schools and boards. In the revisions to the document, these two terms should not be addressed separately. Some administrators are still insisting that teachers have stand-alone literacy and numeracy blocks on their timetables. In addition, administrators arbitrarily assign subject areas to the teacher (literacy) and ECE (numeracy). The roles then switch on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. In the alternate, teachers are assigned literacy and numeracy activities and the ECE is assigned other activities. This speaks to a confusion in the understanding of play-based/inquiry-based learning, EL-K team roles and embedding literacy and numeracy across the entire day. Secondly, it is necessary to explain a conundrum that is emerging between some FDELKP teachers and the ECE. It is important to note that this is not always of their own making. As board demands for diagnostic assessments continue to grow, as scores assume all of the emphasis in learning and the sole tool for measuring student growth over time, concerns about role are emerging. Teachers feel they have to do all the “work” (ongoing, individual assessment of letters, numbers, words, etc.) and the ECE gets to do all the fun stuff (play) with the children. This detracts from the concept of learning through play. With the much larger class sizes, teachers feel that by the time one set of diagnostic

measures are concluded, it is time to start the next one. This was never the concept envisioned with the inception of FDELKP. This was mentioned a significant number of times in our survey.

**5.02** In response to the Ministry's proposed revisions we believe that the section on play-based learning and inquiry should not be distinct. We concur that neither is clear to EL-K teams, board or school staff.

**5.03** OECTA believes that teachers, ECEs and others are not always clear about the ways in which literacy and numeracy skill development is embedded in play and inquiry. This is demonstrated by the ongoing requests to set DRA target levels in junior and senior kindergarten, as well as setting targets for counting, high frequency sight words and more. This makes FDELKP a data driven program and not a play and inquiry-based program. Teachers are attempting to run the Ministry envisioned FDELKP around a curriculum (literacy and numeracy) based program. Play-based learning is seen as not fitting with program expectations or with inquiry and so play is added where possible rather than as a program cornerstone. Moving closer to the envisioned program is hampered by insufficient information on assessment and evaluation, and the disconnect from current reporting practices. This will have its own section further on in this submission.

**5.04** The stages of play need to be explained further. One example would be how to construct and deconstruct play experiences.

**5.05** It is also important that a number of key messages around play-based learning are constructed for other stakeholders, including but not limited to, administrators, parents, primary teachers, etc.

**5.06 OECTA Recommendations:**

- **combine play and inquiry sections**
- **focus on literacy and numeracy development through play/inquiry**
- **expand assessment and evaluation, section to include specific examples. Reporting to parents must be included.**

## 6. CONTEXTS FOR LEARNING: INQUIRY

**Ministry proposed revisions:** Revise sections in the document referring to inquiry, or provide links, to illustrate, with examples, what planning from an inquiry stance looks like and sounds like using the overall expectations, and where the interests of the children fit into the planning.

- a. This could include revisions to sections of the document referring to inquiry (e.g., a chart showing the differences between themes and inquiry; a chart describing ways in which teams can move from themes to inquiry; a chart showing the skills and processes of inquiry, etc.) and to other key components of the document (e.g., in examples of professional learning conversations, interactions at learning centres, examples that accompany specific expectations) that will make inquiry learning clearer for FDELK teams. (rating scale)...

**6.01** In response to the Ministry's proposed revisions we concur that teachers need information regarding transitioning from themes to inquiry. When the Ministry directed that there be no themes done in kindergarten (e.g. bears), teachers interpreted this to mean that they cannot discuss a topic such as bears or undertake some exploration of bears when the local television station mentions that they have been seen near the schoolyard.

**6.02** OECTA believes that much of what could be stated here is clarified in section 5.02. However, it seems apparent from feedback in a number of different avenues that following through with a child's interest is not really understood. The EL-K team is challenged on how to support & extend a child's interest. Consider this example:

**6.03** At an FDELKP teacher meeting last March, a teacher indicated that she had decided to close her large blocks because a group of boys only played there. She felt challenged to continue to shape this interest through inquiry and to extend their play and learning. In following through with this, a number of suggestions were offered.

- (i) The teacher was asked to take a problem solving approach. Take a picture of what was built today. Prior to the students starting to build the next day, explore and discuss the details in the picture. She was

encouraged to model some measurement language in her interactions here. Following this, discuss with the children how today's structure could be different than yesterdays. Then explore with them what could be changed and how they could show this as they went. This could lead to a picture plan, step by step approach of changing a specific facet, etc. Provide feedback and engage the students on how it was going.

- (ii) The teacher was encouraged to start a block journal with the students to record their thoughts throughout the week.
- (iii) Other ideas were explored, including encouraging students to draw what they built to share with parents etc.

**6.04** All of these are ways to extend the play or build on student's interest, rather than closing activities to facilitate participation elsewhere. Yet, the children had obviously demonstrated a keen interest.

**6.05 OECTA Recommendations:**

- **combine play and inquiry sections**
- **use examples to explain the support and extension of student's interest**
- **focus on literacy and numeracy development through play/inquiry**
- **expand assessment and evaluation, section to include specific examples. Reporting to parents must be included.**

**7. SELF REGULATION**

**Ministry proposed revisions:** Revise sections in the document referring to self-regulation, or provide links, to illustrate, with examples, what self-regulation looks like and sounds like and how teams can support the development of self-regulation in Full-Day Kindergarten classrooms.

a. This could include revisions to the front matter (e.g., examples of a supportive learning environment, charts showing the difference between behaviour management and support for self-regulation, etc.) and other key places in the document (e.g., in examples of professional learning conversations, interactions at learning centres, examples that accompany specific expectations) that will make self-regulation clearer for FDELK teams. (rating scale)...

**7.01** In response to the Ministry’s proposed revisions, teachers that were surveyed asked for more information in this area. It is important that this is understood. Teachers are looking for examples in a number of key areas of the program, including centres and program expectations. Examples and charts as proposed revisions seem to be preferred here, rather than adding extensive prose.

**7.02** OECTA believes that the ‘Intentional Interactions Section’ was the most well received section of the document and key to getting teams started. Many of those surveyed ranked this highest. Given this, it would be important to construct some intentional interactions in self-regulation to assist in developing student’s skills in this area. It is important that it is not placed solely in the ‘Personal and Social Development’ program area. In some areas of the document teachers asked for clarification, it is important to note here that teachers requested that it be “built upon”, not just clarified.

**7.03 OECTA Recommendations:**

- **section needs to be expanded including examples**
- **construct some examples of ‘intentional interactions’ in this area and across all program areas**

**8. MAKING THINKING AND LEARNING VISIBLE**

Making thinking and learning visible has been a focus of our learning together over the past year. The training sessions provided for FDELK teams, principals, and other educators with connections to early learning for 4-and 5-year olds, have helped to consolidate key messages about making thinking and learning visible in full-day Kindergarten classrooms.

**Ministry proposed revisions:** Revise sections in the document (e.g., add the phrase “making thinking and learning visible”) and provide examples, or provide links, to show how thinking and learning can be made visible to the children and the adults.

- a. This could include revisions to the front matter (e.g., a chart showing a sample of assessment information gathered, an analysis of that information, and the action taken to move learning forward, etc.) and other key places in the document (e.g., replacing the term “big ideas” with a graphic showing

what the key concepts are in the expectations for each program area; in examples of professional learning conversations, interactions at learning centres, examples that accompany specific expectations) that will help FDELK teams to make thinking and learning visible. (rating scale)

- b. Documenting, as one way of making thinking and learning visible, has been a focus of our learning together over the past year. (text input)
- c. Revise sections in the document referring to documenting, or provide links, to include more examples and information about the processes of documenting thinking and learning. This will make the process of documenting clearer for FDEK teams. (text input)...

**8.01** In response to the proposed Ministry revisions we recognize that this is a challenging area for our members as well as parents and others. Again the Ministry survey states it was a focus of training over the year and so this was an opportunity lost for many members. The addition of a chart showing a sample of assessment information gathered, an analysis of that information, and the action taken to move learning forward would be an important step forward.

**8.02** OECTA believes that in this section, and in most of the other areas where input was sought, an additional resource may be more appropriate. In some of the training this year, learning goals and success criteria were explored. A significant number of teachers are looking for much more tangible direction linking assessment, evaluation and reporting to parents. They are also looking for rubrics to clarify the intent of the expectations contained in the program areas. Observation, as a tool to make learning visible was often challenged by their administrators and parents who were looking for more tangible assessments and demonstrations of learning. Any revision to the program document must be rolled out with a revised reporting process. Teachers are anxiously awaiting this.

**8.03 OECTA Recommendations:**

- **provide specific information that links assessment, evaluation and reporting to parents**
- **explore use of rubrics to clarify intent of some expectations**
- **revised reporting process should be rolled out with document revisions**

## **9. ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK**

### **9.01 General**

Idea of reflective questions would make for an outstanding Professional Learning Community (PLC) opportunity. It would be worthwhile for the Ministry to consider a PLC initiative.

**9.02** Concern have arisen with the frequent referral to developing links to clarify various areas of the program document Sending EL-K teams to links for clarity, ideas, etc. does not seem feasible in the day-to-day reality of the program. If no one has time to access them, it seems another method of clarification needs to be considered.

**9.03** The FDELKP document must inform other ministry initiatives including school and board improvement planning, leadership development etc. This would build an understanding of the program, among school and system leaders, ensuring FDELKP runs as envisioned.

**9.04** Recent versions of elementary curriculum documents (e.g. Language and Mathematics) include examples for each specific expectation in each program area/strand etc. This practice needs to be applied to all of the specific expectations contained in the revised/final FDELKP document. Examples need to focus on incorporating the expectations into play and inquiry as well as assessment and evaluation.

### **9.05 Training**

A great deal of additional training needs to occur. The Ministry needs to focus on teachers and the EL-K team for that training. This could be initiated in a number of ways including ensuring every FDELKP classroom starts with staggered entry. If a staggered entry model of one hour/6-8 students for the first three days, followed by two half days for all students was implemented the teacher and ECE would have sufficient time to collaborate about their observations of students and program direction. A successful start is much more likely with this collaborative opportunity. Another model would have the EL-K team released for five half days per year to provide time for collaboration. In addition, for the next several years, EL-K teams must have time on PA days to collaborate, engage in professional learning conversations and participate in ongoing professional development.

**9.06 Students with Special Needs/Special Education Needs**

When asked what could be added to the document a number made the suggestion that more was needed pertinent to students with special needs/special education needs. This included transition into school, readiness, managing a full day program, individualizing program, writing Individual Education Plans and more. Some of the information contained in the 'Planning for Entry into School' document may be of assistance here.

**9.07 Key Messages**

OECTA believes that key messages should be developed and utilized across various ministry initiatives. As a minimum they need to address the play-based program, roles and responsibilities (including working as a team), diagnostic assessment as well as other assessment and evaluation. These key messages need to also be relayed to faculties of education to ensure teachers graduating or placed in FDELK have an understanding of the FDELKP.

**9.08 Editing**

- remove the reference to syllables on p. 72
- remove reference to calendar in the Math section

## **10. CONCLUSION**

- 10.01** In this journey to assist members with implementing the Full Day Early Learning Kindergarten Program, OECTA has heard from teachers in large and small, urban and rural schools and boards. Their experience in teaching, and in Kindergarten, is widely varied from beginning teachers to highly experienced ones. We have also heard from teachers who are not part of an EL-K team, as they do not have an ECE assigned to their class. A sound, clear, concise program document as well as an additional resource are key for them and all other FDELKP teachers. Both the document and the resource should include examples for situations in which it is only the teacher instructing the program. Additionally, training needs to address the teachers in this specific situation.
- 10.02** For the most part teachers really like and utilize the document; especially Part Two. Care must be taken to ensure that what arises out of this review is not an entirely new document as teachers now have a level of comfort with the document. However, teachers did consistently identify areas that needed to be changed significantly. The most significant concerns arose in the area of roles, particularly the role of the ECE. Another area was scheduling/timetabling, particularly the need for sample timetables. An ancillary issue that was also raised most frequently pertains to the size and scope of the document. Many respondents asked for examples, charts, and pictures etc. that explain the program rather than the extensive prose. No matter what the revisions, it needs to be much more concise. Keeping a spiral binder and sturdy covers will ensure charts, tables and pictures are easily accessible.
- 10.03** Some of what is mentioned in this submission may be more appropriate as an EL-K Team resource. OECTA would welcome the opportunity to work with the Ministry in the development of such a resource, incorporating some of the outstanding resources currently in existence.
- 10.04** OECTA staff is willing to sit down and discuss this report in detail or to clarify any points contained herein should it be helpful.

## **11. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 1.07
  - rework part one of the document to reflect various audiences
  - revise rather than rewrite the document
  - tab document with sturdy covers
  - use guiding rather than reflective questions to support clarity of the program
  - embed examples within the document
- 2.05
  - define and provide examples of how to utilize the environment as the “third teacher”
  - explain the use and construction of the learning environment rather than coin the phrase the “third teacher”
- 3.05
  - clarify the diagnostic assessment piece in this section
  - incorporate information from other Ministry documents in this section
  - charts are the ideal way to clarify meaning for EL-K teams
- 4.03
  - further training required in the area of numeracy
  - incorporate examples for parents in revised document or supplementary resource
- 5.06
  - combine play and inquiry sections
  - focus on literacy and numeracy development through play/inquiry
  - expand assessment and evaluation, section to include specific examples. Reporting to parents must be included.
- 6.05
  - combine play and inquiry sections
  - use examples to explain the support and extension of student’s interest
  - focus on literacy and numeracy development through play/inquiry
  - expand assessment and evaluation, section to include specific examples. Reporting to parents must be included.
- 7.03
  - section needs to be expanded including examples
  - construct some examples of ‘intentional interactions’ in this area and across all program areas
- 8.03
  - provide specific information that links assessment, evaluation and reporting to parents
  - explore use of rubrics to clarify intent of some expectations
  - revised reporting process should be rolled out with document revisions

An Introductory Unit

# Early Learning Kindergarten Program

Getting  
Everyone  
Started

**Special Note:**

This Unit has been developed to provide assistance to teachers as they begin to implement the Early Learning Kindergarten Program. It has significantly more scope than a typical unit plan, as it incorporates pedagogy, activities, roles and other details not normally found, or necessary in a typical plan. This unit is not meant as a template for unit plan development. Rather it is intended to bring together the resources necessary for Kindergarten teachers and Early Childhood Educators to plan for a great start to the school year!

A publication of OECTA's Professional Development Department, written by Nadine Lajoie, Kindergarten teacher, Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board and Claire Laughlin, Executive Assistant, Professional Development Department.

August 2010

This publication can be downloaded from OECTA's website at [www.oecta.on.ca](http://www.oecta.on.ca)

The publication is also available to teacher members of the ELKP Ning Network at <http://oectaelkp.ning.com>

If you are not a ELKP Ning member, contact Claire Laughlin at [c.laughlin@oecta.on.ca](mailto:c.laughlin@oecta.on.ca)

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# Play-Based Learning

The Kindergarten program harnesses the power of play to engage children in acquiring new literacy, numeracy, social, physical and emotional skills. Through intentional planning of centre activities, the Early Learning Kindergarten team ensures children have the opportunity to learn to their fullest capacity. At each centre pictured here children are engaging in social self-regulation, communication, investigation, planning and experimenting.

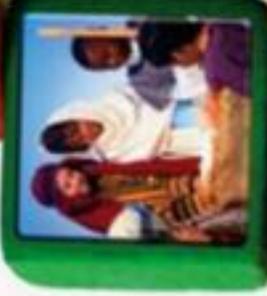
Creativity and imagination are nurtured through art.



Concepts about print are conveyed through books.



Stories about Jesus teach me about my faith.



I'm learning to socialize and share in the sandbox.

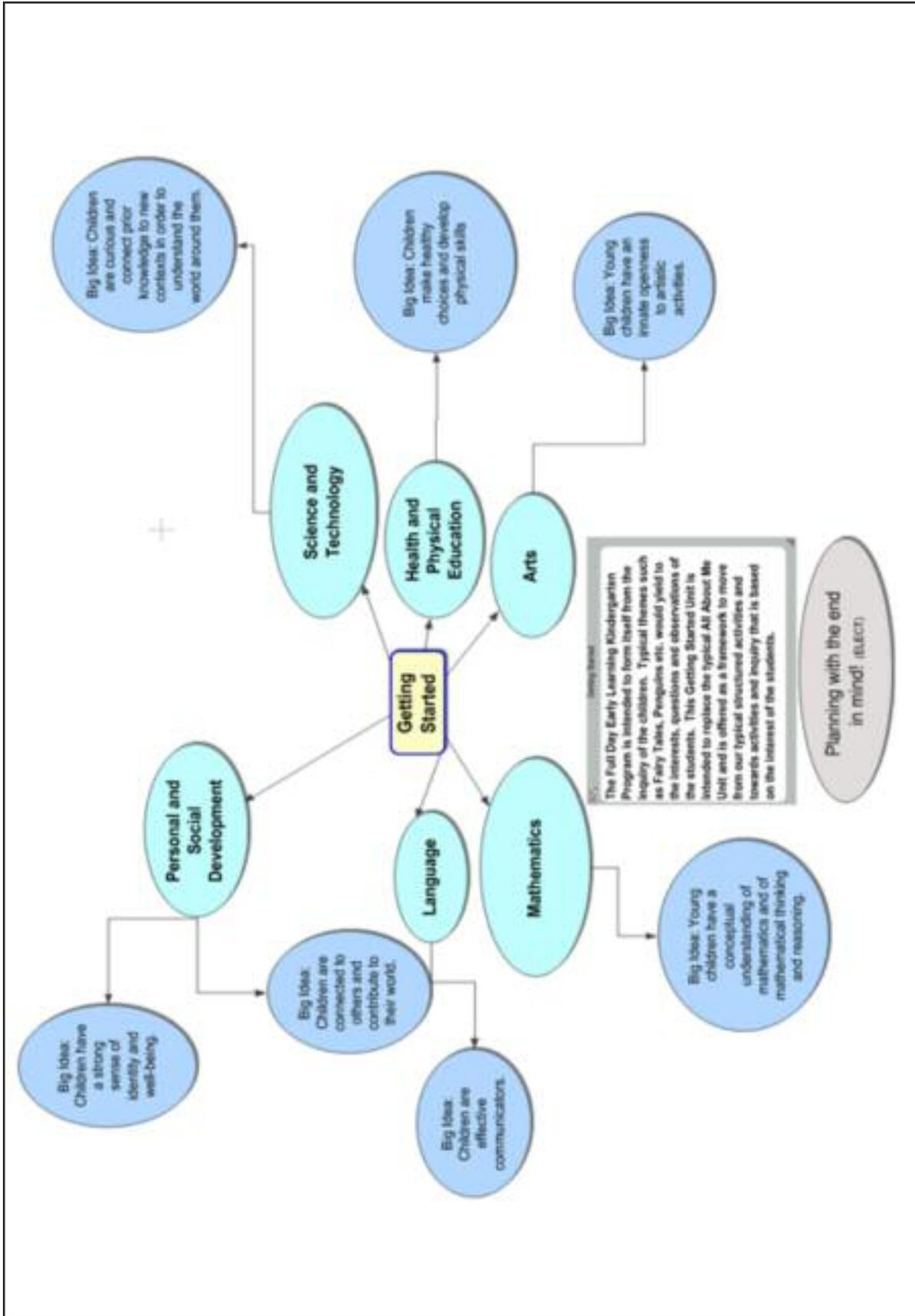


I'm problem-solving and learning about shapes.



Real-life activities help me make sense of my world.





## **BIG IDEAS FOR GETTING STARTED**

Learning about each other, the school community and play based learning

The expectations contained in *The Full Day Early Learning Kindergarten Program* document (TFDELKP, 2010-2011) cover the two years that students are in Kindergarten. The document contains no additional expectations beyond what is contained in the Kindergarten Program of 2006. It is over the course of the two years, in the program, that Kindergarten teachers and early childhood educators should expect to see students attain the overall expectations contained in the document.

“Young children learn best through activities that are relevant to their lives and varied enough to be challenging and engaging... Every child grows and develops in a number of interrelated areas-social, emotional, communication/language, cognitive, and physical. To address the full range of each child’s developmental needs, the full-day Early Learning Kindergarten program should provide opportunities for learning, self-expression, self-regulation, and self-discovery in a variety of areas...”  
(TFDELKP, p. 6)

Kindergarten teachers will evaluate students on the attainment of the overall expectations, but plan and create learning activities that expose students to the specific expectations contained in the program document. Assessment measures progress and informs instruction.

The focus of the Early Learning Kindergarten Program (ELKP) is child-centered, play based learning that is developmentally appropriate for each individual child. The play is both free and guided. Children “ need to be given learning experiences that fall within the range of things they can do with and without guidance-in other words, experiences that fall within their “zone of proximal development”.”  
(TFDELKP, p.6)

Many students enter school each year with special needs /special education needs. With the re-emphasis on a developmentally appropriate program, there will be many entry points for students with such needs, in the ELKP. Transition to school and/or class is key. As much as possible teachers should plan to include students with special needs/special education needs in all facets of the Early Learning Kindergarten Program. “Some children will benefit more from one type of teaching strategy than another; some may need more time than others to develop knowledge and skills and to achieve the learning expectations in the program.” (p.6) When looking at the day, teachers should start by determining which parts of the day or which activities the

student can do the same thing as everyone else, and ensure the student is included and engaged purposefully. Then the teacher would identify which parts of the day the student can do a similar activity [i.e. look at a picture book (mass produced or personalized) or their own copy of the story when Kindergarten teacher/early childhood educator is reading to the class]. Finally what parts of the day will the student require a different program and plan for those parts of the day. Planning for the individualized components of the students program, should include: the parents, support staff etc. You may wish to obtain more information from parents, regarding students with special needs/special education needs. Attached as Appendix 6 is an *All About Me portfolio*, that parents can complete to inform you more fully about their child.

The Early Learning Kindergarten Program team uses reflective practice, planned observation, and a range of assessment strategies to identify the strengths, needs, and interests of individual students in order to provide instruction that is appropriate for each child. There should be a balance between educator initiated and child-initiated activities... (TFDELKP, p. 8).

In this first start up unit, Kindergarten teachers and early childhood educators will be engaging students in two large blocks of play every day. Both staff will fulfill the role of guiding, questioning and supporting students as they engage in this play. Explicit instruction will occur and form a part of the child's learning experience. Explicit instruction will include whole group activities, small group guided instruction or individual teaching, review or conferencing.

This unit is offered to assist everyone in Getting Started: learning about each other, the school community and the play based learning program. Establishing routines, building language and social interactions are key premises of the first few weeks of the school year. There are very distinct differences between the previous kindergarten program and the new one. Typically the teacher has selected themes such as All About Me, Fairytales, Dinosaurs, and Winter etc. Themes, in the Early Learning Kindergarten Program, will reflect the interests, questions and observations of the students. However the Getting Started Unit, reflects students at this stage of development. It has been built around their typical interest at this stage-SELF! They are typically egocentric, and so focusing on the "ME", reflects that interest. Talking about self, families, home etc. provides students with a common starting off point to share and compare with peers. At the start and throughout the year, the EL-K team must be sensitive to cultural differences and the variances that constitute family in today's diverse society.

The new program document emphasizes a focus on self-regulation, documenting where students are, how they are demonstrating their knowledge, responding to students' interests; allowing those interests to guide the instruction, and the play. The document also focuses on the development of the student's language through interactive conversations with the Kindergarten teacher, Early Childhood Educator, and their peers. The outline below indicates some of the expectations that will be the focus in this first unit. As play based learning unfolds, teachers may find that most expectations could be attempted/observed each and every day based on the strength, needs and interests of individual students. The following expectations are identified to assist the EL-K team to focus observations and interactions, as the program starts up.

**Key Resources:**

1. The Full-Day Early Learning Kindergarten Program at [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/kindergarten.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/kindergarten.html)
2. A Guide to Effective Instruction in Writing: Kindergarten to Grade 3, 2005 at [www.eworkshop.on.ca/edu](http://www.eworkshop.on.ca/edu)
3. A Guide to Effective Instruction in Reading: Kindergarten to Grade 3, 2003 at [www.eworkshop.on.ca/edu](http://www.eworkshop.on.ca/edu)
4. A Guide to Effective Instruction in Mathematics, Kindergarten to Grade 3, 2004 [www.eworkshop.on.ca/edu](http://www.eworkshop.on.ca/edu)
5. In God's Image Catechist's Manual – early Childhood Catechetical Resource

**Other:**

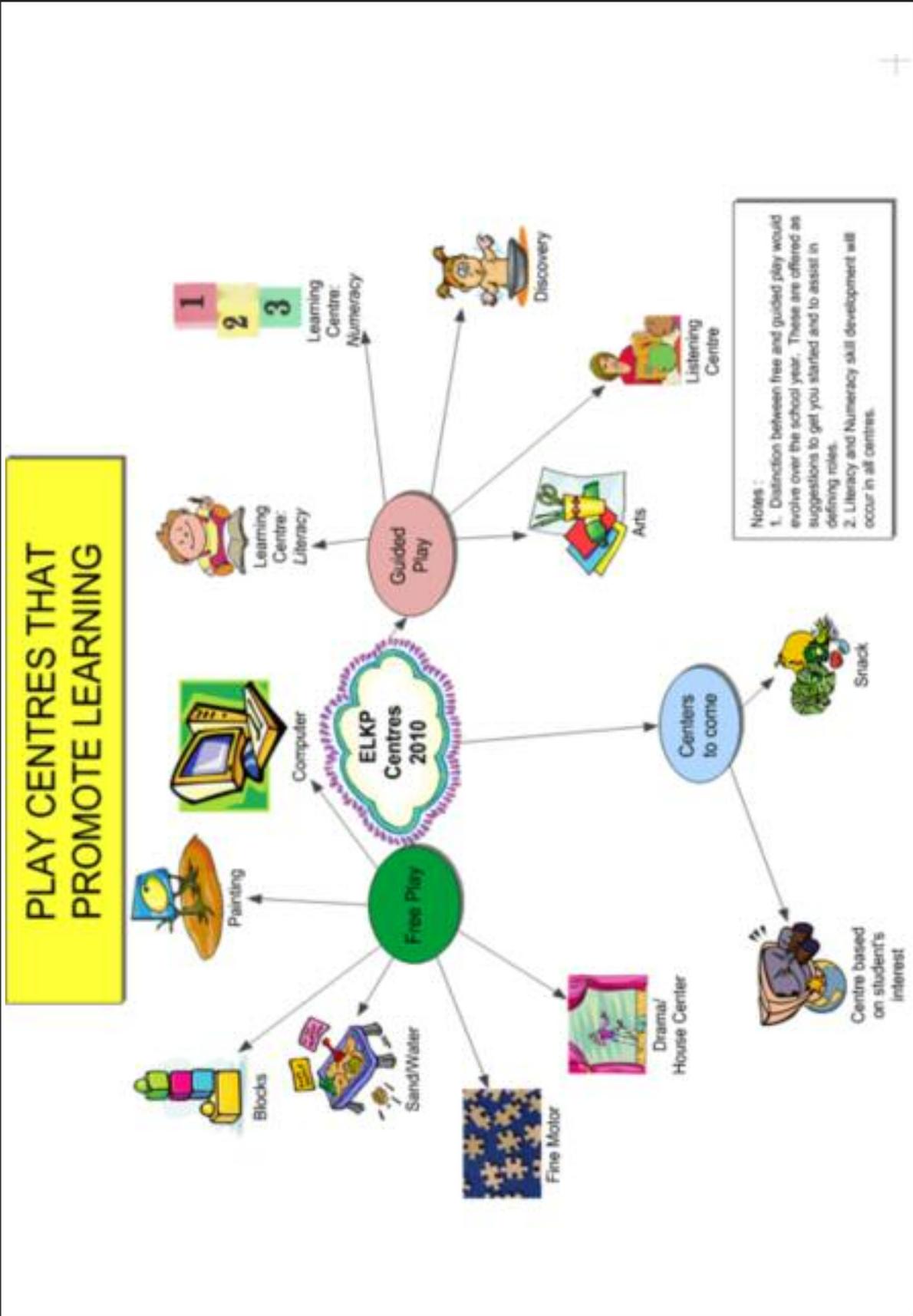
1. Additional Board ELKP and Kindergarten Resources

When considering planning it is important to remember that the new Early Learning Kindergarten Program focuses on self-regulation, documentation, following students' interests; spending lots of time observing the students to determine their oral language; spending lots of time developing the students' oral language by interactive conversations, enriched vocabulary and reinforcement.

The following is offered to assist the Kindergarten teacher and early childhood educator to focus on a few common expectations as they build a professional working relationship. Many other or different expectations could have been selected.

<b>LEARNING AREA</b>	<b>BIG IDEA</b>	<b>OVERALL EXPECTATIONS</b> By the end of the Full-Day Early Learning Kindergarten Program, children will:
Personal and Social Development	Children are connected to others and contribute to their world.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify and use social skills in play and other contexts.</li> <li>2. Demonstrate a beginning understanding of the diversity in individuals, families, schools, and the wider community.</li> </ol>
	Children have a strong sense of identity and well-being.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Demonstrate a sense of identity and a positive self image.</li> <li>2. Demonstrate an awareness of their surroundings;</li> </ol>
Language	Children are effective communicators.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Communicate by talking and by listening and speaking to others for a variety of purposes and in a variety of contexts.</li> <li>2. Demonstrate an understanding and critical awareness of a variety of written materials that are read by and with the EL-K team.</li> <li>3. Use reading strategies that are appropriate for beginning readers in order to make sense of a variety of written materials.</li> </ol>
Mathematics	Young children have a conceptual understanding of mathematics and of mathematical thinking and reasoning.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. (NS1) demonstrate an understanding of numbers, using concrete materials to explore and investigate counting, quantity and number relationships.</li> <li>2. (M2) measure and compare length, mass, capacity, area and temperature of objects/materials, and the passage of time, using non-standard and standard units, through free exploration, focus exploration and guided activity.</li> </ol>

<b>LEARNING AREA</b>	<b>BIG IDEA</b>	<b>OVERALL EXPECTATIONS</b> By the end of the Full-Day Early Learning Kindergarten Program, children will:
		3. (DM5)Sort classify and display a variety of concrete objects, collect data, begin to read and describe displays of data , and begin to explore the concept of probability in everyday contexts.
<b>Science and Technology</b>	Children are curious and connect prior knowledge to new contexts in order to understand the world around them.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct simple investigations through free exploration, focused exploration, and guided activity, using inquiry skills (questioning, planning, predicting, observing, communicating).</li> <li>2. Demonstrate an understanding of the natural world and the need to care for and respect the environment.</li> </ol>
<b>Health and Physical Activity</b>	Children make healthy choices and develop physical skills.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Participate willingly in a variety of activities that require the use of both large and small muscles.</li> <li>2. Develop control of large muscles (gross-motor control) in a variety of contexts;</li> <li>3. Develop control of small muscles (fine-motor control) in a variety of contexts.</li> </ol>
<b>Arts</b>	Young children have an innate openness to artistic activities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Demonstrate an awareness of themselves as musicians through engaging music activities.</li> <li>2. Demonstrate an awareness of themselves as artists through engaging in activities in visual arts.</li> </ol>



# GETTING EVERYONE STARTED

## Centres

Not all of the centres listed below would commence on the first day. They would be introduced gradually over the first week or so. Additional centres would be added throughout the year (e.g. Whiteboard, games, puppets etc.). Changing materials, placed in the centre, based on students' inquiry will ensure continued interest and dynamic opportunities for learning.

1. Drama/Imagination Station/ House
2. Blocks
3. Sand/Water (sensory materials including rice, macaroni etc.)
4. Painting
5. Arts Studio
6. Listening
7. Discovery
8. Literacy
9. Numeracy
10. Computer
11. Fine Motor-puzzles, play dough, (see Appendix 3 for recipes)
12. Snack

*NB: The Ministry envisions snack as a centre where students become aware of their own nutrition needs. However, as everyone gets started in the new school year a scheduled snack break provides an excellent opportunity to engage students in social conversation or to observe students engaged in conversation with peers.*

In guided play, teachers may wish to construct specific situations or provide materials that engage or extend students' inquiry/thinking in a planned way, etc. This construction would be based on listening to the students, listening to what they are planning, dialoguing with the Early Childhood Educator (ECE) about what was heard and determining appropriate next steps.

### Getting Started Unit Activities

Initially, the Kindergarten Teacher/ and Early Childhood Educator (EL-K team) would each take half the class and complete a walkabout of the centres. This should be repeated a few times over the first week or two. Each adult would review materials in the centre, review some basic rules regarding tidy up, safety, area/space/boundaries, etc. and begin to determine the student's interest in materials available at a centre.

Some centres, underlined above, would not have a specific intention or task in the first few weeks. E.g. house, painting, fine motor, computers. These would typically be free play centers. To begin, the Early Childhood Educator could observe student interactions with materials and peers. Additionally over the first few weeks, the EL-K team should intentionally interact with the students while at play to extend language, to respond to child's interest and/or challenge their thinking. More details about "Intentional Interactions" are contained in the draft Full Day-Early Learning Kindergarten Program 2010-2011. Each subject area has an Intentional Interactions section which provides suggestions to respond, challenge, or extend the child's learning at various centers. This can serve to guide the EL-K team as the program gets up and running.

Ideally, the centres set up in your classroom should permit the students to complete more than one or two in any given inquiry block. Some teachers are quite comfortable allowing free choice. For others, it may be more manageable to group the students or to group similar activities, at the outset. Grouping will help to ensure students participate in guided play situations and grow in their interests. However, the long term goal would be for the students to move, based on their interests and inquiry, through the various centers as they choose-i.e. self directed learning!

In the table below both the students and similar skills building activities are grouped. This may be useful as a starting off point:



A more detailed chart is attached as Appendix 2.

## Centers with Guided Play/Inquiry

### **Blocks**

Pose the following question to the students:

How would you measure \_\_\_\_\_ (student's) height using these large blocks?

If you have only small blocks, in your room, this could involve measuring just an arm, leg etc. The ECE would be at this center recording\* students' answers on chart paper and observing the interactions and varied approaches to the task. In subsequent days, students could use the blocks in another way to do their height or measure another body part etc. In the alternate or latter parts of the inquiry period, students can freely interact with the blocks.

*\*as much as possible students should be encouraged to record their number independently, however assistance should be provided where needed, to ensure all students have their height recorded.*

### **Literacy**

The literacy centre would have various writing/drawing implements and various materials to write, scribble or draw on. Students could work together with the teacher to compile a list of "Important Things" or an individual response to "The important thing about me...." These responses would be compiled into a class book to supplement the reading of: *The Important Book by Margaret Wise Brown.*

On a subsequent day, or when they choose, students would conference with the Kindergarten teacher or Early Childhood Educator to complete the sentence: The important thing about me is..... Students can discuss with the Kindergarten teacher or Early Childhood Educator or with peers and then it would be scribed. Those ready can independently write/craft the message. Anecdotal records should be maintained regarding this interaction. It would in essence form the baseline regarding a student's pre-writing/literacy skills.

At this centre, either member of the EL-K team could provide a pre-reading or an additional reading of the book that is going to be read to the class that day. This could serve to build anticipation for the story or assist in building students comprehension.

### **Art Studio**

Generally speaking, the arts centre/studio is where students would go to explore their thinking and utilize art materials to explain their thoughts and feelings. In a play based program it is not appropriate to direct the students to complete the same product. The

materials available would be selected by the teacher based on a student's conversation, observations, upcoming activities (e.g. field trips etc.) In getting started, each child will need a name tag for various group activities (attendance etc.) In terms of available materials, you may want to cut tag board into strips and the teacher or ECE may model creating their own name card. For those interested, they can print their name themselves. Others would need the Kindergarten teacher or Early Childhood Educator to print it for them and then they can decorate appropriately. Students should also have the opportunity to create their own product with the materials available here. The Kindergarten teacher or Early Childhood Educator would simply make name cards for those who did not choose or demonstrate an interest in doing one here.

As another link to The Important Book students could complete a picture of themselves.

### **Listening Centre**

This centre would contain various stories about beginning school. Students would listen to the story. Following the reading, they could discuss with the teacher, a favourite part, or the end. If they are on their own they could pick a favourite part, and then draw/sketch that page.

Before listening to the story, the teacher would undertake\* a miniature book walk in terms of title and students may anticipate that the story will be about. A simple chart of predictions may be undertaken, if appropriate. At the conclusion of the reading, follow up to confirm discussed predictions. For those that are ready, discussions could be extended to sequencing events (First, then or first and then and finally) from a story.

*\*as the unit unfolds, either the Kindergarten teacher or the ECE could do the book walk or follow up*

Suggested books for the Listening Centre:

- Off to School Baby Duck-by Amy Hest
- Franklin Goes to School by Paulete Bourgeois and Brenda Clar
- I can do it too! By Karen Baicker
- And Here's To You! By David Elliot

Once all the students have had an opportunity to listen to the story, or if a particular story sparks discussion and reflection in other parts of their play, you may wish to consider a whole group reading and discussion of that book.

### **Discovery Centre**

Ideally, once parental consents for neighbourhood walks have been returned, items in the Discovery Centre can be obtained from these walks or from the students' commentary before, during or after the walk. Items from home, field trips could also be utilized.

To get the centre started, *The Now I Know Series* from Scholastic has books about Washing Up, Healthy Eating, Going to Sleep etc. You may wish to display them here or use the pictures from the story as reinforcement of routines and healthy eating habits.

#### **Suggestions:**

- create a puzzle of the steps involved in hand washing.  
Students sequence the puzzle in correct order of steps.
- reinforce healthy eating: use food items from drama/housekeeping centre or from child's own snack/lunch to sort healthy items

### **Math Centre**

At the outset, this centre should be providing numerous opportunities for students to manipulate materials (patterning cubes, links, etc.).

In preparation for this, the Kindergarten teacher or Early Childhood Educator could set up some simple patterns of objects, or some simple materials to pattern but it is the self exploration that is key. As students visit the centre more frequently the EL-K team could begin to guide their patterning, building, arranging and invite a peer to copy what they have initiated.

# THE KINDERGARTEN DAY

## WHOLE GROUP

Other parts of the Kindergarten day will include a number of whole group activities. These activities should be of brief duration and over time be shaped by the students' interests and inquiry. Some whole group activities would be led by the teacher and some by the Early Childhood Educator. While one adult is leading the activity, the other is observing or assisting students to participate or remain engaged.

- 1. Gathering time:** starting the day together. Gathering time would not exceed 15 minutes. It would no longer include the calendar.
  - **Attendance,** this should be constructed so that students build recognition of their own name and that of their peers.  
Initially construct some name cards and have student draw their own name. Have students work to identify the names of cards left in the pile (i.e. those absent).  
As this activity builds, they could take the name tag of a peer's name they can read, etc. or select a name card that they can identify the initial letter.
  - **Prayer and O'Canada**
  - **Message of the Day** – At this early part of the year, it should be brief and reflect something that is perhaps a first occurrence (e.g. first time to the gym, first time to the library) or that is a change from the typical routine (e.g. assembly) or that may be intriguing. This would be a good way to start an introduce events in the community to the students (e.g. Fall festival etc.).  
Avoid things like the weather unless it is noteworthy (e.g. first snowfall)
- 2. Either teacher or ECE can read aloud\*** the *The Important Book* by Margaret Wise Brown. This is an excellent launching off point for Getting Started. Activities for literacy, discovery and art centres can be launched from here.
- 3. Modeling:** It is important to demonstrate the task/explain the activity at a centre. e.g. when you wanted students to measure another student, with the blocks, you would explain and model for them, one way to do it. Be sure to clarify that they can also come up with their own way to measure.
- 4. Religion:** In God's Image contains three songs suitable to this unit. They are: Welcome, Hello; Come On In (to the tune of Skip to My Lou) and Me, Me, Me.

On chart paper:

Welcome \_\_\_\_\_, come on in.

(Students would use their previously created name tags and when their name is called, come up and put it on the chart paper).

Using the *Chrysanthemum Book* by Kevin Henkes, sing the song My Gift (to Pop goes the Weasel) in God's Image, pg. 51. Encourage students to create and decorate a name card, in the Arts Studio. Use various textures to create the card (HINT: pasta works well here).

#### 5. A Sample Whole Group Lesson: Math

This would be initiated after the students have completed the Block Centre activity

- In the Block Centre students were required to measure their height in blocks. Using the chart paper with the students' name and number of blocks, this would move to a whole group activity as you introduce graphing to the students. You can begin to graph the heights.
- Follow up could include a shoe sort, same style, same colour. Again these would be graphed.
- The EL-K team would emphasize mathematical language in these activities (same different, more, bigger, small, less etc.)
- The Kindergarten Teacher or Early Childhood Educator may offer small group instruction or additional practice, if there is a need. This could occur during inquiry time in subsequent days. Children could be involved using eye colour or hair colour, favourite colours as graphs

When lining up, build math vocabulary and familiarity with peers.

EL-K team members ask questions such as:

- Who is first
- Who is second, third
- Who is last?
- What is the name of the person in front of you, behind you?
- Direct students to the line with directions, go behind Paul, line up so you are in front of Paul, etc.

\* Ontario Health and Physical Education Association (OPHEA) Kindergarten Health and Physical Education Curriculum Document provides a number of activities regarding line up that can be done in class, outside or in the gym. The unit is entitled: *Introductory Activities Classroom Routines*, the lining up activities, can be found on pages 145 and 145.

6. **Religion:** For the most part, religion would permeate the entire day and program. In keeping with the Getting Started unit, in God's Image contains a number of activities including songs and poems that will assist the class in getting to know themselves and each other.

Suggested activities include:

In God's Image-Unit 1 – Come In, Come In. This would be modified slightly. Instead of a home visit, send a letter home requesting information from parents including:

- Any pictures, souvenirs from summer activities which students would be excited to talk about-vacation
- A picture of the family

In addition, delay having parents in the classroom too early in the year, especially as the EL-K team is being forged and a number of working parents are unable to attend. Leave this for later in the year. One suggestion would be for a Thanksgiving celebration etc.

## 7. Literacy

- (i) **Reading books** to students is another activity that could be done in a large group. Either EL-K team member can read the book. At all times, conventions of print and reading behaviours (i.e. left to right progression, title, author etc.) should be modeled.

Suggested books to read to students:

- **First Day Recommended Reading: *The Important Book*** by Margaret Wise Brown.
- ***Mouse's First day of School*** by Lauren Thompson (Scholastic).  
Read with intonation. Find the items in the classroom.
- ***What I Like About You*** by Colleen Ludington.  
A rhyming book talking about each child's uniqueness fashioned by God
- ***The Kissing Hand*** by Audrey Penn (Scholastic).  
A book about Chester the raccoon who does not want to go to school. Mom tells him about the kissing hand, she kisses his hand and has him press it to his cheek whenever he is missing her.

Other suggested books to read to compliment the Getting Started Unit:

- ***Please Say Please! Penguin's Guide to Manners***, by Margery Cuyler, (Scholastic)
- ***Manners***, by Alike (Scholastic)
- ***Say Please***, by Virginia Austin (Scholastic)
- ***Chrysanthemum***, by Kevin Henkes
- ***I Ain't Gonna Paint No More***, by Karen Beaumont.

- (ii) **Poetry and Songs** – An important goal, as the ELKP class gets started, is gaining familiarity with peers. There are a number of songs and poems that can make this fun and engaging for the students.

Songs to include right at the start:

- Willoughby, Willoughby by Raffi. This song uses silly words and rhymes that match with student's and adult's names.
- Isabelle is Here Today. (tune of Farmer in the Dell)  
Isabelle is here today. Isabelle is here today.  
We're so happy, yes we are.

Other suitable songs to introduce as you start the year include:

- If You are Happy and You Know it
- The More we get together, together
- The Hokey Pokey
- Head and Shoulders Knees and Toes
- Punchinello

- (iii) **Poems:** A selection of poems is provided in Appendix 7.

Any poems being introduced and learned should be short and posted on chart paper and read. You may also wish to create sentence strips of the poem so students who are interested can match them to the chart paper version of the poem. This may be more suitable later in the year, for Junior Kindergarten. You may also wish to include them in a parent newsletter especially the one entitled, Home Reading Poem.

8. **Physical Education:** Students in Kindergarten, have varied experiences with games and equipment. In this Getting Started Unit, it is recommended that you begin with the parachute. Many students will have had little or no exposure to it. Most students' skill level will be similar. It is also a fun way to observe students ability to follow simple directions. It works for both indoor and outdoor\* play. The more space the better. The parachute can start out laying on the floor/ground and have varied games where students move from their spot to another spot based on directions of either EL-K team member.

\* if using the parachute outdoors, you may wish to bring some pylons to mark boundaries for students' running etc.

- a. Walk, jog, skill, jump around the parachute. You can change directions and repeat. You can then combine actions, i.e. walking in one direction, stop, change the skill and the direction.

- b. Roll some balls across the parachute-how high can we count before the big ball (basketball) comes across, repeat with a whiffle ball, with a hula hoop. Which one is faster? How can they move even faster?
- c. Pick one colour – e.g. Red, walk around and when you come to a red triangle – JUMP
- d. Do you have a brother, if you do take one step back? Now run around and fill a spot that is now empty. Repeat with a sister. Depending on grade, you could differentiate younger and older siblings.
- e. All those standing on green, take one step back and walk backwards to a different green spot.

Now have different ends of the parachute up in the air and start rolling the ball across. If the Kindergarten teacher and ECE stand at opposite ends, one side will always be down and another will be up. Repeat rolling balls etc. Try and not let the balls, hoop etc. come off the parachute.

Now introduce lifting the parachute, and have the students lift it up and down, increase and decrease the speed. Lift up a little, lift as high as you can.  
**HINT:** When lifting the parachute initially, encourage the students to keep it tight. You may need to tighten it, before each instruction.

- f. While it is up, have all students take one step in and then sit down on the inside edge of the parachute. You can call this your cave.
- g. While it is up, have all students take one step in and then kneel on the outside edge of the parachute. You can call this a mushroom.
- h. While it is up, call out names that begin with a sound or letter and have them meet in the middle shake hands and return. Depending on the grade, you can have students' trade spots, but meeting in the middle prevents the students from getting careless.
- i. All those holding a specific colour jump under the parachute to the middle, bow and come back out.
- j. Using the centers in the program, if painting is your favourite center, run to the middle and run back

This is just a sample of parachute activities to get you started. Resources (online and print) provide a variety of additional parachute activities.

- 9. Science and Technology: It is important that students have familiarity with both the school and surrounding community. Neighbourhood walks will assist with this.

## SMALL GROUP

During this first unit, and the beginning of the year, it is most likely that small group instruction will occur during the large inquiry/play blocks. As the year progresses, it may occur in anticipation of an activity, or to assist those who need additional or pre-instruction. Either EL-K team member would deliver small group instruction. Later in the year, it may be possible for the teacher to do small group instruction with one half of the class and the early childhood educator the other half.

## ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

*“Young children show their understanding by doing, showing and telling. Early Learning Kindergarten Program teams need to use assessment strategies of observing, listening, and asking probing questions in order to assess and evaluate children’s achievement.”*

FDELKP Draft, 2010

*“Assessment is based on observation and documentation of what children’s experiences are and how they illustrate emerging developmental skills.”*

ELECT 2007

The tasks of observing, documenting and assessing the students are a shared responsibility of the EL-K team. The team works together to watch students at play, interact with them, record the information and assess and interpret this to assist in planning and appropriate program. The tasks of evaluation and reporting are the responsibility of the teacher. The teacher uses the information gathered by the team over time to judge how well the child is doing in terms of the overall expectations in the program.

**Assessment must always be about the child’s learning** – It is designed and carried out in order to promote the further development of the child within the six areas of the FDELKP and the Religion Program. In order to be about child learning our assessments must be developmentally appropriate and therefore most of our assessments should be informal in nature and primarily based on observing students as they play and interact in their everyday surroundings.

A more detailed overview of Assessment and Evaluation can be found in OECTA’s Early Learning Kindergarten Resource found in the Issues section of OECTA’s website [www.oecta.on.ca](http://www.oecta.on.ca), prior to the end of September.

## **SPECIFIC ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES TO APPLY IN THE GETTING STARTED UNIT**

### **Create portfolios**

Hanging file folders work really well for this purpose. The practice for both the Kindergarten teacher and early childhood educator would be to note, on each contribution to the portfolio, the date and a brief rationale for selection.

In the Blocks Centre, photograph the measuring “in process” for follow up later. Photographs could be printed and placed in the portfolio. EL-K team members would record observations of students as they participate in the activity. At this early stage, since the ECE was the adult in the centre, they will take the pictures.

Additions to the portfolio could include: the follow up activity/drawing etc. that the students completed when engaged in the Listening Centre story.

### **Anecdotal Records**

While anecdotal records can be maintained in various formats, in this unit we will focus on two specific means of anecdotal record keeping.

It is important that behaviours/actions are described as well as quotations made of what students have said. The observations may be for an extended time or may record a very brief episode. Anecdotal records would be maintained by the Kindergarten teacher but compiled by both the teacher and early childhood educator.

Initially anecdotal record keeping would serve as a baseline and would be maintained to measure students’ progress towards the expectations in the Personal and Social Development domain. Observations would be based on the following:

- How do the students arrive at school? Are they confident, nervous, upset etc?  
How does this change over time?
- What/How do they prepare appropriately for the start of the day (i.e. indoor shoes, materials in cubby/coat hook etc.)?
- What/How do they prepare appropriately for snack: washing hands, opening containers etc.?
- What/How do they prepare appropriately for home time?
- Are they expressing their needs appropriately?

Sample Assessment Tools can be found at Appendix 5.

### **Assessment Checklist**

A checklist is a predetermined set of skills or behaviours for any given activity or play centre that we create in advance of the activity happening. As we notice the skill or absence of the skill, it is recorded on the checklist.

### **Evaluation**

The teacher has sole responsibility for reviewing assessment data and determining progress towards the attainment of the overall expectations. It is important, in these young children, to keep in mind the discrepancies that are possible in this age group. Developmentally, a JK child that is 4 in January have had significantly longer exposure to language, increased physical development and gross motor development etc. when compared with a JK child who does not turn 4 until November. Similar developmental differences can also be apparent between girls and boys

## **APPENDICES**

1. Centre Ideas and Materials
2. Learning Centre Ideas
3. Recipes
4. Prayers
5. Sample Assessment Tools
6. Poems and Games
7. Sample Parent Letter
8. All About Me

## APPENDIX 1

### Centre Ideas and Materials

NB: Not all materials would be placed in the centre at the outset. Materials can be added when students are inquiring about a particular problem or interest; demonstrating a need for more challenging materials; or when interest in the centre has decreased.

#### Literacy Centre: Reading



##### Materials

- Seating furniture
- Carpet, mats, pillows, bean bag chairs
- Open-faced book shelving
- Baskets, bins, boxes
- Big books
- Theme books and poetry
- Magazines
- Class-made books
- Favourite read-alouds
- Leveled books
- Author study books (author's bag)
- Sticky notes
- Plant
- Stuffed animal or puppets
- Read-around-the-room sticks
- Reading glasses

#### Literacy Centre: Writing



##### Materials

- Pens, pencils, markers (thick & thin), pencils crayons, crayons
- Glue, stapler (coloured staples), tape, scissors, one-hole punch
- Decorative paper, notepads, cards, coloured paper, writing book, blank and lined paper
- Stickers, stamps, stamp pads
- Envelopes
- Clipboards, mini whiteboards
- Theme word book, picture name directory
- Mailbox, mail slots
- Alphabet and number cards
- Dictionaries
- Magnifying glass and bubble wands
- Photos and magazines



#### Materials (at a later date)

- Alphabet and number cards
- Pocket charts
- Letter, sight word and rhyming games
- Pointers
- Word cards

#### Setup (as the year progresses)

- Gradually introduce students the activities
- Have students practice putting the materials away
- Variety of activities for different levels

Organize in clearly labeled containers

### Listening Centre



#### Materials

- Tape recorder and CD player
- Headphones
- Music and books with tapes/CDs
- Sticky notes
- Small pointers

#### Set Up:

- Demonstrate how to use the equipment
- Provide a variety of books and music
- Provide theme books on tape

### Dramatic Play Centre



#### Materials

- Stove, sink refrigerator, washer/dryer and ironing board/iron
- Pots, pans, dishes and cutlery
- Small table and chairs
- Desk and vanity
- Cradle, stroller, highchair and dolls
- Cleaning equipment
- Full length mirror
- Dress-up clothes, shoes, jewellery, hats, purses and scarves
- Toys such as doctor's kit, telephones, binoculars, cash register and calculators
- Plants.
- Writing materials, menus, grocery flyers, calendar, grocery and order lists

## Blocks/Building Centre



### Materials

- Large and small wooden blocks
- Mega and small Lego blocks
- Large and small foam blocks
- Large and small waffle blocks
- Cardboard bricks
- Building signs
- Play mats
- Mobilio
- Sono blocks
- Constructx
- Connex
- Work bench and tools

### Setup

- Use an open area for the blocks, one that is not in the path of traffic
- Consider carpeted areas to help reduce noise
- Locate the blocks near the Dramatic Play Centre to allow for extensions in play
- Establish that creations should be no taller than the builder
- Establish a routine whereby students learn to put away large items neatly
- Uniformly establish a routine if students want to save structures (photographs work well here)

## Numeracy/Mathematics



### Materials

- Unifix cubes, linking cubes, snap cubes
- Pattern blocks, parquetry blocks, small blocks and attribute blocks
- Patterns to re-create, copy or trace
- Sorting materials – buttons, cars, animals, seeds, beans, nuts and bolts, etc
- Large and small links (pattern cards).
- Geometric solids
- Abacus
- Calculator, scale and tape measure
- Sorting trays
- Plastic graphing sheet
- Math board games

## Artist Studio



### Materials

- Glue pots/glue sticks
- Magazines
- Coloured paper
- Fabric/wool
- Paper towel rolls/egg cartons
- Scissors

### Setup

- Locate near the paint centre
- Establish a routine to ensure that the materials are properly used and stored
- Encourage students not to waste paper by providing a scrap box

## Painting Centre



### Materials

- Paintbrushes (variety of sizes)
- Paint pots/Paint
- Paint shirts
- Paint easel
- Drying rack
- Sponges
- Variety of paint utensils
- Shape paper

### Setup

- Locate this centre near a sink to assist in cleaning up any spills
- Use a clear plastic mat beneath the paint easel or table if the whole room is carpeted

## Discovery Centre



### Materials

- Materials of interest to children-insects, magnifying glasses
- Materials gathered on neighbourhood walks
- Jars/containers/baskets
- Measuring devices
- Books, especially non-fiction and picture books

### Setup

- Allows for methods and materials for recording discoveries made by students
- Writing materials for investigations

## Computer Centre



### Materials

- Computer
- Chairs
- Appropriate height table
- Sign-in sheets to encourage interest in writing

### Setup

- Make signs, with visuals, to show students how to log in
- Establish routines for use of computer
- Model use of software and website programs
- Review appropriate software and websites

## Sand/Water Sensory Table



### Materials

- Sand/water/insta-snow/rice/corn kernels/pasta
- Shovels, containers, funnels, strainers, etc.
- Toys related to interest (i.e. insects, trucks)
- Broom/dust pan

### Setup

- Provide broom and dustpan for cleanup.
- Establish routines for appropriate play
- Replace contents regularly for hygienic reasons
- Challenge, respond and extend ideas for students

## Considerations

- The number and choice of centers is dependent on the physical space of the room and the needs of the program and the students in the class. Some centers may be permanent, while others may be set up only temporarily to accommodate a specific purpose/inquiry.
- All centers should allow for manipulation of materials that are clearly labeled and well organized. To encourage reading, each container and area should have both a pictorial representation and written label



- The materials in the centers should change throughout the year to maintain interest
- Centers should be arranged to allow for a natural flow of traffic. The “dividers” between centers may be a plant, bookcase, and so on. The setup of the centers encourages students to focus on the particular centre activity. The smaller the centre, the more interaction and conversation is encouraged.
- Some centers can be placed near each other to foster overlapping or combining of materials
- Centers should be introduced gradually at the beginning of the school year. Students must become familiar with the guidelines established for each centre.
- EL-K team would model for the students as well as challenge, respond and extend students’ thinking, inquiry and interactions

## APPENDIX 2

### Learning Centre Ideas



**Domains:** chart details

Green	Painting	Play dough	Whiteboard	Arts & Crafts	Theme Activities
Yellow	Reading	Magnetic Symbols	Writing	Literacy	Listening
Blue	Math	Building	Computer	Sand	Puzzles
Red	Dramatic Play	Puppets	Games	School	Toys

## APPENDIX 3

### Recipes

#### Kool-Aid Playdough

- 2 pkgs. Kool-Aid
- 2 cups flour
- 2/3 cup salt
- 1 tbsp cream of tartar

Mix all dry ingredients in one bowl. In a separate bowl mix:

- 2 cups boiling water
- 3 tbsp oil

Add wet ingredients slowly to dry ingredients.

Stir and knead. Let cool in a container. Cover when cool.

#### GOOP

- 1 cup cornstarch
- ½ cup of water
- Few drops of food colour

.....

Later on, you can add more cornstarch to form a ball and compare whether it acts like a usual ball (i.e. can it roll, can it bounce etc.)

## **APPENDIX 4**

### **Prayers**

The following are offered as a selection for the EL-K team to consider:

**(1) God in heaven hear my prayer**

Keep me in thy loving care  
Be my guide in all I do  
Bless all those who love me too!

**(2) Let my eyes see good things today**

Let my mouth talk happy today  
Let my ears listen well today  
Let me enjoy today

**(3) God made the sun**

And God made the trees.  
God made the mountains and God made me.  
Thank You, God for the sun and the trees  
And for making the mountains  
And for making me

**(4) God Watches Us**

God watches o'er us all the day  
At home, at school, and at our play;  
And when the sun has left the skies  
He watches with a million eyes

**(5) Thanks for My Friends**

Jesus, I thank You for my friends  
You gave them to me  
To make my life happy

# APPENDIX 5

## Sample Assessment Tools

### Sample 1: Getting Started in Kindergarten

Anecdotal Records: Week of \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Names</b>	<b>Look Fors:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Arrival</li><li>• Prepared for the day</li><li>• Snack time interactions</li><li>• Expression of needs and wants</li></ul>
Saleme	
Joshua	
Sammy	
.....	
.....	
.....	
.....	
.....	
.....	

- You could do a select group of students on a specific day or the whole class throughout the week. Table could be extended, depending on how you to choose to maintain your anecdotal. You could also construct boxes to be the size of a post it note which are affixed to the chart later and just carry a post it pad during the day.

## Sample 2: An Assessment Checklist for Whole Group Math Activity-building bar graphs

Rating Scale: Not yet evident (NE)  
Beginning to develop (BD)  
Developing as expected (DE)  
Well Developed (WD)

You could also compile a simple scale of Yes (Y), No (N), Somewhat (S) or you could design/determine your own key. In the assessment phase, it is important that both the Kindergarten teacher and the early childhood educator (ECE) have a common understanding of what would be the criteria assigned to the key. It is important that the skills identified and assessed are linked to the overall expectations of the unit.

<b>Student Name</b>	1. Is the student demonstrating an understanding of counting and ability to count?	2. Is the student participating? Does the participation indicate an understanding of bar graph created?	3: Is the student demonstrating purposeful use of mathematical language?

For this checklist, the ECE would act as recorder as teacher facilitates this lesson. This could also be an anecdotal record using specific things the student says.

\*Note: A Guide to Effective Instruction in Mathematics has the Mathematical Language identified, for each Math strand. Kindergarten teachers may wish to share these guides with the early childhood educator so they can gain familiarity with the language expected.

### Sample 3: A Pre-Writing Checklist

This is intended to form a baseline to measure growth over the term or year.  
The rating scales mentioned above would apply here.

Student Name	Skill 1: Student holds crayon, pencil correctly.	Skill 2: Student scribbles, uses letters etc	Skill 3: Student moves across the paper when "writing"	Skill 3: Student moves across the paper when "writing"

Either member of the EL-K team could complete this checklist in various settings throughout the day.

An alternate rating scale that may be useful at some centers:

- Rating Scale:**
1. lots of scaffolding required
  2. some understanding
  3. engaged but not consistently
  4. progressing as expected

## APPENDIX 6

### POEMS

#### **Friends**

Friends at school  
Are big and small.  
Friends at school  
are best of all!

#### **Friends**

Friends care.  
Friends share.  
We need friends everywhere!

#### **Me**

This is me, from my head to my toes.  
I have two eyes and one little nose.  
I can wiggle my fingers and stamp my feet.  
From my head, to my toes, I'm really neat!

#### **September**

Off to school  
we go together  
In September's  
sunny weather

#### **Home Reading Poem**

At night when sunshine goes away,  
And it's too dark for me to play,  
I like to come inside, and look  
For new friends in a story book.

## **The Name Game** (a game with a ball)

Besides helping the students learn the routines and their way around the school, it is important to learn each other's names.

EL-K team member rolls the ball to a student (Chandra).

Chandra catches the ball, says her name, and something that she likes or a favourite colour, etc.

Chandra then rolls the ball back to the adult. The EL-K member rolls to next child.

Once student's learn each others names, they can take turns rolling the ball to each other, telling each other their names and sharing something about themselves.

This is a very simple activity that helps the students to get to know each other and start talking to each other.

Try to create the first class book within the first few days. Each child draws a self-portrait and the page says,

"This is me. My name is \_\_\_\_\_."

This book is added to the classroom library.

## **Name Rhyme**

Sit the students in a circle.

Have them start a pattern of clapping hands, patting knees, just going back and forth.

Say the following poem to the beat of claps and pats:

\_\_\_\_\_ (child's name) \_\_\_\_\_ (child's name)

How do you do?

Who's that sitting next to you?

Child says name of person sitting beside them (David).

Chant new child's name:

David, David how do you do?

David would name the person beside him.

Go around the circle until everyone has had a turn.

## APPENDIX 7

### Sample Parent Letter – letterhead would be added

(NB: Depending where you are in meeting and getting to know your ECE, you can choose to do this newsletter in a common voice, rather than just the teacher voice)

Dear Parents/Guardians

There are three attachments at the conclusion of this letter including:

- School Year Calendar (if you wish)
- Permission form for neighbourhood excursions
- ELKP Calendar for the month of September (if you wish)

Welcome to the new school year and the first year of the Early Learning Kindergarten Program. As your child’s teacher, I am excited to be working with \_\_\_\_\_ the early childhood educator(s) in this new endeavour. We will be collaborating to ensure it will be an exciting and productive year. The major focus of the Early Learning Kindergarten Program is to ensure that every child grows and develops in a number of interrelated areas- social, emotional, communication/language, cognitive and physical. The program will provide opportunities for learning, self-expression, self-regulation, and self discovery in a variety of areas...” (TFDELKP, p.6) In addition, I aim to help children feel adequate in the world of school and to develop a positive attitude towards learning. My hope is that school will be a happy and pleasant place where they can learn and contribute. The children will be exposed to a variety of experiences and learning situations that will help their spiritual, cognitive, social, physical and emotional development.

In order to begin to get to know your child, I am requesting that you send in one or two artifacts from your child’s summer. Postcards, pictures, souvenir or even a drawing they have done serve well for this purpose. In addition, if you have one, a picture of your family. Please ensure your child’s name is on the item(s) you send.

#### **Working with Home**

Starting with this and every newsletter, I will take the opportunity to highlight some activities you can do with your child to review material learned at school. The emphasis is on home learning activities rather than homework. It is important to review and reinforce material learned at school.

You can assist your child, in the program, by:

- encouraging him/her to accept responsibilities
- encouraging his/her independence
- reading to your child everyday
- modeling good reading habits by reading in front of your child, as often as possible
- making sure your child attends school
- making sure that your child returns forms and books to school on time
- providing a NUTRITIOUS breakfast/lunch/snack
- implementing a consistent and reasonable bedtime
- asking your child questions about her/his day
- reading a story to your child, nightly. Model left to right direction by following the words with your finger; talk about pictures; discuss and describe characters and events; predict outcomes.
- Practicing songs/chants learned at school. Try this:

### **Home Reading Poem**

At night when sunshine goes away,  
And it's too dark for me to play,  
I like to come inside, and look  
For new friends in a story book.

### **Materials Needed**

Often we are in need of materials to assist with the program. The following is a list of materials we need on a regular basis:

- Magazines
- Fabric Scraps
- Toilet paper/paper towel rolls
- WASHED Styrofoam trays, preferably not meat trays

Each child is requested to bring one box of Tissues/Kleenex to ensure we have them, when necessary. Your assistance would be appreciated.

### **Clothing**

One key goal for the year is to ensure the children are active! We will go outside for outdoor play and physical education, as often as the weather permits. Please dress your child according to the day's predicted weather (jacket, sweater, snowpants, etc.) Non-scuff (non- black sole) shoes are required for the classroom and the gym. It is necessary for each child to have a pair of indoor shoes so that the classroom/gym floors can be kept clean.

**Please label all of your child's personal articles to prevent loss/mix ups.**

### **Snack and Lunch**

**Please** provide your child with a fork or spoon as required for her/his snack or lunch. We do **not** provide these items.

Sharing time will be part of your child's lunchtime activities. Each child may bring a theme related/special event related toy/game/book etc. as follows:

If your child's first name begins with **A-E** (i.e. Alyssa to Ernie) then **Monday** is Sharing Day

If your child's first name begins with **F-M** then **Wednesday** is Sharing Day

If your child's first name begins with **N-Z** then **Friday** is Sharing Day

### **Birthdays**

To help celebrate your child's special day, they will receive a birthday hat; we will sing Happy Birthday and designate special roles for your child. Given that a number of children have food allergies, we will not share nor distribute food products including cookies or cupcakes.

### **Our School Community**

As the school year begins, I wanted to inform you that given the wide array of exciting places in our community (i.e. pond, park, etc.) we will be undertaking a number of neighbourhood walks, all close to the school. In order to leave the school property, your consent is required. Please complete the consent at the end of the newsletter and return to school, as soon as possible.

Our neighbourhood walks will provide materials and experiences for our Discovery Centre, so we want to get started as soon as possible. Please return the consent now!

### **Home Time**

If you normally pick up your child and there is a change in plan you must notify the school. We need the name of the person picking up your child. If you do not call we will NOT allow your child to go with ANYONE even if your child recognizes the person (grandparent, aunt, neighbour etc.). This is for your child's safety. If your child normally goes home by bus and you will be picking her/him up and you do not notify us in writing or by phone your child will be put on the bus as usual.

### **Library**

Your child will have access to the school library and will be able to take one book out, at each visit. The book must be returned before another may be taken. Please take the time to read these books to/with your child when he/she brings them home.

**Arrivals and Dismissals**

We are fortunate to have a fenced yard for the Kindergarten children. Upon arrival at school, before 9:00 a.m., your child should be brought to the Kindergarten yard. Please leave the yard through the gate after your child has entered the school with the teacher. Both myself and the ECE will be there to assist with coats, shoes, etc.; however independence, in this area, is a key goal. Please DO NOT bring your child to the classroom. If it is raining, the students will assemble in one classroom and be picked up by their teacher at 9:00 a.m.

The children will be brought out to the fenced yard for dismissal. Please do not enter the classroom to wait for your son/daughter. You can pick them up at the gate of the fenced yard.

I look forward to an exciting year with your child.

Sincerely,

Kindergarten Teacher

## **SAMPLE**

### Consent

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent/Guardian print your first and last name)  
give permission for \_\_\_\_\_ (print your child's first name)  
to participate in walks around the school neighbourhood, with the Kindergarten teacher and  
early childhood educator. I understand that this will include the neighbourhood park, pond,  
and other venues within easy walking distance of the school. These walks will build the chil-  
dren's understanding of their community, facilitate motor and language development as well  
as other expectations in the Early Learning Kindergarten Program.

The teacher will sign in and out at the office when the class leaves the school.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to the teacher, no later than Friday September 10, 2010. Thank you!

**Note to teacher:** This is just a sample.  
An additional consent may be necessary, in your Board regarding injury etc.

# APPENDIX 8

## All About Me!

### INTRODUCTION

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ . I will be \_\_\_\_\_ years old on \_\_\_\_\_ .

I will be coming to \_\_\_\_\_ School on (date) \_\_\_\_\_



My Picture

A large empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for a student to draw a picture of themselves.

### My Family includes

list the family members (mother, father, siblings)

---

---

---

---

---



**Words people use to describe me**

(e.g., happy, funny, moody)

---

---

---

---

---

---



**Things people say about me**

(catchy phrases)

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Things I'm really good at (What I love to do)**

(special interests, skills)

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---

---

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**My favourite things...**

(e.g., food, toys)

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---

---

---

---

---



**Things I don't like...**

(e.g. food, smells,)

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---

---



**You really need to know**

(any special concerns – diet, a reference to medication, any other items you wish to highlight)

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**My mom, dad and I are looking forward to doing these things this year**

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**Please return as soon as you can!**

# Play-Based Learning

The Kindergarten program harnesses the power of play to engage children in acquiring new literacy, numeracy, social, physical and emotional skills. Through intentional planning of centre activities, the Early Learning Kindergarten team ensures children have the opportunity to learn to their fullest capacity. At each centre pictured here children are engaging in social self-regulation, communication, investigation, planning and experimenting.



Creativity and imagination are nurtured through art.



Stories about Jesus teach me about my faith.



Concepts about print are conveyed through books.



I'm learning to socialize and share in the sandbox.



Real-life activities help me make sense of my world.



I'm problem-solving and learning about shapes.