

Full School Day Kindergarten Q&A

See http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/early_learning/full_day_kindergarten.htm

When are children eligible for kindergarten in British Columbia?

- Children who reach their 5th birthday within a calendar year are eligible to enroll in kindergarten in September of that year. For example, a child whose birthday is between January 1 and December 31, 2010, can enroll in September 2010 in kindergarten.

Do children have to go to kindergarten?

- It's up to the parents or guardians. Kindergarten is optional in British Columbia. This will not change with the availability of universal full day kindergarten. Parents can choose to enrol a child in kindergarten in September of a given year if the child's 5th birthday is in that calendar year. Or parents can wait until the next year, in which their children turn 6, to enroll them in Grade 1, in September of that year. Parents are encouraged to discuss enrolment with their local school district.

Don't some students already go to full day kindergarten?

- Yes, but only in communities where boards of education or independent schools offer it. The Ministry has funded kindergarten for certain groups –children with special needs, those whose first language is not English and Aboriginal students – but again, only when boards or schools have chosen to offer it.

The Province's new policy will make full day kindergarten available to all children, not only those currently funded groups. Boards of education and independent school authorities will be required to offer full day programs to all kindergarten-eligible children by September 1, 2011.

Who decides where full day kindergarten will be available in the first year?

- Boards of education and independent school authorities will advise the Ministry which schools are ready to offer full day kindergarten programming in September 2010. The Ministry will use the information

districts submit to determine where full day kindergarten will expand first.

As a result, some schools in your community will offer full day kindergarten in the fall of 2010, and others not until the following year. The Province aims to offer full day kindergarten to everyone by 2011.

The Ministry has asked boards and schools to think about a range of possible considerations as they plan for Year One including:

- recruiting kindergarten teachers
- using available space for program expansion, including re-organizing the current use of classrooms and schools as needed

What if school districts do not have enough space for all their kindergarten students?

- The Ministry expects schools to use surplus classrooms for kindergarten expansion. They are also expected to preserve StrongStart BC programs and existing child care programs that use school space, as these are also important to early learning.

The Ministry is working closely with school districts regarding space requirements for Year One, but cannot currently provide any new capital funding to build or purchase new classrooms. The Ministry has initiated an analysis of capital needs for full implementation in the second year of expansion (2011/12).

What if school districts don't have enough teachers for full day kindergarten?

- The Ministry and the British Columbia Public School Employers' Association are working together to provide support and tools to help meet recruitment needs.

How will full day kindergarten be funded?

- Schools are funded on a per-pupil basis. Half day kindergarten is funded at half the basic full-time student allotment. Full day kindergarten is funded at the basic full time student allotment, or twice as much as the half-day kindergarten rate.

Government has committed \$151 million over two years in support of full day kindergarten.

Plans are underway to address the need for resources, such as furniture and equipment, in classrooms that have not been used for kindergarten before.

When and how will we know which schools will have full day kindergarten in September 2010?

- Many school districts have been discussing and even planning activities since February 2008, when government initially announced it was studying the feasibility of full day kindergarten.

Boards of education and independent schools were asked to submit proposals for the first year of expansion. Decisions should be made by the end of 2009, in time for kindergarten registration early in 2010.

Educators and parents who want to know about implementation in their district should contact boards of education or independent school authorities.

Where can I find information about the benefits of full day kindergarten?

- The [Early Childhood Learning Agency report](#) (PDF, 107KB) on the feasibility of expanding early learning in British Columbia provides information on the importance of quality kindergarten and pre-kindergarten, and includes research associated with these findings.

Will there be new curriculum for full day kindergarten?

- A longer instructional day will enable kindergarten teachers to provide more opportunities for learning and success. The expanded kindergarten program will be play-based and designed to address all areas of child development: physical, social, emotional, language and cognitive.

The current Prescribed Learning Outcomes (PLOs) for [kindergarten](#) (PDF, 650KB) will remain in place for full day kindergarten.

The ideas contained in the [Primary Program: A Framework for Teaching](#) (PDF, 4.6MB) will support teachers in designing and delivering full day kindergarten programs. The Primary Program

reflects an understanding that children learn through active engagement and play.

Note: The Primary Program document does not refer to the most current PLOs; an up-to-date listing is available at:

www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/grkcurric_req.pdf (PDF, 650KB).