

MY CHILD'S LEARNING: A PARENT RESOURCE CUSTOMIZED INFO SHEET

Early Literacy

Language is the doorway to being able to share ideas and experiences, relate to others and make sense of the world. Your child will ask questions, give their thoughts on stories they hear and share their own exciting stories and experiences. They will read and print their name, group objects and play with words. As they discover how language works, the world opens up for them! For more about Early Literacy, refer to the [Kindergarten Program Statement](#).

Mathematics

Kindergarten students

- count to 10 forwards and backwards
- show, describe and compare quantities of things up to 10
- sort objects based on a single [attribute](#)
- recognize groups of 1–5 objects arranged in a familiar way
- play, read and use storytelling to explore and talk about how to solve problems
- connect numbers to everyday life
- recognize and create patterns, using objects, sounds and actions

For more about Kindergarten Mathematics, refer to the [program of studies](#).

Citizenship and Identity

Kindergarten children explore who they are and how they fit into the world. Your child will become aware of their own uniqueness—their gifts, talents and interests—and discover the connections they have with others. They will develop a strong sense of identity, self-esteem and belonging as they share their gifts with others, express interest in others and interact sensitively and responsibly. For more about Citizenship and Identity, refer to the [Kindergarten Program Statement](#).

Environment and Community

Awareness

Your child will begin to make sense of the environment and understand how they fit into and shape their world. They will

see similarities and differences between things and discover how one action can cause another. Using their senses, they will identify shapes, symbols and sounds; recognize animals; and see seasonal changes. Building structures with various materials, and using technology, they will impact the environment and see the results. For more about Environment and Community Awareness, refer to the [Kindergarten Program Statement](#).

Personal and Social Responsibility

As your child makes friends, shares materials and attention, and takes turns, they will develop social skills they need for life. Kindergarten helps children see themselves as capable of learning, trying new things and taking risks. Rules and routines are learned and children become more independent, beginning to take responsibility for what they do at school. They develop ways to express feelings positively and to show respect and caring for others. Still curious? Refer to the [Kindergarten Program Statement](#) for more about Personal and Social Responsibility.

Physical Skills and Well-Being

Healthy lifestyles begin in Kindergarten. Through movement, games and activities that use a variety of equipment, children develop coordination, balance and stability, as well as fine motor skills. They begin to connect the choices they make—what they eat, whether they will follow safety rules—with their health and well-being, and begin to understand that they are responsible for their bodies. For more about Physical Skills and Well-being, refer to the [Kindergarten Program Statement](#).

Creative Expression

Ideas and feelings are shared in many ways. Kindergarten children explore drama, art, music and dance to express themselves and to shape the world with their vibrant imaginations. By listening to, creating and moving to music; looking at, creating and responding to visual art; and pretending to be someone else in a dramatic play, your child will become more self-aware and self-confident and begin to appreciate the connections that the fine arts create between individuals and the world. For more about Creative Expression, refer to the [Kindergarten Program Statement](#).

Religious Education in Separate Schools

General Information about Religious Education

Religious education crosses all seven of the learning areas described in the [Kindergarten Program Statement](#). *In God's Image*, the Kindergarten religion program, consists of 8 modules containing 33 themes that can be sequenced by the teacher to best respond to the particular needs and interests of each class.

The *Me* module celebrates the child through such topics as feelings, senses, capabilities, needs and family. The *Earth Times* module celebrates the wonder of Earth through activities related to the seasons. The *Community* module celebrates caring through discussion, making friends and helping. The *Changes* module invites children to experience support and comfort at such times as the birth of a sibling or moving to a new house. The *Plants* and *Animals* modules celebrate creation through activities with trees, flowers, bugs, pets and other animals. The *Special Days* module suggests activities for celebrating such events as birthdays, Mother's Day and Father's Day. The *Church Times* module is a sequential set of lessons that invite children to celebrate the Christian story as it unfolds through Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter. *In God's Image* uses the existing special moments and experiences of young children and affirms their religious importance. Throughout the day, your child will be encouraged to see traces of God in all of their experiences.

Spiritual Development

In a Catholic school, the spiritual development of children is nourished, and children will likely meet the priest, pastoral assistants and other members of the parish. It is recognized that young children are each at a unique place in their spiritual development.

A young child's way of being "religious" is to play, to be creative, to be curious and to express wonderment. Through these natural childhood activities, children explore traces of God, the "marks" of God present all around them as they grow, learn and experience life. The essence of children's spirituality is their response to life.

In the uninhibited excitement that Kindergarten children feel toward nature, they are drawn toward a loving Creator. Their experiences of God are sensed through touching, smelling, tasting, seeing and hearing, rather than through intellectual explanations.

Young children come to know Jesus through their experiences of seeing people valued and celebrated. They recognize themselves first, and then their families, friends and classmates as made in God's image. Later, they are able to experience Jesus as the perfect image and likeness of God.

In a Catholic school, the spiritual development of a child in Kindergarten occurs through activities that are affective, to support positive feelings toward themselves and others, and sensory, to relate directly to the good things that God has created.

The Kindergarten classroom will have a prayer centre where the Bible has a special place of honour. A cross, candles and a special cloth may also be present. The teacher will use this centre as a gathering area to commence religious activities and will allow the children to explore the Bible and other elements of the centre freely. In addition, the teacher may adjust the art, games and other centres in the classroom to reflect the current emphasis of the religion program.

COMMON QUESTIONS

How can I encourage my child to develop good literacy and numeracy skills?

Literacy is more than reading and writing, and numeracy is more than arithmetic. Literacy and numeracy open doors to the world! You, your community and your school help open those doors for your child, offering them unlimited opportunities. Between Kindergarten and Grade 12, your child will develop and use many literacy and numeracy skills and strategies to understand and make meaning of the world around them. For more information about literacy and numeracy, including information on strategies you can use to develop literacy and numeracy with your child, visit the [Literacy and Numeracy web page](#).

What are competencies?

Competencies are combinations of attitudes, skills and knowledge that students develop and apply for successful learning, living and working. They help students build upon how and what they know, understand, think and can do. Students develop and apply competencies when they face new challenges, develop solutions to problems, imagine and create.

Alberta's curriculum promotes the development of the following competencies:

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- Critical Thinking
 - Communication
 - Problem Solving
 - Collaboration
 - Managing Information
 - Cultural and Global Citizenship
 - Creativity and Innovation
 - Personal Growth and Well-being.

For more information about competencies, visit the [Competencies web page](#).

How can I help my child to develop competencies?

Competencies are not just for school, they are for life. They are a useful way to be involved with your child's learning. The following are some suggestions for how to support your child to develop competencies:

- Ask your child's teachers how they teach competencies and what you can do at home.
- Talk with your child about the skills and knowledge that they are developing and how these skills and knowledge are useful in life.
- Do things together that use one or more competencies. This connects what your child learns at school to the things that they do in everyday life. For example: plan a meal together, learn new games, be part of a team or discuss local or global issues.

How can I be involved in my child's school?

You and staff at your child's school are partners in providing a positive learning environment for your child. You can be involved in your child's education in many ways. It is really important to get to know your child's classroom teacher(s) and the school principal by attending parent-student-teacher meetings. You could also attend, or volunteer at, school events such as open houses, information sessions, parent advisory meetings, concerts and special events. Often schools have newsletters that provide updates on upcoming events in the school. In this way, you will have a better idea of school rules, program expectations, discipline policies and grading practices. [School councils](#) provide another way for you to become involved in the school. The school council works together with school staff to support and enhance student learning. Contact your child's school to get more information on ways you can be involved.

How can I help my child with homework?

You, as a parent, play a key role in supporting and reinforcing your child's learning. It is so important for you to talk with your child's teachers about their expectations for the work they assign. Keep in touch with the teachers about your child's progress, including successes and achievements, not just concerns. Knowing what the teachers expect and how they organize the classroom learning experience will help you to help your child. Don't be afraid to ask the teachers questions when you are unsure of the tasks and work assigned. Communication with teachers (possibly through the use of a school organizer or agenda) will help you and your child prioritize and organize the homework and studying they must do. Visit the school website or talk to the school office staff to find out the best way to contact your child's teachers.

Once you have determined what schoolwork or skills your child must work on at home, set aside a time and place where there are few distractions and spend time with your child. Be positive and encouraging about learning to help your child feel confident and enthusiastic about success. Remember that success can look different for each child. Talk to your child about schoolwork, help your child set realistic goals and discuss progress in an encouraging way. Connect your child's schoolwork with everyday life, and use these opportunities to problem solve in everyday situations. As you support your child through encouragement and guidance, homework and studying can become a positive experience with lifelong rewards. Developing strong homework and study habits early in life will build a strong foundation for your child's future learning.

How do I find the right school for my child?

There are many factors to consider when choosing a school for your child, including distance from home, language of instruction, programs offered and alignment with your values. Fortunately, you and your child can choose from a wide range of options for schooling: [public schools](#), [separate schools](#), [Francophone schools](#), [private schools](#) and [charter schools](#). There are also a number of unique and innovative programs, including [home education](#), [online/virtual schools](#), [outreach programs](#) and [alternative programs](#).

When searching for a school or program that will best meet your child's needs and future aspirations, be sure to research what types of learning experiences a school or program offers. Talk with the school administration and teaching staff and

attend school open-house or information events. The more information you gather, the more informed you will be about your options, and the better you'll feel about your child's learning experience.

What if my child needs more support to be successful?

If your child is having difficulty learning, the first step is to talk with the classroom teacher to determine what might be causing these difficulties and decide if there are some small changes that can be made in the classroom environment to improve learning.

Teachers can use a number of strategies to explore your child's learning strengths and needs, including:

- talking with your child
- observing your child in the classroom in various types of learning experiences
- analyzing your child's class work
- doing an informal reading or mathematics inventory.

Many school authorities have school-based teams that might include administrators, counsellors, learning coaches and other school staff knowledgeable about learning strategies and learning difficulties. Classroom teachers can consult with the team to develop strategies for addressing the learning needs of individual students.

If school-based strategies aren't enough, the teacher, in consultation with parents, may make a referral for a specialized assessment. Written informed parent consent is required before any specialized assessment, such as psycho-education, speech-language or IQ testing, begins. Each school authority has different assessment procedures, so talk to your child's teacher or the school principal about what will take place and how long it will take. There should be opportunities during the assessment for you, as a parent, to share information and insights about how your child learns.

When the school requests a specialized assessment for your child, this does not necessarily mean your child has a specific disability or special education needs. It may simply indicate that your child is having difficulties learning at a particular time and may require short-term support.

When assessment results and additional information have been compiled, the school will contact you and arrange for a meeting to explain the results, discuss the recommendations and get your input on any related decisions.

If my child has a disability or medical condition that

impacts learning, what kinds of supports are available?

Many children who have disabilities or medical conditions that impact learning will receive support in regular classrooms in their local school or school of choice. For more information on the types of strategies required to support students with disabilities or medical conditions, see [Diverse Learning Needs \(Medical Conditions\)](#).

Depending on the individual learning needs of your child, there is a continuum of possible supports, from minor adaptations in instruction to intensive individualized programming.

All decisions about educational programming must be made in the best interest of your child so they have the challenge and support they need to be a successful learner. In Alberta's inclusive education system, there are a wide variety of programming options that may support your child's learning. For ideas on how to support your child's educational experience, see [The Learning Team: A Handbook for Parents of Children with Special Needs](#).

What if I do not agree with an educational decision that is made for my child?

As a parent, you have a right and a responsibility to participate in decisions about the education of your child. School authorities are required to make every reasonable effort at the school and district level to resolve concerns collaboratively with parents. However, despite these efforts, there may be differences of opinion between parents and the school about the education of children. For information on how to resolve these differences, read Chapter 6 of [The Learning Team: A Handbook for Parents of Children with Special Needs](#) and see the [Review by the Minister web page](#).

What if my child is gifted? How can I support his or her diverse learning needs?

Raising children who have exceptional abilities can be both exciting and challenging for parents. Because every child is unique, there is no one way to ensure children have the best opportunities possible to develop the skills and attitudes they need to live a satisfying and happy life. For information and ideas on supporting, at home and at school, children who are gifted and talented, see [The Journey: A Handbook for Parents of Children Who Are Gifted and Talented](#).

How are my child's diverse learning needs supported within French immersion programs?

French immersion is a program open to all students. Just like

students in the regular English program, French immersion students display a wide range of abilities and needs—they may be gifted or have behavioural, emotional, physical or learning challenges. View more information regarding [French immersion](#) and [inclusion](#).

How can I help my child complete high school?

There are several reasons why children may become disinterested in school and consider leaving school. A student's decision to leave school is not a snap decision but rather the result of a process that often begins long before the student reaches high school. For details on key reasons why students contemplate leaving school, and to learn about how you can support your child to stay in school, visit the [High School Completion Strategic Framework web page](#).

How can I support my child's transition from...

...home to Kindergarten?

You are your child's first and longest lasting teacher. To ease your child's transition to Kindergarten, you can support school success by forming a partnership between home and school. In Kindergarten, the values and beliefs of the home are acknowledged, and the cultural diversity of families is recognized.

Entering Kindergarten can be an exciting time for children. Moving from the home or childcare environment to the school environment is a big step. Because this transition can be stressful for both you and your child, the teacher typically provides orientations to help everyone feel at ease. Your child will then become acquainted with other children and with classroom activities and materials. Gradually, your child will gain a sense of belonging because they know the routines and school layout.

Young children are naturally curious and eager to learn. Learning is enhanced by interaction and cooperation with others, including adults and children. Through interactions, organized activities and purposeful play in the Kindergarten program, your child will explore and experiment with their environment to add to their knowledge, learn new skills and practise familiar ones.

The [Kindergarten Program Statement](#) provides more information about Kindergarten in Alberta.

The following link may also be helpful:

- [Galileo Educational Network](#)

...elementary to junior high?

Transitioning from elementary to junior high school can involve many emotions, ranging from excitement to uncertainty to fear. Shifting emotions are normal; you can support your child by helping identify the emotions and working together on strategies to address them. Be patient as you keep in mind that the junior high school years involve a degree of physical, mental, social and emotional growth similar to the early years of life.

Grades 7–9 students are required to take six subjects: English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Physical Education and Health and Life Skills. To complement this learning, they can also choose options such as Career and Technology Foundations, Career and Technology Studies, Fine Arts, Languages, Environmental and Outdoor Education, Ethics and Locally Developed Courses.

In contrast to their experience in elementary school, Grade 7 students will discover that they have more than one teacher—each with his or her own expectations—and that they are expected to move from room to room throughout the day. Their workloads and homework expectations will increase, they will be expected to show more independence and self-motivation, and they'll be encouraged to explore and develop individual interests and skills and to participate in extracurricular and cocurricular activities.

While change can be difficult, remember that students benefit from having parents who show interest in and support for their school experiences.

Most importantly, any stress related to your child's move from elementary to junior high school need not fall squarely on you. Staff from your child's elementary school and junior high school can provide assistance and support during this important transition.

...junior high to senior high school?

Your teen's strengths, interests and career dreams will influence the courses they choose in junior and senior high school. Work with teachers, school counsellors and administrators to determine the path that will help your teen move toward their future goals. At the start of high school, it is important to understand the high school graduation requirements and the course sequences that must be followed to ensure that your teen is on the path that will help them

achieve their goals. Want more support for your teen's transition to senior high school? Visit the [Alberta Learning Information Service website](#). If your teen is contemplating a career in the trades, see the [Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training Trade Entrance Requirements](#).

High School Graduation Requirements:

- [Alberta High School Diploma](#)
- [Certificate of High School Achievement](#)

...senior high school to post-secondary studies and/or the world of work?

Senior high school courses (required and optional) help students understand themselves, develop personal management skills, explore their options and plan their careers. Students should make sure they have the courses they need to follow the career path they are interested in. For some 30-level courses, a [provincial diploma examination](#) must be written. Your teen can get help with course decisions by consulting school counsellors and by referring to current post-secondary calendars, the [Alberta Learning Information Service website](#) and the [Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training Trade Entrance Requirements](#). School counsellors can also help your teen apply to post-secondary institutions, explore [scholarships](#) and investigate options for [financial assistance](#). Get the [Education and Training Planner](#) or visit the [Alberta Learning Information Service website](#) to learn more. The [Tip Sheet for Career Coaching Your Teens](#) may also be helpful.

High School Graduation Requirements:

- [Alberta High School Diploma](#)
- [Certificate of High School Achievement](#)

Dual Credit Programming

Dual credit provides opportunities for students to participate in post-secondary programming while still in high school and earn both high school and post-secondary credits for the same coursework.

Dual credit helps students to:

- get a jump start on their post-secondary education while still in high school
- complete high school while engaging in personally meaningful curriculum
- transition to post-secondary studies or move into the world of work
- potentially reduce the financial impact of post-secondary

education.

To learn more, visit Alberta Education's [Dual Credit web pages](#).

I want to know more about...

...knowledge and employability

Knowledge and Employability (K&E) courses are designed for students in grades 8 to 12 who demonstrate reading, writing, mathematical and/or other levels of achievement two to three grade levels below their age-appropriate grade. K&E courses provide students with opportunities to experience success and to become well prepared for employment, further studies, citizenship and lifelong learning.

Annual learning plans are developed for each student enrolled in K&E courses. Learning plans are developed in collaboration with parents and ensure that parents are well informed of their child's academic needs and opportunities. Learning plans identify high school, continuing education and training opportunities, as well as career goals for every student enrolled in K&E courses. Learning plans are also used to monitor, assess and adjust the effectiveness of each child's learning.

Successful completion of K&E courses may lead students toward a Certificate of High School Achievement. Students may also transition to other course sequences to earn an Alberta High School Diploma.

To determine if K&E courses might be the right choice for your child, review the specific criteria outlined in the [Knowledge and Employability Courses Handbook: Grades 8–12](#) (see page 3). [Knowledge and Employability Programs of Study](#) provide information about the content and outcomes of K&E courses. For information about the relationship between K&E courses and CTS courses, see the Knowledge and Employability section of the [Guide to Career and Technology Studies \(CTS\)](#).

...distributed learning

Students and teachers don't have to be in the same place for learning to occur. Students can learn anytime, in any place and at any pace with a variety of learning resources. Distributed learning Learn EveryWare courses developed by Alberta Education are provincially authorized and offer students flexibility in their learning. All online distributed learning courses are available on [LearnAlberta.ca](#) under the T4T Courses tab.

...locally developed courses

Locally developed courses (LDCs) allow school authorities the flexibility to complement, extend and/or expand upon provincial programs of study. LDCs may be used to:

- accommodate student needs and interests, ranging from Marine Life and Ecosystem Studies to Technical Theatre
- encourage and support innovative learning and teaching practices, through courses such as the Learning Strategies sequence
- address unique community priorities, such as international and heritage languages
- engage students who may be at risk of leaving school early, through courses such as Leadership, Character and Social Responsibility
- promote successful transitions to further education, including through exposure to advanced subject matter aligned with Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate programs.

School authorities may develop new LDCs or acquire existing ones from other school authorities. Talk to the staff at your school to find out if they offer any LDCs that might interest your child. View [more details regarding LDCs](#).

...French immersion

French immersion is a second language program designed to promote functional fluency in French while students achieve all of the objectives of the regular school program. French immersion may begin in Kindergarten (early immersion) or in Grade 6 or later (late immersion). Several or all subjects, except English language arts, are taught in French. This program is designed for students whose first language is not French. The objectives are full mastery of the English language, functional fluency in French, and understanding and appreciation of the French culture. Want to know more? Refer to [Yes You Can Help! Information and Inspiration for Parents of French Immersion Students](#).

...English as a Second Language

Many children born in Canada speak a language other than English at home, and many students move here from countries where English is not the main language. Students who are learning English at the same time they are learning the content of their school subjects are called English language learners. Schools provide English as a second language (ESL) supports and programs to help English

language learners learn English so they can do well in all of their school subjects.

English language learners receive supports in the classroom, such as:

- pictures, diagrams and charts to help them understand what they read or hear
- books and other written materials that match their reading abilities and interests
- direct teaching about English grammar and vocabulary.

Some ESL programs or courses help students learn English while they learn about Canadian cultural values, customs and social expectations.

Every year, schools measure the English language proficiency of students who are English language learners. Schools use this information to decide what sort of supports each student needs. Many schools use the *Alberta K–12 ESL Proficiency Benchmarks*, available through the [Supporting English Language Learners website](#), to find out an English language learner's English level in Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. There are five levels of language proficiency. If your child is an English language learner, the school will tell you about their progress in developing English language proficiency either once every school year or at report card times. You are encouraged to:

- contact the school to ask questions
- provide useful information about your child
- volunteer at the school.

If you are a newcomer to Alberta and want to learn more about the school system in Alberta, you might wish to look at the [Parent Tip Sheets](#). The tip sheets are currently available in English and in French.

For more information about ESL supports that could help your child learn English, contact your child's school.