



Your Future in MIND

"Getting the Best Start"

Changes to Kindergarten Entrance Age

Beginning in **September 2014**, a child is eligible to start Kindergarten if he/she will be **five** years old on or before **December 31st** of that school year.

Elk Island Public Schools (EIPS) is moving the kindergarten enrolment cut-off from March 01st to December 31st because this change:

- better positions our students and schools for the implementation of the principles of Inspiring Education.
- acts on local and provincial evidence that our younger kindergarten students are more likely to have learning and social challenges in kindergarten and in subsequent years.
- more closely aligns with our beliefs and advice to parents.
- reflects educational research – specifically in the area of literacy outcomes.
- coordinates the entrance ages for kindergarten and early intervention (Play And Learn at School (PALS) programs)

Inspiring Education (Alberta Education, 2010) provides the direction for the future of Alberta's education system. It is a learner-centred approach that focuses on building competencies. Within this revised mandate, the **best start** to school becomes even more important.

Twenty-six school boards across the province currently use December 31st as the cut-off for kindergarten enrolment.

Age span is one of the most challenging aspects for kindergarten teachers as they must teach to a wide variety of cognitive and social maturity levels. The change to December 31st decreases the potential age span in kindergarten by two months.

Research demonstrates that children who begin school at a somewhat older age perform better at the start of school, show greater improvement over the course of their first years of schooling, and function at a more advanced level in third grade than children who began at a somewhat younger age (NICHD Early Childhood Research Network, 2007).

Children beginning Kindergarten at a young age are often not socially mature enough to cope with the expectations in an ECS classroom. This can lead to a decrease in self-confidence that can follow them throughout their school career.

Kindergarten Teacher, Elk Island Public Schools

Using December 31st as the cut-off date for kindergarten enrolment will have a significant positive impact for all students.

Kindergarten Teacher, Elk Island Public Schools

Elk Island Public Schools (EIPS) practice has been to encourage families to delay kindergarten enrolment if their child is born between January and the end of February. The change to December 31st more closely aligns with our philosophy but continues to offer most families choice.

Elk Island Public Schools (EIPS) offers programming for children aged 3 ½ to 4 ½ in our Play And Learn at School (PALS) programs. (<http://www.eips.ca/system-special-education-programs>).

Research demonstrates significant differences in early literacy development between younger and older students in kindergarten which remain statistically significant at the end of Grade 2 (Huang & Invernizzi, 2012).

In a large-scale study of 15 year olds' achievement levels using PISA data, relative age at the start of primary school had a significant positive effect on PISA scores in half of the considered countries and regions (Sprietsma, 2010).