



A Look into the Early Years in MHPSD

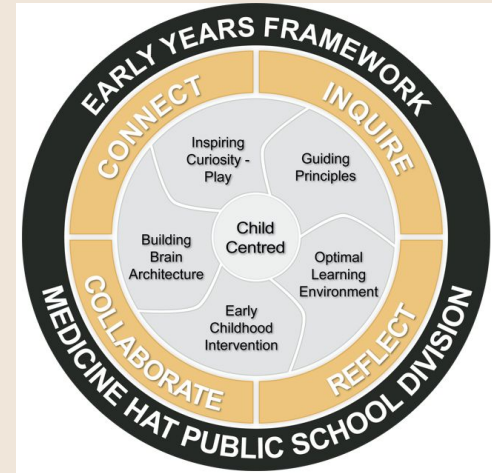
Early Years Framework

Early years programming in Medicine Hat Public School Division (MHPSD) is child centered and is reflective of the Guiding Principles set out by Alberta Education. Optimal learning environments combined with early intervention builds solid brain architecture. Children learn through play. We build, pretend, get messy, move and explore together - inspiring curiosity.

MHPSD is dedicated to providing Early Childhood programs that offer language-rich, play-based environments; a multi-disciplinary team of professionals work together to provide programming designed to enhance language, social, physical, intellectual, creative, cultural and emotional development.

Our teams achieve child centered programming through connection, inquiry, reflection and collaboration.

Programming in MHPSD includes the Community Early Learning Program, School based Early Learning Programs, Play & Learn and Kindergarten. Kindergarten is unique in the overlap with the OLC team who has supported the implementation of new curriculum and assessment for K teachers.





Early Years Stories

Stories were shared about individual children and how they had been supported through early intervention in ELP, Kindergarten and Play & Learn.



We heard about a child that arrived in ELP struggling to regulate and communicate effectively. She is now in grade one and graduating from speech and language and occupational therapy supports. The grade one teacher has been able to build on this solid foundation and apply the strategies from the Alternative Learning Team so the child can continue to experience success. She now enjoys friendships, is able to work with a partner and has problem solving strategies.



We heard about twins who arrived in late September for Kindergarten. They also attend Play & Learn. When they arrived, they were easily overwhelmed, causing them to shut down. They required support with the expected fine motor skills like removing lids from glue sticks and holding a pencil and speech sound development. Today they are expressing their independence, they want to and can do the tasks and have moved on to developing academic skills in literacy and numeracy. Their parents have expressed the joy and enthusiasm they have for school.



Finally, we had the opportunity to learn about a little one that has been in the Early Learning Program for two years who had difficulty engaging independently with peers and initiating and sustaining play who was also difficult to understand. After two years she will also graduate from services. She is heading into kindergarten next fall willingly participating, communicating effectively and has made wonderful friendships.



Early Intervention

Speech and Language supports the development of communication:

- understanding language (e.g., following directions, basic concepts)
- ability to use language (e.g., vocabulary, sentence formation)
- speech sound development skills (e.g., speech substitutions)
- social use of language (e.g., flexible thinking, turn-taking)

Occupational Therapy

- Focuses on Fine Motor Skills (pre printing, printing, scissoring etc.)
- Focuses on regulation from a sensory perspective (trying to achieve the just right state)

Physical Therapy supports the development of gross motor skills:

- Movement around the classroom and school
- Postural support for sitting, standing, balancing
- Changing positions and manipulating objects

The goal is to build skills to support children with accessing learning opportunities.

Educational Assistants



The EA team pictured here supports ELP, Kindergarten and Play & Learn. They are an integral part of providing opportunities for the children to practice the skills they are learning, co-regulating with the children and providing a helping hand so the children can experience success as they grow and develop.



Parent & Child Engagement

The goal of parent and child engagement sessions is for parents to build their skill set with supporting their child's development out in our community.

Play sessions for families and their early learning children to attend at our local playgrounds, the library, Crestwood School and Big Marble Go Centre. There are also family field trips to places like Medalta, Neubauer Farms, and the Root Cellar for gardening experiences for families to enjoy with their children.



Parents are an integral part of the team and with their understanding of, participation in and support, a child can make significant gains in their development.

At play sessions the facilitator will set up opportunities for children to develop language, fine and gross motor skills, social skills and emotional development through play. Parents have the opportunity to learn about how children learn through play to build their individual skills.

In addition to the play sessions we provide parent workshops including Circle of Security and partner with other agencies in town including LEARN for Literacy Building Blocks and Miywasin for play sessions to name a couple.





Let's Play

- Build
- Pretend
- Get Messy
- Move
- Explore

Inspiring Curiosity