



Ministry of Education

# **Before-and-After School Programs Kindergarten – Grade 6**

## **POLICIES AND GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL BOARDS**

January 2017

## PREFACE

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Beginning September 2017, school boards are required to ensure the provision of before-and-after school programs (i.e. school board-operated and third party programs) in each elementary school in Ontario for students in Kindergarten to Grade 6 where there is sufficient demand.

School boards are required to comply with the provisions for before-and-after school programs set out under [Part IX.1 of the \*Education Act\*, Regulation 221/11 entitled “Extended Day and Third Party Programs,”](#) and policies set out in this document.

### PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document summarizes the provisions set out in the *Education Act* and regulations for before-and-after school programs for students in Kindergarten to Grade 6. It also sets out requirements with regard to reporting and program content for before-and-after school programs and additional considerations to support the implementation of these programs.

## INTRODUCTION

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Since the introduction of Full-Day Kindergarten (FDK), school boards have been required to ensure the provision of before-and-after school programs for FDK students where there is sufficient demand.

FDK was fully implemented across the province in September 2014, reaching approximately 260,000 students each year, with more than 70% of schools offering FDK also providing a before-and-after school program.

### A VISION FOR CHILD CARE, THE EARLY YEARS AND EDUCATION IN ONTARIO

FDK and before-and-after school programs are key parts of the broader provincial vision for “a system of responsive, high-quality, accessible, and increasingly integrated early years programs and services that contribute to healthy child development today and a stronger future tomorrow” ([Ontario Early Years Policy Framework](#), 2013).

Greater integration between child care, early learning and education services was also highlighted as a central component of the ministry’s commitment to the success and wellbeing of every student and child in the ministry’s strategic plan for education ([Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario](#), 2014).

### ***Child Care Modernization Act, 2014***

In December 2014, the *Child Care Modernization Act, 2014* was enacted to:

- Replace the outdated *Day Nurseries Act* with the [Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014](#) (CCEYA) as the new legislative framework governing child care and the early years in Ontario; and

- Amend the *Education Act* to extend the current duty for school boards to ensure the provision of before-and-after school programs for FDK students, to also include students in Grades 1 through 6.

Under these legislative changes, regulatory amendments were made to [Regulation 221/11: Extended Day and Third Party Programs](#) (the “regulation”) in May 2016 to set out a framework that supports an integrated approach for the provision of before-and-after school programs for 4-12 year olds.

The regulatory amendments were informed by feedback received from school boards and local partners and will support greater collaboration between partners, including child care and early years service system managers.

## **WORKING TOGETHER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

### **LOCAL SERVICE SYSTEM MANAGERS**

Under the [Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014](#), Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs) and District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs) are designated as service system managers responsible at the local level for the planning and management of early years services, including child care and child and family programs.

Service system managers, in partnership with families, service providers, school boards and community agencies, lead locally-based planning and development to support an integrated approach to child care and early years services that respond to the needs of the community.

The ability to strengthen the quality of child care and early years experiences and enhance system integration requires the strategic leadership of CMSM/DSSABs to initiate, sustain and monitor local planning and development to achieve Ontario’s vision for the early years.

Effective 2019, service system managers will be required to develop Service System Plans in accordance with provincial requirements. Service planning should be done in the context of the full range of coordinated early years and child care services for children and families, including before-and-after school programs for children in Kindergarten to Grade 6.

### **SCHOOL BOARDS**

School boards play a critical role in the child care and early years sector. They provide an environment where services can be co-located and integrated for the purpose of reducing transitions and building stronger connections between children, families, and early years and school professionals and educators.

School board leadership is vital to supporting comprehensive and continuous education that supports children from birth to adulthood.

School boards include district school boards and school authorities as defined under the *Education Act*.

### **DUTY TO COOPERATE**

Under the [Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 \(CCEYA\)](#) service system managers are required to consult with school boards in the development of service plans. The [CCEYA](#) also states that the service system manager, school boards and other identified child care and early years partners shall cooperate with each other for the purpose of implementing the service plan.

For the past several years, service system managers and school boards have worked in partnership to assess and jointly submit school-based early years capital funding projects to the ministry. As part of this process, CMSMs/DSSABs and school boards work closely together to identify suitable early years capital projects that meet the eligibility and priority requirements of the ministry, then jointly sign off on all proposals which are submitted for approval.

Through greater integration with early years, child care, and education services, more children will benefit from a seamless day and consistent quality of care that supports healthy child development and lifelong success.

## **1. DUTY: PROVISION OF BEFORE-AND-AFTER SCHOOL CARE**

### **SCHOOLS SUBJECT TO THE DUTY**

#### Requirement:

In accordance with section 2 of the regulation, school boards are required to ensure the provision of a before-and-after school program for every elementary school serving students in the primary and/or junior division (i.e. from Kindergarten to Grade 6) where there is sufficient demand and/or viability.

Programs must be available on every instructional school day.

*A before and/or after school program may not be required if there is insufficient demand. Please see section 3 for more information.*

#### Considerations:

Programs may operate on non-instructional days (e.g. professional development days, winter, spring and summer breaks) if there is a need required by families within the community.

### **ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS: SCHOOL BOARD-OPERATED OR THIRD PARTY**

#### Requirement:

In accordance with the *Education Act* and regulation, school boards may directly operate before-and-after school programs or they may enter into an agreement with a third party that is either:

- A licensed child care centre that is eligible to receive fee subsidy payments for children enrolled in the program; and/or
- An authorized recreational and skill building program for after school programs only serving students in Grade 1 and up (aged 6 or older).

### **THIRD PARTY PROGRAMS: NOT-FOR-PROFIT OR MUNICIPALITY**

#### Requirement:

In accordance with section 27 of the regulation, third party programs (licensed child care centres or authorized recreational and skill building programs) must be operated by a not-for-profit organization or a municipality. For-profit organizations may only be considered if the school board has made reasonable efforts to find a not-for-profit or municipal operator but was unable to do so.

Additionally, for licensed child care centres, if the school board had a written agreement with a for-profit operator to operate a before and/or after school program for four and five year olds at the relevant school when the duty first came into effect in 2011, the school board may continue to enter into agreements with this operator to meet the duty.

#### Considerations:

When selecting potential service providers, school boards are encouraged to work with their local service system managers to select not-for-profit organizations that have the capacity to:

- deliver high quality before-and-after school programs
- collaborate and integrate services with community and school partners
- address the diverse needs of all children and families in the community

Where a school board is proposing to work with a licensed child care centre to meet the expanded duty and wishes to license space in the school to deliver the program, providers are encouraged to begin the licensing application process as early as possible to prevent delays.

### **ENTERING INTO AGREEMENTS WITH ANOTHER SCHOOL BOARD**

#### Considerations:

In accordance with the Act and regulations, two or more school boards may enter into an agreement together for one of the school boards to directly operate or enter into an agreement with a third party to operate a before and/or after school program in a school of the board, for students of another school board.

## **2. PROGRAM FEES AND ACCESS TO CHILD CARE SUBSIDY**

### **PARENT FEES: SCHOOL BOARD-OPERATED PROGRAMS**

#### Requirement:

In accordance with the *Education Act* and its regulation, every school board shall charge fees to parents of students enrolled in school board-operated programs to recover costs incurred

by the school board.

School boards are also required to ensure that costs associated with accommodating students with special needs are incorporated into the cost of the program.

Considerations:

A school board may also require a deposit or a registration fee to be paid to enroll a student in a school board-operated program.

- Deposits cannot exceed fees charged by the school board for two weeks enrolment in a program.
- Where a parent withdraws an enrolled student before the first day of the program, school boards must refund deposits, less a maximum of \$50 for administrative fees.
- Registration fees cannot exceed \$50.

**PARENT FEES: THIRD PARTY PROGRAMS**

School boards do not determine third party fees as these are set by the provider. The ministry does not regulate child care fees set by licensed child care centres or recreation providers.

[New regulatory amendments](#) prohibit child care centres from charging a waiting list fee or deposit to parents seeking to be added to or removed from a waiting list.

**CHILD CARE SUBSIDY**

The ministry provides funding to local service system managers who are responsible for the administration of child care fee subsidies in their communities. Child care subsidy is available for children enrolled in licensed child care, a school-aged recreation program and a school board-operated before and/or after school program. Eligible families may apply for subsidy through their local service system manager. Fee subsidy for eligible families is subject to the availability of subsidy funds within the budget of the CMSM or DSSAB and space availability within a child care program.

Local service system managers have the flexibility to determine how to allocate child care and early years funding to best meet the needs of children, families and service providers within their community. There may be instances where a before-and-after school program is not in receipt of fee subsidy even if it is eligible.

Requirement:

Child care subsidies may only be provided through the local service system manager. School boards are not permitted to directly provide subsidies to families to access a before and/or after school program.

Considerations:

Consistent with the delivery of before-and-after school programs for students in Full-Day Kindergarten, school boards may enter into agreements with a local service system manager to provide subsidies to eligible families with children enrolled in a school board-operated

program. Local service system managers may administer child care subsidy based on local policies and priorities, in accordance with ministry regulations and policies, to best respond to the needs in their community.

### **3. PLANNING: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

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#### Requirement:

To support an integrated approach to the planning and delivery of before-and-after school programs, school boards are required to consult with the following community partners to determine demand and program viability (section 4 of the regulation):

- Service system manager(s) for the service areas of the school board
- Any First Nation that has a tuition agreement with the school board
- Operators of existing third party programs selected by the school board (e.g. licensed child care programs and authorized recreation program providers)
- Parents with children who are enrolled/they intend to enroll in Kindergarten – Grade 6 with the school board
- Indigenous organizations that provide culturally appropriate programs and services to urban Indigenous communities

School boards are required to include information regarding the estimated daily fee and non-instruction fee for school board-operated and third party programs when assessing demand. School boards are also required to assess demand for non-instructional days.

#### **Prioritizing Indigenous Organizations as Local Partners**

On May 30<sup>th</sup>, the province released *The Journey Together: Ontario's Commitment to Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples*. Under this commitment, the province is working closely with Indigenous and sector partners to address the legacy of residential schools, close gaps and remove barriers, support Indigenous culture and reconcile relationships with Indigenous peoples. This includes a commitment to expand access for Indigenous children and families to child and family programs on reserve as well as licensed child care and culturally relevant child and family programs off reserve.

Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy aims to help the education community identify and address discriminatory biases and systemic barriers in order to support the achievement and well-being of all students. The strategy builds on successful ministry, school board, and school policies and practices. Parent engagement is an essential component of Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy.

[Ontario's Indigenous Education Strategy](#) was launched in 2007 with the release of the [Ontario First Nation, Metis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework](#). The Strategy has been designed to help improve opportunities for First Nation, Métis and Inuit students – whether they live in remote areas or in urban areas – and to increase the knowledge and awareness of all students

about Indigenous histories, cultures, perspectives and contributions. The Strategy sets the foundation for improving achievement among Indigenous students and for building positive relationships with Ontario First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples.

In 2014, the ministry released the [Ontario First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework Implementation Plan](#) to advance the goals of the strategy. The [Implementation Plan](#) highlights meaningful collaboration with First Nation, Métis and Inuit partners as being critical to success for Indigenous students. The ministry recognizes the ongoing work of all district school boards to establish formalized processes for collaborating with First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities and organizations, such as using their Indigenous Education Advisory Councils to provide input into education programs and policies.

**Considerations:**

District school boards should engage with their Indigenous Education Advisory Councils and with Indigenous organizations, such as their local Indigenous Friendship Centres, to support Indigenous students who may be accessing before-and-after school programs.

Prioritizing Indigenous organizations will help the province meet its commitments to both reconciliation and its equity and inclusive education policy.

**A Consistent Approach for Families**

**Considerations:**

As part of the consultative planning process, school boards must work with their local service system manager and their community partners, including urban Indigenous organizations to develop an approach on how to assess sufficient demand and viability. The regulatory framework provides flexibility for partners to work together to assess viability and demand and develop planning processes that are responsive to the particular qualities and needs of a community. Factors for consideration may include:

- Demand and/or gaps in services:
  - These gaps may include specific populations that face barriers to accessing programs and may require specific programming to accommodate their specific needs
  - Partners may wish to co-create community surveys and share existing information such as waitlist data for child care or enrolment data in schools
  - Interests identified by children and families in programming (programming content, hours of operation, provision of snacks)
- Capacity to expand and/or establishing program
  - Partners may identify existing service providers and their capacity to meet specific programming needs in the community (e.g. culturally responsive, newcomer programs)



- Partners may consider the availability of qualified staff and/or service providers that are able to meet the programming requirements
- School boards may take an inventory of existing programs offered in their schools that operate before-and-after school such as licensed child care centres, nutrition programs, After School Programs funded by the Ministry of Tourism Culture and Sport
- Parent Fees
  - Programs should consider demand for both full-fee paying families and families that require subsidy to access programming
  - Where demand is insufficient in the absence of subsidies, a program may not be viable
  - School boards are encouraged to work with their local service system manager to support equitable access to before-and-after school programs for children

School boards and local service system managers are encouraged to share information to develop a common approach to assessing viability of programs and identify potential solutions at a community level.

School boards may wish to work through their local service system manager to engage with existing third party providers.

### **Co-Terminus School Boards**

#### Consideration:

School boards are encouraged to work with their co-terminus school boards to ensure a consistent approach to the provision of before-and-after school care for families across the community.

**Please note:** The regulatory requirement that each parent is surveyed every year has been removed from regulation (though school boards may continue to use the survey to inform planning discussions).

### **EXEMPTIONS FROM DUTY**

#### Requirement:

A before and/or after school program may not be required for a school if there is agreement between the school board, the local service system manager and any First Nation with a tuition agreement relating to students attending that school that there is insufficient demand.

This assessment must be informed by the consultative process set out above, which includes engagement with urban Indigenous organizations, existing third party providers, and parents.

## DETERMINATIONS

### Requirement:

Based on the consultative process, school boards must determine:

- The schools in which the school board will offer before-and-after school programs in the next school year for students enrolled in Kindergarten to Grade 6 including:
  - the length of time the program will operate
  - the times in the day during which the before-and-after school portions of the program will operate
  - any non-instructional days on which the school board anticipates before and/or after school program will operate
  - the features the school board-operated program will include (e.g. provision of snack, homework help)
  - The daily fee and non-instructional daily fee for school board-operated program

Reporting requirements set out in section 9 below include an affirmation signed by the school board, relevant local service system manager(s) and First Nations indicating there is agreement that where a before and/or after school program is not offered, the school is exempt from the duty because it is not viable (e.g. there is insufficient demand). See section 9 for more information.

## **4. SCHOOL BOARD –OPERATED: PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

### PRINCIPLES GUIDING PROGRAMMING

#### Requirement:

School board-operated programs complement what happens during the regular school day and are guided by [\*How Does Learning Happen?: Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years\*](#) (HDLH). Consistent with HDLH it is expected that school board-operated programs will be guided by the following principles:

- *View of the Child:* All students are competent, capable of complex thinking, curious and rich in potential. Environments and experiences allow students to exercise choice and responds to individual abilities and interests.
- *Positive Interactions:* Programs support students in making connections with their peers and staff in structured and unstructured interactions as well as provide opportunities for students to engage in independent activities. All students, including students with differing abilities feel valued, connected to others, and are able to make positive contributions to the group, community and natural world.
- *Developmentally Responsive:* All students are able to participate fully in ways that are most comfortable for them. Programs support physical and mental health and wellness, and are rooted in an understanding of child development and the broader contexts within which this development is happening (e.g. local, social, cultural,

economic).

- *Safe, Inclusive Spaces*: Programs establish and maintain positive, harassment/discrimination free environments for optimal participant growth so that students, each with differing abilities, interests and perspectives feel that their experiences and strength are valued.

[How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years](#) provides a comprehensive framework to guide program development and pedagogy in early years settings and support Ontario's vision of high quality programs and services centred on the child and family with a view of children as competent and capable of complex thinking, curious and rich in potential. [How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years](#) helps move Ontario towards increasingly integrated programs and services for children and families whether in child care, child and family programs, or Kindergarten, with a shared view of the child, common pedagogical approaches and foundations of belonging, well-being, engagement and expression that are aligned with the Kindergarten program.

## **STAFFING RATIOS**

### Requirement:

- The maximum allowable child to adult staffing ratio for a school board-operated program shall be 15:1.
- Where a program unit size exceeds a child to adult ratio of 15:1, the school board shall appoint another staff person to that program unit.
- Each group of children shall not exceed a maximum size of 30 students (this maximum size does not refer to the total number of children served by a program. There may be multiple groups of children, in separate areas, served by one program).

## **STAFF QUALIFICATIONS AND ADULT SUPERVISION**

### Requirement:

As set out under Part IX.1 of the *Education Act*, school board-operated programs must have at least one Registered Early Childhood Educator (RECE) to lead the program unit.

For programs only serving children 9 years of age or older, there must be at least one adult to lead the program unit who meets one of the following criteria:

- Has a diploma or degree in child and youth care;
- Has a diploma or degree in recreation and leisure services;
- Is a member in good standing with the Ontario College of Teachers; or
- Is a member in good standing with the College of Early Childhood Educators

Programs must have adult supervision on-site at all times. Additionally, where a program is the sole occupant of the premises, there must be a minimum of two adults onsite at all times.

Considerations:

Programs may wish to exceed the minimum ratio and staffing requirements. Research suggests that smaller group sizes support more meaningful and positive interactions between children. This may also permit greater capacity to support children with higher levels of need.

**ACTIVE PLAY**

Requirement

School board-operated programs are required to offer a minimum of 30 minutes of active play in daily programming to align with the government’s commitment to provide opportunities for increased physical activity for children and youth. Activities should be developmentally appropriate and accommodate fitness levels and interests of students. Emphasis should focus on participation and enjoyment and can include introducing participants to a range of developmentally appropriate physical activities such as sports, dance, free gym time, and active games.

This requirement aligns with the [Public Health Agency of Canada’s guidelines](#) recommending 60 minutes of daily moderate to vigorous physical activity for children aged 5-17. It is also consistent with the principles outlined in [How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years](#), which include creating opportunities for children to engage in active play that allow them to connect with the natural world and their community.

**OUTDOOR PLAY**

Considerations:

[How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years](#) notes that children thrive where they can engage in vigorous physical play in natural outdoor spaces. In addition to providing physical benefits, active play outdoors strengthens functioning in cognitive areas such as perception, attention, creative problem solving, and complex thinking.

**OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS**

Considerations:

School boards may wish to offer specific programming based on the needs and interests of the community and participants in the program. This programming can include:

- Academic assistance or time for students to complete school work
- Arts and cultural activities that promote inclusion, knowledge of other cultures, or creative pursuits
- Personal health and wellness education (e.g. anti-bullying, body image, fostering resilience)
- Community involvement
- Providing snacks for students participating in the program. Programs may choose to incorporate hands-on activities about nutrition when snacks are provided. All food should meet [Canada’s Food Guide to Healthy Eating](#) or [Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide – First Nations, Inuit and Métis](#)

- Unstructured time to allow children to develop interests, engage with their peers, play independently, and make choices and decisions for themselves

## DEVELOPMENTALLY RESPONSIVE SPACES

### Considerations:

Programs should ensure spaces are clean and in a good state of repair. Environments should be inviting and designed together with students based on their abilities and interests, allowing for a variety of activities that are responsive to individual development. Spaces should allow for both independent and small group experiences as well as opportunities to participate in larger groups.

Furnishings and materials should support a range of interests that provide for learning, creative expression, recreational activities, and relaxation.

## **5. AUTHORIZED RECREATIONAL/SKILL BUILDING PROGRAMS**

Where a school board chooses to enter into an agreement with a provider to deliver an authorized recreational and skill building program, the school board must ensure that the following programming requirements set out below are included in the agreement between the school board and the recreation program provider.

### **AUTHORIZED RECREATIONAL AND SKILL BUILDING PROGRAMS**

For after school programs that only serve students in Grades 1 and higher, school boards may enter into an agreement with an authorized recreational and skill building program.

Authorized recreation providers include municipalities, the YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada, and Ontario's After School Program funded by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

#### ***Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014***

As defined under [section 6\(4\) of the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014](#) and [the General Regulation](#), **authorized recreational and skill building programs** may provide **up to 3 hours** of care once a day for children aged 6 and up if they are:

- Operated by a municipality, school board, First Nation, or the Métis Nation of Ontario;
- Operated by the YMCA or Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada;
- An Ontario After School Program funded by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (MTCS);
- A member of a provincial sports or multi-sport organization recognized by MTCS;
- Operated by an MTCS agency or attraction (e.g. ROM, Ontario Science Centre); or
- Authorized by the local service system manager or First Nation provided that the program supports the health, safety and well-being of children.

## **PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

Research suggests that key factors in quality after school programs include staff qualifications, small group sizes, more adults per child to encourage increased and meaningful interaction, and a variety of activities that stem from self-directed programming.

### **Principles Guiding Programming**

#### Requirement

Authorized Recreational and Skill Building programs should be consistent with [How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years](#).

- *View of the Child:* All students are competent and capable of complex thinking, curious and rich in potential. Programming allows students to exercise choice and responds to individual interests.
- *Positive Interactions:* Programs support students in making connections with their peers and staff in structured and unstructured interactions, and provide opportunities for students to engage in independent activities. All Students, including students with differing abilities, feel valued, connected to others, and are able to make positive contributions to the group, community and natural world.
- *Developmentally Responsive:* All students are able to participate fully in ways that are most comfortable for them. Programs support physical and mental health and wellness, and are rooted in an understanding of child development and the broader contexts within which this development is happening (e.g. local, social, cultural, economic).
- *Safe, Inclusive Spaces:* Programs establish and maintain positive, harassment/discrimination free environments for optimal participant growth so that students, each with differing abilities, interests and perspectives feel that their experiences and strengths are valued.

### **Staffing Ratios**

#### Requirement:

Programs must have a minimum of one staff person for every 15 students (1:15). Where the number of students exceeds 15, a second staff person is required.

Each group of children shall not exceed a maximum size of 30 students (this does not refer to the total number of children served by a program. There may be multiple groups of children, in separate areas, served by one program).

## **Staff Qualifications and Supervision**

### Requirement:

Each program must have access to at least one adult to lead the program who meets one of the following criteria:

- Is a member in good standing with the College of Early Childhood Educators; or
- Is a member in good standing with the Ontario College of Teachers; or
- Has a diploma or degree in child and youth care; or
- Has a diploma or degree in recreation and leisure services; or
- Has a diploma or degree in social work, psychology, sociology, kinesiology with a focus/experience working with children aged 6-12 years old.

Programs must have adult supervision on-site at all times and at least one adult must meet the requirements above or be enrolled as a student in the fields identified above.

Additionally, where a program is the sole occupant of the premises, there must be a minimum of two adults onsite at all times

## **Active Play**

### Requirement:

After school programs must dedicate 30% of program time or one hour of daily active play for students in the program. Activities should be developmentally appropriate and accommodate fitness levels and interests of students. Emphasis should focus on participation and enjoyment and can include introducing participants to a range of developmentally appropriate physical activities such as sports, dance, free gym time, and active games.

This requirement aligns with the [Public Health Agency of Canada's guidelines](#) recommending 60 minutes of daily moderate to vigorous physical activity for children aged 5-17. It is also consistent with the principles outlined in [How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years](#), which include creating opportunities for children to engage in active play that allow them to connect with the natural world and their community.

## **Outdoor Play**

### Considerations:

[How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years](#) notes that children thrive where they can engage in vigorous physical play in natural outdoor spaces. In addition to providing physical benefits, active play outdoors strengthens functioning in cognitive areas such as perception, attention, creative problem solving, and complex thinking.

## **Optional Activities and Programs**

### Considerations:

School boards may encourage recreation providers to offer specific programming based on the needs and interests of the community and participants in the program. This programming

can include:

- Academic assistance or time for students to complete school work
- Arts and cultural activities that promote inclusion, knowledge of other cultures, or creative pursuits
- Personal health and wellness education (e.g. anti-bullying, body image, fostering resilience)
- Community involvement
- Providing snacks for students participating in the program. Programs may choose to incorporate hands-on activities about nutrition when snacks are provided. All food should meet [Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating](#) or [Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide – First Nations, Inuit and Métis](#)
- Unstructured time to allow children to develop interests, engage with their peers, play independently, and make choices and decisions for themselves

### **Developmentally Responsive Spaces**

#### Considerations:

Programs should ensure spaces are clean and in a good state of repair. Environments should be inviting and designed together with students based on their abilities and interests, allowing for a variety of activities that are responsive to individual development. Spaces should allow for both independent and small group experiences as well as opportunities to participate in larger groups.

Furnishings and materials should support a range of interests that provide for learning, creative expression, recreational activities, and relaxation.

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS**

#### Requirement:

Where a school board chooses to enter into an agreement with an authorized recreational and skill building program for the provision of after school programs for students in grade 1 and up, the agreements must require that the operator meet the following conditions:

### **Policies and Procedures**

#### Requirement:

Authorized recreation programs must have the following policies in place at each site and reviewed annually with all staff:

- An emergency action plan communicated with the school and visibly posted
- Accident and injury reporting
- Plans for children with medical or special needs
- Safety policies to monitor equipment and facilities
- Reducing risk of and responding to exposure to anaphylactic causative agents
- Safe arrival and departure procedures for children, particularly with regard to transitions after the school day (see below)



- Safe food handling with a minimum of one staff person that has been certified in a licensed safe food handling course
- Vulnerable sector screening for all staff prior to interacting with children
- The provision of healthy and nutritious food and drink for students
- Ensuring protection of privacy of children, youth and their families

### **Safe Arrival/Dismissal Policy**

#### Requirement:

At a minimum, this policy should include a:

- Daily sign-in/sign-out procedure so that staff are aware of which children are in attendance and which are absent
- Procedure to be followed if a child does not attend and staff have not been notified in advance of the reason (e.g. contact school/parent if child has not arrived by a certain time)
- Process by which parents must inform the program in writing of who is or is not allowed to pick up their children
- Process by which parents must provide written consent for children of any age to sign themselves in and out
- Process by which the authorized recreation provider communicates with the school to support transitions to after the school day

### **Standard First Aid and CPR**

#### Requirement:

All staff must be certified in Standard First Aid / CPR from a Workplace Safety Insurance Board (WSIB) recognized agency.

### **Vulnerable Sector Checks**

#### Requirement:

Authorized Recreational and Skill Building programs are required to obtain vulnerable sector checks (VSCs) from all staff, volunteers, and students before they interact with children.

For any person, other than an employee, volunteer or student, who provides services to a child in the program, the program must obtain an offence declaration from the person or an attestation from their employer that a vulnerable sector check has been obtained and reviewed.

Vulnerable sector checks should be renewed every five years and offence declarations should be completed annually except in the year when a vulnerable sector check is obtained.

Authorized Recreational and Skill Building programs are required to have a policy in place to ensure that persons in contact with children in their programs are appropriately screened or supervised.

## ORGANIZATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

### Professional Learning and Development

#### Requirement:

Authorized recreational programs must have a staff training plan that ensures orientation, as well as initial and ongoing staff education. A staff training plan must include:

- Yearly after school/organizational orientation where the staff sign off on organization's policies and procedures
- Training in occupational health and safety (WHMIS)
- Training in ways to encourage positive interactions and communication among peers and support students self-regulation abilities; and training on prohibited adult practices (i.e. using harsh or degrading measures withholding physical activity as a form of punishment)
- Training in conflict resolution
- Training in Standard First Aid and CPR certificate from a WSIB recognized agency (i.e. Red Cross, St. John's Ambulance)
- Training in healthy child development (e.g. High Five's "Principles of Healthy Child Development")
- Training on the role of healthy eating for development of healthy behaviours and one staff at each location must be trained in safe food handling
- Training in adapting physical activity opportunities to include children and youth at all levels of athletic ability and those with physical, sensory or intellectual disability
- Training and familiarity with resources on integrating physical activity throughout the program

### Liability Insurance

#### Requirement:

A current certificate of Comprehensive General Liability for at least \$2 million naming "Her Majesty the Queen in right of Ontario, Her Ministers, Agents, Appointees and Employees" as additionally insured.

## **6. LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTRES**

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Licensed child care centres are regulated under the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*. Under the Act and its regulations, centres must meet a number of provincial standards including:

- Maximum group size and ratios for staff and children in care
- Staff qualifications
- Policies and procedures to support health, safety and wellbeing of children in care.

These regulations also require that licensed child care centres are guided by [How Does Learning Happen?: Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years](#) in the development of their

programming for children. Consistent with [How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years](#), licensed child care centres offering before-and-after school care are required to provide a minimum of 30 minutes of outdoor time each day in their programming.

## **7. THIRD PARTY PROGRAMS: LINKAGES TO THE SCHOOL DAY**

### **TRANSITIONS AROUND THE SCHOOL DAY**

#### **Requirement:**

Agreements must include how third party programs and schools ensure the safe arrival and departure of children enrolled in third party programs as they transition between the school day, before-and-after school programs, and home.

#### **Considerations:**

Children have differing experiences and connections with their school. It is important that school boards and providers are considering transition requirements that support the individual needs of children in the program. A child may have an individualized education plan where specific supports may be required to transition children from the school day to before and/or after school programming.

### **SAFE SCHOOLS**

#### **Requirement:**

In accordance with section 28 of the regulation, agreements must include that operators of third party programs must ensure that when its employees or contractors become aware that a student of the school board may have engaged in an activity for which suspension or expulsion must be considered, that these staff or contractors report the matter to the school's principal.

### **PROGRAMS OFFERED OFF SCHOOL PREMISES (GRADES 1 TO 6 ONLY)**

#### **Considerations:**

For programs that only serve children aged 6 and over, school boards may choose to offer these programs off school premises. For example, an after school program for 6-12 year olds may be offered at a municipal community centre where there may be space that is more appropriate for developmentally responsive programming for school aged children.

This is intended to recognize existing partnerships between school boards and municipalities and service providers to serve school aged children and better integrate existing services to support local planning, particularly for after school recreation programs.

## **8. COMMUNICATION TO PARENTS**

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### **POSTING INFORMATION**

#### Requirements:

Before the start of May of each year, school boards are required to provide the following information to parents and guardians in writing and post on the school board's website:

- The fees for before-and-after school programs
- The process and approach for determining sufficient demand and viability
- Schools that will and will not be offering a before and/or after school program
- Information on how to apply for financial assistance for before-and-after school programs
- Notice that if a third party program ceases to operate, the school board will ensure that another program will be available but the fees, days and times of operation may change

#### Considerations:

School boards may wish to work with their Indigenous and community partners to help communicate information to parents.

## **9. REPORTING TO THE MINISTRY**

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#### Requirement:

School boards are required to report the following information to the ministry by the end of each school year:

- For the coming school year:
  - A summary of:
    - How the school board consulted with the local service system manager(s), First Nations with tuition agreements, existing service providers, urban Indigenous organizations and parents
    - What additional information and data was used or collected to support planning (surveys, asset mapping, demographic projections, waitlist information)
  - Total number of schools that will be delivering a before-and after school program
  - The total number of children registered in before-and-after school programs including non-instructional days
  - Names of all schools exempt from the duty
  - Average and range of daily fees for before, after and before-and-after school programs (including non-instructional days)
  - Affirmation signed by relevant local service system manager(s) and First Nations

that:

- Describes how sufficient demand and viability was determined
- There is agreement that the schools that are not offering a before and/or after school program is exempt from the duty because a program was not viable
- Affirmation that, if a school board has entered into an agreement with a for-profit operator, it did so in compliance with the requirements set out in O. Reg. 221/11
- Affirmation that third party and board-operated programs meet the requirements under the *Education Act*
- Beginning May 2018, for the preceding school year for board-operated and authorized recreational and skill-building programs:
  - Name of each school and the name of the operator delivering before and/or after school programs
  - The hours of operation including non-instructional days
  - Updated (if any) names of each school exempt from the duty including revised affirmation signed by the local service system manager(s) and relevant First Nations
  - Number of children registered in each of the before and/or after school programs by age group
  - Daily average and range of fees for each of the before and/or after school programs (including non-instructional days)
  - Wages and number of staff for each program

Boards are not required to provide this information for licensed child care programs as this will be collected through child care licensing.