



SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 50 HAIDA GWAI BOARD POLICY MANUAL

Policy C.5 (Formerly 3300)

Policy Subject: STRONGSTART EARLY LEARNING CENTRES

Date Passed: April 2007

Date Approved: April, 2007

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POLICY

The Board of Education of School District No. 50 (Haida Gwaii) believes that the years between birth and school-age are a critical time in a child's life.

The experiences that children have in the early years influence their future health, well-being, and life-long learning. By investing in children's early years we can positively affect the future lives of residents of Haida Gwaii. Children who have had exposure to language rich environments and play based early learning experiences are more likely to develop the skills, knowledge and dispositions to support their success in school.

To this end the Board of Education of School District No. 50 (Haida Gwaii) supports the provision of StrongStart Centres in School district No. 50 to provide school-based, high quality early learning programs for children younger than school age accompanied by a parent or caregiver, designed to support the success of students when they enter Kindergarten.

PROCEDURE

A. Definitions

"StrongStart centre"- A free early learning program located in schools, for preschool children accompanied by parent, other adult family member or caregiver, created through an agreement between School District No. 50 and the Ministry of Education.

"Early learning" -the knowledge, skills and dispositions that preschool children acquire in the years before school entry in key developmental domains: cognitive, physical, language and communication, social and emotional.

B. Operational

School District 50 should ensure:

- Facilitators running the centre are certified Early Childhood Educators StrongStart early learning centres are situated in appropriate, available school space, preferably schools offering Kindergarten
- Designated space is or will be surplus to school district need and will be dedicated to the Centre.
- A parent, family member, or caregiver accompanies the child in the StrongStart centre at all times
- the Service in the Strong Start centre is not designated child care.
- A risk management plan is in place for the centre

C. Standards

StrongStart early learning centres are under the direct supervision of the school Principal and should be designed and operated to meet the following standards:

- Promote language, physical and social/emotional development of preschool children (program emphasis will be on 3 to 5 year olds but designed to accommodate families with children age 0-5)
- Free of charge for parents/caregivers attending with their preschool children
- Demonstrate collaboration with Band Councils, Haida Education Council and the community to meet the unique needs of the school community
- Provide opportunities for parents/caregivers to observe and practice activities that support early learning
- Open five days per week for 3-4 hours per day, together with their parents/caregivers
- Operate on days in the district's school calendar, or throughout the calendar year
- Link parents/caregivers to services offered by health authorities, community agencies and other social service providers (e.g., early screening, libraries, English as A Second Language services, parent resource centres, child care services, referrals for children who may have developmental or other special needs)
- offer family-friendly environments where parents/caregivers can make connections

D. Activities

StrongStart early learning centres should include the following activities:

- organized activities such as story time, music, singing

- access to books, art materials, and puzzles
- play areas that promote creativity, exploratory individual and group play (such as water, sand, clay, blocks)
- movement and large muscle play activities
- snack time, with food that models healthy eating
- outreach component to reach the most hard to serve families

E. Records

Districts will maintain StrongStart data and records using the format provided by the Province for this purpose.

Districts should collect enrollment and attendance information about the adults and children (by age) attending the centre, including names, birthdates and ages of children, and other information necessary for the successful operation of the program and to report to the Ministry.

Districts should create quarterly reports regarding total monthly and average daily attendance at the centres for each month for both adults and children to be shared with the Ministry for the following dates:

- November 10 (attendance for July and October),
- January 10 (attendance for November and December)
- April 10 (attendance for January through March), and
- July 10 (attendance for April through June).

F. Criminal Records Check

StrongStart Early learning Centres will operate under conditions set out in the Criminal Record Review Act.