

School District No. 5

[Southeast Kootenay]



SCHOOL DISTRICT 5
SOUTHEAST KOOTENAY

Early Learning and Child Care September 2024



Through collaborative partnerships, innovative practices, and unwavering dedication, School District No. 5 (Southeast Kootenay) (the District) continues to cultivate an inclusive environment where every learner has pathways to graduation that honour individual strengths and abilities. This academic, social and personal journey is one of continuous improvement and commitment to educational excellence. Creating school age care on school grounds involves a blend of collaboration, innovation, and strategic planning.

The District is committed to creating partnerships that include educators, child care professionals, and communities to collaboratively design inclusive programs that support academic, social, and emotional development. The [Inclusion and Diversity Administrative Procedure](#) was created to ensure children and youth of all abilities can participate meaningfully in educational environments. The District engaged in consultation with local Indigenous groups to develop this administrative procedure. The District values and celebrates all unique differences that support all individuals including race, language, ethnicity, culture, gender, socioeconomic levels, range of abilities and physical and/or health care needs.

The District is committed to modeling inclusion in all educational environments and is committed to maintaining an inclusive environment with equitable access, support, and participation for all children. All programs in the District support the individual strengths and needs of each child. All children are welcomed, supported, and valued, which allows them to participate meaningfully. All children benefit from inclusive settings that are welcoming and celebrate the diverse identities of children, families, and staff.

In the spring of 2024, the District, in partnership with not-for-profit providers, was successful in applying to the province's ChildCareBC New Spaces Funds and received approval for more than \$2.5 million in funding. By leveraging school facilities and by utilizing existing school facilities such as libraries, gymnasiums, classrooms and outdoor spaces, the District maximized resources. The District's approach reduced the need for additional infrastructure and allowed for a seamless transition between the school day and child care.

The District has partnered with the *Elkford Women's Task Force Society* to create twenty-four (24) before and after school spaces at Rocky Mountain Elementary School in Elkford. They also partnered with the *South Country Social Planning Committee Society Jaffray* to create thirty (30) spaces at Jaffray Elementary Junior Secondary School in Jaffray. In Cranbrook, Steeples Elementary School, partnered with the Boys and Girls Club of Cranbrook to create thirty (30) spaces. Gordon Terrace Elementary School partnered with the Stay n' Play Association and created an additional thirty (30) school aged care spaces. The District will continue to build upon relationships between early years and the schools as well as explore new opportunities for connecting and collaborating in the coming years.

By leveraging collaboration and innovation, school aged care on school grounds provides high-quality, inclusive care that supports the overall development of children. School aged care on school grounds not only benefits the students but also strengthens the school community relationship, contributing to a more supportive environment for all.

The early years' programs contributed to the ongoing work of the Strategic Plan. Our early years programs prioritize relationship building between schools and the community. By fostering trust and open communication, children feel supported and safe in the school environment.

CR4YC (Changing Results for Young Children)

One of the main goals of the CR4YC project is to improve social and emotional well-being outcomes for children. The project brings together community early childhood educators, StrongStart facilitators, and primary teachers to engage in collaborative inquiry. CR4YC focuses on social and emotional well-being to improve outcomes for young children. One of the CR4YC goals is to identify and apply a strengthened understanding of quality practices associated with improving the social and emotional well-being of young children. Another goal of CR4YC is to align instructional practices between early childhood educators and primary educators using the Early Learning Framework.

SEY2KT (Strengthening Early Years to Kindergarten Transitions)

The SEY2KT group is a collaborative, multi-partner, initiative designed to improve early learning experiences and transition processes for children and families in British Columbia. Comprised of principals, vice principals, district staff, kindergarten teachers, community members, speech and language pathologists, early childhood educators, StrongStart facilitators, childcare providers, and school trustees, the program brings together educators from both the District and community settings to design and implement ongoing collaborative actions, based on local resources and needs.

The group meet six times per year, attending provincial meetings and meeting in their community groups to strengthen relationships across education and the early years sectors. The program is aligned with the revised Early Learning Framework (BC 2019). Engaging families in the transition process fosters a strong sense of community. Workshops, open houses and communication between school and home help parents feel connected and children feel supported. By focusing on these aspects, early years and transitions into kindergarten fosters environments that are not only safe but also emotionally supportive and welcoming, promoting a positive foundation for children's future academic and social success.

The group is thrilled to bring SEY2KT to Cranbrook during the upcoming year. The goal is to improve the continuity for children as they transition from early childhood programs to kindergarten. This project will have several benefits, including smoother transitions, and better collaboration among the early years, school, and families. These efforts will help lay a positive foundation for a child's journey.

StrongStart

The District StrongStart facilitators were invited to attend a school professional development day along with primary teachers, on Metis Early Learning, Aansaamb aen kiskayhtaamaahk, Learning Together, resource. The workshop supported Metis specific teachings and programming and helped to foster learning environments in which Metis culture is celebrated.