

Preschools

For most families, preschool is not a replacement for childcare. Typically, a child will attend preschool for about two and half to four hours per day, two or three days per week. Most operate on the school year – that is they offer preschool from September to June.

A facility in British Columbia that holds a preschool licence must:

- Maintain a staff/child ratio of 1 – 10, with at least one ECE educator present. Where 11– 25 children are present, one ECE educator and one assistant must be present
- Offer a part day program (no more than four hours for each class)

It is common in North America for early childhood education programs to be based on a “learning through play” approach. Play is important for healthy early childhood development because it fosters problem solving, flexibility in thinking, supports the development of social skills such as turn taking and negotiation, and helps children to develop communication skills. Play is also satisfying and absorbing, and provides children with the opportunity to work through anxiety and stress.

When searching for a preschool you may hear some of the following terms:

- Reggio Emilia or Responsive Curriculum - Information on Reggio Emilia can be found at: North American Reggio Emilia Alliance <http://www.reggioalliance.org>
- Montessori – Information on Montessori Philosophy can be found at the Montessori Society of Canada <https://ami-canada.com/>
- Parent Participation – Please see the Council of Parent Participation Preschools in BC for additional information www.cpppreschools.bc.ca

When choosing a preschool program identify what you believe is important for your child’s development and discuss it with the preschool staff during the interview process. Refer to the information provided earlier in this document regarding quality child care, as well as the sample interview questions to assist you in this process.

The document *British Columbia Early Learning Framework* has been developed to support early childhood educators and other service providers to create rich early learning environments. It can be viewed at <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/early-learning/teach/early-learning-framework>