

Overview of Early Learning Program

Questions and Answers

Parent and Community

OVERVIEW

1. What will the full day Early Learning Program look like?

Ontario will begin phasing in full day learning in September 2010 with full implementation in all schools by 2015-2016. As a province, the first phase will include 15-17% of four- and five-year-olds. In TDSB, this means 4940 students or 190 classrooms.

2. How does a child enrol in the full day Early Learning Program?

On 12 January 2010, the Ministry announced which schools will have full day learning. In February, parents/guardians will be able to register children in the full day Early Learning Program through their designated school's regular Kindergarten registration process. The Board's registration process and practices will be the same for all new registrants. The only change will be the additional form for the parents to express interest in the Before and After School program. This form will be provided to schools centrally as part of the Kindergarten registration material.

3. What will children be learning while in a full day Early Learning Program?

Ministry of Education intends to review the Kindergarten Program (2006) and the Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT) and release an updated document for use in ELP schools in spring 2010.

4. Who will be teaching a full day Early Learning Program?

Certified Teachers and certified Early Childhood Educators (ECE) will work in partnership to help children learn during the regular school day.

5. Can parents/guardians opt for half day if their home school is offering full day kindergarten?

The Early Learning Program is a wonderful opportunity for Kindergarten aged children. At times, there may be an individual child who requires some additional time to transition into the full day of learning. School staff will work alongside every child and their family to ensure each child's transition to the full day learning program is as smooth as possible.

6. Can parents/guardians apply to schools offering full day Kindergarten under optional attendance?

The Board's Optional Attendance policy will be followed. Schools involved in ELP that are designated "closed" will remain closed. Schools involved in ELP that are designated as "limited" and anticipate space in the Kindergarten program, will be considered "closed" except for situations involving child care attendees and siblings, where space is available.

The closing date for accepting optional attendance in ELP programs will be March 1, 2010. After this date, only in-district students should be allowed to register.

Schools will not exceed their JK/SK projection for 2010-2011.

7. How will parents/guardians learn of these new programs?

Communications and Public Affairs is working on a package, together with translations, to provide parents/guardians with the information they need. This will be provided for schools as part of the Kindergarten materials. Translations will be available.

FACILITIES:

8. How can we provide kindergarten in rooms that are not purpose-built?

This is already common practice in many schools and principals have confirmed that appropriate space can be found.

9. How can these rooms be prepared for kindergarten students in the absence of capital funding?

In many cases, the number of rooms required remains the same as at present due to the adjustment in class size (average of 26 versus 20). Where additional rooms are required, Facility Services will assess needs as they do for all new classrooms and provide minor improvements as needed (e.g., coat hooks, cubbies).

10. How will security issues be addressed in the Before and After School program (once doors are locked from the regular school day)?

Many schools already have security systems in place but needs will be reviewed on a school-by-school basis.

STAFFING:

11. How will teachers be supported through the transition to a full day program in partnership with ECEs?

The TDSB Early Years staff team has provided a leadership role in developing professional development activities linking the Kindergarten program and Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT). The team presently offers joint PD to Teachers and ECEs from in-school child care programs. They will continue to plan and provide appropriate professional development for ECE/teaching teams prior to and throughout the first year of implementation.

12. How will we find and fund the ECE staff required?

1.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) ECE will be funded through the Ministry and, where the Before and After School program is implemented, ECEs will be funded on a cost recovery basis.

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM (extended day):

13. Do children have to attend the Before and After School program?

No. The Before and After School program is optional and will be funded by parent fees. Spaces in such programs will be dependent on local interest and will need to be determined early in order to ensure appropriate staffing.

14. What will be the hours of operation for the Before and After School program?

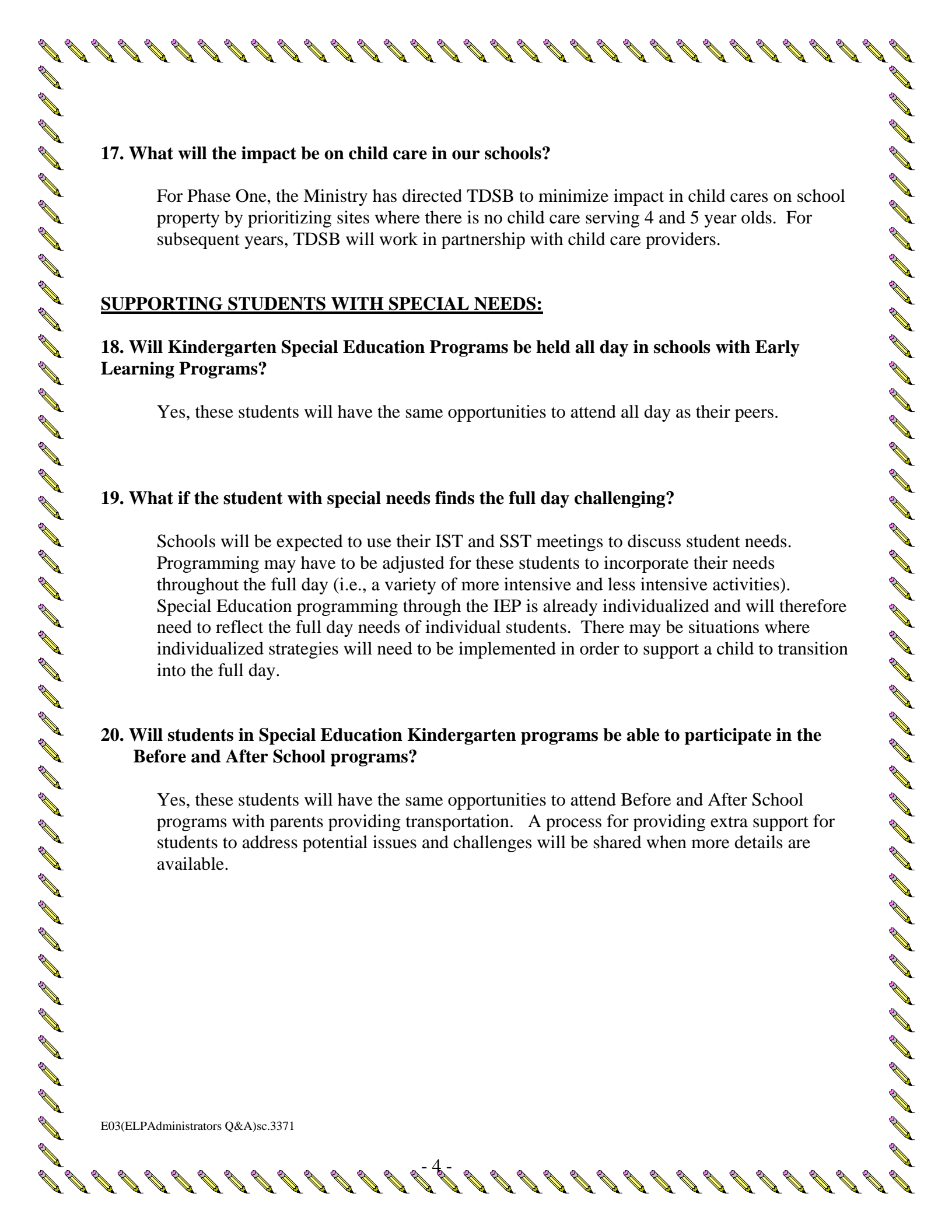
Hours will be determined at the local school. In general, programs will run between 7:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

15. How will fees for the Before and After School program be established?

Business Services is working closely with the Ministry, our coterminous Board and the City to establish a common approach to determining fees. This will be shared with schools when it is available.

16. Can parents/guardians choose a partial Before and After School program?

Parents/guardians who choose to enroll their Kindergarten students in the Before and After School program can select hours of attendance but will be required to pay a common monthly fee, regardless of number of hours of service used.



17. What will the impact be on child care in our schools?

For Phase One, the Ministry has directed TDSB to minimize impact in child cares on school property by prioritizing sites where there is no child care serving 4 and 5 year olds. For subsequent years, TDSB will work in partnership with child care providers.

SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:

18. Will Kindergarten Special Education Programs be held all day in schools with Early Learning Programs?

Yes, these students will have the same opportunities to attend all day as their peers.

19. What if the student with special needs finds the full day challenging?

Schools will be expected to use their IST and SST meetings to discuss student needs. Programming may have to be adjusted for these students to incorporate their needs throughout the full day (i.e., a variety of more intensive and less intensive activities). Special Education programming through the IEP is already individualized and will therefore need to reflect the full day needs of individual students. There may be situations where individualized strategies will need to be implemented in order to support a child to transition into the full day.

20. Will students in Special Education Kindergarten programs be able to participate in the Before and After School programs?

Yes, these students will have the same opportunities to attend Before and After School programs with parents providing transportation. A process for providing extra support for students to address potential issues and challenges will be shared when more details are available.