



Attention: The Honourable Demetrios Nicolaidis, M.L.A. Minister of Education

Dear Minister Nicolaidis,

In response to the provincial government's newly mandated Kindergarten screening assessments, the Early Childhood Education Council (ECEC) has issued the following statement:

*The Early Childhood Education Council, a specialist council of the Alberta Teachers' Association, **strongly opposes** the Alberta Government's mandated literacy and numeracy assessments for Kindergarten children. These standardized assessments are developmentally inappropriate and fail to account for the diverse abilities and learning rates of this age group. They limit children's ability to demonstrate their full potential, offer little meaningful context, and assess skills exceeding the Kindergarten Curriculum's developmental level.*

The one-on-one administration of these screening assessments is time consuming, taking away from valuable instructional time. Standardized assessments can also cause undue stress and lead to mislabeling children. Through ongoing observation, assessment, and nurturing relationships, teachers identify children's strengths and needs, rendering this assessment screener data redundant.

Teachers create welcoming and child-centered environments to offer Kindergarten children the best start in their educational journey. In addition to literacy and numeracy skills, they support children's holistic development through playful learning approaches that address their cognitive, physical, social, and emotional needs.

*Research states that children learn best through play and teachers are encouraged to **prioritize play-based learning** to support children's holistic development over premature academic metrics.*

The ECEC advocates for research-based practices for young children and supports its members with ongoing professional development opportunities, including an annual conference, online PD series, a community of practice, and a mentorship program.

We are hearing from our members that the screening assessments are negatively impacting them, the children they teach, and their families. Teachers are unclear how the results will be used to benefit young children and question the validity of the results. Implementing the assessments presents significant logistical challenges. Teachers are struggling to structure their programming to accommodate the extensive one-on-one assessment time required for each child. Teachers are forced to find creative ways to manage the rest of the class during these assessments, potentially resulting in over a week of lost instructional time for half-day Kindergarten programs.

What educators want are smaller classes, supports for complex learners and a developmentally appropriate curriculum. For an example of a framework focused on playful, joyful, child-centered learning, the Alberta government need look no further than the [British Columbia Early Learning Framework](#), internationally recognized for its research base and responsive approach to whole-child development.

Minister, immediately scrap the damaging screening assessments and let teachers get back to what they do best: building futures by fostering a love of learning.

Sincerely,

The Early Childhood Education Council