



Early Childhood Readiness Initiative June 18, 2024

Overview

The Early Childhood Readiness Initiative implements the **Early Years Evaluation-Developmental Assessment tool (EYE-DA)** from The Learning Bar Canada, which provides us with valuable information that assists schools and Sunrise Student Services in planning for all our new Kindergarten students every fall.

The areas that are covered through this assessment are:

- Awareness of Self and Environment
- Cognitive Skills
- Language and Communication
- Physical Development – Fine Motor and Gross Motor

Each domain is assessed using play-based activities that have been developed to get a better sense of each child's strength and opportunities for continued development, knowing that all children learn and develop at different paces.

The initiative first started in Sunrise with one pilot school (Gillis) in the spring of 2018 with Program Leader, Suzanne Dienstbier and Principal, Jody Wielgosh. A second pilot school (École Dugald School) was added in the spring of 2019 with Principal, Christine Fetterly and a third school (Hazelridge) with Principal, Lana Gardner was scheduled to start in the spring of 2020 but that was de-railed by COVID. Gillis and Dugald still administered the EYE-DA (both virtually and in-person) in June of 2020 when students were allowed to visit their schools. The following year, Gillis, Dugald and Hazelridge all administered the Virtual EYE-DA in the spring of 2021.

In the fall of 2021, Assistant Superintendent, Jackie Julien along with Division Principals, Lars Feilberg and Jody Wielgosh and Program Leader, Suzanne Dienstbier, rolled out the initiative to all Sunrise Schools. Claudia Oldcorn, an SLP with Sunrise, was named as the Early Childhood Readiness Program Lead (ECRPL) and her duties were to organize and administer the program across the school division. Assessors were hired and trained. Pattie Sjoberg, Administrative Assistant, booked the Connect and Learn assessments with families.

The benefits of the program to individual schools and Sunrise as a whole are substantial:

- School teams (Principal, School Student Services, Kindergarten Teacher, Clinicians) are able to effectively plan programming that targets the specific needs identified in the assessment. Connect & Learn information is shared with school teams, which ensures programming can start immediately in September.

- Division Staff (ECRPL, Program Leaders, Resource Teacher, Division Principals, Assistant Superintendent) have access to all data which allows for pro-active transition planning and planning to support specific programming needs.
- New Kindergarten students who would not have previously been identified as requiring supports/interventions (SLP/OT/PT) before starting Kindergarten can now be connected with specialized supports immediately following their assessment.
- For many families, this is their first contact with Sunrise School Division and we aim to ensure it is a very positive and supportive relationship with them. Community partnerships have been strengthened and continue to grow.
- Families receive activity suggestions to facilitate continued development of areas identified as “opportunities for continued development” by the assessment. Ongoing support, provided by the ECRPL, is available upon parent request.
- for the first report card in Kindergarten, students and parents receive the results from the Early Years Evaluation – Teacher Assessment (EYE-TA) which links wonderfully to the EYE-DA that parents are already familiar with. In addition, Manitoba Education has recognized the value of the EYE Assessments and starting this year (2023-24) is fully funding the administration of the EYE-TA in every school with Kindergarten in the Province.

The following data from the first three years of the program:

	Year 1 Oct 21 – May 22	Year 2 Oct 22 – May 23	Year 3 Oct 23 – May 24
Assessments Completed	213	249	253
Kindergarten Registrations Received	253	274	283
Percentage Assessed	84%	91%	89%
Play & Learn Sessions Booked with OT/PT	NA	20	16
Intake or Transition Students Identified	13	24	27
One-month follow-up services provided by ECRPL (offered via phone call)	38	19 accepted 35 offered	32 accepted 47 offered
Direct SLP services provided by ECRPL	13	10	7

Summary of Highlights from the 2023-24 Year

Preschool Newsletters started in 2022-23 school year with 239 families receiving the newsletter.

Starting in the 2023-24 school year, families who signed up for a Connect & Learn assessment automatically received monthly Connect & Learn newsletters (September-August prior to kindergarten entry). In total, 271 families were added to the newsletter distribution list for the 2023-24 school year.

Program Partnerships

Activity Bag program

- Partnership between Sunrise School Division, Springfield Public Library, Network 4 Change, and Bright Beginnings
- Available free of charge to all families, with children ages 2-5, who live in the North Eastman Health Region
- 2023-24 stats to be provided in September of 2024

Hanen Book Nook packets

- <https://www.hanen.org/Helpful-Info/Book-Nook.aspx>
- Partnership between Sunrise School Division and community libraries – packets designed to increase children’s pre-literacy skills
- Available for sign-out at all public libraries in the division (Springfield Public Library, LDB Regional Library, Brokenhead River Regional Library, Allard Regional Library)
- Feedback has been positive – the Springfield Public Library and Brokenhead River Regional Library managers shared that families continue to sign out packets on a weekly basis
- The Springfield Public Library manager shared that their library memberships have noticeably increased since hosting the Connect & Learn assessments
- Will continue to advertise/promote the Hanen Book Nook packets through Connect & Learn follow-up with families, Connect & Learn newsletter, Sunrise website, library websites and social media, childcare centres, regional play groups, public health contacts, Families First contacts, and regional therapists. Lastly, our Connect & Learn assessors share a sample Hanen Book Nook packet with each family who attends an assessment throughout the year.

Bright Beginnings

- Regional group indicated interest in funding Hanen Book Nook packets for Families First visitors to use during their home visits (packets to then be left with families between visits)
- ECRPL will join the Bright Beginnings Committee for the 2024-25 school year

Play and Learn Sessions

- 16 families signed up for our Play & Learn sessions (lead by our regional preschool OT/PT)
- If child scored yellow or red, on the fine or gross motor section of the EYE-DA assessment, family was invited to sign-up for session
- Sessions are held at the Springfield Public Library (Dugald) and the Sunrise Education Centre (Beausejour) twice/year – December and May
- The description of the sessions is as follows: This is an opportunity for you to learn more about your child’s fine and gross motor development prior to school entry. Our regional Children’s Therapy Initiative Occupational Therapist and Physiotherapist will be leading the session and will have enjoyable activities for your child to try. The therapists will also be available to answer any questions about fine and gross motor development and the publicly funded services available to preschool families in our region. If you have any concerns about your child’s fine and/or gross motor development, please feel free to share these concerns with the therapists. Lastly, the occupational therapist and physiotherapist will plan to send each family home with some activity suggestions.

Del Belanger Memorial Fund

- \$500 was received from Mike Belanger in memory of his wife (Del Belanger) who was a preschool speech-language pathologist with Sunrise
- Families, who received direct SLP services from Claudia (ECRPL), will receive a "graduation bag" in August which will contain a variety of school readiness games and activities
- In addition to the "graduation bags", five books will be donated to each of the following sites: Springfield Public Library, Brokenhead River Regional Library, LDB Regional Library, and Allard Regional Library. These books will serve to add to their existing Hanen Book Nook Package collection.

Connect & Learn page on Sunrise website (under "Parent" tab)

- Included: invite, Hanen Book Nook promo, Activity Bag promo, Connect & Learn FAQs, newsletter info., ASQ:SE-2 info., Play & Learn promo, Connect & Learn permission form for assessment at childcare centre.
- Documents will be updated on a yearly basis

https://www.sunrisesd.ca/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=1060727&type=d&pREC_ID=1390634

Funding

The costs for implementing the Connect and Learn Program are funded with existing dollars from the provincial Early Childhood Development Grant received by school divisions.