



**Early Childhood Readiness Initiative
January 9, 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

Each domain is assessed using play-based activities that have been developed to get a better sense of each child's strength and interests, 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. This included hiring and training assessors and working closely with Pattie Sjoberg, Administrative Assistant, to book 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) are able to effectively plan programming that targets the specific needs identified in the assessment. This 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 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 now have access to supports immediately following their assessment.
- for many families, this is their first contact with Sunrise School Division and we ensure it is a very positive and supportive relationship with them. Community partnerships have been strengthened and continue to grow.
- 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 22	Year 3 Oct 23 - Ongoing
Assessments Completed	213	249	113
Kindergarten Registrations Received	253	274	NA
Percentage Assessed	84%	91%	NA
Play & Learn Sessions with OT/PT	NA	20	
Intake or Transition Students Identified	13	24	7
One-month follow-up services provided by ECRPL	38	19 accepted 35 offered	27 accepted 37 offered
Direct SLP services provided by ECRPL	13	10	6

Summary of Highlights from the 2022-23 Year

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

Starting in the 2023-24 school year, families who sign up for a Connect & Learn assessment will automatically receive monthly Connect & Learn newsletters (September-August prior to kindergarten entry).

Program Partnerships

Activity Bag program

- 798 activity bags were made from Oct 2022 to June 2023
- 101 starter kits were made for new families (markers/scissors)
- 125 total families participated in the program
- 168 children enrolled in the program
- 9 Sunrise schools served as pick-up sites (Anola, ÉBEYS, Centennial, Gillis, OBE, École Powerview, Whitemouth, Gross Colony, & Heartland)

Hanen Book Nook packets

- now available at all public libraries in the division (Springfield Public Library [SPL], LDB, Brokenhead Regional, Allard Regional)
- feedback has been positive - SPL said that families are signing out packets on weekly basis
- SPL 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, library websites and social media, childcare centres, and Sunrise website

Bright Beginnings

- Regional group indicated interest in funding packets for Families First visitors to use during their home visits (packets to then be left with families between visits)

Play and Learn Sessions

- 20 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

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
- eight families, who received direct SLP services from Claudia received a "graduation bag" in August which contained a variety of school readiness games and activities

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

- included: invite, Hanen Book Nook promo, Activity Bag info., Connect & Learn FAQs, newsletter info., ASQ:SE-2 info., Play & Learn promo, Connect & Learn permission form for assessment at child care 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.