



# NOVA SCOTIA Pre-Primary Program

## What is pre-primary?

- A play-based program that supports young children's development.
- A program that lays the foundation for school success and lifelong learning.
- Voluntary – children do not have to go to pre-primary before going to primary.
- An early learning opportunity that welcomes the child and family into the school community.
- An environment that is inclusive and respectful of diversity.

## Who is it for?

- For children who will attend the school where the pre-primary is located.
- For children who will be at least four years old by December 31 of the school year.

## What is early learning through play?

Play is very important for children. It is how they experience their world and bring meaning to it. Play engages young children and promotes learning in all areas of children's development:

- Physical Health and Well-Being
- Social Competence
- Emotional Maturity
- Language and Cognitive Development
- Communication Skills and General Knowledge

## Why use a learning through play approach?

- Play develops children's creativity and problem-solving. For example, when children play pretend they are role playing based on their own experiences.
- Play prepares children better for school learning. For example, talking about story books helps children expand their vocabulary and become familiar with print.
- Play is healthy. It promotes strength, coordination, and brain development. For example, when children build things with large and small blocks, they use their gross and fine motor skills.

- Play develops new skills that build self-esteem. Children try out materials and equipment at their own level, at their own pace. When they master a new skill, they feel good about their own success.
- Play teaches social skills and helps children develop friendships. When children play together, they learn to problem solve and to help each other. They learn from each other.

A play-based approach to early learning builds upon children's natural inclination to make sense of the world through play. Early childhood educators guide the natural play process. They extend children's explorations with narrative, novelty, and challenges.

## What does play-based learning look like in the pre-primary room?

You may see children

- Making decisions around the size and shape of a tower to prevent it from falling.
- Making up "shows" with song and dance to practice expressing ideas and to explore story development.
- Using cars and ramps to change speed and direction.
- Sorting through materials to make a boat and testing how it floats.
- Using objects like toothpicks or paperclips as units for measuring.

## What will my child learn in the pre-primary program?

Your child will develop skills in four key areas that are part of the new Early Learning Curriculum Framework:

### Well Being

Your child will

- Feel safe, secure, and supported.
- Develop social skills and make friends.
- Start to learn responsibility for their own health and well-being.

### Discovery and Invention

Your child will

- Be curious, confident, and creative – and use their imagination.
- Learn through problem-solving, trying new things, and asking lots of questions.

### Language and Communication

Your child will

- Express themselves in a variety of ways.
- See different types of print and learn about symbols and patterns.
- Learn how to find information and follow through with their ideas.
- Develop a strong foundation in French, if they live in a French minority language community.

### Personal and Social Responsibility

Your child will

- Learn about respect, fairness, and the feelings of others.
- Develop an awareness and respect for the world around them.
- Feel a sense of belonging to groups and communities.

## How can I be involved in the pre-primary program?

Families are children's first teachers. Talk to your child's early childhood educator about how they practice a play-based approach. Ask how your family can encourage learning through play at home.

Some possible questions you can ask your early childhood educators at the pre-primary program:

- How will the pre-primary program prepare my child for school?
- How can I as a parent add to the pre-primary program's information and understanding about my family's culture?
- My child needs some additional supports in order to participate in activities with the rest of the children, how do you plan for that?
- How do early childhood educators expand children's opportunities to learn through play?