



Kindergarten Gradual Entry Frequently Asked Questions

What is gradual entry?

In British Columbia, kindergarten is a full-day program. The Ministry of Education and Child Care has strategically allowed for fewer minutes of instruction in kindergarten so schools can help ease the transition into kindergarten for children and families.

Why is gradual entry valuable?

The most significant transition a child will make in their education journey is from early years into kindergarten. The kindergarten experience sets the stage for the next 13 years of a child's path from the primary grades, to upper elementary, right through to high school graduation.

While gradual entry may look somewhat different at schools across the district, the first two weeks of kindergarten are all designed to provide time and space for classroom teachers to attend more closely to each child's entry into their new environment. Families also have time and space to build relationships with teachers during gradual entry which is equally critical because the more comfortable families are with the kindergarten transition, the more relaxed children will be about coming to kindergarten.

Gradual entry involves introducing children to the physical space of the school including classrooms, bathrooms, gymnasium, library, playground, and other areas, all of which are critical in developing a sense of place for children. Shorter days allow children to learn important structures, routines, and expectations so they can develop a level of comfort, confidence, and independence in their new surroundings without becoming overwhelmed and/or overstimulated which can result in adverse experiences and associations with school.

The goal for all gradual entry plans is to have children happy, comfortable, and excited to come to school which naturally translates into families feeling confident in sending their children to school.

My child is in childcare full time, why do they need a gradual entry to school?

There are many important differences between attending childcare and going to school including:

- There are fewer adults and more children in classrooms at school compared to childcare
- The number of different spaces used by children in a day at school is higher than childcare
- The total number of children in each school is significantly higher compared to childcare
- Schools have less flexibility in transition times during the day (start time, recess time, lunch time, dismissal time)

When will I know my school's gradual entry plan?

The school district recognizes that gradual entry may be challenging to plan for, which is why schools share their gradual entry plans with registered kindergarten families no later than the first week of July. This gives families two months to make any plans necessary for gradual entry in September. Additionally, all gradual entry plans will be posted on the [Kindergarten](#) tile of the school district website.