



QUESTION and ANSWERS - Full-Day Kindergarten

Q: Why is the department introducing full-day kindergarten?

A: Full-day kindergarten (FDK) will give students access to more instructional time to build their knowledge and skills related to Inuit language and culture, literacy, numeracy, as well as physical, social and emotional health and wellness. Research has shown that FDK has lasting benefits for children's behaviour as well as their learning. Children enrolled in FDK have been shown to perform better in reading, writing and mathematics than children enrolled in half-day programs. These benefits have been observed through to Grade 2.¹

Q: Will the FDK program result in children being apart from their families for too long?

A: With many jurisdictions across Canada having a FDK program in place, the precedent has been set. Also, children in daycare already attend programs of the same length as FDK, if not longer, and at a much younger age, with no adverse impacts.

One of the main reasons for piloting FDK in Nunavut is to see how students react and what might be needed to support them while accessing the program. Lessons learned from the pilot will be used to expand the FDK program to other schools and communities in the future.

DEAs from the pilot school communities have been consulted on the FDK program and have expressed support for it.

Q. Will the expansion to FDK involve new curriculum and programming?

A: The expansion to FDK is based on the existing curriculum offered through half-day programming. FDK will increase the positive impacts of the existing curriculum and programming by allowing students to have more time and interaction with fellow students, teachers and school staff.

A working group, composed of Inuit educators and experienced kindergarten teachers from across Nunavut, was established to develop recommendations on how to use the additional instruction time to ensure that the FDK program offers an educationally-beneficial experience for students. This working group has recommended that the FDK program:

- promote a holistic, integrated approach to programming that is grounded in *Inuit Qaujimaqatuqangiit* principles, notably *Inunnguiniq* and Inuit language and culture;
- be play-based;
- emphasize additional instructional time in the Inuit language, literacy and numeracy; and
- prioritize learning across a range of learning areas including physical, social and emotional health and wellness.

¹ Taken from: <https://theconversation.com/children-gain-learning-boost-from-two-year-full-day-kindergarten-79549>



Q: How will the FDK pilot be monitored?

A: The FDK pilot will be monitored and reviewed for lessons learned. Surveys and other forms of data collection activities will be conducted with parents whose children were involved in the pilot, as well as with school staff involved in the pilot. Input from parents and school staff will be gathered in terms of the lessons learned. The lessons learned from the pilot will support future roll-out of the FDK program.

Q: What is being done to prepare and support teachers involved in the FDK pilot?

A: The teachers to be involved in the FDK pilot received training in September 2023 in Iqaluit. During this training, teachers received a copy of a Full-Day Kindergarten Teacher Handbook, along with an assessment tool, that have been developed for the purpose of supporting teachers and helping them prepare their classroom and provide instruction during the pilot. In addition to this, these teachers were provided with a variety of learning resources intended to support student's physical and socio-emotional development, as well as the acquisition of their literacy and numeracy skills. Finally, members of the Full-Day Kindergarten Working Group and Regional School Operations (RSO) staff will provide support to teachers involved in the pilot on an as-needed basis throughout the pilot.

Q: How were the pilot schools selected?

A: Five schools have been selected to participate in the pilot, including:

- Nanook School, Apex
- Qaqqalik School, Kimmirut
- Victor Sammurtok School, Chesterfield Inlet
- Inuglak School, Whale Cove
- Jimmy Hikok Ilihakvik, Kugluktuk

The DEAs from these communities were engaged to determine their interest in participating in the pilot. All DEAs involved provided a motion in support of their participation.

These schools were chosen to ensure that there is representation across all three regions of Nunavut and because they were the schools needing the fewest and simplest renovations to ensure enough space to hold a FDK program. Finally, in order to keep the number of schools involved in the pilot to a manageable level, only five schools were chosen for this phase.

Q. When will FDK be rolled out in my school/community?

A: The Department of Education is taking a phased approach to the introduction of FDK beginning with the 2023-24 pilot in five schools. The first phase will help to inform a broader system-wide rollout. The department is in the process of determining all the necessary steps



and actions required to build capacity across Nunavut's school system to accommodate the expansion from half-day to FDK. The expansion to FDK will occur in phases to ensure schools are adequately prepared and that costs are incurred gradually so that it is more feasible for the department. The department will be in touch with DEAs to form part of phase 2 as soon as the plan is complete.

Q. How will schools with less space and capacity be supported to offer FDK ?

A. The Department of Education recognizes that not all schools have the space or capacity to support FDK. The department has reviewed classroom needs and is developing a plan to support future implementation of FDK across additional Nunavut schools. This plan could include renovating to expand space and the hiring of new teaching staff to support the delivery of FDK.

Q. Is FDK factored into the current School Funding Formula?

A. Yes, the recently revised school funding formula was developed with the possibility of a FDK program in mind. The revised formula is based on student headcount (i.e., the total number of students enrolled in the school), which includes kindergarten students. Up until now, the department has been implementing the formula by adjusting it for a half-time kindergarten program. Going forward, it will simply no longer make this adjustment for schools offering a full day program.

Q. Will there be any associated costs for parents due to the shift to full day kindergarten?

A: No, one of the benefits of FDK is that parents with kindergarten-aged children would no longer have to pay for half a day of childcare, resulting in cost savings for them.

Q: Are there existing FDK programs in other parts of Canada?

A: Yes, many jurisdictions across Canada have already implemented FDK programs. There are eight other provinces and territories who offer FDK (Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, British Columbia and the Northwest Territories.) The FDK experience of these other jurisdictions has provided a baseline understanding about the effectiveness of these programs and has allowed the Department of Education to learn from existing knowledge.