
School-Age Early Learning Framework

School Age Child Care Association of BC

Over the years, early childhood educators have worked tirelessly to elevate the profession of caring for children, to advocate for living wages and enhanced benefits for its professionals, and to promote the British Columbia Early Learning Framework (ELF) and bring attention to the important work of early years care.

The current ELF provides an expanded focus on children from infancy to eight years of age, which is a significant step beyond the previous ELF that focused on children from infancy to five years of age. We believe that the larger child care sector would benefit from a future iteration of ELF that provides guidance for children from ages nine to twelve.

The ELF provides a guide to creating inclusive and holistic child care spaces that include pedagogical narration and living inquiries. School-age educators know firsthand the extensive development occurring in school-age children, and our work with five- to twelve-year-olds must adapt the ELF through the lens of our extensive knowledge of middle childhood to create rich and robust child care programs. School-age care does not stop at age eight or in grade three, yet the current ELF is silent about a unique pre-teen age group that faces increasing challenges in our modern world.

Children aged nine to twelve are at a critical time for development with a strong focus on areas of physical, cognitive, and social development.



(Photo by Artem Kniaz on Unsplash)

Children are eager to expand their acquired knowledge and need time for hands-on learning opportunities. Children in this stage of development are seeking out ways to practise new skills such as cooperation and compromising with others. They are looking for opportunities to negotiate and work through complex problem-solving issues. Children are experiencing increased physical development and are ready for new games and activities that challenge them. They are eager to practice and increase physical competencies in familiar and safe settings.

School-age educators provide quality child care spaces and safe opportunities for children aged nine to twelve to explore their individuality. To have the ELF itself be inclusive of these children is to provide clearer guidance and best practices for the school-age child care sector, and especially for care providers whose

training and experience may not extend into middle childhood. A unifying guide for teachers, educators, and families would ensure consistency and increase professionalism for school-age educators across our province and align programs for children from birth to age twelve.

The Early Learning Framework Principles and the First Peoples Principles of Learning are not age restrictive. They are principles that currently enhance school-age programs for children of all ages and should continue to support children moving into their next stage of development from nine to twelve years old.

The School Age Child Care Association of British Columbia is a province-wide, non-profit organization for professionals and students working or studying in the school age child care field.