

# Preschool Cycle Program



The Preschool Cycle Program is intended for children who attend kindergarten for 4-year-olds and 5-year-olds. It aims to foster the global development of all children by taking preventive action to meet their needs. Play is at the heart of learning.

The program follows the *Agir tôt et de manière concertée* framework, a government strategy involving the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, the Ministère de la Famille and the Ministère de l'Éducation. It focuses on global development and prevention.

The Preschool Cycle Program includes end-of-cycle outcomes. These refer to the major steps in the development process for each area of development. They provide benchmarks for what is expected of children at the end of preschool education.

This prescriptive program is the pedagogical reference for the Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec. As such, it is an integral part of the Québec Education Program.

It follows and complements the *Accueillir la petite enfance* program for educational childcare services.

This cycle program supports children by giving them a chance to learn, understand and become familiar with the school environment, to believe in their own abilities and to develop the competencies they will need to facilitate their transition to first grade.

## With the intention of promoting educational success, the mandate of preschool education is as follows:

### Fostering the global development of all children:

- › allowing children to grow in every area at the same time (physical, motor, emotional, social, language and cognitive)
- › giving children daily activities that are tailored to their ability to understand, their needs, their interests and their culture

### Provide a reassuring, welcoming and inclusive environment:

- › focusing on the well-being, safety and health of each child
- › allowing children to undertake challenges based on their interests and needs

### Cultivate enjoyment through exploration, discovery and learning:

- › encouraging children to be active, express their natural curiosity, make choices and be creative in a safe and stimulating environment
- › inspiring children to be enthusiastic about school

### Lay the foundations for future schooling:

- › providing children with contexts and activities that foster the development of attitudes and behaviours
- › allowing children to develop processes and strategies
- › allowing children to acquire knowledge related to certain determinants of educational success

### Taking preventive action:

- › taking a careful look at each child to support their global development in terms of their maturity, their pace and their needs, and giving them the proper tools to prevent adaptation or learning difficulties
- › acting in collaboration with families, educational childcare services, complementary services and social services to provide consistent and continuous interventions

### Provide universal prevention activities:

- › offering specific, continuous activities for all children
- › fostering the development and consolidation of protective factors and the acquisition of personal and social competencies required for harmonious development

### Provide targeted prevention activities:

- › offering specific, differentiated and intensified activities in response to the needs of children who have been identified as more vulnerable or who present certain difficulties, such as psychosocial or cognitive challenges. These targeted prevention activities can be offered by teachers or by professional and support staff, according to the children's needs

The Preschool Cycle Program is built around working together on behalf of the child, a responsibility shared by the school, the family and the community.

## Working together on behalf of the child

- › Preschool accommodates not only children, but their families too.
- › The school team recognizes and values each child's culture while encouraging an openness to Québec culture as well.
- › Teachers have extensive knowledge of child development, the pedagogical approaches specific to preschool education and the emphasis put on play.
- › The school team plays a key role in smooth, successful transitions.

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Three orientations are being used to pursue the two main objectives of the mandate for the Preschool Cycle Program: play, observation of the child's progress and classroom organization.

## Program orientations

### **Learning through play**

- › Children have different strategies they can apply in order to learn, including imitating, observing, experimenting and questioning. However, play is the ideal way for children to learn. The enjoyment and satisfaction that children derive from self-initiated play will motivate them to become fully engaged and to persevere. With support from the adults, children are able to engage in learning situations based on a combination of play and real-life experiences.

### **Observation of the child's progress**

- › Observing children's progress requires paying attention to what is happening and what the children's words and actions reveal. Observation helps teachers identify the children's skills, knowledge, learning, interests, questions, attitudes, behaviours, processes, strategies and needs. It also allows for parents to be informed of their children's progress.

### **Classroom organization**

- › The classroom must be physically adapted to the needs of 4- to 6-year-old children and be both safe and easily accessible. It should be organized in such a way as to foster the children's participation and encourage them to explore different types of play (e.g. games that involve motor skills, manipulation of objects; symbolic play; construction games; board games).

The Preschool Cycle Program covers five areas of development which are of equal importance and which must be dealt with in synergy.

Areas of development and competencies	Focuses of development	Key features
<b>Physical and Motor Development</b> <b>Increases physical and motor development</b>	<b>Motor skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Explores sensory perceptions</li> <li>› Develops body awareness</li> <li>› Uses gross motor skills</li> <li>› Uses fine motor skills</li> <li>› Explores the concept of space</li> <li>› Explores the concept of time</li> <li>› Discovers lateral dominance</li> <li>› Explores different ways of moving</li> </ul>
	<b>Healthy lifestyle habits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Explores the world of food</li> <li>› Explores different ways of relaxing</li> <li>› Adopts practices associated with good personal hygiene</li> <li>› Learns about safety</li> </ul>
<b>Emotional Development</b> <b>Builds self-awareness</b>	<b>Self-knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Recognizes own needs</li> <li>› Recognizes own characteristics</li> <li>› Expresses own emotions</li> <li>› Regulates own emotions</li> </ul>
	<b>Self-confidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Explores own autonomy</li> <li>› Responds with confidence</li> </ul>
<b>Social Development</b> <b>Maintains harmonious relationships with others</b>	<b>Sense of belonging</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Shows openness to others</li> <li>› Participates in group activities</li> <li>› Collaborates with others</li> </ul>
	<b>Social skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Gradually complies with rules of conduct</li> <li>› Creates connections with others</li> <li>› Regulates own behaviour</li> <li>› Resolves conflicts</li> </ul>
<b>Language Development</b> <b>Communicates using oral and written language</b>	<b>Oral language</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Interacts verbally and non-verbally</li> <li>› Demonstrates understanding</li> <li>› Expands own vocabulary</li> <li>› Explores different kinds of statements</li> <li>› Develops phonological awareness</li> </ul>
	<b>Written language</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Interacts with written language</li> <li>› Recognizes some reading and writing conventions</li> <li>› Discovers some functions of writing</li> <li>› Knows the letters of the alphabet<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Cognitive Development</b> <b>Discovers the world around them</b>	<b>Thinking skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Acquires new knowledge relating to the subject areas (mathematics, arts education, social sciences, science and technology)</li> <li>› Uses reasoning skills</li> <li>› Uses imagination</li> </ul>
	<b>Strategies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Takes action</li> <li>› Explores different actions</li> <li>› Explains the actions taken</li> </ul>

1. End-of-preschool outcome: The child knows know the names and sounds of most of the letters of the alphabet (upper and lower case).