

WHAT IS JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN?



JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN (JK) IS A PART OF LARGER STRATEGIES DESIGNED TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN.

- Junior Kindergarten is a part of a systemic education overhaul. Across Canada and around the world jurisdictions are implementing JK, recognizing that research and early successes are proving that JK is a strong component in a child's early development and growth.
- JK is a free, safe, play-based, quality early learning program for 4-year old children that includes activities such as:
 - ◇ Movement, dancing, singing and playing
 - ◇ Creativity, curiosity and critical thinking
 - ◇ Hands-on/experiential centres
 - ◇ Reading both quietly and aloud
 - ◇ Exploring technology
 - ◇ Participating in small and large group activities
 - ◇ Experiencing outdoor and on the land activities
 - ◇ Arts and crafts
 - ◇ Developing listening and social skills
 - ◇ Healthy snacks and nutrition
 - ◇ Culturally appropriate programming
- JK will be offered in all communities in existing school spaces to ensure all NWT 4 year olds receive the opportunity to participate. Schools provide a safe, well maintained and educationally stimulating environment.
- Similar to Kindergarten for 5 year olds, JK for 4 year olds is optional for families to choose whether their child participates.
- Families who do choose JK for their child will have the option of enrolling their child in a full or half day program, based on the availability in the school. If full day JK is available in the community, it provides parents with the option of JK for half the day, and a program like Aboriginal Head Start for the other half.
- A Junior Kindergarten teacher must have a Bachelor of Education degree or a two-year diploma in Early Childhood Education from an accredited institution.
- JK will save a family up to \$12,000 per year/per child, depending on the community.
- 20 small communities are currently offering JK programming in their schools for the 2016-17 school year.
- The implementation of JK offers quality early learning programming and aligns with the commitments of the 18th Legislative Assembly, to work with stakeholders and communities to ensure the territory has free play-based care for 4-year olds, and to develop an action plan for universal childcare.

