**Early Learning Program Information Summary**

As you might be aware, the Ministry of Education has legislated Early Learning in the form of Full day JK and SK programs across the Province of Ontario. Each school Board is required to implement these programs beginning September 2010. There are many unknowns at this point and the UGDSB has struck a committee, to oversee the implementation of the core and extended programs; establish sub committees who will research, develop and organize specific components of the implementation; and to communicate with respective departments, staff, unions and community partners during implementation. The program is supposed to look something like this:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Before regular school hours | During school hours | After school hours |
| ECE and “ECE helper” | ECE and Teacher | ECE and “ECE helper” |

**What does this mean to you?** Well, as I said, there are many unknowns. The Ministry’s direction with respect to ‘providing core day programs and extended programs before and after school hours’ is clear. What is also clear, from the Ministry, is that ECE’s will work in conjunction with teachers to facilitate this program. The unknowns are mostly around how the logistics of staffing will unfold. There are also issues regarding financing and sustainability of this program. As of today, February 12, 2010, there have been 13 schools named in Upper Grand to start this program in Sept 2010. Our Board has decided that they will offer the program initially in 7 schools and then add additional schools if need and funding allows. For now though, I want to reassure you that there will be some ECE’s hired for these programs because the Ministry has mandated that certified ECE’s will be running these programs along with teachers. We believe, (meaning your President, Provincial OSSTF) that these ECE members fall under the jurisdiction of our Collective Agreement and should be in our Bargaining Unit. We also believe that the “ECE helpers”, who will be assisting the ECE’s, and who are not certified ECE’s, before and after regular school hours fall under the jurisdiction of our Collective Agreement and should be in our Bargaining Unit. The Board has not ruled on this as yet. I also want to assure you that should there be a special needs student in the JK/SK population, and that student requires assistance, that assistance will still be provided by an Educational Assistant. Your President in on the committee representing your interests. Please keep an eye out for updates. If you have concerns and questions regarding ELP, send me an email!