

# Overview of Early Learning Program

## *Questions and Answers*

### **OVERVIEW**

#### **1. What will the full-day Early Learning Program look like?**

The Provincial Government has announced that it will begin phasing in full-day early learning in September 2010. The expectation is that the program will be fully implemented in all schools by the 2015-2016 school year. For phase 1, the Province has targeted approximately 15-17% of four-and five-year-olds. For the Toronto Catholic District School Board, this means approximately 1,500 students or 63 classrooms. The approved list is posted on the TCDSB website.

#### **2. How does a parent enrol their child in the full-day Early Learning Program?**

Kindergarten registration began in January 2010 across the entire system. Registration will continue for all kindergarten programs over the coming weeks/months, including those schools who have been selected to offer the full-day program. Parents who have already registered their children for Kindergarten, as well as parents whose children are currently attending Junior Kindergarten in a TCDSB school, will receive notification from their local school about the opportunity to avail themselves of the full-day learning program for September 2010. They will also be invited to complete a brief survey to determine their interest in an extended day program (before- and after-school program).

#### **3. What is the process/criteria for admission?**

Students must qualify under TCDSB's Admission Policy. The admission policy states that children must be baptised Catholic, or at least one custodial parent must have proof of their own Catholicity in order to be eligible to attend a Catholic elementary school.

All registrations must be date stamped.

Preference will be given to students living *within the school's catchment* area. The school catchment area map for each school will be posted on the website at [www.tcdsb.org](http://www.tcdsb.org), click on the ELP link on the home page as well the map will be sent by email to each Principal. Principals will build their JK/SK classes to the Ministry recommended class-size average of 26. Any applications received which exceed the 26 average will be placed on a wait-list.

Anyone applying from *outside the school's catchment area* shall automatically be placed on a wait-list.

**Two Separate Waiting Lists:** Students placed on the wait-list will be identified as either being from *within* or *outside* of the school's catchment area.

Principals will **first** place wait-listed students who are from "within the catchment area" and once this list is exhausted, they may place students from "outside the catchment area" if there is space as determined by average class-size of 26.

Principals must complete the class lists for ELP in keeping with the timelines as outlined in the TECT collective agreement

Principals will be advised at a later date regarding protocols for dealing with remaining applicants on the wait-list.

Principals are to provide each registrant and current JK student with the Before and After School survey.

#### **4. What will children learn while in a full-day Early Learning Program?**

A new Catholic curriculum, based largely on the existing Catholic kindergarten program, will be developed for full-day early learning.

#### **5. Who will teach a full-day Early Learning Program?**

Certified teachers and certified early childhood educators (ECE) will work together to help children learn during the regular school day.

#### **6. Can parents/guardians opt for half-day attendance if their home school is offering full day kindergarten?**

Junior and Senior Kindergarten remain optional programs under the Education Act. However, the expectation is that kindergarten students in a school with full-day learning will attend on a full-day basis, recognizing that there may be a need for some individual transition plans.

#### **7. How will parents/guardians be informed of these new programs?**

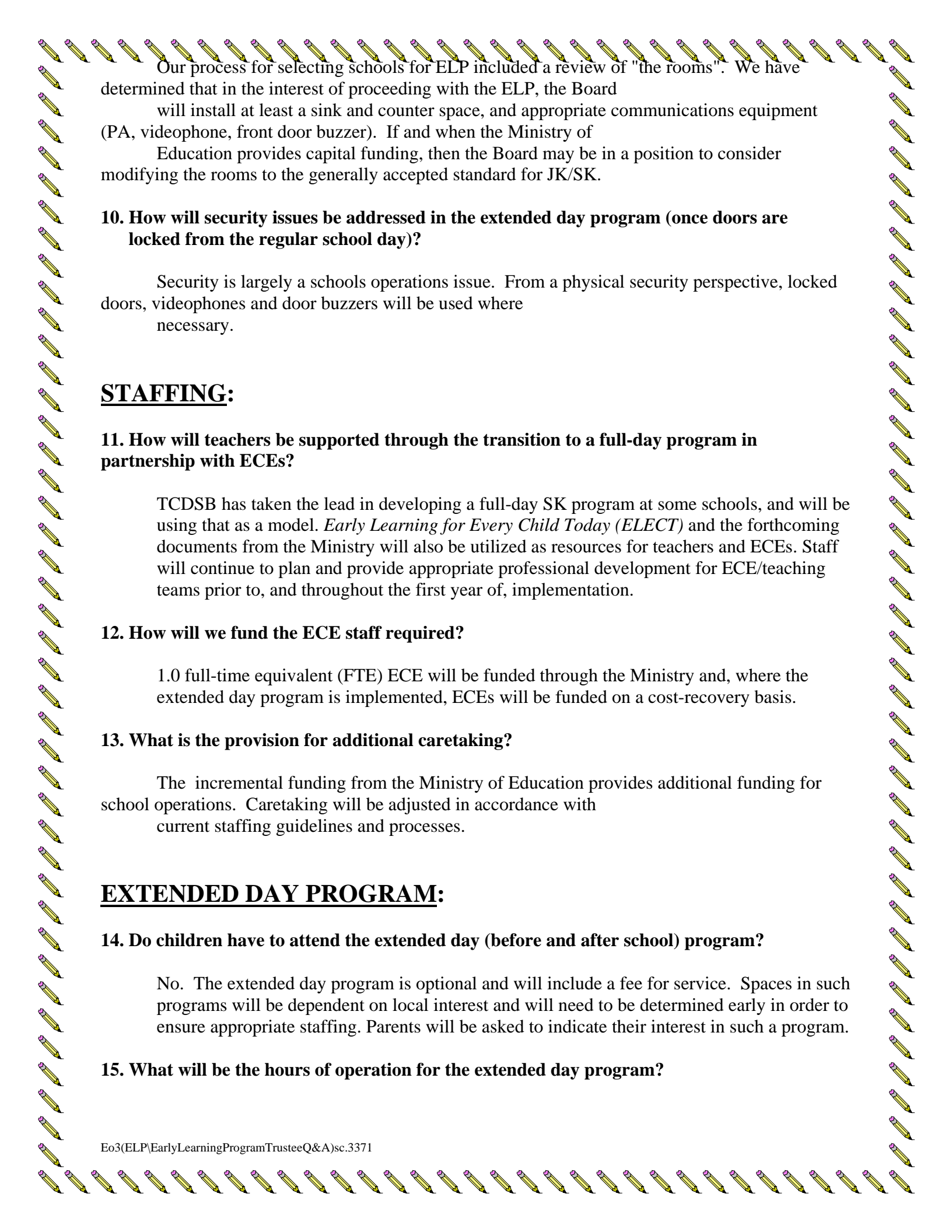
School principals have been provided with letters to send home to families who have already registered, or who are registering at their schools. Information will also be published in the Director's Bulletin, the Board's website and in "TCDSB Winter Update".

### **FACILITIES:**

#### **8. How can we provide kindergarten in rooms that are not purpose-built?**

The Planning and Facilities Department of the TCDSB has confirmed that appropriate space can be found.

#### **9. How can these rooms be prepared for kindergarten students in the absence of capital funding?**



Our process for selecting schools for ELP included a review of "the rooms". We have determined that in the interest of proceeding with the ELP, the Board will install at least a sink and counter space, and appropriate communications equipment (PA, videophone, front door buzzer). If and when the Ministry of Education provides capital funding, then the Board may be in a position to consider modifying the rooms to the generally accepted standard for JK/SK.

**10. How will security issues be addressed in the extended day program (once doors are locked from the regular school day)?**

Security is largely a schools operations issue. From a physical security perspective, locked doors, videophones and door buzzers will be used where necessary.

**STAFFING:**

**11. How will teachers be supported through the transition to a full-day program in partnership with ECEs?**

TCDSB has taken the lead in developing a full-day SK program at some schools, and will be using that as a model. *Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT)* and the forthcoming documents from the Ministry will also be utilized as resources for teachers and ECEs. Staff will continue to plan and provide appropriate professional development for ECE/teaching teams prior to, and throughout the first year of, implementation.

**12. How will we fund the ECE staff required?**

1.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) ECE will be funded through the Ministry and, where the extended day program is implemented, ECEs will be funded on a cost-recovery basis.

**13. What is the provision for additional caretaking?**

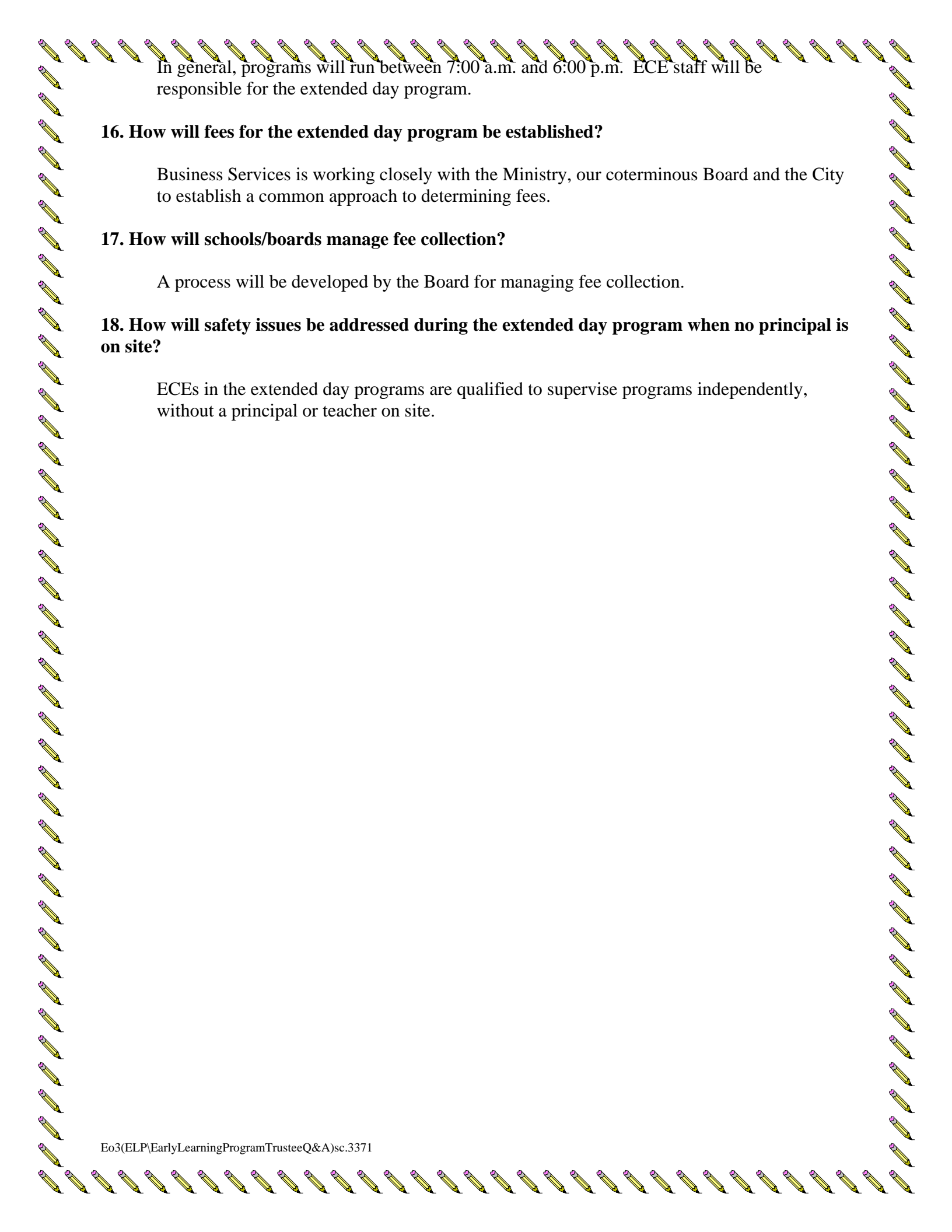
The incremental funding from the Ministry of Education provides additional funding for school operations. Caretaking will be adjusted in accordance with current staffing guidelines and processes.

**EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM:**

**14. Do children have to attend the extended day (before and after school) program?**

No. The extended day program is optional and will include a fee for service. Spaces in such programs will be dependent on local interest and will need to be determined early in order to ensure appropriate staffing. Parents will be asked to indicate their interest in such a program.

**15. What will be the hours of operation for the extended day program?**



In general, programs will run between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. ECE staff will be responsible for the extended day program.

**16. How will fees for the extended day program be established?**

Business Services is working closely with the Ministry, our coterminous Board and the City to establish a common approach to determining fees.

**17. How will schools/boards manage fee collection?**

A process will be developed by the Board for managing fee collection.

**18. How will safety issues be addressed during the extended day program when no principal is on site?**

ECEs in the extended day programs are qualified to supervise programs independently, without a principal or teacher on site.