

IDEAS Lab (part of the Sciences program) Frequently Asked Questions

1. How are parents assured that curriculum is covered in an alternative program?

Teachers have a professional responsibility to cover the curriculum at every grade level, in every program. The question is not if we teach curriculum, but rather how we deliver curriculum. By nature, project work is cross curricular and thereby supports learning across the curriculum.

2. How do we nurture and support learners to gain their full potential?

Children are individuals with specific strengths and learning needs. Teachers design instruction that fulfills curriculum mandates as well as builds from the natural curiosities of children. Teachers develop projects by listening deeply and responding to the ideas of children and by taking advantage of the real life experiences outside and within the community. Children are taught and encouraged to have a voice in their learning and to impact it directly through responsible choice and active engagement.

3. Do IDEAS Lab students write Provincial Achievement Tests?

All students are expected to write the PAT's. Exemptions are the exception and are granted by the Superintendent, on an individual basis.

4. How do IDEAS Lab students rank on the Provincial Achievement Tests?

At Garneau, PAT results include all of our students and are not separated by program. Parents receive a copy of their child's PAT results shortly after the tests are written (at the Grade 6 level only). Standardized assessments are only one way for students to demonstrate their learning.

5. Is there a French Language Program? When and how often do the children receive French instruction?

Children in grades 4-6 have 150 minutes per week of French language instruction, which is typical of Edmonton Public Schools students in these grades.

6. What types of technology can the children access?

Garneau School has three sets of Chrome Books available for class use. Each classroom has a SMART Board and iPads are available for students requiring assistive technology support and for general classroom use.

7. Can children join the IDEAS Lab at any time during their grade 1-6 schooling?

We do accept registrations at all grade levels depending on available space. Pre-enrolment begins in March each year. The district pre-enrolment deadline for the 2015-2016 school year is April 15th.

8. What do IDEAS Lab alumni say about the impact of their experience on their transition to junior high school?

From interview with IDEAS Lab (Formally Child Study Centre) alumni, we have found that students have made successful transitions to junior high schools throughout Edmonton.

- "I love to learn and see it as an adventure that I am up for."
- "The **IDEAS Lab** has taught me how to study with other students, and work on big projects."
- "I know what it is like to ask big questions to get the most out of my learning. I feel very comfortable talking to teachers and other students."
- "I really enjoyed the choices I've had to represent my learning. I use these skills in junior high school projects in all subjects."

9. How many ‘spaces’ are available in each IDEAS Lab grade?

Many Edmonton Public Schools have Optimal Enrolment Limits (OEL) depending on the physical space available in the building. Garneau School does have an OEL. The IDEAS Lab Centre has the following OEL:
1 class per grade
Kindergarten – 25 students

Available spaces are filled according to district pre-enrolment guidelines:

1. Students living within the school’s attendance area are first accepted
2. Then any siblings of students currently enrolled at the school
3. Any remaining space is filled with out of attendance area students.

Either all students are accepted, or a random selection occurs to fill available spaces. Students are not accepted on a ‘first come first serve’ basis. Schools are also not permitted to keep waiting lists.

10. How is IDEAS Lab different than the regular program

All students at Garneau School receive instruction through an inquiry based approach to learning focusing on developing students who are engaged learners and ethical citizens with an entrepreneurial spirit. Project work is used to demonstrate learning based on the curriculum in both programs.

Specific to the IDEAS Lab program:

The teaching and learning in the IDEAS Lab program is based on the following educational principles. Children learn best when:

- Teachers are responsive to individual learning needs and interests
- Children are interested in what they are learning
- There are opportunities to learn in depth, building on everyday experience
- There is a provision for active investigation, observation and discussion
- Children’s inquiry is guided by their own questions and desire to learn
- Children can interact first-hand with people, objects, places and events
- Children can represent their learning in a variety of ways
- Learning is memorable, rather than memorized

There is a consistency in the approach to project across the program. A three phase approach is used to introduce the project, guide children through a deep inquiry and research process, and celebrate the learning at the end of the project. The CSC program is organized in combined grades as we believe in the value of cross grade groupings.

11. How do I know that the IDEAS Lab will be a good program fit for my child?

Every child is an individual. Children who thrive in the IDEAS Lab are self-starters, able to work independently, open to change and flexible. Children that require structure, predictability and support through transitions may find the IDEAS Lab approach quite challenging.