

How can parents support their child's learning in a combined grade class?

The ways in which parents can support a child in a combined class are fundamentally the same as helping a child who is placed in a single-grade class. Parents can support their child's success by maintaining a positive perspective and showing interest in their child's schoolwork and activities.

Even if parents are not able to visit the school on a regular basis, they can connect with their child's teacher and engage in conversations with their child about what is happening at school. Children benefit when their learning is celebrated at home.



Visit the following link or scan this QR Code to view further research on Combined Grade Classrooms:

bit.ly/combined-classes



Combined Grade Classes at Elementary

One Learning Community



sd61.bc.ca



What is a Combined Class?

A combined class consists of students in consecutive grades grouped together. Sometimes it is referred to as a split-grade class. There are many reasons why schools may choose to create combined grade classes.

Why do we have Combined Classes?

Combined classes are created for both educational effectiveness and a school's organizational needs. Combined grade classes can provide opportunities for student leadership and promote social responsibility. Students in combined grade classes may have unique experiences to develop their social skills and work cooperatively with others. Social emotional benefits include increased self-esteem and pro-social behaviours and fewer aggressive behaviours at school.

Combined classes offer an excellent structure in which to support BC curriculum's focus on big ideas and competencies, which span several years of student development.

How do Teachers meet the needs of all students in a Combined Class?

In every classroom, teachers endeavor to create a community of learners where students are valued for their unique strengths and abilities. Studies show a developmental range of up to five years among students in a single grade class, and the range in a combined class is similar. Teachers in a combined class support and challenge their students in the same way as in a single grade class. To do so, they recognize that each child is unique and very few students have even development in all areas. Children mature at different rates and learn in a continuous spiral. This spiral happens regularly in all classrooms to allow students to consolidate their learning over time.

While teachers of combined grade classes do need to incorporate learning standards from the curriculum of both grades, they also understand that learning is continuous; a child's intellectual, social, and personal development does not occur in discrete steps according to grade level. Combined classes can reflect a more holistic approach to learning using both whole group instruction and flexible groups to meet students' learning needs and styles.

Studies show no significant differences in academic achievement between students enrolled in single grade or combined grade classes.



How are Students chosen to be placed in a Combined Class?

Class placement is a complex process. The goal in creating both combined grade and single grade classes is to create a balanced community of learners where each child will be able to experience success at school. The issues in setting up effective combined classes are the same issues in setting up any class, largely because both combined and single-grade classes include students with a wide range of developmental levels.

Many factors are taken into consideration when placing students in classes, including social skills, work habits, leadership skills, self-motivation, learning styles, and academic achievement. Students' learning needs have more to do with their abilities and previous experiences than with their grade level.

