

However, many local authorities provide one or two years of pre-school education for pupils aged four and five.

The most common grade structure in Canada is the "6-3-3 system", with Grades 1 to 6 designated as elementary, Grades 7-9 as junior high school, and Grades 10 to 12 as senior high school. However, in the most populous province, Ontario, the elementary grades are defined as Grades 1 to 8, and secondary as grades 9 to 12 or 13. In British Columbia, the pattern is Grades 1 to 7 as elementary and 8 to 12 as secondary.

While classification of grades by provincial authorities is primarily for school curriculum, individual schools may have some modifications to the basic pattern. For example, a frequent grade combination for high schools in some provinces is 7 to 12; not infrequently, elementary schools have Grades 1 to 10.

School curriculum

Up to the secondary level, education is general and fundamental, but with increasing variety in the implementation of provincial curriculum guidelines. The objective of elementary education, however, remains as it has been in the past — to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to proceed to higher levels of study.

In the secondary schools, students have a choice of programs with either academic or vocational orientations. There are also "special" programs for students who will not be able to complete the regular secondary school program.

High school programs generally provide for two streams. One prepares students for university; the other prepares students for an occupation or for further post-secondary education at a community college or institute of technology.

At one time, secondary schools were predominantly academic institutions, preparing students for university, while vocational schools were separate institutions. Today, in addition to technical and vocational high schools as such, most secondary schools are comprehensive or composite schools offering a variety of both academic and vocational choices. Depending on provincial requirements for graduation, a student may build a secondary program by selecting from a number of subject-matter areas.

In many areas, high school graduation by means of accumulating a requisite number of "credits", has replaced grade promotion. Provincial departments specify high school graduation requirements but the students and their parents decide, in consultation with the school, on the