

Hard work meets mentorship

A profile of an early childhood education dual credit program and student

Meet future educator Komal Padda

For as long as she can remember, Grade 12 student Komal Padda has wanted a career teaching young children. When Komal learned she had been accepted into the Early Childhood Education (ECE) program offered in her school district, she was both anxious and excited.

“Suddenly in college, it would be a big change in my life. Knowing I would get out of it what I put into it, I was ready to work hard.”

Provincial investment inspires local design

Dual credit empowers grades 11 and 12 students to take tuition-free college and university courses that count toward both their high school diplomas and future post-secondary credentials. While school districts and their post-secondary partners choose what dual credit to offer, the Ministry of Education and Child Care directed an additional \$6.3 million between 2022 and 2025 to enable them to design and launch early childhood education programs to serve local students for years to come.

In the Surrey School District, where Komal went to school, students completed four ECE courses at Douglas College, with textbooks and supplies provided. Georgina Hoops, District Career Education Coordinator, explained: “We provide a financial jump-start for students accepted into the program. Some of our students might not be able to afford a post-secondary education right after high school, and this takes away that barrier.” She said, “It is an investment in the future of the student and the province.”



Surrey’s career education team also considered how best to prepare their students for a career in early childhood education. They chose online classes for Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, followed by two in-person courses on campus on Fridays. Moreover, students spent Wednesdays engaging in work experience with early childhood educators at Nurturing Hearts Montessori in Langley, and the program culminated in a six-week practicum at local Montessori schools and daycare centres.

A local program with personalized supports and workplace mentoring

To help Komal succeed, the school district stayed in regular communication to offer her and each of her classmates personalized supports. For example, financial assistance for food and transportation was provided, as needed, and students could return to their

high school at any time for help from a teacher, administrator, or counsellor.

In addition, the school district decided that it was important to supplement classroom learning with opportunities to see and participate in real-life early childhood education settings.

“Taking the students’ perception of a career in early childhood education out of theory and into reality is a key part of the learning process,” said Georgina Hoops.

Nurturing Hearts Montessori in Langley run by Colleen and David Patrick, welcomed dual credit students into their centre. “It takes a great deal of effort to bring students in to observe in our facilities,” said Colleen Patrick, “but it also reminds us how important this work is. The students bring an energy and enthusiasm that inspires us and we’re committed to helping inspire and shape the next generation of early childhood educators.”

Following up with Komal

The time spent applying theory in practice with early childhood educators and children in daycares helped settle Komal’s initial anxiety leaving only her excitement. Moreover, her hard work resulted in her successful completion of the four-course dual credit program.

Reflecting on her dual credit experience, Komal said, “I feel very fortunate that my first-year costs were covered.”

Since graduating, Komal applied for an Early Childhood Educator Assistant certificate to work with young children in community programs while she continues studying at Douglas College to earn an ECE Certificate or Diploma.

“I have a part-time job doing work I love while I complete my education,” she said, “and by doing this, I will also have work experience when I graduate and that will help me to find the job I want.”



To learn more about dual credit in British Columbia, visit:

www.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/support/dual-credit

To learn more about early childhood professionals, visit:

www.gov.bc.ca/childcare/ecestrategy