

Medicine Hat Catholic
Separate Regional Division #20

STUDENT SERVICES

Program Description



ECS PROGRAMMING FOR CHILDREN WITH SEVERE DISABILITIES
(Program Unit Funding – PUF)
Exceptional Codes 41 – 47

Program Description

Children diagnosed with severe/profound disabilities are eligible for Program Unit Funding (PUF) from Alberta Education. The child's program must meet the child's needs and may consist of a combined program of center-based programs and in-home programs. The Teacher will develop an Individual Program Plan with goals and objectives, reflective of the child's needs.

Within center-based ECS programs, the child receives instruction in a classroom setting at a center or school. The center-based programming takes place in settings such as preschools, kindergartens and daycares.

An in-home program means an ECS program delivered to a child with a disability on a one-on-one basis through home visits in the child's home or other alternate setting by Teacher, Teacher Assistant and/or Child Development Specialist. For program and funding purposes, an eligible home visit must meet the following requirements:

- All home visits must be under the supervision of the child's Teacher and the home visit may be provided by a Teacher Assistant, Speech/Language Pathologist or Teacher.
- A home visit must involve the child and the Parent/Guardian and service provider.
- A home visit must average 1.5 hours in length.
- Visits to the home need to support the child's overall educational program in order to count as an eligible home visit.
- Home visits should be carefully planned and documented. A copy of the home visit document may be accessed under division folders/special education forms. Summary reports of visits are to be shared with Parents.
- If the in-home program is chosen there must be a minimum of four visits during the school year.



Eligibility Criteria and Referral Process

To be eligible for Program Unit Funding, **a child with a severe disability** must be at least two years six months of age and less than six years of age on September 1st. To determine eligibility, refer to the Special Education Definitions from Alberta Education.

Eligibility for PUF will be based on all of the following:

- a) A diagnosis of a disability/condition or recent assessment at the severe/profound level by qualified personnel such as a Speech/Language Pathologist, Pediatrician, Chartered Psychologist or Child Psychiatrist is required. (Note: a diagnosis alone is not necessarily sufficient to qualify for funding)
- b) Documentation/assessments of the child's current level of functioning in the learning environment
- c) The levels of support and services being provided to the child.

A child must qualify each year that they will receive PUF for a maximum total of three years.

Note: A child receiving program unit funding is not eligible for ECS mild/moderate funding.

The deadline for applications and budgets to Alberta Education is mid-December. If a child is diagnosed or registered after mid-December, Alberta Education will accept the application until April 1st. When a child leaves a program before the end date, the Director of Special Education must notify Alberta Education in writing with the end date and budget details.

“Teachers lead children to mystery by helping them to be alert when they find themselves nodding off because the seeking is more difficult than imagined. They lead children to the mystery of God by helping them look beyond what they have come to take for granted in their friends, families and even in their fears. A child can see a painting, but it takes a teacher to unlock the beauty that is contained within it.”¹

¹ Canadian Catholic School Trustees' Association, *Build Bethlehem Everywhere/A Statement on Catholic Education*. (Ontario, 2002), p.3.

