

My child has been assessed with a delay or disability. Where do I go for help?



A child with a delay or disability may need extra supports to be successful in preschool or kindergarten. There are choices available and parents should explore the options to choose the one that best meets the needs of their child and family.

[Alberta Health Services](#) (toll-free 1-866-408-5465) offers a range of resources and services that may include:

- parent and teacher workshops and resources to support children in their home, school and community
- consultation, coaching and intervention for children, their parents/ families, preschool staff and caregivers.

Some preschool and kindergarten children are eligible for Early Childhood Services (ECS) programming provided by a school authority:

- a child with a severe delay or disability may be eligible for up to 3 years of support in an ECS program before Grade 1
- a child with a mild-moderate delay or disability may be eligible for up to 2 years of support in an ECS program before Grade 1.

Eligibility for ECS programming before kindergarten is based on an assessment that shows the child's need for educational programming and support. This assessment may have been completed by a psychologist, occupational therapist, speech-language pathologist or other professional. The school authority is responsible for deciding if the child meets Education's eligibility requirements based on information received from assessments.

ECS programming is available through all school jurisdictions and approved private ECS operators in Alberta.

When a child with a special need attends an ECS program, the teacher, parents and others involved with the child's program develop an Individualized Program Plan (IPP). This plan addresses the child's educational needs in the most enabling environment possible. ECS operators use a variety of approaches or models including:

- environmental supports (e.g. visual schedules, well-established routines, warnings of transition, visual cues, adapted furniture, use of physical boundaries to define space)
- embedding goals in ongoing routines and activities
- strategic use of educational assistant support
- involving peers as positive models
- focused intervention in a small group
- direct intervention.

Further information about ECS programming is available at <http://education.alberta.ca/admin/special/ecs.aspx> or by contacting the Early Learning Branch at PUF@gov.ab.ca or 780-422-9423, toll free in Alberta by first dialing 310-0000.

