



English Language Learners Programming FAQ's

*For Families

Big PLANS is recognized as a “school” though we do not function as a typical school. Instead, we work in communities in Calgary. We are a Private School and we provide services to children with mild-moderate (MM), severe (PUF) and English Language Learners (ELL) needs. Our services can be added to the preschool programming children receive where they are registered.

Did You Know? *Almost 29% of children going to kindergarten in Alberta have difficulty in one or more of the five key areas of development (Physical health, Social skills, Behaviour, Language and Thinking, Communication). Please see this link for more information: [*http://www.ecmap.ca/project/about.html](http://www.ecmap.ca/project/about.html)*

What programs are in place to help children who are experiencing developmental delays? Early Intervention agencies like Big PLANS are licensed and funded by Alberta Education for the purpose of identifying and helping children who have delays. We have teachers as well as teams of therapists who can screen (a short question and answer session) and assess your child to know how their skills are developing compared to other same-aged children across the country.

As parents, what do we have to do?

- You will need to sign the consent form and make sure to indicate on the form that you speak more than one language within the home.
- You will need to provide a copy of your child's birth certificate.
- A therapist will review the results of the screening / assessment and offer therapy services.
- You are invited and encouraged to participate in therapy sessions when they occur.
- You will need to review the IPP together with the Early Learning Specialist (Certificated Teacher).

Is there a cost? No, this program is funded by Alberta Education.

Why do you need a copy of my child's birth certificate? Your child's birth certificate serves as proof of their age. Early Intervention Programs are only available to children of a certain age and we need to make sure your child meets the age-eligibility criteria. Your child's birth certificate also verifies their legal name, which is required by Alberta Education at the time of Alberta Student Number (ASN) creation.

When will therapy start? Therapy begins in Mid-November.

How often will it be? Therapy services will occur twice a month.

How many sessions will my child receive? A child has a maximum of 12 x 30 minute sessions for ELL funding.

What happens when my sessions are used up? When allotted therapy hours are used up the child is released from the program.

What happens if my child's goals are not achieved and they have used up their therapy hours? Your child can continue with ELL programming in kindergarten or your family can pay for private therapy.

Where does therapy happen? Therapy can occur at your home, at the school (before or after class - we will NOT remove a child from class), at a local public library or at the therapist's office. Your therapist can discuss this with you based on scheduling and transportation.

Do I have to be there for therapy? You are invited and encouraged to participate in therapy sessions when they occur.

What is the time commitment? Sessions usually occur twice per month for 30 minutes each time. You will be given ideas for fun activities to practice at home with your child.

What is the IPP and why does my child need one? Our agency is funded for "add-on" services, which means that all of the children receiving funding need an Individual Program Plan (IPP). This IPP lays out the 'add-on' activities that will happen with your child. These activities are written in the form of goals and strategies.

What benefits are there to participating in the program?

- A child who has had intervention always has positive outcomes.
- All children are expected to have acquired 'school-start-up' skills when they enter kindergarten. Early Intervention ensures these skills are present.

There are no disadvantages when your child participates in the program; however, you should be aware that:?

- Your child will have a code on their school file.
- Your child will have an IPP on their school file.

Will my child's code follow them for the rest of their life? A child can have ELL funding for up to five years.

Do I need to tell the Kindergarten teacher about this intervention work? It is helpful for your kindergarten teacher to know that your child has had ELL services. They will want a copy of the IPP.

Why is my child being observed in the classroom? Classroom observations are a way for the teacher to make sure the goals being worked on in therapy are helping your child in their classroom experience. For example, does working on pronouns help my child to play with others in their classroom?

Will Big PLANS follow my child into kindergarten? No. Big PLANS is only able to continue services into Private kindergarten settings.

At what age does my child have to go to kindergarten? A child who turns four years old on or before March 1st is eligible to attend kindergarten in the fall of that same calendar year. However, a child who is not yet five years old on September 1st has the option of waiting until the following year before entering kindergarten.