

ALLOCATION FORMULA

UNDER REVIEW

1. The allocation amount for each unit will be the lesser of:
 - a) the approved budget amount,
 - b) the program unit ceiling amount, and
 - c) the actual cost.

2. a) Calculation of the ceiling amount for a program unit with one child:
 - i) Centre-based program

$$\text{Program Unit Funding} = \frac{\text{Number of Centre Hours (max 800)}}{800 \text{ hrs}} \times \text{Funding Rate for one child}$$

- ii) In-home based program

$$\text{Program Unit Funding} = \frac{\text{Number of Visits (max 36)}}{36 \text{ visits}} \times \text{Funding Rate for one child}$$

- iii) Combined program – centre-based and in-home based program

$$\text{Program Unit Funding} = \left\{ \frac{\text{Number of Centre Hours (max 800)}}{800 \text{ hrs}} + \frac{\text{Number of Visits (max 36)}}{36 \text{ visits}} \right\} \times \text{Funding Rate for one child}$$

The maximum payable under this calculation is the rate for one child.

- b) Calculation of the ceiling amount for a program unit with more than one child (clustering):

Choose the **child** with the highest combination of hours and/or home visits and calculate the ceiling for this **child** as follows:

$$\text{Program Unit Funding} = \left[\left\{ \frac{\text{Number of Centre Hours (max 800)}}{800 \text{ hrs}} + \frac{\text{Number of Visits (max 36)}}{36 \text{ visits}} \right\} \times \text{Funding Rate for one child} \right]$$

Add to this amount for each additional **child** in the unit, the following:

$$\left[\left\{ \frac{\text{Number of Centre Hours (max 800)}}{800 \text{ hrs}} + \frac{\text{Number of Visits (max 36)}}{36 \text{ visits}} \right\} \times \text{Funding Rate for each additional child in the unit} \right]$$

- c) Maximum funding for a program unit is based on an 800-hour program or 36 in-home visits or a combination thereof.
- d) See ADDITIONAL INFORMATION at the end of this section for calculation examples.

ALLOCATION CRITERIA

1. Program Unit Funding (PUF) may be paid to a **school jurisdiction** for each eligible **child with a severe disability** for a maximum of three years.
2. The funding amount paid will be the lesser of the program unit ceiling, the approved budget total, and the actual cost.
3. To be eligible for funding, a **child with a severe disability** must be at least 2 years 6 months of age and less than 6 years of age on September 1. **School jurisdictions** should plan the **child's** program so that the last year of PUF is the year prior to the **child's** entry into grade 1.
4. **School jurisdictions** will use the categories/codes and related definitions outlined in **students/ECS children with severe disabilities** in the Glossary of Terms to determine a **child's** disabling condition for PUF eligibility purposes.
5. A **child** receiving program unit funding is not eligible for ECS mild/moderate funding.
6. An eligible **child** can be claimed by only one **ECS operator** at a time. The **school jurisdiction** claiming the **child** is responsible for ensuring the **child** is not claimed by another **ECS operator**.
7. Eligibility for PUF will be based on all of the following:
 - a) a diagnosis of a disability/condition at the severe/profound level by qualified personnel (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) a current **individualized program plan (IPP)** which addresses the **child's** diagnosed needs; and
 - d) the levels of support and services being provided to the **child**.

To expedite the approval process, assessment information to support the eligibility of the **children** should be submitted with the PUF application. This information should include actual reports, summary information, or a format agreed upon with Alberta Learning. When a **school jurisdiction** is uncertain of a **child's** eligibility, the operator is encouraged to discuss the issues of the **child's** eligibility with Alberta Learning prior to making an application.

PROCEDURES, DOCUMENTATION AND REPORTING

1. Payment of program unit funding is based on the approval of a Program Unit Application form (Form 03AL2.5a). Applications may be submitted either on paper or using the Program Unit Funding System (PUFS). A separate PUF application should be completed for each **school** that has **children** eligible for PUF. As part of the application, an individual budget must be submitted for each program unit listed on the application. The **school jurisdiction** should provide current assessment information to support the PUF application. The completed application, with original signatures, must be submitted to School Finance. The assessment information should be sent to the Special Programs Branch.
2. The following information pertaining to **children** receiving PUF must be kept on file by **school jurisdictions**:
 - a) an **individualized program plan (IPP)** must be developed, implemented and regularly revised for each **child**; and
 - b) formal assessment documentation to support the severity of each **child's** special need (a current assessment report must be included with the PUF Application); and
 - c) informal assessment documentation reflecting current performance levels; and
 - d) plans and summaries of home visits conducted over the year; and
 - e) current budget information.
3. The deadline for applications is January 1. **School jurisdictions** should plan and budget carefully for the school year as revisions will no longer be accepted. However, extenuating circumstances may be discussed with Alberta Learning personnel. Applications for **children** who are diagnosed or registered after January 1 will be accepted until May 1.
4. When a **child** leaves a program before the end date specified, a letter of notification must be submitted to the School Finance Branch outlining the following information:
 - a) the **child's** program start date and end date; and
 - b) an estimated cost of the **child's** program up to the time of departure. If no cost estimate is provided, the approved budget will be pro-rated based on the months the **child** was in attendance at the program.The original approved budget total and ceiling will then be reduced.
5. When a **child with a severe disability** moves from one **ECS operator** to another, a new PUF application based on the **IPP** must be submitted by the second operator prior to May 1 of the program year.

6. At the end of each school year, **school jurisdictions** must report actual expenditures for all program unit **children** using Form 03AL2.5b, Statement of Actual Expenditure, as follows:
- Complete one statement for all program unit **children** except those program unit **children in designated special education ECS programs**.
 - Complete a statement for each approved **designated special education ECS program**.

The form(s) must be returned to School Finance by October 15.

7. If a **child** has a medical condition/disability which has not changed significantly since the initial diagnosis and was previously approved by Alberta Learning, current documentation outlining assessments, treatment and current level of functioning may be sufficient to ensure continuation of PUF. This information should be kept on file and available for review by Alberta Learning.

School jurisdictions must provide documentation to support continued PUF for previously eligible **children** with a severe communication disorder, a severe multiple disability (primarily involving language), or any other condition likely to change significantly as a result of intervention, maturation or changes within the **child's** environment. Documentation must include the following:

- a statement from the appropriate professional that the **child** continues to demonstrate a severe disability;
- description of the necessary supports and services the **child** requires as a result of the disability;
- description of the impact of the disability on the **child's** ability to function within the ECS environment.

It is the responsibility of the **school jurisdiction** to ensure that all **children** claimed under PUF meet the eligibility criteria outlined. **School jurisdictions** who are uncertain about the eligibility of a **child** are encouraged to contact the Special Programs Branch. Special Programs Branch staff will provide confirmation of eligibility.

8. A **child's** program hours and/or home visits must meet the **child's** needs. If a combined program of **school** hours and home visits is provided, the **in-home program** must include a minimum of four in-home visits in order to be included in the ceiling calculation (see example of ceiling calculation). See definition of **in-home program** in Glossary.
9. To access the full ceiling amount, the program offered must be a full time program. A full-time program must provide either 800 hours of instructional programming for a **child** in a center-based program or a minimum of 36 in-home visits for each **child** in an **in-home program** during the school year, or the equivalent combination of hours and visits.

10. 800 hours is the maximum number of hours that will be funded for ECS **children** receiving PUF. Summer programs are not eligible for PUF and should not be included as part of the 800 hour maximum.

In some exceptional circumstances, for a **child's** last year of PUF, additional program hours beyond 800 hours may be approved, based on an individual **child's** needs. A written request explaining the reason for the additional program hours must be submitted with the PUF application for approval by the Special Programs Branch. This exception will be subject to the ceiling maximum.

11. PUF is supplemental to the Basic Instruction funding. It is intended to cover the additional educational program costs required to meet the **child's** severe special needs.

When completing the budget for program unit costs, budget amounts should approximate anticipated costs. The following specifies the costs which may be included for PUF. Any exceptions to these costs should be discussed with Alberta Learning before submitting the application.

a) Instruction

Revised (i) Salaries, wages and employer's portion of benefits and expenditures applicable to teacher assistants directly involved in planning, implementing and evaluating the program for the **child(ren)** in the unit. The number of hours claimed here may exceed the **child's** program hours by up to 10 percent for each child within that program unit. Clustering and small group program delivery should be considered as alternatives to full-time direct one-to-one assistance.

Revised (ii) Services Purchased – includes services of qualified personnel in the areas of speech therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, mobility training, special education consultation, psychological and other services, and assessment costs for part or all of the program which are not provided free by public service agencies. Costs should be reasonable. **School jurisdictions** must keep records of all services purchased under PUF. All options regarding service delivery should be considered. **School jurisdictions** must ensure that all services purchased are relevant to the child's educational program and are in direct support of the goals and objectives included on the child's IPP.

Special Education Consultation is a service purchased by the **school authority** to provide programming support for the ECS teacher. Examples of services provided under Special Education Consultation include IPP development and implementation, programming strategies, suggested resources and materials and support of the off-campus components of the program. Special education consultation is delivered by a certified teacher with the appropriate training and experience. On-site Special Education consultation costs are additional costs to the **school jurisdiction** that provide direct programming support. These costs will be subject to a maximum of

\$1,500 per **child** based on a full-time program. For programs less than 800 hours, the \$1,500 maximum will be pro-rated based on the program hours and/or number of eligible home visits. For example, special education consultation costs for 475 hours and 6 home visits would be calculated as:

$$\$1,500 \times \left(\frac{475}{800} + \frac{6}{36} \right) = \$1,141.$$

Revised

Costs for special education administration may not be claimed in this category. These costs are more appropriately covered by the administration category or by basic instruction funding. **School jurisdictions** must keep records of costs and services associated with special educational consultation.

- (iii) Supplies and materials - instructional supplies and materials which are particular to the **child's** program, and are in addition to supplies purchased with basic instruction funding. Costs in this area are usually in the \$200 - \$500 range per **child**. For costs over this range, please attach a list of supplies to the application. **School jurisdictions** are encouraged to maintain a resource inventory and an equipment loan pool.
- b) **Parent Inservice** - costs for **parents** who attend in-province workshops, seminars, inservice and specialized training sessions specifically related to the **child's** program and designed to enhance the ability of **parent(s)/guardian(s)** to assist in the **child's** development. Costs in this category are usually in the \$100 - \$400 range per **child**.
- c) **Staff Inservice** - costs for teachers and teacher assistants who attend workshops, inservice, special courses and seminars related to staff responsibilities in the **child's** program and in parental assistance. Costs in this category are usually in the \$200 - \$500 range per **child**. Personnel included in Services Purchased are not eligible for Staff Inservice.
- d) **Transportation**

Funding to urban and rural districts for transportation of ECS **children** is available by submitting an application electronically under sections 1.17 (Rural), 1.18 (Special), and 1.19 (Urban). Funding to metro urban districts is available using form 03AL2.6, ECS Transportation (Regular and Special), under section 2.6. PUF will pay for any transportation costs for **children with severe disabilities** not covered by these Transportation grants. In order to determine which transportation costs are covered by PUF, all transportation costs must be listed on the PUF budget, then all transportation revenues (from the above transportation grants) must be deducted from the transportation costs. The following descriptions indicate the types of transportation costs which can be claimed and which transportation grants are available. Note: transportation claims must be submitted to School Finance by November 30 and only **children** who were enrolled by September 30 are eligible.

- i) Transportation to and from school: Transportation funding for these costs may be claimed by metro urban districts under section 2.6 and by rural or urban districts under section 1.18 for a **child** who requires special transportation; e.g. handi-bus, when, because of the severity of his or her disability or because of the **child's** age, the **child** cannot ride regular, rural or urban transportation or under section 1.17, 1.18, 1.19 for a **child** who is transported by a regular bus. Transportation costs for **children with severe disabilities** in excess of the funding paid under section 2.6, 1.17, 1.18, or 1.19 may be claimed as transportation costs under program unit funding;
- ii) In-Home Programs: Transportation funding for these costs may be claimed under section 2.6 for metro urban districts and under section 1.18 by rural and urban districts for each scheduled visit made by a teacher, a **child** development specialist or a teacher assistant to the home of a **child** enrolled in an ECS **in-home program**. Transportation costs in excess of the funding paid under sections 2.6 or 1.18 may be claimed as transportation costs under program unit funding;
- iii) Other - Field Trips: Transportation costs for this area may be claimed as transportation costs under program unit funding. Field trips claimed must be those provided in addition to field trips for the regular ECS class or for a **child** who, because of his/her disability, requires special transportation on a regularly scheduled field trip; and
- iv) In-Program: Transportation costs for this area may be claimed as transportation costs under program unit funding. In-program transportation costs must be specified and must be for transportation of the **child** from one program to another program or agency as part of the **child's Individualized Program Plan (IPP)**.
- e) Operation and Maintenance
- Funding for this area is now provided by Alberta Infrastructure – Plant Operations and Maintenance funding. Costs for this category may not be claimed on the PUF budget.
- f) Administration
- Funding for this area is now provided under Section 1.9 Funding in Transition – System Administration funding. Costs for this category may not be claimed on the PUF budget.
- g) Capital: Furniture and Equipment - expenditures for specialized furniture and equipment required to meet the special needs of the **child**, which are not available free or subsidized by another source.

- Revised
- i) For any major purchase, such as computer hardware, FM systems, etc., a written recommendation from an appropriate specialist is required indicating the necessity for the equipment. The letter from the specialist should specify the relevance of the equipment to the child's educational program and how it directly supports the goals and objectives of the child's IPP. The letter should

also include projected costs of the capital equipment. This letter should be attached to the PUF application.

- ii) Approval by the Special Programs Branch is required for all capital expenditures.
- iii) Expenditures should not exceed 15 percent of the budget total.
- iv) A specialized piece of furniture or equipment no longer used by the **child** remains the property of the **school jurisdiction**, not of the **child** or **parents** of the **child**. If a **child** changes **schools** in Alberta but continues to have use for the specialized furniture or equipment, the furniture or equipment goes with the **child**.
- v) Renovations to a building to be used for the benefit of all **children** in the instructional area are not eligible for support under this section. **School jurisdictions** receive funding for renovations through the Building Quality Restoration Program (BQRP).
- vi) Administrative capital purchases cannot be claimed under this category.

12. Designated Special Education ECS programs.

These are **ECS programs** where at least 70% of ECS **children** enrolled have a severe disability. The following requirements apply for these programs:

- a) Prior approval is required to qualify for this status;
- b) Operators who qualify for this status may claim all education program costs except capital building costs;
- c) A budget based on the total education program costs must be submitted on the program unit funding application budget page for **designated special education ECS programs**;
- d) Operation & Maintenance costs: This would include costs associated with the operation and maintenance of the school facility and would also include rent costs. PUF will cover costs in this category that exceed the funding provided by Alberta Infrastructure;
- e) Administration: Reasonable costs for administration of the **ECS program** may be claimed here. Costs in this area are typically in the 6% to 12% range. Costs in this category should not include any central office admin. costs/charges covered by System Admin. Funding under Section 1.9;
- f) Capital costs must meet the specific needs of a **child** or a group of **children** to be eligible. An itemized list of capital must be included with the application if costs are claimed in this category;

- g) Alberta Learning will apply all applicable revenues to the total program costs (such as basic instruction funding, mild/moderate funding, Program Enhancement Project (PEP) funding, ECS transportation funding and other applicable revenues) to determine a net program cost total to which the program unit funding will apply;
- h) **Designated special education ECS programs** must comply with all Conditions, Requirements and Considerations outlined in Section 1.7, Program Unit Funding, of the Funding Manual. These programs must also comply with the expectations outlined in the *Standards for Special Education* and the principles contained in Alberta Learning's *Kindergarten Statement (2000)*;
- i) Applications for new programs must be submitted as a proposal to the Director of the Special Programs Branch by June 1 for approval. To be considered for this designated status, the program must have operated for at least one year. Newly designated programs will be subject to program review within the first year. The proposal should contain the following information:
- a rationale for applying for status as a **designated special education ECS program** including the potential benefits to **children** with severe special needs and their families. The rationale should also explain why the program could not operate as a regular ECS program and should highlight how receiving the designated status will resolve those issues.
 - an overview of the proposed program including population served, program format, service delivery model, support services provided, and a brief summary of the role descriptions of program staff.
 - a proposed budget completed using form 03AL2.5a. This budget should outline all estimated expenditures and projected revenues; and
- j) The status of approved **designated special education ECS programs** may be reviewed and withdrawn at any time by Alberta Learning.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. A **child with a severe disability** who:
 - a) is at least 5 years 6 months but less than 6 years of age on September 1 of the school year in which s/he is counted; and
 - b) is eligible to enter grade 1 under the **school** entrance age policy of a **school jurisdiction**; and
 - c) has not spent 3 years in an **Early Childhood Services program**,may be eligible for PUF if, in the opinion of the **school jurisdiction** and the **parent**, an **ECS program** is the most appropriate placement for the **child**.
2. The calculation of the ceiling amount for a program unit with one child in it using examples of a centre-based program, an **in-home program** and a program based on a combination of centre hours and in-home visits is determined as follows:

Calculation of the ceiling for a <u>centre-based program</u> of 500 hours	Calculation of the ceiling for an <u>in-home based program</u> of 10 in-home visits	Calculation of the ceiling for a <u>combined program</u> based on 500 centre hours and 10 in-home visits
$\frac{500 \text{ hrs}}{800 \text{ hrs}} \times \$21,281$ $= \$13,301$	$\frac{10 \text{ visits}}{36 \text{ visits}} \times \$21,281$ $= \$5,911$	$\frac{500}{800} + \frac{10}{36} \times \$21,281$ $= \$19,212$

Note: If the calculation results in a number higher than the ceiling amount then the ceiling would apply.

3. The maximum program unit rates should be viewed as ceilings only. Provincial averages indicate the cost of most programs to be less than \$14,000 per child. Careful stewardship of funds by **school jurisdictions** is integral to the PUF program.
4. The decision to cluster or group **children** into a program unit for programming purposes should be based on the educational needs of the **children** involved. However, it is expected that operators will cluster **children** with similar needs who receive services in the same setting and at the same time whenever possible.
5. For a program unit with more than one **child**, the ceiling is calculated as follows:
 - Choose the **child** with the highest combination of hours and/or home visits. Calculate the ceiling for this **child** as follows:

$$\left[\frac{\# \text{ hours}}{800} + \frac{\# \text{ visits}}{36} \times \$21,281 \right]$$

- To this amount, add, for each additional **child** in the program unit as follows:

$$+ \left[\frac{\# \text{ hours}}{800} + \frac{\# \text{ visits}}{36} \times \$5,279 \right]$$

Example

For a program unit (cluster) of three **children**, where:

- **child #1** has 500 hours and 10 home visits
- **child #2** has 400 hours, no home visits
- **child #3** has 600 hours and 4 home visits

The ceiling is then calculated as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}
 & \left[\frac{500}{800} + \frac{10}{36} \right] \times \$ 21,281 = \$19,212 \\
 & + \left[\frac{400}{800} \right] \times \$5,279 = \$2,640 \\
 & + \left[\frac{600}{800} + \frac{4}{36} \right] \times \$ 5,279 = \underline{\$4,546} \\
 & = \text{Total ceiling for the unit} \qquad \qquad \qquad \$26,398
 \end{aligned}$$

6. Funding ceilings will be adjusted when a **child** starts a program after December 31 or when a **child** leaves the program earlier than planned. In these situations, the ceiling will be the lesser of:
- a pro-rated ceiling amount of \$2,128 per month for the number of months the program runs; or
 - the ceiling amount based on the program hours and/or the # of home visits.

For example, the ceiling amount for a **child** in a four month program with 300 hours and 4 home visits would be calculated as follows:

Ceiling calculation for a 4 month program in a 10 month program year
Lesser of:
a) \$21,281 X 4/10 = \$8,512 or
b) \$21,281 X (300/800 + 4/36) = \$10,345
Ceiling amount is \$8,512

7. For **school jurisdictions** that are providing a program for a **child** with a severe disability in the regular ECS classroom:

The Basic Instruction funding, Part 1, Section 1, is paid on behalf of all **children** in an **ECS program**. Basic Instruction funding is available for **children** with a severe disability who are as young as 2 years 6 months on September 1. This funding supports the day-to-day operating costs of the program, such as teacher salaries, rent, utilities, and supplies. Since these costs would be incurred whether or not a **child** with a severe disability was in the program, they should not be included in the program unit expenditures. Ordinarily, teachers' salaries should not be included as program unit costs because the basic instruction funding supports these costs.

8. For **school jurisdictions** contracting placement in a Day Care and for Day Cares with approved ECS status the following apply:

- a) In circumstances where a **child** is placed in a day care program because the location is the best place to implement the **IPP** for the **child**, the fees only for the education component portion of the day may be claimed from PUF. The education component should reflect a typical education schedule
 - b) Costs for childcare are not eligible to be claimed under PUF.
9. **School jurisdictions** may appeal program unit funding decisions by contacting the Director of the Special Programs Branch.

REFERENCES

ECS Program Unit Funding: A Handbook for ECS Operators