

MOVING TO ALBERTA with a disability

ALBERTA HEALTH CARE CARD

Apply for the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan (AHCIP). You'll have to print the AHCIP Registration form and bring it to a registry agent office. The health card will then be processed within 5 days.

Just like the rest of Canada, healthcare is free in Alberta

GET ALBERTA ID & A DOCTOR

- Apply for a Driver's License or Alberta ID by contacting your nearest Alberta Registry Office.
- Establish a residence, have proof of Alberta Residence for benefit application forms
- Find a doctor in Alberta: <https://albertafindadoctor.ca/>

DISABILITY BENEFITS ARE NOT TRANSFERABLE

Moving to Alberta means provincial disability benefits DO NOT move with you. It is best if you have copies of your medical history before moving to Alberta to give to your new doctor and to submit to Alberta Works or AISH with your initial application.

AISH BENEFITS

Please be advised that disability benefits from other provinces DO NOT transfer to Alberta and there will be a *few months delay* in services while you apply and get approved for AISH. Although AISH is available to any qualifying individual, it is often difficult to get approved right away. AISH is not a program that is transferable, and does not accept disability transfers from other provinces.

Moving to Alberta

<https://vadsociety.ca/before-moving-to-alberta-what-you-need-to-know/>

Resources for students with disabilities

Albertans with disabilities have equitable access to adult learning through a process called accommodation. The goal of accommodation is to remove barriers and obstacles that might prevent a student with a disability from being able to fully participate in a post-secondary program. This can include:

- ensuring physically accessible classrooms
- flexible course delivery and exam formats
- assistive technologies
- individualized services, such as sign language interpreters

Accommodation does not:

- require institutions to lower their learning standards for students with disabilities
- replace the student's responsibility to develop the skills and competencies needed for their learning program

Read about an institution's duty to accommodate students with disabilities: https://albertahumanrights.ab.ca/publications/bulletins_sheets_booklets/bulletins/Pages/duty_to_accommodate_students.aspx

Practical Steps to Calm the Back-to-school Anxiety of Your Child with Disabilities

So, how do we help them prepare to go "back to school?" Start with where they are. Ask them open-ended questions and try reflective listening (rephrasing what you're hearing, like "I heard you share that you're a mix of excited and scared...") When your child expresses genuine concern or doubt, try to hear it without judgement. Avoid telling them not to feel a certain way, and instead, say that you hear them.

Some questions to get them started can include:

- What do you wonder about next year?



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- What excites you?
- What do you hope?
- What do you dread?
- How would you like to prepare?

These conversations will empower you to know what to highlight (the hopes and excitements) and what to plan to address before school starts (the worries and dreads). When tackling the potential challenges, try to dig a bit into what specific things are making them feel fearful or anxious: old problems coming back, fear of the unknown, or a new campus? Maybe something else? Talking through these challenges will help potential solutions emerge. For example, if your child is worried about bullies, you can prep some quips and rehearse responses, so your child is ready with a plan. (Next step would be to report the bullying to school, of course.)

If your child is fearful of the unknown, the post-pandemic school world, you can try:

- Visiting the campus before the school starts (even before any busy orientation days)
- Taking preview photos to review at home
- Connecting with other students enrolled at the school (older students can be helpful guides!)
- Reaching out to the IEP case manager, or school psychologist, to meet and greet
- Previewing the route between classes and noting landmarks for navigation
- Keeping track of their questions to ask the school before the first day

No matter what grade your child is entering, be sure to connect with the case manager and as many teachers as possible. Every teacher appreciates connecting with families, and knowing how to best help your child will be key to success the first day and beyond. If your IEP is robust (and possibly a little hard to read), consider making a “cheat sheet” that lists your child’s needs, accommodations, motivations and strategies for success. It sometimes takes case managers weeks to get access to this information and make it available to all teachers. If you’re sharing the information in an introductory letter, with a little bit of chocolate attached, you can ensure your child’s needs are well-addressed from the first day.



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Teacher and student back to school
We’re making history right now, and our brave kids are the faces of the post-pandemic schools. Let’s take advantage of this restart to advocate for the better support and inclusion of our kids! *My current favorite dad joke: People are shocked when they find out I’m not an electrician. <https://www.abilities.com/community/back-to-school.html>

How Can I Support Students with Learning Disabilities in the Classroom?

<https://www.foothillsacademy.org/community/articles/ld-educators-need-to-know>

No two students with a Learning Disability are the same. Each individual’s profile must be considered in determining the best fit of supports, strategies, and accommodations for them. But, research supports some key principles to consider in working with the majority of students with LD, along with suggested strategies for the classroom.

1. Provide opportunities to experience success.

Many students with Learning Disabilities can begin to feel hopeless. They become reluctant learners after experiencing failure over time. So, it is important to find ways to build the students’ sense of competence where they’re at.

2. Make expectations clear.

Students with LD frequently exhibit unrealistically high





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pre-task expectations. This may be due to: being expected to do things they are not yet capable of doing, misperceiving task demands, difficulties understanding the task, inaccurately matching demands to ability level, selective attention to what has been mastered versus what has not, or inaccurate self knowledge. Get rid of the ambiguity as much as possible by providing explicit explanations about tasks, assignments, and tests/exams.

Have realistic expectations and set standards of success that are achievable for the student. Don't just tell them what you don't want them to do; tell them exactly what you do want them to do. Use simple language, repeat directions/instructions, and check-in for understanding

Provide rubrics/exemplars of assignments that they can work towards. Help students to break down a large task into its components and check-in on each of these components

3. Provide frequent, positive feedback for both academics and behaviour being sure to praise effort and strategies, not product or success.

As noted above, students with LD tend to receive more negative than positive feedback. Many opportunities to provide feedback on what they are doing correctly are often missed. Be sure to "Catch 'em being good!" Furthermore, students with LD often need to put forth much greater mental effort to meet the same task demands as others. And, they may not be able to meet those demands in the same way. As such, it is important to ensure that we are measuring them against their own progress. Goals on their IPP can assist with this.

- Provide a combination of both summative and formative feedback to better assist students in directing their behavior and academic goals
- Ensure that feedback is not only sincere, but also specific and immediate. This helps to ensure that the positive behavior will occur again. IFEED is a useful acronym to assist in remembering how to provide positive reinforcement:

I - Immediately

F - Frequently

E - Eye Contact

E - Enthusiastically

D - Describe

Build personal connections with students. Don't forget the profound value of giving a struggling student eye contact and a genuine smile. Be flexible on expectations. An example of this is avoiding grading students for neatness if they struggle with motor coordination. Fair doesn't mean equal. If the student has an LD that impacts their ability to complete math tasks, expecting them to complete the same 20 questions for homework as others in the class can be defeating and exhausting. Five questions may be enough to ensure and show that the student is understanding the concept.

4. Provide scaffolding as required.

Much like students with ADHD, students with LDs can be inconsistent in their skills. They can be inconsistent from one day to another and subject to subject. They can also be inconsistent within the same day, subject, or skill area. As noted above, they can also often show knowledge about a particular concept but fail to put this knowledge into practice when expected. As such, each student needs to be met where they're at and provided the needed supports to move them towards greater independence in skill areas.

- Slowly increase independence and complexity
- Follow these steps in order (the amount of time required at each step will vary for each student):
 - Explicitly model the skill;
 - Do the skill together;
 - Have the student do the task with help;
 - Have the student do the skill independently;
 - Eventually fade support.
 - Be sure to celebrate each accomplishment!

5. Keep the Tanks Full.

Kids with LD use a lot of mental energy and can deplete faster than other kids. Provide opportunities for brain breaks, snack breaks, and regular exercise. These can help with modulating frustration while also increasing attention and productivity. Remember that recess is necessary! Don't take it away as punishment.

6. Use Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

Although each learning profile is different, what



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can help one student can often help most, if not all, students within a classroom. Many of the best practices for teaching are applicable to students with LD.

- Use visuals to support content and to show typical routines (e.g., visual schedule)
- Provide lesson outlines and copies of notes to student(s)
- Have clear visible objectives on the board
- Whenever possible, allow students to set their own pace of task completion
- Provide a quiet space to work
- Have consistent and predictable routines and expectations for instruction and assessment.
- Support development of executive functioning skills (e.g., planning, time management, organization):
- teach colour coding of materials;
- teach students to make checklists for the steps of big projects and assignments;
- provide and explicitly teach how to use organizers, planners, lists and mindmapping software;
- highlight key words on worksheets; explicitly teach students how to create study guides and how to study

Give choice and differentiation in products to personalize learning; this can help maximize student potential through engagement. For example, if the purpose of an assignment/test is to demonstrate knowledge on a topic, allow students to choose how they demonstrate this knowledge. They may choose to do this through written, oral, or other creative means.

7. Teach them about their brains.

Educating students about their brain is an important way to help them not feel bad about the challenges they face. All students have strengths and weaknesses in their cognitive profile. A student with a Learning Disability/Disorder needs to understand how the disability/disorder impacts them. They also need to recognize that the diagnosis is only a small part of who they are. A young person is also more likely to advocate for themselves if they understand the disorder. For example, they can request accommodations or use strategies they have been taught. As well, other students in the classroom are more likely to have empathy for a student with a Learning Disability if they

understand each other's learning differences.

World Humanitarian Day - 19 August

#TheHumanRace - A global challenge for climate action in solidarity with the people who need it most.

The climate emergency is wreaking havoc across the world at a scale that people on the front lines and in the humanitarian community cannot manage. Time is already running out for the world's most vulnerable people — those who have contributed least to the global climate emergency yet are hit the hardest — and millions of others that are already losing their homes, their livelihoods, and their lives.

With most climate campaigns focused on slowing climate change and securing the planet's future, World Humanitarian Day 2021, will highlight the immediate consequences of the climate emergency for the world's most vulnerable people and ensure that their voices are heard, and their needs top the agenda at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) in November.

Therefore, everyone is invited to join #TheHumanRace, which is the global challenge for climate action in solidarity with people who need it the most; and to put the needs of climate-vulnerable people front and centre at the UN climate summit (COP26).

Stand in solidarity with the world's most vulnerable people by using these hashtags in your social media activities #TheHumanRace #WorldHumanitarianDay Join #theHumanRace - Run, ride, swim, walk or do any activity of your choice for a cumulative 100 minutes between August 16 and August 31 in solidarity with vulnerable people and to tell world leaders that they expect developed countries to deliver on their decade-old pledge of \$100 billion annually for climate mitigation and adaptation in developing countries.

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/humanitarian-day>

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Accessible Waters

Making Alberta's waters accessible to everyone.

We at Accessible Waters would like to introduce ourselves and our newly formed organization. Accessible Waters is a recently developed non-profit based in Devon, Alberta (just SW of Edmonton), with the vision of supporting those with mobility, physical or sensory limitations in accessing Alberta's rivers and lakes. We recognize there are often many barriers preventing those with disability or other physical limitations from enjoying and participating in activities on the water.

Our goal is to reduce these barriers with a fully modified and accessible boat and to advocate for improved land-to-water facilities to make Alberta's waterways inclusive and accessible to all. Our customers will benefit from having improved access to our natural environments with the ability to fully participate in water-based activities with family and friends.

I, Butch Pollock, am the founder and captain of our boat and have been an avid boater for over 30 years. I have been able to share these adventures with my children and through boating, they have seen the vast diverse landscapes in Alberta, seen wildlife up close and also enjoyed fishing in many of these rivers and lakes. As a family, we have had the privilege of accessing the rivers and lakes in our region and enjoyed diverse experiences on the water. But we recognize that these adventures aren't easily accessible to all - especially those with mobility limitations or others who need additional assistance with activities. We hope that by providing a fully accessible boat to those with any mobility need and equipped with appropriate seating and

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For ease of access, our boat is fitted with a standard sized ram and grab bars for eased entry onto the boat either by foot or with mobility aids. Our boat, The Rum Runner II, is the only wheelchair accessible river/lake boat in Alberta (and in Canada outside of major commercial tourism)! In the boat, we have seating for up to 5 participants with safety connectors for wheelchairs. Our boat is fully safety equipped with approved life vests and our captain and staff are first aid and CPR trained. Canvas covering provides protection from sun, wind and rain if needed.

Accessible Waters launched for our debut season June 2022, with booking available now online via our website. It is our hope that we can partner with local municipalities and service organizations to advocate for improved land-to-water accessibility and increase opportunities for those with limitations to participate in water-based sports. It is our aim that together we might start conversations around water accessibility and inclusivity while supporting local initiatives for water-based sports. We invite you to look at our website for further information, consider booking a tour for yourself or someone with disability, or make a donation to our organization so we can keep our operation costs low making this accessible recreation option financially accessible as well! Please do not hesitate to contact us directly if you have any visions of how we might work together to accomplish these goals or if you have any questions about our services.

Some Considerations:

- **Add us to your organization's activity or event promotions**
- **Promote our accessible services among your teams, local senior groups and disability service organization partners.**
- **Consider if your local waterways are accessible for all and how can we collaborate together to ensure they are!**
- **Reach out to Accessible Waters to present to your teams about our activities, plans and services! We'd love to tell you more about our organization.**
- **Make a donation, sponsor a client trip, some equipment or connect with us to see how you might help our mission!**
- **Let us know how we might support your clients with our services.**
- **Join our mailing list for updates on our projects, trip packages and progress!**

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