

FUNDS FOR SPECIAL NEEDS

By virtue of our operation of a kindergarten program under the aegis of Alberta Education we are able to access and administer funds for children with special needs. FCB is the Trustee, responsible for expenditure of the funds and a professional audit is required each year. These funds are early intervention measures designed to assist the child in the context of the classroom in preparation for advancing to elementary education.

Role of Foothills Creative Beginnings:

- To administer the funds for PUF and MILD/MODERATE programs.
- To develop an Individualized Program Plan for each child accessing these programs
- To provide assurance to Alberta Education of the quality of the program and financial accountability.

MILD / MODERATE FUNDING

This level of funding provides for children with mild to moderate delays in one or two developmental areas such as speech or motor development. It is expected that the child is able to follow directions and enjoy the company of other children in a classroom setting. These funds provide for regular visits (usually 16-18 sessions) to a professional therapist during the school year. This funding is available for 2 years only, one of which must be the kindergarten year. Parents pay the school fees. No assistant is provided.

To qualify for mild/moderate funds:

- The child must be at least 3 years 6 months and less than 6 years on September 1 of the program year to qualify.
- The child must be registered with Foothills Creative Beginnings by September 30 of the year when this funding is accessed and attend a preschool which is serviced by Foothills Creative Beginnings.
- The initial request for therapy can be based on opinions of the parents and FCB personnel or a referral from a speech clinic or Children's Hospital. This will then be confirmed by one of our therapists.

PROGRAM UNIT FUNDING (PUF)

PUF is the most generously conceived of comparable provincial programs in Canada. The total funds made available depend on the needs of the child, although there is an upper limit. PUF seeks to provide for the needs of children with disabilities requiring additional support above that offered in a regular preschool or kindergarten program. The funding is based on developmental therapeutic interventions with an emphasis upon learning through play, in preparation for further educational pursuits. The child receiving PUF may have a severe delay in areas such as speech, language, fine or gross motor development. Behavioral or medical issues are also factors considered for PUF funding. When more than one area of delay occurs, the program seeks to address such broader issues. The services of a teaching assistant are generally required as well as professional therapists appropriate to the child's needs. These may include speech language pathology, occupational therapy, physical therapy, a behavior consultant or psychologist. Family Focus sessions are provided, bringing strategies and consistency between school and home to the program. The PUF program we administer is designed to provide families with as much participation as possible in their child's program.

To qualify for PUF Funding:

- Assessment/diagnosis from appropriate professional(s) is required prior to submitting an application. This is imperative for an initial application and it is very helpful if these assessments can be completed before September. Please see the Link for the Early Intervention Program, Alberta Children's Hospital.
- The child must be at least 2 years 6 months and less than 6 years of age on September 1 of years when PUF is accessed. PUF is available for a maximum of three years. Care should be taken in deciding when to start PUF.
- The child must be registered in and attend a preschool or kindergarten program.

PUF funds provide for:

- Therapies as indicated by the needs of the child
- A teaching assistant
- An Individual Program Plan (IPP) with developmentally appropriate goals developed by a PUF Coordinator in consultation with teachers, therapists, parents and teaching assistants. She is the connecting link between classroom, therapists and parents. The PUF Coordinator may travel from Foothills Creative Beginnings to service outlying Preschools or Kindergartens providing the services listed above.

Please contact Lorraine Parker (403-282-7895) if you have questions with regard to funding.