



Families



PARENT HANDBOOK

Airdrie Foundation 4 Early Childhood Intervention, (Foundation 4) is a Private Service Provider accredited by Alberta Education. Foundation 4 is a Non-Profit Corporation located in the City of Airdrie. Services are provided in the home, community and pre-school settings, depending upon the child and family needs.

Our mission is to provide an enriching individualized program for children and families who are in need of early intervention that is research-based and play focused.

It will be an exciting journey to watch your child learn and grow and we invite you to ask ANY questions you may have along the way...

Core Values

- We believe that every family is doing their very best for their child
- We believe that activating parent and family resourcefulness will facilitate a lifetime of learning
- Compassion and acceptance must underlie all interactions with children and families
- We are passionate about early intervention that is developmentally appropriate and implemented within play-based environments.
- Evidence based practice is crucial when planning intervention practices
- We are dedicated to creating an innovative and enjoyable program for children and families
- We are committed to solution-focused interactions
- Enhancing functional skills is a priority
- We believe that early intervention is crucial for long term success and social contribution
- Both the dignity and individuality of the family must be respected and enhanced at all times.

The important thing is not so much that every child should be taught, as that every child should be given the wish to learn.

~John Lubbock

FUNDING TYPES

PUF Funding

- Eligibility criteria for PUF funding is established by the Department of Education
- Criteria are determined by professional diagnosis, impact statements and supporting documentation.
- This funding is allocated to the PUF program provider, in this case, Foundation 4, and not to the individual child or family.
- **Not every child needs the same program so long as every child's needs are met.**
- An IPP (Individualized Program Plan) must be developed in collaboration with the family, and based on the child's identified needs. IPP reviews will provide an opportunity to update goals and discuss budget allocations.

Program Unit Funding Criteria:

- a. The child must be 2.6 years of age on September 1 of the given year.
- b. The child must have severe delays in at least 1 area of development
- c. These delays must have a significant impact on the child's ability to benefit from the learning opportunities available in a preschool program
- d. A high level of adult support is needed to facilitate success
- e. PUF support is available for a MAXIMUM of 3 years and the final year SHOULD be accessed in the Kindergarten year. Every year, children must meet criteria and be approved for continuation of funding.

Family Participation

- Ongoing communication and collaboration with the team is paramount to successful programming
- Parent(s) must attend 3 IPP meetings during the year to Establish Goals, Update Goals, and Plan for transition. These meeting are held at the beginning, mid and end of the

school year. Every effort will be made to accommodate parent schedules.

ECS Family Oriented Programming Sessions (FOPS)

Family Oriented Programming Sessions are designed to enhance parent involvement in their child's learning.

They are:

- Designed to target specific skill development and offer suggestions for home follow-up
- Conducted in the home or community
- 1.5 hours in length
- Directed by the parents' priorities and planned by the Educational Coordinator or Therapists.
- Conducted with the parent present
- Scheduled at the beginning of the year
- Optional but HIGHLY recommended

Mild Moderate Funding

Our program provides less intensive services for children with mild to moderate delays. Children who need extra supports to achieve success at preschool in the area of speech intelligibility or motor strength and/or coordination may be eligible for funding. These supports may be individual, small group or classroom based supports.

Criteria for Mild/Moderate Funding:

- Children aged 3 years, 6 months on or before September 1 of the school year
- Professional documentation indicating mild to moderate delays that impact preschool performance.

Family Participation

Participate in prioritizing and setting goals for the Individualized Program Plan (IPP) and signing two IPP's per year.

FSCD Specialized Services

Connections 4 is a Private Specialized Service Provider approved by FSCD to create and implement a supported Individualized Service Plan for your child and family once approved for Specialized Services. Connections 4 was established in 2008 to create an ability to offer a “one child, one team” approach to service delivery

Specialized Services (SS)

Specialized Services provides funding for families whose child has severe needs in at least 2 of the following 5 areas and these needs affect the family’s ability to function in home and in the community without support:

- Communication and Social Skills
- Physical and Motor Development
- Behavior
- Self-Help Skills and Adaptive Functioning
- Cognitive Abilities

Connections 4’s home-based programs are designed to achieve goals as described in an Individual Service Plan (ISP). Based on both the child’s and family’s needs, this program may include a Child Development Facilitator (CDF), Occupational Therapist (OT), Physical Therapist (PT), Speech and Language Pathologist (SLP), Psychologist / Behavior Specialist, and Clinical Coordinator.

Individual budgets for intervention are determined by [FSCD](#) recommendations based on individualized needs of the family and child. These determinations are based on professional documentation, parent reporting, in-home observations and collaboration with an independent panel of professionals.

Please visit www.calgaryandareacfsa.gov.ab.ca for more information.

Common Approach

Connections 4 partners with Foundation 4 to support a common approach to service delivery for our children who are eligible for both

SS and PUF programs. In doing so, our services are consistent and streamlined both in terms of team members and philosophy.

Foundation 4

4 Child

Our goal is to ensure that your child feels accepted, valued and safe. Through carefully structured, developmentally appropriate intervention we use play to maximize your child's strengths while always encouraging growth in challenge areas. We act as a cheering section – celebrating improvements, motivating your child and nurturing your child's self esteem with every interaction.

The Individualized Program Plan is a goal-tracking document for each child. They are written at the beginning of the year with all team members to contributing expertise to prioritize goals that will maximize your child's growth. Progress is documented through formal assessment and informal observations.

4 Family

Your family is the most important team member! You have a vested interest in the success of your child and we want you to be involved every step of the way. Your knowledge and attachment to your child is our most important tool.

Our definition of family includes siblings and extended family too (we know there are many special adults that have a significant role in your child's life and they are welcome to be included – grandparents, aunts and uncles, etc)

Parents are invited to help choose goals for your child that reflect and are consistent with the priorities of *your individual family*. We understand that you know your child BEST and we respect and support the important role of your family in determining priority goals.

Research tells us that all children do better when their families are involved in their education. This is especially important when a child has individually special needs.

Foundation 4 believes that providing intervention in your home helps a child feel more comfortable and also opens up possibilities in using toys and games you already own to target different learning goals. We understand that we are guests in your home and always want to be respectful of your family's space.

To allow for the best possible service delivery, we ask the family to accept a few additional commitments during the year:

- Parents are invited and necessary at all team meetings (IPP and/or ISP)
(These are scheduled at the beginning, middle and end of the school year)
- Parents are asked to sign the Therapy assistants time sheets
- Parents are welcome to be present and active during therapy sessions to share your strategies for helping your child and to learn new strategies from the team
- Parents are welcome at any time to express any questions or concerns about team members or programming – we want communication to be frequent and ongoing
- Parents **MUST** provide copies of the most recent FSCD contracts upon receipt of that contract.

Most of our team members are also parents who understand and empathize with the juggle of life, and amidst it all, wanting the best for our children. Foundation 4 strives to provide programming for your child that is easily applied in the reality of your daily life and functionally appropriate for your family.

4 School

Our goal is to support your child so that those critical first school experiences are enjoyable and rewarding.

We use a TEAM approach to in-class support rather than one-to-one support. 20+ years of experience has taught us that this approach is best for the following reasons:

- It promotes skills being transferred across a variety of adults
- It promotes independence
- It promotes flexibility
- It builds skill and capacity in staff members
- Every adult is aware and knowledgeable about the child's goals

In-home activities with the Assistant will focus on building success in areas where your child experiences difficulty at school. With specific, step-by-step assistance at home, transference of these new skills to the school environment is more likely. The TA will endeavor to work closely with the pre-school teacher so that pre-teaching of upcoming skills can be introduced during one-on-one activities. The goal is to ensure that your child feels successful and confident during his/her first school experiences.

4 Community

Foundation 4 is proud to be an Airdrie owned and operated Early Intervention program. We strive to utilize and integrate all available and appropriate Airdrie community resources to support your child's program. Inclusion is a way of thinking that allows every individual to feel accepted and valued. We embrace inclusion as a means of enhancing the well being of every member of the community. By working together, we strengthen our capacity to provide a richer future for all of us, especially our community's children.

We will be using the library in Airdrie, the toy lending library, the swimming pool, the Wellness centre, the playgrounds, etc., so your child will have the opportunity to generalize goals to community settings.

It is also our hope that these 'outings' will be coordinated to provide an opportunity for the children in our program to meet and build relationships.

Please make it a priority to attend at least one group outing in the course of the year. It is an excellent opportunity for both children and parents.

OUR TEAM

Our team is comprised of innovative, compassionate, enthusiastic, solution-focused, and skilled professionals. We have extensive experience training and supervising, mentoring, and implementing programs developed to meet the individual needs of your child.

The team will be "custom" designed depending on the needs of your child. The team members may include some or all of the following:

- Family
- Certificated Teacher
- Speech-Language Pathologist (communication goals expressive language, speech sounds, understanding language)
- Physical Therapist (gross motor skills)
- Occupational Therapist (fine motor, sensory, daily living skills)
- Educational Specialist (early education skills)
- Psychologist/Behaviour Specialist
- Therapy assistant (daily child support to implement all your child's goals that have been provided by the specialist team)

Our Therapy Assistants come from a wide variety of experiential and educational backgrounds, and ALL have extensive experience and a passion for working with children.

Therapy

- Therapy hours include direct time spent in sessions with the parent and child, report writing, planning, documentation, and consultation/meetings.

Privacy and Safety

- Confidentiality regarding family circumstances and private affairs are to be strictly adhered to. Families have placed their trust in us and invited us into their homes under vulnerable circumstances. Foundation 4 personnel must remain mindful of this and act appropriately.
- We understand that it is very unsettling to have a 'stranger' in your home working with your child and providing suggestions. Please know that it is equally uncomfortable for us.
- All TA's are required to provide evidence of Criminal Records Checks and Child Welfare Checks as a term of employment with Foundation 4

Conflict Resolution

- Conflicts are inevitable.
- It is always wise to allow some time to 'simmer' before addressing issues. Please give 24 hours prior to addressing any issues. Always enter a conflict with a clear idea of what you want and/or a solution.
- Please do not deal with conflicts via e-mail as misinterpretations are inevitable.
- Any conflicts must be discussed between the concerned parties first. If concerns are not resolved, individuals may bring concerns to the Director.

E-Mail

- For the most part, communication expediency can be enhanced through technology and e-mails are a great way to respond quickly, however....
- Effective and accurate use of the English language in writing is a dying art! Please remember that as you read and interpret all e-mails. Please be compassionate when reading e-mails. Seldom is the tone of the written word accurately represented in e-mails.

Cancellation Guidelines

- Please cancel therapy if your child is ill:
(*Vomiting in last 24 hours, high fever, excessive mucous*)
It is difficult to engage a child who is feeling ill and interventions are more likely to reinforce undesirable behaviour when the child would rather be resting than playing.
- Please give as much notice as possible when cancelling, particularly if therapists are traveling from Calgary for the appointment.
- Likewise, therapists are expected to provide as much cancellation notice as possible so that you can adjust your plans.
- **We realize that parents want the best intervention for their children. However, MORE is not always better. When a child is sick, forcing engagement may do more harm than good. The TA, from a place of compassion and empathy, may allow expectations of the child to slip. Even worse, she may inadvertently reinforce maladaptive behaviour. Also, the therapy assistant can become an annoyance to the child by forcing engagement. This is damaging to the rapport the therapy assistant has established as the 'fun, playful lady'. It is not worth the risk for us to create a routine where the child starts 'rejecting' the therapy assistant as a play partner.**
- **For the same reasons, please be sure to cancel therapists when your child is sick. Some therapists visit 4-6 homes over the course of the day. It is a highly efficient means of sharing viruses and 'bugs'.**

Our hope is that this Handbook will answer many of your questions. Please don't hesitate to contact us with any further concerns.

Thank you for choosing to work with Foundation 4!

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