

## LINKS Program



The Learning - Individual Needs, Knowledge and Skills (LINKS) Program is a specialized system program designed to meet the needs of students with mild to severe/profound cognitive (intellectual) disabilities, who may also have physical, sensory, medical or behavioural difficulties. The focus of the program is to improve academic, communication, self-care, social, vocational and independent-living skills within a safe, structured and supported learning environment. LINKS students are working toward a high school certificate of completion or a certificate of high school achievement (knowledge and employability), rather than a high school diploma.

Flexible and responsive instruction is guided by an Instructional Support Plan (ISP), builds on individual strengths and needs, and follows the Alberta Education Programs of Study, with adaptations or modifications as necessary. The LINKS Program is supported by Elk Island Public Schools' Specialized Supports multi-disciplinary team.

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### Benefits for Students

- Improved literacy and numeracy skills
- Improved social and communication skills
- Improved life skills and independence
- Improved sense of community and belonging

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### Programming Priorities

- Smaller class size with more targeted instruction
- Building literacy and numeracy skills in a nurturing and structured environment, while providing opportunities to grow as part of the school community
- Integration in certain subjects based on students' ability to cope and individual learning needs

### Eligibility

Students must:

- be 6 to 18 years old as of December 31, in the year they'll enrol in the program;
- have a clinical diagnosis of an intellectual disability or a medical condition that inhibits their ability to cope with the demands of a regular classroom; and
- be a resident student of Elk Island Public Schools.

If you feel your child might be eligible, discuss your child's programming needs with your school team. They, along with the specialized supports consultant, can help to determine if the LINKS Program might be a potential fit for your child.

### Locations

- A.L. Horton Elementary (grades 1-6)
- Fort Saskatchewan Elementary (grades 1-6)
- Rudolph Hennig Junior High (grades 7-9)
- Lamont High (grades 7-12)
- Vegreville Composite High (grades 7-12)
- Fort Saskatchewan High (grades 10-12)

### Questions about this program?

**Current EIPS families:**

Contact your school team

**New EIPS families:**

Contact EIPS' Supports for Students team at 780-417-8270

Updated October 2022

## SPECIALIZED SYSTEM PROGRAMS

# Frequently Asked Questions



### When is the application deadline?

Applications are due on Jan. 25, 2023 to request enrolment in a Specialized System Program for the 2023-24 school year. Families will likely start having conversations with their school teams much earlier in the year.

### How can I find out more about the application process?

Questions about the application process should be directed to your current school. For students new to the Division, the System Program Consultant (780-417-8270) will help answer questions and support next steps.

### How can I find out more about the program before applying?

[Program descriptions](#) are available on the Division website. You may also contact the school offering the specific program you're interested in or the System Program Consultant to learn more about it.

### Do I need to live in the program school's attendance area for my child to be accepted into the program?

All Elk Island Public Schools resident students who are eligible for a program may apply. Priority is not given to students who are currently in that school's boundaries.

### My child has multiple diagnoses and may be eligible for several programs. How do I know which program is the best fit?

Your child's school team are your partners in deciding the program that will best serve the needs of your child. In the case of multiple diagnoses, they'll determine which diagnosis should take priority and help develop a strategy to serve your child's educational needs most effectively.

### Is a student able to join at any point during the school year?

Applications to EIPS Specialized System Programs must be submitted prior to the January deadline for requested registration in the following school year. Late applications will be considered in the spring, but placement is dependent on available space and program fit. Generally, students start in a Specialized System Program at the start of the school year rather than joining part way through the year.

### If my child is eligible for the program, will they automatically be accepted?

While the Division does its best to accommodate the needs of all students, resources and space are limited. Sometimes students are waitlisted for programs for which they qualify.

### How do I know if my child is accepted in a program?

The Division will notify all families who apply about the outcome by the end of the first week of February. If your child is recommended for placement in the program, you'll be required to complete a Specialized System Program Consent form which will be emailed to you directly.

### What happens if my child is not accepted in a program?

Your school team will continue to provide educational programming, supported by the Division's specialized supports team and guided by your child's Instructional Support Plan.

### If my child is accepted in a program, is transportation provided?

In most circumstances, transportation is available for students accepted in an EIPS Specialized System Program. Fees may apply. If your child is accepted, contact EIPS Student Transportation—at 780-417-8151 or [st@eips.ca](mailto:st@eips.ca)—to formally request busing, if required.