

Where do I find more information?

Edmonton Public Schools,
429-8000, www.epsb.ca

- Schools, Program Locations, Transportation, Special Education Programs, Special Education Parent Brochures, Consulting Services, Leadership Services

GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA
Alberta Education,
Special Programs, 422-6326,
www.education.gov.ab.ca

www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/specialneeds/resource.asp

- Individualized Program Planning
- Building on Success: Helping Students Make Transitions from Year to Year
- Essential Components of Educational Programming for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Teaching Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders
- The Learning Team: A Handbook for Parents of Children with Special Needs

www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/ParentResources.asp

- The Parent Advantage: Helping children become more successful learners at home and school, grade 1-9

Alberta Learning
Information Service (ALIS),
www.alis.gov.ab.ca/learning/pset/planning.asp

- Planning for Post-Secondary Studies

Edmonton & Area Child
& Family Services,
Region 6, 427-2250, www.edmontonandareaacfsa.gov.ab.ca

- Family supports for children with disabilities from birth to age 18

Alberta Seniors and Community
Supports, Persons with
Developmental Disabilities
(PDD) Program, 427-1177,
www.pdd.org

- Supports for adults with developmental disabilities and their families

Support Organizations

- Alberta Association for Community Living, www.aacl.org
- Alberta Children's Services, www.child.gov.ab.ca
- Autism Society Canada, www.autismsocietycanada.ca
- Autism Society of Alberta, Edmonton Autism Society, 453-3971
- Autism Today, www.autismtoday.com
- Canadian Council for Exceptional Children, <http://canadian.ccc.sped.org>
- Centre for the Study of Autism, www.autism.org
- Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorders, www.chadd.org
- Edmonton Regional Coalition for Inclusive Education, www.gatewayacl.org
- The Learning Disabilities Association of Alberta, 466-1011, www.ladaa-ec.ca

- The KID Foundation's Sensory Processing (SPD) Network, www.sinetwork.org
- Mental Health Helpline, 1-877-303-2642
- NLD on the Web (Nonverbal Learning Disorder), www.nldontheweb.org

Edmonton Public Schools recognizes that students are individuals with unique needs and interests. To ensure that we provide an outstanding education to all, we offer a range of programs that allow students to find their own educational paths, explore their interests and discover their potential.

For further information, please contact your community school principal.

Interactions Program



DISTRICT
CENTRE
PROGRAMS
FOR
STUDENTS
WITH
SPECIAL
NEEDS



The Interactions Program assists students with autism spectrum disorders.

How do I know that the Interactions Program is right for my child?

Autism spectrum disorders impact how people understand what they see, hear and sense. These lifelong disabilities can result in difficulties in communication, social relationships, behaviour or learning. Although some students with autism spectrum disorders achieve at grade level, many have uneven or delayed achievement. The Interactions Program helps students with autism spectrum disorders to improve their communication, social interaction and behaviour while developing academic skills in keeping with their individual abilities. Students must be from five and one-half to nineteen years of age and meet entrance requirements (including a clinical diagnosis) to attend the program.

How does the program work?

The Interactions Program provides students with supportive and structured learning environments and programming tailored to meet their special education needs. Staff have training and/or experience in special education, communication programming and behaviour management. In

smaller-sized classes, students benefit from regular routines, consistent interventions and close, constant supervision and instruction. Students work and learn with classmates of approximately the same age and have opportunities to interact with peers in a variety of school and community activities.

Interactions staff carefully organize the classroom and learning process. Teachers provide clear instruction, visual aids, concrete examples and hands-on activities. They use frequent praise and other meaningful rewards to assist students to learn and apply important skills. In general, Interactions programming focuses on the following areas:

- communication and language (listening, understanding and speaking);
- social interaction (building and maintaining relationships, understanding social situations and other people); and
- behaviour (expanding interests, managing aggression or problematic behaviour, coping with anxiety, stimulation or change).

Academic programming is based on ongoing assessment of each student's needs, interests, skills and growth. In this way, the program helps students to develop academic skills in keeping with their abilities and goals. Within their academic work, students develop important skills for learning, such as paying attention, working with and expressing concepts, and using visual, oral and written information. Students may join other classes for instruction in areas of strength. In senior high, community based programming helps students transition to the world of work and adult living.

Hours of instruction are the same for all district students. All students have a lunch break; however, in some Interactions classes a reduced noon break gives students an opportunity to apply communication, social interaction and behaviour skills in different contexts, such as lunch preparation, conversation or recreation.



What are the benefits of the program?

The Interactions Program assists students by providing a safe, structured environment and programming that specifically meets the special education needs of students with autism spectrum disorders. Instruction helps students achieve at levels appropriate to their abilities, while they learn and use socially appropriate communication and behaviour patterns in the classroom and community.

How is my child's progress monitored and communicated?

Students, parents and teaching staff work together as a learning team to monitor achievement and other important outcomes. Regular communication includes report cards, conferences, notes, phone calls and in some classrooms, agendas or other communication books. In addition, with parent input,



staff develop an Individualized Program Plan (IPP), which is a plan of action to address each student's priority special education needs. The IPP process supports monitoring of progress, communication and transition planning. Each school year, parents and teaching staff work together to evaluate the continuing benefit of Interactions programming for students.

Where is the program located?

The Interactions Program is offered in a number of elementary, junior and senior high schools throughout the district. For program locations, visit www.epsb.ca or call Program Distribution at 429-8427. For information on student transportation, please visit <http://transportation.epsb.net> or call 429-8585.

How does my child get into the program?

Contact your child's community school teacher and principal to discuss your child's abilities, achievements, interests and programming. Your child's school will provide information about Interactions eligibility and school and district programming options. If your child currently attends a school outside of Edmonton Public Schools, contact Leadership Services at 429-8030 for information about entry into the district.

What happens when my child leaves the program?

Every student with autism spectrum disorders is a unique individual with different goals. Options for students leaving the senior high Interactions Program include post-secondary programs, adult training programs, employment and supported living and work settings.