

Understanding Program Unit Funding (PUF) for Alberta's Children

FAQs about PUF

What is PUF?

- **Program Unit Funding** aka 'PUF' is a grant provided by **Alberta Education** to school authorities for children with severe disabilities (based on formal diagnosis) who are **older than two years, eight months of age, and younger than six years on September 1**.
- **PUF** is provided for children who require support beyond what is offered in regular Early Childhood Services (ECS) 'aka' kindergarten programs.

How does a child qualify for a PUF designation?

- **The school authority** requires a **letter from a qualified professional** (physician, pediatrician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or speech-language pathologist) **confirming a diagnosis or delay, developmental assessments, or descriptions of concerns** involving significant impacts on the child's learning.
- The school authority applies for PUF from Alberta Education.
- **Alberta Education** approves requests for funding based on the information provided to them from the school authority.



**Minimum 3 Years of age before September 1, up to a
Maximum of 6 years before September 1**

Call
780-225-4311
to speak with
Amy Corser,
GYPSD's
Inclusive
Learning
Consultant

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How long can a child receive PUF support?

- Children can qualify for the PUF designation for **up to three years in total based on their age when they start to access PUF**: two years in a Pre-K program and one year of kindergarten if they meet the **Special Education Coding Criteria** as per Alberta Education for a severe disability/delay.

What support does the PUF designation provide?

- Children with a PUF designation receive an **Individual Program Plan**. The plan identifies developmentally appropriate goals for the PUF child.
- A certificated teacher takes the lead role in the program planning process and takes responsibility for ensuring each child receives instruction, services, and supports in order to meet the individualized program plan (IPP) goals.
- PUF children are integrated in a supportive educational environment with children their age where they can gain important social skills and opportunities to learn from their peers.
- The goals are constructed in consultation with educators, specialists, and the child's parents.
- Children receive a range of therapy supports, depending on the delay or diagnosis, and support from an educational assistant.
- The Rehabilitation/Educational Specialists who support the child and inform the plan may include:
 - Speech and Language Pathologists (SLP),
 - Occupational Therapists (OT),
 - Psychologists,
 - Behavioural Specialists
 - Deaf and Hard of Hearing Consultant
 - Blind and Low Vision Consultant



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FAQs about **PUF** in GYPSD

How does a family apply for a PUF destination in Grande Yellowhead Public School Division?

- PUF designation requires a letter confirming a formal diagnosis or delay.
- Parents with concerns about their child's development should share their concerns with a **physician and request an assessment as early as the concern is noted.**
- Once the family has the letter confirming the delay or diagnosis, parents **contact the elementary school principal** where a **Pre-K** program is offered.
- The school authority applies for the child to receive **PUF.**



We missed the Pre-K window. Is it too late for PUF in kindergarten?

- PUF is available for eligible children who are **less than 6 years old** on September 1. Contact your local elementary school principal or call **GYPSD's Inclusive Learning Consultant, Amy Corser, at 780-225-4311.**

What else should a family know about PUF in GYPSD?

- PUF is a grant to support eligible children. PUF children are integrated into Pre-K or Kindergarten programs with age-related peers. Their program plan is created and monitored by a certificated teacher and/or Learning Support Teacher (LST).
- Children must be enrolled in the school jurisdiction by September 30.
- Parents are **key partners in PUF success** and must be actively involved in the process.
- Each child's program goals are informed by their specific and unique educational needs.
- Parents need to inform staff if their child is not yet potty-trained.
- In GYPSD, Junior Kindergarten programs are available for both 3 and 4-year-olds; kindergarten beginning at 5 years.
- **Contact Amy Corser at 780-225-4311 for details specific to your community.**



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