



Welcome to Support Services

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SelfDesign® Learning Community's tuition-free and inclusive kindergarten to Grade 12 (K-12) program provides equal access to opportunities for all learners, including specific services to support learners of all ages with special needs.

Support services are provided with educational funding grants from the B.C. Ministry of Education through the SelfDesign Learning Foundation, to support learners with special needs. Note: We do have a waitlist for learners in low-incidence and periodically for high-incidence needs. Please fill out the expression of interest form <https://www.selfdesign.org/programs/enrol/>.



We believe...

Every learner has a unique voice, and our inclusive K-12 program is committed to listening to each and every child –however they are able to communicate.

You know your child better than anyone, and while opinions of professional experts are highly regarded, your insights are equally valued.

Every learner with special needs is unique, and we reflect this by providing programming that is adapted for each learner.



*SelfDesign Learning Community
supported over 900 learners
with special needs in
the 2021/22 learning year.*

Who are support services for

We offer support services to learners who have been, in accordance with B.C. Ministry of Education guidelines, professionally diagnosed with low incidence needs or who have been identified with high incidence needs. The following designations are taken from and defined by B.C.'s Ministry of Education:

LOW INCIDENCE

special needs include:

- Dependent handicapped
- Deaf/blind (*multi-sensory deprived*)
- Blind or visually impaired
- Deaf or hard of hearing
- Medically fragile (*including chronic health conditions*)
- Intellectual disabilities (*moderate to profound*)
- Physical disabilities (*moderate to profound*)
- Autism spectrum disorder
- Severe mental illness/severe behaviour issues

HIGH INCIDENCE

special needs include (*but are not limited to*):

- Learning disabilities
- Mild mental health issues/behavioural concerns [*Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), anxiety, etc.*]
- Mild intellectual disabilities
- Speech and language impairment

Every learner has a unique voice, and our inclusive K- 12 program is committed to listening to each and every child –however they are able to communicate.



How we support your child's learning journey

For learners using Support Services, an Individual Education Plan, commonly referred to as an IEP, is created in addition to the learning plan to provide specialized support.

This learner-centred plan is created through collaboration with you and your child, along with a B.C. certified educator (learning consultant), to identify and support their individual needs.


Your learning consultant will discuss Individual Education Plan goals with you, developing short-term objectives and identifying potential support providers and/or resources. We believe building on the existing strengths of each child is the best way to support a child's optimal growth and development.

SelfDesign is as unique as your child, and we support your child's personalized learning journey.

The learning consultant will work with you and your family to identify your child's needs, reflect on their learning as it arises, and provide learning extensions and resources as appropriate.

We will also provide you and your child with digital technologies and resources as a complement to real-world learning. This includes access to many subscriptions such as Discovery Education and BrainPop, which are free of charge.

We also give you access to our Learning Experience Library, which includes more than 150 curated resource offerings to explore. These Learning Experiences contain videos, book suggestions, articles, hands-on activities and more, and each one is linked to the B.C. curriculum in a cross-curricular way.



We have a support services team that includes over 90 B.C. certified educators with training that ranges from masters degrees in special education to certifications in specific learning techniques.

What is involved with hiring a support provider?

Each learner is unique, and therefore support will look different for different learners. Some learners will access a support provider as a part of their plan for the learning year. If a support provider is appropriate and can assist in the meeting of the Individual Education Plan goals, the learning consultant will help you understand what interventions are appropriate and possible, based on guidelines provided to our program from the B.C. Ministry of Education, whether the learner has high incidence needs or low incidence needs, and the recommendations in the professional documentation.

LOW INCIDENCE (Some examples of support providers):

- One-to-one support from a special education assistant
- Adapted or modified physical activity instruction
- Support in community activities
- Academic support
- Behavioural support
- Social skills training
- Occupational therapy
- Physiotherapy
- Psychology services for psychoeducational assessment or behavioural support
- Therapeutic riding
- Music or art therapy to address communication, self-regulation, and/or motor-control issues
- Specialized small group classes or interventions designed to support children with special needs (modified or adapted), and facilitated by a person with training specific to your child's needs
- One-to-one instruction in swimming or gymnastics or other individual sports
- One-to-one instruction by language professionals, behavioural interventionists, art therapists, music therapists, counsellors, special education assistants, equine therapists, etc.
- Counselling

HIGH INCIDENCE (Some examples of support providers) :

- Tutors
- Art, music or equine therapists
- Speech/language and occupational therapists
- Counselling
- Specialized home reading programs

Notes:

- *All service providers are required to have a criminal record check done and a signed contract completed prior to working with any learners.*
- *Parents/Guardians will be responsible for payment for any support provided before the support provider signs the contract.*
- *Available supports vary depending on low or high incidence needs.*
- *Parents/Guardians are expected to be at home with their child when support providers are working in the home.*



Who hires support providers?

When support providers are appropriate, our Support Services team works in consultation with the parents to select support providers who fit the SelfDesign philosophy, who meet the professional recommendations, and who meet the Ministry criteria. Support providers are contracted by and work for SelfDesign on behalf of your child. SelfDesign, rather than the family, is responsible for starting and ending contracts with support providers, as necessary.

What is the role of the parent/guardians?

A learner's parents, guardians, and/or caregivers are important and welcome members of a learner's support team. They know the child's needs better than anyone and often have clear ideas as to the types of support that will facilitate the child's optimal development.

Parent/Guardian Parents roles include the following:

- 01 Sharing relevant documentation and coordinating the release of confidential files.
- 02 Providing invaluable insights in the development of their child's learning plan and Individual Education Plan.
- 03 Assisting in the search for appropriate external service providers.
- 04 Ensuring other support workers are contributing in alignment with the Learning Plan.
- 05 Ensuring other support providers are contributing in alignment with the Learning Plan.
- 06 Maintaining weekly Observing for Learning communications with the learning consultant.



What is the role of the educator?

Learning consultants are B.C. certified educators.

Their role includes:

01

Creating and monitoring the Individual Education Plan (IEP) and the support services budget, in collaboration with the parent/guardian, and in consideration of both the recommendations from consulting/assessing professionals and the Ministry guidelines.

02

Reviewing your child's personal learning plan and Individual Education Plan progress weekly with you and at regular intervals throughout the year during the review process (completed two times a year).

03

Finding appropriate support services providers in your community, in accordance with your child's IEP, and in consultation with you and the community professionals working with your child.

04

Communicating with you on a weekly basis, providing ideas and support as appropriate.

05

Maintaining the weekly Observing for Learning communications, documenting the realization of the learning plan.

06

Working collaboratively with support providers, and responding to support provider input to the weekly communication in Observing for Learning.

07

Your learning consultant will provide both Special Education expertise and educational expertise, in helping to integrate your child's educational program with the Special Education support provided. Your first line of contact is always your learning consultant who can refer you to the appropriate person.

Pathways to completion

Grade 10-12 programs are theme based. Depending on your child's need, they may follow supplemental competencies (previously referred to as adapted), or replacement competencies (previously referred to as modified). Decisions about which [pathway to completion](#) is appropriate for your learner are supported by your learning consultant, unique learning team and our Support Services and Guidance teams.

- **Supplemental competencies** incorporate our Universal Design for Learning approach to help the learner achieve grade-level milestones, according to B.C. curriculum requirements, and can result in the learner achieving a B.C. Certificate of Graduation (Dogwood Diploma). This typically applies to learners receiving either high and low incidence supports. Learners with supplemental competencies can select from our grade appropriate themes to chart a personalized pathway to graduation.
- **Replacement competencies** replace the common curricular competencies for a grade or course. Instead the learner engages with personalized competencies and Learning Plan/IEP goals as their program. This path culminates in a School Completion Certificate, which represents the completion of personal learning goals but does not represent graduation. This path is for learners receiving low incidence support. Learners with full replacement competencies are usually enrolled in a Myself theme.

Beginning in grade 8, Transition Plans are created to help guide learners to graduation or completion, as well as chart the goals and supports needed for a smooth transition to adulthood. Your child's learning consultant will discuss what the graduation/completion options are and how these choices can affect post-secondary options.

We offer several pathways for learners to achieve their learning goals – the B.C. Certificate of Graduation (Dogwood Diploma), the Adult Graduation Diploma (Adult Dogwood Diploma) and the School Completion (Evergreen) Certificate.

- **School Completion (Evergreen) Certificate:** Learners on replacement competencies may work toward this certificate. This option offers considerable flexibility to support personalized learning plan and IEP goals.
- **Dogwood or Adult Dogwood Diploma:** Learners with supplemental competencies to support their engagement in themes/courses may work toward a B.C. Certificate of Graduation (Dogwood Diploma or Adult Dogwood). This option requires weekly participation in themes, and is supported by the Universal Design for Learning approach and personalized IEP goals/support resources.

Both options equip learners for a meaningful transition to adulthood. If your child is enrolled with us before the age of 19, they may be able to stay enrolled with SelfDesign Learning Community after the age of 19 and continue to receive support services while they are completing their high school certification. Additional year requests are reviewed by Guidance and Support Services on an individual basis.

How we assess learning

At Self Design Learning Community, our B.C. certified educators participate in an ongoing weekly conversation with you and your child. We call this type of communication and dialogue “Observing for Learning”. It’s led by your educator and is at the core of our K-12 program.

It is your role as a parent/guardian to participate in Observing for Learning, although assistance can be given by an educational assistant, as determined in collaboration with your learning consultant. If you are being assisted in the process, it is still expected that you play an ongoing role in this process as it is really helpful to have input from the person who knows your child best.

In the Observing for Learning process, you observe and reflect on your child’s learning during that week. Reflections include describing learning activities and the learner’s engagement or emotional response. Your educator responds, reflects and shares in observing, and also matches your child’s learning with B.C. Ministry of Education requirements.

Your educator will coach you in how to observe daily activities, assisting you in noticing learning as it unfolds in everyday moments.

In grades 10-12 learners will be supported by their learning consultant and their learning specialist in their theme. Both the learning consultant and the learning specialist co-assess learning.

As your child is able, they will collaborate directly with the educator in the Observing for Learning process, with parent or educational assistant support as needed. This fosters a deepened awareness of their own integrated learning, goals, interests and skills related to learning to learn such as time management, flexible thinking, and organizational skills. Depending on the needs of you and your child, the learning consultant will find the best way to support a personal connection.

How does funding work?

The amount of funding available for specific interventions and services is determined by considering each child’s unique needs and reviewing the recommendations in the documentation from professionals, such as assessments.

Funding from the Ministry of Education is intended to cover all aspects of Support Services (supporting learners, teachers, IT, and administration). No learner is entitled to a specific amount of funding, and the distribution of funds to meet the needs of each learner is the responsibility of SelfDesign, the provider of the educational program.



How to enrol

STEP 1

Complete the [Expression of Interest](#) Support Services Intake form.

STEP 2

The Intake Coordinator will arrange a phone call interview.

STEP 3

If SelfDesign is a good fit for your family, we will request documentation of diagnosis which will be reviewed before being placed on our waitlist.

STEP 4

When space for your learner becomes available, we will contact you via email to invite you to enrol.

STEP 5

We will direct you through the enrolment process.

STEP 6

We will match you with a learning consultant, who will get in touch with you in mid-August to discuss your child's learning plan goals.





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