

## Provincial Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services - ASL Services

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The American Sign Language (ASL) Services team is thrilled to announce exciting developments!

It is important for families with deaf children to learn American Sign Language (ASL) as it facilitates effective communication, supports the child's language development, fosters emotional connections, enhances academic success, and connects the child with their cultural heritage. Learning ASL creates an inclusive environment, improves the child's overall quality of life, empowers families to advocate for their child, and provides long-term benefits for the child's independence and well-being.

- **ASL vision**

We recognize the importance of fostering a cultural and linguistic identity focusing on ASL instruction and Deaf culture for children and youth from 5 to 19 years of age and their families. Through ASL services, the team creates an inclusive and supportive environment for Deaf children, youth, and their families.

## • Description of Services

- Provide ASL instruction and support to children, youth, young adults, families, and professionals in individual and group settings.
- Provide Deaf cultural awareness workshops to families, community members, and professionals.
- Provide educational information and consultation in relation to ASL and Deaf cultural awareness including the importance of language acquisition and dinner table syndrome.
- Provide consultation to community services, locally and provincially, in the areas of language curriculum, language assessment and development, family communication and child development.
- Commit to the current best practices and research-based supports related to ASL and Deaf culture.

## • New team members

Roger Chan, Family Support

Anthony Dall, ASL Specialist

Jolene Gallagher, ASL Specialist (limited availability)

Heather Kimola, Family Support

Bonnie Russell, ASL Specialist

Sarah Taylor, ASL Specialist

Diana Tarchuk, Team Leader

- **New Developments**

- **Revised courses that are family-friendly and research-based**

- Foundations (underway, will be mandatory prior to taking classes)

- Beginner (former Introductory to ASL and Level 1)

- Intermediate (former Level 2 and 3)

- Advanced (former Level 4, onwards)

- Conversational – same

Based on research, group classes offer a more social and interactive learning environment, which facilitates quicker improvement in ASL skills. Individual 1 on 1 may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

We kindly request your support and patience as we work on developing a new curriculum aimed at enhancing ASL instruction. We are proud to partner with professionals across North America to deliver comprehensive ASL services for families and professionals.

- **ASL Level Assessments**

Our ASL Specialists bring expertise in the field and are currently conducting ASL assessments for all families taking classes with us to ensure they are placed in the proper levels, promoting ASL acquisition and communication within family members.

- **Registration**

We are currently working with MCFD to create an effective and efficient registration system for future ASL classes or workshops. We hope to have the registration system ready in 2024. Thank you for your patience.

- **Workshop webinars**

We are excited to let you know that we are finalizing our webinar series related to ASL and Deaf Culture. Please stay tuned for announcements about the upcoming webinar series.

Feel free to contact us if you have any questions or inquiries.

Email: [ASL.Program@gov.bc.ca](mailto:ASL.Program@gov.bc.ca)

Website: [www.gov.bc.ca/aslservices](http://www.gov.bc.ca/aslservices)