

May 2025 Strategic Plan

Our Mission

The mission of Foothills Academy is to facilitate learning in persons, primarily youth and children, identified as having a Learning Disability by providing quality educational programs and a supportive environment for families and staff. We recognize that we are interdependent with our global community – by participating in research, public education, in-service and advocacy, through community service.



School Program

- A Designated Special Education Private School (DSEPS) for approximately 300 students in grades 3-12 with diagnosed Learning Disabilities (such as Dyslexia), who often also have coexisting disorders such as Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
 - Small class sizes with caring, dedicated, and highly trained teachers; educational assistants; and other professionals (psychology; occupational therapy; speech-language therapy; literacy and numeracy specialists)
 - Typical graduation rate of 100% annually
 - Data collected by Alberta Education indicates that each year Foothills Academy consistently scores well above the provincial average in providing a 'safe and caring' environment according to parents, students, and teachers
 - Winner of the Reader's Choice Award (Calgary Herald & Calgary Sun) for the past five years
- Year-round programs and services to support more than a thousand individuals with Learning Disabilities and/or ADHD, which serves both our school families and the wider community.
 - An extensive range of wrap-around services across four departments:
 - Psychological Services & Programs: Psycho-educational assessments; individual and family counselling; and group psychology programs.
 - Amicus Camps & Recreation: Day and overnight camps for young people with LD and/or ADHD, as well as year-round recreation programs
 - Read/Write & Math Intervention: Individual remedial instruction in literacy and numeracy (weekly or intensive)
 - Professional Development & Community Education: In-person workshops and online courses on Learning Disabilities, ADHD, and associated issues

We recognize that Learning Disabilities and ADHD can have a significant impact on the academic, social, emotional, and behavioural wellness of a young person, as well as their family. Therefore, our work throughout Foothills is built upon the tenants of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which is an empirically based theory of human motivation, development, and wellness that is focused on the fulfillment of our basic psychological needs for relationships (*Find Understanding*), competence (*Build Confidence*), and autonomy (*Maximize Potential*). Through connection, expertise, and persistence, we support young people in the development of critical life-long skills, such as self-knowledge; self-regulation; and self-advocacy.





Our Unique Value

- A leader in the field of Learning Disabilities since 1979, with a strong focus on Best Practices in the field.
- A commitment to decreasing financial barriers in order to support all youth in need of our services and programs, regardless of their ability to pay
- The only school jurisdiction in Southern Alberta dedicated solely to being a Designated Special Education Private School (DSEPS) for students with Learning Disabilities.
- Our Community Services provides the most comprehensive offerings for young people with LD in western Canada, including the only youth camps dedicated to this population, as well as a large Psychology Training Centre.
- A strong synergy between our School and our Community Services, in order to leverage the internal multidisciplinary expertise to best support our school students and the larger community.
- The backbone agency for the Calgary Region Learning Disabilities & ADHD Network which organizes a collaborative group of professionals from a range of institutions and sectors.
- A commitment to leadership roles in advocacy with LD/ADHD organizations at the regional, provincial, and national levels.

Our Strategic Priorities

We aim to be responsive to the evolving needs of the LD and ADHD community. The demand for our unique, holistic programming remains consistently high, and we recognize the need for growth. In fall 2024, the Foothills Academy Board of Governors announced their vision to grow the combined capacity of our School and Community Services by 50% for our 50th anniversary in 2029.

Given our complex service delivery model, we intend to expand the building on our current site in the community of Parkdale. This approach ensures that our School students and Community Services clients can continue to access the comprehensive programming and multidisciplinary professionals they need to be successful.

While we pursue efforts to increase our capacity to serve the LD/ADHD community, we will ensure:

- We are able to continue delivering the high-quality programs and services upon which our reputation is built;
- Our approach to programming continues to prioritize the cognitive, social, and emotional aspects of the young people we serve;
- Community members have equal opportunities to access our programs regardless of financial need;
- We continue to steward the strong culture of the Foothills community, based on the established values of caring, belonging, and respect; and
- We continue to nurture and grow our connections with community partners, in order to engage in collaboration, advocacy, and research.