

English as a Second Language Programs



Students who are newcomers to Canada often need help learning English. There are programs available in many schools to help newcomers develop the English skills they need to be successful in school.

Do all Toronto schools have ESL programs and teachers?

- No. But Toronto schools with high numbers of students who need English language support are more likely to have ESL programs and teachers.
- In some schools, the ESL teacher provides support to the classroom teachers. In other schools, students are taken out of the regular classroom for part of the day and given extra help in ESL classes taught by specialist ESL teachers.
- In schools without specialist ESL teachers, the classroom teacher is responsible for providing the support. But not all classroom teachers have training in ESL.

How can I find out which schools have ESL programs?

There is no central list of schools with ESL programs, but individual school websites have that information.

Both the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) and the Toronto Catholic School Board (TCDSB) have ESL coordinators. You can reach them at:

- TDSB - 416-394-7330
- TCDSB - 416-222-8282, ext. 2715.

Are there programs for students who haven't been able to go to school regularly before coming to Canada?

Both Toronto boards have English Literacy Development (ELD) programs to help students who have arrived from countries where they did not have regular access to school.

In these programs, students improve their skills in reading, writing and speaking in English.

- The TDSB has a special program called LEAP (Literacy Enrichment Academic Program) for students from 11 to 16 years old who have gaps in their education. This program helps students catch up to other students their age, and is offered in many elementary and secondary schools.

Are students put in a lower grade if they don't speak English?

- Newcomer elementary students are usually placed in the appropriate grade for their age if possible.
- High school students have their English language and math skills assessed at reception centres to ensure that they are placed in appropriate courses and grades. There are different levels of credit courses for high school students who are just learning English. The reception centre will determine which level is appropriate. The centres also provide settlement support and information about high school life.

Do schools provide ESL classes for adults?

Both Toronto school boards offer a wide variety of English classes for adults as part of their Continuing Education programs. The programs provide language instruction, settlement information and even employment services.

Where can I find out more?

For more information about programs and supports for newcomer students, you can visit the following websites:

- Toronto District School Board: www.tdsb.on.ca
- Toronto Catholic District School Board: www.tcdsb.org
- Settlement Services: www.settlement.org

