



What is ESD and how does it relate to Indigenous Students?

“Provincial policy recognizes ESD support services as part of ELL support services. ESD support services must address the development of Standard English language proficiency, including oral language proficiency. . Students reported as requiring EDS services speak a dialect of English that differs significantly from Standard English used in school and in broader Canadian society (i.e. significant variations in oral language vocabulary and sentence structure from those used in Standard English). ESD services do not include: speech-language therapy for language development disorders; services that solely address accents in speech carried over from another language; or services that solely address deficits in reading and writing Standard English.”

Should all Indigenous students be assessed for ESD?

No. Not all Indigenous students are ESD students.

When do you decide to assess for ESD support?

These students must be referred and assessed before added to the 1701 list. Usually the student is brought to the attention of the SST or ELL specialist because the classroom teacher suspects the student demonstrates a use of nonstandard English in their writing and oral language (differences in student’s pronunciation, vocabulary features, grammar and conversational patterns).

Who is responsible for assessing potential ESD students?

The school based ELL specialist is responsible for assessing potential and existing ESD coded students. They will communicate with the school secretary which students are to be added to the ministry list for ESD.

Note that ESD students have an English Dialect that is cultural and important to retain. We are not to ‘fix’ this English. The student’s ability to code-switch between dialects is important.

Why are some Indigenous Students coded as ESL?

- Even though English may be their first language, these students have not been exposed to a Standard English rich environment.
- Indigenous students may have basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) but may not demonstrate Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALPs refers to the ability to listen, speak, read and write about subject area content material).
- Indigenous students may display differences in pronunciations, may omit propositions, may be more proficient in the casual register but may struggle hearing and using the formal register. There may be differences in discourse structure. Their cadence may be different and finally, they may not have the same background knowledge to access academic vocabulary.