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# A Guide to Responsive Teaching and Learning - Early Years

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## Introduction

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APSEA is committed to supporting the inclusive educational environments across Atlantic Canada by ensuring responsive teaching and learning guides the education of learners who are blind or visually impaired and/or Deaf or hard of hearing through equitable, accessible, culturally and linguistically responsive, appropriate and collaborative learning opportunities.

### Mission

APSEA, in collaboration with our partners, provides culturally and linguistically responsive, inclusive, equitable, and accessible educational services and supports to children and youth who are blind or visually impaired and/or Deaf or hard of hearing and their families.

### Vision

The children and youth that we support reach their highest potential for an independent, self-sufficient, and fulfilling life.

### Guiding Principles

APSEA is child-focused, family-centered, research-based, collaborative, and inclusive.

### SCOPE

The Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA) is an interprovincial co-operative agency established in 1975 by joint agreement among the Ministers of Education of New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island.

The Agreement provided for the creation of the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority and authorized it to provide educational services, programs, and opportunities for persons from birth to 21 years of age with low incidence sensory impairments. This includes children and youth who are Deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind, blind, or visually impaired who are residents of Atlantic Canada.

The Agreement is the only one of its kind in Canada and, as such, may serve as a model for service delivery at a regional level. Operational costs are shared among the four provinces.

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## Helpful Terminology and Definition

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APSEA .....	Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority
APSEA Service Delivery Team .....	A team comprised of various APSEA teachers and specialists who collaborate to inform responsive teaching and learning practices that focus on learner needs by providing equitable, accessible, and appropriate learning opportunities as they pertain to areas of the DSI-DHH and/or ECC-BVI.
APSEA Program Planning Team ...	A team comprised of APSEA Directors, Coordinators and Supervisors of Programs who support the APSEA Service Delivery Team by reviewing and responding to consultation requests and guiding the development of APSEA programs and services.
BVI .....	Blind or visually impaired
Community of Care Partners .....	A learner's circle of care providers which includes any combination of the following: parents, guardians and caregivers; grandparents and extended family members; early childcare providers and teachers; community members and support service partners.
DSI – DHH .....	Developmental Skills Inventory for Learners who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing represents content areas that identify skill areas and targets that are unique needs of learners who are DHH.
ECC – BVI .....	Expanded Core Curriculum for Learners who are Blind or Visually impaired represents content areas that identify skill areas and targets that are unique needs of learners who are BVI.
ESS .....	Education Support Specialist
EST .....	Education Support Teacher
EST – EL .....	Education Support Teacher – Early Learning

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## Scope of Responsibilities

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APSEA provides educational services, programs, and opportunities for learners who are Deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind, blind, or visually impaired. Atlantic provincial inclusive education policies must be considered and reflected in the programs and services APSEA provides for learners and their families.

Each Atlantic Province provides inclusive public education by:

- recognizing every child can learn,
- each child has the ability to participate in every activity, routine, and learning opportunity.
- creating learning environments that respect learner and staff diversity where they feel safe, accepted, and valued,
- providing a continuum of supports and services that promote learners' physical, social-emotional, and behavioural well-being, and achievement.

APSEA's role is to collaborate with families and community of care partners to support these values and overall policy directives. This document has been developed based upon the inclusive education policies, tiered systems of support guidelines, and program planning standards outlined by Departments of Education and Early Childhood Development/Early Years of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador.

The purpose of this document is to outline the Responsive Teaching and Learning model of service delivery for APSEA teams that provide a framework of support and programs for early learners, their families, and community of care partners regardless of gender, ability, language, family circumstances, and cultural identity.

A similar guidelines document outlines the Responsive Teaching and Learning model of service delivery for APSEA teams that provide a framework of support and programs for school-aged learners and their families.

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## Early Learning & Development

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Learning begins before birth and children are born ready to continue their learning. The first years of life are a time of significant growth and development. Physical, cognitive, socio-emotional, language, and communication, and executive functioning begin to develop during these early years through the child's experiences and environments.

Each child has their unique strengths, needs, and perspectives. By creating healthy learning environments and meaningful relationships, APSEA team members work with families, and

community of care partners to support children in reaching their full potential as they transition to school.

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## Family, Community, and Culture

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A child's first relationship is with their family, then with their cultural group, with their neighbourhood, and then with their wider community. A child's community of care can extend beyond their parents to include guardians and caregivers, grandparents and extended family members, early childhood educators and care providers, community members and support service partners. Each of these relationships help shape who the child is and who they will become.

Families are vital members of the educational team and are their child's first and most influential educator. Families provide an important perspective and play an integral role in the support and ongoing development of their child. As such, the learner's success benefits from family support and involvement in both program development and delivery.

By establishing responsive and respectful relationships and actively encouraging collaboration with a child's family, community of care partners, APSEA Team members ensure learning experiences are meaningful, flexible and responsive. Such relationships are strengthened when they value each other's knowledge of the child, share perspectives, information, and decision-making in the program planning process.





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## Continuity of Learning

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Each learner has unique experiences, strengths, and needs. These aspects are supported and fostered by their family and community of care partners. Building on a child's prior learning and experiences helps to create positive learning opportunities that support the child's self-confidence, security, and success. Building on previous experiences and unique strengths provides a continuity of learning which supports the learner's transitions between their various learning environments: home, community, early learning, and eventually school setting. Working together, the APSEA Service Delivery Team, the family, and community of care partners play an active role in preparing the learner for transitions between these learning environments.

Developing school readiness skills begins with the support of families and community of care partners. The quality of early learning experiences and healthy, responsive relationships between the family, APSEA Service Delivery Team, and community of care partners establish a basis for the learner's strengths and abilities to flourish as they prepare for school entry. Fostering positive learning opportunities throughout a child's life creates a strong foundation for their optimal growth, development, and well-being. This strong foundation is built upon the child's abilities, experiences, and cultural and linguistic identity.



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## Tiered System of Support

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APSEA's early learning programs and services are designed to build capacity across the learner's family and community of care partners by offering participatory experiences and opportunities that strengthen their knowledge and skills. This wrap-around support develops a positive sense of competence and confidence that ultimately fosters the child's learning and development in a culturally and linguistically responsive, flexible, and appropriate manner.

Each of the Atlantic Provinces applies a tiered system of support within their program planning structure. Responsive Teaching & Learning supports learner needs by identifying priorities which are



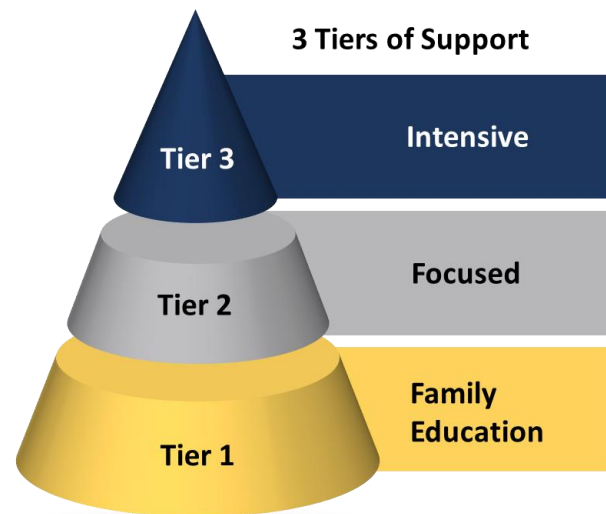
supported through a tiered system of support. This instructional framework is used by the APSEA Service Delivery Team to develop and implement instructional practices, supports, and programs that are culturally and linguistically responsive, flexible, and appropriate to the learner’s strengths and needs.

This tiered system of support allows for learner movement between tiers. Progress is monitored closely and collaborative decisions about instructional needs are based on data collected through authentic assessment by the APSEA Service Delivery Team, family, and others who support the learner. Appropriate APSEA programs and support are identified and developed through a collaborative, culturally and linguistically responsive process. The APSEA Service Delivery Team purposefully engages to empower families to inform their understanding and guide decisions around appropriate programming and supports for their child.

Family Education – Tier 1 interventions and supports provide the foundation where families can be successful without further intervention. Tier 1 supports are evidence-informed, best practices, and are available as part of the learning environment both in-person and virtually. Such practices may include providing education to family and caregivers that benefit early learners who are BVI and/or DHH. It could also include consultation with community partners, service providers, and early childhood educators and care providers. These supports would involve observations, parent conversations, and developmental checklists.

Focused – Tier 2 interventions offer provisional, small group support with specific learning outcomes. These intervention opportunities build on the family education offered through Tier 1 interventions by providing focused small group learning opportunities based on family and learner needs and progress. Such interventions are delivered for a defined amount of time to meet the specific identified learning outcomes. Tier 2 interventions are provided in a responsive and flexible manner across fluid learning environments and opportunities by members of the APSEA Service Delivery Team and/or community of care partners and are supported through in-person and virtual offerings.

Intensive – Tier 3 interventions provide programs and supports that are intensive, individualized, evidence-informed, and based on the learner’s strengths and needs. Tier 3 interventions are also provided in a responsive and flexible manner across fluid learning environments and opportunities by



members of the APSEA Service Delivery Team. These interventions can be offered within the home, community settings, early learning environment and/or virtually, and extend beyond the time and intensity allocated for Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions.

## Progress Monitoring

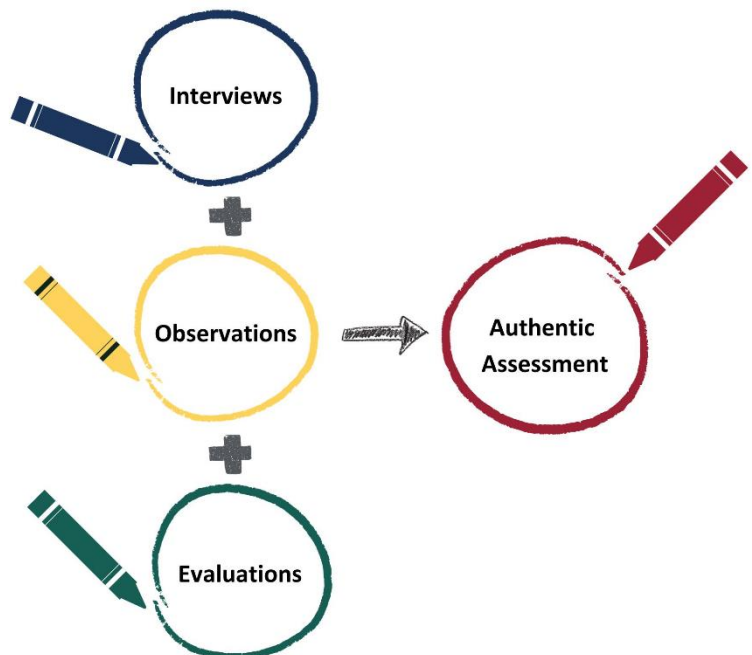
The APSEA Service Delivery Team in collaboration with the family performs regular and ongoing progress monitoring which guides the Responsive Teaching and Learning process. Information may also be gathered by the learner's community of care partners.

To begin this process, meaningful data as described below is reviewed as it relates to the learner's development. To support the prioritized areas for development, the contributors develop strategies, and coordinate programs and resources for the learner and the family. These new strategies and programs are then implemented which will lead to repeating the process after an agreed upon timeframe.



## Authentic Assessment

Assessment serves a variety of purposes at different times of the learner's progress. Authentic assessment is part of the ongoing progress monitoring cycle and includes observation and documentation to assess a learner's development. Authentic assessment supports an overall process of discovery of a learner's abilities, interests, preferences, and learning environments. When working with early learners, the most important goal of assessment is to gain an understanding of their skills and abilities. Authentic assessment provides insight into the learner's thinking and learning processes to best support their ongoing holistic development.



Authentic assessment gathers information through a combination of interviews, observations, and evaluations. The value of such information measures the learner's skills and abilities by observing how they accomplish everyday activities and documenting their development. It is carried out by observing and documenting the learner's play, their interactions with peers, and conversations with families and community of care partners in the learner's real-life environments.



Interviews are held with the learner's familiar people. This may include family members, early childcare providers, and any other community of care partners that work with the learner. These people interact with the learner on a regular basis in a variety of real-life environments. Such valuable information ensures that learners are further supported through culturally and linguistically responsive practices.



Observations are done in the learner's natural environments within their daily routines and activities. Such observations provide insight into the learner's abilities and development, along with their processes and problem-solving skills; how they think, plan, and understand. Observations completed by a variety of people in the learner's life will expand the information collected and better support the overall program plan.



Evaluations support the holistic developmental information of the learner. The choice of appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive evaluation tools may further support the program planning process. Such tools may include hearing or vision assessments, language and communication assessment tools, visual access assessments, access technology assessments, and discipline-specific evaluation tools from other community of care partners.

Authentic assessment supports the documentation of a learner's progress over time. When supporting the progress monitoring process, Teams will consider which aspects of authentic assessment are necessary to best guide the decision for the learner's future programming needs.



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## Responsive Teaching and Learning

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Responsive Teaching and Learning supports learners who are blind or visually impaired and/or Deaf or hard of hearing who qualify for APSEA support. Eligibility requirements can be found on the APSEA website ([Eligibility for Service | APSEA](#))

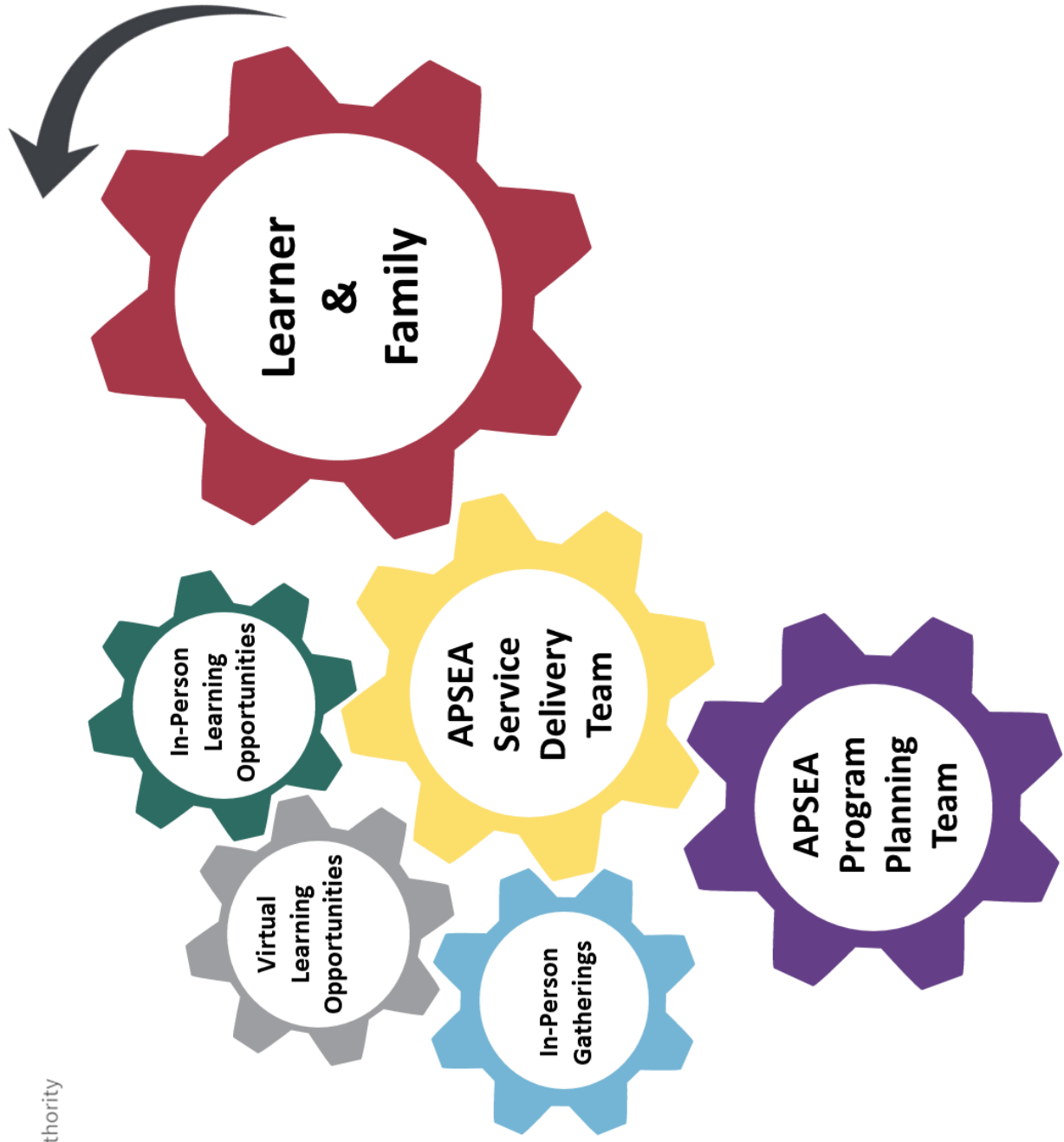
A consistent organization-wide approach to program planning is critical to support a greater degree of success in enabling children to learn and achieve. Responsive Teaching and Learning is designed to help ensure learner success in meeting educational outcomes; the development of flexible, appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive programs and services; and provides a consistent process across the Atlantic Provinces.

Responsive Teaching and Learning highlights the importance of professional collaboration which involves all team members in planning, implementing, and monitoring programs for learners who are BVI and/or DHH. Collaborative consultation and teamwork ensure effective and efficient service delivery. Team members work together to share goals, but not to duplicate the efforts of others. Collaboration helps support team members and provides the opportunity to learn from other's areas of expertise while keeping the learner the central focus of the plan. The role of the various APSEA team members is to contribute their knowledge and skills to support learners who are BVI and/or DHH.

Responsive Teaching and Learning requires innovative thinking to create opportunities for consultation, co-planning, and program delivery. Professional collaboration and communication amongst the APSEA Service Delivery Team and APSEA Program Planning Team should be routinely built into employees' schedules. This provides protected time for valuable conversations, data sharing, and strategic planning that will focus on learner achievement and well-being. Responsive Teaching & Learning provides a framework to ensure that APSEA programs and services are offered through a collaborative, culturally and linguistically responsive process. The learner and their family remain the focus throughout the process. Each learner is unique, with diverse strengths and needs. Through collaborative consultation and data-informed programming decisions, Responsive Teaching & Learning supports consistent, appropriate, and flexible programming that responds to the learner as they gain new skills and knowledge in their home, early learning and childcare setting, and beyond.



## Responsive Teaching & Learning – Early Years





## Child-Focused & Family-Centered

Program outcomes change throughout the year. Families contribute to the development and prioritization of their child's program outcomes, as well as the accompanying implementation



strategies. Families also play an important role in long-range educational and transition planning. As such, APSEA Service Delivery Teams play an active role in inviting and collaborating with families to ensure that the program plan is child-focused, family-centered, collaborative, and inclusive.

A learner's family is their first teacher, their most influential connection, and their first cultural and linguistic model. To best support the learner, their family and community of care partners, flexible and responsive programming will be discussed with the family and community of care

partners while considering: preference of programming location such as home, community, or school settings; both virtual and in-person support; programming availability during and outside of workday hours; individual and group learning opportunities; real-time and individually paced learning opportunities.

## APSEA Service Delivery Team

The APSEA Service Delivery Team focuses on learner needs by providing culturally and linguistically responsive, equitable, accessible, and appropriate learning opportunities as they pertain to areas of the DSI-DHH and/or ECC-BVI. While working collaboratively with the family and community of care partners the APSEA Service Delivery Team analyzes data to inform and monitor learner achievement and development; employs tiered system of support to inform teaching and provision of APSEA programs and services; and ensures learner outcomes are being met in a responsive, flexible, culturally and linguistically responsive manner.

The APSEA Service Delivery Team collaborates with the family and community of care partners to gather authentic assessment information; identify the learner's strengths and needs; prioritize programming strategies; and make recommendations for and delivers appropriate APSEA programs and services. The APSEA Service Delivery Team provides data and information on identified programming needs to the APSEA Program Planning Team in order to guide the development of new or existing programs and services. The Early Learning Program Planning Document (Appendix A) is a resource that will support the APSEA Service Delivery Team in their work and collaboration. The APSEA Service Delivery Team supports transition processes and planning throughout the learner's growth and development while working in a collaborative, responsive, flexible, culturally and linguistically responsive manner with the family and community of care partners.



## APSEA Program Planning Team



The APSEA Program Planning Team supports the APSEA Service Delivery Team by reviewing and responding to APSEA Service Delivery Team consultation requests; guides the development of culturally and linguistically responsive programs and services that reflect learner needs; ensures learner needs are met while avoiding duplication of service; and analyzes data to inform and monitor the development and efficacy of responsive, flexible, culturally, and linguistically responsive programs and services.

## APSEA Program & Services

### In-Person Learning Opportunities

In-person learning opportunities provide learners, families, and community of care partners with targeted, individualized support and programming. These learning opportunities occur in a variety of learning environments where specific outcomes related to the ECC-BVI and/or DSI- DHH are addressed. Responsive Teaching & Learning guides this process through the tiered systems of support, supported by authentic assessment and progress monitoring. In- person learning opportunities are designed to be inclusive, equitable, accessible, culturally and linguistically responsive. These opportunities include coaching and modeling, sharing resources, collecting authentic assessment data and individualized instruction.



### Virtual Learning Opportunities

Virtual learning opportunities provide learners, families, and community of care partners with targeted support and programming. These learning opportunities are developed to support specific outcomes and content areas related to the ECC- BVI and/or DSI-DHH are addressed. Virtual learning opportunities can be outcome driven and/or support various aspects of social and emotional



learning. Through Responsive Teaching & Learning, Teams identify when and which virtual learning opportunities are appropriate, through the tiered systems of support, supported by authentic assessment and progress monitoring. Virtual learning opportunities are designed to provide learners with opportunities to connect virtually with peers and other families as well as benefit from accessing the expertise of APSEA EST's, ESS's and others. Each virtual learning opportunity is unique in supporting targeted outcomes while encouraging thoughtful dialogue and relevant learning in an online

environment to support and enrich real life experiences and experiential learning. Virtual learning opportunities include APSEA's Virtual Learning Series, APSEA Connect, virtual instruction supported



by APSEA EST's and ESS's, virtual social gatherings, and presentations. Some virtual learning opportunities are offered in real-time while others are recorded or created and offered to families and community of care partners to be viewed at their own pace and availability.

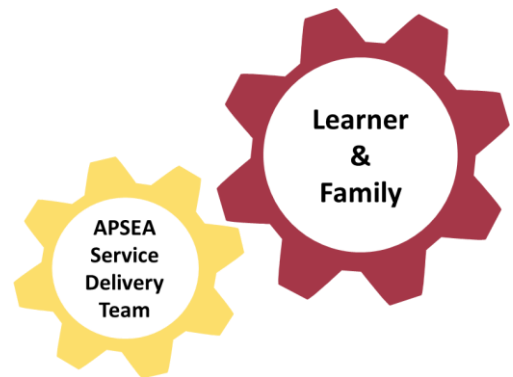
### **In-Person Gatherings**

In-person gatherings provide learners and their families with opportunities to meet one another and share their common experiences. These gatherings occur in a variety of settings where learners and families can meet both regionally and beyond. Shared experiences have a significant impact on social emotional health and in turn enhance each person's individual experience. Learners who are blind or visually impaired and/or Deaf or hard of hearing have unique experiences. Sharing this lived experience with other learners, families, and community of care partners can support the formation of social connections and overall well-being. In-person gatherings are designed to be inclusive, equitable, accessible, culturally and linguistically responsive. These gatherings include regional group gatherings for early learners and their families, learner and family social gatherings, family camps, and targeted in-person learner group gatherings.



### **Team Facilitation**

All APSEA Service Delivery Team members ensure that appropriate programming information is shared as necessary between the family, community of care partners and the APSEA Service Delivery Team to support consistent program delivery for the learner. All members of the APSEmuA Service Delivery Team request team meetings as needed, contribute to team meeting notes, support the provision of interventions, communicate information to team members as required, and support the review of learner progress in partnership with the family and community of care partners. The EST-DHH or BVI is the point of contact for the APSEA Service Delivery Team and arranges meetings, sends meeting invitations and agendas as required.



## Team Structures

	<b>APSEA Program Planning Team</b>	<b>APSEA Service Delivery Team</b>	<b>Family</b>
<b>Focus</b>	Focus on the coordination of APSEA services and employees' involvement to ensure the best support for the learner.	Focus on learner needs by providing equitable, accessible, and appropriate learning opportunities as they pertain to areas of the DSI-DHH and/or ECC- BVI.	Focus on the child's overall well-being and provide experiences that will promote development and learning.
<b>Who are the members?</b>	Consists of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• APSEA Supervisors of Programs</li> <li>• APSEA Directors of Programs, as required</li> </ul>	Consists of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EST-DHH and/or EST-BVI</li> <li>• EST – Early Learning (DHH and/or BVI)</li> <li>• ESS as required</li> <li>• EI, EDI, EOI as required.</li> <li>• Other APSEA programming employees as required</li> </ul>	At the discretion of the family, this team may consist of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents/guardians</li> <li>• Grandparents and/or extended family members</li> <li>• Community of care providers</li> </ul>
<b>How often do they meet?</b>	At least every two months or as required	At least every two months or as required	
<b>What do they do?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and respond to APSEA Service Delivery Team consultation requests.</li> <li>• Guide the development of programs and services that reflect learner needs by being flexible, culturally and linguistically responsive.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze data to inform and monitor learner achievement and development.</li> <li>• Employ tiered system of support to inform teaching and provision of APSEA programs and services. Ensure learner outcomes are being met in a responsible, flexible, culturally and linguistically responsive manner.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respond to the child's needs through daily routines.</li> <li>• Manage and engage with support services for their child.</li> <li>• Gather data to inform and monitor learning of developmental milestones.</li> </ul>

	APSEA Program Planning Team	APSEA Service Delivery Team	Family
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure learner needs are met while avoiding duplication of service.</li> <li>• Analyze data to inform and monitor programs and services.</li> <li>• Engage in professional learning to inform educator practice.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports transition processes and planning while working in a collaborative, responsive, flexible, culturally and linguistically responsive manner with the School-based Education Team and family.</li> <li>• Engage in professional learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze data to inform and monitor teaching/learning of curricular developmental stages.</li> </ul>
<b>What is their role?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide leadership to the APSEA Service Delivery Team, and School-based Education Team are required.</li> <li>• Develop and support responsive and flexible programs and services through a collaborative, culturally and linguistically responsive process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide collaborative leadership in the assessment, development, implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement of inclusive programs and practices at the school level for learners who BVI and/or DHH.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child's first and most important teacher.</li> <li>• Create an environment for their child's most optimal development.</li> </ul>

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Carta, J.J., & Young, R.M. (2019). Multi-tiered Systems of Support for Young Children. Baltimore: Paul H. Brooks Publishing Co.

[Early Childhood Development Intervention Services \(NS\)](#)

[Early Intervention Program Standards \(NB\)](#)

[Early Learning Curriculum Framework \(NB\)](#)

[Early Learning Curriculum Framework \(NS\)](#)

[Early Learning Framework \(PEI\)](#)

[Early Learning Framework \(NL\)](#)

[Guidelines and Standards Educational Planning for Students with Diverse Learning Needs \(NB\)](#)

[IEP Planning Standards and Guidelines \(PE\)](#)

[Inclusive Education \(NB\)](#)

[Inclusive Education Policy \(NS\)](#)

[Inclusive schools - Education \(NL\)](#)

[Moving Forward Policy 322 \(NB\)](#)

[MTSS Quick Guide \(NS\)](#)

[Policy 322 Inclusive Education \(NB\)](#)

[Response To Intervention For Behaviour \(NB\)](#)

[Responsive Teaching and Learning Policy \(NL\)](#)

[Supporting Inclusive and Engaging Learning \(NS\)](#)

[The Program Planning Process \(NS\)](#)

[Reflective Planning Cycle Poster \(NS\)](#)



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## Appendix A: Early Learning Program Planning Document

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Learner:

Date:

Age:

Learning Environment(s):

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Consideration of the following areas can provide the team with information to develop a responsive and flexible program plan for the learner.

### Community of Care Partners:

Name	Role	Contact Information	Details of Support Provided to Family/Learner

As identified by the family as their priority, what is the foundational skill(s) or concept(s) the **family** would benefit from learning at this time?

As identified by the community of care partner as their priority, what is the foundational skill the **community partner** would benefit from learning at this time?

How would this learning be **best delivered** (e.g., sharing resources, meeting with others, coaching, modeling)?

**Who** would be best to deliver this learning? (e.g., APSEA team member(s), community of care partners)

**When and where** would this learning be best delivered (e.g., home or community setting, in-person or virtually, real-time or recorded)?

**Capacity Building for the Family:**

Developmental Milestone Identified	Date	Team Members Supporting this Area	Details and Location of Support

**Authentic Assessment for the Learner:**

Assessment Type (Interview, Observation, Evaluation)	Date	Person(s) Involved	Summary of Information

What is the **developmental milestone** the child needs to learn?

Does the child have the **previous developmental skills** for learning this milestone?

What is the **natural context** in which other children use the skill? Once the child reaches this milestone, how frequently and in what contexts will they use it?

What opportunities exist for this to be practiced in **other natural environments**?

What **strategies** could be used by family and community of care partners to support the learning and practice?

What opportunities exist for the child and family to be **grouped** with others who share similar interests or needs?

What **members** of the child’s community of care partners and/or APSEA Service Delivery Team would support these learning opportunities?

**Identified Areas for Development:**

Areas for Development	Date	Team Members Supporting this Area	Details and Location of Support

Comments:



## ***Appendix B: Roles & Responsibilities***

### **Education Support Teacher (EST)- DHH or BVI**

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The EST-DHH & EST-BVI provides leadership in the assessment, development, implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement of inclusive, responsive, and flexible programs and practices for learners who are blind or visually impaired (BVI) and/or Deaf or hard of hearing (DHH). EST – DHH & EST – BVI’s require specialized knowledge and skills to develop and support personalizing programming for these learners with these diverse needs.

- Provides Tier 1, 2, and 3 to the family and community of care partners to support learners who are Deaf or hard of hearing and/or blind or visually impaired and are eligible to receive APSEA services.
- Collaborates and supports the family and community of care partners regarding inclusive, responsive and flexible instructional practices related to learners who are BVI and/or DHH.
- Maintains knowledge of use and limitations of assessment instruments to support the authentic assessment process related to learners who are BVI and/or DHH.
- Assesses, recommends, supports, and provides adaptive and assistive equipment and alternate format materials that allow for access, active participation, and self-determination/self-advocacy.
- Selects, adapts, and uses evidence-informed instructional strategies and materials to address the unique needs of learners who are BVI and/or DHH by utilizing tiered systems of support and program monitoring principles.
- Supports processes to create a safe, equitable, positive, and supportive learning environments in which diversities are valued.
- Fosters respectful, collaborative relationships between families and community of care partners.
- Participates in ongoing professional learning.

## Education Support Teacher – Early Learning (DHH) (BVI)

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The EST - Early Learning consults and provides leadership toward the delivery of inclusive, responsive and flexible programs and services for early learners who are blind or visually impaired and/or Deaf or hard of hearing. They work collaboratively with families, community of care partners, and other APSEA employees utilizing specialized knowledge and skills to support personalized programming.

- Collaborates with the EST-DHH and/or EST-BVI, other APSEA employees, families and community of care partners to support Tier 1, 2, 3 inclusive, responsive, flexible programming for early learners who are Deaf or hard of hearing and/or blind or visually impaired who are eligible to receive APSEA services.
- Supports the EST and other APSEA employees to align the programs and services to the provincial curriculum and programs.
- Assists EST to conduct specialized assessments to guide authentic assessment and the program planning process.
- Maintains regular contact with the EST as needed to support the individual needs of the learner, family, and community of care partners within the learning environments and programming context.
- Engages and participates in transition processes, including the school entry process.
- Fosters respectful, collaborative relationships between families and community of care partners.
- Selects, adapts, and uses evidence-informed instructional strategies and materials to address the unique needs of learners who are BVI and/or DHH by utilizing tiered systems of support and program monitoring principles.
- Encourages and offers relevant professional learning for APSEA colleagues and community of care partners relating to early learners.
- Supports processes to create a safe, equitable, positive, and supportive learning environment in which diversities are valued.
- Participates in ongoing professional learning.

## Program Specialist – BVI or DHH

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The Program Specialist – BVI or DHH supports and guides APSEA teachers and specialists to develop and implement programs and an environment that is developmentally and culturally appropriate. They focus on individual and group professional learning that will expand and refine understanding about research-based effective instruction. The Program Specialist - DHH or BVI delivers instructional programming in a virtual or in-person group setting in areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum (BVI) or Developmental Skills Inventory (DHH).

- Collaborates with the EST-DHH and/or EST-BVI, other APSEA employees to support Tier 1, 2, 3 inclusive programming for early learners who are Deaf or hard of hearing and/or blind or visually impaired who are eligible to receive APSEA services.
- Provides coaching, modeling, instructing, and collaborative support that is responsive to the identified needs of APSEA employees in their department.
- Conducts observations and provides appropriate coaching, modeling, and feedback on the implementation of instruction that supports learner progress.
- Provides leadership and support to employees within their department through professional learning, identification of research-based resources, instructional strategies, and progress monitoring techniques.
- Provides supportive feedback on caseload management and assessment practices. Assists APSEA employees with maintaining student data and preparing pertinent reports to document program impact as requested.
- Serves on the APSEA Service Delivery Team and the APSEA Program Planning Team.
- Assists APSEA Service Delivery Teams in the implementation and monitoring of effective instructional and comprehensive assessment practices.
- Fosters respectful, collaborative relationships between families and community of care partners.
- Supports processes to create a safe, equitable, positive, and supportive learning environment in which diversities are valued.
- Participates in ongoing professional learning.

## Education Support Teacher – Counsellor (BVI) (DHH)

### Education Support Teacher – Social Worker (BVI)

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The EST - Counsellor or EST - Social Worker provides personal and career counseling to learners who are blind or visually impaired and/or Deaf or hard of hearing. The EST - Counsellor or EST - Social Worker provides consultative support to learners, families, and community of care partners.

- Fosters a shared understanding of the family and community of care partners with respect to the social, emotional, and behavioural needs of learners who are DHH or BVI.
- Collaborates with school-based and/or community-based counselors as required.
- Develops and delivers workshops for learners, families, other APSEA employees, and community of care partners related to vision and healthy social, emotional, behavioural, and career development related to the DSI-DHH and/or ECC-BVI.
- Supports families and community of care partners with transition and providing access to guidance-related curriculum.
- Collaborates with the EST-DHH and/or EST-BVI, other APSEA employees, and community of care partners to support Tier 1, 2, 3 inclusive, responsive and flexible programming for early learners who are Deaf or hard of hearing and/or blind or visually impaired who are eligible to receive APSEA services.
- Develops and delivers educational programs regarding social, emotional, and behavioural wellness for families and learners who are BVI and/or DHH.
- Provides group counselling for learners who are BVI and/or DHH or families in areas related to psycho-social development.
- Connects families to additional supports/resources and provides referrals to community of care partners as needed.
- Supports processes to create a safe, equitable, positive, and supportive learning environment in which diversities are valued.
- Participates in ongoing professional learning.

## Education Support Teacher – Access Technology (AT)

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The EST-AT (Access Technology) is responsible for coordinating the provision of top quality, relevant, and up to date access technology programs and services for early learners who are supported by APSEA. As a member of the APSEA Service Delivery Team, the EST-AT promotes active learner and family participation to encourage optimal access to relevant technology and improving access to the learning environments.

- Engages in collaborative practice; working with learners and their families, other APSEA employees, and community of care partners to recommend appropriate assessment (Student, Environment, Task, Tools, Training - SET3) strategies related to access technology within the context of program planning for learners who are blind or visually impaired in each of the Atlantic Provinces.
- Consults and provides professional learning and resources to APSEA staff, families and community of care partners related to access technology for learners who receive supports from APSEA.
- Collaborates with learners, families, the APSEA Service Delivery Team, and community of care partners regarding inclusive practices to support skill development, actualization, and successful use of access technology for learners who receive supports from APSEA.
- Assesses, selects, adapts, and uses evidence-informed strategies and materials/technology to address the unique access needs of learners who are BVI and/or DHH with current best practices in the field of access technology.
- Supports processes to create a safe, equitable, positive, and supportive learning environment in which diversities are valued.
- Fosters respectful, collaborative relationships between families and community of care partners.
- Participates in ongoing professional learning.

## Education Support Specialist – Orientation & Mobility (O&M)

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The ESS – O&M is responsible for the delivery of responsive and flexible Orientation and Mobility(O&M) programs for early learners supported by APSEA who are blind or visually impaired. The ESS - O&M provides leadership in the development and implementation of individualized programs which optimize learner potential in areas of independent orientation, movement, and travel.

- Provides Tier 1, 2, and 3 support to learners supported by APSEA, their families and community of care partners to facilitate independent orientation, movement, and travel.
- Supports the family and community of care partners regarding collaborative instructional practices related to the delivery of O&M programs.
- Promotes learning and development by conducting and facilitating O&M assessments by supporting the authentic assessment process.
- Implements evidence-informed instructional strategies and resources to support the development of O&M skills and concepts.
- Supports processes to create a safe, equitable, positive, and supportive learning environment in which diversities are valued.
- Fosters respectful, collaborative relationships between families and community of care partners.
- Participates in ongoing professional learning.

## Education Support Specialist - American Sign Language (ASL)

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The ESS – ASL provides leadership in the assessment, evaluation, and development of American Sign Language (ASL) for learners who are Deaf or hard of hearing (DHH). The ESS - ASL is responsible for providing ASL assessment and consultation services to families, learners, other APSEA employees, and community of care partners. They work collaboratively with families, community of care partners, and other APSEA employees utilizing specialized knowledge and skills to support personalized programming.

- Collaborates with families, other APSEA employees, and community of care partners to support the development of learner outcomes and language development priorities as they relate to ASL development for learners who are Deaf or hard of hearing using ASL, who are eligible to receive APSEA services.
- Conducts sign language assessments and checklists to support the development of learner outcomes; provides summative reports to families as required.
- Collaborates with the Supervisors of Educational Interpreting Services and Educational Deaf Interpreters – Early Learning (EDI-EL) to provide appropriate language modelling based on learner assessment results to support the learner's continued language development.
- Supports the EST and other APSEA employees as it relates to sign language development and understanding of the value of Deaf culture.
- Conducts in person or via digital platform consultation as required to identify and model language and language acquisition strategies.
- Develops and delivers programs, both online and in person, in collaboration with other APSEA team members.
- Identifies and recommends services, resources, and community of care partners contacts for families and other APSEA team members to support the learner's ASL language development.
- Supports processes to create a safe, equitable, positive, and supportive learning environment in which diversities are valued.
- Fosters respectful, collaborative relationships between families and community of care partners.
- Participates in professional learning.



## Education Support Specialist - Deaf Mentor

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The ESS - Deaf Mentor provides information, models, and supports the development of visual communication, sign language, and Deaf culture with learners, families and community of care partners. Working with learners, families, other APSEA employees, and community of care partners, the ESS - Deaf Mentor brings lived experience to support the understanding of Deaf cultural values and acts as a cultural role model and facilitator to the local Deaf community for the learner and their family through both virtual and in-person sessions.

- Provides Tier 1, 2, and 3 support for learners, families, other APSEA employees, and community of care partners.
- In collaboration with employees and families, supports the development and implementation of outcomes for learners and families as they relate to ASL development, Deaf culture, self-advocacy, social skills, and education options.
- Monitors and documents the learner's ASL language development with the family, EST-DHH, and ASL specialist.
- Provides exposure to and information regarding the local Deaf community and Deaf culture to learners, families, employees, and community of care partners.
- Works with learners, in one-on-one and group settings, to develop strategies to enhance self-advocacy and success when transitioning to school.
- Acts as a language model for the Deaf learner by interacting in ways that take advantage of their visual environment and provides strategies to support ASL development.
- Models' opportunities and strategies to bridge auditory experiences into visual communication and ASL, and vice versa.
- Acts as a positive role model with respect to professionalism and involvement with learners, families, and community of care partners.
- Supports processes to create a safe, equitable, positive, and supportive learning environment in which diversities are valued.
- Fosters respectful, collaborative relationships between families and community of care partners.
- Participates in professional learning.

## Education Support Specialist - Mentor (BVI)

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The ESS - Mentor (BVI) provides information, as well as acting as a role model and support for learners, their families, and community of care partners as they navigate experiences of living with vision loss.

- Collaborates with families and community of care partners to support the development and implementation of programs for learners and families as they relate to educational opportunities and in the areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum.
- Facilitates and delivers programs regarding adjustment to blindness for learners and their families.
- Acts as a role model for learners who are blind or visually impaired by interacting in ways that demonstrate how to build empowerment, foster independence, and self-efficacy.
- Supports families to navigate and understand the programs and services available from community of care partners, and how to access these supports.
- Works with learners, in one-on-one and group settings (in-person and/or virtual) to develop strategies to enhance self-advocacy and success in various learning environments.
- Works with families, community of care partners, and other APSEA employees to enhance competencies and independence of learners who are blind or visually impaired in preparation for the transition to school.
- Supports processes to create a safe, equitable, positive, and supportive learning environment in which diversities are valued.
- Fosters respectful, collaborative relationships between families and community of care partners.
- Participates in ongoing professional learning.

## Education Support Specialist – Speech Language Pathologist (SLP)

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The ESS-SLP provides speech and language support, including augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), to learners who are blind or visually impaired and/or Deaf or hard of hearing who are eligible to receive APSEA services.

- Engages in collaborative practice, working with learners and their families, other APSEA employees, and community of care partners to ensure appropriate strategies and recommends related to speech, language, and communication development within the context of program planning for learners who are blind or visually impaired and/or Deaf or hard of hearing in each of the Atlantic Provinces.
- Consults and provides professional learning and resources to APSEA employees, families, and community of care partners related to speech, language, and communication development for learners who receive support from APSEA.
- Collaborates with the APSEA Service Delivery Team regarding inclusive practices to support speech, language, and communication development in learners who are BVI and/or DHH.
- Assesses, recommends, and provides evidence-informed strategies and materials as part of the authentic assessment process that allow for access, active participation, and self-determination/self-advocacy.
- Selects, adapts, and uses evidence-informed strategies and materials to address the unique needs of learners who are BVI and/or DHH.
- Supports processes to create a safe, equitable, positive, and supportive learning environment in which diversities are valued.
- Fosters respectful, collaborative relationships between families and community of care partners.
- Participates in ongoing professional learning.

## Educational Audiologist

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The Educational Audiologist provides consultation services to enhance communication access and learning for learners who are Deaf or hard of hearing who are eligible to receive APSEA services.

- Participates as needed in APSEA Service Delivery Team meetings to provide expertise regarding the effects of hearing, listening and speechreading on the ability of learners to access communication and learning.
- Supports the ordering, maintenance, and repair of hearing assistance technology.
- Consults with clinical audiologists, and/or families regarding the amplification needs of learners who qualify for APSEA service.
- Develops resources to support assistive technology options and use for learners.
- Provides consultative outreach service to community of care partners and families in collaboration with the ESS - DHH.
- Remains current with advances in new amplification technology.
- Supports processes to create a safe, equitable, positive, and supportive learning environment in which diversities are valued.
- Fosters respectful, collaborative relationships between families and community of care partners.
- Participates in ongoing professional learning.

## Educational Interpreter (EI)

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The EI is responsible for providing a culturally and linguistically equivalent message in both American Sign Language (ASL) and English for all participants. The EI aims to produce the most linguistically and culturally relevant message possible for all participants, considering and adapting to cultural and linguistic knowledge gaps by reframing and clarifying the message.

- Provides interpreting support to learners who are Deaf or hard of hearing and school-based employees in the classroom.
- Works collaboratively as part of the APSEA Service Delivery Team and education team as required.
- Prepares for all lessons, which includes pre-conferencing and preparation time with materials and the teacher, clarifications and interruptions during the lesson, and post-conferencing with the teachers and learners to ensure the content is clear and accessible.
- Fosters learner independence and advocacy during classroom instruction, discussions, and classroom evaluations.
- Maintains currency and follows ethical standards and up to date on current educational interpreting research and standards/theories.
- Remains current with Department of Education curriculum documents and the APSEA DSI - DHH, as well as additional DHH-specific curriculums being used by classroom teachers and ESTs.
- Offers insight on the interpreter process, as well as providing support, knowledge, and engages in the development of strategies to support learner success in the classroom.
- Supports processes to create a safe, equitable, positive, and supportive learning environment in which diversities are valued.
- Fosters respectful, collaborative relationships between families and community of care partners.
- Participates in ongoing professional learning.

## Educational Deaf Interpreter (EDI)

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The EDI is responsible for American Sign Language (ASL) linguistic modelling and support to Deaf signing learners, along with facilitating the learning of Deaf culture in various learning environments, and the understanding of how to navigate an environment where both ASL and English are the predominate languages.

- Works collaboratively as part of the APSEA Service Delivery Team and education team as required.
- Supports the learner with the transition from EDI to Educational Interpreter; the EDI develops the necessary linguistic and cultural foundation within the Deaf learner so they can successfully work with an Educational Interpreter.
- In collaboration with the classroom teacher, the EDI follows school curriculum/lesson plans for the day to develop ASL with the learner, as well as supporting learning opportunities and strategies for connections to the English language.
- Fosters learner independence and advocacy during classroom instruction, discussions, and classroom evaluations as well as the development of their Deaf identity.
- Communicates with the classroom teacher to share learner progress, identifies challenging areas develop strategies for learner success.
- Maintains currency and follows ethical standards and up to date on current educational interpreting research and standards/theories.
- Remains current with Department of Education curriculum documents and the APSEA DSI - DHH, as well as additional DHH-specific curriculums being used by classroom teachers and ESTs.
- Supports processes to create a safe, equitable, positive, and supportive learning environment in which diversities are valued.
- Fosters respectful, collaborative relationships between families and community of care partners.
- Participates in ongoing professional learning.

## Educational Deaf Interpreter – Early Learning (EDI-EL)

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The EDI-EL is responsible for American Sign Language (ASL) linguistic modelling and support to Deaf signing learners, along with facilitating the learning of Deaf culture in various early learning settings, and the understanding of how to navigate an environment where both ASL and English are the predominate languages.

- Works collaboratively as part of the APSEA Service Delivery Team and community of care partners as required.
- In collaboration with the early learning educator(s), the EDI-EL works with the plans for the day to develop ASL with the learner, as well as supporting learning opportunities and strategies for connections to the English language.
- Brings the activities and discourse to the learner's linguistic level and builds on this foundation by facilitating the learning of vocabulary, syntax, semantics, and critical thinking skills.
- Coaches the learner on joint attention, classroom-culture appropriate interactions, and supports the learner in the learning of social interactions.
- Models the skills of turn-taking, attention-getting, and learning social and school-based structures.
- Communicates with the early learning educator(s) to share learner progress, identifies challenging areas, and keeps informed of the daily plans, to be properly prepared for the lessons, and develop strategies to support learner success.
- Maintains currency and follows ethical standards and up to date on current educational interpreting research and standards/theories.
- Remains current with Department of Education early learning documents and the APSEA DSI - DHH, as well as additional DHH-specific curriculums being used by community of care partners and ESTs.
- Supports processes to create a safe, equitable, positive, and supportive learning environment in which diversities are valued.
- Fosters respectful, collaborative relationships between families and community of care partners.
- Participates in ongoing professional learning.



## Educational Oral Interpreters (EOI)

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The EOI is responsible for providing an oral interpretation in the educational environment with a focus on rate of speech, enunciation, articulation, and orally accessible language/phrasal choices. This process includes rephrasing and reorganizing content to make it more easily speech readable.

- Works collaboratively as part of the APSEA Service Delivery Team and education team as required.
- Prepares for all lessons, which includes pre-conferencing and preparation time with materials and the teacher, clarifications and interruptions during the lesson, and post-conferencing with the teachers and learners to ensure the content is clear and accessible.
- Remains current and follows ethical standards, up to date on current interpreting research and standards/theories.
- Fosters learner independence and advocacy during classroom instruction, discussions, and classroom evaluations.
- Works to develop word and phrase recognition with the learner as they access more of the curriculum. When appropriate, the OI incorporates supporting gestures, visuals cues and signs to aid in oral language recognition.
- Remains current with Department of Education curriculum documents and the APSEA DSI - DHH, as well as additional DHH-specific curriculums being used by classroom teachers and ESTs.
- Offers insight on the interpreter process, as well as providing support, knowledge, and engages in the development of strategies to support learner success in the classroom.
- Supports processes to create a safe, equitable, positive, and supportive learning environment in which diversities are valued.
- Fosters respectful, collaborative relationships between families and community of care partners.
- Participates in ongoing professional learning.

## Program Consultant – BVI or DHH

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The Program Consultant – Blind & Visually Impaired (BVI) or Deaf & Hard of Hearing (DHH) is responsible for providing leadership and direction on a broad range of issues and initiatives that support implementation of the APSEA Responsive Teaching and Learning model in the Atlantic Provinces. The Program Consultant promotes alignment across APSEA programs and services for learners and their families by coaching and guiding employees, collaborating with community of care partners and organizing professional learning.

- Facilitates the implementation of the Responsive Teaching and Learning model by providing supportive leadership and coaching to APSEA employees and community of care partners.
- Assists APSEA employees in the implementation and monitoring of effective instructional and assessment practices for learners receiving services from APSEA, supporting both in-person and virtual learning opportunities.
- Identifies, plans, and facilitates relevant professional learning opportunities for employees, families, and community of care partners as it relates to all aspects of the Responsive Teaching and Learning model. Individual program planning, virtual learning and in-person gatherings are included in the scope of responsibilities.
- Collaborates with APSEA employees/departments to strategically develop organization-wide programs, professional learning, and special projects.
- Develops effective relationships with related community of care partners.
- Provides educational support and leadership to employees in the implementation of all related policies, procedures and initiatives pertaining to the Responsive Teaching and Learning model.
- Serves on the APSEA Program Planning Team.
- Assists the APSEA Service Delivery Teams in the implementation and monitoring of effective instructional and authentic assessment practices.
- Supports processes to create a safe, equitable, positive, and supportive learning environment in which diversities are valued.
- Fosters respectful, collaborative relationships between families and community of care partners.
- Participates in ongoing professional learning.

## Supervisor of Programs – BVI or DHH

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The Supervisor of Programs – BVI or DHH is responsible for coordinating the provision, quality, and daily management of programs. The Supervisor of Programs is also responsible to provide supportive leadership to APSEA employees, translating priorities and vision into operational programs and initiatives that benefit learners who are BVI and/or DHH and their families.

- Provides leadership in the development, implementation, and evaluation of services to learners who are BVI and/or DHH.
- Supports and provides leadership to employees in their designated department to align programs and services to the provincial curriculum and programs.
- Actively engages in and facilitates APSEA Program Planning teams.
- Collaborates with other Supervisors of Programs to further the development and improvement of APSEA programs and services.
- Fosters respectful, collaborative, and effective relationships between community of care partners.
- Encourages and offers relevant professional learning for APSEA employees and community of care partners.
- Supports processes to create a safe, equitable, positive, and supportive learning environment in which diversities are valued.
- Engages in ongoing professional learning.

## Coordinator of Programs – BVI or DHH (Atlantic Provinces)

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The Coordinator of Programs - BVI or DHH is responsible for providing supportive leadership as it relates to the coordination, development and implementation of programs and services for learners, families, and school teams across the Atlantic provinces. The Coordinator of Programs promotes collaborative alignment across APSEA programs and services through a network of interconnected resources supporting learners who receive APSEA services and their families.

- Provides leadership in the development, provision and evaluation of programs and services that support learners who are BVI and/or DHH that align with Atlantic provincial policies and standards.
- Collaborates with APSEA Directors and Supervisors of Programs to assess learner needs, analyze target population trends and profiles to recommend programs and service changes.
- Represents APSEA on provincial and/or interprovincial teams and committees.
- Liaises with community of care partners on a wide range of initiatives, including in-person gatherings and APSEA Connect.
- Actively engages with APSEA Program Planning teams as required in the implementation and monitoring of effective instructional and authentic assessment practices.
- Fosters respectful, collaborative and effective relationships between community of care partners.
- Encourages and offers relevant professional learning for APSEA employees and community of care partners.
- Supports processes to create a safe, equitable, positive, and supportive learning environment in which diversities are valued.
- Engages in ongoing professional learning.

## Director of Programs – BVI or DHH

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The Director of Programs – BVI or DHH is responsible for the efficient and effective delivery of programs and services for learners who are BVI or DHH. The Directors of Programs maintain a strong understanding and experience in the specialized knowledge area and skills required to develop and deliver programs and services for these learners who are BVI and/or DHH with diverse needs.

- Oversees the development, implementation and evaluation of consistent programs and services for learners who are BVI or DHH.
- Supports the Coordinators of Programs, Supervisors of Programs and APSEA employees to align the programs and services to the provincial curriculum and programs.
- Oversees consistent application of processes and procedures related to assessment and evaluation to ensure best practices are reflected within APSEA programs and services.
- Maintains regular contact with the Coordinators of Programs and Supervisors of Programs to support the organizational needs of learners who are BVI and/or DHH and their families across the Atlantic Provinces.
- Actively engages with APSEA Program Planning teams as required in the implementation and monitoring of effective instructional and authentic assessment practices.
- Fosters respectful, collaborative, and effective relationships between community of care partners.
- Encourages and offers relevant professional learning for APSEA employees and community of care partners.
- Supports processes to create a safe, equitable, positive, and supportive learning environment in which diversities are valued.
- Engages in ongoing professional learning.