

**What is ESD and how do Aboriginal students meet this criteria as described by the Ministry's 1701 agreement?**

Some students qualify for ESD under the 1701 agreement that states,

"students reported as requiring ESD 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." (Ministry of Education, June 24, 2009, Form 1701-9)

What is a dialect? [Webster's dictionary](#) says dialect is "a regional variety of language distinguished by features of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation from other regional varieties and constituting together with them a single language." Dialects may be similar but differ in sound systems, vocabulary, grammar, storytelling, conversational interaction and writing conventions (Ball et al in Recognizing Aboriginal English as a Dialect in Curriculum by Fadden).

What is Standard English? Standard English is the English used in schools. It is academic English. [Webster's dictionary](#) says it is "the English that with respect to spelling, grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary is substantially uniform though not devoid of regional differences, that is well established by usage in the formal and informal speech and writing of the educated, and that is widely recognized as acceptable wherever English is spoken and understood the language of books."

Although most of our Aboriginal students in Surrey speak English at home and English is their first language, they may still speak a dialect of English that differs from the Standard English dialect. Research in ESD calls this variation of English an Aboriginal English Dialect or First Nation English Dialect. It is the dialect of English that their families use to communicate within their cultural community.

The following quote gives us a clearer definition of AED and although it is referring to the Aboriginal Peoples of Australia, it is still applicable to the Aboriginal People of Canada.

Aboriginal English is a dialectal form of English that reflects [Aboriginal] language and culture... The form and structure of this language exhibit some speech patterns of standard English as well as speech characteristics and words originating from Aboriginal languages. Aboriginal English is a very effective medium of communication which has evolved to meet the particular needs and circumstances of its speakers. Aboriginal English also varies across the state due to the people, their culture and community.

[This extract is taken from Williams, M. (1988). 'Aboriginal English'. In M. Williams (Ed.), The Nunga Code (p.10). Adelaide, SA: Education Department of South Australia. Mark Williams is Superintendent of Multicultural Affairs in the

Department of Education of South Australia.]

**Some Examples of differences between Standard English and Aboriginal English:**

(collected from research papers - see bibliography link).

Differences in	Examples
Social discourse rules	Differences in use of silence, listening and observing versus speaking, answering questions, sequencing and humour.
Pronunciation	Vowels, speech sounds (dropped 'g'), prepositional phrases, past tense, inflections.
Substitutions/Omissions	Gender terms he/she, him/her (some Aboriginal languages do not use gender markers), pronoun omissions.
Vocabulary	

**Identifying Aboriginal students with ESD.**

Research indicates that we have not yet developed the appropriate tools to truly identify ESD and that too often Aboriginal students are incorrectly identified as having a speech/language problem when in fact it is an issue of dialect.

Until these tools are developed, Surrey SD recommends the following tools to assess language proficiency: District ESL Assessment, BCESL Standards, Ministry Performance Standards in reading and writing, Oral guidelines in the new English Language Arts IRP and the Kindergarten Emergent Literacy Continuum - Oral Language document.

**Key:**

Research indicates it's critical to allow our Aboriginal students to keep their AED. It is their way of communicating with their community and embedded in the AED are the remnants of their Aboriginal language and culture. Our goal should not be to eradicate the AED but rather give the Aboriginal student another dialect of English. An additive approach is critical. We need to equip about Aboriginal students with Standard English, the language of school and maintain their own AED.

**For MORE information:**

**See FAQ on ESD**

**See ESD Reporting Procedures**

**See LST Handbook of Guidelines and Procedures:**

- page 41 (defines ESD)
- page 88/89 (describes 1701 procedures)
- page 55/56 (describe assessment procedures for ESD)
- page 50 (Annual Instructional Plan for ELL)

**Appendix B-4. more on ELL assessments**

**See [Nadine McSpadden's](#) webpage on ESD [click here](#)**