



Institute for Stuttering Treatment & Research  
**every** voice matters

Stuttering Treatment Program  
Communication Improvement Program

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[www.istar.ualberta.ca](http://www.istar.ualberta.ca)

## ***Welcome to ISTAR's Communication Improvement Program***

The Communication Improvement Program (CIP) was established in January 1988, under the direction of Dr. Helen Ilott of the Faculty of Education, University of Alberta. The program shares facilities and staff with the Institute for Stuttering Treatment and Research, with which it is affiliated. All CIP staff are fully qualified speech-language pathologists.

### **CIP Information Package Contents**

1. CIP Application Process.....	2
2. What is the CIP?.....	2
3. Frequently Asked Questions.....	2
4. Fee Schedule - Effective January 1, 2023.....	4
5. Policy on Fee Payment .....	4
6. Opportunities for Financial Support.....	4
7. ISTAR Staff.....	5

CIP Brochure  
Application Form

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*ISTAR is a self-supporting unit of  
the Faculty of Rehabilitation  
Medicine, University of Alberta.*

## 1. CIP Application Process

1. Complete the application form and mail, fax or email it to ISTAR Edmonton. The application form contains the contact information.
  2. An ISTAR speech-language pathologist will call you to schedule an assessment appointment. This may take some time as we usually have a wait-list.
  3. At the end of the assessment appointment you will discuss therapy recommendations and options with your clinician.
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## 2. What is the CIP?

CIP offers three types of services: assessment and treatment of communication disorders; consultation and programming for people who wish to enhance their communication skills, and; the Hanen *It Takes Two to Talk*® program for family-centered early language intervention to parents and caregivers of young children.

**Assessment and treatment services** are provided for adults and children with:

- ◆ language delay or disorders
- ◆ articulation problems (mispronunciations)
- ◆ voice problems
- ◆ communication difficulties caused by brain injury (e.g. aphasia, dysarthria)

**Communication enhancement services** are provided for teens and adults in the areas of:

- ◆ accent reduction
- ◆ overall speaking effectiveness and/or voice use
- ◆ public speaking

**The Hanen “It Takes Two to Talk”® program** empowers parents and caregivers of young children to become the child’s family language facilitator by promoting language development during everyday activities. The program recognizes:

- ◆ the importance of involving parents in their child’s early language intervention
- ◆ the need to help children and families as early as possible
- ◆ that children benefit from the frequency and consistency of language intervention delivered in their home by their parent or caregiver

## 3. Frequently Asked Questions

**How long do I have to go for speech therapy?**

The answer is complex and can only be answered with a speech assessment. Some factors that affect the length of a speech therapy program include reason for needing speech therapy, age of individual and readiness for treatment.

**Is there funding available to help offset the cost of the assessment or therapy?**

There are a few options for funding - see page 4 for details.

**Does my work insurance plan cover speech therapy?**

Many insurance plans cover a portion of therapy fees. As insurance plans vary in coverage, check with your plan administrator to determine the type and extent of coverage. Fees are paid to ISTAR and then you apply for reimbursement from your insurance company. We provide a detailed statement to attach to your payment receipt.

**Do I need a doctor's referral?**

A referral is not required; you can contact ISTAR directly. If you want to claim speech therapy fees as a tax deduction for medical expenses, a letter from your family doctor is needed to attach to your taxes.

**Can I schedule an appointment and then complete the application form?**

Your assessment appointment will be booked after we have received a completed application form.

**Can I get speech therapy without an assessment?**

An assessment is a critical part of the therapy process, as it helps us determine the type of therapy that would best suit your needs. We base therapy recommendations and treatment plans on our observations and findings.

**Is there a waiting list?**

You can typically expect to schedule an assessment appointment within two months of receipt of the completed application form. Speech therapy is then scheduled to fit around your schedule and that of the clinician's. During peak periods, there may be a longer waiting time depending upon existing client load.

**Do I send my application form to Calgary or Edmonton?**

Application forms are sent to the Edmonton office; we will then determine what office will take the application.

**Can I speak with a speech-language pathologist (SLP)?**

Certainly! There are SLPs at both the Edmonton and Calgary offices. Contact the Edmonton office and we will arrange for someone to return your call and discuss your specific questions and concerns.

**Is a formal report included in the assessment fee?**

Most people do not require a formal report so we have priced it separately to keep our assessment prices lower for everyone. The assessment does include a free assessment summary, which is a discussion of your results and therapy recommendations at the end of your session and that can be sent to you in a simple email if you like. If you want a formal report (usually needed if you need to apply for other government supports, for example for more severe cases) then we are happy to provide one. We will schedule a 1-hour report writing time and the charge will be \$145 for most reports. Multiple reports or complex external reports can also be provided at our hourly rate, as requested.

## 4. Fee Schedule - Effective January 1, 2023

<b>Assessment</b>	Between \$210 and \$360 includes preparation, assessment time and evaluation (Once your application is received, we will verify the relevant fee based on your situation.)
<b>Formal Assessment Report</b>	\$145 per hour
<b>Individual Sessions</b>	\$145 per hour
<b>Small Group Sessions</b> (Two or three people)	\$115 per hour <b>per client</b>

## 5. Policy on Fee Payment

ISTAR relies on clinic fees and donations to cover provision of treatment services. ISTAR accepts debit, Visa, American Express, and MasterCard for fee payments.

ISTAR is a not-for-profit institute in the Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine at the University of Alberta. With the support of community partnerships, we strive to provide the best possible speech and language therapy to people of all ages. We are not government funded. Our fees are set at a level that allows us to recover our costs and provide accessible and quality treatment. As such, we charge an hourly rate for speech and language services. These services include: face to face time with your speech-language pathologist, preparation and analysis of your case, report and IPP writing, caregiver training, team meetings, phone/email discussions with other professionals, and travel (including kilometers).

At ISTAR, our clients are our number one priority. As a result of our widely recognized excellence in speech-language pathology, appointments at ISTAR/CIP are in very high demand. If you cannot attend your appointment, please cancel it as soon as possible so that we can offer your session time to another client waiting for services. In order to book another client, we require a minimum of 2 business days' notice prior to your scheduled appointment time. You can contact us by email at [istar@ualberta.ca](mailto:istar@ualberta.ca) or by phone [780-492-2619](tel:780-492-2619) (Edmonton) and [403-201-7285](tel:403-201-7285) (Calgary).

Not cancelling your appointment or cancelling your appointment without sufficient notice prevents us from helping others who are waiting for our services. Missed appointments or late cancellations will be charged at 50% of the appointment fee.

Please note that missed appointment and late cancellation fees are your responsibility. Third party funders (e.g., private insurance, ICAP Fund, Bergeron Fund, or Elks and Royal Purple Fund for Children) will not cover missed appointments or late cancellation fees.

## 6. Opportunities for Financial Support

Fees for speech therapy at CIP are not covered by Alberta Health Care. However, other financial opportunities may be available as listed below.

### *Private Group Insurance*

Many insurance plans cover portions of speech therapy fees. Check with your plan administrator to determine the type and amount of coverage you have. It may help to know if you have an annual maximum and per visit maximum that can be applied towards your session cost. **NOTE: Fees are paid to ISTAR and then you apply for reimbursement from your insurance company.**

### *Government*

Social Services has covered fees for some low-income families. Contact your regional office of Social Services if you think you may qualify. Health and Welfare Canada may pay for First Nations Children of pre-school age. Alberta Human Resources and Employment / Disability Related Employment Supports Program may fund adults who are having difficulty finding employment.

### *Funding for Students with Disabilities*

Students at post-secondary institutions may be eligible for special funding for speech therapy. Please check with your institution's office for Students with Disabilities.

### *The ICAP Fund (ISTAR Client Assistance Program)*

The ICAP Fund may cover up to 90% of therapy, depending on the financial need of the client. This fund does not cover travel or accommodations. Application forms can be obtained by contacting ISTAR. **Note that the ICAP Fund can only be used when all other avenues of funding have been exhausted.**

*We gratefully acknowledge financial assistance from the Alberta Elks Foundation, The Elks and Royal Purple Fund for Children, and many individual and other corporate donors for their operational assistance to ISTAR, and the help they give to clients seeking our services.*

## 7. ISTAR Staff

With decades of collective experience, our clinicians have special expertise in the treatment of stuttering and bring a committed, personal approach to their work. **All have attained a Master's degree in Speech-Language Pathology and completed extensive training in the Comprehensive Stuttering Program as well as other treatment approaches** such as Lidcombe, Camperdown and The Hanen Program. All are committed to keeping abreast of the latest research and techniques in their field, and demonstrate a profound concern for their clients' well-being and a determination to offer the best possible therapy available.

### **Edmonton Clinicians:**

#### **Jessica Harasym O'Byrne, PhD, MSLP, R.SLP, S-LP(C)**

##### *Speech-Language Pathologist*

Dr. Jessica Harasym O'Byrne holds a Master of Speech-Language Pathology and a PhD in Rehabilitation Science. She has completed training in the the Lidcombe Stuttering Treatment Program, Palin Parent Child Interaction Therapy, and the Camperdown Program for Teens and Adults who Stutter.

In 2019, she was honoured to serve as a committee member for Speech-Language and Audiology Canada's position statement on the role of speech-language pathologists in concussion management.

**Ashley Saunders, M.Sc; R.SLP**

*Speech-Language Pathologist, Interim Director*

Ashley has completed specialized training or holds certifications in the Lidcombe Program for preschool and school-age children, the Camperdown Program., Palin Parent-Child Interaction Therapy for Early Childhood Stuttering (Palin PCI), Visualizing and Verbalizing for Comprehension and Thinking - The Lindamood-Bell Learning Processes program for imagery development to support expressive and receptive language skills, Prompts for Restructuring Oral Muscular Phonetic Targets (PROMPT) – Level 1 and Solution Focused Brief Therapy.

**Claire Casault, M.Sc; R.SLP**

*Speech-Language Pathologist*

Claire has completed specialized training or holds certifications in the Lidcombe Stuttering Treatment Program for Preschool Children, Meaningful Speech Course: Natural Language Acquisition/Gestalt Language Processing, Health Change Methodology Training.

**Calgary Clinicians**

**Kiera Hughes, M.Sc, R.SLP, SLP(C)**

*Speech-Language Pathologist*

Kiera has completed specialized training or holds certification in Prompts for Restructuring Oral Muscular Phonetic Targets (PROMPT) – Level 1, More Than Words - The Hanen program for parents, Pragmatic Organization Dynamic Display (PODD) augmentative and alternative communication, Language Acquisition through motor planning (LAMP) augmentative and alternative communication, TouchChat augmentative and alternative communication system, Brain Story Certification, and Lidcombe Stuttering Treatment Program for preschool and school-aged children.

**Amanda Strang, R.SLP, CCC-SLP**

*Speech-Language Pathologist*

Amanda has completed training or holds certifications in the Lidcombe Program for preschool and school age children, Palin Parent-Child Interaction Therapy for Early Childhood Stuttering (Palin PCI), Play based therapy for children, TouchChat AAC program, and a Certificate of Clinical Competence with the American Speech Language and Hearing Association.

**Admin Team:**

**Crystal, Receptionist**

**Marlo DeVouge, Administrative Assistant**