

## Alberta Aids to Daily Living (AADL)

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*What is Alberta Aids to Daily Living (AADL)?*

A child's hearing aids, cochlear implants, bone conduction hearing devices, batteries, and assistive technology (such as FM systems) can be expensive. Fortunately, residents of Alberta who are covered by Alberta Health Insurance are eligible for funding from AADL, which is a program administered by the Alberta government. This article will only refer to hearing devices and earmolds for children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing; however, AADL does fund other equipment.

*Who can benefit from AADL?*

Children under the age of 18 as well as full-time students up to the age of 24 are eligible. Other eligibility criteria include:

- Permanent resident of Alberta.
- Reside at home or in a community setting.
- Have a valid Alberta Personal Health Number (PHN).
- Have documented hearing loss.
- Have a valid authorization completed by an AADL vendor (a hearing clinic).
- Not receiving comparable benefits through another government source (i.e., First Nations Health Insurance Benefits).

*What funding does AADL provide?*

It depends on the parents' income levels. The two different income categories include **cost-share** and **cost-share exemption**.

## A. Cost Share

Families are automatically placed into the cost-share category if they meet all of the above criteria. They are then expected to pay 25% of the cost of the equipment and fitting fees. AADL will cover the other 75%. However, if the hearing aid manufacturer invoice cost is more than the AADL maximum amount, the family will be responsible to pay the difference. Examples are provided for you below. Your dispensing audiologist can provide you with up-to-date AADL pricing guides.

AADL has a special pricing system for children. The 25% that the family pays is based on the manufacturer's invoice cost and a pre-set fitting fee for AADL pricing, rather than the retail cost\* that the clinic would typically charge. Once the family has paid \$500.00 of the cost-share portion for equipment, AADL will fund 100% of the cost for any remaining equipment fees.

\*"Retail cost" is the pricing that clinics use for private-pay clients that includes all-in bundled service, which incorporates the invoice cost of the hearing aids, a repair warranty, and the fitting and follow-up fees.

### **Below are sample breakdowns of AADL funding for individuals approved for the cost-share category:**

- AADL pays 75% of the maximum amount and the family pays 25% of the maximum amount, plus any cost over the **invoice cost** of the hearing aid.
- In the first example, the hearing aid cost is at or below the AADL maximum amount.
- In the second example, the hearing aid invoice cost is above the AADL maximum amount.

- A.1** Hearing Aid with an invoice cost at or below the AADL maximum amount of \$650.

Item	Amount	AADL (75%)	Client Pays (25%)
<b>Manufacturer's Invoice Cost</b>	\$650.00	\$487.50	\$162.50
<b>Earmold invoice Cost</b>	\$40.00	\$30.00	\$10.00
<b>AADL Controlled Fitting Fee</b>	\$600.00	\$450.00	\$150.00
<b>Total Client Pays</b>			<b>\$322.50</b>

- A.2** Hearing Aid with an invoice cost above the AADL maximum amount of \$650.

Item	Amount	AADL (75%)	Client Pays (25%)
<b>Manufacturer's Invoice Cost Over Maximum Amount of \$650.00</b>	\$1000.00	75% of \$650 = \$487.50	\$162.50 + \$350.00 Cost Share: 25% of \$650 = \$162.50 Invoice Overage: \$1000-\$650 = \$350.00
<b>Earmold invoice Cost</b>	\$40.00	\$30.00	\$10.00
<b>AADL Controlled Fitting Fee</b>	\$600.00	\$450.00	\$150.00
<b>Total Client Pays</b>			<b>\$322.50</b>

## **B. Cost-share exemption:**

Families who have low income may be exempt from the \$500.00 cost-share. To qualify for the exemption, income must be below \$39,250 in the previous year, as declared on the income tax return. The family must apply for cost-share exemption by filling out the Cost-Share Exemption Form. Most hearing clinics will be able to provide this form to you.

**Below are sample breakdowns of AADL funding for individuals approved for the cost-share exemption category:**

- AADL pays 100% of the maximum amount and the family pays 0% of the maximum amount, plus any cost over the **invoice cost** of the hearing aid.
- In the first example, the hearing aid cost is at or below the AADL maximum amount.
- In the second example, the hearing aid invoice cost is above the AADL maximum amount.

**B.1** Hearing Aid with an invoice cost at or below the AADL maximum amount of \$650.

Item	Amount	AADL (100%)	Client Pays (0%)
<b>Manufacturer's Invoice Cost</b>	\$650.00	\$650.00	\$0.00
<b>Earmold invoice Cost</b>	\$40.00	\$40.00	\$0.00
<b>AADL Controlled Fitting Fee</b>	\$600.00	\$600.00	\$0.00
<b>Total Client Pays</b>			<b>\$0.00</b>

**B.2** Hearing Aid with an invoice cost above the AADL maximum amount of \$650.

Item	Amount	AADL (75%)	Client Pays (25%)
<b>Manufacturer's Invoice Cost Over Maximum Amount of \$650.00</b>	\$1000.00	100% of \$650 = \$650.00	\$0.00 + \$350.00 Cost Share: 0% of \$650 = \$0.00 Invoice Overage: \$1000-\$650 = \$350.00
<b>Earmold invoice Cost</b>	\$40.00	\$30.00	\$0.00
<b>AADL Controlled Fitting Fee</b>	\$600.00	\$450.00	\$0.00
<b>Total Client Pays</b>			<b>\$350.00</b>

*How often does AADL provide funding?*

Funding is currently provided once every five years for most hearing devices if the devices are unrepairable. Some exceptions may apply (e.g., it is once every six years for bone anchored hearing devices). AADL may provide funding to replace hearing aids earlier than five years if there has been a significant change in hearing. AADL has a mathematical formula that the audiologist uses to determine if changes in your child's hearing loss meet AADL's criteria for early replacement.

*Does AADL help cover the cost of hearing aid repairs and earmolds?*

Yes. AADL will help cover the cost of earmolds and repairs. Families are expected to pay 25% of the repair cost and fitting fees, but AADL will cover the costs for families that are cost-share exempt. Each hearing aid can be repaired with AADL funding once a year if needed. AADL will provide funding for earmolds for each ear every three months for children aged three and under, and once every six months for children aged 4-17 years. Students between 18-24 years are eligible for AADL funding for earmolds once a year.

*Does AADL replace lost equipment?*

No. If your child's hearing equipment is lost, AADL will not replace it prior to the AADL replacement timelines. Most hearing device manufacturers have loss coverage for a period of time after the device is purchased. There may be a deductible fee. It is very important to insure hearing devices via homeowner's insurance if the loss coverage has expired.

## **Family Support for Children with Disabilities (FSCD)**

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*What is Family Support for Children with Disabilities (FSCD)?*

FSCD is a program administered by Alberta Human Services, and is based on the Family Support for Children with Disabilities Act. The premise of FSCD is that parents of children with disabilities sometimes need support so they can raise their children at home and fully participate in community life.

*Who is eligible for this program?*

In order for a family to be eligible for the FSCD program:

1. The child with a disability must be under age 18.
2. The person applying for the program must be the child's parent or have guardianship of the child.
3. The child must be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident.
4. The child and the parent or guardian must reside in Alberta.
5. Medical documentation must be provided confirming that the child has a disability.

For the purposes of the FSCD program, a disability is defined as "a chronic, developmental, physical, sensory, mental or neurological condition or impairment that does not include a condition for which the primary need is for medical care or health services to treat or manage the condition, unless it is a chronic condition that significantly limits a child's ability to function in normal daily living."

Families with children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing - and who also happen to be members of Alberta Hands & Voices - have successfully applied to FSCD. Some children who qualified had additional conditions or impairments such as

syndromes, speech and language delays, or ADHD. Other families reported that they were able to qualify without having any additional disabilities.

*What kinds of services are covered by the program?*

Supports may include financial assistance for parking, mileage, respite, sibling care, and developmental aid supports. One family from Alberta Hands & Voices received funding for summer camp; another family was reimbursed for an aide for their daughter while she attended swimming lessons. Other supports are available, and are listed on the FSCD website.

*What do I do as a parent?*

The first step is to contact the regional FSCD office and fill out an application form. An intake meeting is then scheduled to determine a child's eligibility. The application process is outlined on the FSCD website. An interview guide for potential FSCD providers is also provided in this toolkit.

For more information, see the FSCD website at

<http://humanservices.alberta.ca/disability-services/14855.html>

Also try searching "FSCD" on the Alberta Hands & Voices Facebook page in the navigation toolbar for archived conversations about FSCD between members.