



# Closing the Gap

## Virtual Summer Learning Programs



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## WELCOME TO OUR VIRTUAL SUMMER LEARNING CAMPUS!

Evoke's individualized summer programs help to minimize the effect of deficits in academic and organizational (executive function) skills and prepare students for the next academic year, including any upcoming transitions to high school or postsecondary studies.

With personalized instruction and lots of opportunity for learning and practice, Evoke's summer programs help students gain the skills, knowledge, and confidence they need to succeed and realize their academic potential.

### Providing Students with Personalized Learning: How Evoke Can Help

In Canada, commitments to educational recovery have been weaker than other countries (see Gallagher-Mackay et al., 2021). Research highlights that high dosage tutoring, delivered at least three times a week, is one of the most effective educational interventions for addressing academic gaps, especially when it is closely linked to in-school curriculum. We incorporate this approach into our programs to help close the gaps for students and teach skills that stick. Summer is the perfect time for students to boost those skills, since they aren't carrying a normal academic workload and have more time to devote to improving them.

Evoke's approach is uniquely effective in helping students who struggle with reading, writing, math, expressive language, and executive functioning skills. We ensure that students have a thorough understanding of their current grade-level curriculum before transitioning into the next. We can reteach or help students to relearn concepts and material with which they struggle so that they are well prepared for the new school year. We reinforce concepts in math, science, and literacy to improve academic outcomes; ensure understanding; and assist students in achieving grade-level expectations and achievement levels. We offer critical skill development and remediation in math, reading, and writing for elementary and high school students to increase student competency.

For students with executive function challenges, Evoke teaches students the key foundational concepts necessary for academic performance, informed by current cognitive science, such as how to study, research and analysis skills, note-taking strategies, managing procrastination, the science of motivation, and time management.

Our academic strategists and tutors can assist high school students who are taking online courses over the summer, helping them stay on task, understand material, complete assignments, and prepare for tests and exams. Our practitioners can assist students who have self-regulation and processing challenges who may need more individual support for learning and more time to understand and retain material.

Our summer programs offer flexibility and convenience to accommodate your vacation or cottage plans.

## MATH

In October 2022, Ontario released the provincial results of the EQAO results. Fewer than 50% of Grade 6 students met the provincial standard in math. It was the first time since the start of the pandemic that the tests were administered. The data also highlighted that the most recent provincial results are the same as student scores in 2018. In 2021, slightly more than half of Ontario students in Grade 9 math met the provincial testing standard. This decline is also reflected on international student assessments where Canadian high school student's scores in mathematics have been falling over time.

Many students find math difficult and struggle with learning it for different reasons. Some may lack confidence, have trouble focusing or staying on task, or have a negative attitude toward math. Others may have difficulty processing information as quickly as their classmates or have trouble with things like remembering information. When students don't get enough practice with math concepts and skills, it can also make it harder for them to learn. Research has shown that if students don't understand basic math concepts taught in elementary school, they may have trouble with math in high school. At Evoke, our math programs help students who are behind in math by giving them extra time to learn and addressing their learning challenges. This helps bridge the gap and ensures that they don't fall further behind.



## Math Recovery, Grades 3–12

Math is cumulative. For example, if a student skips fractions, they're going to have a hard time in high school when they begin to learn algebra, which is grounded in fractions. Higher-level math frequently requires fundamental knowledge about underlying concepts that is necessary for success in sequential courses. The math trajectory includes some grades that are more critical than others. For example, in the years leading up to eighth grade, students transition from arithmetic into algebra. Studies demonstrate that when students have fallen behind, the most successful approaches to closing learning gaps and improving math proficiency require explicit instruction and intense and targeted intervention to help students master the skills and knowledge required for success in the next grade.



Geared toward students who have been falling behind in math and those with gaps in their learning, Evoke's math recovery program focuses on identifying and addressing academic gaps in math for students in Grades 3–12, concentrating on the most important concepts required for the next academic year. The program begins with a diagnostic assessment that allows us to pinpoint the specific concepts and curriculum expectations with which a student is struggling and help them get up to speed so they can experience success in the next academic year. The information collected from the math diagnostic is helpful in guiding our tutors so that they may effectively and efficiently develop a student's skills and build fluency. The diagnostic also helps to determine the number of recovery hours the student will require.

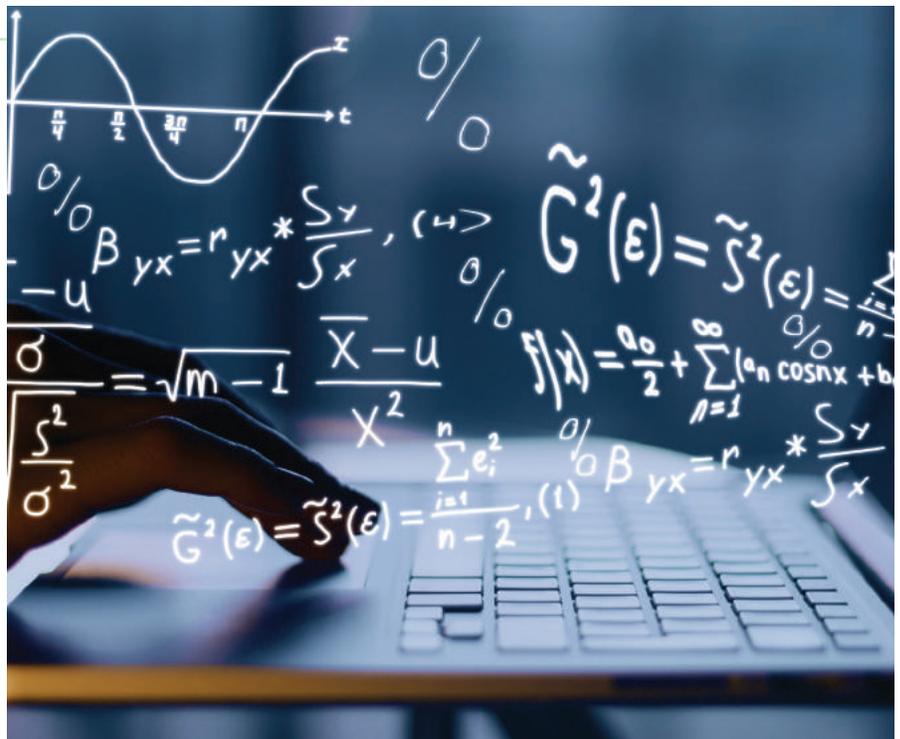
Evoke's Academic Recovery program gives students the extra time to relearn critical skills and concepts and target specific learning deficits, accelerating proficiency regardless of where the student began. The program reinforces understanding over memorization.

Recent studies highlight the effectiveness of tutoring as an evidence-based intervention for learning loss when delivered in high doses with three or more sessions per week. Studies have found little evidence that once-a-week tutoring is sufficient to generate meaningful gains. Evoke's recovery math sessions are delivered three times a week for a minimum of 30 minutes with a minimum commitment of 12 hours over the course of the summer. Students are required to complete practice questions in between sessions to reinforce strategies and skills.

## Math Booster, Grades 5–12

If a student wants to move ahead to begin the next grade curriculum to ensure a strong performance for next year, they can select this "go ahead" program. Tutors will work with students to provide greater exposure to—and a jump-start on—the next year's academic curriculum. Students are introduced to the materials to facilitate a deeper understanding, mastery of key concepts, and enhanced confidence. This program requires a minimum commitment of 12 hours over the course of the summer.

Evoke specializes in supporting neurodiverse learners: students with learning disabilities (such as dyslexia), ADHD, autism, and/or executive function challenges. We champion a strength-based model for learning, providing students with the skills and strategies they need to succeed.



## READING

### Reading Remediation for French Immersion and English Stream Students, Grades 1–12

In February 2022, the Ontario Human Rights Commission released its Right to Read public inquiry report on human rights issues affecting students with reading disabilities. The inquiry determined that despite their importance, foundational word-reading skills have not been effectively targeted in Ontario's education system. They have been largely overlooked in favour of an almost exclusive focus on contextual word-reading strategies and on socio-cultural perspectives on literacy. The report indicated that students who don't develop strong, early reading skills can quickly begin to experience negative academic consequences, which may only get worse.



Many students appear to be reading when they are only sight-reading, and not understanding what they read. They make up for their lack of skill by guessing the meaning of the text in a sentence and identifying the words they have memorized. This is referred to as compensating. When students sight-read, it strains their working memory, which further reduces their ability to comprehend. On the surface, it may look like reading is fluent, but it is challenging. There is very little working memory and attention available to understand what is being read.

Many students with weak phonemic and phonological awareness skills go unnoticed and don't even know they are not decoding. Students who are unable to read words fluently and efficiently will continue to expend most of their limited cognitive resources painstakingly trying to decode letter-sound correspondence, with little to no resources remaining for the demanding task of comprehension. Slow, stilted reading is difficult and frustrating. Weak readers are less likely to practice reading and so do not improve their skills and vocabulary or build fluency and automaticity.

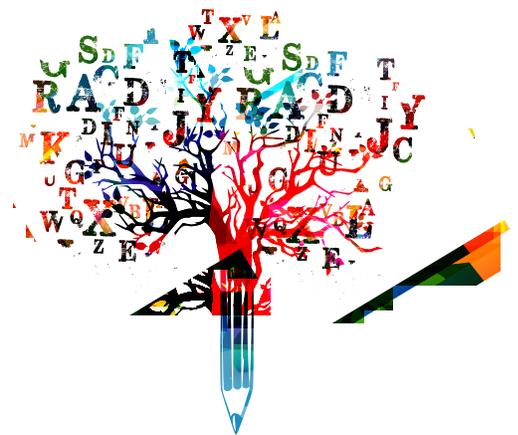
Struggling readers require explicit, structured reading instruction (teaching that leaves nothing to chance and makes no assumptions). Students with reading difficulties do not catch up without systematic and intensive intervention and practice; this involves considerable time on task, consistency, duration of instruction, and evidence-based approaches based in reading science. Reading is not innate, it is a skill that must be taught, and some students require direct instruction to be successful readers.

Based on The Simple View of Reading, Evoke uses research-validated strategies informed by the science of reading in all our programming. Reading skills are taught in an explicit, systematic, and sequential fashion, from simple to complex, through intensive intervention and direct instruction.

Program features include:

- Phonological and phonemic awareness,
- Word work to promote orthographic mapping,
- Word-level reading fluency practice,
- Spelling instruction, and
- Morphological instruction and vocabulary development.

Prior to remediation, students undergo an assessment with a speech-language pathologist aimed at identifying gaps in their reading skills to ensure intervention is targeted and strategic. Midway through and at the end of the remediation sessions, students are re-evaluated, highlighting the gains that have been achieved and providing the family with a record of student improvement. This program requires a minimum commitment of 10 hours per month. Sessions are 30 minutes in length and delivered 5 days a week.



## WRITING

### Academic Writing Strategies; Grade 4–8

Evidence-based research shows that struggling writers can improve their skills dramatically if they receive the detailed explicit instruction they need (Graham & Harris, 2005). Such strategies can improve the writing skills of students with learning disabilities and are equally effective for individuals who just need extra help.

Evoke's Academic Writing Strategies program teaches students, step-by-step, a variety of evidence-based strategies that help them manage the writing process and improve what they write. The program assists students with every phase of the writing process, from brainstorming and goal setting to proofreading and revision—strategies that have been researched and proven to work with students at all levels, and especially those who are challenged by learning disabilities. Together, student and academic strategist will identify the greatest roadblocks to the student's writing and choose the strategies that will best address their challenges.

The writing process demands a lot from our brains, requiring us to perform multiple tasks simultaneously. Many students with executive function challenges, ADHD, and learning disabilities have a difficult time organizing their writing. Students work one-to-one with an academic strategist and are provided with the explicit strategy instruction required to enhance their writing skills and boost their confidence. This program requires a minimum commitment of 12 hours over the course of the summer and 10-15 minutes of homework per day, in between sessions, to reinforce strategies and skills.



### Virtual Learning and Instruction - Strategies for All Learners

Evoke specializes in working with students with ADHD and self-regulation challenges and understands their unique profiles and learning needs. We use evidence-based best practices for virtual instruction and learning. We use strategies, effective approaches, structure, and tools to enhance student engagement. Student achievement is important to us. Evoke uses measurable outcomes to track student progress through standardized assessments (where possible), weekly feedback communication from practitioners, and student progress-tracking summaries to highlight the mastery of strategies, accomplishments, and areas of challenge. Evoke offers interactive and engaging sessions, and we utilize screen sharing, interactive whiteboards, and online tools and resources that we'll teach your child (or you) to use. Our practitioners enlist technology to illustrate concepts and details by using photos, animations, drawings, and diagrams.



### Academic Writing Skills; Grade 9–12

There are specific academic competencies that are essential for postsecondary success and graduation. In Canada, too many high school students enter postsecondary education lacking these skills. There is also evidence that any deficiencies students have entering postsecondary education continue to persist after graduation. Students need to be taught specific and tangible skills that are required in high school and will be essential during their postsecondary career. Evoke's Academic Writing Skills program provides high school students with an introduction to the writing demands of both high school and postsecondary education. These academic writing skills include essay writing (creating a topic sentence, formulating a thesis, essay structure) applying and sequencing APA/MLA style in written work, identifying grammatical mistakes, effective note-taking strategies, and identifying plagiarism in essays. This program requires a minimum commitment of 12 hours over the course of the summer and 15 minutes of homework per day, in between sessions, to reinforce strategies and skills.

## ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Assistive Technology (AT) enables individuals with learning disabilities to bypass their weaknesses and complete tasks and activities independently. AT has been increasingly recognized as a valuable tool for students with learning disabilities, ASD, and ADHD. Research indicates that AT significantly enhances the educational experience and improves the academic outcomes for these students. A study by Okolo and Bouck (2007) found that AT tools and strategies help students overcome barriers to accessing, participating in, and making progress in the general education curriculum.

The benefits of using assistive technology include:

- An increase in student independence and self-confidence,
- The ability to complete tasks with which the student would otherwise struggle,
- Bridging the gap between the student's abilities and the demands of their learning environment, allowing them to experience greater academic success,
- Empowering students to become active learners,
- Tailored support that can address the unique needs of the student,
- Improved social interactions and integration for students by enabling them to engage more effectively with their peers, resulting in a positive impact on student well-being and mental health, and
- A sense of belonging and social inclusion.

### Gadget Gurus, Grade 4–Postsecondary

Evoke's Gadget Gurus summer program introduces students to assistive and educational technologies that support learning. Gadget Gurus gives students the tools and strategies that are key to helping make next year's academic experience a success. Students will explore how to use technology to help them stay organized, read text with meaning, write their best work, take effective notes, study, research, annotate, and edit their work. To engage in this program, students will require their own technology, which may include a laptop OR tablet (note: cell phones are not utilized in the program). This program requires a minimum commitment of 8 hours over the course of the summer. Reference sheets are provided to all participants to reinforce learning.

## LEARNING, STUDYING, AND CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

### The Science of Effective Learning and Studying, Grade 7–Postsecondary

This program provides students with a vital guide to key study and learning skills that are instrumental to academic success. Students are provided with evidence-based advice on how to understand and remember material, misunderstandings about learning, metacognition and effective studying, how to improve memory, effective academic reading and note-taking, time management and procrastination, academic integrity, and goal setting and motivation.

This program helps students develop the skills required to meet the academic expectations of their current grade/program and improve their academic performance. Informed by current cognitive science, the program focuses on helping students understand the science of learning and enhance their academic skills. Students are introduced to information, resources, strategies, and tools that will help them successfully navigate next year's academic curriculum. The program is designed to be delivered over 8 hours during the summer.

### Critical Thinking, Grade 9–Postsecondary

Critical thinking—the ability to gather and synthesize information, identify biases, make comparisons, ask questions, and weigh alternative points of view to reach informed conclusions—is an essential skill for students who want to succeed in their postsecondary studies and an important talent in the workplace and life. By acquiring new knowledge and different ways of looking at nuanced or novel problems, students learn to develop and vet logical, supportable arguments informed by research and analysis.

This capability looks different across academic disciplines. For example, students studying history learn to interpret documents by considering their sources, finding corroboration, and identifying historical context.



In the lab, students follow the scientific method and rely on the content knowledge stored in their long-term memory to free up their working memory to brainstorm hypotheses. In math class, students can take the goals of the steps in the solution models they have learned and apply those goals to solve word problems.

In this 8-session program, students learn the importance of (and brain science behind) content knowledge and time on task, practice understanding and taking points of view, learn how to research information effectively and efficiently, become familiar with the psychological origins and implications of bias, learn how to identify fake news and propaganda, practice asking open-ended questions, identify and make effective comparisons (surface structure vs. deep structure), and become more adept at breaking down arguments. Sessions include reinforcing activities/practice time and self-quizzes. Students receive helpful handouts and tip sheets that can be used as reference tools in future coursework. This program requires a minimum of 8 hours over the summer.

## COACHING

### **ADHD and Executive Function Coaching, Grade 9–Postsecondary**

Summer is an ideal time for students with ADHD and executive function challenges to engage in coaching before the next school year. It offers a less stressful environment and an opportunity to develop essential skills. The absence of academic pressures allows students to fully immerse themselves in coaching, focusing on understanding their academic and personal barriers, executive functioning challenges, and emotional regulation. During this time, students can work closely with their coach to develop personalized strategies and coping mechanisms that target their specific needs, setting the groundwork for a smoother transition into the new school year, when they will have an opportunity to practice and reinforce the strategies they learn during the summer.

This proactive approach to addressing ADHD and/or executive function related challenges during the summer months can lead to a more successful and positive academic experience in the upcoming school year, setting the stage for long-term growth and development. Evoke's coaches help students reflect on their strengths and weaknesses, prepare their mindset, think ahead, and set goals for the next year (i.e., what do they need, what are potential barriers that they faced this year that could get in the way for them in the fall, and how can they find balance when the school year begins).

Coaching helps students to:

- Build skills for the upcoming school year,
- Prepare for transitions,
- Learn evidence-based learning strategies,
- Strengthen their organization, time management, and executive function skills to enhance academic performance,
- Learn strategies they can use to help facilitate change, and
- Help translate abstract goals into concrete actions.

For students with ADHD, coaching provides an opportunity to understand their ADHD better: how the symptoms of ADHD play out in their daily, personal, and academic lives and how ADHD gets in the way of their learning.

Engaging in coaching over the summer means there is no homework to juggle, and plenty of time to focus on strategies that will enhance executive function skills, promote more positive thoughts and behaviours, and discover new approaches to learning. This program requires a minimum of 8 coaching hours over the summer.

### **Parent Coaching, for Parents of Students in Grade 6–12**

Parent coaching helps to provide encouragement, practical suggestions for challenges faced at home, feedback, and support in applying a change management system to move families forward. The goal of parent coaching is to help devise and implement personalized strategies to help your child manage their challenges, and for family life to be more balanced and functional.

The benefits of parent coaching include:

- Understanding how ADHD and executive function issues affect learning, behaviour, and family dynamics,
- Identifying and practicing strategies to enhance your relationship with your child and work on improving outlook and behaviours,
- Learning the skills to communicate effectively to ease conflicts,
- Modelling communication that allows for trust and problem-solving,
- Practicing active listening, asking powerful questions to help children increase awareness, building cognitive skills for flexibility, handling frustration, and problem-solving,
- Moving from judging to understanding and providing your child with the support and structure they need, and
- Creating a support team for your child, including facilitating school connections.

Coaching is a proven method for creating and managing change. The principles of coaching can be used by parents to help a child with ADHD and/or executive function challenges build an independent and happy life. This program requires a minimum of five, 60-minute coaching sessions.

## PERSONALIZED HIGH SCHOOL CREDIT PROGRAM, GRADES 9–12

This program is designed for students interested in, or currently taking, online summer courses. An Evoke tutor works one-to-one with the student to keep them organized, supported, and on task. Benefits of this program include:

- Uninterrupted learning, regardless of what happens in the fall, to ensure that the student can earn their credit/s,
- Work-checks by tutors before students submit assignments, and feedback to allow for deeper learning and increased achievement scores,
- Preparation for upcoming tests and exams, reteaching concepts as required/needed,
- Help for students who need more time processing information and benefit from working at their own pace,
- Assistance for students in planning for a reduced course load for the next year,
- Increased depth in the student's learning of the subject matter,
- The opportunity to make up lost credits, and
- Assistance for students who have executive function challenges and need to be supported in their online learning.

This program requires a minimum of one hour per week until the student's course is completed.

## POSTSECONDARY PREPARATION

### Postsecondary Planning, Grades 11 and 12

Summer is an ideal time for students with ADHD and executive function challenges to engage in coaching before the next school year.

Students managing learning differences and other demands on their time are frequently at a disadvantage when it comes to guidance counselling. Many students are unsure of their options and have difficulty organizing their approach, getting adequate time with counsellors, and identifying their strengths and interests. Our academic mentors understand that the postsecondary environment is competitive and that it is extremely important for students with learning disabilities to pursue their education and career goals at an institution that fits their needs and abilities. At Evoke, we alleviate anxiety for our students (and their families) by helping them ensure that they have the prerequisite courses and experiences to make successful postsecondary choices. Our mentoring sessions are student-centered, and we ask our clients open-ended questions to discover what inspires, motivates, and engages them. We move beyond traditional standardized questionnaires to give students an early, personalized, thoughtful, and comprehensive plan for thriving in a postsecondary environment. This program requires a minimum commitment of 3 hours.

### Transition to Postsecondary, Grades 11 and 12

Students with learning disabilities face unique challenges when entering postsecondary education after high school. A successful transition to and navigation of postsecondary studies requires knowledge of one's own disability and needs, as well as access to the resources and support services that may be available at the institution, and the ability to self-advocate (Milsom & Hartley, 2005). In the move to college or university, students often lose the essential supports they received in high school. As a result, many struggle both academically and emotionally.

Evoke offers personalized academic strategy focused on the development of metacognitive skills. Our academic strategists identify effective strategies and solutions that help students bridge the gap between ability and performance, and transition to postsecondary studies. Academic strategists focus on increasing the individual's ability to plan, prioritize, and organize, and emphasize a proactive approach to learning. Our program supports students in their transition by helping them create a vision for the kind of postsecondary experience they want to have, define their goals, and implement action steps to achieve their objectives. Through Evoke's Transition to Postsecondary program, students learn to develop key academic strategies, understand how to access available resources, and learn how to make a successful transition to postsecondary studies. This program requires a commitment of 8 hours over the summer.



### Financial Literacy for Students, Grade 11–Postsecondary

It's so easy for young adults to fall into financial traps, and poor decisions about money can take decades to fix. Learning to manage their personal finances today means that students will be prepared when the time comes to set financial goals, follow best practices, and prevent and protect themselves against fraud and financial abuse. Understanding the fundamentals of budgeting, saving, debt, and investing is critical in every part of life and students require the knowledge and skills for making sound financial decisions, engaging in good saving habits, budgeting, and building a solid credit score. This program is especially helpful to individuals who are transitioning to postsecondary education and/or students with ADHD who may find managing finances particularly difficult due to challenges with procrastination, disorganization, and impulsivity. This program requires a commitment of 8 hours over the summer.