

**Contact
Notes**

**Hamilton-Wentworth
District School Board
Special Education / Student Services**

905-527-5092 x2625

School Number: _____

Teacher: _____

Learning Resource Teacher: _____

Other Relevant Staff: _____

Principal _____

Things I want to talk about when I meet with the school:

2008



Working Together

*A Guide to
Special Education
and
Student Services*



Vision

A future in which all students achieve their full potential

Mission

Educating all students to become lifelong learners and contributing citizens in a challenging, changing, multi-cultural world

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board
100 Main Street West
Hamilton Ontario L8P 1H6

905.527.5092

www.hwdsb.on.ca

It is our pleasure to welcome you to Special Education / Student Services in Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board.

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is committed to providing appropriate educational opportunities for improved student learning for all students. Many professionals, including classroom teachers, special education teachers, educational assistants, school administrators, special education consultants, special assignment teachers, speech and language consultants, psycho-educational consultants and social workers provide support services to students with special needs.

The Board endeavours to meet the needs of all special education students in the most enabling environment, in accordance with parental preference. The special learning needs of students, wherever possible, can and should be addressed in their home school. The Board provides a continuum of special education supports and services which includes this regular class placement and support, as well as special class placement and support.

Education of our children is a responsibility shared by parents, school staff, and the students themselves. Regular, ongoing communication, initiated by you or the school staff, is a valued part of the team approach. Students, parents, and educators all play important roles in the planning and implementation of a student's special education program.

It is our hope that the information presented here will be helpful to you. After reading the handbook, should you require further information about programs, services and supports in special education or student services, please contact your local school or call 905-527-5092 x 2625 to have your call directed to the appropriate staff/department.

Vicki Corcoran
Superintendent
Special Education /
Student Services

Judy Colantino
Chair
Special Education
Advisory Committee

Printed by Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board
 N-Gage Productions

PT	Physiotherapist
SLP	Speech/Language Pathologist
Special Education Placement	The place where the special education program will occur and/or the special education services will be provided
Special Education Program	An educational program that is based on and modified by the results of continuous assessment and that includes a plan containing specific objectives and an outline of educational services that meet the needs of the exceptional pupil
Special Education Services	Facilities and resources, including support personnel and equipment, necessary for developing and implementing a special education program
Transition Plan	A plan for transition to appropriate post-secondary activities, such as work, further education, and/or community living, for exceptional students 14 years of age or older (except for those solely identified as gifted) that is part of their IEP



Some Common Terms and Short Forms

Accommodation	Teaching strategies, supports, and/or services that provide students with access to the curriculum and enable them to demonstrate learning
Alternative Expectations	Expectations that outline learning related to skill development in areas not represented in the Ontario curriculum policy documents
EA	Educational Assistant
ECE	Early Childhood Educator
Interpreter	A person who interprets/facilitates communication on behalf of a deaf or hard of hearing student
Intervenor	A person who helps interpret the world on behalf of a deaf/blind student
Exceptional Pupil	A pupil whose behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical or multiple exceptionalities are such that he or she is considered to need placement in a special education program
LRT	Learning Resource Teacher A special education teacher assigned to each school to provide special education resource support
Modification	Changes made to the grade-level curriculum expectations for a subject or course to meet the needs of the student
OT	Occupational Therapist

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Should you require further information about programs, services and supports, please contact your local school or call 905-527-5092 x 2625.

If you wish to receive this Guide to Special Education in Braille, large print or audio cassette format, please contact the Board at the address or telephone number shown on this guide.

When used in this guide, the word "parent" includes "guardian".

Enrolling A Child With Special Needs

Parents and school board personnel need to work together to be sure that the necessary supports are in place to provide a positive school-entry experience for your child. A planned transition to school will help to prepare for your child's future success.

Depending on the specific needs, the process may include:

- Identifying the persons who have worked with your child in the past;
- Identifying the persons who will play a role in supporting your child at school;
- Identifying the support staff who will continue to work with the school as part of the transition to school; and
- Developing the program, supports and services that will be in place to meet your child's needs once in school.

During the Spring prior to school entry -

- Registration Information is made available through area schools
- Orientation sessions for parents are held at each school
- School Entry Meetings for children with special needs are coordinated by Board personnel in collaboration with the appropriate community pre-school agencies

School Intake forms are completed for any students entering school who have previously attended an Umbrella Family and Child Centres of Hamilton program. This information is shared with the receiving school and teacher.

Additional meetings at the school may be scheduled to discuss your child's specific program requirements. The Principal may request assistance from system Special Education / Student Services staff. The school will consult

If you are registering your child for the first time:

- Call or visit your home school to complete pre-registration forms (If you do not know which is your home school, call the Board at 905-527-5092 to obtain this information)
- Participate in any meetings
- Participate in orientation sessions and other enrolment activities
- Describe the specific needs of your child
- Share information about your child, including any reports or relevant medical information

A Summary



You must be given adequate notice, in writing, of the time and date for any IPRC meeting. You will be invited to participate in any IPRC meeting.



You may bring an advocate to speak on your behalf or otherwise support you. This also applies to students 16 years of age or older. If you plan to bring someone with you, you should give the principal the name in advance.



You must be given written notice of any IPRC decisions.



You may appeal the identification and/or placement decisions of the IPRC, if you do not agree.



Your consent to the IPRC decisions is necessary before your child is placed. However, if you do not agree with the IPRC decisions, but do not ask for a discussion meeting or request an appeal within 30 days, the Board is then allowed to place your child.



You, and students who are 16 years of age or older, shall be invited to participate in the development of the Individual Education Plan (IEP). You must be provided with a copy of the IEP.



You may request a review of your child's placement after three months, if you have concerns.



You may at any time request an interview with the teacher to discuss your child's program.



Your Rights and Responsibilities:



Parents and school staff should strive for a close working relationship to support the needs of your child.



Parents and pupils 16 years of age and older have the right to be present at and participate in all committee discussions and to be present when the IPRC makes identification and placement decisions.



School staff should consult with you regarding any School Team meetings, discussions, or decisions.



Any written information regarding your child that is available to the School Team and/or the IPRC should also be available for you to read. School staff should discuss this information with you, and answer any questions you might have. You should, likewise, provide the School Team with any written information you wish to have considered during the problem-solving process.



Your consent is required before staff from community agencies can be consulted regarding your child.



Your consent is required before individual psycho-educational assessments can be done.



You are entitled to review with Psychological Services staff the results of a psycho-educational assessment. You will be provided with a copy of the report upon request.



You may request written communication to be made available in Braille, large print, or audio-cassette format.



How Do I Find Out if My Child Needs Help?

If you or the classroom teacher finds that your child is having difficulty learning, or your child is entering school with special learning needs, there are certain areas that need to be considered to plan appropriately.

Your child's social or behavioural skills, communication skills, cognitive/learning skills, and/or physical or sensory skills are the areas that you and the school may need to look at to find out more about how your child learns and then design an appropriate program.



Parents Are Our Partners

Parents are valued partners and parent participation is an important part of planning for education. As parents, you know your child best. You know your child's strengths, abilities, needs, and challenges, and, as a result, you have an important role in the education of your child.

Your continued involvement and support in the education of your child will make a positive and meaningful impact. It is important that you participate in decisions that affect your child's education.

Effective intervention on behalf of your child begins from the time that your child first enters one of our schools. When you register your child, whether entering kindergarten or transferring from another school, providing the school with as much information as you can about your child's strengths and needs helps us to get supports in place as quickly as possible. Contact the Principal of your local school who will begin the process. If necessary, a meeting will be arranged with appropriate resource personnel. Staff will recommend a suitable program for your child. They will also recommend any special services that are needed. A referral to an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) meeting may be made once your child is enrolled in the school.

A Place to Start

Where Do I Begin?

If you feel your child is having difficulty learning, the first step is to talk with the classroom teacher. Teachers have a number of ways to identify your child's learning needs, including:

- Talking with your child
- Observing your child during classroom activities
- Reviewing any information in your child's Ontario Student Record (OSR)
- Analyzing your child's class work
- Assessing your child's abilities in areas such as reading, mathematics, and so on, according to the curriculum expectations

Many informal processes can be put in place for your child as soon as concerns are present. These can include a variety of different strategies based on information gathered regarding your child's specific needs, interests, and learning style.

Parents can also gather information that may be useful in the assessment process.

This information could include medical reports, recent behavioural changes, and /or observations made about the child's learning needs, such as how he or she behaves outside of school.



Developmental Services for Children, Youth and Adults:

YWCA of Hamilton
Woodview Manor

The Salvation Army: Lawson Ministries
Rygiel Supports for Community Living
L'Arche Hamilton
Hamilton and District Extend-A-Family
Community Living Hamilton
CHOICES

Christian Horizons

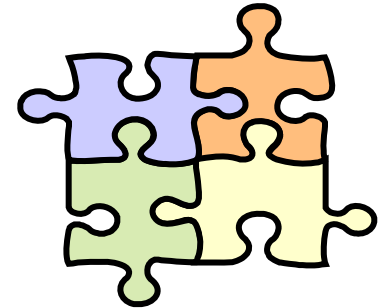
Child and Family Centre, McMaster Children's Hospital

Children's Aid Society of Hamilton: Alternate Care Program

Catholic Family Services: Adult Protective Services Worker, Family Services Worker

Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton: Alternate Care Program

Beth Tikvah Foundation of Hamilton



Many parent organizations are available to provide information and support to parents of exceptional children.

The school team can direct you to the appropriate community organizations.



Ministry Website for Special Education

The Ministry provides a website specifically for Special Education. This website provides excellent information in the following areas:

- Overview
- Resolving Identification or Placement Issues
- Policy Direction
- Resource Documents
- Related Information.

The Special Education website can be located at the following internet address.

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/speced.html

Community Services

CONTACT Hamilton
For Children's
and Developmental
Services

What Is Contact Hamilton?

140 King Street East, Suite 4
Hamilton, ON L8N 1B2
(905) 570-8888
info@contacthamilton.ca
www.contacthamilton.ca

CONTACT Hamilton is an agency funded by the Ministry of Community and Social Services to provide a single point of access and service co-ordination for individuals and families who use children's services and/or developmental services.

CONTACT Hamilton assists individuals and families, and the health and social service staff who work on their behalf, to get information and link with the services they need.

The following agencies are directly involved with CONTACT Hamilton:

Services for Children and Youth:

Woodview Children's Centre
Wesley Urban Ministries
The Good Shepherd: Brennan House
Rygiel Supports for Community Living
Public Health and Community Services: Child and Adolescent Services
Lynwood Hall Child and Family Centre
Hamilton Public Health & Community Services (Child and Adolescent Services, Ontario Works, etc.)
Community Living Hamilton
Community Child Abuse Council
Community Adolescent Network
COAST
Children's Aid Society of Hamilton
Charlton Hall Child and Family Centre
Child and Family Centre, McMaster Children's Hospital
Charlton Hall Child and Family Centre
Catholic Family Services: St. Martin's Manor and Family Services Worker
Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton: Alternate Care Program

The School Resource Team

For children who have learning needs that require support, a team is often formed to develop a plan. The School Resource Team can vary depending on your child's needs, but is made up of persons with various types of expertise. They work together to determine the best program and teaching strategies for your child.

The team *may* include:

School Staff

principal, vice-principal, learning resource teacher (the special education teacher assigned to your school), classroom teacher(s), educational assistant(s)

System Staff

speech/language pathologist, psycho-educational consultant, special education consultant, social worker, special assignment teacher

Community Partners

Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) case manager (occupational therapy, physiotherapy, nursing)

The active involvement of parents enhances the effectiveness of the Team. You have important information to share with its members. Your insights and observations may help in assessing your child's educational skills and identifying his or her interests.



The School resource Team works together to:

- Support your child, yourself, and each other
- Collaborate, consult and share information
- Identify strategies that may increase your child's success

How is an Assessment Carried Out?

At a Team Meeting, it may be decided that additional assessments, other than those that can be completed at the school level, may be necessary in order to determine your child's particular learning skills and make further changes to your child's program. Many of these assessments will require your consent.

After you provide consent to the school for a referral to system personnel to conduct further assessment(s), the appropriate staff will be contacted and the assessment will be scheduled.

An assessment may be done:

- To find out whether your child has a special learning need
- To identify your child's current capabilities, skills, and needs
- To find out how those learning needs affect your child's ability to learn and function in school
- To identify appropriate programming and services that will meet your child's individual needs



When all the assessment results are completed, the school will contact you and arrange a meeting with the staff who completed the assessment to explain the results, discuss the recommendations, and involve you in any related decisions.

Often a written report is shared with you and the teacher or others working with your child.

You will be provided with a copy of any written report upon request.

SEAC Members

Community Members

Autism Society Ontario Hamilton-Wentworth Chapter
Vicky Wylson-Sher 905-648-4266 idoc@sympatico.ca

Community Living Hamilton
Linda Dietsch 905-526-9339 x225 ldietsch@clham.com

Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)
Robert Peters 905-560-6051 petersfamily@cogeco.ca

CHOICES—Supporting people with Developmental Disabilities
Doug Foster 905-627-5716 douglas41@sympatico.ca

Down Syndrome Association of Hamilton
Judy Colantino 905-385-5022 judycolantino@hotmail.com

Lynwood Hall Child & Family Centre
Vicki Downie 905-389-1361 x232 vdownie@lynwoodhall.com

The Children's Aid Society of Hamilton-Wentworth
Brenda Bayley 905-522-1121 x6290 bbayley@hamiltoncas.com

Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant Community Care Access Centre
Bernadine Nabuurs 905-523-8600 x2150 bernadine.nabuurs@hnhb.ccac-ont.ca

McMaster Children's Hospital Dev. Pediatrics and Rehabilitation Portfolio
Jenny McEwen-Hill 905-521-2100 x74457 hillj@hhsc.ca

VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children
Cam Simmons 905-383-9593 csimmons@mountaincable.net

Board Trustee Members

Trustee Judith Bishop 905-512-5713 judith.bishop@hwdsb.on.ca

Trustee Robert Barlow 905-308-2483 robert.barlow@hwdsb.on.ca

Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) of Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is committed to working in partnership with the staff and resources of the Board to assure quality educational services for all students.

SEAC advocates for students with special needs by:

- Assisting students to receive the best programs that meet their social, physical, emotional and educational needs;
- Advising the Board about best practices;
- Working to ensure that all students are welcomed and included within their schools.

The Ministry of Education requires that each school board in Ontario appoint a SEAC. This committee is made up of parents, trustees, and representatives recommended by local associations and community organizations. Staff who represent various employee groups and/or provide information to the committee also participate.

The purpose of SEAC is to review issues related to the education of students with special needs and make recommendations on these issues to the trustees and the administration. The members bring their associations' perspectives to the discussions while working together to ensure the best education for all exceptional children within the Board.

SEAC members also sit on various other committees of the Board, both to represent SEAC on the committee and to keep SEAC members up-to-date on the issues.

SEAC meets once per month (usually on the last Wednesday of each month) throughout the school year.

The meetings start at 7:00 p.m. at the Education Centre, 100 Main Street West, in Hamilton.



Individual members of SEAC can be contacted with specific questions or concerns.

What is an IPRC - Identification, Placement, and Review Committee?

What is an IPRC?

Regulation 181/98 of the Education Act requires all school boards to set up Identification, Placement and Review committees. The purpose of the committee is to determine if a student should be identified as an exceptional pupil and states the exceptionality and the appropriate special education placement that will best meet the student's needs.

The Committee is composed of at least three people. One member will be either a supervisory officer or principal who acts as chairperson. Two or more members could include another principal, a vice-principal, a Learning Resource Teacher (LRT), a classroom teacher, or a Special Education Consultant.

After the initial meeting, the identification and placement are reviewed by an IPRC at least once yearly.

Referral to an IPRC

The principal of your child's school may, with written notice to you, refer your child to an IPRC when the principal and the child's teacher(s) believe that your child may benefit from a special education program.

You can request an IPRC meeting for your child by making a written request to the principal of your child's school.



Who Participates in an IPRC?

Parents are entitled and encouraged to attend the committee meeting.

Students who are 16 years of age or older are also entitled to attend.

Either you or the principal of your child's school may make a request for the attendance of others at the meeting. These may include your child's teacher, special education staff, representatives of an agency, or any person that you or the school believe will provide further information or clarification to the discussion.

The services of an interpreter, if one is required, can be requested through the principal of your child's school.

What Happens At An IPRC Meeting?

The chair or a school team member will introduce everyone.

The chair will explain the purpose of the meeting.

The IPRC will review all available information about your child.

The IPRC members will consider:

- An educational assessment of your child;
- Any health, psychological, or other assessment of your child conducted by a qualified practitioner if the IPRC members feel that such an assessment is required to make a correct identification or placement decision;
- Interviewing your child, with your consent, if your child is less than 16 years of age, if the IPRC members deem that it would be useful to do so;
- Any information that you submit about your child or that your child submits if he or she is 16 years of age or older.

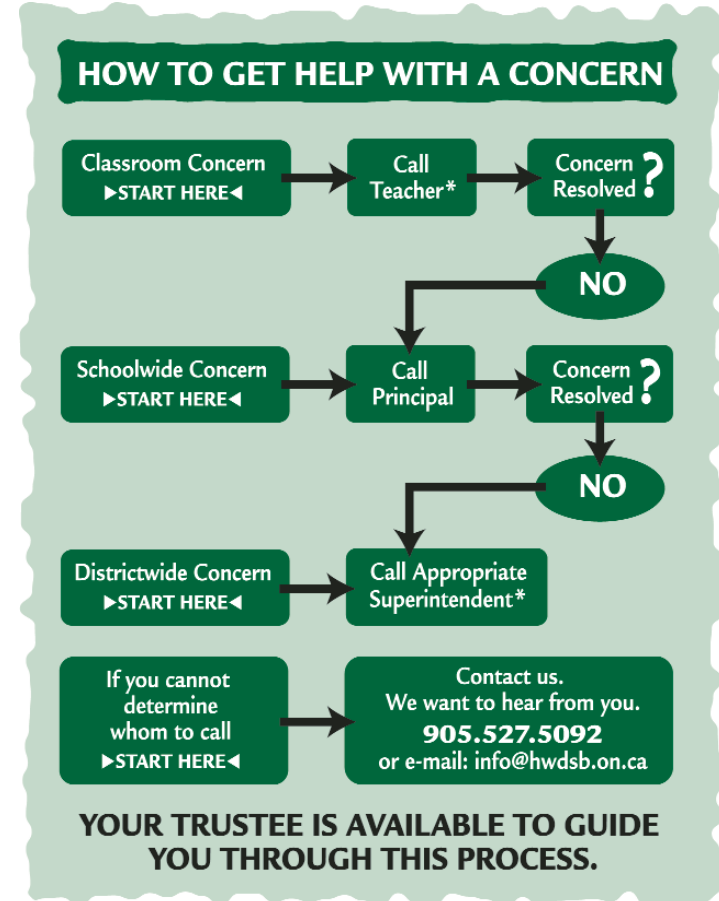
Following the sharing of information, the committee:

- may discuss any proposal that has been made about a special education program or special education services for your child and committee members will discuss any such proposal at your request, or at the request of your child if the child is 16 years of age or older
- will encourage you to ask questions and join in the discussion.

After all the information has been presented and considered, the committee will make its decision on identification and placement.

As a parent,

- Familiarize yourself with Board policies and procedures in areas that affect your child
- Participate in IPRCs, parent-teacher conferences, and any other relevant school activities
- Participate in the planning of your child's Individual Education Plan (IEP)
- Become acquainted with the school staff who work with your child
- Support your child at home
- Work with the school principal and teachers to solve problems



*School, Superintendent and Trustee contact information is available at www.hwdsb.on.ca or by calling 905.527.5092

What Should I Do When Issues Arise?

As a parent of a child with special needs, there will be a variety of decisions you will have to make throughout your child's education. The issues that may affect your child are as many and diverse as there are children.

When issues arise, it is important to start the discussion by :

- **Contacting your child's teacher—share your concerns or questions**
- **Including the important members of the school team (ex., Learning Resource Teacher, Guidance Counselor, Student Success Teacher, Principal) as needed**

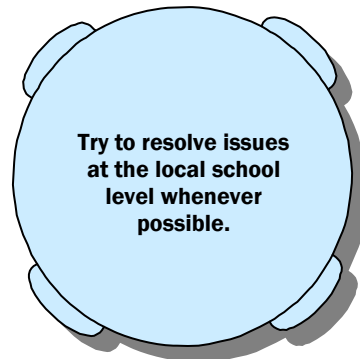
When an issue or concern arises about your child's program or services, it is essential that you first speak to the person most involved in your child's education: the classroom teacher. If the concern cannot be resolved at this level, it may be necessary for the principal to become involved. System special education staff may also be called upon to provide information and support in resolving the concern.

Various parent associations may be able to assist you in your discussions with the school and Board. In addition, the members of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) may also be able to help and provide support.

All parents have the right to advocate for their children. You may wish to work with an advocate if you feel that the addition of a third party may be helpful. An advocate can accompany you to meetings.

Focus on:

- **Your child's best interests**
- **Obtaining a clear understanding of the situation**
- **Exploring all options**
- **Examining all ideas and suggestions**
- **Finding a solution**



What Information Will Parents Receive About the IPRC Meeting?

At least ten (10) days in advance of the meeting, the chair of the IPRC, through the school, will provide you with written notification of the meeting and an invitation to attend the meeting as an important partner in considering your child's placement.

This letter will notify you of the date, time, and place of the meeting, and it will ask you to indicate whether you will attend.

Before the IPRC meeting occurs, you will receive a written copy of any information about your child that the chair of the IPRC has received from the school personnel.

What If I Am Unable to Make the Scheduled Meeting?

If you are not able to attend a scheduled meeting, you should contact the school principal to discuss the possibility of an alternate date or time.

If it is not possible to change a scheduled meeting, the principal will investigate alternate arrangements in an effort to allow for your participation.

What Will be Decided?



The IPRC will:

- **decide whether or not your child should be identified as exceptional;**
- **identify the areas of your child's exceptionality;**
- **decide an appropriate placement for your child; and**
- **review the identification and placement at least once in each school year.**

Who Is Identified as an Exceptional Pupil?

The Education Act defines an exceptional pupil as "a pupil whose behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical or multiple exceptionalities are such that he or she is considered to need placement in a special education program...".

Students are identified according to the categories and definitions of exceptionalities provided by the Ministry of Education.

What Are the Categories of Exceptionalities?

Behaviour

A learning disorder characterized by specific behaviour problems over such a period of time, and to such a marked degree, and of such a nature, as to adversely affect educational performance, and that may be accompanied by one or more of the following:

- an inability to build or to maintain interpersonal relationships;
- excessive fears or anxieties;
- a tendency to compulsive reaction;
- an inability to learn that cannot be traced to intellectual, sensory, or other health factors, or any combination thereof.

Autism

A severe learning disorder that is characterized by:

- a) disturbances in:
 - rate of educational development;
 - ability to relate to the environment;
 - mobility;
 - perception, speech, and language;
- b) lack of the representational symbolic behaviour that precedes language.

Language Impairment

A learning disorder characterized by an impairment in comprehension and/or the use of verbal communication or the written or other symbol system of communication, which may be associated with neurological, psychological, physical, or sensory factors, and which may:

- involve one or more of the form, content, and function of language in communication; and
- include one or more of the following:
 - language delay;
 - dysfluency;
 - voice and articulation development, which may or may not be organically or functionally based.

An IEP is ...

- a written plan describing the special education program and/or services required by a particular student, based on a thorough assessment of the student's strengths and needs – that is, the strengths and needs that affect the student's ability to learn and to demonstrate learning;
- a record of the particular accommodations needed to help the student achieve his or her learning expectations, given the student's identified learning strengths and needs;
- a working document that identifies learning expectations that are modified from the expectations for the age-appropriate grade level in a particular subject or course, as outlined in the Ministry of Education's curriculum policy documents;
- a working document that identifies alternative expectations, if required, in program areas not represented in the Ontario curriculum;
- a record of the specific knowledge and skills to be assessed and evaluated for the purpose of reporting student achievement of modified and/or alternative expectations;
- an accountability tool for the student, the student's parents, and everyone who has responsibilities under the plan for helping the student meet the stated goals and learning expectations as the student progresses through the Ontario curriculum.



An IEP is not ...

- a description of everything that will be taught to the student;
- list of all the teaching strategies used in regular classroom instruction;
- a document that records all learning expectations, including those that are not modified from the regular grade level curriculum expectations;
- a daily lesson plan.

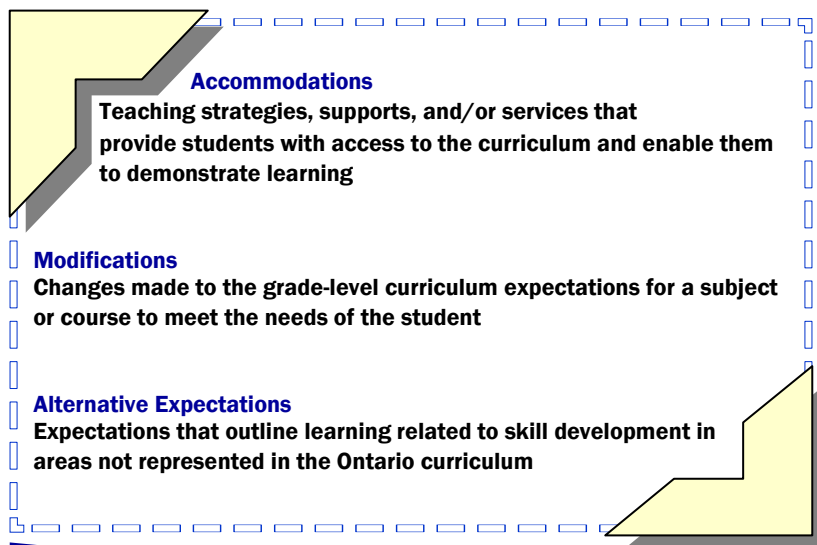
What Is An Individual Education Plan (IEP)?

An IEP is a written plan describing the special education program and/or services required by a particular student. It identifies learning expectations that are modified from or alternative to the expectations given in the curriculum policy document for the appropriate grade and subject or course, and/or any accommodations and special education services needed to assist the student in achieving his or her learning expectations.

Who Has An IEP?

If the IPRC has identified your child as an exceptional pupil and if you agree with the IPRC identification and placement decisions, then an Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be developed for your child within 30 school days of your child's placement in a special education program.

An IEP can also be developed for your child in order for him or her to receive a special education program and/or related services, even if he or she has not been formally identified through the IPRC process. In this case, the school may determine an IEP is necessary in order to assess your child's achievement based on modified expectations, or your child regularly requires accommodations for instruction or assessment purposes.



Speech Impairment

A disorder in language formation that may be associated with neurological, psychological, physical, or sensory factors; that involves perceptual motor aspects of transmitting oral messages; and that may be characterized by impairment in articulation, rhythm, and stress.

Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing

An impairment characterized by deficits in language and speech development because of a diminished or non-existent auditory response to sound.

Learning Disability

A learning disorder evident in both academic and social situations that involves one or more of the processes necessary for the proper use of spoken language or the symbols of communication, and that is characterized by a condition that:

- is not primarily the result of:
 - impairment of vision;
 - impairment of hearing;
 - physical disability;
 - developmental disability;
 - primary emotional disturbance;
 - cultural difference;
- results in a significant discrepancy between academic achievement and assessed intellectual ability, with deficits in one or more of the following:
 - receptive language (listening, reading);
 - language processing (thinking, conceptualizing, integrating);
 - expressive language (talking, spelling, writing)
 - mathematical computations; and
- may be associated with one or more conditions diagnosed as
 - a perceptual handicap;
 - a brain injury;
 - minimal brain dysfunction;
 - dyslexia;
 - developmental aphasia.

Giftedness

An unusually advanced degree of general intellectual ability that requires differentiated learning experiences of a depth and breadth beyond those normally provided in the regular school program to satisfy the level of education potential indicated.

Mild Intellectual Disability

A learning disorder characterized by:

- an ability to profit educationally within a regular class with the aid of considerable curriculum modification and supportive service;
- an inability to profit educationally within a regular class because of slow intellectual development;
- a potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self-support.

Developmental Disability

A severe learning disorder characterized by:

- an inability to profit from a special education program for students with mild intellectual disabilities because of slow Intellectual development;
- an ability to profit from a special education program that is designed to accommodate slow intellectual development;
- a limited potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self-support.

Physical Disability

A condition of such severe physical limitation or deficiency as to require special assistance in learning situations to provide the opportunity for educational achievement equivalent to that of pupils without exceptionalities who are of the same age or developmental level.

Blind and Low Vision

A condition of partial or total impairment of sight or vision that even with correction affects educational performance adversely.

Multiple Disabilities

A combination of learning or other disorders, impairments, or physical disabilities that is of such a nature as to require, for educational achievement, the services of one or more teachers holding qualifications in special education and the provision of support services appropriate for such disorders, impairments, or disabilities.



Special Education Classes

The Board endeavours to meet the needs of all special education students in the most enabling environment, in accordance with parental preference. The special learning needs of students, wherever possible, can and should be addressed within the home school.

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board provides a continuum of special education supports and services for exceptional learners which includes regular class placement and support, as well as special class placement and support.

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board offers the following special class placements:

Elementary	No. of Classes
Developmental Disability Classes	7
Multiple Disabilities Classes	2
Autism Classes	5
Comprehensive—Intellectual Classes	20
Comprehensive—Communication Classes	18
Comprehensive—Primary Speech and Language Classes	5
Deaf and Hearing Impaired Classes	3
Behaviour Pathway Classes	3

Secondary	No. of Classes
Developmental Disability Classes	8
Comprehensive Classes	7
Autism Classes	3

Special Day School—Glenwood	No. of Classes
Developmental Disability Classes	5
Multiple Disabilities Classes	4

The Review Process

Once a child has been placed in a special education program, will the placement be reviewed?

Yes, a Review IPRC meeting is held each school year, unless the principal of the school at which the special education program is being provided receives written notice from you, the parent, dispensing with the annual review.

You may request in writing to the principal a Review IPRC meeting any time after your child has been in a special education program for three (3) months.



What does a Review IPRC consider and decide?



The Review IPRC considers the same type of information that was originally considered.

The IPRC will review the identification and placement decisions to decide whether they should be continued or whether a different decision should be made.

With your written permission, the IPRC conducting the review will consider the progress your child has made in relation to your child's current IEP.

What Is A Special Education Program?

A special education program is defined as a program that:

- Is based on and modified by the results of continuous assessment and evaluation; and
- Includes a plan (called an Individual Education Plan or IEP) containing specific objectives based on your child's strengths and needs and an outline of special education services that address the strengths and needs of the exceptional pupil.

What Are Special Education Services?

Special education services are defined as the facilities and resources, including support personnel and equipment, necessary for developing and implementing a special education program.

What Placement Decisions Will Be Made at an IPRC?

Placement decisions that can be determined by the IPRC are:

- regular class
- special class
- special day school.

What Will the IPRC Consider In Making Its Placement Decision?

Before the IPRC can consider placing your child in a special education class, it must consider whether placement in a regular class with appropriate special education services will:

- meet your child's needs; and
- be consistent with your preference.

If, after considering all of the information presented to it, the IPRC is satisfied that placement in a regular class will meet your child's needs and that such a decision is consistent with your preference, the committee will decide in favour of placement in a regular class with appropriate special education services. If the committee decides that your child should be placed in a special education class, it must state the reason(s) for that decision in its written statement of decision.

Statement of Decision

The IPRC will provide you with a copy of its decision, called a Statement of Decision. This statement will indicate:

- whether the IPRC has identified your child as exceptional and if so, will identify the specific exceptionality; and
- the IPRC's placement decision (regular class, special class, or special day school).

Where the IPRC has decided that your child should be placed in a special education class, or special day school, the committee will give the reason(s) for that decision.

A written description of your child's strengths and needs is included on the IPRC record form under the sections 'Areas of Strength/Interest' and 'Areas of Needs/Strategies to Address Need'.

What Happens After the IPRC Decision?

If you agree with the IPRC decision, you will be asked to indicate, by signing your name, that you agree with the identification and placement decisions made by the committee.

If you do not agree with either the identification or placement decision made by the IPRC, you may request within 15 days of receiving the decision that the IPRC hold a second meeting to discuss your concerns.

If you still do not agree after the second meeting, an informal mediation process is available to you prior to formally appealing the IPRC decision.

If you do not agree with the IPRC decision, you may file a written notice of appeal with the Secretary of the Board within 30 days of the original decision or within 15 days of receiving the decision of a review meeting.

Your notice of appeal must indicate the decision with which you disagree and must include a statement explaining why you disagree.



The Appeal Process

The appeal process involves the following steps:

- The board will arrange for a special education appeal board to be established to hear your appeal.
- The appeal board will be composed of three people: one member selected by the Board; one member selected by the parent(s) of the pupil; and a chair, who is selected jointly by the first two members. If those two members cannot agree, the appropriate district manager of the Ministry will select a chair. The first two selections shall be made within 15 days of the board receiving notice of appeal. The chair shall be selected within 15 days of the first two members being chosen.
- Members of the appeal board may not have any prior knowledge of the matter under appeal.
- The chair of the appeal board will arrange for a meeting, which will be conducted in an informal manner, to take place at a convenient time and place within 30 days of his/her selection unless written consent is received from both the parents and the board agreeing to a later date.
- The chair may invite to the meeting anyone who can contribute information with respect to the matters under appeal.
- The appeal board shall make its recommendation(s) in writing within three (3) days of completing the meeting, stating whether it agrees or disagrees with the original IPRC decision, make recommendations about the pupil's identification and/or placement and give reasons for its decision and recommendations. The Board shall provide written notice within thirty (30) days indicating what action it will take after considering the appeal board's decision and recommendations.
- Parents may accept the appeal board's decision, or, if they do not accept the appeal board's decision, they may file a written appeal for a Special Education Tribunal.