



DURHAM CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO SPECIAL EDUCATION



Student Services Department

Notes:

1. If you wish to receive this parent's guide in Braille, large print, or audio-cassette format, please contact the board at the address or telephone shown on the last page of this guide.
2. When used in this guide, the word "parent" includes guardian.

The Education Act requires that school boards provide, or purchase from another board, special education programs and services for their exceptional pupils. The purpose of this parent's guide is to provide you with information about special education services and the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (I.P.R.C.). The guide also sets out for you the procedures involved in identifying a pupil as "exceptional", deciding the pupil's placement, or appealing such decisions if you do not agree with the I.P.R.C..

If, after reading this guide, you require more information, please see the board's list of contacts at the end of the document.

Philosophy

The Durham Catholic District School Board supports the belief that each student is unique, with individual strengths and needs. We provide for each child's strengths and needs in the neighbourhood school. Our philosophy is the concept and image of a circle - full, complete and inclusive. Our Catholic schools are committed to the whole person, since in Christ all human values find their fulfillment and unity.

Our Catholic school communities respect and accept the challenges of diversity. Recognizing the dignity and worth of each person, the Durham Catholic District School Board brings together all members of the Catholic school, parish and community, in an effort to realize the full potential of all students.

All teachers share in the responsibility of providing appropriate education for every student in their care. The concept of inclusion is based on the belief that all teachers are "special educators" who differ only in the extent of their training and expertise. The classroom/subject teacher may access resource staff within the school or draw upon the wider resources of the system as the need arises. Fundamental to this process is the collaboration among educators and support staff to deliver a variety of services, programs and strategies to achieve measurable, successful outcomes.

The collaborative process extends beyond the school and into the home. Parents are full partners in the education of their children, therefore parental participation and interest are important to student success and motivation. Parents are invited to be an integral part of the team planning and implementation process. Ongoing communication helps to ensure that the student's diversified needs are met in an inclusive setting.

Parents as Partners

You, as a parent/guardian, are the student's first teacher. As such, you have a wealth of information about the student's needs and abilities.

As part of its Belief Statements, the Durham Catholic District School Board supports the role of parent(s)/guardian(s):

- All students and their families are an integral component of the neighbourhood community school and parish.
- Parents and school staff are partners in the education of all students.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) of all students are encouraged to be closely involved in the education of their children through visits to the school and classroom, contact with the teacher as well as participation in the School Team process.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) collaborate with school personnel to develop, implement, and monitor the Individual Education Plan (I.E.P.). The plan describes the strengths and needs of an individual exceptional pupil, the special education program and services established to meet that pupil's needs and how the program and services will be delivered. It is a flexible, working document that can be adjusted as necessary.

Parent(s)/guardians(s) are kept informed of their child's progress on a regular basis. Both formal and informal interviews are held throughout the year. At least once every year, an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (I.P.R.C.) meets to discuss the placement of each identified student. Parents and students (16 years of age or older) are integral to these meetings.

Special Education Services

All students shall have their educational needs met through appropriate programming in a regular classroom in their home school. The goal is to ensure that the individual strengths and needs of each student is met. The support process is as follows:

PHASES IN THE SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL: ELEMENTARY

Phase I: Recognition and Program Adjustment

Pre-referral

When a student is experiencing difficulty, the Classroom Teacher:

- conferences with the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) regarding concerns;
- reviews the O.S.R.;
- may consult with the Program Support Teacher for resources and/or strategies;
- may make program adjustments and update the Parent(s)/Guardian(s);
- may suggest an optional consultation session be arranged, if the student requires further modifications.

Consultation Session (Classroom Teacher/Program Support Teacher)

The Classroom Teacher shares observations about the student, accommodations and/or modifications to date, and the success or difficulty with these accommodations and/or modifications.

One or more of the following may be decided:

- Classroom Teacher determines alternate modifications are necessary;
- Program Support Teacher may provide resources to the Classroom Teacher;
- Program Support Teacher may observe the student and model strategies for the Classroom Teacher

Classroom Teacher, Program Support Teacher and Parent(s)/Guardian(s) may decide that a School Team Meeting is necessary to discuss the student's program. The Classroom Teacher and Program Support Teacher will schedule a time convenient to all and outline procedures and identify participants.

Phase II: Referral to School Team Meeting

MEMBERS:

- Principal/Vice-Principal (Chair)
- Classroom Teacher
- Program Support Teacher
- Parent(s)/Guardian(s)
- Student (when appropriate)

Please note that additional school personnel, including Educational Assistants make valuable contributions to successful inclusion and may be invited to the School Team Meeting.

Appropriate resource personnel, system or community, may also be invited by the School Team upon agreement of the Parent(s)/ Guardian(s). This may include an Advocate.

- School personnel and Parent(s)/Guardian(s) share observations and offer information about the student.
- Minutes of the School Team are recorded and retained for future reference.
- The School Team develops a plan of action which may include:
 - The development of an Individual Education Plan with further accommodations and/or modifications;
 - Program Support Team involvement;
 - In-school assessment;
 - A request for additional input and/or services from Board Resource Personnel;
 - ◊ Co-ordinator
 - ◊ Resource Teachers
 - ◊ Psychological Services
 - ◊ Child and Youth Counselor Services
 - ◊ Social Work Services
 - ◊ Speech and Language Services
 - ◊ Program Consultants
- A review date may be established by the Team to evaluate the plan of action.

PHASES IN THE SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL: SECONDARY

Phase I: Recognition and Program Adjustment

Pre-referral

A concern is expressed regarding issues of program, academic progress or behavior. This may be initiated by Subject Teacher, Curriculum Chair, Program Support Teacher, Parent(s)/Guardian(s), or Principal.

Teacher and Program Support Teacher:

- determines strengths/ areas needing development;
- establish contact with student;
- review successful strategies/programs;
- determine medical needs, procedures presently in place, equipment needs.

Phase II: Referral to School Team Meeting

MEMBERS:

- Principal/Vice-Principal (Chair)
- Program Support Chair
- Guidance Department Representation
- Parent(s)/Guardian(s)
- Student (when appropriate)
- Subject Teacher representation
- Student Services/Community Services (which may include an Advocate)

The School Team convenes to determine appropriate adjustments to address concern.

- A plan of action is developed, which may include the following:
 - The development of an Individual Education Plan with further subject accommodation and/or modifications;
 - guidance counseling;
 - reduced course load;
 - timetable adjustment;
 - change in course level;
 - Parent(s)/Guardian(s) must consult on the I.E.P., or decline in writing on the Consultation Form;
 - in-school assessment;
 - psychological assessment;
 - referral to Student Services;
 - referral to Speech Language Pathologist;
 - referral to Resource Teachers for Vision, Hearing, Special Needs, Assistive Technology;
 - Program Support involvement;
 - optional resources as pursued by Parent(s)/Guardian(s).
- A review date may be established by the Team to evaluate the plan of action.

Phase III: Referral to I.P.R.C. (Identification, Placement and Review Committee)

Elementary and Secondary

In the Durham Catholic District School Board, there are no additional services or programs associated with formal identification through the Identification, Placement and Review Committee.

What is an I.P.R.C.?

Regulation 181/98 requires that all school boards set up I.P.R.C.'s. An I.P.R.C. is composed of at least 3 people, one of whom must be a principal or a supervisory officer of the board.

In the Durham Catholic District School Board, members of the Identification, Placement and Review Committee include:

- Principal (Chair)
- Family of Schools Superintendent
- Family of Schools Co-ordinator

How is an I.P.R.C. meeting requested?

The principal of your child's school:

- must request an I.P.R.C. meeting for your child, upon receiving your written request;
- may, with written notice to you, refer your child to an I.P.R.C. when the principal and the child's teacher or teachers believe that your child may benefit from a special education program.

Within 15 days of receiving your request, or giving you notice, the principal must provide you with a copy of this guide and a written statement of approximately when the I.P.R.C. will meet.

May parents attend the I.P.R.C. meeting?

Regulation 181/98 entitles parents and pupils 16 years of age or older:

- to be present at and participate in all committee discussions about your child; and
- to be present when the committee's identification and placement decision is made.

What is a special education program?

A special education program is defined in the Education Act as an educational 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 I.E.P.) containing specific objectives and an outline of special education services that meet the needs of the exceptional pupil.

What is an I.E.P.?

The I.E.P. must be developed for your child—if he or she has been identified as an exceptional student—in consultation with you. It must include:

- specific educational expectations;
- an outline of the special education program and services that will be received;
- a statement about the methods by which your child's progress will be reviewed; and
- for students 14 years and older (except those identified as exceptional solely on the basis of giftedness), a plan for transition to appropriate postsecondary school activities, such as work, further education, and community living.

The I.E.P. must be completed within 30 days after your child has been placed in the program, and the principal must ensure that you receive a copy of it.

What are special education services?

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

What will the I.P.R.C.'s written statement of decision include?

- whether or not a pupil is exceptional and to specify and define the appropriate exceptionality, according to Ministry definitions;
- a record of the pupil's strengths and needs as indicated on the I.E.P.;
- the most appropriate placement of the exceptional pupil with Special Education support to meet the needs of the child as outlined in the I.E.P.;
- recommendations regarding a special education program and special education services.

What Happens after the I.P.R.C. decision has been made?

- If you **agree** with the I.P.R.C. decision, you will be asked to indicate by signing your name, that you agree with the identification and placement decisions made by I.P.R.C.
- If the I.P.R.C. has identified your child as an exceptional pupil and if you **agree** with the I.P.R.C. identification and placement decisions, the principal of the school will ensure the development of an Individual Education Plan (I.E.P.) for your child, if one has not already been initiated.

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

- A review I.P.R.C. meeting will be held within the school year, unless the principal of the school where the special education program is being provided receives written notice from the parent, dispensing with the annual review.
- You may request a review I.P.R.C. meeting anytime after your child has been in a special education program for 3 months.

REVIEW COMMITTEE:

The Identification, Placement and Review Committee personnel who review the identification or placement on an annual basis are:

- Principal (Chair)
- Program Support Teacher
- Family of School Coordinator (when requested to attend by the school)

All decisions made by the I.P.R.C. Committee (Review Committee) are forwarded to the School Board. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are advised of the date when this will occur.

What does a review I.P.R.C. consider and decide?

- With your written permission, the I.P.R.C. conducting the review will consider the progress your child has made in relation to the I.E.P. It will consider the same type of information that was originally considered by the I.P.R.C., as well as any new information.
- The I.P.R.C. will review the placement and identification decisions and decide whether they should continue or whether a different decision should be made.

Who else may attend an I.P.R.C. meeting?

- the principal of your child's school;
- other resource people such as your child's teacher, special education staff, board support staff, or other professionals, who may provide further information or clarification;
- your representative - that is, a person who may support you or speak on behalf of you or your child; and
- an interpreter, if one is required. (You may request the services of an interpreter through the principal of your child's school.)

Who may request that they attend?

Either you or the principal of your child's school may make a request for the attendance of others at the I.P.R.C. meeting.

What information will parents receive about the I.P.R.C. meeting?

At least 10 days in advance of the meeting, the chair of the I.P.R.C. will provide you with written notification of the meeting and an invitation to attend 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 I.P.R.C. meeting occurs, you will receive a written copy of any information about your child that the chair of the I.P.R.C. has received. This may include the results of assessments or a summary of information.

What if parents are unable to make the scheduled meeting?

If you are unable to make the scheduled meeting, you may:

- contact the school principal to arrange an alternative date or time; or
- let the school principal know you will not be attending. As soon as possible after the meeting, the principal will forward to you, for your consideration and signature, the I.P.R.C.'s written statement of decision noting the decision about identification and placement and any recommendations regarding special education programs and services.

What happens at an I.P.R.C. meeting?

- The chair introduces everyone and explains the purpose of the meeting.
- The I.P.R.C. will review all available information about your child. The members will:
 - ◊ consider an educational assessment of your child;
 - ◊ consider, subject to the provisions of the Health Care Consent Act, 1996, a health or psychological assessment of your child conducted by a qualified practitioner, if they feel that such an assessment is required to make a correct identification or placement decision;
 - ◊ interview your child, with your consent if your child is less than 16 years of age, if they feel it would be useful to do so; and
 - ◊ consider any information that you submit about your child or that your child submits if he or she is 16 years of age or older.
- The committee may discuss any proposal that has been made about a special education program or special education services for the child. 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.
- You are encouraged to ask questions and join in the discussion.
- Following the discussion, after all the information has been presented and considered, the committee will make its decision.

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 will the I.P.R.C. consider in making its placement decision?

Since the Durham Catholic District School Board practices inclusion, the outcome of placement decisions at I.P.R.C. meetings is generally determined to be the regular classroom with varying degrees of indirect, resource, or withdrawal support.

DISAGREEMENT WITH I.P.R.C. DECISIONS

If you **do not agree** with either the identification or placement decision made by the I.P.R.C., you may:

- ◊ within 15 days of receipt of the decision, request that the I.P.R.C. hold a second meeting to discuss concerns; or
- ◊ within 30 days of receipt of the decision, file a notice of appeal with the Director of Education, Durham Catholic District School Board, 650 Rossland Road West, Oshawa, Ontario L1J 7C4.

If you **do not agree** with the decision after the second meeting, you may file a notice of appeal within 15 days of your receipt of the decision.

If you do not consent to the I.P.R.C. decision and you do not appeal it, the Board will instruct the Principal to implement the I.P.R.C. decision.

APPEAL PROCEDURES

It may be that at the I.P.R.C., the student's parents and the school personnel disagree with the identification and/or placement for the student. If that should occur there is an appeal process outlined in Regulation 181-98.

How do you Appeal an I.P.R.C. Decision?

If you disagree with the I.P.R.C.'s identification of your child as exceptional or with the placement decision of the I.P.R.C., you may, within 30 days of receipt of the original decision or within 15 days of receipt of the decision from the second meeting described above, give written notification of your intention to appeal the decision to:

The Director of Education
Durham Catholic District School Board
650 Rossland Road West
Oshawa, Ontario L1J 7C4

The notice of appeal must:

- indicate the decision with which you disagree; and
- include a statement that sets out your reasons for disagreement.

What Happens in the Appeal Process?

The appeal process involves the following steps:

- The Special Education Appeal Board shall be composed of:
 - a) one member selected by the board in which the pupil is placed;
 - b) one member selected by a parent of the pupil; and
 - c) a chair, selected jointly by the members selected under clauses (a) and (b) or, where those members cannot agree, by the appropriate district manager of the Ministry.
- The chair of the Appeal Board will arrange a meeting to take place at a convenient time and place, but no later than 30 days after he or she has been selected (unless parents and board both provide written consent to a later date).
- The Appeal Board will receive the material reviewed by the I.P.R.C. and may interview any persons who may be able to contribute information about the matter under appeal.
- You, the parent, and your child, if he or she is 16 years old or over, are entitled to be present at, and to participate in all discussions.
- The Appeal Board must make its recommendation within 3 days of the meeting. It may:
 - ◊ agree with the I.P.R.C. and recommend that the decision be implemented; or
 - ◊ disagree with the I.P.R.C. and make a recommendation to the board about your child's identification, placement, or both.
- The Appeal Board will report its recommendations in writing, to you and to the school board, providing the reasons for its recommendations.
- Within 30 days of receiving the appeal board's written statement, the School Board will decide what action it will take with respect to the recommendations.
- You may accept the decision of the school board, or you may appeal to a Special Education Tribunal. You may request a hearing by writing to the Secretary of the Special Education Tribunal. Information about making an application to the Tribunal will be included with the Appeal Board's decision.

What Organizations are Available to Assist Parents?

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

Ajax-Pickering/Whitby Association for Community Living 905 427 3300

Association for Bright Children (ABC) 416 925 6136

Autism Society Ontario, Durham Chapter <http://www.em-space.com/aso/>

Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation 416 425 6200 or toll free 1 800 363 2440

Central East Community Care Access to Care 905 430 3308 or toll free 1 800 263 3877

Central Seven Association for Community Living

Cystic Fibrosis Foundation (Durham Chapter) 905 720 4739

Durham Behaviour Management 905 723 8521

Durham Down Syndrome Association 905 619 0073

Durham West Chapter- Learning Disabled Association of Ontario - 416 929 4311

Frontenac Youth Services 905 427 8504

Grandview Children's Centre 905 728 1673

Kinark Child and Family Services 905 433 0241

Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders

Ontario Federation for Cerebral Palsy 416 244 9686

Oshawa/Clarington Association for Community Living 905 576 3011

Resources for Exceptional Children 905 427 8862

Speech Language Learning Centre 905 686 4800

Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus Association of Ontario 416 214 1056

The Easter Seal Society 416 421 8585

The Tourette Syndrome Association 416 861 8398

Variety Village 416 699 7167

Views for the Visually Impaired 905 839 8454

Voice for Hearing Impaired Children 416 698 0704

What are the Ministry's Provincial and Demonstration Schools?

The Ministry operates provincial and demonstration schools throughout Ontario for the deaf, blind, deaf-blind, and severely learning disabled students, as well as those with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Residential programs are offered at the schools Monday to Friday.

DEMONSTRATION SCHOOLS for A.D.H.D. and Severe Learning Disabilities

Sagonaska School

350 Dundas Street West
Belleville, ON K8P 1B2
Phone: (613) 967-2830

Amethyst School

1090 Highbury Avenue
London, ON N5Y 4V9
Phone: (519) 453-4408

Trillium School

347 Ontario Street South
Milton, ON L9T 3X9
Phone: (905) 878-8428

School of the Deaf

Ernest C. Drury School
255 Ontario Street South
Milton, ON L9T 2M5
Phone: (905) 878-2851
TTY: (905) 878-7195

Sir James Whitney School
350 Dundas Street West
Belleville, ON K8P 1B2
Phone & TTY: (613) 967-2823

Robarts School
1090 Highbury Avenue
P.O. Box 7360, Station E
London, ON N5Y 4V9
Phone & TTY: (519) 453-4400

School for the Blind and Deaf-Blind:

W. Ross MacDonald School
350 Brant Avenue
Brantford, ON N3T 3J9
Phone: (519) 759-0730

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM:

Superintendent of Education - Student Services/Family of Schools
Durham Catholic District School Board
700 Stevenson Road North
Oshawa, ON L1J 5P5
Phone: (905) 576-6150 Ext. 2121
Fax: (905) 432-6886

OR

Contact the Principal or Program Support Teacher
at your son/daughter's school.

OR

VISIT OUR WEBSITE @ www.dcdsb.ca

**A copy of the Durham Catholic District School Board's
Special Education Plan is available upon request.**

**Catholic Education
Learning and Living in Faith**

Our Mission

The Durham Catholic District School Board, as followers of Jesus, is a Catholic learning community committed to educating students to contribute their God-given talents in service to others.

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