



Simcoe County District School Board

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**PARENTS'
GUIDE
TO
SPECIAL
EDUCATION
2006-2007**

PARENTS' GUIDE TO SPECIAL EDUCATION – 2006-2007

Notes:

1. If you wish to receive this Parents' Guide in Braille, large print, or audio-cassette format, please contact the Board at the address or telephone number 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 Parents' Guide is to provide you with information about the Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC), and to set 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 IPRC.

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

What is an Identification Placement and Review Committee?

Regulation 181/98 requires that all school boards set up IPRCs. Each IPRC must consist of three or more members, one of whom must be either a principal or supervisory officer employed by the school board. The balance of the committee may be made up of teachers, special education consultants, or other special education professionals employed by the board.

Parents are invited and encouraged to attend the meeting.

What is the role of the IPRC?

The IPRC will:

- decide whether or not your child is exceptional;
- identify the areas of your child's exceptionality, according to the categories and definitions of exceptionalities provided by the Ministry of Education;
- describe your child's strengths and needs, from which your child's IEP will be developed, within 30 school days of the IPRC meeting;
- decide an appropriate placement for your child (regular class or special education class); 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 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;
- includes a plan (called an Individual Education Plan or IEP) containing specific objectives and an outline of special education services that meet the strengths and needs of the exceptional pupil.

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 is an IEP?

The IEP must be developed for your child, 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 post secondary school activities, such as work, further education, and community living.

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

How is an IPRC meeting requested?

The principal of your child's school:

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

Within **15 calendar days** of receiving your request, or giving you notice, the principal must provide you with a written acknowledgement of your request, a copy of this guide and a written statement of when approximately the IPRC will meet.

May parents attend the IPRC 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.

Who else may attend an IPRC meeting?

- the student
- the principal of your child's school;
- other resource people such as your child's teacher, special education staff, board support staff, or the representative of an agency, 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 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 IPRC meeting.

What information will parents receive about the IPRC meeting?

At least **10 calendar days** in advance of the meeting, the chair of the IPRC 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 reply as to whether or not you will attend. Before the IPRC meeting occurs, you will receive the same information that the Identification, Placement and Review Committee receives about your child. If assessments exist, this will also include the results of the assessments. The letter will also invite you to contact the school if there is any information that you would like to provide the IPRC and/or if you have any questions related to the information or the process.

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 IPRC's written statement of decision noting the decision of identification and placement and any recommendations regarding special education programs and services.

How a parent might prepare for an IPRC meeting

- set up a file to keep all papers organized
- speak to the principal, teachers and professionals working with their child
- ask for information about the parent's role and the IPRC process
- look at their child's OSR and review recent assessments and reports
- ask if they can meet with the school team to discuss their child's progress
obtain a copy of the Board's Special Education Plan

What happens at an IPRC meeting?

- The chair introduces everyone and explains the purpose of the meeting.
- The IPRC will review all available information about your child. The members will:
 - consider an educational assessment of your child;
 - may, subject to the provisions of the *Health Care Consent Act, 1996*, request 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 your child submits if he or she is 16 years of age or older.
- You are encouraged to ask questions and join in the discussion.
- Following the discussion, and after all the information has been presented and considered, the committee will make its decision.

What will the IPRC consider in making its placement decision?

The Simcoe County District School Board acknowledges that placement of a student in a regular class is the first option considered by an IPRC.

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 strengths and needs; and
- be consistent with your preferences.

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 strengths and needs and that such a decision is consistent with your preferences, 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 reasons for that decision in its written statement of decision.

What will the IPRC's written statement of decision include?

The IPRC's written statement of decision will state:

- whether the IPRC has identified your child as exceptional; and when the IPRC has identified your child as exceptional, the categories and definitions of any exceptionalities identified, as they are defined by the Ministry of Education; the IPRC's description of your child's strengths and needs; the IPRC's placement decision; the IPRC's recommendations regarding a special education program and special education services; and when the IPRC has decided that your child should be placed in a special education class, the reasons for that decision.

What happens after the IPRC has made its decision?

- If you **agree** with the decision, you will be asked to indicate, by signing your name, that you agree with the identification and placement decisions made by the IPRC.
- If the IPRC has identified your child as an exceptional pupil and if you **agree** with the IPRC identification and placement decisions, the board will promptly notify the principal of the school at which the special education program is to be provided of the need to develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for your child.

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

- A review IPRC meeting will be held within one 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 a review IPRC meeting any time after your child has been in a special education program for 3 months.

What does a review IPRC consider and decide?

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

What can parents do if they disagree with the IPRC decision?

If you **do not agree** with either the identification or the placement decision made by the IPRC, you may:

- within **15 calendar days** of receipt of the decision, request, in writing, that the IPRC hold a second meeting to discuss your concerns; or
- within **30 calendar days** of receipt of the decision, file notice of appeal with *Secretary of the Board, Simcoe County District School Board, 1170 Highway 26, Midhurst, Ontario, L0L 1X0.*
- If you **do not agree** with the decision after the second meeting, you may file a notice of appeal within **15 calendar days** of your receipt of the decision.

If you do not consent to the IPRC decision but you do not appeal it, the board will instruct the principal to implement the IPRC decision.

How do I appeal an IPRC decision?

If you disagree with the IPRC's identification of your child as exceptional or with the placement decision of the IPRC, 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 *Secretary of the Simcoe County District School Board, 1170 Highway 26, Midhurst, Ontario, L0L 1X0.*

The notice of the appeal must:

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

What happens in the appeal process?

The appeal process involves the following steps:

- A Special Education Appeal Board will be established to hear your appeal. This board will be composed of three persons who have no prior knowledge of the matter under appeal, **one of whom is to be selected by you, the parent.**
- The **chair** of the appeal board will arrange a meeting to take place at a convenient time and place, but no later than 30 calendar days after he or she has been selected (unless parents and board provide written consent to a later date).
- The appeal board will receive the material reviewed by the IPRC 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's ending. It may;
 - agree with the IPRC and recommend that the decision be implemented; or
 - disagree with the IPRC and make a recommendation to the board about your child's identification or 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 calendar days** of receiving the appeal board's written statement, the school board will decide what action it will take with respect to the recommendations (boards are not required to follow the appeal board recommendation).
- 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 special education programs and services are provided by the Board?

The Simcoe County District School Board provides a range of programs and services to meet the strengths and needs of our students with special needs. The Simcoe County District School Board works in partnership with local agencies to provide education for some students in care and treatment facilities, and works with the Ministry's Provincial and Demonstration schools to provide support for students with specific strengths and needs which can more appropriately be addressed through intensive residential programs. Simcoe County District School Board currently does not purchase services from other boards.

What organizations are available to assist parents?

Many parent organizations are available to provide information and support to parents of exceptional students. Those organizations represented on the Board's SEAC include the following:

| Agency, Association, First Nation, Organization or Parent | Phone Number |
|--|---------------------|
| Association for Bright Children, Simcoe County Chapter | (705) 458-1564 |
| Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Network | (705) 721-4719 |
| Autism Society (Simcoe Chapter) | (705) 733-0440 |
| Barrie Area Native Advisory Circle (BANAC) | (705) 721-7689 |
| Candlelighters Simcoe - Parents of Children with Cancer | (705) 725-0747 |
| Deaf Access Simcoe | (705) 728-3577 |
| Epilepsy Ontario - Simcoe County | (705) 737-3132 |
| Integration Action for Inclusion in Education and Community Ontario (Simcoe Chapter) | (705) 734-9683 |
| Kinark Child and Family Services | (705) 726-8861 |
| Learning Disabilities Association of Simcoe County | (705) 726-5553 |
| Parents of Down Syndrome | (705) 446-0888 |
| Simcoe Community Services | (705) 726-9082 |
| Simcoe County Family Network | (705) 325-6796 |
| VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children | (905) 939-0643 |

What are the Ministry's Provincial and Demonstration Schools?

The Ministry of Education operates Provincial and Demonstration Schools throughout Ontario for 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 for students who live too far from school to travel daily.

| Demonstration Schools for English-speaking Students with Severe Learning Disabilities, Including Learning Disabilities Associated with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (A.D.H.D.) | |
|---|---|
| Amethyst School 1090 Highbury Avenue London, ON N5Y 4V9 Telephone : (519) 453-4408 Fax: (519) 453-2160 | Sagonaska School 350 Dundas Street West Belleville, ON K8P 1B2 Telephone : (613) 967-2830 Fax: (613) 967-2482 |
| Trillium School 347 Ontario Street South Milton, ON L9T 3X9 Telephone : (905) 878-8428 Fax: (905) 878-7540 | |

| Schools for the Deaf | |
|--|--|
| Ernest C. Drury School 255 Ontario Street South Milton, ON L9T 2M5 Telephone : (905) 878-2851 Fax: (905) 878-1354 | The Robarts School for the Deaf 1090 Highbury Ave. London, ON N5Y 4V9 Telephone : (519) 453-4400 Fax: (519) 453-7943 |
| Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf 350 Dundas Street West Belleville, ON K8P 1B2 Telephone : (613) 967-2823 Fax: (613) 967-2857 | |
| School for the Blind and Deaf-Blind | |
| W. Ross Macdonald School 350 Brant Avenue Brantford, ON N3T 3J9 Telephone : (519) 759-0730 Fax: (519) 759-4741 | |
| French-Language School for the Deaf and Demonstration School for French-Speaking Students with Severe Learning Disabilities, Including Learning Disabilities Associated with ADHD | |
| Centre Jules-Leger 281 rue Lanark Ottawa, ON K1Z 6R8 Telephone : (613) 761-9300 Fax: (613) 761-9301 TTY- (613) 761-9302 and 761-9304 | |

Where can parents obtain additional information?

Additional information can be obtained from:

- the *School Principal* or the *Principal of Special Education*, 1170 Highway 26, Midhurst, Ontario , L0L 1X0, (705) 728-7570, ext 11264.

Web Resources

- www.scdsb.on.ca – SCDSB web-site
- www.edu.gov.on.ca – Ontario Ministry of Education Web-Site
- www.seaclearning.on.ca – Special Education Advisory Committee Resource Web-Site