

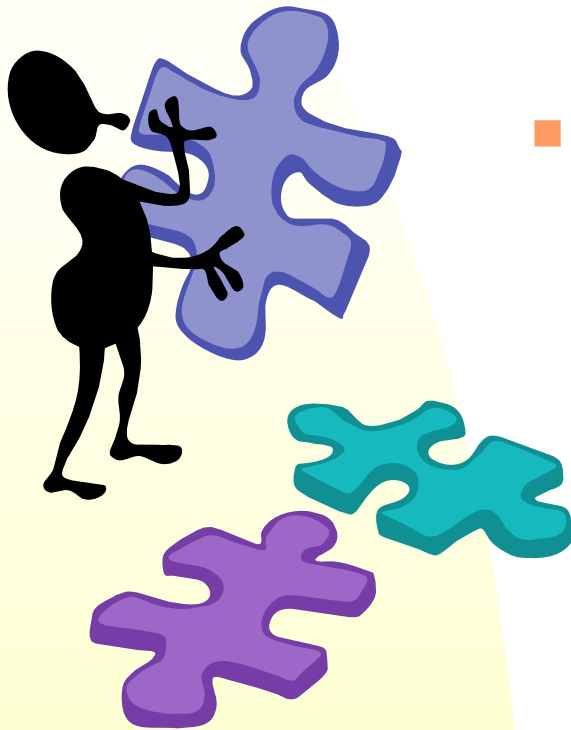


# A Parent's Guide to a Child's Special Learning Needs

*London District Catholic School Board*

*Building Inclusive Catholic Schools*

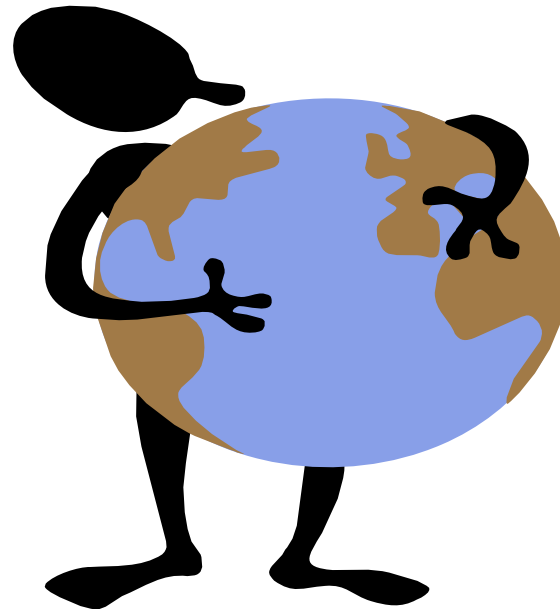
# Philosophy of Special Education



- The London District Catholic School Board is committed to providing appropriate learning environments and experiences for students with special needs

# *We believe that*

- All students educated in our schools have an opportunity to learn to live and to contribute as responsible Catholics in any society



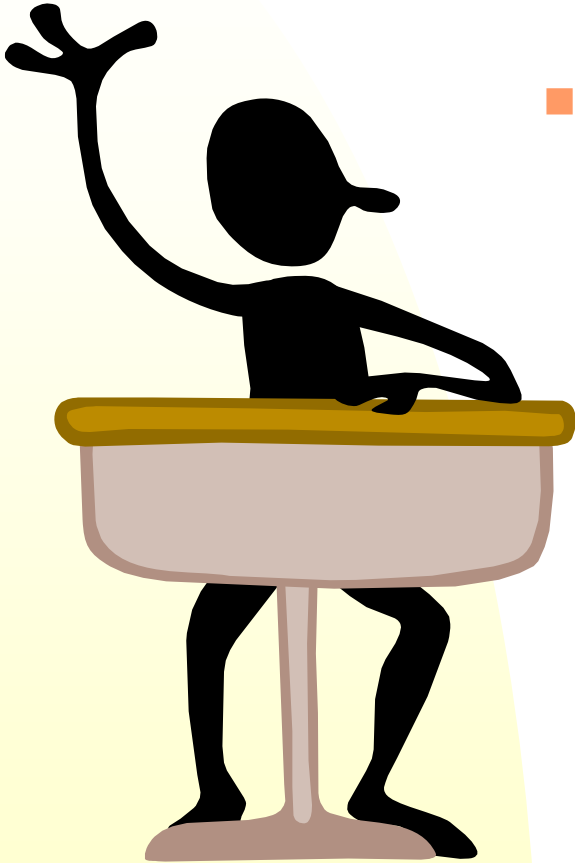
# *We believe that*

- All students have a right to participate fully in opportunities for learning and growth appropriate to their needs and gifts



# *We believe that*

- Students that have exceptional needs are more LIKE other students than they are different



# *We believe that*

- It is our responsibility as Catholic educators and parents to provide for all students, the opportunity to share the school experience
- Fairness is not sameness



# *We believe that*



- An attitude of welcome acceptance, and indeed, *celebration* of individual differences and unique gifts is to be encouraged and supported among pupils, parents and staff of this Catholic school board

# Welcome to School!



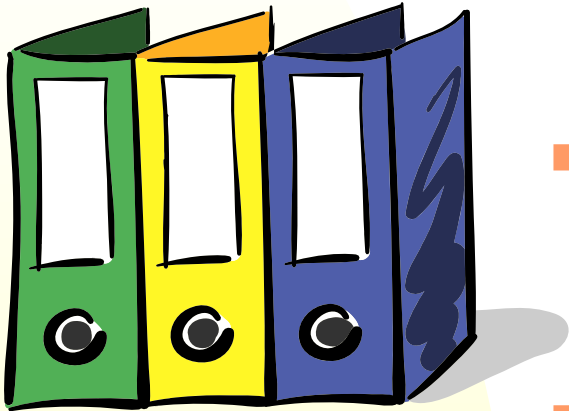
- **How can the school initially find out about the strengths and needs of your child?**
  
- **During the Registration process at the school; sharing information about your child is important to his/her education program**
  
- **At an Early Years Transition Meeting which may involve:**
  - ◆ **School team**
  - ◆ **Affiliate liaison teacher**
  - ◆ **Community partners**

# Who makes up the school team?

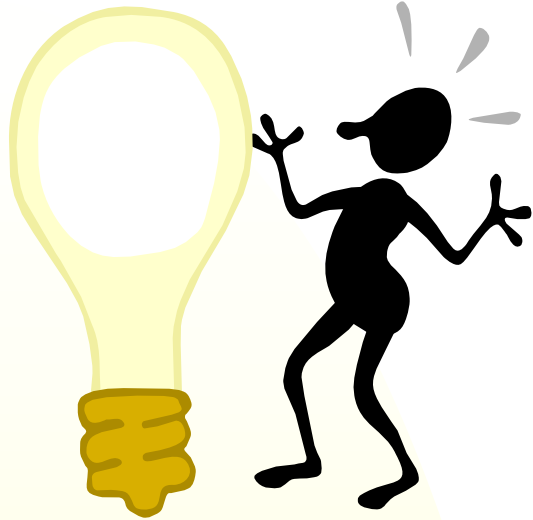
- The principal or vice-principal
- Your child's teacher
- The Student Program Support Teacher who is a resource support for teachers and students
- An Educational Assistant (if applicable)



# How will my child be welcomed and provided for in school?



- The Ontario Curriculum is designed for all students
- Programs and activities must reflect the abilities, needs, interests and learning styles of all students
- Shared responsibility among teachers, parents, students, school and system staff to enhance the participation of all students in the life of the school



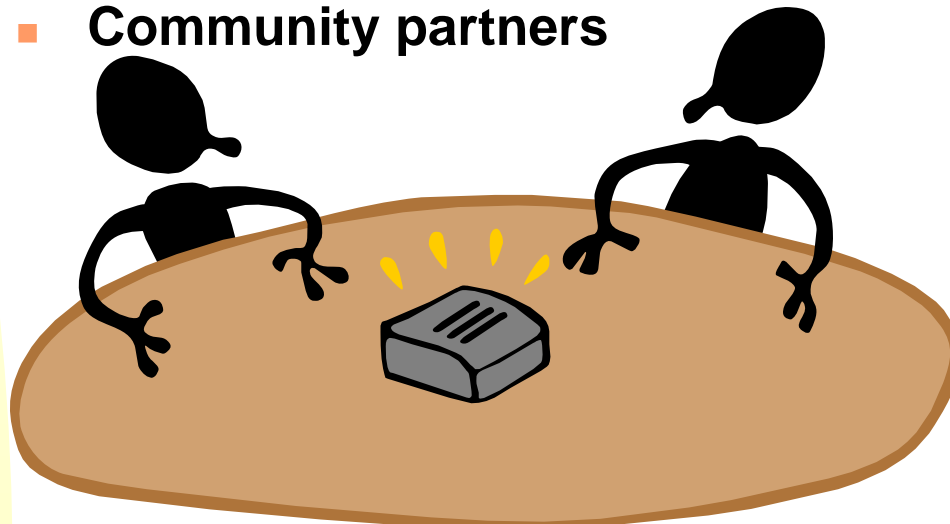
## What if concerns about my child develop?

- The school team will want to gather additional information about your child in order to gain some insight about their intelligence, strengths, needs, health and behaviour
- This information will help the school to make appropriate educational decisions for your child
- It can be gathered through teacher judgement, diagnostic assessments performed by the school SPST and tracking achievement over time

# Does anyone else get involved?

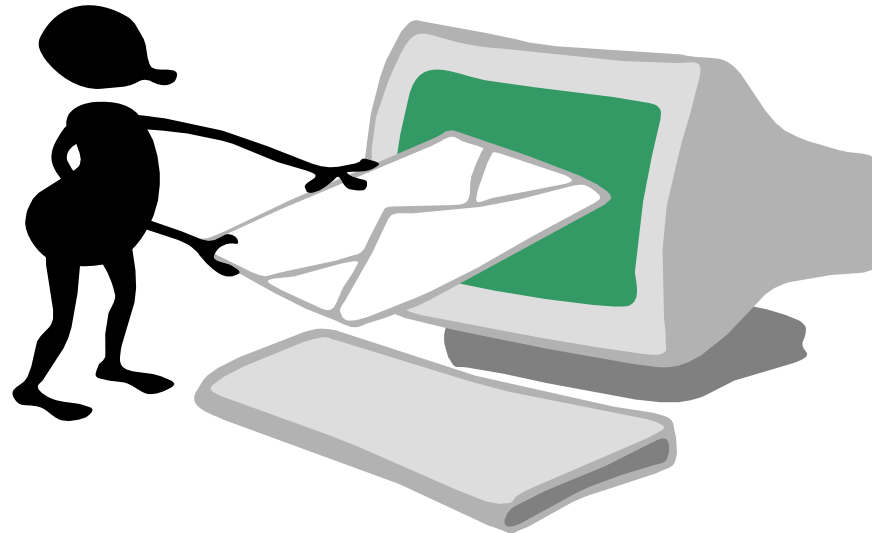
**Possibly:**

- **Affiliate area team – Liaison Teacher, Psycho-educational consultant, Social Worker, Speech and Language Pathologist**
- **Curriculum Resource Teachers**
- **Behaviour Resource Teacher**
- **Community partners**



# How will I be kept informed?

- Parent-teacher conferences
- Home-school communication
- School Team meetings
- Regular reporting periods

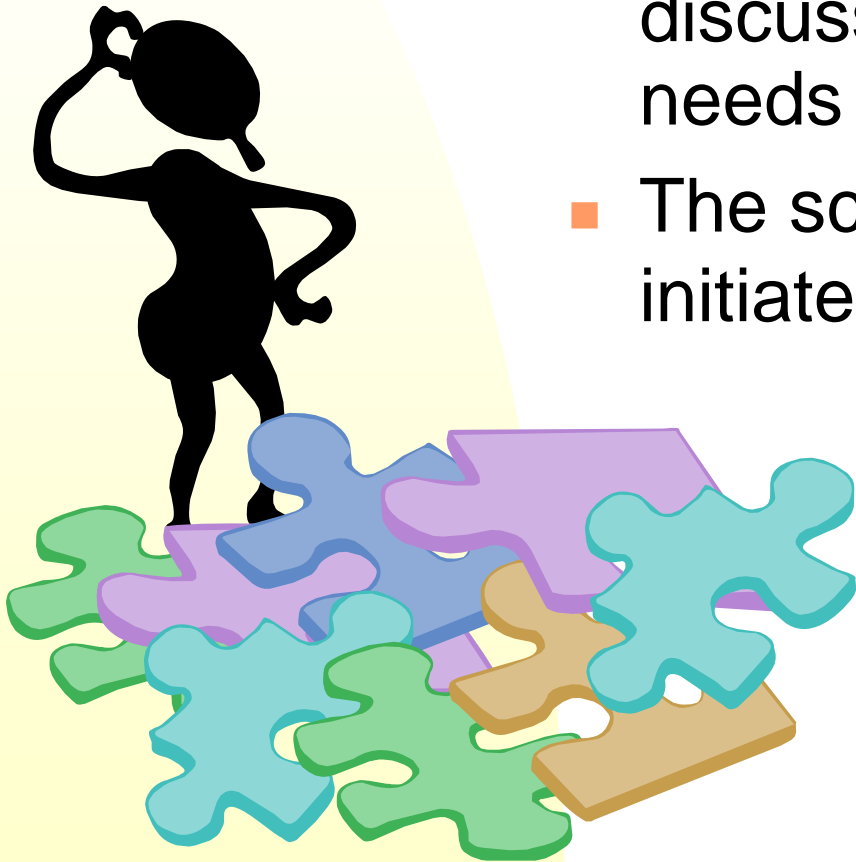


# Once the school team is aware of a child's special needs....

- **Discussions with parents will ensue**
- **Informal assessments will take place**
- **Possible formal assessments and consultation with other resource personnel**
- **Depending upon the learning need, this may take more than a year when a child is in the primary grades (JK to grade 3) because a team does not make decisions about your child without observation and assessment over a lengthy period of time**

# What if the school team decides that more needs to be done?

- Parents will be invited to engage in discussion about the student's needs
- The school team may choose to initiate the IPRC process



# What is an IPRC?



- **An IPRC is an Identification, Placement and Review Committee**
- **The IPRC obtains and considers information about the child and considers an individualized program and when applicable, other services**
- **The purpose of the committee is to determine whether a child is an exceptional learner, to identify the exceptionality as per Ministry criteria**
- **The committee then recommends placement**

# Who is part of the IPRC?



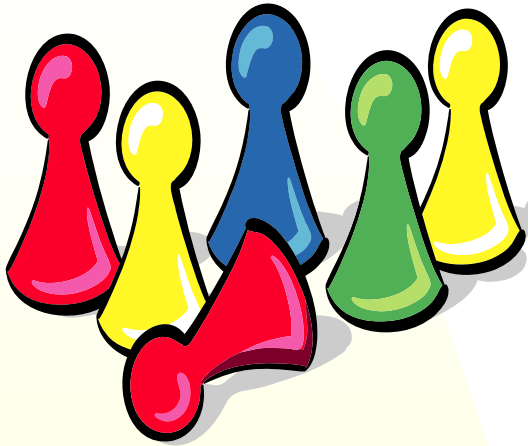
- **The IPRC has a minimum of three members; one must be a principal or supervisory officer of the board**
- **The student's teacher and the school Student Program Support Teacher are often on the committee**
- **Other resource people may be in attendance to provide information or clarification**



# What is my role at an IPRC meeting?

- **Parents are formally invited to attend the meeting**
- **You are encouraged to ask questions and to join in the discussion**
- **However, it is the committee that determines exceptionality and placement; the parent gives input, the school team makes the final decision**

# What are the different exceptionalities?



- **Behaviour**
- **Communication**
  - ◆ Autism
  - ◆ Deaf and Hard of Hearing
  - ◆ Speech or Language Impairment
  - ◆ Learning Disability
- **Intellectual**
  - ◆ Giftedness
  - ◆ Mild Intellectual Disability
  - ◆ Developmental Disability
- **Physical**
  - ◆ Blind and Low Vision
  - ◆ Physical Disability
- **Multiple**

# What are the different placement options?



- The IPRC can choose one of the following placements:
- Regular class with indirect support
- Regular class with resource assistance
- Regular class with withdrawal assistance
- School to Community Pathways Program (secondary school only)

# Does the LDCSB offer different placements?

- The LDCSB believes that students should be educated in an inclusive classroom environment and this is always the first choice:
- That fosters positive peer relations
- That celebrates and respects diversity
- That meets their physical, academic and spiritual needs
- With age appropriate peers



# What does an inclusive classroom look like?

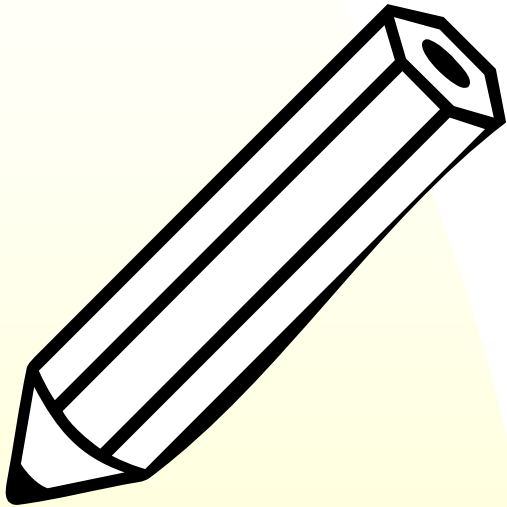
- **Educational Planning – Teachers develop program with SPST support**
- **Collaboration and Consultation: when applicable: Educational Assistants, Board personnel, Community partners**
- **Accommodations and Modifications**
- **Individualized Educational outcomes**
- **Students feeling safe enough to take risks and learn and participate to their own learning potential**



# After the IPRC has recommended an exceptionality and placement, what next?

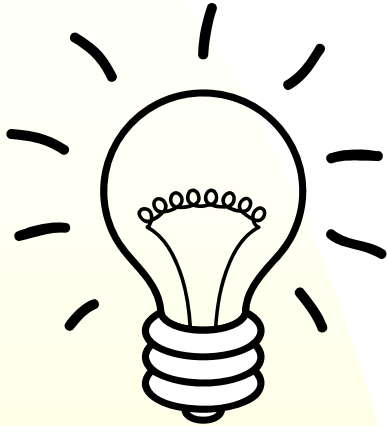
- An Individual Education Plan (IEP) is developed and implementation begun

# What is an IEP?



- It is an Individual Education Plan
- This is a written plan of action that highlights the student's strengths and needs
- It outlines goals, and learning expectations and possibly services that meet the needs of the student
- It offers ideas and strategies for instruction which may differ from those used with the class

# What else should I know about the IEP?



- It is prepared by the teacher with the support of other members of the school team
- Parental input is welcome in terms of its development by sharing information about your child, however, *the professional school team determines the program*
- It is a flexible living document that can be adjusted according to student needs, and shared during parent/teacher/student conferences

# From a parent's perspective, it all sounds complex!



- Yes, it all may sound confusing – there are a lot of acronyms: IEP, IPRC, SPST, EA,...
- There are a lot of people involved: School teams, Area teams, Special services, Community Agencies
- There is a lot going on! Program accommodations, modifications, classroom adjustments, instructional changes

# An Accommodation

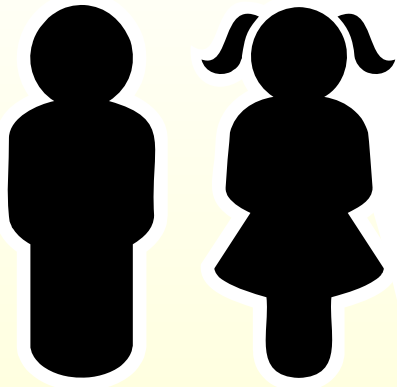
An accommodation is a strategy, a device, a piece of equipment, a software...anything which allows your child to access the curriculum in order to learn

A simple example: anyone who wears glasses is accommodating their ability to read

# A Modification

- A modification is when the teacher decreases or increases the number or complexity of Ontario's learning expectation for a given grade level
- For example, a student in grade 6 might be working at grade 4 curriculum expectations within their IEP

# All this for a child with special needs?



- Yes!
- The LDCSB must follow special education legislation
- And the LDCSB has clearly stated beliefs and principles of special education and of Inclusion
- Visit the Board website at [www@ldcsb.on.ca](http://www@ldcsb.on.ca) /special education to learn more

# But most importantly...

- *We want to help each of our students to find within himself/herself and to reveal to the world, the beauty and goodness we know God put there.*

