

**EARLY AND ONGOING IDENTIFICATION OF
CHILDREN'S LEARNING NEEDS**

**AS-19.0
NPS 152-05**

POLICY:

The Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board celebrates the uniqueness of every child.

Early and on-going identification of learning needs is an important first step to ensuring success for children's learning and in helping them develop their individual talents.

IT SHALL BE THE POLICY OF THE NIPISSING-PARRY SOUND CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD to follow an early and on-going identification procedure that identifies each child's level of development, learning abilities and needs. This process, based on continuous assessment and program planning, is initiated for all students upon early school entry and continues throughout a child's school life.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES:

PREAMBLE

The Ministry of Education requires each Board to establish procedures to identify each child's level of development, learning abilities and needs and to ensure that educational programs are designed to accommodate these needs and to facilitate each child's growth and development.

Accordingly, the following is the Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board's procedure in respect to the early and on-going identification of children's learning needs.

PROCEDURES

1. SCHOOL ENTRY PROCESS - (Junior and Senior Kindergarten)

The School Entry Process involves three (3) main components:

- a) Registration
- b) Pre-entry visits
- c) Admissions

a) Registration

The principal will be responsible for the registration of all Junior and Senior Kindergarten children and the compilation of all necessary documents (a birth or baptismal certificate, an immunization record with other pertinent medical/health information, a direction of school support form, and information regarding the children).

The principal will arrange for a suitable orientation for the child and family to the school environment in early June. For French Immersion, given the unique nature of the program, a special information meeting for parents of prospective Early French Immersion candidates will be held prior to the end of March.

b) Pre-entry visits

The principal will ensure that all pre-entry visits are completed for children in Junior Kindergarten and for children who are entering Senior Kindergarten without previously being enrolled in a Junior Kindergarten program.

Prior to scheduling the pre-entry visits, teachers will review the guidelines and procedures for the pre-entry visit found in Appendix A.

c) Admissions

In order to facilitate the provision of pre-entry visits, Junior and Senior Kindergarten children will not attend class during the first week of school in September.

All Senior Kindergarten children will begin school on the Monday of the second week of school in September.

Delayed entry for Junior Kindergarten will begin during the second week of school in September with several children being admitted every day.

Once a child is admitted to class he/she will attend school on a regular basis from then on.

All Junior Kindergarten children will be admitted no later than the Friday of the third week of school in September.

2. EARLY AND ON-GOING IDENTIFICATION OF CHILDREN

Kindergarten teachers shall assess children on an on-going basis in the context of every day activities framed within the expectations outlined in the Ministry of Education curriculum document, **The Kindergarten Program 1998**. A variety of informal and formal assessment tools and strategies appropriate to the age and ability of the children will include the following:

a) Observation of Children

Using their own observations of students within the classroom setting as well as suggestions from other teachers and other professionals, the teacher will track a student's intellectual, physical and social development with comments recorded in an anecdotal format.

Through the interpretation of these observations and the analysis of student work samples, appropriate programs will be planned and implemented for each child. The observations will identify the accommodations that need to be made to the learning environment, changes in classroom routines, and the materials needed. Modifications will be made to program expectations for individual children and for group activities as required.

In addition to the responsibilities outlined in the Board's policy regarding student assessment, teachers are required to:

- i) systematically observe students in a variety of different learning

contexts and record observations on a weekly basis for each child;

- ii) analyze and interpret recorded observations for the purpose of making instructional decisions and for reporting to parents;
- iii) engage in spontaneous and planned conversations with the students;
- iv) continuously evaluate the progress of the child in order to provide a curriculum that will effectively meet the identified needs and levels of development of the child;
- v) notify the principal of those children whom they suspect may require special assistance. At this time it may be necessary for the teacher to begin the process for tracking interventions and possible referral to an Identification Placement and Review Committee (IPRC).

b) Ready to Learn

- i) Teachers will implement the activities of the "Ready to Learn" program found in the **Building Futures** Kindergarten document which focus on gross and fine motor (kinesthetic) development, as well as visual and auditory perception.
- ii) Teachers will identify children having difficulty with perceptual motor development and implement the activities or exercises to address the areas of weakness.
- iii) Children requiring further assistance may be referred to an IPRC.

c) Screening

- i) Screening for speech/language difficulties will be done by the Speech-Language Pathologist in September of each year.
- ii) During pre-entry visits and in the classroom, teachers will use a screening tool such as the Nipissing District Developmental Screen to monitor child development.

d) Portfolios

Portfolios are kept as records of student growth in all areas of learning.

Teachers are required to establish and maintain a portfolio for each child with a collection of student work samples.

e) Formal Assessment

It is important to assess students both informally and formally. Formal assessments of a student's print awareness, phonological awareness and oral language development help the teacher recognize student strengths and needs and identify those students at risk. The teacher uses the assessment data to inform practice and plan for early intervention opportunities to meet the needs of all students.

Teachers are required to administer selected formal assessment (e.g., various tasks for *An Observation Survey*, Marie Clay, The Yopp-Singer Test of Phoneme Segmentation and LDAO) to determine student strengths, needs and next steps, and identify students 'at risk'.

3. REPORTING TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Information collected through observation, "Ready to Learn" activities and formal and informal assessments will be used for reporting to parents via parent-teacher conferences and the Kindergarten Progress Report. Copies of the conference form, progress report and relevant referral forms or checklists will be placed in the student's OSR.



PRE-ENTRY VISITS

As part of the welcoming and entry process to school, the Board recognizes that pre-entry visits fulfill a number of important functions such as establishing rapport with the child, improving home/school communications, and identifying through observation child development stages which will facilitate school programming.

Pre-entry Visit Guidelines

1. Before scheduling the pre-entry visit, review the registration information.
2. Schedule the visit by telephone and invite the parents/guardians and child to come to your classroom. This is an opportunity to explain and review the pre-entry visit process with the parents (see below).
3. Schedule visits at 30-minute intervals.
4. Provide the schedule of your visits to the school principal.
5. Familiarize yourself with and review the contents of the pre-entry kits to ensure all the required materials are there.
6. Photocopy materials needed for the visits (i.e. checklists for teachers, and parents, and student task sheets).
7. Prepare a file folder for each child in which to place the information gathered at the pre-entry visit.

Procedure for the Pre-entry Visit

1. Welcome the child and the parents/guardians to your classroom.
2. Provide the child and the parents/guardians with a tour of the classroom.
3. Provide the parents with the school pre-entry visit questionnaire.
4. Interact with the child and present the child with the prepared tasks as outlined in the pre-entry kit.
5. Observe and guide the child in completing the assigned tasks and complete the Nipissing District Developmental Screen checklist provided.
6. Listen to any information provided by the parents/guardians and answer any questions they may have.
7. Following the pre-entry visit, analyze all the information gathered about the child from the completed checklists.
8. Report any concerns to the school principal and the classroom resource teacher where appropriate.
9. With parental consent, make any necessary referrals to outside agencies and if appropriate to the School Board Special Education Services.