



CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL  
BOARD OF EASTERN ONTARIO

# Special Education

## Parent Guide

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## **Special Education – A Guide for Parents**

### **PARENT'S GUIDE TO SPECIAL EDUCATION**

The CDSBEO views every child as unique and aims to provide a Catholic education which nurtures this uniqueness and enables each student to maximize their spiritual, physical, intellectual, and social potential. It is CDSBEO's belief that the most desirable placement for children is the regular classroom with appropriate special education services. This Parent Guide is designed to help parents understand the services and programs offered to support students with special education needs in the CDSBEO.

*For the purposes of this guide, the term 'parent' includes a legal guardian.*

### **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 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 expectations and an outline of special education services that meet the needs of the exceptional student

### **WHAT SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES ARE PROVIDED BY THE CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF EASTERN ONTARIO?**

CDSBEO strives to educate all students in a safe, accepting, and inclusive environment that takes into account their specific and unique needs. We are committed to helping all students reach their full potential and prepare for success in school, work, and life. The CDSBEO Special Education Annual Report reflects our commitment to the development, implementation, and consistent delivery of effective special education programs and services for all students who require them, whether or not they have been formally identified as "exceptional" through the IPRC process.

Some students may need additional supports which can be offered within the classroom or various locations in the school. At times, a student may require additional supports beyond those available in the regular classroom. In these cases, more intensive special education services may be provided. Based on a student's individual strengths and needs, CDSBEO offers a range of supports, including:



- Support within the regular classroom
- Resource support
- Remedial support
- Self-contained programs

### **WHAT IS AN INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)?**

If an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is to be developed for a student, it will always be in consultation with you:

It will include:

A description of the student's strengths and needs and 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
- A transition plan which includes the specific goals, actions required, person(s) responsible for actions, and timelines for each educational transition where the student requires support.
- The IEP must be completed within 30 days after the student has been placed in the program, and the principal will ensure that the parent(s)/guardian(s)/caregiver(s) are given access to a copy.

## **IEP Fact Sheet**



## **IDENTIFICATION PLACEMENT AND REVIEW COMMITTEE (IPRC)**

An IPRC meeting determines the appropriate placement if your child is identified as exceptional as outlined by the ministry definitions. It is not required, if your child is in a regular class placement and their programming is outlined on an IEP.

An IPRC meeting does not discuss or impact the overall allotment of Educational Assistants, Resource staffing, or additional funding.

### **WHAT IS AN IPRC?**

Regulation 181/98 requires that all school boards set up an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC). This is a formal committee that determines if a student should be identified as exceptional and decides on the appropriate educational placement based on their needs.

An IPRC is composed of at least three persons, one of whom must be a principal or supervisory officer of the board. When your child's placements and identifications might change, parents are encouraged to attend the meeting.

### **WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE IPRC?**

The Identification, Placement and Review Committee will:

- Decide whether or not your child should be identified as exceptional
- Identify the areas of your child's exceptionality according to the categories and definitions of exceptionalities provided by the Ontario Ministry of Education
- Decide an appropriate placement for your child from the following:
  - Regular class with indirect support
  - Regular class with resource assistance from a Special Education Resource Teacher
  - Regular class with withdrawal assistance
  - Special Education class with partial integration
  - Full time Special Education class
- If your child's identification and placement remain the same and the student is having success in the placement, the annual IPRC review meeting can be dispensed by the parent
- Otherwise, IPRC review meetings occur annually

### **WHO MAY REQUEST WHO SHOULD ATTEND?**

Either you or the principal of your child's school may request for the attendance of others at the IPRC meeting. If you are planning to invite an educational advocate and/or private therapist, please inform the chair of the IPRC as soon as possible prior to the meeting in order for the appropriate central staff member to be present.



## **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 school team 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 the Special Education Parent Guide and a written notification letter indicating approximately when the IPRC will meet

## **WHO ATTENDS THE IPRC MEETING?**

An IPRC is composed of at least three persons, one of whom must be a principal or supervisory officer of the board.

Others who can attend:

- Parents and students who are 16 years of age and older are entitled to be present at, and participate in all IPRC discussions
- Educators such as student's classroom teacher(s), special education staff, school board support staff or other professionals who may be needed to provide further information or clarification
- Your representative, a person who may support you or speak on behalf of you or your child (cannot be a trustee of the board)
- An interpreter, if one is required. (You may request the services of an interpreter through the principal of your child's school)

## **WHAT INFORMATION WILL PARENTS RECEIVE ABOUT THE IPRC MEETING?**

At least 10 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 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 confirm your attendance.

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. This may include the results of assessments or a summary of information.

If your child's identification and placement remain the same, you may choose to dispense with the IPRC review meeting, and continue to support your child's learning through conversations with their classroom teacher(s).

## **WHAT IF PARENTS ARE UNABLE TO MAKE THE SCHEDULED MEETING?**



If you can't attend the scheduled meeting, you can either:

- Contact the school principal to arrange a new date or time for the meeting
- Let the school principal know you will not be attending

If you do not attend the meeting, the principal will send you the IPRC's written statement of decision for your consideration and signature as soon as possible after the meeting. The statement will include the decision of identification and placement and any recommendations for special education programs and services for your child.

### **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 and the members will:

- Consider your child's educational assessment
- Consider 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 (this is subject to the provisions of the Health Care Consent Act, 1996)
- Interview your child, if they feel it would be useful to do so (with your consent, if your child is less than 16 years of age)
- Consider any information that you submit about your child, and information your child submits, if they are 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 STUDENT?**

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

The Ministry of Education uses the following 5 categories of exceptionalities, which include 12 specific definitions

- Behavioural



- Communicational
  - Autism
  - Deaf and Hard of Hearing
  - Language Impairment
  - Speech Impairment
  - Learning Disability
- Intellectual
  - Giftedness
  - Mild Intellectual Disability
  - Developmental Disability
- Physical
  - Physical Disability
  - Blind and Low Vision
- Multiple
  - Multiple Exceptionalities

### **WHAT WILL THE IPRC CONSIDER IN 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 preferences.
- If, after considering all the information presented to it, the IPRC is satisfied that a placement in a regular class will meet your child's 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?**

- If you agree with the IPRC decision, you will be asked to sign your name indicating that you agree with the identification and placement decision made by the IPRC. The statement of decision may be signed at the IPRC meeting or taken home and returned.
- If the IPRC has identified your child as exceptional and you have agreed with the IPRC identification and placement decision, the school board will promptly notify the principal of the school at which the special education program is to be provided and of the need to develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for your child.
- If the IPRC decides your child is not exceptional, your child will not be formally identified as an exceptional student. The school team will develop or revise an IEP describing special education programs and services to meet their needs. In a regular classroom, any



student with an IEP can receive indirect support, resource assistance from a Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) or withdrawal assistance.

### **WHAT CAN PARENTS DO IF THEY DISAGREE WITH THE IPRC DECISION?**

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

- Within 15 days of receipt of the decision, request that the IPRC hold a second meeting to discuss your concerns
- Within 30 days of receipt of the decision, file a notice of appeal with the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario

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 IPRC decision and 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:

**Superintendent of Special Education, Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario**  
**Box 2222**  
**2755 Highway 43**  
**Kemptville, ON K0G 1J0**

The notice of 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:

- The Board will establish a special education appeal board to hear your appeal. The appeal 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 days after he or she has been selected (unless parents and the school board both 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 they are 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 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 the identification, placement, or both.
- The appeal board will report its recommendation 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 (school boards are not required to follow the appeal board's recommendation).
- You may accept the decision of the school board, or if you do not agree with the decision 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.

The Special Education Department personnel, under the direction of the Superintendent of Special Education and the Principal of Special Education, act as a resource to schools to extend the range of programs and services for students with special needs. Consultation, assessment, direct service, professional development, and advocacy are key components of the services provided to the system through the referral process.

Special Education Consultants, Psycho-Educational Consultants, Speech-Language Pathologists, Teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing / Visually Impaired, Registered Behavioural Analysts and the Student and Community Liaison Consultants work closely with school personnel to ensure the effective delivery of special education programs.

The in-school special education team offers ongoing support to students. Qualified special education teachers, student support workers, and educational assistants are available to provide direct assistance to pupils with behavioural, communicational, intellectual, or physical exceptionalities. Parents are encouraged to play an active and on-going role with the school team. Open communication, cooperation, and sharing of responsibilities are the keys to each child's educational success and welfare.

## **WHAT ARE THE MINISTRY'S PROVINCIAL AND DEMONSTRATION SCHOOLS?**



The Ministry operates provincial and demonstration schools throughout Ontario for students who are deaf or hard of hearing, blind or low-vision, deaf-blind, and students with severe learning disabilities. Residential programs are offered at the schools from Monday to Friday, for students who live too far from school to travel daily.

**EASTERN ONTARIO PROVINCIAL DEMONSTRATION SCHOOLS**

| Students with Severe Learning Disabilities                                | Students Who are Blind or Have Low Vision   | Students Who Are Blind or Deaf-Blind   |
|---|---|--|
| Sagonaska School 350 Dundas Street W. Belleville, ON K8P 1B2 613-967-2830 | Sir James Whitney School 350 Dundas Street W. Belleville, ON K8P 1B2 613-967-2823 | W. Ross Macdonald School 350 Brant Avenue Brantford, ON N3T 3J9 519-759-0730 |

**WHAT ORGANIZATIONS ARE AVAILABLE TO ASSIST PARENTS?**

Many organizations are available to provide information and support to parents of exceptional children. Some of these are:

- Association for Bright Children
  - [www.abcontario.ca](http://www.abcontario.ca)
- Autism Ontario
  - [www.autismontario.com](http://www.autismontario.com)
- Canadian Hearing Society
  - [www.chs.ca](http://www.chs.ca)
- Canadian Mental Health Association
  - [www.cmha.ca](http://www.cmha.ca)
- Canadian National Institute for the Blind
  - [www.cnib.ca](http://www.cnib.ca)
- Child and Youth Health Network for Eastern Ontario
  - [www.cyhneo.ca](http://www.cyhneo.ca)
- Children’s Mental Health Ontario
  - [www.kidsmentalhealth.ca](http://www.kidsmentalhealth.ca)
- Community Living Ontario
  - [www.communitylivingontario.ca](http://www.communitylivingontario.ca)
- Down’s Syndrome Association
  - [www.dsao.ca](http://www.dsao.ca)
- eMental Health



- [www.ementalhealth.ca](http://www.ementalhealth.ca)
- Epilepsy Ontario
  - [www.epilepsyontario.org](http://www.epilepsyontario.org)
- Family Alliance Ontario
  - [www.family-alliance.com](http://www.family-alliance.com)
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Ontario
  - [www.fasdinfectsaf.ca/en](http://www.fasdinfectsaf.ca/en)
- Groupe-Action pour L'Enfant, la famille et la communauté de Prescott-Russell
  - [www.groupeaction.ca](http://www.groupeaction.ca)
- Integration Action for Inclusion in Ontario
  - [www.inclusionontario.ca](http://www.inclusionontario.ca)
- Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (LDAO)
  - [www.ldao.ca](http://www.ldao.ca)
- MS Society
  - [www.mssociety.ca](http://www.mssociety.ca)
- Ontario Association for Families of Children with Communication Disorders
  - [www.oafccd.com](http://www.oafccd.com)
- Open Doors
  - [www.opendoors.on.ca](http://www.opendoors.on.ca)
- Parents' Lifelines of Eastern Ontario
  - [www.pleo.on.ca](http://www.pleo.on.ca)
- Inspire – Community Support Services
  - <https://inspire-sdg.ca/>
- Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Association of Ontario
  - <http://sbhac.ca/>
- The Easter Seal Society of Ontario
  - [www.easterseals.org](http://www.easterseals.org)
- Tourette Syndrome Foundation
  - [www.tourette.ca](http://www.tourette.ca)
- Valoris for Children & Adults of Prescott-Russell
  - [www.valorispr.ca](http://www.valorispr.ca)
- VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children
  - [www.voicefordeafkids.com](http://www.voicefordeafkids.com)

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION MINISTRY DOCUMENTS**

Special Education and Education documents may be found through the [Ministry of Education](#).



### **SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

As the Special Education Advisory Committee established for the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario, we recognize the need for strong partnerships in our Catholic community in order to develop the unique potential of all children. We recognize that we foster each child's uniqueness, as intended by God who created us in his own image and likeness, when we facilitate programs and services that:

- Recognize the importance of all children
- Respect the unique strengths and needs of all children
- Nurture self-esteem by recognizing the talents of children as gifts from God
- Provide equity of opportunity and accessibility
- Reflect our Catholic faith and the principles of inclusion
- Promote quality education for all

SEAC meets 10 times a year, generally held monthly, either virtually or at the Board Office in Kemptville. Information regarding the dates and times as well as the agendas and minutes can be found on the board website: [www.cdsbeo.on.ca](http://www.cdsbeo.on.ca).

Association members can join, and parents are welcome to attend.

Should parents have any additional questions, please reach out to your school principal for guidance and support.