



SPECIAL EDUCATION PLAN

SECTION 10: Categories and Definitions of Exceptionalities and Placement Options

CATEGORIES AND DEFINITIONS OF EXCEPTIONALITIES

The board uses the Ministry of Education Categories and Definitions of exceptionality to identify students. To assist with consistency in the identification process, TLDSB also uses additional locally developed guidelines for use by IPR Committees. These guidelines include the characteristics of the student, assessment information required, and documentation required to support the particular exceptionality determination.

The following information outlines the Ministry of Education Categories and Definitions of Exceptionalities.

BEHAVIOUR

A learning disorder characterized by specific behaviour problems over such a period of time, and to such a marked degree, and of such a nature, as to adversely affect educational performance, and that may be accompanied by one or more of the following:

- an inability to build or to maintain interpersonal relationships;
- excessive fears or anxieties;
- a tendency to compulsive reaction; or
- an inability to learn that cannot be traced to intellectual, sensory, or other health factors, or any combination thereof.

COMMUNICATION

Autism

A learning disorder that is characterized by:

- a) disturbances in:
 - rate of educational development;
 - ability to relate to the environment;
 - mobility
 - perception, speech and language
- b) lack of representational symbolic behaviour that precedes language.

Deaf and Hard-of Hearing

An impairment characterized by deficits in language and speech development because of a diminished or non-existent auditory response to sound.



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Language Impairment

A learning disorder characterized by an impairment in comprehension and/or use of verbal communication or the written or other symbol system of communication, which may be associated with neurological, psychological, physical, or sensory factors, and which may:

- a) involve one or more of the form, content, and function of language in communication; and
- b) include one or more of the following:
 - language delay;
 - dysfluency;
 - voice and articulation development, which may or may not be organically or functionally based.

Speech Impairment

A disorder in language formulation that may be associated with neurological, psychological, physical, or sensory factors; that involves perceptual motor aspects of transmitting oral messages; and that may be characterized by impairment in articulation, rhythm, and stress.

Learning Disability

A learning disorder that persistently and significantly has an impact on the ability to learn and use academic and other skills. It affects the capacity of students with at least average intellectual ability to understand or process information effectively or accurately. It results in academic underachievement that is inconsistent with the at least average intellectual abilities of the student and/or academic achievement that can be maintained by the student only with extremely high levels of effort and/or support.

- a) is not primarily the result of:
 - impairment of vision;
 - impairment of hearing;
 - intellectual disabilities
 - socio-economic factors;
 - lack of motivation or effort
 - gaps in school attendance
 - cultural differences;
 - lack of proficiency in the language of instruction

and



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- b) results in a significant difference between academic achievement and assessed intellectual ability (in at least the average range) with deficits in one or more of the following:
 - reading
 - writing
 - math
 - work habits and learning skills

- c) May be associated with difficulties in one or more cognitive processes such as
 - Phonological processing
 - Memory and attention
 - Processing speed
 - Perceptual-motor processing
 - Visual-spatial processing
 - Executive functions (self-regulation, planning, organizing, prioritizing, decision making)

INTELLECTUAL

Giftedness

An unusually advanced degree of general intellectual ability that requires differentiated learning experiences of a depth and breadth beyond those normally provided in the regular school program to satisfy the level of educational potential indicated.

Mild Intellectual Disability

Characterized by:

- a learning style that profits from a hands-on, concrete and applied approach
- a slower-paced and practical approach to academic subjects
- an expectation of successful independent living
- a potential for meaningful and significant contributions to family and society

Developmental Disability

Characterized by:

- significantly slower pace of development and learning
- complex and multiple needs requiring modified and alternative programming
- significant areas of need may include communication, basic living skills, social interaction and adjustment, impulse control and behaviour, and functional academics



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PHYSICAL

Physical Disability

A condition of such severe physical limitation or deficiency as to require special assistance in learning situations, to provide the opportunity for educational achievement equivalent to that of pupils without exceptionalities who are of the same age or developmental level.

Blind and Low Vision

A condition of partial or total impairment of sight or vision that even with correction affects educational performance adversely.

MULTIPLE

Multiple Exceptionalities

A combination of learning or other disorders, impairments, or physical disabilities, that is of such nature as to require, for educational achievement, the services of one or more teachers holding qualifications in special education and the provision of support services appropriate for such disorders, impairments, or disabilities.

Additional References

[Special Education, A Guide for Educators, Ontario Ministry of Education, 2001](#)

SPECIAL EDUCATION PLACEMENTS PROVIDED BY THE BOARD

Each year, programs and placements required are determined based on student needs and available resources. The TLDSB SEAC, and Principals Advisory Group (PAG) is consulted during this process, and input is used to develop programs and services available to students.

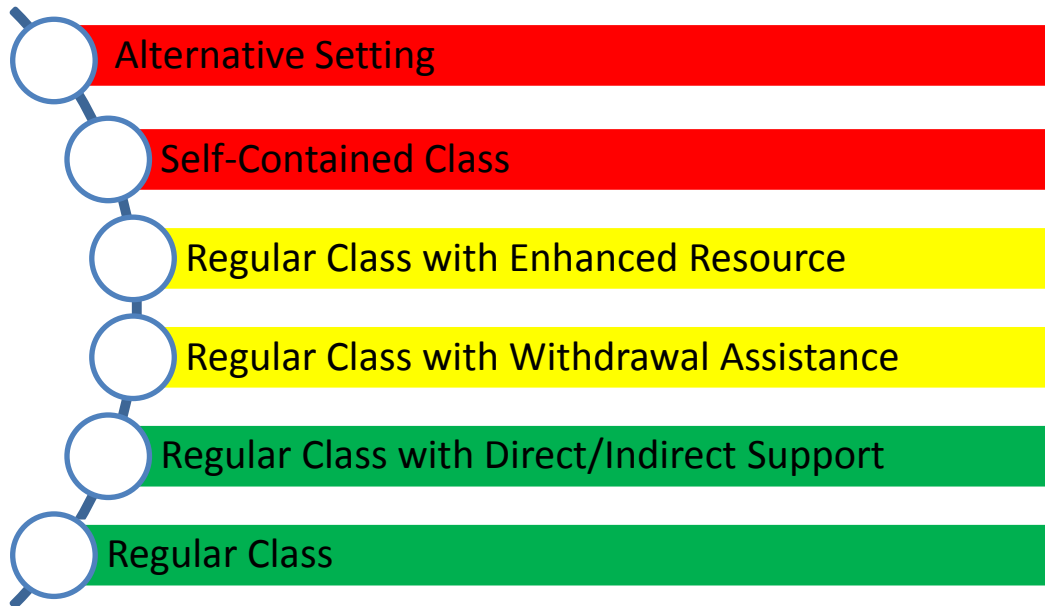
RANGE OF PLACEMENTS

TLDSB is committed to providing a range of services to meet the needs of exceptional students. This range of services includes regular program placements, enhanced resource special program placements, and referral to programs outside the Board when necessary. The following representation provides more comprehensive information on the Trillium Lakelands D.S.B.'s special education range of placements.

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The TLDSB Cascade Model



TLDSB RANGE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION SETTINGS

TLDSB believes that all children can learn. The Board accepts and supports the belief that every child is an individual with unique strengths and needs.

TLDSB is committed to considering the regular classroom as the placement of first choice when such a placement meets the pupil's needs and is in accordance with parental wishes. The Board, however, recognizes that a regular classroom placement may not meet the needs of every exceptional pupil. With this in mind, a range of options, including placement in a special class (with integration when/where appropriate) will be considered for pupils whose needs cannot be met in the regular classroom environment.

The following outlines the range of placements that exist for all exceptionalities:



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REGULAR CLASS

Placement in a regular program is the first option considered by the Board provided the placement meets the student's needs and is in accordance with parental preferences. Students can be integrated into the regular program in a variety of ways including:

- accommodations and/or modifications to the regular program delivered by the classroom teacher (CT);
- differentiated instruction in the regular program delivered by the classroom teacher in consultation with the resource teacher;
- intensive individual support provided by resource teachers in the classroom;
- support of teacher-directed programming delivered by other Board personnel in the classroom

REGULAR CLASS WITH DIRECT/INDIRECT SUPPORT RESOURCE ASSISTANCE

- the exceptional student is placed in the regular classroom on a full time basis;
- support is provided to the student in the regular classroom by the SERT;
- instructional interventions, (i.e., differentiated instruction), modifications and/or accommodations are also provided and continually assessed by the classroom teacher, supported by the SERT;
- an Individual Education Plan is developed by the classroom teacher, in consultation with the SERT and parent;
- the classroom teacher, in collaboration with the SERT, is responsible for developing, implementing, evaluating and reporting on the special education portion of the program;
- ongoing consultation among the teachers, support staff, parents and student is integral to the student's progress.

REGULAR CLASS WITH WITHDRAWAL ASSISTANCE

- the exceptional student is placed in the regular classroom and is withdrawn for special education support; the withdrawal sessions are often scheduled in flexible blocks of time over the course of the school year;
- support is provided to the student as outlined in the Individual Education Plan;
- instructional interventions, (i.e., differentiated instruction), modifications and/or accommodations are also provided and continually assessed by the classroom teacher and supported by the special education personnel;
- an Individual Education Plan is developed by the classroom teacher and SERT, in consultation with the parent;
- special education personnel are responsible for developing, implementing, evaluating and reporting on the special education portion of the program;
- ongoing consultation among the teachers, support staff, parents and student is integral to the student's progress.



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REGULAR CLASS WITH ENHANCED RESOURCE PROGRAM (ERP)

- Students receive Enhanced Resource instruction in a particular area/s of need;
- Students have membership in a regular classroom;
- Time in the program varies;
- Students are placed through an IPRC or case conference with the Special Education Area Consultant present;
- In order to be considered as a candidate for an ERP, certain requirements must be fulfilled:
 - Academic and psychological or comprehensive educational assessments
 - Previous support through the School Resource Program
 - Ongoing involvement with the Special Education Area Consultant
- The ERP provides services to 12-15 students throughout the day
- Students are demitted from the program through an IPRC or through a case conference with the Special Education Area Consultant present

SELF-CONTAINED CLASS

The following description outlines the variety of special education class program placements available in TLDSB. The location and nature of these placements is reviewed on an annual basis through consultation with SEAC, school and central special education staff and the Principals' Advisory Group. The Superintendent responsible for Special Education approves the locations of these programs.

- The exceptional students in this placement receive a significant portion of their program from a qualified special education teacher;
- The exceptional student may also spend time in a regular classroom with appropriate modifications and accommodations, depending on individual needs;
- Instructional interventions, modifications and accommodations are also provided and continually assessed by the special education program teacher, the classroom teacher and support of special education personnel;
- An IEP is developed by the special education program teacher in consultation with the regular program teacher, and the parent;
- Special education personnel are responsible for developing, implementing, evaluating and reporting on the special education portion of the program;
- Ongoing consultation among the teachers, support staff, parents and student is integral to the student's progress report;

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Self-Contained Special Education Class Programs include:

Practical Academic and Life Skills Programs (Elementary & Secondary)

- certain requirements must be fulfilled for consideration as a candidate including age requirements, academic, adaptive and psychological assessments, and on-going involvement with the Special Education Area Consultant;
- Demission guidelines include successful integration for the majority of the day, parental/student over the age of 16 request, failure to benefit from the goals of the program.

Coaching Class Programs (Elementary)

- Entry into the behaviour program is through an IPRC;
- Certain requirements must be fulfilled for consideration as a candidate including age requirements, academic and psychological assessments, on-going involvement of the Board's Behaviour Consultant.

Bridging Class Programs (Elementary)

- For primary/junior students with significant learning and behavioural needs who may not meet the requirements for other System Level Classes;
- Programming is developed in consultation with community partners who are supporting the student;
- Significant effort to align programming across environments (home, school, community).

Learning Strategies Programs (Elementary)

- For Junior/Intermediate students with significant learning disabilities;
- Focus on development of learning strategies, using technology for accommodations, intensive instruction and closing the gaps in literacy and numeracy.

Reaching Independence through Structured Environment (RISE) Program (Elementary)

- Pilot program for Primary/Junior students with ASD
- Focus on social and learning skill development, self-regulation strategies, and literacy and numeracy development



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ALTERNATIVE SETTING

Home Instruction

- the use of this placement must be approved by the Superintendent of Specialized Service. Board Procedure ES-5540 Home Instruction contains detailed information regarding applying for Home Instruction;
- the student receives instruction in their home or alternate setting approved by the principal
- a home instruction teacher provides the instruction;
- the program is monitored by the principal of the school;
- an IEP is developed by the principal or school resource teacher;
- home instruction programs are considered as temporary placements when alternatives in the school setting are not meeting student needs due to safety or illness;
- while on home instruction, efforts should continue to develop appropriate long term programming for the student.

Care and Treatment Programs

When the placements within the Board are not meeting a student’s needs, school staff, in consultation with district special education staff, community agencies, and parents will discuss and explore other options for a student. These options often include Care and Treatment programs both within and outside the district. The space in these programs is extremely limited. Acceptance into the alternative setting is often through the agency in consultation with Board Special Education Staff.

TLDSB has several Section 23 Care and Treatment agreements with facilities in the TLDSB geographic area. The following table lists the Section 23 Care and Treatment programs located in TLDSB.

| SECTION 23 PROGRAMS |
|--|
| NAME OF PROGRAM |
| Chimo Youth and Family Services (2 programs; Boys and Girls) |
| Hawk Homes – Lindsay Learning Centre (2 programs) |
| Hawk Homes- Oakwood Learning Centre |



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RANGE OF PLACEMENT OPTIONS AVAILABLE BY EXCEPTIONALITY

| Category | Definition | ELEMENTARY | | | SECONDARY | |
|---------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| | | School Resource Program | Enhanced Resource Program | Special Education Program | School Resource Program | Special Education Program |
| BEHAVIOUR | Behaviour | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| COMMUNICATION | Autism | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| | Deaf and Hard of Hearing | ✓ | | | ✓ | |
| | Language Impairment | ✓ | | | ✓ | |
| | Speech Impairment | ✓ | | | ✓ | |
| | Learning Disability | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| INTELLECTUAL | Gifted | ✓ | | | ✓ | |
| | Mild Intellectual Disability | ✓ | | | ✓ | |
| | Developmental Disability | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| PHYSICAL | Physical | ✓ | | | ✓ | |
| | Blind and Low Vision | ✓ | | | ✓ | |
| MULTIPLE | Multiple Exceptionality | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

Due to the widespread geography of the board and the low incidence of students who are blind or deaf, these students are currently served with an itinerant teacher, special education teachers and educational assistant support rather than special program placements.



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GUIDELINES AND PROCESS FOR ADMISSION

REGULAR CLASS AND RESOURCE PROGRAM PLACEMENTS

| Placement | Guidelines for Admission | Admission Process |
|--|--|--|
| REGULAR CLASS WITH MONITORING | Environmental, Instructional accommodations in place, student still needs assistance and/or assessment | Referral to School Intervention Team with recommendation for Monitoring Ongoing service from school resource program |
| REGULAR CLASS WITH RESOURCE ASSISTANCE | Student requires accommodations and modifications of up to 50% of the regular curriculum, or requires alternative curriculum | Recommendation of support through school intervention Team Classroom assessments to support need |
| REGULAR CLASS WITH WITHDRAWAL ASSISTANCE | Student requires skill specific instruction in a small group | Recommendation of support through School Intervention Team Classroom and resource assessments to support need Supplemental formal assessment as required Formal identification if need expected to be long-term |
| REGULAR CLASS WITH ENHANCED RESOURCE PROGRAM | Student requires general instruction in a small group setting for a significant amount of time | Referral to special education consultant for intake into program |
| SPECIAL EDUCATION CLASS PROGRAMS | Specific guidelines are available below for each type of program | Formal Assessment Referral to IPRC |



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SELF-CONTAINED SPECIAL EDUCATION CLASS PROGRAMS

This chart outlines the specific types of Special Education Class Programs. Class size follows the requirements of Regulation 298 of the Education Act. The location and feasibility of offering the classes is determined on an annual basis according to system needs.

| Special Education Program | Guidelines for Admission | Admission Process |
|---|---|--|
| ELEMENTARY PLACEMENTS | | |
| BEHAVIOUR PROGRAM (COACHING CLASS) | Behaviour identification through IPRC Average cognitive ability Requires alternative programming for social skills development | Recommendation by behaviour consultant IPRC identification and placement |
| PRACTICAL ACADEMICS LIFE SKILLS PROGRAM (PALS CLASS) | Mild Intellectual disability (MID) with a significant need for development of adaptive skills or Developmental Disability identification Need for alternative expectations, focused on life skills | Recommendation of area Special Education Consultant |
| BRIDGING CLASS PROGRAM | Placement through system consultation. Must meet criteria | Recommendation from area Consultant and Superintendent of Specialized Services |
| LEARNING STRATEGIES CLASS PROGRAM | Placement through system consultation. Must meet criteria and be identified with learning disability | Recommendation from area consultant, Superintendent of Specialized Services, school and Psychoeducational consultant |
| AUTISM PROGRAM (RISE CLASS) | Placement through system consultation for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder identification | Recommendation from area Consultant and Superintendent of Specialized Services |



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SPECIAL EDUCATION CLASS PROGRAMS CON'T

| SECONDARY PLACEMENTS | | |
|---|---|---|
| PRACTICAL ACADEMICS LIFE SKILLS PROGRAM (PA&LS) | Developmental Disability or Mild Intellectual Disability identification Alternative expectations needed, with focus on life skills programming | Recommendation of Special Education Consultant IPRC identification and placement |

GUIDELINES FOR DETERMINING CHANGE OF PLACEMENT OR IDENTIFICATION

A change of placement should be considered based on the following guidelines:

- A student has made sufficient progress to be able to return to a less intensive setting (regular program, resource program)
- A student's needs have increased such that an alternative setting is required (e.g., Care and Treatment program)
- A student has been in the program for two years or more, and would receive limited benefits from remaining in the program
- A parent no longer wishes a student to remain in the program and an alternative program that meets the students needs is suitable

A change of identification should be considered based on the following guideline:

- New assessment, medical, or other information indicates a different identification is more appropriate



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DETERMINATION OF SUPPORT PROVIDED IN PLACEMENTS

Special Education service levels including numbers of staff are determined through the budget process and input on this is given by SEAC.

After staffing levels are approved through the budget process, support levels for each placement are determined through the following process:

Resource Teachers and Special Program Teachers

Information on needs is collected from the system. The Superintendent of Specialized Services recommends support levels. Guidelines for determining support levels of teacher staffing are:

- Number of students in the school
- Level of need of the school based on principal input, area SO input, assessment data
- Access to special classes or programs both within the school and within the family of schools
- Number of students with high needs

Final school assignments are reviewed by senior administration and a final staffing plan is approved by the Superintendent of Special Education.

Educational Assistants

Twice per year, in December and June, the Principals' Advisory Group under the direction of the Superintendent of Specialized Services recommends the level of support assigned for special education programs in each school. The overall needs of the school are reviewed on a regular basis by the school and central staff and the level of support may be adjusted as required. The Superintendent of Specialized Services approves final support levels. For emerging needs due to students entering the system, additional support allocations are assigned by the Superintendent of Specialized Services.

One of the guiding principles for students with special needs is to foster inclusion. Promoting independence and participation for these pupils is a focus. All students require and have access to academic support through the classroom teacher, and yet some require a significantly increased level of support to optimize their outcomes. The following guidelines, listed in order of priority (high to low) are used to determine support levels in each placement and school.

1. Physical needs
2. Safety issues
3. Behavioural needs
4. Social needs
5. Communication needs
6. Academic needs