



TLDSB Parent Guide to Special Education



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WHO CAN ACCESS SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES IN TLDSB?

- All students in TLDSB have access to special education services and support
- Our focus is to provide highly responsive purposeful programming for all students to build success and to foster independence

IS AN FORMAL IDENTIFICATION OR DIAGNOSIS REQUIRED?

- While the identification of a specific exceptionality or diagnosis may be helpful to provide additional information to your child's teacher, these are not necessary to gain access to special services or programs at school
- It is very useful for the school to have access to reports and recommendations as a result of any exceptionalities or diagnoses from outside sources so that we can design the best program for your child. We welcome you to share information about your child with us.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR ACCESSING SPECIAL EDUCATION SUPPORT?

A common process is followed for all students regardless of their needs, exceptionality, or diagnosis.

1. The process begins in the classroom with the teacher conducting assessments to understand your child's learning needs.
2. If specific learning needs are identified from the classroom assessments, the teacher may work with the school's Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) to design or update an Individual Education Plan (IEP).
3. An IEP will identify accommodations, and in some cases specific program goals, to support your child.
4. Parents/guardians are an important part of this process and will be consulted for input throughout the development of the IEP and the programming.
5. The teacher and SERT may include or request specific resources or supports for your child.



These may include some of the following strategies to support learning:

- **Classroom Interventions:** Specific and targeted interventions in the classroom by the teacher
- **Research:** Research-based strategies relevant to the need
- **Assistive Technology:** Technology used to support learning
- **Data Collection and Interpretation:** Collecting more specific data collection to further understand the strengths and needs of the student
- **Programs:** Strategies from a specific program (Applied Behaviour Analysis, Collaborative and Proactive Solutions, TLDSB system classes, etc.)
- **Resource Interventions:** Specific and targeted interventions out of the classroom with support of the SERT
- **Central Office Support:** Support from board-level staff (consultants, assessment staff, consultants with expertise in a specific area, etc.)
- **Community Partnerships:** Support from outside agencies (therapy, interventions, programming, medical reports, etc.)
- **What else might work for the Individual Student?** Other supports and resources as appropriate.

HOW WILL YOU MEET MY CHILD'S LEARNING NEEDS? WHAT IF THEY CHANGE?

- As your child and the teacher work with the programming and plan that is put in place, there will be a continual re-assessment of needs and progress towards goals.
- As programming goals are reached, new goals are put in place. Reassessment of the supports and strategies used will determine what is working and how to adjust things to best support your child.
- The Provincial Report Card, and in some cases, an Alternative Report Card, is used alongside the IEP to document your child's progress. Parents/guardians are encouraged to maintain contact with the classroom teacher to ensure they are always in touch with their child's progress.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

Additional information about TLDSB special education services can be found in the TLDSB Special Education Plan found at <http://tldsb.ca/programs/special-education/> or by talking to the SERT or Principal at your child's school.



School-to-Home Communication

Education is a shared experience involving the home and the school and it can be strengthened by open communication between the two.

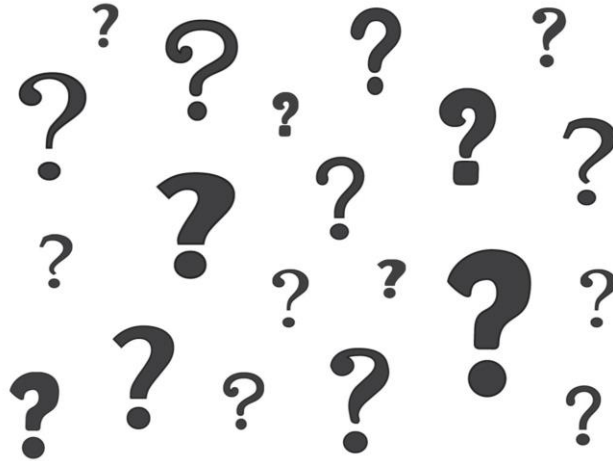
WHAT DO I DO IF I NEED TO DISCUSS A QUESTION, SUGGESTION OR CONCERN WITH SOMEONE ABOUT MY CHILD'S LEARNING NEEDS?

We welcome you to be in touch with the school at any time about your child's learning needs.

Some suggestions for effective and meaningful conversations:

- Plan your Approach.
- Gather your information.
- Be clear about the facts ahead of time.
- Organize what you want to highlight.
- Know what questions you want to ask.
- Focus on one or two issues at a time.
- Share information you feel is important about your child.
- Share information that you have gathered from outside sources that may assist with programming decisions at school.
- Listen actively – every person in the discussion has important information to share.
- Give some thought to the solutions you would like to see.
- Plan next steps together.
- Take notes of discussion items and decisions made.
- Remember - Your input is important – sometimes getting to the best solutions takes time.
- Keep in touch! Continuous communication is important.





WHO SHOULD I TALK TO IF I HAVE QUESTIONS, SUGGESTIONS OR CONCERNS?

Should a concern about your child’s special education programming or experience arise, follow these steps:

FIRST

If you have a question, concern or suggestion, contact the classroom teacher and discuss the situation; the classroom teacher may seek out support from the school SERT or central Special Education Staff. Most questions, concerns or suggestions can be addressed via meaningful conversations with the school staff who regularly work with your child.

THEN

If the situation has not been resolved, the Principal and request help in dealing with the matter.

THEN

If necessary, contact the Superintendent in charge of the school involved. Call 1.888.526.5552 and ask for the name of the superintendent for your child’s school.

THEN

If necessary, contact the Director of Education who is the Chief Executive Officer at 1.888.526.5552.

THEN

If necessary and if the situation has not been resolved, contact your local trustee.



School Intervention Team Process

The School Intervention Team as a group of experts who brainstorm together to develop and plan for the best possible education for your child.

STEP ONE:

Identify the need:

The Classroom Educator:

- Confers with parents/ guardians, principal and other teachers
- Collects information to know more about the child's strengths and needs (e.g. diagnostic assessments, reviews documents from the OSR etc.)

STEP TWO:

Determine next steps:

IF Classroom Educator has enough information he/she will:

- Plan and implement an appropriate program and interventions
- If program/ interventions are effective, progress will be monitored

OR

IF Classroom Educator needs additional support:

- The Educator will make a referral to the School Intervention Team and/or Student Success Team



STEP THREE (if needed):

Schedule a Meeting:

School Intervention Team/ Student Success Team Meeting

- These in school teams include teachers, principal, SERT or Head of Special Education and support staff
 - The referring educator defines the learning issue and provides background information
 - The group discussion involved brainstorming and selecting appropriate program and intervention strategies
 - An action plan/ response to intervention (RTI) plan is developed
 - Program suggestions and interventions are documented
 - The plan is monitored for effectiveness

STEP FOUR (if needed):

Follow up:

- Review action plan and determine if the interventions have been effective

IF interventions have been effective:

- Continue to monitor

OR

IF interventions have not been effective:

- Brainstorm additional strategies
- Revise the action plan
- SERT/ head of Special Education may consult the Special Education Consultant for additional strategies and/or support



The Individual Education Plan (IEP)

WHAT IS AN INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)?

A document to meet your child's needs:

- The IEP is a written plan that communicates the strengths and special education needs of the student.
- The most important educational goals for the student, as determined by classroom assessments and in consultation with the parent/guardian, are included in the IEP.
- It is a written commitment that records the learning expectations for the student and documents how the educators will meet the student's needs at school.

A document that changes with your child:

- The IEP is a living document that is continually reviewed, updated and changed based upon your child's progress towards the learning goals and expectations within.

HOW DOES MY CHILD GET AN IEP?

An IEP is responsive to student need.

IEPs can be developed as a result of any of the following:

- Specific learning needs identified in the classroom by the classroom teacher or Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT)
- Informal assessments done by the classroom teacher or SERT
- Formal assessments completed in board or by a community partner or private practitioner
- Case conference or meetings involving a number of stakeholders
- Discussions with parents/guardians and others regarding what the learning needs of the child
- In response to other factors



WHAT WILL I FIND IN AN IEP?

- A list of your child's strengths and needs
- Assessment data
- Accommodations
- Program modifications
- Alternative programs
- Your child's current level of achievement in each program area
- Goals and specific expectations for your child
- Instructional strategies
- Assessment strategies that will be used to monitor your child's achievement and progress towards goals
- List of essential special education equipment that has been purchased for your child's use
- Transition plan (define)
- Medical or health supports that are required
- Safety plan (if applicable)

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN ACCOMMODATION AND A MODIFICATION?

Accommodations are

- Special teaching and assessment strategies, education supports, and/or special equipment for learning that are required to enable a student to learn and to demonstrate learning.
- Accommodations do not alter the Ontario curriculum expectations for the grade.

Modifications are

- changes made to grade-level curriculum expectations for a subject or course that are necessary to meet the student's learning needs.
- Sometimes a modification is made so that the student is working towards curriculum expectations for a different grade level.
- At other times, the curriculum expectations for the grade are decreased in number or complexity.



WHAT ARE THE STEPS IN DEVELOPING AN IEP?

TLDSB IEP Process Checklist

The principal assigns to one teacher primary responsibility for coordinating the development, implementation, and monitoring of the student's IEP.

Gather Information

- Review the student's OSR (including the previous IEP, the IPRC statement of decision, and any relevant assessments)
- Consult with the student, parent, school staff, and other professionals
- Observe the student
- Review the student's current work
- Conduct further assessments, if necessary
- Consolidate and record information

Set the Direction

- Establish a collaborative approach (including the student and parent)
- Establish roles and responsibilities (refer to pages E13-E16 in Ministry Guide)

Develop the IEP

- Complete within 30 school days following placement
- Identify and record the student's strengths and needs
- Identify goals and expectations
- Determine strategies and resources
- Develop a transition plan
- Establish a monitoring cycle

Implement the IEP

- Share the IEP with the student, parent, school staff, and other professionals
- (providing a copy to the parent and to the student, if age 16 or older)
- Put the IEP into practice
- Continuously evaluate the student's progress
- Adjust goals, expectations, and strategies as necessary

Review and Update the IEP

- Update the IEP periodically (at least once per reporting period)
- Review and update the IEP at year end and when the student transfers to another school
- Store the IEP in the Ontario Student Record

For more information about IEPs, please refer to *The Individual Education Plan: A Resource Guide (2004)*, which is available on the Ministry of Education website. <https://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/guide/resource/iepresguid.pdf>



AS A PARENT/ GUARDIAN HOW CAN I BE INVOLVED IN MY CHILD'S IEP?

Working together:

- Parents/guardians play a very important role in developing the IEP.
- Parents must be consulted by the school when the IEP is developed.
- Sometimes this consultation happens at a school meeting and other times there is a letter, email or telephone call asking for parent input.

Open Communication:

- Open communication between home and school will ensure there is a shared understanding of your child's strengths and needs, and the special education program and services that are required and provided for the child.
- Parents are invited to share information about their child's strengths, interests and needs.
- Within the first 30 days of school, you will receive a copy of the IEP.

If you are unsure, ask!

- Parents always have the right to ask questions about the IEP.
- Understanding the IEP will support continuity in educational programming, including reinforcement of goals at home.



Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC)

WHAT IS AN IPRC?

The Education Act in Ontario requires school boards to provide special education programs and services for students who require them.

In accordance with Regulation 181/98, TLDSB has established **Identification, Placement, and Review Committees (IPRCs)** which follow a formal process to identify students who need special education programs and services.

It is important to note that TLDSB does not *require* an IPRC meeting for a student to access special education services.

The IPRC:

- Is a formal committee comprised of at least three people. At least one person on the committee is a principal or supervisory officer
- Decides whether a student should be identified as exceptional
- Identifies the category and area of exceptionality
- Decides on an appropriate placement for the student who is identified as exceptional; and,
- Reviews the identification and placement at least once in each school year unless this right is waived by the parent or adult student

WHAT HAPPENS BEFORE AN IPRC MEETING?

Referral to IPRC:

- The school principal may refer your child to the IPRC if he/she would benefit from a special education program.
- You may also ask the principal to refer your child to the IPRC. This request must be made in writing. If you make a written request to the principal, the principal will respond to you within 15 days of receiving your letter with an indication of when the IPRC will meet.



Invitation to IPRC:

- You will receive an invitation to the IPRC meeting.
- The invitation will include the date, time and location of the meeting.
- Usually, IPRC meetings happen at your child's school.
- You will receive the invitation at least 10 days in advance of the IPRC.
- You will also receive a copy of this guide with your invitation.

Attendance at the IPRC Meeting:

- If you are unable to attend the IPRC meeting, you are encouraged to contact the principal of your child's school to arrange an alternate date and time.
- Your involvement and participation is important at the IPRC.
- If you want the IPRC to meet without you, the principal will contact you following the meeting to let you know the IPRC's decisions regarding identification and placement.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING AN IPRC MEETING?

Chair of Meeting:

- Usually, the principal of the school will chair the IPRC meeting.
- The chair will start the meeting by welcoming you and making introductions.
- The chair will also explain the purpose and the agenda for the meeting.

Length and structure of Meeting:

- Usually, IPRC meetings last about 15-30 minutes.
- Your input is very important at the IPRC meeting. For this reason, your attendance is strongly encouraged so that you can join into the discussion.
- The IPRC will:
 - Review all relevant information about your child, such as classroom assessments by the teacher.
 - Consider the results of speech and language assessments, psychological assessments, occupational therapy, physiotherapy assessments and medical information, if available.
 - Discuss your child's strengths and needs.

Identification and Placement:

- Following discussions the Committee will then make a decision about identification and student placement.



IDENTIFICATION OF EXCEPTIONALITIES

What does it mean that my child is 'identified':

- Identifying a student as exceptional through the IPRC process **means** that the student has a *documented exceptionality* that requires access to a special education program to meet his or her needs.
- There are five categories of exceptionalities defined by the Ministry of Education for the purposes of identification through the IPRC process:
 - **Behaviour**
 - **Communication:**
 - Autism
 - Learning Disability
 - Language Impairment
 - Speech Impairment
 - Deaf and Hard of Hearing
 - **Intellectual:**
 - Developmental Disability
 - Mild Intellectual Disability
 - Gifted
 - **Physical:**
 - Blind Low Vision
 - **Multiple Exceptionalities**

Learn more about identified exceptionalities:

- TLDSB has developed a series of resources to support parents /guardians and community in better understanding support for specific exceptionalities and student needs in TLDSB
- Copies of the brochures can be found at this [link](#) or by requesting hard copies from your child's school



PLACEMENT OPTIONS

What will my child's learning environment ('placement') look like once he/she is identified with an exceptionality?

There are five placement options that can be considered.

Before the IPRC can consider placing your child in a special education self-contained program 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 the committee decides that your child should be placed in a special education self-contained program, it must state the reasons for that decision in its written statement of decision.

- 1. Regular Class with Indirect Support:** The student is enrolled in a regular class for the entire day. The teacher receives consultative services from the Special Education team at the school and/or the Department of Specialized Services to support the student.
- 2. Regular Class with Resource Support:** The student is enrolled in a regular class and receives some specialized instruction by a qualified special education teacher. This specialized instruction may occur in the regular classroom or resource room.
- 3. Regular Class with Withdrawal Support:** The student is enrolled in a regular class and receives a significant amount of specialized instruction by a qualified special education teacher. This instruction often happens outside of the classroom for 50% of the day or less.
- 4. Special Class with Partial Integration:** The student is enrolled in a special education class for at least 50% of the day. Student is integrated into a regular class for at least one period each day.
- 5. Special Class Full Time:** The student is enrolled in a special education class for the full day.

Completing the IPRC Process:

You will be asked to sign a written statement of the IPRC's decision and indicate whether you agree or disagree with the decision.

The statement of decision will:

- State whether the IPRC has decided to identify your child as exceptional;
- Specify the IPRC's decision regarding the category of exceptionality;
- List your child's strengths and needs;
- State the IPRC's placement decision; and
- State the reasons for any IPRC decision to place a student in a special education self-contained program; and
- List recommendations regarding a special education program and special education services, if applicable

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER AN IPRC MEETING?

Development or review of the IEP:

- In TLDSB, the IEP has usually been developed in advance of having an IPRC meeting.
- The school may review or revise your child's IEP within 30 days of the IPRC and or/a new placement.
- The purpose of reviewing the IEP is to ensure it is consistent with the child's learning needs and the IPRC decision.

What if I disagree with the IPRC decision?

- Some parents wonder what happens if you disagree with the decisions of the IPRC. If this occurs, you may ask to meet with the IPRC again.
- You must do so within 15 days of receiving the original IPRC decision.
- The purpose of this follow-up meeting is to review the decisions made by the IPRC in light of your or your child's concerns, if he or she is 16 years or older.
- The meeting will be held as soon as possible after the request has been received. At this meeting, you will be able to explain your concerns to the committee.
- The committee will carefully listen and try to resolve your concerns.
- The IPRC will decide whether to change its decision(s) or not while you are present. If you remain dissatisfied, you may appeal the decision(s) of the IPRC.



HOW DO I APPEAL AN IPRC DECISION?

If you or your child (16 or older) disagree with the IPRC decision(s), you can:

- file a written notice of appeal to the Director of Trillium Lakelands District School Board within 30 days of the original receipt of the IPRC's decisions; or
- file a written notice of appeal to the address above within 15 days of receiving the second IPRC meeting.

In your letter of appeal, you must state which of the IPRC decisions you are appealing and your reasons for disagreeing with the committee.

The appeal process involves the following steps:

- The board will establish a special education appeal board to hear your appeal.
- 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/she has been selected (unless parents and 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 and your child, if he/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 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, 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 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 may appeal to a Special Education Tribunal.



Community Resources for Schools/Parents



Autism Ontario

1179A King Street West, Suite 004
Toronto, ON M5K 3C5
416.246.9592
www.autismontario.ca

Canadian Hearing Society Muskoka

175 Manitoba Street, Suite 103
Bracebridge, ON P1L 1S3
877.840.8882
TTY 877.872.0585

Canadian National Institute for the Blind (Barrie Office)

20 Anne St. S
Barrie, ON L4N 2C5
705.728.3352 www.cnib.ca

Closing the Gap

395 Centre Street N
Huntsville, ON P1H 2P5
877.560.0202 www.closingthegap.ca

LHIN- North Simcoe Muskoka

8 Crescent Drive, Suite B-3
Huntsville, ON P1H 0B3
888.721.2222 www.healthcareathome.ca

Community Living South Muskoka

15 Depot Drive
Bracebridge, ON P1L 1A0
705.645.5494 www.clsm.on.ca

Community Living Huntsville

99 West Road
Huntsville, ON P1H 1M1
705.789.4543
www.clhuntsville.ca

handsthefamilyhelpnetwork.ca

23 Ball's Drive
Bracebridge, ON P1L 1T1
888.668.8555
www.handsthefamilyhelpnetwork.ca

Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (LDAO)

365 Evans Ave, Suite 202
Toronto, ON M8Z 1K2
416.929.4311 www.ldao.on.ca

One Kid's Place Children's Treatment Centre

100 Frank Miller Drive
Huntsville, ON P1H 1H7
705.789.9985 www.onekidsplace.ca

Simcoe Muskoka Family Connexions

49 Pine Street
Bracebridge, ON P1L 1K8
705.645.4426 www.familyconnexions.ca





Autism Ontario

1179A King Street West, Suite 004
Toronto, ON M5K 3C5
416.246.9592 www.autismontario.ca

Canadian Hearing Society Peterborough

315 Reid Street
Peterborough, ON K9J 3R2
800.213.3848
TTY 888.697.3623

**Canadian National Institute for the Blind
(Peterborough Office)**

159 King Street
Peterborough, ON K9J 2R8
705.745.6918 www.cnib.ca

Chimo Youth & Family Services

227 Kent Street West
Lindsay, ON K9V 2Z1
705.324.3300
www.chimoyouth.ca/info

LHIN- Central East

370 Kent Street West
Lindsay, ON K9V 6G8
705.324.9165 www.healthcareathome.ca

Community Living Trent Highlands

205 McLaughlin Road, Suite 200
Lindsay, ON K9V 0K7
705.328.0464 www.communiytlivingkl.ca

**Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario
(LDAO)**

365 Evans Ave, Suite 202
Toronto, ON M8Z 1K2
416.929.4311 www.ldao.on.ca
Kawartha Lakes Chapter: 705.324.2596

Five Counties Children's Centre

9 Russell Street E
Lindsay, ON K9V 1Z7
888.706.4734 www.fivecounties.on.ca

Kinark Child and Family Services

380 Armour Road, Suite 275
Peterborough, ON K9H 7L7
705.742.3803
www.kinark.on.ca

Kerry's Place- East Region

189 Victoria Avenue
Belleville, ON K8N 2B9
613.968.5554
www.kerrysplace.org

Tri-County Community Support Services

349A George Street North, Suite 303
Peterborough, ON K9H 3P9
888.616.3456 www.tccss.org





Autism Ontario

1179A King Street West, Suite 004
Toronto, ON M5K 3C5
416.246.9592
www.autismontario.ca

LHIN- Central East

13321 HWY 118, Box 793
Haliburton, ON K0M 1S0
705.457.1600 www.healthcareathome.ca

Community Living Haliburton County

14 South Street, Box 90
Haliburton, ON K0M 1S0
705.457.2626
www.communitylivinghaliburtoncounty.com

Five Counties Children’s Centre

6 McPherson Street
Minden, ON K0M 2K0
705.286.0737
www.fivecounties.on.ca

Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario

365 Evans Ave, Suite 202
Toronto, ON M8Z 1K2
416.929.4311 www.ldao.on.ca

Point in Time

69 Eastern Avenue, Box 1306
Haliburton, ON
705.457.5345
www.pointintime.ca



TLDSB SPECIALIZED SERVICES ACRONYMS

SERT	Special Education Resource Teacher
CT	Classroom Teacher
EA	Educational Assistant
VP	Vice Principal
IEP	Individual Education Plan
IPRC	Identification Placement and Review Committee
SEA Equipment	Special Education Amount Equipment (student equipment)
SEAC	Special Education Advisory Committee
RTI Plan	Response to Intervention Plan
SIT Meeting	School Intervention Team Meeting