



# The Parents' Guide to the Individual Education Plan (IEP)

## What is an Individual Education Plan (IEP)?

An IEP is a written plan. It is a working document which describes the strengths and needs of an individual exceptional pupil, the special education program and services established to meet that pupil's needs, and how the program and services will be delivered. It describes the student's progress, and includes a plan to support students in making successful transitions.

### Developing the IEP: *How can I contribute to planning goals for my child?*

Beginning with your child's strengths and needs is an important first step. You can help by engaging in discussions with your child and his or her teachers around establishing short term and long term goals.

Many organizations are available to support you in understanding the IEP, and/or to provide additional resources. Your school principal can provide the names of the organizations that serve your area. This information is also found in the Special Education Advisory Committees brochure available from your child's school, or through the special education section of [sgdsb.on.ca](http://sgdsb.on.ca)

### Carrying out the IEP: *At home, how can I help my child reach their goals?*

- Talk to the teachers about what they plan to accomplish
- Do what you can at home to support your child's goals
- Take every opportunity to communicate with your child's teachers
- Provide additional insights and resources to the school
- Share relevant significant personal/family events

### Review & update the IEP

Your child's progress toward his/her goals will be reviewed. Then, the IEP will be updated to include different strategies, approaches, and/or resources considered necessary to help the learning process.

- Talk to your child's teachers about the goals that have been set
- Communicate regularly with your child's teachers regarding progress
- Look for evidence of growth towards goals on your child's report card
- Recommend changes in goals, strategies and/or resources or support where you see a need
- Be actively involved in discussions at school when your child is changing grades, schools or moving into the workplace

### The IEP summarizes:

- Your child's strengths and needs
- Assessment data
- Special education services provided to your child
- Accommodations (supports, services that will help your child access the curriculum and demonstrate learning)
- Program modifications (changes required to grade-level expectations in the Ontario Curriculum)
- Alternative programs/courses not represented in the Ontario Curriculum (such as Personal Care, Orientation/Mobility Training, Auditory Verbal Intervention Strategies, and/or development of American Sign Language skills)
- Your child's current level of achievement in each program area
- Goals and specific expectations for your child
- Assessment strategies for reviewing your child's achievements and progress
- Regular updates, showing dates, results and recommendations
- A transition plan
- Medical/health supports/services
- A safety plan

**Alternative programming:** *expectations that outline learning related to skill development in areas not represented in the Ontario curriculum, and may include behaviour, life skills, learning strategies or the social/emotional needs of the student.*

**Accommodation:** *a term used to refer to the special teaching and assessment strategies, and/or individualized equipment required to enable a student to learn and to demonstrate learning. Accommodations do not alter the provincial curriculum expectations for the grade.*

**Modification:** *changes made in the age appropriate grade level expectations for a subject or course in order to meet a student's learning needs. These changes may involve developing expectations and skills required in the curriculum for a different grade level and/or increasing or decreasing the number and/or complexity of the regular grade level expectations.*

### How does an IEP work?

#### How can I contribute to planning goals for my child?

An IEP outlines the special education programs and services your child will receive. There are five phases in the development of an IEP:

1. Gather information
2. Set the direction
3. Develop the plan
4. Carry out the planned activities
5. Review and update the IEP, including the transition plan and safety plan

### Who develops a Students IEP?

Creating an IEP is a process that involves the classroom teachers with whom the student interacts, the student, where appropriate, the students parents, the Special Educational Teacher (SET), other professionals involved with the student, other school personnel/support staff, and staff from community agencies.

A students IEP should be developed, implemented, and monitored in collaborative manner. The IEP reflects the school board's and the principal's commitment to provide the special education program and services, within the resources available to the school board, needed to meet the identified strengths and needs of the student.

### As the parent, what role do I play?

Parents play a powerful supporting role in the IEP process and transition planning. It is important to understand and participate in the five phases of the IEP process. As well, be sure to ask for a copy of your child's IEP within 30 school days, so that you can support the planned activities at home.

You know things about your child's approach to learning that no one else knows.

Be sure to tell the teachers about your child's:

- Likes, dislikes and interests
- Talents and abilities
- Interest in extra-curricular activities
- Family and peer relationships and dynamics (extended family, pets)
- Family routines and schedules
- Hopes and dreams for the future, including any short and/or long term goals
- How your child learns best (e.g. by doing, through demonstration, etc.)

### Setting the direction: How do I work as an effective IEP team member?

Students are most successful when all team members work together towards achievable goals. As a parent

- Keep the focus on your child at all times;
- Tell the teachers the hopes you have for your child's learning;
- Bring ideas an information
- Ask questions
- Value everyone's input

### What is a transition plan?

A written plan which outlines the daily, short term and long term changes to programs/pathways. Transitions may include:

- Entry to school, between grades, from elementary to secondary school
- Activity to activity, class to class, school to school
- Secondary school to education, career, community, and life pathway

Contained within the transition plan are:

- Individual goals
- Actions required to achieve those goals
- Identified individuals responsible for the actions required
- Specific timelines for completion

A transition plan is developed in collaboration with students and their families, the school, community agencies and post secondary partners as appropriate and is reviewed and updated as part of the IEP review process.

See [School to Community Transition Information](#) for more

### SGDSB SEAC (Special Education Advisory Committee) Members

SGDSB Trustees, members at large, one or two persons to represent the interests of First Nations students, and representatives and alternates from up to 12 local associations.

The local associations must be affiliated with associations or organizations that are:

- Incorporated
- Operate throughout Ontario
- Further the interests and well-being of one or more groups of exceptional children or adults
- Do not represent professional educators

See the [SEAC Guide](#) for more info

#### Notes:

1. To receive this guide in Braille, large print, or audiocassette format, please contact the board office.
2. When used in this guide, the word parent includes guardian.

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