

What is special education?

Special education provides accommodations and/or education programs that are modified to meet the needs of students that are beyond the regular school assessment and instructional practices. Special education is available for students who have behavioural, intellectual, communicational, physical, or multiple exceptionalities

What is the IPRC?

The Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) identifies exceptional students and based on an assessment of strengths and needs, recommends an educational placement of the student. The following process is followed:

1. The school principal makes a referral based on parent(s)/guardian(s) written request OR may provide written notice to the parent(s)/guardians(s) and refer the student to the IPRC. If a student is not formally identified and parents believe that they will benefit from special education services, parents can request an IPRC meeting to determine if their child or youth is an exceptional student.
2. The IPRC holds a meeting involving school staff, parents, and the student, if they are 16 years of age or older, to be able to identify the strengths and needs of the student.
3. Based on this meeting, the IPRC will recommend appropriate special education programs and/or services. The options for placement are as follows:
 - A regular class with indirect support
 - A regular class with resource assistance
 - A regular class with withdrawal assistance
 - A special education class with partial integration
 - A full-time special education class
4. The IPRC will provide a written rationale for the placement decision to the parents

What is an IEP?

An Individual Education Plan (IEP) is a written document that includes a description of the special education program services that the student receives as well as educational and behavioural goals based on individual needs and strengths. An IEP is developed for students who are identified as exceptional and can be developed for students who are not formally identified but who have exceptional needs.

Parents have the right to participate in the development of their child or youth's IEP as well as advocate for the adherence to all of its recommendations.

Ontario Special Needs Roadmap

<http://www.specialneedsroadmaps.ca/download-roadmap>

What is educational advocacy, and how do I do it?

Educational advocacy involves securing, ensuring, and advancing the educational rights of a student. Some ways to engage in educational advocacy are:

- Understand special education law, regulations, and rules
- Understand your child or youth's strengths and areas of need
- Participate in the IEP process
- Inform the school of any new information that may affect their school performance
- Think about what accommodations and supports your child or youth needs to be successful
- Help the school staff understand your child or youth's communication skills
- Help the school understand the way your child or youth learns new skills
- Access information about your school board's special education program
- Reach out to other parents of students or youth with special needs
- Find out what community services and support groups are available to your child or youth
- Keep records of educational meetings and important documents

Creating and maintaining a binder:

Create a binder for your child or youth with:

- Reports from service consultations (e.g. medical consults, speech-language reports, occupational therapist reports)
- Copies of educational and psychological assessments
- Copy of your child or youth's IEP
- Report cards
- Notes from the school about your child or youth's behaviour or progress
- A home/school communication book.

References and Resources:

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2018). The Identification, Placement, and Review Committee: Identifying the Needs of Exceptional pupils. Retrieved from:

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/identifi.html>

Ontario Ministry of Education (2018). An Introduction to Special Education in Ontario. Retrieved from: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/ontario.html>

Ontario Special Needs Roadmap. Retrieved from: <http://www.specialneedsroadmaps.ca/>
Video on how to organize IEP binder - <https://youtu.be/DNEdNQaqJAM>