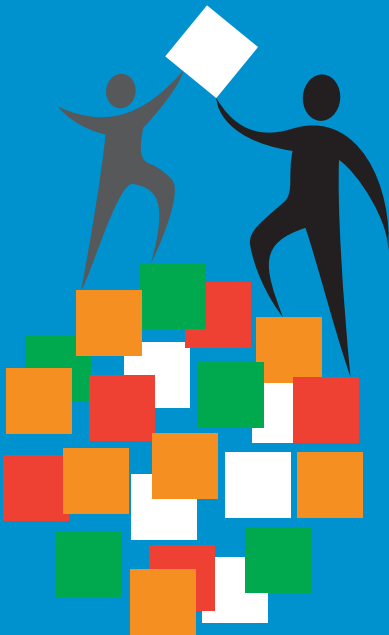




Special Education Support Services

A parent's guide to **IEP**



**Individual Education Plans in
the Peel District School Board**

The Peel District School Board offers a wide range of special education programs, services and supports.

We recognize that children are more confident and successful in school when we support their learning in a variety of ways.

The Ministry of Education requires that every student who has been identified by an IPRC as exceptional must have an individual education plan—or IEP. A student who requires special education programs or services to be successful in school, but who has not been identified as exceptional, may also have an IEP.

This brochure will help you understand the IEP and how we use it to support your child's learning.

Why does your child need an IEP?

If your child has been identified as exceptional, it means that he or she has special learning needs and will benefit from special education programs or services.

The IEP supports your child's learning in the following ways:

- > helps teachers understand your child's interests, strengths and needs
- > provides a tool for sharing information about your child
- > describes educational goals for your child to pursue
- > identifies types and levels of support necessary to help your child be successful
- > helps teachers track and evaluate your child's growth and learning progress
- > encourages open and ongoing communication between you and the school
- > ensures continuity in your child's educational programming
- > ensures educational goals are appropriate and measurable

What is an IEP?

The IEP describes your child's learning strengths needs. It also identifies specific learning goals and tracks your child's progress towards achieving those goals. The plan also explains the special education services and teaching strategies the school will use to support your child's learning.

The IEP helps the teachers monitor your child's progress and report back to you and your child about that progress. The plan identifies the specific knowledge and skills that teachers will evaluate to assess your child's achievement of goals or learning expectations.

How is the IEP developed?

The principal is responsible for making sure that an IEP is developed for your child. The special education team within each school takes the lead role in writing the IEP. Your child's teachers contribute to the plan. Team may also gather information from the following sources:

- > guidance counsellors
- > special education staff who have been involved in the prior stages of this process
- > principal
- > your child's Ontario Student Record
- > assessments
- > previous IEPs
- > representatives of community agencies or services

As a parent, you are crucial to the IEP process. The information you contribute is essential in helping the school understand your child's personality, development, learning and preferences.

Your child's involvement in developing and reviewing the IEP will vary. If your child is 16 years or older, he or she has the right to be consulted. In some cases, your child may participate in setting his or her educational goals. When students take an active role in the IEP process, they tend to assume greater responsibility for their own learning. Students are encouraged to monitor their own progress during the year and help set learning priorities, based on their interests and concerns.

The plan must be developed within 30 school days after your child starts in a special education program.

What will the IEP look like?

Each IEP has at least three pages:

PAGE 1 is the information about your child.

PAGE 2 is the list of the subjects/courses and formal assessments in your child's records.

PAGE 3 indicates the accommodations your child needs to be successful in the program. Only accommodations that are different than those used by other students in the class are listed. Page 3 also lists the accommodations that are allowed for provincial assessments.

There is a **PAGE 4** for every subject or program that is modified or alternative. The "current level of achievement" on page 4 for a modified program is your child's mark from the report card the previous June. The "current level of achievement" for an alternative program is a brief statement summarizing how the student did in the same program during the previous school year.

The "annual goal" outlined on each page 4 represents what the teacher expects your child can reasonably accomplish by the end of the school year in each area.

The learning expectations break down the annual goal into more specific goals that can be measured and assessed. The expectations listed reflect a sample of the full program the school will deliver.

The plan lists some specific teaching strategies that teachers will use to support the learning expectations. The plan does not list every strategy that will be used, only those specifically chosen, based on your child's unique learning strengths and needs.

The plan also describes how your child's learning may be measured.

What information is included in the IEP?

The IEP includes the following information:

Reason for developing the IEP

Student information—school, student number, grade, date of birth

Exceptionality and placement

Assessment data—most recent and relevant educational, medical, health, psychological, speech-language, occupational, physiotherapy or behavioural assessments

Areas of strength and need—identifying both your child’s individual skills and learning style that contribute to his or her learning, along with areas where extra support and services may be needed

Subjects, courses or programs to which the IEP applies—this could be just one or two subjects, courses or alternative programs or all the subjects in which your child is receiving instruction

Accommodations

- > **instructional**—for example, using concrete or hands-on materials for instruction or providing note-taking assistance
- > **environmental**—for example, minimizing background noise or providing an alternative work space
- > **assessment**—for example, providing more frequent breaks during tests or reducing the number of tasks used to assess a particular skill

Human resources—any instruction or support provided by a special education teacher, teaching assistant, social worker or other Peel board staff, how often and locations where support may occur

Evaluation—reporting dates and format (the provincial report card or an alternative report)

Transition plan—if your child is 14 years or older, the IEP must include a plan that will help your child make a smooth adjustment to the next stage of their life. This may include secondary school, post secondary education, the workplace or living as independently and productively as possible in the community. This plan is not required for gifted students who have no other exceptionalities.

Annual program goals, learning expectations, teaching strategies and assessment methods for each subject or course requiring modified or alternative expectations for the upcoming term or semester

Record of parent/student consultation and staff review/updating—when and how you are consulted in the development of your child’s IEP and the outcome of these consultations

If your child requires *accommodations* only to learn and demonstrate learning, those accommodations do not alter the provincial curriculum expectations for the grade. Your child will be working towards regular grade expectations, and at the secondary level toward secondary school credits.

If your child requires *modifications*, it means that changes are made in the grade level expectations to meet his or her learning needs. It may mean that your child is working on skills required for a different grade level or that the number or complexity of regular grade level expectations may be increased or decreased. At the secondary level, this may mean that some students are working towards a secondary school certificate rather than a diploma.

Alternative expectations or programs involve knowledge and skills that are not part of the regular Ontario curriculum. Examples include conflict resolution and social skills development. At secondary school, these are non-credit courses. Some students work towards a certificate of accomplishment rather than a secondary school diploma or certificate.

How does the school use the IEP?

Once the IEP is developed, it will be shared with parents, teachers and support staff and your child (if 16 years of age or older). The school will give you a copy of the IEP and ask you to sign it, acknowledging that you were consulted in its development and have received a copy. A copy will also be placed in your child's Ontario Student Record.

Your child's teachers and any support staff involved are responsible for implementing the programs and services outlined in the IEP. The teachers will use a variety of strategies to help your child learn, and they will make note of successful strategies in the IEP. Updating and changing strategies is part of the ongoing process. The teacher may handwrite changes on the IEP or change it electronically.

How is the IEP updated and evaluated?

The IEP sets goals for one school year and is formally reviewed and updated annually. In addition, the school is evaluating and reviewing your child's progress continually throughout the year, monitoring the effectiveness of teaching strategies and accommodations. The IEP is revised on an ongoing basis, as needed. For example, new goals may need to be set if your child's learning is going well, or expectations may need to be broken into smaller steps if learning is moving slower than expected.

How do I find out about my child's progress?

For most students, their progress will be reported on the report card. If your child requires alternative programming, progress will be reported by teacher's comments at the end of page 4 of the IEP for that program. Page 4 for either modified or alternative programs will be sent home with the report card at the end of the first and second terms, along with the learning expectations for the next term. In semestered secondary schools, page 4 will be sent home at the end of the first and second semesters, along with learning expectations.

Where can I get more information?

To find out more about the IEP:

- > talk with your child's teacher or principal
- > contact the special education teacher at your child's school
- > go to the Peel board website at www.peelschools.org/speced
- > visit the Ontario Ministry of Education website at www.edu.gov.on.ca and click on elementary and secondary education, then follow the special education links

About this parent guide

This brochure reflects the changes required by the *Ministry of Education Individual Education Plans Standards for Development, Program Planning, and Implementation, 2000* and *The Individual Education Plan Resource Guide, 2004*. It has been produced by Special Education Support Services, in co-operation with the Special Education Advisory Committee.

Special Education Advisory Committee

The Ministry of Education requires every school board to establish a Special Education Advisory Committee, with representatives from local parent associations and trustees.

These representatives serve as advocates for children and parents, and the associations have useful parent resources. To find meeting dates and the names and phone numbers of SEAC members, please phone **905-890-1010** (or **1-800-668-1146**) ext. **2345**, or visit www.peelschools.org/speced.

The following associations have representation on the Peel board SEAC:

- > Association for Bright Children, Peel Chapter
905-230-8281 www.abcpeel.org
- > Autism Ontario, Peel Chapter
905-450-2299
- > Brampton Caledon Community Living
905-453-8841
- > Community Living Mississauga
905-542-2694 www.clmiss.on.ca
- > Easter Seal Society
416-421-8377
- > Fragile X Research Foundation of Canada
905-453-9366
- > Learning Disabilities Association Mississauga
905-272-4100
- > Learning Disabilities Association of North Peel
905-791-4100
- > Parents for Children's Mental Health
416-921-2109
www.parentsforchildrensmentalhealth.org
- > Peel Parents of Hearing Impaired Children
905-812-7644
- > Tourette Syndrome Association of Ontario, Brampton Chapter
1-888-274-2226 tsao.primus.ca
- > Views for Blind and Visually Impaired Children
905-799-3118
- > Voice for Hearing Impaired Children
416-487-7719 voicefordeafkids.com

**Questions?
Call 905-890-1099
(or 1-800-668-1146),
ext. 2345**