

## Autism P.D.D.

A severe learning disorder that is characterized by:

- a) Disturbances in:
  - (i) rate of educational development
  - (ii) ability to relate to the environment
  - (iii) motility
  - (iv) perception, speech, and language
- b) Lack of the representational-symbolic behaviour that precedes language.

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<b>CRITERIA:</b>	Diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) by qualified professional.
<b>PLACEMENTS:</b>	Delivered by or with the support of the Special Education Teacher: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Resource in Class</li><li>• Withdrawal</li><li>• Self-contained classes (elementary/primary), two schools only</li></ul>
<b>PROGRAM:</b>	Social Communication Program (Elementary and Secondary panels) Delivered in home school, except for ASD classes, with appropriate supports and services
<b>SERVICES:</b>	Available in Elementary and Secondary Panels <i>(unless otherwise indicated)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Speech/Language Services</li><li>• Behaviour Resource Services</li><li>• Physical Management Services</li><li>• Psychological Services</li><li>• Special Ed Consultant (<i>elementary</i>)</li><li>• Special Program Teacher (<i>secondary</i>)</li><li>• Special Ed Department Head (<i>secondary</i>)</li></ul>

## **SPECIAL PROGRAM – AUTISM (Social Communication Program)**

Students aged 4 – 21 years with a diagnosis of autism/pervasive developmental disorder are enrolled in their home school on a regular classroom register, usually with age-appropriate peers. They have a program focused to provide specialized instruction to students who have significant difficulties relating to their environment and acquiring the full range of academic skills. The individualized program supports ongoing needs such as communication, sensory-motor integration, anxiety and appropriate behaviours. Implementation of the uniquely designed program is a collaboration between classroom teacher and Core Resource (special education) teacher with additional supports, as required. Mode of delivery ranges from resource withdrawal to special class full time (primary grades).

Each school is serviced by a Board resource team that supports the school staff working with these students. This multidisciplinary team includes a special education program consultant and/or department head and a representative from each of the Board's services.

In consideration of very divergent needs of students diagnosed with Autism/PDD, during the 2004-2005 school year two ASD classes were implemented which created a special class full-time for students with autism/pervasive developmental disorder who are experiencing significant/severe difficulty and require a more intensive, congregated setting with appropriate resources, for significant portions of their school day.

These students are not able to sit and attend due to a number of factors including body organization difficulties, the stimuli in the room and the communication expectations. As a result, at present they are not able to learn in the environment and inhibit the learning of others. Within the congregated setting, it is hoped that the students will be able to focus on a few main areas of development.

Examples of requisite skills that may need to be learned are:

- a) acquiring skills of daily living, i.e. toileting, dressing, eating
- b) classroom routines
- c) social awareness
- d) communication
- e) initiating requests for assistance
- f) negotiating the classroom environment
- g) familiarizing self with the school environment
- h) adapting the grade 1-3 program

The goal of the program is to assist students in the development of skills in the aforementioned areas.

## **Secondary Schools**

Within the next few years, six secondary high schools will receive an unusually large number of students with Autism. In order to prepare the schools to facilitate transition plans, a comprehensive series of inservice opportunities have been prepared to train and develop a school ASD team. The school team will work with the area team and the Board's ASD team to develop their skills in dealing with the students. The school teams consist of an administrator, two special education teachers, and an educational assistant.