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# A Parent/Guardian Guide to Special Education

YORK CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD  
320 Bloomington Road West  
Aurora, Ontario  
L4G 0M1

*If you would like to receive this guide in Braille, Large Print, or another language,  
please call (905) 713-1211 ext. 11628*

## YCDSB VISION

*Students with special education needs, as meaningful members of an inclusive Catholic community, will reach optimal independence and achievement through strategic, focused, accessible, and timely educational interventions.*

### WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE?

The purpose of this Guide is to provide Parents/Guardians with information about the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) process, and to set out the procedures involved in identifying a pupil as “exceptional”, deciding the pupil’s placement, and appealing such decisions if Parents/Guardians do not agree with the IPRC decision. If, after reading this guide, you require more information, please see the board contact list at the end of the document.

### WHAT IS AN IPRC?

Regulation 181/98 of the Education Act requires that all school boards set up IPRCs that are responsible for the identification of exceptional students and their placement in special education programs.

An IPRC is a formal committee made up of 3 people that meets and decides if a student should be identified as exceptional and, if so, the placement that will best meet the student’s needs.

### WHO MAKES UP THE IPRC?

An IPRC is composed of a committee of at least three persons, one of whom must be a principal or supervisory officer of the board.

### WHAT IS THE ROLE OF AN IPRC?

The IPRC will:

- ❖ decide whether or not your child should be identified as **exceptional**;
- ❖ identify the areas of your child’s exceptionality, according to the categories and definitions of exceptionalities provided by the Ministry of Education and Training;
- ❖ decide an appropriate **placement** for your child from the **placements** listed below;
- ❖ make recommendations for **special education programs and services**; and
- ❖ review the **identification** and **placement** at least once in each school year.

### WHO IS IDENTIFIED AS AN EXCEPTIONAL PUPIL?

The Education Act requires school boards to provide special education programs and services to students who are formally identified as “exceptional pupils.” Under the Act, an exceptional pupil is a student who has been identified by an IPRC as having behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical or multiple exceptionalities that requires them to have a special education program. Students are identified according to the [Categories and Definitions of Exceptionalities](#) provided by the Ministry of Education and Training.

## The categories of exceptionalities are:

- **Behaviour**
  - Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- **Communication**
  - Autism
  - Deaf & Hard of Hearing
  - Language Impairment
  - Speech Impairment
  - Learning Disability
- **Intellectual**
  - Developmental Disability
  - Giftedness
  - Mild Intellectual Disability
- **Physical**
  - Blind and Low Vision
  - Physical Disability
- **Multiple Exceptionalities**

## WHAT PLACEMENTS ARE AVAILABLE TO MY CHILD?

If your child is identified as exceptional, the IPRC will identify the most appropriate placement from the placements below:

- Regular Class
- Regular Class with Withdrawal
- Special Class with Partial Integration
- Special Class Fully Self-Contained

*Note: Where possible, the placement will be within the child's home school, with appropriate programs and services provided. Should placement in another location be decided, the IPRC must explain the reasons/benefits.*

## WHAT IS A SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM?

A special education program is defined in the Education Act as an educational program that:

- ❖ is based on and modified by the results of continuous assessment and evaluation; and
- ❖ includes a plan (called an Individual Education Plan or IEP) containing specific objectives and an outline of special education services that meet the needs of the exceptional pupil.
- ❖ YCDSB offers the following Special Education Programs:

## YCDSB SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

### Core Resource Program (CORE)

- ❖ Serves a wide variety of students with mild to moderate learning delays in all exceptionality areas and students with ADHD.

### Educational Support Program (ES)

- ❖ Serves students with mild to moderate developmental disabilities and delays in their educational development.

### Functional Life Skills Program (FLS)

- ❖ Serves students with moderate to severe developmental disabilities and delays in their educational development.

### Social Communication Program (SCP)

- ❖ Serves students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

### **Hearing Program and Services**

- ❖ Serves students with moderate to severe hearing loss.

### **Vision Programs and Services**

- ❖ Serves students diagnosed as Blind or Low Vision whose vision cannot be corrected with glasses, vision therapy or surgery.

### **Pathways to EmployABILITY Program (PEP)**

- ❖ Serves secondary students who require accommodations to successfully access work experience opportunities in the community.

### **Program for Academic and Creative Extension (PACE)**

- ❖ Serves students who are intellectually advanced.

### **Learning Strategies Courses**

- ❖ Serve secondary students with Learning Disabilities and ADHD in grades 9-12.

## **WHAT ARE SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES?**

Special education services are defined in the Education Act as the facilities and resources, including support personnel and equipment, necessary for developing and implementing a special education program. YCDSB offers the following Special Education Services:

## **YCDSB SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES**

### **Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) Services**

- ❖ Provides a range of services using evidence-based practices, from general and individualized consultation to direct services for students who may or may not have a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder. Students who are experiencing adjustment difficulties due to behavioural excesses and/or functional skill deficits are referred for ABA services by school staff and board-level Multidisciplinary Team Members.

### **Behaviour Resource Services**

- ❖ Provides a range of services and is available to all students. This includes consultation to school staff and students, direct service to students, skill development groups for students, inservice to students, parents/guardians and Board staff.
- ❖ The reduced ratio TD Program in elementary and the Tutorial Program in secondary schools, serve students with significant social and behavioural difficulties which may be interfering with the student's ability to learn and/or fully access the educational setting.

### **Mental Health Services**

- ❖ Provides individual and group short term psychotherapy for students experiencing mental health problems (eg. anxiety, depression)
- ❖ Provides consultation and community referrals as appropriate

### **Physical Management Services**

- ❖ Serves students who have difficulties in the areas of fine motor, gross motor or sensory motor skills, in order to promote their independence in the regular school environment.

### **Psychological Services**

- ❖ Provides consultation, assessment or short-term supportive intervention for students, and facilitation to community agency services. Students are referred by school staff with parent/guardian/student consent.

### **Speech/Language Services**

- ❖ Provides consultation, assessment and short term intervention for students with communication needs who are referred by school staff with the consent of parents/guardians.

## ADDITIONAL STUDENT SERVICES

### Multilingual Services

- ❖ One of the services available through ESL/ESD (English as a Second Language/English Skills Development) Programs and Services.
- ❖ Interpreters and translators are provided to assist in communication with parents/guardians and students who have limited English communication skills.
- ❖ Multilingual assessors are available to provide support for schools in assessing the needs of students with limited English communication skills.

## BEFORE THE IPRC

### HOW IS AN IPRC MEETING INITIATED?

There are two ways that an IPRC can happen:

#### 1. SCHOOL REFERRAL

The principal may, with written notice to you, refer your child to an IPRC when the principal and the child's teacher(s) believe that your child may benefit from a special education program.

#### 2. PARENT/GUARDIAN REQUEST

You may ask the principal to refer your child to the IPRC by submitting a written request for an IPRC meeting to the principal. Within 15 days of receiving your written request for IPRC, you will receive a written response from the principal outlining next steps.

### WHAT INFORMATION WILL PARENTS/GUARDIANS RECEIVE IN ADVANCE OF THE IPRC MEETING?

At least 10 days in advance of the IPRC meeting, you will receive a written notification/invitation to attend the meeting as an important partner in considering your child's placement. This written notification/invitation will notify you of the date, time and place of the meeting, and it will ask you to indicate whether you will attend. Before the IPRC meeting occurs, you will receive a written copy of any information about your child that the Chair of the IPRC has received. This may include the results of assessments or a summary of other pertinent information.

### MAY PARENTS/GUARDIANS ATTEND THE IPRC MEETING?

Regulation 181/98 entitles parents/guardians and pupils 16 years of age or older:

- ❖ to be present at and participate in all committee discussion about your child; and
- ❖ to be present when the committee's identification and placement decision is made.



### WHO ELSE MAY ATTEND AN IPRC MEETING?

- ❖ The principal of your child's school;
- ❖ other resource people such as your child's teacher, special education staff, board support staff, or the representative of an agency, who may provide further information or clarification;
- ❖ your representative/advocate – that is, a person who may support you or speak on behalf of you or your child; and
- ❖ an interpreter, if one is required.

### WHO MAY REQUEST THAT OTHERS ATTEND?

Either you or the principal of your child's school may make a request for the attendance of others at the IPRC meeting.

## WHAT IF PARENTS/GUARDIANS ARE UNABLE TO MAKE THE SCHEDULED MEETING?

If you are unable to make the scheduled meeting, you may;

- ❖ contact the school principal to arrange an alternative date or time; or
- ❖ let the school principal know you will not be attending, and as soon as possible after the meeting, the principal will forward to you, for your consideration and signature, the IPRC's written statement of decision noting the decision of identification and placement and any recommendations regarding special education programs and services.

## DURING THE IPRC

### WHAT HAPPENS AT AN IPRC MEETING?

The Chair introduces everyone and explains the purpose of the meeting. The IPRC will review all available information about your child. They will:

- ❖ consider the results of an educational assessment of your child;
- ❖ consider (subject to the provisions of the Health Care Consent Act, 1996), a health and/or psychological assessment of your child conducted by a qualified practitioner if they feel that such an assessment is required to make a correct identification or placement decision;
- ❖ interview your child, with your consent if your child is less than 16 years of age, if they feel it would be useful to do so; and
- ❖ consider any information that you submit about your child or that your child submits if he or she is 16 years of age or older.

The committee may discuss any proposal that has been made about a special education program or special education services for the child. Committee members will discuss any such proposal at your request, or at the request of your child if the child is 16 years of age or older.

- ❖ You are encouraged to ask questions and join in the discussion.
- ❖ Following the discussion, after all the information has been presented and considered, the committee will make a decision about the following:
  - **IDENTIFICATION:** If your child should be identified as exceptional, and
  - **PLACEMENT:** The most appropriate placement for your child if they are identified as exceptional.

### WHAT WILL THE IPRC CONSIDER IN MAKING ITS PLACEMENT DECISION?

Before the IPRC can consider placing your child in a special education class, it must consider whether placement in a regular class with appropriate special education services will meet your child's needs.

If, after considering all of the information presented to it, the IPRC is satisfied that placement in a regular class will meet your child's needs and that such a decision considers parental input, the committee will decide in favour of placement in a regular class with appropriate special education services. If the committee decides that your child should be placed in a special education class, it must state the reasons for that decision in its written statement of decision.

## WHAT WILL THE IPRC'S WRITTEN STATEMENT OF DECISION INCLUDE?

The IPRC's written statement of decision will state:

- ❖ whether the IPRC has identified your child as exceptional;
- ❖ where the IPRC has identified your child as exceptional,
  - the categories and definitions of any exceptionalities identified, as they are defined by the Ministry of Education and Training;
  - the IPRC's description of your child's strengths and needs;
  - the IPRC's placement decision;
  - the IPRC's recommendations regarding a special education program and special education services; and
  - where the IPRC has decided that your child should be placed in a special education class, the reasons for that decision.

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE IPRC HAS MADE ITS DECISION?

- ❖ If you agree with the IPRC decision, you will be asked to indicate, by signing your name, that you agree with the identification and placement decisions made by the IPRC. The statement of decision may be signed at the IPRC meeting or taken home and returned within 15 days of the IPRC.
- ❖ If the IPRC has identified your child as an exceptional pupil and you have agreed with the IPRC identification and placement decision, the board will promptly notify the principal of the school at which the special education program is to be provided of the need to develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for your child.

## APPEAL PROCESS

### WHAT CAN PARENTS/GUARDIANS DO IF THEY DISAGREE WITH THE IPRC DECISION?

- ❖ If you do not agree with the identification or placement decision made by the IPRC, you may:
  - Within 15 days of receipt of the decision, request that the IPRC hold a second meeting to discuss your concerns; or
  - Within 30 days of receipt of the decision, file a notice of appeal with the *Director/Secretary of the Board, York Catholic District School Board, 320 Bloomington Rd. West, Aurora, Ontario, L4G 0M1*
- ❖ If you do not agree with the decision after the second meeting, you may file a notice of appeal within 15 days of your receipt of the decision. In your notice of appeal, you must state which of the IPRC decisions you are appealing (identification and/or placement) and your reasons for disagreeing with the committee.

**Note: If you do not consent to the IPRC decision and you do not appeal it, the board will instruct the principal to implement the IPRC decision.**

### HOW DO I APPEAL AN IPRC DECISION?

If you disagree with the IPRC's identification of your child as exceptional or with the placement decision of the IPRC, you may, within 30 days of receipt of the original decision or within 15 days of receipt of the decision from the second meeting described above, give written notification of your intention to appeal the decision to the *Director/Secretary of the Board, York Catholic District School Board, 320 Bloomington Rd. West, Aurora, Ontario L4G 0M1*.

The notice of appeal must:

- ❖ Indicate the decision with which you disagree; and
- ❖ Include a statement that sets out your reasons for disagreeing.

## **WHAT HAPPENS IN THE APPEAL PROCESS?**

The appeal process involves the following steps:

- ❖ The board will establish a special education appeal board to hear your appeal. The appeal board will be composed of three persons:
  - 1) one member selected by the York Catholic District School Board;
  - 2) one member selected by you, the parents/guardians; and
  - 3) a Chair selected jointly by the other two members, or the appropriate district manager of the Ministry of Education, if the two members are unable to agree on the Chair.
- ❖ 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 or she has been selected (unless parents/guardians 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, the parent/guardian, and your child, if he or 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 you may appeal to a [Special Education Tribunal](https://tribunalsontario.ca/oset/) (<https://tribunalsontario.ca/oset/>). You may request a hearing by writing to the secretary of the Special Education Tribunal. Information about making an application to the tribunal will be included with the appeal board's decision

# AFTER THE IPRC

## WHAT IS AN IEP?

Under Ontario Regulation 181/98, “Identification and Placement of Exceptional Pupils”, principals are required to ensure that an IEP is developed for every student who has been identified as exceptional by an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC), within 30 school days of the student’s placement in a special education program. The principal must ensure that you receive a copy of the IEP.

The Individual Education Plan (IEP) must be developed for your child, in consultation with you. It must include:

- ❖ the student’s strengths and needs;
- ❖ specific educational expectations;
- ❖ an outline of the special education program and services that will be received;
- ❖ a statement about the methods by which your child’s progress will be reviewed; and
- ❖ a transition plan that includes the specific goals, actions required, person(s) responsible for actions, and timelines for each educational transition where the student requires support.

The IEP must be completed within 30 days after your child has been placed in the program, and the principal must ensure that you receive a copy of it.

Please refer to [Special Education in Ontario K-12](#) (Section E) for Ministry of Education information on the IEP.

For YCDSB information on IEPs, click on [MyEP Flyer](#) or scan this QR code



## ONCE A CHILD HAS BEEN PLACED IN A SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM, CAN THE PLACEMENT BE REVIEWED?

- ❖ An IPRC review meeting will be held within each school year, unless the principal of the school at which the special education program is being provided receives written notice from you, the parent/guardian, dispensing with the annual review by signing an IPRC Review Waiver.
- ❖ You may request an IPRC review meeting any time after your child has been in a special education program for 3 months.

## WHAT DOES AN IPRC REVIEW CONSIDER AND DECIDE?

- ❖ The IPRC review considers the same type of information that was originally considered.
- ❖ With your written permission, the IPRC conducting the review will consider the progress your child has made in relation to the IEP.
- ❖ The IPRC will review the placement and identification decisions and decide whether they should be continued or whether a different decision should now be made.

## WHAT ORGANIZATIONS ARE AVAILABLE TO ASSIST PARENTS/GUARDIANS?

Many parent organizations are available to provide information and support to parents/guardians of exceptional children.

### [ASSOCIATION FOR BRIGHT CHILDREN \(ABC\)](#)

4 Simpson Rd  
Bolton, ON L7E 1G9  
Email: [abcyorksouth@abcontario.ca](mailto:abcyorksouth@abcontario.ca) and  
[abcyorknorth@abcontario.ca](mailto:abcyorknorth@abcontario.ca)  
[www.abcontario.ca](http://www.abcontario.ca)

### [AUTISM SOCIETY ONTARIO – YORK REGION CHAPTER](#)

Loyal True Blue & Orange Home  
11181 Yonge Street, Suite 211  
Richmond Hill, L4S 1L2  
Phone: (905) 780-1590  
<https://yssn.ca/autism-ontario-york-region-chapter/>

### [COMMUNITY LIVING YORK SOUTH](#)

101 Edward Avenue  
Richmond Hill, ON L4C 5E5  
Phone 1: 1 (877)-737-3475  
Phone 2: (905) 884-9110  
<https://www.communitylivingyorksouth.ca/>

### [DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION OF YORK REGION](#)

P.O. Box 2063, Stn B  
Richmond Hill, ON L4E 1A3  
Phone: (416) 410-3696; 1 (800)-649-DOWN  
<https://dsayr.ca/>

### [EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES, YORK REGION](#)

Town of Newmarket  
17150 Yonge St.  
Newmarket, ON L3Y 8V3  
Phone: 1 (877) 464-9675  
TTY: 1 (866) 512-6228  
<https://www.york.ca/support/childrens-services/children-special-needs>

### [EASTER SEALS ONTARIO](#)

One Concorde Gate, Suite 700  
Toronto, ON M3C 3N6  
Phone: (416) 421-8388  
Phone: 1 (800) 668-6252  
<https://www.easterseals.org/>

### [INCLUSION ACTION IN ONTARIO](#)

88 Berkely Crescent  
Simcoe, ON N3Y 4M7  
Phone: 1 (877) 681-5128  
<https://inclusionactionontario.ca/>

### [LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION OF YORK SIMCOE](#)

9040 Leslie St., Suite 208  
Richmond Hill, ON L4B 3M4  
Phone: (905) 884-7933  
Phone: 1 (866) 705-3297  
<https://ldays.org/>

### [YORK HILLS CENTRE FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES](#)

402 Bloomington Road  
Aurora, ON L4G 0L9  
<https://www.yorkhills.ca/>



## WHAT ARE THE MINISTRY'S PROVINCIAL AND DEMONSTRATION SCHOOLS?

The Ministry operates provincial and demonstration schools throughout Ontario for deaf, blind, deaf-blind, and severely learning-disabled students, as well as those with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Residential programs are offered at the schools Monday to Friday, for students who live too far from school to travel daily.

### Demonstration Schools for English-speaking students with severe learning disabilities and for students with learning disabilities in association with ADHD:

#### [Amethyst School](#)

1090 Highbury Avenue  
London, ON N5Y 4V9  
Phone: (519) 453-4408

#### [Sagonaska School](#)

350 Dundas Street West  
Belleville, ON K8P 1B2  
Phone: (613) 967-2830

#### [Trillium School](#)

347 Ontario Street South  
Milton, ON L9T 3X9  
Phone: (905) 878-8428

### Provincial Schools for the Deaf:

#### [Ernest C. Dry School](#)

255 Ontario Street South  
Milton, ON L9T 2M5  
Phone: (905) 878-2851  
TTY: (905) 878-7195

#### [Robarts School](#)

1515 Cheapside Street  
London, ON N5V 3N9  
Phone: (519) 453-4400  
TTY: (519) 453-4400

#### [Sir James Whitney School](#)

350 Dundas Street West  
Belleville, ON K8P 1B2  
Phone: (613) 967-2823  
TTY: (613) 967-2823

### Provincial Schools for the Blind and Deafblind:

#### [W. Ross MacDonald School](#)

350 Brant Avenue,  
Brantford, ON N3T 3J9  
Phone: (519) 759-0730



### Francophone school for the Deaf and for those with Learning Disabilities:

#### [Centre Jules-Leger](#)

281 rue Lanark  
Ottawa, ON K1Z 6R8  
Phone: (613) 761-9300

## THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEAC): WORKING TOGETHER TO SUPPORT STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The role of the YCDSB Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) is to provide important advice to the board on special education and make recommendations to the board on any matter affecting the establishment, development and delivery of special education programs and services for exceptional students. SEAC members are available as a resource for exceptional students, parents/guardians of these students, schools, educators, Trustees and the community. Many members of SEAC are parents/guardians themselves of students with exceptional needs and are therefore acutely aware of the educational needs these students may have. The YCDSB SEAC committee holds monthly meetings which are open to the public and all parents/guardians and any other interested members of the community are welcome to attend. Please go to [ycdsb.ca](http://ycdsb.ca) - Programs, Services & Support, Student Services - Special-education-advisory-committee-seac/ - for a complete list of dates/times that the SEAC meetings are held.



Scan this code for more  
information on SEAC

## WHERE CAN PARENTS/GUARDIANS OBTAIN ADDITIONAL INFORMATION?

Additional information can be obtained from:

- ❖ The school principal;
- ❖ Superintendent of Education: Exceptional Learners (Student Services), York Catholic District School Board, 320 Bloomington Road West, Aurora, Ontario L4G 0M1 (905) 713-1211 ext. 11630; and
- ❖ The [YCDSB Special Education Plan](#) found at [ycdsb.ca](http://ycdsb.ca) - Programs, Services and Support - Special Education.

