



# Parent/Guardian Guide to Special Education IPRC





## The Purpose of this Guide

Thank you for the opportunity to partner with you in the program and pathway planning for your child. Families and caregivers are valued partners and are central to the planning for students.

Most essential is the ongoing partnership with parents/guardians. Your voice is important. Please reach out to our team for support. We are here in service of students and families.

This guide has been created to provide you with information about the process we follow in the Durham District School Board for consideration and decision making regarding identification as an exceptional student and program placement.

It is important that parents/guardians understand each of the steps in this process as we strongly believe that your voice is key when decisions are made about your child's program.

If parents/guardians have questions after reading this guide, we encourage you to contact your child's school for additional assistance.

In addition to key contacts at your school:

- Classroom Teacher
- Special Education Resource Teacher
- Principal/Vice-Principal
- Inclusive Student Services team

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### SERVING OUR STUDENTS

The DDSB is committed to the learning of all students and to providing services and learning environments that are respectful, inclusive, equitable and accessible, and free from discrimination under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

In partnership with parents/guardians, the DDSB considers the student's individual learning strengths and needs.

The DDSB provides a range of differentiated placements, programs, interventions and individualized accommodation to maximize participation, integration and independence, enable meaningful access to education, and support student success.



# Supporting Many Paths to Success

**SPECIAL EDUCATION**  
Supporting Many Paths to Success

**STEP 1 Teacher Assesses Strengths and Needs of Students**

**NOTE: Steps 1 - 4 MUST precede the Consent for Service**

- Recognize a learning gap, unique pattern of strength/need or significant concern.
- Communicate with parents/guardians, principal, and Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT).
- Accommodate program to meet student needs.
- Calculate the effectiveness of accommodations/interventions.
- Student Profile is started on Power 79A.

**STEP 2 The Special Education Resource Teacher**

- Observe the student and collect data pertaining to strengths/needs.
- Write a plan of action based on the observation results and set a timeline for progress.
- Provide and coordinate non-direct support to the teacher and student through a variety of approaches.
- Share plan of action with parents/guardians.

**STEP 3 In-School Team**

- Teacher and SERT present classroom observations and/or assessment results to in-school team and outline current accommodations.
- Team discusses strategies/suggestions including community partner services.
- Team collaboratively updates the action plan.
- Update agency/guardian: SERT and teacher discuss program accommodations and interventions with parents/guardians.

**STEP 4 Pre-Referral Consultation**

- The referral consultation occurs with the Family of School Special Education Team to determine appropriate services.
- Student assessment may be completed at this time for further information of student needs.
- No identifying information is shared at this point.

**NOTE: Steps 1 - 4 MUST precede the Consent for Service**

**STEP 5 Consent for Service Submitted**

- SERT verifies that appropriate forms and documentation are completed and sent to Special Education support staff.
- Informed Consent:
  - Special Education support staff provide communication to parents/guardians to receive informed consent.
  - Special Education support staff ensure that the parents/guardians are aware of the nature of services to be provided, appropriate timelines and confidentiality.
- Support from Special Education Services:
  - Special Education support staff may visit classroom, observe and provide further assessment, program accommodations, strategies and materials as required.
  - SERT continues to update teacher and administrator.
  - Special Education support staff involvement may be consultation and/or teacher direct student support.
- Determine if IPRC is warranted at this time.

**STEP 6 Case Conference**

- Special Education Revised Guide provided to parents/guardians.
- Parents/guardians, teacher, SERT Administrator attend a meeting to discuss concerns next steps.

On-going assessment of your child's strengths and needs is an important part of supporting your child. The *Supporting Many Paths to Success* resource outlines the steps that school teams will take to assess, accommodate, provide interventions, and monitor the progress of your child as we learn more about these strengths and needs to best support them. Classroom teachers provide important information to both family and school team staff to determine next steps.

Should initial accommodations or interventions not sufficiently meet your child's needs, the Special Education Resource Teacher will be activated for more comprehensive supports. In partnership with families, additional assessment and information will be gathered through observation, daily tasks, formal assessment tools, and conversations to further the understanding of the strengths and needs of your child. This information will guide additional accommodations and intervention planning.

Supporting Many Paths to Success can be found online at

Additional Inclusive Student Services team members may be activated, with parent/guardian informed consent, to provide support, strategies, additional assessment, and recommendations for your child. A case conference may be arranged to share any assessment data or new information and to discuss next steps.

In some situations where a student's needs are complex and/or medical information outlines the need, the steps towards IPRC may be moved along more quickly to meet your child's needs, including supporting programming modification or support through alternative curriculum.

## What is an IPRC?

An Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) is a committee of the Durham District School Board which undertakes a formal process that is mandated under Regulation 181 of the Education Act for students who require additional supports to be successful in meeting curriculum expectations.

An IPRC is composed of at least three staff members, one of whom must be a Principal/Vice-Principal or a Supervisory Officer of the Board.

**Parents/guardians are key players in any decisions that are made regarding your child, you are highly encouraged to attend and participate in the meeting as your input is valued.**

## The IPRC Committee

The team will strive to ensure that you are an integral part of the planning process. Your input is valuable within the decision making process.

**During the IPRC meeting, the committee 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 exceptionality provided by the Ministry of Education;
- after considering the options available, the committee will also decide an appropriate placement for your child based on individual needs and strengths;
- review the identification and placement at least once in each school year.

Accommodation is an ongoing process involving adjusting services, programs and practices to remove barriers and better respond to or address individual Human Rights Code related needs. Program planning may include assessment by school board, or community based, clinicians and the results are shared at school team meetings (or case conferences) with the parent/guardians. If appropriate, then an IPRC may be requested.

**An IPRC Committee has three main goals:**

1. to identify each student who needs special education;
2. decision on program placement (regular class or specific special education program type) that will meet learner's needs; and
3. annually, to formally review how a program is meeting student needs and leveraging their strengths.




## Exceptional Pupil and the Program According to the Education Act

An exceptional pupil is “a pupil whose behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical or multiple exceptionalities are such that they are considered to need placement in a special education program...” Students are identified according to the categories and definitions of exceptionalities provided by the Ministry of Education and Training.

A special education program is 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 (IEP) containing specific objectives and an outline of special education services that meet the needs of the exceptional pupil.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parent/guardians/speced.html>



**Most of our students with special education strengths and needs are in regular class placements.**

## Before the IPRC

If a program is not yet meeting a student's needs, school staff will communicate concerns, in-class assessments, planning and strategies to parents/guardians on a regular basis. The teacher may request support from the school team comprised of the Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) and school administrator(s) for programming ideas.

If a program continues to not yet meet the student's need, the school team will host a Case Conference which is an informal, problem-solving team meeting where all those who have been working to support your child meet with parents/guardians (and your child as appropriate), to determine further interventions, the need for outside supports, and whether the student would benefit from a formal identification. A summary of all information will be presented which may include:

- information you choose to share as parent/guardian
- assessment results conducted by school staff
- assessments completed by other professionals that you have given permission to be involved with your child
- strengths and needs of the student; decided in collaboration with you and based on assessment data
- potential programming options

If identification is being considered, the team can describe what placement options are available to meet your child's needs. Most of our students with special education strengths and needs are in regular class placements. For some, a more intensive, smaller ration program is recommended. A list of these programs can be found online: <https://www.ddsbc.ca/en/programs-and-learning/inclusive-student-services.aspx>

Options may also include provincial or demonstration schools run by the Ministry of Education and Training.

## Requesting an IPRC

You, as a parent/guardian, have the right to request an IPRC. The request must be written and sent to your child's school principal. The principal shall organize the IPRC and inform you in writing of the process and timelines.

The school team may request an IPRC based on their assessment(s) of your child's progress. The principal will inform you in writing.

Within 15 calendar days of receiving your request, the principal must provide you with a copy of the Parent/Guardian Guide.

At least 10 days before the IPRC will be held, the principal or chair will provide you with a written notice of when the IPRC shall meet (location, date and time). If the date is not convenient you may request an alternate date or time and the principal or chair will try and accommodate your request.

If you do not want to attend then the principal will forward to you a copy of the IPRC form and a written statement of the decision of identification and the recommendations of placement after considering the options available.

## The Parent/Guardian Importance

Parent(s)/guardian(s) are an essential part of the IPRC and an equal participant in the discussion that will lead to making a decision for your child. We encourage you to become as involved and informed as possible. As a result, we highly encourage you to attend the IPRC. If you need language interpretation services or supports or other accommodation to participate in the meeting, please ask your child's principal to arrange for an interpreter at the IPRC. Services are also available for parents with vision or hearing impairments, and arrangements will be made to accommodate other accessibility concerns that you may have.

If your child is 16 years or older they may attend the IPRC meeting. Children under age 16 may attend with parent/guardian permission. Given the sensitive nature of some of the information presented, you may want to talk in advance with your child and your school principal about how they might be involved in the meeting.

Prior to the IPRC, your input regarding strengths and needs will be sought.

Parents/guardians will have been offered an opportunity to review this information prior to the meeting.



## During the IPRC

### Students and Parents/Guardians in the IPRC

Parents/guardians and students 16 years of age or older are invited to attend the IPRC and are considered to be important contributors to the discussion. Staff who have come to know and work with your child will attend an IPRC. An interpreter to assist the parents/guardians (where appropriate) can be arranged by the referring school principal.

An advocate, if invited by the parents/guardians may be also be in attendance to provide support or speak on their behalf. We request that the school team be notified in advance so that meeting room arrangements and any accommodations can be made for participants.

### Categories of Exceptionalities

- Behaviour
- Communication
- Intellectual
- Physical
- Multiple

### IPRC Committee

There will be three designated staff from the Durham District School Board. These will include at least one Superintendent and/or Principal/Vice-Principal. It may include the Special Education Officer, or other Education Officers from the central office. Others might include:

- Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT), or Head of Special Education from the school
- The classroom teacher and/or other teachers from the school
- Facilitators from the area or central team
- Professional support staff – speech and language or psychological services



## What happens at the IPRC Meeting?

The Chair begins the meeting by welcoming all attendees and initiating introductions. The purpose and goals of the IPRC meeting are reviewed and participants, including the parents/guardians, are invited to provide information to assist the committee in understanding the student's progress, strengths and needs.

A regular classroom placement (mainstream placement) should be considered as the first option. Before recommending a placement in a special education class (small class placement) the IPRC must decide whether this placement will meet your child's needs.

At the IPRC, the chairperson will ask that a summary of strengths and needs be presented to the committee. Parents/guardians will have been offered an opportunity to review this information prior to the meeting.

The IPRC will review all available information about your child. The members will:

- consider an educational assessment of your child;
- consider, subject to the provisions of the Health Care Consent Act, 1996, a health 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 they are 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 your 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.

Parents/guardians will be invited to ask questions and to join in the discussion.

A placement decision will usually be made immediately. In addition, an identification and placement decision will be formalized. The chairperson will explain it carefully.

**Parents/guardians will be invited to ask questions and to join in the discussion.**

# What decisions can be made by the IPRC?

Parents/guardians will be given a written record of the recommendations of the committee.

The committee:

- Describes and provides a statement of the student's strengths and needs
- Determines whether your child is "exceptional", and if so, designates the area of exceptionality as defined by the Ministry of Education and DDSB criteria. A student may be identified with more than one exceptionality
- Determines placement options based on your child's needs and strengths where the IPRC has identified your child as exceptional
- Determines the appropriate level of support for the student, based on the placement: and one of five placement options defined by the Ministry of Education
- States the reason for the recommendation if the committee has decided that the student placement is a Special Education Class
- Discusses and makes additional written recommendations of specific programs or services deemed by the committee to be important for understanding and meeting the needs of the student
- The IPRC may also consider referring the student to a provincial committee for consideration of eligibility for admission to one of the Provincial Schools for blind, deaf or deaf-blind students, or to one of the Provincial Demonstration Schools for students with severe learning disabilities

## Five Placement Options as Defined by the Ministry of Education

- 1 A regular class with indirect support** where the student is placed in a regular class for the entire day, and the teacher receives specialized consultative services.
- 2 A regular class with resource assistance** where the student is placed in a regular class for most or all of the day and receives specialized instruction, individually or in a small group, within the regular classroom from a qualified special education teacher.
- 3 A regular class with withdrawal assistance** where the student is placed in a regular class and receives instruction outside the classroom, for less than 50 per cent of the school day, from a qualified special education teacher.
- 4 A special education class with partial integration** where the student is placed by the IPRC in a special education class in which the student-teacher ratio conforms to Regulation 298, section 31, for at least 50 per cent of the school day, but is integrated with a regular class for at least one instructional period daily.
- 5 A full-time special education class** where the student-teacher ratio conforms to Regulation 298, section 31, for the entire school day.

## If You Agree with the IPRC Decision

If you agree, then you will be asked to indicate by signing the IPRC form that you agree with the designation of the exceptionality and the placement. You may take the form home to consider or you may sign the form at the conclusion of the IPRC. You have a maximum of 30 working days.

The appropriate staff will then notify the school that you agree with the decision and that an IEP will be developed within 30 school days of formal placement within the recommended program.

*If you disagree with either the identification or the placement, you have 2 options available to you:*

## If You Disagree with the IPRC Decision

1. Within 15 calendar days of receiving the decision, request in writing an additional meeting to re-evaluate the decision of the IPRC. The principal must hold the meeting as soon as possible. Following the meeting, the Chair of the IPRC must advise the parent/guardian of any changes to the decision of the IPRC.

If after the second meeting to re-evaluate the IPRC decision you still disagree, then you have 15 calendar days to appeal the decision in writing.

2. Within 30 calendar days of receiving the initial IPRC decision, the parent/guardian may appeal the decision in writing (*outlined later in this guide*).

If you do not consent to the IPRC decision but you do not appeal it, the board will instruct the principal to implement the IPRC decision.

If the parent/guardian disagrees with the decision reached at the Review, the parent/guardian may appeal in the same way as described for the original IPRC.

### You may appeal the IPRC decision in writing.

#### Address your appeal to:

Superintendent of  
Inclusive Student Services,  
Durham District School Board,  
400 Taunton Road East,  
Whitby, ON, L1R 2K6

## Following the IPRC

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

The Ministry of Education requires that every student who has been identified by an IPRC as exceptional must have an individual education plan (IEP). The IEP is developed by the school with opportunity for consultation with parents/guardians, the school team and may include input from the central board staff.

An IEP will be developed for the student, inclusive of an opportunity for your input, and will include:

- A statement of the student's strengths and needs;
- Specific education expectations;
- An outline of the special education program and services that will be provided;
- A statement about the methods by which your child's progress will be reviewed; and
- A transition plan to assist with changes to a student's experience at school as part of their school life (such as the transition between grades or schools).

#### The IEP may also include:

- A safety plan for students whose disability related behaviour poses a risk of injury to themselves and/or others;
- Medical plan for students who may experience an emergency as the result of a medical condition as outlined by a physician to describe the necessary interventions required (e.g., seizures, choking, etc.);
- Emergency plan for students who require specialized assistance in the event of a school emergency (e.g., fire drill, lockdown, etc.).

### Annual IPRC Review

**Your child's special education needs must be reviewed at least once a year at an annual review of placement. You will be notified of this in writing.**

The IEP must be completed within 30 school days after your child has been formally placed in the program by an IPRC, and the principal must ensure that you receive a copy of it. Every student in the fall will receive an updated IEP within 30 working days of the start of school. The IEP is a working document that will be updated for every reporting period, or as student needs and program strategies change.

## What happens in the IPRC 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, one of whom is selected by you, the parent/guardian, who have no prior knowledge of the matter under appeal.
- The chair of the appeal board will arrange a meeting to take place at a convenient time and place, but no later than 30 calendar days after the chair has been selected (unless parent/guardian and the 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 they are 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's conclusion. 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 calendar 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 and may choose to go to the Special Education Tribunal).
- You may accept the decision of the school board, or you may appeal to a Special Education Tribunal. 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.

**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.**

## Provincial and Demonstration Schools

The Ministry of Education and Training operates provincial and demonstration schools throughout Ontario for students who are deaf, blind, deaf-blind and severely learning-disabled, 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 ADHD and severe learning-disabilities:

#### **Sagonaska School**

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

#### **Amethyst School**

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

#### **Trillium School**

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

### Schools for the deaf:

#### **Ernest C. Drury School**

255 Ontario Street South  
Milton, ON LT9 2M5  
T: (905) 878-7195  
TTY: (905) 878-7195

#### **Robarts School**

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

#### **Sir James Whitney School**

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

### Schools for the deaf/blind:

#### **W. Ross MacDonald School**

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

# Where can parents/guardians obtain additional information?

Additional information can be obtained from:

## School Based Team Members

- Special Education Resource Teacher
- School Administrators

## Inclusive Student Services Team Members

- Instructional Facilitator/  
Inclusive Student Services

The Durham District School Board  
(905) 666-5500 or 1-800-265-3968  
or TTY: (905) 666-6943

- Special Education Officer

The Durham District School Board  
(905) 666-6354 or 1-800-265-3968  
or TTY: (905) 666-6943

## Special Education Advisory Committee

- Members of The Special Education  
Advisory Committee (*see right*)

c/o The Superintendent of Education/  
Inclusive Student Services

The Durham District School Board  
(905) 666-6371 or 1-800-265-3968  
Ext. 6371 & TTY (905) 666-6943

- Local associations that further  
the interests of exceptional persons



## Special Education Advisory Committee

School boards are required to establish a Special Education Advisory Committee which includes representatives from local parent associations and trustees.

These representatives serve as advocates for children and parents, and the associations have useful parent resources.

[ddsb.ca/en/about-ddsb/resources/Documents/SEAC\\_Brochure.pdf](https://ddsb.ca/en/about-ddsb/resources/Documents/SEAC_Brochure.pdf)

Association for Bright Children (ABC) [abcontario.ca](http://abcontario.ca)

Autism Ontario - Durham Region Chapter  
[autismontario.com/chapters/durham-region](http://autismontario.com/chapters/durham-region)

Durham Down Syndrome Association [ddsa.ca](http://ddsa.ca)

Easter Seals Ontario [easterseals.org](http://easterseals.org)

Learning Disabilities Association of Durham Region  
[ldadr.on.ca](http://ldadr.on.ca)

Ontario Association for Families of Children with  
Communication Disorders (OAFCCD) [oafccd.com](http://oafccd.com)

VOICE for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children  
[voicefordeafkids.com](http://voicefordeafkids.com)

## Members At Large

Craig Cameron [ccameron@trentu.ca](mailto:ccameron@trentu.ca)

Carolyn McLennon [cmclennon@gmail.com](mailto:cmclennon@gmail.com)

## DDSB Trustees

Donna Edwards [donna.edwards@ddsb.ca](mailto:donna.edwards@ddsb.ca)

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# Helpful Information for Parents/Guardians

## Principal:

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NAME

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PHONE

## Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT):

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NAME

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PHONE

## Family of Schools or Central Team Members:

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PHONE

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PHONE

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NAME

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## Dates to Remember:

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